



# Boyhood

*Leo Tolstoy*

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## **Boyhood** Leo Tolstoy

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was born at Yasnaya Polyana, in Tula Province, fourth of five children. Tolstoy is widely regarded as one of the greatest of all novelists, particularly noted for his masterpieces *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*; in their scope, breadth and realistic depiction of Russian life, the two books stand at the peak of realistic fiction. As a moral philosopher he was notable for his ideas on nonviolent resistance through his work *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which in turn influenced such twentieth-century figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. In the 1850s Tolstoy also began his literary career with an autobiographical trilogy: *Childhood* (1852), *Boyhood* (1854), and *Youth* (1857). His first publications tell of a rich landowner's son and his slow realization of the differences between him and his peasant playmates. Although in later life Tolstoy rejected these books as sentimental, a great deal of his own life is revealed, and the books still have relevance for their telling of the universal story of growing up.

## **Boyhood Details**

Date : Published March 23rd 2006 by Wildside Press (first published 1854)

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# From Reader Review Boyhood for online ebook

## Elif Y?ld?z says

Evet ama insan hep ayn? kalamaz ki; bir g?n gelir de de?i?mek gerekir.

Tolstoy'un yar? otobiyografik olan ?çlemesinin ikinci kitab? olan ?lkgençlik, serinin ilk kitab?na göre bir t?k daha iyiydi. O küçük çocu?un gençli?ini okumak çok çok güzeldi. ?lk uyan??lar?n?, ilk fark edi?lerini okurken öyle bir etki alt?na al?yor ki sizi, ac?yla gülümsemeden geçemiyorsunuz çünkü biliyorsunuz ki size bir yerden çok tan?d?k anlat?lanlar.

**Dü?ünce alan?nda gitgide daha yukar? ç?karken bir anda bu alan?n ne kadar uçsuz bucaks?z, ilerlemeninse olanaks?z oldu?unu anlad???n o dakikay? severdim.**

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## Darwin8u says

*"Kerr has said that every attachment has two sides: one loves, and the other allows himself to be loved; one kisses, and the other surrenders his cheek."*

- Leo Tolstoy, Boyhood

Boyhood, is Tolstoy's second novel(la) and the second of his three autobiographical novels (Childhood, Boyhood, Youth). Like with Childhood, I get big Knausgårdian vibes from reading these early Tolstoy novels. They are "technically" ficiton, but draw heavily on the childhood, boyhood and youth (see what I did?) of Tolstoy. Details may change, relationships might not be exact, but in many ways, these novels capture if not the letter of Tolstoy's early years, at least the spirit of those years. But I also get a bit of a Nabokovian vibe too (yes, I agree, Nabokov's and Knausgård's novles TECHNICALLY have a Tolstoyan vibe...but bear with me.). Some scenes in Boyhood sing with a flavor I haven't felt since certain chapters of Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle or Speak, Memory.

Probably the most poignant part of this novella, for me, was the section where he was talking about the almost Nihilist hatred Tolstoy had for St. Jerome (his French tutor). He captured in a couple short paragraphs that melancholy loneliness of boys from 12 to 14. That awkward incediarism driven by isolation, curiosity, and inevitable growth, that all must pass through and MOST pass through safely, with just a few scars. Tolstoy NAILED it, at least from my perspective. He captures the insecurities, the fears, the myopic stupidities of boyhood. Some things NEVER change.

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## Mike says

The second part of Tolstoy's autobiographical trilogy, published two years after *Childhood*, takes up where that narrative left off, continuing the recollections of Nikolai as he transitions from childhood to young adulthood. It's a stormy transition (indeed, Tolstoy begins with Nikolai's description of a sudden

thunderstorm that moves across the countryside as he rides in a carriage). We see how the young man copes with life without his mother, the transition from being under the care of his beloved German tutor to a more strict French tutor, and the first spark of his interest in women. To cope with these changes, Nikolai turns even more inward with his philosophical musings. He invents long imaginative narratives in his mind as fantasies to offset the turbulent changes in his life.

In one of the more memorable sections, Tolstoy offers a first-person account of the German tutor's difficult life to contrast with Nikolai's own narrative, which we discover is rather less harsh by comparison. This is an important moment because Nikolai not only comes into his own understanding as an individual with agency, but he also begins to recognize others -- especially servants and villagers -- as being individual people with their own lives, rather than merely "serfs." He grapples with the same three Big Ideas as in *Childhood* (life, love, and death), as well as his first encounters with (and resistance to) authority.

Despite chronicling a very specific time, place, and culture, Tolstoy's narrative has a universal appeal. We share in Nikolai's anguish that "the world is against him" because it is the same feeling we all experience at that age. Once again, Tolstoy has penned an insightful, gripping, intellectual, and emotionally resonant work -- at the age of 25!

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### **Shazeena Ismail says**

Loved reading about Leo Tolstoy's *Childhood*, *Boyhood* and *Youth*. Children and adolescents has the same mindset no matter what era you live in.

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### **David Xavier says**

My first Tolstoy. And not my last. You get a sense in *Boyhood*, that you're reading the passed-up story of a great writer who wrote something way better that got all the attention. *Boyhood* is great. Tolstoy cuts to the bone and gives you characters drenched with feeling. You can relate to all his examples of awkwardness. Little did I know (because when it comes to books, I leap before I look) that this is the second part in a trilogy. I will be reading part 1 and 3, and I'm really excited to take on *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* very soon.

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### **Suheyła says**

çocuklu?um ve gençli?im kitaplar? yazar?n ruh durumunu, yeti?ti?i ortam?, en az?ndan çevresindeki insanlar için geçerli ili?kileri anlama bak?m?ndan önemli. Tolstoy'un, lezzeti daha olu?mam?? ham tad?n? al?r gibi hissettim.

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### **RACA says**

"Çal??t???m dersi s?ras?yla güzelce anlatmak ne?elendiriyor beni. Matematik fakültesine haz?rlan?yorum, gerçe?i söylemek gerekirse bu seçimi s?rf sinüs, tanjant, diferansiyel, integral gibi sözcükler çok ho?uma

gitti?i için yapt?m."

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## Hltsevim says

### Kitab?n Yorumu

“Gençli?im”; Tolstoy’un gençlik y?llar?n?n 16 - 29 ya??na kadar ki an?lar?ndan olu?maktad?r ve yine onun ilk eseridir (Çocuklu?um ve Gençli?im).

Yazar; gençlik y?llar?n?n ba?lang?c?n?, hayata ait fikirlere ba?l? kalma karar?n? verdi?i gün olarak tan?mlar. Bu karar?n? da; görünü?ünü be?enmedi?i vücudundan, yüzünden, ellerinden duydu?u utançtan kaynakl? olumsuz hislerinden bir kaç?? olarak de?erlendirir.

Lev Nikoloviç Tolstoy “Gençli?imde”; babas?n? ve ikinci evlili?ini, aile çevresini, kom?ular?n?, bahar?, bahar aylar?ndaki okul s?navlar?n? (her bir dersi ayr? anlatacak ?ekilde), günahs?z ya?ama ve kendini iyili?e adama azmini, bu maksatla koydu?u kurallar? ve bunlar?n kontrol çizelgelerini, kiliseye yak?nla?mas?n?, ?ehir d???ndaki yak?nlar?na ziyaretlerini (her bir ziyareti ayr? bölüm olarak), yeti?kinli?ini, sevgiyi, a?k? ve kendi ifadesiyle “gönül i?lerini”, klasik müzik hevesini, üniversiteye giri?ini (özel okul mu, devlet okulu mu karar?), okul dönemindeki içki alemini ve sosyeteyi, nihayetinde s?n?fta kalmas?n? (integral ve diferansiyel denklemlerden) dörder - be?er sayfal?k bölümler halinde anlat?r. Bu anlat?m, yazar?n di?er bir eseri olan “Çocuklu?um”daki gibi sadece olaylar üzerinden de?il, daha çok; gözlemler, duygu ve yorumlar üzerinden gerçekle?ir.

“Eser; insan?n gençlik y?llar?ndaki kendini bulma aray???n? ve savrulmalar?n? çarp?c? biçimde hikaye eder. Okura; iyilik ve do?ruyu bulmak için gayret göstermenin de?erini hissettirir.

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## Glorry says

Çok sevdim

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## Amanda Alexandre says

The writing is elegant (Although it begins with 10 pages of a bland road trip and excessive weather descriptions. Something authors could afford to do in a time there was no Candy Crush Saga.). The way Tolstoy paraphrased the simplicity of childish conversations with his mature prose gives a deliciously hilarious effect....

But the plot failed to engage me. I felt The Death of Ivan Ilych or Master and Man had more depth and critique.

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## TarasProkopyuk says

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### **Stephen Ryan says**

This, the second novella Tolstoy ever published, follows right on Childhood, the first book in this series. This one is much more obviously part of a series. It has an ending that, if not exactly a cliffhanger, definitely sets up a relationship that is obviously going to be a huge part of Youth, the final book in the series. Much less of a stand-alone book, then but the characters are just so great.

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### **Millie says**

So interesting how many parallels there are between 19th century Russian children and that of American children in the 21st century. So many similarities and passages of thought between what I can remember from my own younger days and Nikolai's. Sensitivity, conceit, insecurity, naivete, outspokenness, a propensity for trouble... it all comes back lol. Excellent read.

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### **(\_- Jared -\_) ? Book Nerd ? says**

Review to come...

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### **T. says**

The 2nd of his semi-autobiographical novels. A bit more of his developing philosophy. Interesting to me as he seemed to conclude many of the thoughts Buddhism stands for.

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