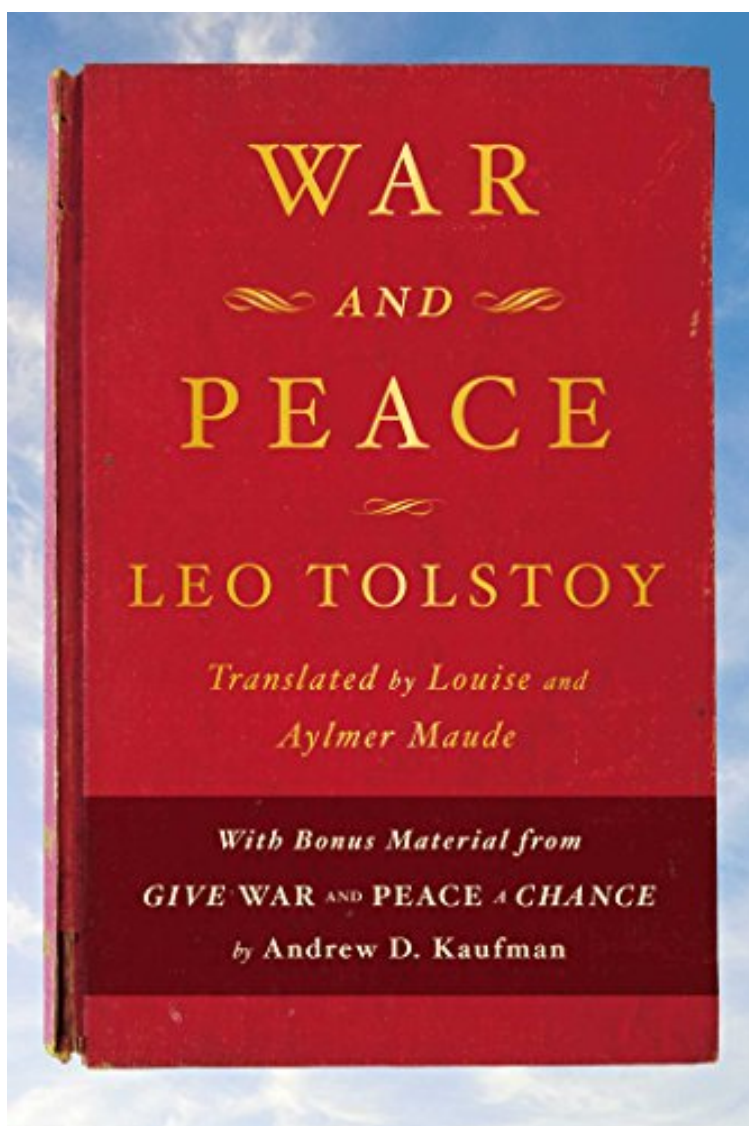


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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur War and Peace is considered one of the worlds greatest works of fiction. It is regarded, along with Anna Karenina, as Tolstoys finest literary achievement. Epic in scale, War and Peace delineates in graphic detail events leading up to Napoleons invasion of Russia, and the impact of the Napoleonic era on Tsarist society, as seen through the eyes of five Russian aristocratic families.Extrait Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa VolokhonskyPart Three, XVAt eight oclock Kutuzov rode to Pratz at the head of

Miloradovichs fourth column, the one which was to take the place of the columns of Przebyszewski and Langeron, which had already gone down. He greeted the men of the head regiment and gave the order to move, thus showing that he intended to lead the column himself. Having ridden to the village of Pratz, he halted. Prince Andrei, one of the enormous number of persons constituting the commander in chiefs suite, stood behind him. Prince Andrei felt excited, irritated, and at the same time restrainedly calm, as a man usually is when a long-desired moment comes. He was firmly convinced that this was the day of his Toulon or his bridge of Arcole.[1] How it would happen, he did not know, but he was firmly convinced that it would be so. The locality and position of our troops were known to him, as far as they could be known to anyone in our army. His own strategic plan, which there obviously could be no thought of carrying out now, was forgotten. Now, entering into Weyrothers plan, Prince Andrei pondered the possible happenstances and came up with new considerations, such as might call for his swiftness of reflection and decisiveness. To the left below, in the fog, exchanges of fire between unseen troops could be heard. There, it seemed to Prince Andrei, the battle would concentrate, there an obstacle would be encountered, and its there that Ill be sent with a brigade or division, and there, with a standard in my hand, Ill go forward and crush everything ahead of me. Prince Andrei could not look with indifference at the standards of the battalions going past him. Looking at a standard, he thought: maybe it is that very standard with which Ill have to march at the head of the troops. By morning the nights fog had left only hoarfrost turning into dew on the heights, but in the hollows the fog still spread its milk-white sea. Nothing could be seen in that hollow to the left, into which our troops had descended and from which came the sounds of gunfire. Over the heights was a dark, clear sky, and to the right the enormous ball of the sun. Far ahead, on the other shore of the sea of fog, one could make out the jutting, wooded hills on which the enemy army was supposed to be, and something was discernible. To the right the guards were entering the region of the fog, with a sound of tramping and wheels and an occasional gleam of bayonets; to the left, beyond the village, similar masses of cavalry approached and disappeared into the sea of fog. In front and behind moved the infantry. The commander in chief stood on the road out of the village, letting the troops pass by him. Kutuzov seemed exhausted and irritable that morning. The infantry going past him halted without any command, apparently because something ahead held them up. But tell them, finally, to form into battalions and go around the village, Kutuzov said angrily to a general who rode up. Dont you understand, Your Excellency, my dear sir, that to stretch out in a defile through village streets is impossible when were marching against an enemy? I intended to form them up outside the village, Your Excellency, said the general. Kutuzov laughed biliously. A fine sight youd be, lining up in view of the enemy, a very fine sight! The enemys still far off, Your Excellency. According to the disposition . . . The disposition! Kutuzov exclaimed biliously. Who told you that? . . . Kindly do as youre ordered. Yes, sir! Mon cher, Nesvitsky said to Prince Andrei in a whisper, le vieux est dune humeur de chien.[2] An Austrian officer in a white uniform with green plumes on his hat rode up to Kutuzov and asked on behalf of the emperor whether the fourth column had started into action. Kutuzov turned away without answering him, and his gaze chanced to rest on Prince Andrei, who was standing close by. Seeing Bolkonsky, Kutuzov softened the angry and caustic expression of his gaze, as if aware that his adjutant was not to blame for what was going on. And, without answering the Austrian adjutant, he addressed Bolkonsky: Allez voir, mon cher, si la troisieme division a dpass le village. Dites-lui de sarrter et dattendre mes ordres.[3] Prince Andrei had only just started when he stopped him. Et demandez-lui si les tirailleurs sont posts, he added. Ce quil font, ce quil font! [4] he said to himself, still not answering the Austrian. Prince Andrei galloped off to carry out his mission. Overtaking all the advancing battalions, he stopped the third division and ascertained that there was in fact no line of riflemen in front of our columns. The regimental commander of the front regiment was very surprised by the order conveyed to him from the commander in chief to send out riflemen. The regimental commander stood there in the full conviction that there were more troops ahead of him, and that the enemy was no less than six miles away. In fact, nothing could be seen ahead but empty terrain sloping away and covered with thick fog. Having ordered on behalf of the commander in chief that the omission be rectified, Prince Andrei galloped back. Kutuzov still stood in the same place and, his corpulent body sagging over the saddle in old mans fashion, yawned deeply, closing his eyes. The troops were no longer moving, but stood at parade rest. Very good, very good, he said to Prince Andrei and turned to a general who stood there with a watch in his hand, saying it was time to move on, because all the columns of the left flank had already descended. We still have time, Your Excellency, Kutuzov said through a yawn. We have time! he repeated. Just then, from well behind Kutuzov, came shouts of regimental greetings, and these voices began to approach quickly along the whole extended line of the

advancing Russian columns. It was clear that the one being greeted was riding quickly. When the soldiers of the regiment Kutuzov was standing in front of began to shout, he rode slightly to one side and, wincing, turned to look. Down the road from Pratz galloped what looked like a squadron of varicolored horsemen. Two of them rode side by side at a great gallop ahead of the rest. One, in a black uniform with white plumes, rode a bobtailed chestnut horse, the other, in a white uniform, rode a black horse. These were the two emperors with their suite. Kutuzov, with the affectation of a frontline veteran, ordered his standing troops to attention and, saluting, rode up to the emperor. His whole figure and manner suddenly changed. He acquired the look of a subordinate, unthinking man. With affected deference, which obviously struck the emperor Alexander unpleasantly, he rode up and saluted him. The unpleasant impression, like the remains of fog in a clear sky, passed over the emperors young and happy face and disappeared. He was somewhat thinner that day, after his illness, than on the field of Olmtz, where Bolkonsky had seen him for the first time abroad, but there was the same enchanting combination of majesty and mildness in his beautiful gray eyes, and the fine lips had the same possibility of various expressions, with a prevalent expression of good-natured, innocent youth. At the Olmtz review he was more majestic; here he was more cheerful and energetic. He was slightly flushed after galloping two miles and, reining in his horse, gave a sigh of relief and looked around at the faces of his suite, as young, as animated as his own. Czartoryski and Novosiltsev, and Prince Volkonsky and Stroganov, and the others, all richly clad, cheerful young men on splendid, pampered, fresh, only slightly sweaty horses, talking and smiling, stopped behind the sovereign. The emperor Franz, a ruddy, long-faced young man, sat extremely straight on his handsome black stallion and looked around him with a preoccupied, unhurried air. He called up one of his white adjutants and asked something. Most likely what time they started, thought Prince Andrei, observing his old acquaintance, and recalling his audience with a smile he was unable to repress. In the emperors suite there were picked fine young orderly officers, Russian and Austrian, from the guards and infantry regiments. Among them were grooms leading the handsome spare horses of the royalty in embroidered cloths. As fresh air from the fields suddenly breathes through an open window into a stuffy room, so youth, energy, and certainty of success breathed upon Kutuzovs cheerless staff as these brilliant young men galloped up. Why dont you begin, Mikhail Larionovich? the emperor Alexander hurriedly addressed Kutuzov, at the same time glancing courteously at the emperor Franz. I am waiting, Your Majesty, answered Kutuzov, inclining deferentially. The emperor cupped his ear, frowning slightly and showing that he had not heard properly. Im waiting, Your Majesty, Kutuzov repeated (Prince Andrei noticed that Kutuzovs upper lip twitched unnaturally as he said this waiting). Not all the columns are assembled, Your Majesty. The sovereign heard, but this reply clearly did not please him; he shrugged his slightly stooping shoulders, glanced at Novosiltsev, who stood nearby, as if complaining of Kutuzov by this glance. Were not on the Tsaritsyn Field, [5] Mikhail Larionovich, where you dont start a parade until all the regiments are assembled, ... From Publishers Weekly British scholar Briggs unveils his lucid new translation of Tolstoy's masterpiece-the first in almost 40 years-to a slightly anxious audience, from first-timers who, balking at the amount of time required by this massive yet startlingly intricate work, want to ensure they are reading the best translation available, to purists who worry that clunky modern prose will replace the cadences of earlier translations. But these concerns melt away after the first 100 pages of this volume. Briggs's descriptions are crisper and the dialogue is sharper, with fewer "shall's," "shan't's" and "I say!'s" than the Garnett, Maude, or Edmonds translations, leaving readers free to enjoy the rich and complex plot, vivid characters and profound insights into war and the nature of power. There are some awkward spots: Briggs claims his earthy rendering of soldierly banter is more realistic than earlier, genteel translators', but it reads distractingly stagy: "Give 'im a right thumpin', we did." It's also a shame to have lost Tolstoy's use of French, not only in the mouths of his characters, but also in the essays, as when he plays with Napoleon's famous "sublime to the ridiculous" quote. Briggs will face competition next year when Pevear and Volokhonsky release their new translation, but for now, this is the most readable translation on the market. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.