

MAJOR WORKS Annotations & Information sheet

<p>Title: The Death of Ivan Ilych Author: Ivan Ilych Date of Publication: 1886 Genre: Novelia</p>	<p align="center">Biographical Information about the Author</p>	
<p align="center" style="background-color: #cccccc;">Historical & Cultural context</p> <p>Leo joined active duty with the Russian army in 1851.</p>	<p>Born in 1828. Leo Tolstoy was born into a wealthy aristocratic family</p>	
	<p align="center">Characteristics of the Genre</p> <p align="center">It's somewhat critical of society but in subtle ways. It's often dark.</p>	
<p>Plot Summary: make a bulleted list highlighting the main events and twists of the plot, 15 items maximum</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starts with Peter looking at Ivan's dead body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps back to when Ivan was alive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivan falls and hurts his side • He obsesses over the pain and goes to the doctor after originally saying it was just a bruise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He develops a morbid fixation and loves to hear about other's ailments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He progresses his condition by obsessing over death • He finds occasional relief but ultimately dies 		
<p align="center">Describe the author's style</p>	<p align="center">An example that demonstrates that style</p>	
<p align="center">The author is incredibly dark.</p>	<p align="center">Afterwards all becomes blacker and blacker and proceeds more and more rapidly – in inverse ration to the square of the distance from death.</p>	
<p align="center">Memorable Quotes:</p>		
<p align="center">Quotations (4 examples) w/page</p>	<p align="center">Significance – in brief: save a full explication for your written analysis <i>--who, what, why, what difference it makes --</i></p>	
<p>Till about three in the morning he was in a state of stupefied misery. It seemed to him that he and his pain were being thrust into a narrow, deep black sack, but though they were pushed further and further in they could not be pushed to the bottom. (Page 55)</p> <p>“Then what does it mean? Why? It can't be that life is so senseless and horrible. But if it really has been so horrible and senseless, why must I die and die in agony?” (Page 57)</p>	<p>This is the narrator describing Ivan's feelings. It's significant because it shows that Ivan is approaching death but cannot quite reach it. He's approaching death by his own volition, rather than from a substantial physical ailment which is why he can't quite reach it but is approaching it (he's limited by inherent biological desire to live).</p> <p>This is Ivan's thoughts on his approach toward death. He ponders the reasonability of his death, and why it must happen. This is an existential pondering and one of great importance. What Ivan fails to understand is that the agony of his death is his own doing as he is the one who is prematurely driving himself to death.</p>	

From the very beginning of his illness, ever since he had first been to see the doctor, Ivan Illych's life had been divided between two contrary and altering moods: now it was despair and the expectation of this uncomprehend and terrible death, and now hope and an intently interested observation of the functioning of his organs. Now before his eyes there was only a kidney or an intestine that temporarily evaded its duty, and now only that incomprehensible and dreadful death from which it was impossible to escape. Page 57

Resistance is impossible! He said to himself. "If I could only understand what it is all for! But that too is impossible. An explanation would be possible if it could be said that I have not lived as I ought to. But it is impossible to say that." (Page 59)

This is the narrator's explanation of the vacillation of Ivan's focus between two topics which are simply two ways of looking at his situation. In one, Ivan sees his pain as stemming from a biological inevitability that everyone else seems to be blind to as they remain jolly despite knowing that they will die: death. In the other, Ivan is rational and sees his pain as stemming from mere anatomical disorder, which is entirely treatable. Throughout the book, Ivan begins more and more to focus only on the former (that his condition stems from an understanding of the salience of the knowledge that seems to elude everyone else: that you will die).

This quote demonstrates the very salient fact that Ivan is in denial of the fact that his life was not lived perfectly. Ivan does not recognize until the very end that his life was not lived as well as it could be. Of course, with this final acceptance, he finally understands that there does not exist a way to perfectly live one's life.

Characters

Name	Role in the Story	Significance	Adjectives
Ivan	The protagonist whose fate is inevitably dreary.	His thoughts and experiences guide the story	Paranoid, delirious, insightful
Peter	He's one of the observer's of Ivan's death	It is suggested that Peter will experience a fate identical to Ivan's	Ignorant, fearful
Praskovya	Ivan's wife who attends to Ivan until his last days	She is blind to her husband's pain and is not helped by his death.	Selfish, assuming, inconsiderate

Setting (where + when)

Eighteenth century, in a courthouse some but mostly in Ivan's house and bedroom.

Significance of opening scene

The opening scene shows that Ivan's death made no impact on how those who knew him lived their lives.

Significance of ending/closing scene

We understand that Ivan ultimately reached the end, and that the answer Ivan was searching for was death. It was the only cure to his disease.

Symbols you notice and what they "mean"

The black sack symbolized death and one's submergence into the sack symbolized that one had

accepted death and was dead.

Major themes

Propriety and the striving for being punctilious is a big theme. Death is another big theme. Pain and suffering.

Essay topic ideas: 3 possibilities

How does Ivan ultimately accept death?

Were Ivan's thoughts rational?

Is the point made in the book that there exists no point to life?