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# Garbo



## Anna Karenina

(1935, 95 min.) Directed by Clarence Brown. Produced by David O. Selznick for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Screenplay by Clemence Dane and Salka Viertel. Adapted from the novel by Leo Tolstoy. Dialogue by S. N. Behrman. Photographed by William Daniels. Edited by Robert J. Kern.

Anna Karenina	Greta Garbo
Vronsky	Fredric March
Sergei	Freddie Bartholomew
Kitty	Maureen O'Sullivan
Countess Vronsky	May Robson
Karenin	Basil Rathbone
Stiva	Reginald Owen
Yashvin	Reginald Denny

Tolstoy's romantic novel has been filmed at least sixteen times. The date, country of origin and, where known, personnel working on the adaptation follow. 1910—Russia (directed by Maitre); 1910—Germany; 1914—Russia (directed by Vladimir Gardin); 1915—United States (directed and produced by J. Gordon Edwards, released by Fox); 1917—Italy; 1919—Germany; 1920—Hungary; 1927—United States (retitled *Love*, directed by Edmund Goulding, released by M-G-M, starring Greta Garbo and John Gilbert); 1935—United States (this evening's film); 1936—Austria (retitled *Manja Walewska*, directed and scripted by Maria Stephan, produced by Ufa, starring Maria Andergast as Manja [Anna]); 1947—Great Britain (directed by Julien Duvivier, produced by Alexander Korda, scripted by Jean Anouilh, Guy Moran and Julian Duvivier, starring Vivien Leigh, Kieron Moore and Ralph Richardson); 1952—India; 1953—U.S.S.R.; 1956—Argentina; 1961—United Arab Republic; 1967—U.S.S.R. (directed by Alexander Zarkni, starring Tatyana Samoilova as Anna and Maya Plisetskaya as Countess Vronsky).

For her creation of the role, Garbo received the award of the New York Film Critics Circle for the "best feminine performance" of 1935. *Anna Karenina* was judged Best Foreign Film of the year at the Venice Film Festival, and one of the ten best films of 1935 in the *Film Daily* poll of American critics.

"Clarence Brown, directing the film, makes this a constantly poignant yarn. He allows Garbo to go

at an almost elephantine pace through the various emotions. He builds her and all the surrounding characters with considerable detail and makes them believable. Not one of the characters is really loveable, and, from ordinary screen standards, every one of the characters goes somewhat heavy, but that doesn't matter in this case. It's one of the few instances in screen portrayal where a director deliberately breaks down his characters somewhat in order to make them more human."

—*Variety* (1935)

"Miss Garbo, the first lady of the screen, sins, suffers and perishes illustriously in the new, ably produced and comparatively mature version of the Tolstoy classic. . . . The photoplay is a dignified and effective drama which becomes significant because of that tragic, lonely and glamorous blend which is the Garbo personality. . . .

"Miss Garbo, always superbly the apex of the drama, suggests the inevitability of her doom from the beginning, streaking her first happiness with undertones of anguish, later trying futilely to mend the broken pieces, and at last standing regally alone as she approaches the end. Bouncing with less determination than is his custom, Mr. Marsh [sic] gets by handsomely as Vronsky. *Anna Karenina*, in fact, suffers in performance only at the hands of young David [sic] Bartholomew, the child star of *David Copperfield*. The lad renders the part of Anna's son with a terrifying and assured maturity that makes his emotional scenes with Miss Garbo seem helplessly phony." —Andre Sennwald, *The New York Times* (1935)

"Miss Garbo has never looked lovelier or played more beautifully than she does in the new and handsome screen version of Tolstoy's celebrated *Anna Karenina*, and I can think of no more enthusiastic praise than that. My guess is that the film is an admirably managed example of heavily brooding and slightly ponderous sentimental drama. I suspect that it is a reasonably faithful adaptation, that it is sensibly written, skillfully played and excellently photographed. But I would be unfair to you if I did not confess that my verdict on the picture is based in great part on prejudice. Everything I say in connection with the work is predicated on the fact that it gives Miss Garbo the best opportunity she has had in several seasons and, since she is completely fascinating in *Anna Karenina*, it seems to me a splendid motion picture." —Richard Watts, Jr., *The New York Herald Tribune* (1935)