

# Am I Anna Karenina?

by Lillian Ann Slugocki

## Speaker One

Members of the academy---- as a romantic character, a woman, I am the embodiment of all your theories and desires. I particularly enjoyed my incarnation as Anna Karenina, a late 21st century hacker, Tanya X. And Vronsky as the spy she falls in love with--- nice touch. But she kills herself before they can do it. I'm willing to go along with all these little literary experiments, *but I'm still not getting laid with any regularity*. I'm not getting any S-E-X. And this is definitely getting to be a problem. It's been five years now. I'd like to jump someone's bones. Put me in a bodice ripper, let a half-wolf, half-man ravage me. Or something.

And so I'm honored this evening to have Professor Lucy Witter-Avedon, from a very prominent university in Bologna, as my first speaker this morning. As she takes her place here on the podium, once again I'd like to remind you, esteemed members of the academy, that you need to find me a narrative so I can get some action in the sack. *I don't know how I can be any clearer*. Professor Avedon?

## Speaker Two

You're wearing a Balmain dress, your honey blond hair is wound in an elegant chignon revealing heavy silver earrings. You're often photographed at Martha's Vineyard at sunrise, Key West on New Year's Day, Coney Island on Christmas, and variously at dive bars in Montauk. You're a woman of a certain age and you are also a woman of the world. You're a 21st century woman. You're 40 years old, the 1st wave of feminism is ancient history. So if you're going to commit adultery, it's going to be an informed decision. Which means you have enough agency to do it on your own. This is my view. And for this, you don't need a writer. Let me repeat. This story writes itself. It always has.

You could be Anna Karenina again, but not a trashy mash-up. Instead of throwing yourself on the tracks and dying, Benito, a

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maintenance worker, rescues you at the last minute. As he pulls you to safety, his dark eyes blaze a trail through your heart. You find yourself in a supply closet off the main gate. He's about to fuck you blind, but you don't mind. He's stupid, but that doesn't bother you either. As he roughly unbuttons your silk blouse and rips off your expensive jewelry, you muse that fucking is better than dying. That would be a revelation for Anna Karenina! So you don't fall in love, not at all. But at least you are not pulverized. Three days later, you are accidentally shot and killed. It's tragic but at least your desire is fulfilled

### **Speaker Three**

The story has to maintain its purity. I've said this many times before. Otherwise what is the point? She is tragic, has always been tragic and must remain tragic, this is why she is so beautiful. So hear me out--- Anna K can finally have her orgasm just as the train is crushing her body. It can be a manual orgasm or a mechanical one. Perhaps the vibrating tracks quiver and shake as the iron beast approaches. And in this way, the story retains the same architecture. The same power.

### **Speaker One**

The point is to get laid and stay alive. But I could be that girl who is photographed at sunrise on Martha's Vineyard. Why not? The image is beautiful, yet it hides my inner turmoil. I'm on the beach by a bit of driftwood, the sky is barely pink. Why am I alone at such an early hour? Or am I alone? It's the moment that everything is crashing down around me. The night before, my husband found out about my affair. We'd just finished dinner at a small but exclusive club in Montauk. I had a bowl of lobster bisque and monk fish with juniper berries, and a white rioja. The stars were out. It was the end of summer. I was wearing that Balmain dress, but my hair was loose, I liked the way it felt in the wind.

I know that when we get home there will be message for him on his Blackberry. I know it will be the end of our marriage. I know that this will also disgrace his family. But I do nothing to stop this from happening. I'm supposed to want to kill myself, but I don't. This

where my desire differs from the canon. And maybe I'm on the beach at dawn because I'm getting my wits about me. Heads will roll. Shit will hit the fan. I know this. But all I want to do is call up my lover, the DA who is prosecuting my prominent husband for bank fraud. I want to fuck him for hours on the deserted moonlight beach. Because after that revivifying fuck, I want to steal my soon-to-be-ex-husband's Porsche, sell it for parts in the city, and disappear. I'd like the story to start right here. When she disappears.

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