

Whether he was acting rightly or wrongly he did not know – indeed, far from laying down the law, he now avoided talking or thinking about it.

Deliberation led to doubts and prevented him from seeing what he ought and ought not to do. But when he did not think, but just lived, he never ceased to be aware of the presence in his soul of an infallible judge who decided which of two possible courses of action was the better and which the worse, and instantly let him know if he did what he should not.

So he lived, not knowing and not seeing any chance of knowing what he was and for what purpose he had been placed in the world. He was tormented by this ignorance to the extent of fearing suicide, yet at the same time he was resolutely cutting his own individual and definite path through life.

The character Levin

From Anna Karenin, Leo Tolstoy, 1876