Lara & Yuri

Who are the main characters in part one?

Professors, Lawyers, aristocrats, liberal industrialists, revolutionary aristocrats, and ruined millionaires.

Incidental characters, some disappear forever, others re-appear; intricate connections, interweaving lives;

 Strikes, marches, fighting of 1905

How is the story of the seduction of a schoolgirl by a lawyer told? Entirely through their separate reflections on it.

Her own humiliation makes her sympathetic with the demonstrators and street barricaders.

She may be described/understood as rebellious victim of the old social order

What features do not fit the stereotype?

(1) Although disgusted, she enjoys her sexual adventure and gives Komarovsky a ‘sly wink of complicity’ minutes after her Mom’s attempt to commit suicide.

(2) Villain stereotype of Komarovsky, an “animal,” a “monster of mediocrity.” However, he feels more than sensual admiration for her;

Although he is said to have ruined her life, he turns up in an ambiguously benevolent role.

Lara avoids feeling herself as an individual; she observes herself as just a human body.

Pasternak is avoiding the sense of “inner causality”, or “motivation.” If we try to analyze why, in terms of psychological make-up or circumstances, one character undertakes this or that action, we’re likely to get nowhere.

Eg., How can Lara be ready to kill Komarovksy just for money needed for her brother? Komarovksy has stopped harming her a long time ago…

Does she want to test his ability to be noble?

Why? She has the hatred, courage and the gun, but no pretext.

Why not shoot him when he’s alone? Why go to Christmas part? She doesn’t ask Komarovksy for money, just fires the gun.

At whom? Kornakov? Komarovksy?

A revolt against sexual and political oppression?

We read a page about Komarovksy feelings, but not a page about Lara’s.

After this, Lara accepts any amount of help from Komarovksy—the man she decided to kill; after her marriage, she invites him as an old friend to her farewell party. Why? Her husband suffered so much after he found out about her
relationship. Why does Komarovsky expect to be welcome at their new house in the Urals. On the level of “cause” and “effect” – almost everything is implausible.

Let’s look for other meaning:

**Symbolic meaning:**

The shooting—Lara’s affinity with the spirit of the time; with Pasha Antipov, the future Strelnikov.

In contrast with Tonya, she belongs to times of danger, change, revolt.

Accepting help from Komarovsky may suggest an unbreakable link between the seduced and seducer. He also has a friend Satanidi, i.e., satanic forces are accompanying him.

It symbolizes the dependence of beauty on the common conditions of existence: “Beauty is always in chains.”

**Another idea:**

we do not act on reason decisions;
relationships are no longer seen as cause and effect patterns, but rater we live in a trance/spell/dream of interconnections.

After dreaming of mincing up/not mincing up Komarovsky (a man of flesh) Lara’s absorption/dream spell/ with a limp/hobbled horse that has wandered away/strayed in the yard.

**Adjectives** that describe her: turbulent, rebellious, striding, harmonious, domestic, maternal, practical, the purest creature on earth;
This has nothing to do with her sexual life, but means that she isn’t a theorizer, speech-maker, she “exists to make sense of the beauty of the earth and to call everything by its name.” Feelings precedes words (also typical for Tonya and Yuri).

**Love:** erotic, parental, and compassionate
**Pleasure:** in innovation and creative work.

In his speech “Symbolism and Immortality” Pasternak says we should only love what’s immortal in us, we do not die—philosophy of immortality in Zhivago; When Anna Gromeko dies—you live in others Yuri’s talk to her in Part 1);

Zhivago is about the world lit up by many minds
Villains in the novel are either likable or forgivable: Komarovsky, Liverii.
Yuri-love of people and love of work;

Pre-acquaintance glimpses Yuri has of Lara;
After the revolution, both go to the East of Russia. Lara –purposefully; Yuri-taken by
the family. When they meet in Yuriatin, he’s an observe—looks in the book; She’s an active influence-helps to chose the book.

Lara is portrayed not how she looks, but how she’s affected by the wind; Yura is depicted mostly as a state of being (not acting), with a tendency for happiness;

In order to exist, everything needs to posses a form, thus ‘art, including tragic art, is the story of the happiness of existence.’