My paper looks at the role of innocence in Tolstoy’s War and Peace and makes three points: first, that the plot is designed to valorize innocence (in a particular sense defined by Tolstoy) over experience, insight, or panoramic vision; second, that it aims to persuade the reader, primarily via the characters Natasha and Pierre, that innocence is a viable way of life for adults, a somewhat surprising stance since the innocent are generally assumed to be ill-equipped for the business of grown-up life even in earlier Tolstoy; but third, that to do so, it must covertly defend and protect both characters in ways denied other characters, via coincidence and various other deus ex machina devices whose artificiality casts the actual viability of innocence into doubt. A separate part of the paper will examine some unexpected ways innocence functions in readers’ moral evaluations and how a narrative tool of this sort suits a project like War and Peace. The topic is largely absent from criticism, though a few scholars, for example S. G. Bocharov, touch on it, and almost all obliquely acknowledge its existence in one way or another.