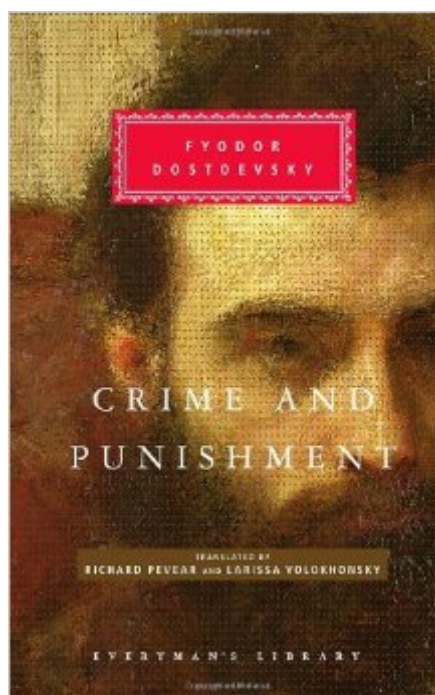


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# Crime And Punishment (Everyman's Library)



## Synopsis

Raskolnikov, an impoverished student living in the St. Petersburg of the tsars, is determined to overreach his humanity and assert his untrammelled individual will. When he commits an act of murder and theft, he sets into motion a story that, for its excruciating suspense, its atmospheric vividness, and its depth of characterization and vision is almost unequaled in the literatures of the world. The best known of Dostoevsky's masterpieces, *Crime and Punishment* can bear any amount of rereading without losing a drop of its power over our imaginations. Dostoevsky's drama of sin, guilt, and redemption transforms the sordid story of an old woman's murder into the nineteenth century's profoundest and most compelling philosophical novel. Award-winning translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky render this elusive and wildly innovative novel with an energy, suppleness, and range of voice that do full justice to the genius of its creator. (Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

## Book Information

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the language - of the book I'm buying could be different from the one I read about online. Since getting my Kindle, I've been impressed by the machine itself, but thoroughly unimpressed by its handling of content. They should focus less exclusively on getting people to buy the device, and work harder at improving the way they sell books and other content for it.

I initially approached this book with a great deal of trepidation. I had never read Dostoyevsky, and was concerned that I would get bogged down in some lengthy, mind-numbingly boring, nineteenth-century treatise on the bestial nature of man or something. I am happy to report this is not the case. Instead, and to my delight, it is a smoothly flowing and fascinating story of a young man who succumbs to the most base desire, and the impact this has both psychologically and otherwise on himself and those around him. To be sure, the book seems wordy in places, but I suspect this has to do with the translation. And what translator in his right mind would be bold enough to edit the great Dostoyevsky? But this is a very minor problem. What we get with Dostoyevsky is dramatic tension, detailed and believable human characters, and brilliant insight into human nature. Early in the novel our hero meets and has a lengthy conversation with Marmeladov, a drunkard. This conversation is never uninteresting and ultimately becomes pathetic and heartbreaking, but I kept wondering why so much time was spent on it. As I got deeper into the book, I understood why this conversation was so important, and realized that I was in the hands of a master storyteller. This is also indicative of the way in which the story reveals itself. Nothing is hurried. These people speak the way we actually speak to one another in real life, and more importantly, Dostoyevsky is able to flesh out his characters into whole, three-dimensional human beings. And what a diverse group of characters! Each is fleshed out, each is marvelously complex. Razumikhin, the talkative, gregarious, good-hearted, insecure and destitute student; Sonia, the tragic child-prostitute, with a sense of rightness in the world; Petrovich, the self-important, self-made man, completely out of touch with his own humanity; Dunia, the honorable, wronged sister: we feel like we know these people because we've met people like them. They fit within our understanding of the way human beings are. Dostoyevsky also displays great insight into human nature. Svidrigailov, for example, talks of his wife as liking to be offended. "We all like to be offended," he says, "but she in particular loved to be offended." It suddenly struck me how true this is. It gives us a chance to act indignantly, to lash out at our enemies, to gain favor with our allies. I don't believe I've ever seen this thought expressed in literature before. In fact, it never occurred to me in real life! Petrovich, Dunia's suitor, not only expects to be loved, but because of his money, and her destitution, he expects to be adored! To be worshipped! He intentionally sought out a woman from whom he expected to get

this, and is completely flummoxed when she rejects him. His is an unusual character, but completely realized. There is so much more to talk about: the character of Raskolnikov, which is meticulously and carefully revealed; the sense of isolation which descends on him after committing his crime; the cat and mouse game played on him by the police detective. I could go on and on. I haven't even mentioned the historical and social context in which this takes place. Suffice to say this is a very rich book. Do not expect it to be a rip-roaring page turner. Sit down, relax, take your time, and savor it. It will be a very rewarding experience. And thank you SL, for recommending it.

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