

S Y N O P S I S

Raskolnikov (Rodya) is a former university student who is suffering from poverty and ill health. His life seems thwarted and crushed. As a last straw comes word that his sister is contemplating an obviously distasteful marriage in the hope of bringing some financial benefit to her mother and brother.

Before, Raskolnikov has formulated his theory whereby the extraordinary men of the world have a right to overstep the law. To prove his theory, he plans to murder a repellent old pawnbroker (Alyona) who preys upon such poor student as he. He rationalizes himself into believing that it is his right to kill the old woman on the ground that she is a parasite, in fact, a positive evil in society, and that she hoards means which could be used to help the needy.

After elaborate preparations he commits the crime. Utter panic overwhelms him, and the neat structure of his plan crumbles. The pawnbroker's sister returns unexpectedly and he kills her as well. He fails to find the money chest and at last flees with merely a purse and a handful of trinkets, almost being detected in his escape. He hides his trifling haul under a stone and never touches it again.

x

*Journey*

After committing the crime, Raskolnikov becomes ill and lies in his room in semi-consciousness for several days. When he recovers, he finds that his friend, Razumihin, had looked after him. While he is recovering, he is visited by Luzhin, his sister (Dounia)'s future husband. Raskolnikov, out of his hatred feeling, insults Luzhin and sends him away because he resents Luzhin's dominating attitude toward Dounia.

Because Raskolnikov had pawned something with the murdered woman, he is routinely questioned by the police. The chief inspector, Porfiry Petrovich, is very perceptive, and his suspicions about Raskolnikov are soon aroused. The story follows the course of his slow breakdown under the pressure of remorse. He begins to indulge in cryptic, suspicion arousing eccentricities.

As soon as he slightly recovers, Raskolnikov goes out and reads about the crime in all the newspapers of the last few days. He meets an official from the police station and almost confesses the crime. He is raving too much that the official becomes suspicious. Later, he witnesses the death of Marmeladov, a minor government official, who is hit by the carriage as he staggers across the street in a state of deep drunk. Rodya helps the man and leaves all his money to Marmeladov's widow.

When he returns to his place, he finds his mother and sister who have just arrived, to prepare for the wedding with Luzhin. He denounces Luzhin and refuses to allow his sister to marry him. About the same time, Svidrigailov, Dounia's former employer, arrives in town and goes visiting Rodya. He asks Rodya's help so as to be able to meet his sister. Previously, Svidrigailov had attempted to seduce Dounia and when Rodya had heard of it, he formed a violent dislike for the man.

Since Raskolnikov had heard about Sonia Marmeladov (the daughter of the dead man that Rodya helped) who had been forced into prostitution in order to support her family, he formed a great sympathy toward her. Since her father's death, Rodya has been paying her a visit for several times. To her, he makes a promise to tell about who is the murder of the old pawnbroker and her sister, Lizaveta.

Porfiry and Raskolnikov meets several times again. In the course of time he enters into a prolonged intellectual game of cat-and-mouse with Porfiry. Inevitably Rodya is tracked down. Porfiry finally becomes convinced that Raskolnikov is the murderer.

After another interview with Porfiry, Rodya determines to confess to Sonia. He returns to her, and

during the confession. Svidrigailov is listening secretly through the door. He uses this information to try to force Dounia to sleep with him. She refuses and he kills himself later in the night.

Porfiry, later, informs Rodya that he knows who murdered the pawnbroker. Yet, rather than arrest him, Porfiry gives him time to confess his crime voluntarily. Porfiry sees Raskolnikov as a brilliant but misguided young man, and he believes that a voluntary confession would be the first essential step toward his regeneration.

After a long period of anguished indecision, Raskolnikov is persuaded by Sonia, the girl he loves, to confess his crime. Raskolnikov finally accepts this course and fully confesses to the police. He is sentenced to eight years in Siberia prison. Sonia faithfully follows Raskolnikov to Siberia after his trial, and through her patient and quiet devotion and love, Raskolnikov is able to learn his mistake and gain a new life with her.