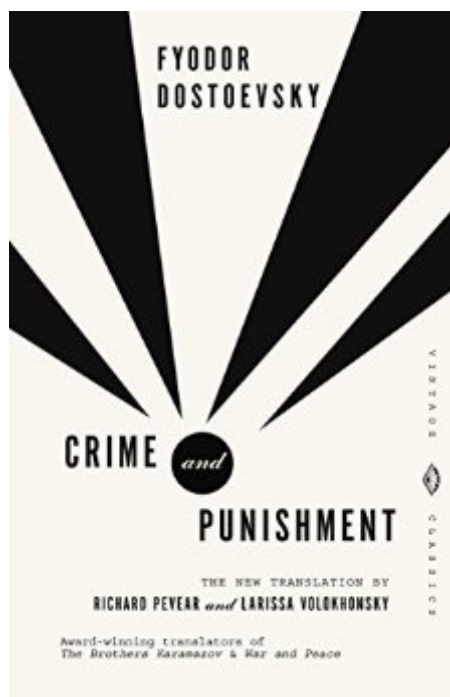


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Crime And Punishment (Vintage Classics)



Synopsis

With the same suppleness, energy, and range of voices that won their translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* the PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Prize, Pevear and Volokhonsky offer a brilliant translation of Dostoevsky's classic novel that presents a clear insight into this astounding psychological thriller. "The best (translation) currently available"--Washington Post Book World.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was eighteen when I first read *Crime & Punishment*. It was the end of my freshman year of college and over the course of the last two semesters I had been introduced to a constant stream of new novels, authors and genres in and outside the classroom, accelerating me from an avid reader to a voracious one. Dostoevsky loomed large over a lot of the writers I loved at the time: particularly Hemingway and Kerouac. *Crime & Punishment* had already long been on my radar as a weighty Russian tome and one of the great works of world literature. So I was surprised by Bantam's pocket sized volume translated by Constance Garnett, which on scanning the first few pages, had the stiffly sophisticated tone I'd come to expect from 19th century novels and a compulsive readability presented in its breathless opening pages. Plus, it was on sale for something like five bucks, so

what the hell. That first reading of Crime & Punishment proved to be one of the most important literary experiences of my life. I read rapturously over the course of a few summer days, carrying the book about in a back pocket, and finished it around 6 am one morning. It seemed to me everything that a really great novel should be: entertaining, thought provoking, beautiful. A year of intro philosophy classes had convinced me I was some kind of original thinker, or at least a conscientious atheist. But Dostoevsky's take on spiritualism and religion gave me real pause; and despite a year's worth of railing against organized religion as the bane of all existence, the image of the murderer and prostitute reading the story of Lazarus together proved enormously powerful.

Crime and Punishment was always one of those books that I kept intending to get around to but for some reason always felt reluctant to actually start reading. I think to a certain extent I was intimidated by the book, by some hard to name quality that seems to accompany the truly great novels and writers. A list provided by my law school of recommended reads thankfully gave me the final push I needed to dive in and what I found was a book deserving of all the adulation it has received. Fyodor Dostoevsky does not need my endorsement and I scarcely think anybody considering picking up this book will look at my support as a deciding factor. More likely than not, the undecided would-be-reader is trying to decide between the various editions and versions. In this respect, I cannot recommend this edition strongly enough. The translation work is exceptional and it is almost easy to forget that this was originally written in Russian. I have seen in a few other reviews (which sold me on this edition) the praise for the footnotes and I echo this applause. The book is filled with little acknowledgements of political and philosophical movements of Dostoevsky's day as well as to obscure traditions and habits of Russians that would escape the reader's attention were it not for these helpful notes. These notes are perhaps not essential to a grasp of the larger themes of the book, but it informs certain situations with added meaning that one might otherwise miss (not to mention, it just helps satisfy curiosity as to what certain things are). Personally, this is enough to set this edition above all the rest. As to the substance of the novel itself, Crime and Punishment is a masterpiece.

Oh. My. Goodness. This book was "interesting" but not something I would recommend to any but the most intrepid literary enthusiast. A lot of people consider it a "masterpiece" but it simply didn't appeal to me. The main character, Rodion Raskolnikov is the ULTIMATE anti-hero. I wanted to root for him and wanted to see him overcome the torments of his sick soul and the consequences of his crime, but in the long, long narrative, I found him to be SO unlikeable that I finally couldn't care that

much about him. Imagine a book with Adolph Hitler as the "hero" and you might understand my feelings about this book. I guess that is the point - that even the most evil people can be redeemed. PROCEED WITH CAUTION. SPOILERS AHEAD This story documents the descent of a sociopath into madness and his climb out. It is very detailed and includes a description of an ax murder that is far more graphic than it needed to be. It mostly covers the inner workings of a sick mind and how his crime affects him, his friends and family. I give it three stars instead of one star because, other than the murder scene (which gave me nightmares), this story has some redeeming qualities. The "detective story" follows a police inspector who reminded me of the TV series, COLUMBO. The cat-and-mouse play between the detective and the murder is quite engaging. And there is also the story of young prostitute who had greater moral courage than all the other characters put together and whose love and loyalty saved someone who seemed unredeemable. Ultimately, this is not a book that I would spend time reading again. It was OK in some parts, but I didn't find it uplifting, even though the ending was supposed to be "happy".

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