

## Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

Along with Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment* is considered one of the best-known and most influential Russian novels of all time. Dostoevsky's classic work focuses on Raskolnikov, an impoverished St. Petersburg student who formulates a plan to kill and rob a hated money lender, thereby solving his money problems and at the same time ridding the world of her evil. The novel portrays Raskolnikov's gradual realization of his crime and the knowledge of it eventually drives him mad.

Think about these questions while reading:

- Compare the characters of Raskolnikov, Luzhin, and Svidrigailov. How is each of these men a "villain," and to what extent are they guilty? How does each man face his guilt, and how does each suffer for it?
- What role does Raskolnikov's conscience play in the story?
- How does Raskolnikov's magazine article explain his motives?
- How does Raskolnikov justify his crime? What motive does he give for his murder?
- Discuss the rationale by which Raskolnikov considers himself a superior man.
- Is his crime justified?
- What role does alcohol, sex, rape, poverty, and prostitution play?
- How does the state of St. Petersburg serve as a symbol of society and of Raskolnikov's state of mind?
- Explain the antagonists: Luzhin, Porfiry Petrovich, Svidrigailov, Raskolnikov's conscience, and society?
- Discuss the following themes: alienation from society, the psychology of crime and punishment, and the importance of family.
- What leads to Raskolnikov's confession to Sonya, then to Dunya, and finally to Gunpowder?
- Compare the major female characters: Sonya, Dunya, Katerina Ivanovna. Do you think they are well-rounded characters or stereotypes? How does each figure in Raskolnikov's actions?
- Why does Raskolnikov confess to Sonya? Why doesn't the confession ease him of his inner torment?
- Does the fact that Raskolnikov never uses the money he stole from the pawnbroker make him less-or more-guilty? Why do you think he never recovers the stolen items or cash?
- How would people living in the 1860s in Russia have taken this book?

### ***Assignment:***

Write an analysis of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* by examining what it says about mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century Russian society economically, politically, socially, and religiously.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- Page numbers (starting on the first page of writing)
- must be typed, using 12-point font size, Times New Roman font, and double-spaced
- must be a minimum of 5 pages of content
- must include specific quotes and examples from the book
- must have a title
- Additional expectations can be found on the attached rubric

## *Rubric*

Content – Is the content of the paper appropriate for the specified topic? Did you answer the specified questions completely? How specific were you? (55 pts.)

0      10      20      30      40      50      55      \_\_\_\_\_

Intro./Conclusion – How well do you start and end your paper with a good summary and thesis of what your paper is about and your stance? (10 pts.)

0      2      4      6      8      10      \_\_\_\_\_

Use of quotes/Citations – How well do you utilize quotes from your book and cite them in MLA style? (10 pts.)

0      2      4      6      8      10      \_\_\_\_\_

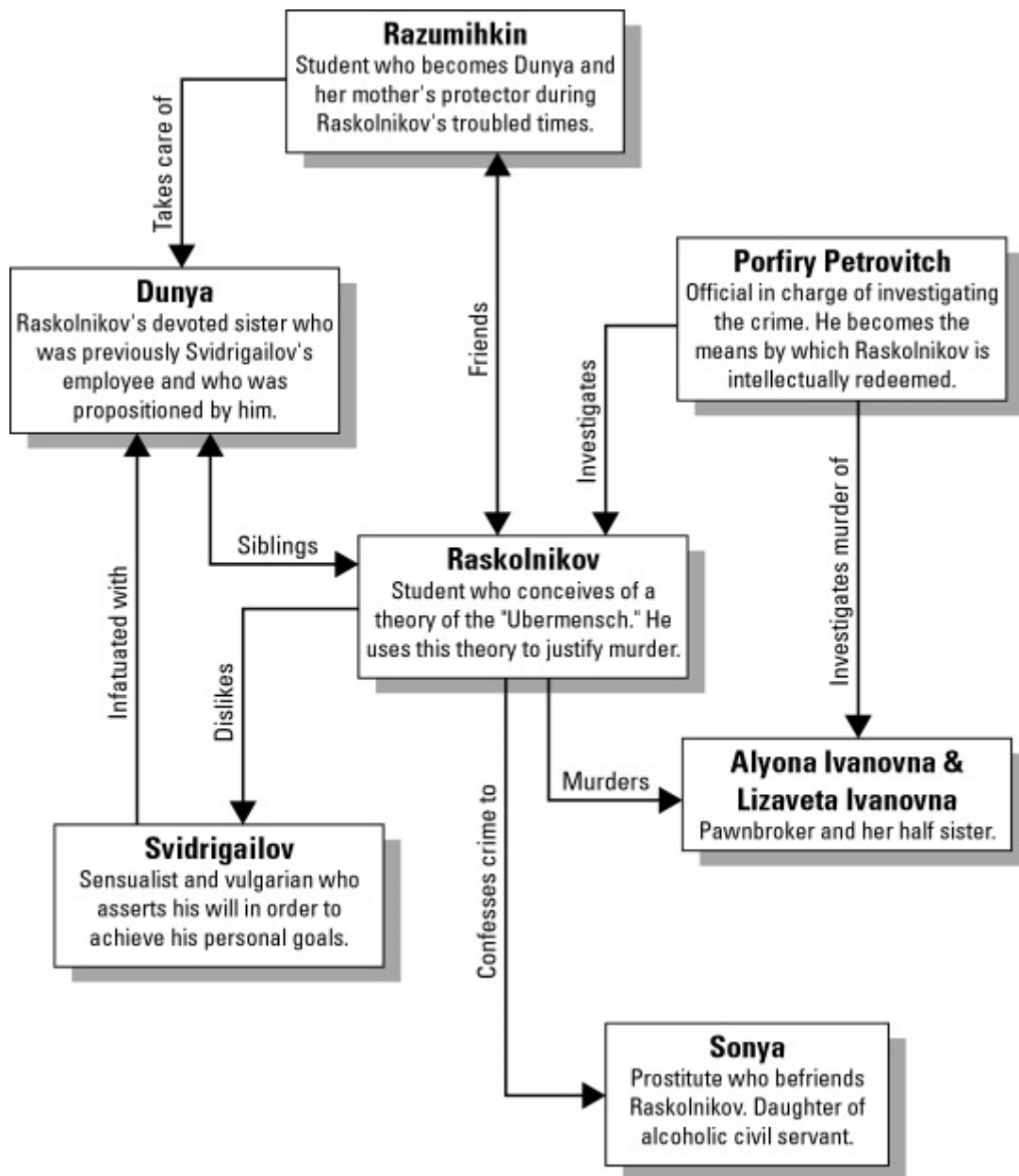
Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation – How well did you proofread your paper? (20 pts.)

0      5      10      15      20      \_\_\_\_\_

Misc. – Is your paper the required length, typed, have a title, etc.? (5 pts.)

0      1      2      3      4      5      \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_



## Character List

**Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov (Rodya, Rodenka, or Rodka)** A poverty-stricken student who conceives of a theory of the "Übermensch" or extraordinary man who has the right and/or obligation to transgress the laws of the ordinary man in order to give a *New Word* or idea to all of humanity. He uses this theory as a justification or rationalization to commit murder.

**Sonya Marmeladov (Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov)** A quiet, modest, suffering prostitute who will become Raskolnikov's chief redemptive figure.

**Porfiry Petrovitch** An official of the investigating department who is in charge of the "crime."

**Svidrigailov (Arkady Ivanovitch)** A sensualist and vulgarian who asserts his own will in order to achieve his personal goals.

**Dunya (Avdotya Romanovna Raskolnikov)** Raskolnikov's devoted sister who was previously Svidrigailov's employee and who was propositioned by him.

**Razumihkin (Dmitri Prokofitch)** One of Raskolnikov's student friends who will become enamored of his sister Dunya.

**Semyon Zakharovitch Marmeladov** A dismissed government clerk who is an alcoholic.

**Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladov** Marmeladov's consumptive wife had been previously married to an army officer by whom she had three children.

**Pulcheria Alexandrovna Raskolnikov** Raskolnikov's mother who is frightened of her moody and intellectual son.

**Alyona Ivanovna** The sadistic and nasty moneylender whom Raskolnikov murders.

**Lizaveta Ivanovna** The mild, likable half sister to Alyona who is brutalized by her.

**Polenka, Lyona, Kolya (Kolka)** Katerina Ivanovna's children by a previous marriage. Sonya's greatest fear is that Polenka might have to enter into prostitution — Raskolnikov plagues her with this thought.

**Marfa Petrovna** Svidrigailov's wife who once assumed Dunya had designs on her husband.

**Luzhin (Pyotr Petrovitch)** A petty and miserly clerk in government who wants a poor person for his bride so that she will be indebted to him.

**Lebezyatnikov (Andrey Semyonovitch)** Luzhin's roommate who calls himself an "advanced liberal."

**Praskovya Pavlovna** Raskolnikov's shy and plump landlady.

**Nastasya** Praskovya Pavlovna's maid who befriends Raskolnikov and looks after him when he is ill.

**Amalia Fyodorovna** The Marmeladov's landlady who is particularly disliked by Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladov.

**Kapernaumovs** Sonya and Svidrigailov rent rooms from these rather depressed people.

**Zossimov** The doctor who cares for Raskolnikov during his illness.

**Nikodim Fomitch** A handsome police officer who was also at Marmeladov's death scene and reports this fact to Porfiry.

**Zametov (Zamyotov), Alexander Gigorevitch** The chief clerk at the police station.

**Ilya Petrovitch** A loud and somewhat overbearing police official to whom Raskolnikov makes his confession when there was no one else to confess to.

**Nikolay (Milkolka) and Dmitri (Mitka)** The painters who were working in the flat below the pawnbroker's flat at the time of the crime.