

"I don't understand why the three brothers can't just be a bit nicer to each other." Ben, 14



THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

As Dimitry struck him Grigory screamed and fell back, the blood streaming horribly from his head. Dimitry bent over him, trying to stop the flow with his handkerchief which turned soaking red in an instant.

Alexey, Ivan and Dimitry Karamazov were sent away by their father Fyodor when they were very young, and never knew a father's love. Now what will Dimitry's bitter quarrel with Fyodor lead to?

Dimitry and his father both want to marry the beautiful Grushenka. Fyodor is old and ugly, but offers her wealth and security. Will she accept either of them, and if so, which?

The sickly, timid servant Smerdyakov confesses to a terrible crime. Is he telling the truth?

Can the deadly rivalry between father and son be settled peacefully, or must it end in tragedy?



THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV Fyodor Dostoyevsky



Retold by Tony Evans
Illustrated by Maxim Larin

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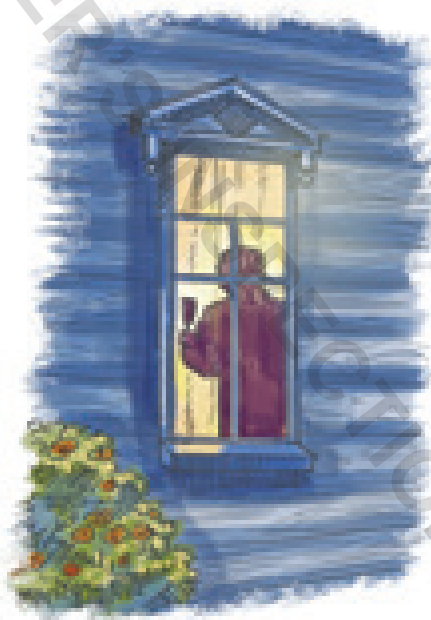
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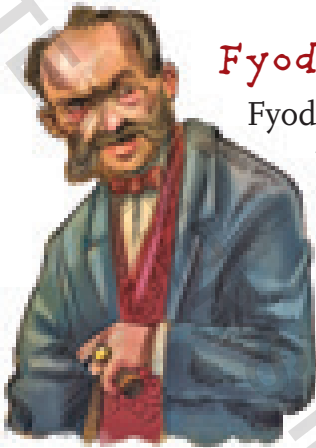
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THE CHARACTERS

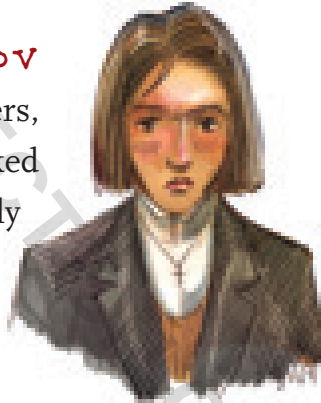


Fyodor Karamazov

Fyodor is the father of the Karamazov brothers – Alexey, Dimitry and Ivan. He thinks only about enjoying himself, and has always neglected the three boys. How will they treat him now that they have grown up?

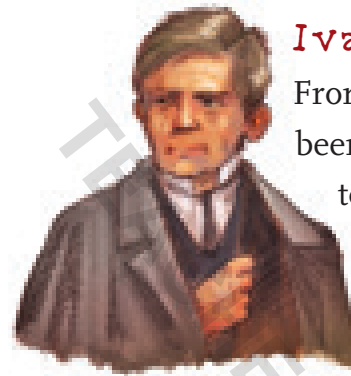
Alexey Karamazov

The youngest of the three brothers, Alexey is honest, friendly and liked by everyone. He hopes that the holy monk, Father Zosima, will be able to end their family quarrel.



Dimitry Karamazov

Dimitry is hot-tempered and impulsive. Will his anger and jealousy destroy him?



Ivan Karamazov

From his earliest schooldays Ivan has been a brilliant student. Now he seems to have abandoned his religious beliefs. What effect will his ideas have on the young servant, Pavel Smerdyakov?

Grushenka Svetlov

Grushenka is a lively and attractive young woman who is alone in the world. Fyodor and Dimitry are both entranced by her. Will she choose either of them – or does she have another plan?



Katerina Verkhovtsev

Katerina has a good reason to be angry with Dimitry, who broke off their engagement. How will she react when Dimitry is in trouble?



Pavel Smerdyakov

His sad upbringing has turned Smerdyakov into a sly and unpleasant young man. But is he really guilty of a terrible crime?





THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

Alexey Karamazov looked down at the monk's robes that he was wearing and frowned anxiously. His father, Fyodor Karamazov, was sure to make fun of him. Alexey was only twenty, and although he'd lived in the monastery for the last twelve months he was just a novice or apprentice monk, and hadn't yet decided to join up for good.

Alexey was waiting for his father and his two brothers, Dimitry and Ivan. He could not help worrying about what might happen when they met with the Elder Zosima, a monk and holy man. Would his father behave properly for once, and not make a drunken idiot of himself? And could Zosima really persuade Fyodor and Dimitry to end their quarrel?

Alexey shook his head; he did not feel that the family disagreement could be solved that easily. Still, at least he and his brothers had returned to their home town and were now together again after many years apart.

His father had been married twice. When his first wife Adelaida died, their little boy Dimitry had been sent away to be brought up by his mother's cousin. Fyodor's second wife, Sofya, was the mother of Alexey and Ivan. When she too passed away, the boys were brought up by one of Sofya's friends. Although Alexey was a kind young man who always tried to think the best of everyone, he was well aware that his father had been happy to get rid of him and his two older brothers. Fyodor was only interested in drinking, playing the fool and enjoying himself, and the three little boys would merely have got in his way.



Alexey's thoughts were interrupted by Father Zosima's entry into the room, followed by two of the monks. Zosima was one of the Elders, the most respected monks in the monastery.

A moment later the outer door of Zosima's room opened and the visitors entered. The first to step through the door was Alexey's father, followed by his brother Ivan. But where was Dimitry?

Before Alexey could ask about his oldest brother his father trotted towards Zosima and made a low bow. Fyodor's black eyes twinkled slyly from the multitude of deep wrinkles which creased his little fat face, and he pointed at Alexey.

'I see you have a new recruit – my son, the monk!' he sniggered. 'Wearing his cassock, very smart! Perhaps you'd better pray for me, my boy. Someone needs to!'

Ivan stepped forward with a frown, trying to ignore Fyodor's foolish words.

'I must apologise for my father's comments, your holiness,' he said. 'Dimitry Karamazov has not yet joined us, but I'm sure he will be arriving shortly.'

- In the original version many characters are given a variety of nicknames as well as their full first name. Dostoevsky also follows the Russian system of using a character's 'patronymic' for their second name (based on their father's or grandfather's first name) instead of a surname in the English style.

Back in Time

When *The Brothers Karamazov* was published in a magazine between 1879 and 1880, it was the last novel that Dostoevsky was to write; he died less than four months after the final episode appeared. By that time he was recognised as one of Russia's most important writers, although his work did not become well-known in the English speaking world until the first translations of his books, by Constance Garnett, appeared in 1912.

The popularity of *The Brothers Karamazov* is based partly on the novel's sensational story of a family quarrel, a terrible murder, and the trial scene which follows. Dostoevsky keeps

the reader guessing until the very end of the story. However, the novel also explores some of the ideas and problems which Dostoevsky had been struggling with all his life.

Dostoevsky's father was a doctor who worked in a hospital that treated poor people, and Dostoevsky was very aware of the harsh living conditions for many in Russia. It was not until 1861, when Dostoevsky was forty years old, that serfdom was finally abolished in Russia. Serfdom was a system which forced farm labourers to work for their masters for very little reward, and prevented them leaving or moving around the country. Poverty was still widespread after serfdom ended, and much of Dostoevsky's writing – including *The Brothers Karamazov* – draws attention to the hard life of peasants and servants like Smerdyakov, Grigory and Marfa.

Another important aspect of the book is its examination of religion. As a young man Dostoevsky could not decide whether or not to accept religious belief and teachings. This