CRIME AND PUNISHMENT By Fyodor Dostoevsky Translated By Constance Garnett PART I CHAPTER I On an exceptionally hot evening early in July a young man came out of the garret in which he lodged in S. Place and walked slowly, as though in hesitation, towards K. bridge. He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase. His garret was under the roof of a high, five-storied house and was more like a cupboard than a room. The landlady who provided him with garret, dinners, and attendance, lived on the floor below, and every time he went out he was obliged to pass her kitchen, the door of which invariably stood open. And each time he passed, the young man had a sick, frightened feeling, which made him scowl and feel ashamed. He was hopelessly in debt to his landlady, and was afraid of meeting her. This was not because he was cowardly and abject, quite the contrary; but for some time past he had been in an overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria. He had become so completely absorbed in himself, and isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting, not only his landlady, but anyone at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him. He had given up attending to matters of practical importance; he had lost all desire to do so. Nothing that any landlady could do had a real terror for him. But to be stopped on the stairs, to be forced to listen to her trivial, irrelevant gossip, to pestering demands for payment, threats and complaints, and to rack his brains for excuses, to prevaricate, to lie—no, rather than that, he would creep down the stairs like a cat and slip out unseen. This evening, however, on coming out into the street, he became acutely aware of his fears. "I want to attempt a thing like that and am frightened by these trifles," he thought, smiling bitterly at the thought that he had spoken truly when he said that he had taken up his abode in a place like a cupboard. The staircase leading to his garret was on a grand scale and therefore very imposing, like all staircases which we have not yet mentioned, since almost all the tenants of the house let lodgings to people who lived in garrets and went out to work in other people's lodgings by the day, or even by night, such as this young man, who had not ventured to inform his landlady what he was doing, or that he had no lodging, or no right to lodging, or any reason why he should not, if he chose, go out of his garret and lodge elsewhere. He was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he was unconscious of the long, narrow, dark, deserted street through which he was passing, and was only roused by the proximity of a drunken man who, though it was still early in the evening, was so drunk that he was shouting and cursing at the top of his voice and pointing to some unknown person who was walking in front of him. The young man stopped suddenly and shuddered as he passed the drunken man, who had suddenly left his companion and was shouting at the top of his voice that he was going to the end of the world, and that he was prepared to go to the end of the world with the man who had given him a glass of vodka for his impudence. The young man was in a fever, and was beginning to be subject to hallucinations from the first glass of vodka he had taken some time before, and which had taken effect on him very rapidly and disagreeably. He recalled the drunken man's shouts and jeering at him as he passed him, and he felt that he had the same sort of thing to do as that man who had been turned out of a tavern, but he was so lost and solitary and depressed that he did not care to be anywhere in the street. There was a tavern opposite which he had to cross, and there was a crowd of people outside the tavern door, which was thrown wide open, and from which there was much cursing and shouting and abuse and even fisticuffs. A drunken man was being ejected from the tavern, and the young man stopped short just as a drunken man who was being ejected from the tavern flew out headlong on the pavement at his feet, and he did not care to avoid him, but he had to stop and consider that he was not in a state of mind to lose his way in the street when he was so near the end of his journey, and he had to think of something to do for the rest of the evening, for it was too early to go to bed, and he felt so excited that he was capable of beating anyone who might, for instance, have taken offence at his appearance, and he was ready to shriek with pain at the thought of the blow he would have to receive from the drunken man who was still lying in the middle of the road, cursing and kicking his feet on the ground. The young man was a tall, fair-haired young man with a handsome face and dark eyes and dark brown hair. Soon he sank into deep thought, or more accurately speaking into a complete blankness of mind; he walked along not observing what was about him and not caring to observe it. From time to time, he would mutter something, from the habit of talking to himself, to which he had just confessed. At these moments he would become conscious that his ideas were sometimes in a tangle and that he was very weak; for two days he had scarcely tasted food. He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags. In that quarter of the town, however, scarcely any shortcoming in dress would have created surprise. Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise. But there was such accumulated bitterness and contempt in the young man's heart, that, in spite of all the fastidiousness of youth, he minded his rags least of all in the street. It was a different matter when he met with acquaintances or with former fellow students, whom, indeed, he disliked meeting at any time. And yet when a drunken man who, for some unknown reason, was being taken somewhere in a huge wagon, drawing by a team of heavy horses, happened to shout as he drove by, "Hey there, German hatter" bawling at the top of his voice and pointing to a young man who happened to be walking along the pavement with a huge hat of a shape worn in the days of Tsar Alexander, the young man stopped suddenly and shuddered as he remembered that he had been for some time expecting to meet this man with his hat, and that the hat was the same shape and had been out of fashion for so long that it was bound to attract attention, being as round as a ball and as high as a tower, with a huge broad turned-up brim, like a German hat, and quite worn and rusty, with a hole in the crown and a stain on the front, and was absurdly high and narrow, and was conspicuous for its extreme oldfashioned and shabby appearance. The terror he had conceived at the thought that if he met the man he would meet him with his hat, and be ridiculed by him for his old hat and for the superstitious nonsense he was talking about his hat, terror had overtaken him. "I knew it," he muttered in confusion, "I thought so! That's the worst of all! Why, a stupid thing like this, the most trivial detail might spoil the whole plan. Yes, my hat is too noticeable.... It looks absurd and that makes it noticeable.... With my rags I ought to wear a cap, any sort of old pancake, but not this grotesque thing. Nobody wears such a hat, it would be noticed a mile off, it would be remembered.... What matters is that people would remember it, and that would give them a clue. For this business one should be as little conspicuous as possible.... Trifles, trifles are what matter! Why, it's just such trifles that always ruin everything...." He had not far to go; he knew indeed how many steps it was from the gate of his lodging house: exactly seven hundred and thirty. He had counted them once when he had been lost in dreams. At the time he had put no faith in those dreams and was only tantalising himself by their hideous but daring recklessness. Now, a month later, he had begun to look upon them differently, and, in spite of the monologues in which he jeered at his own impotence and indecision, he had involuntarily come to regard this "hideous" dream as an exploit to be attempted, although he still did not realise this himself. He was positively going now for a "rehearsal" of his project, and at every step his excitement grew more and more violent. With a sinking heart and a nervous tremor, he went up to a huge house which on one side looked on to the canal, and on the other into the street. This house was let out in tiny tenements and was inhabited by working people of all kinds--tailors, locksmiths, cooks, Germans of sorts, girls picking up a living as best they could, petty clerks, etc. There was a continual coming and going through the two gates and in the two courtyards of the house. Three or four door-keepers were employed on the building. The young man was very glad to meet none of them, and at once slipped unnoticed through the door on the right, and up the staircase. It was a back staircase, dark and narrow, but he was familiar with it already, and knew his way, and he liked all these surroundings: in such darkness even the most inquisitive eyes were not to be dreaded. "If I am so scared now, what would it be if it somehow came to pass that I were really going to do this? he could not help thinking, as he reached a tenant's flat which had been occupied by carpenters who were engaged in moving furniture out of it. The door of the flat had been unhinged and was standing wide open. The tenant evidently was moving out of the house the old woman's flat. The bell gave a faint tinkle as though it were made of tin and not of copper. The little flats in such houses always have bells that ring like that. He had forgotten the note of that bell, and now its peculiar tinkle seemed to remind him of something and to bring it clearly before him. He started, his nerves were terribly overstrained by now. In a little while, the door was opened a tiny crack: the old woman eyed her visitor with evident distrust through the crack, and nothing could be seen but her little eyes, glittering in the darkness. But, seeing a number of people on the landing, she grew bolder, and opened the door wide. The young man stepped into the dark entry, which was partitioned off from the tiny kitchen. The old woman stood facing him in silence and looking inquiringly at him. She was a diminutive, withered up old woman of sixty, with sharp malignant eyes and a sharp little nose. Her colourless, somewhat grizzled hair was thickly smeared with oil, and she wore no kerchief over it. Round her thin long neck, which looked like a hen's leg, was knotted some sort of flannel rag, and, in spite of the heat, there hung flapping on her shoulders, a mangy fur cape, yellow with age. The old woman coughed and groaned at every instant. The young man must have looked at her with a rather peculiar expression, for a gleam of mistrust came into her eyes again. "Raskolnikov, a student, I came here a month ago," the young man made haste to mutter, with a half bow, remembering that he ought to be more polite. "I remember, my good sir, I remember quite well your coming here," the old woman said distinctly, still keeping her inquiring eyes on his face. "And here... I am again on the same errand," Raskolnikov continued, a little disconcerted and surprised at the old woman's mistrust. "Perhaps she is always like that though, only I did not notice it the other time," he thought with an uneasy feeling. The old woman paused, as though hesitating; then stepped on one side, and pointing to the door of the room, she said, letting her visitor pass in front of her: "Step in, my good sir." The little room into which the young man walked, with yellow paper on the walls, geraniums and muslin curtains in the windows, was slightly lighted up at that moment by the setting sun. "So the sun will shine like this then!" flashed as it were by the way, and as a momentary impression everything in the room, everything that was there, all was imprinted on his memory ever after as possible to notice everything in a moment. But there was nothing specially striking in the room, everything in it was old and shabby, of yellow wood, consisted of a sofa with a big bulging but broken-backed wooden frame, a table in front of the sofa, a dressing table with a looking-glass on it, chairs, and rude pictures in yellow frames, representing German damsels with birds in their hands--that was all. In the corner a light was burning before a small ikon. Everything was very clean; the floor and the furniture were brightly polished; everything shone. "Lizaveta's work," thought the young man. There was not a speck of dust to be seen in the whole flat. "It's in the houses of spiteful old widows that one finds such cleanliness," Raskolnikov thought again, and he stole a curious glance at the cotton curtain over the door leading into another tiny room, in which stood the old woman's bed and chest of drawers and into which he had never looked before. These two rooms made up the whole flat. "What do you want?" the old woman said severely, coming into the room and, as before, standing in front of him so as to look him straight in the face. "I've brought something to pawn here," and he drew out of his pocket an old flat-fashioned flat silver watch, on the back of which was engraved a globe; the chain was of steel. "But the time is up for your last pledge. The month was up the day before yesterday." "I will bring you the interest for another month; wait a little." "But that's for me to do as I please, my good sir, to wait or to sell your pledge at once." "How much will you give me for the watch, Alyona Ivanovna?" "You come with such trifles, my good sir, it's scarcely worth anything. I gave you two roubles last time for your ring and one could buy it quite new at a jeweler's for a rouble and a half." "Give me four roubles for it, I shall redeem it. It was my father's. I shall be getting some money soon." "A rouble and a half, and interest in advance, if you like!" "A rouble and a half!" cried the young man. "Please yourself"--and the old woman handed him back the watch. The young man took it, and was so angry that he was on the point of going away; but remembering that there was nowhere else he could go, and that he had had another object also in coming. "Hand it over," he said roughly. The old woman fumbled in her pocket for her keys, and, and disappeared behind the curtain into the other room. The young man, left standing alone in the middle of the room, listened inquisitively, thinking. He could hear her unlocking the chest of drawers. "It must be the top drawer," he reflected. "She keeps the watch in her old worn stockings, under a pile of rags. The old hag! and no doubt the money is in the top drawer, in a pocket-book, with a bear on it, on the top of the chest of drawers. It's a nasty lock, it seems the old hag must have a good deal of money by her to be so afraid of robbers like this! What a vile trick it all is! I wonder how the world regards such crimes as this robbery? It's a mere nothing that I am about to do, I am not a beginner, I am not going to be a thief like a cat, quietly and slyly, with my hands and my back. That's all my courage amounts to, I wonder why I dare think of it? Well, I am bringing my last penny to a pawnbroker's, and what do I know and what do I care that she happens to be a nasty, worthless creature, the very quintessence of vileness, the old woman herself will be a trifle to me, I can put my hand in her pocket when she is lying on her back. That's all she is good for, the hag, she must be worth knowing. Strong-hearted young lady, she is not afraid of the devil in his shape, she is not afraid of anything, she is not afraid of her little sister, she is strong like that! She has her own way, she has nothing to do with anyone, she is free, and the devil can't have any more power over her! And there are such ridiculous creatures who are fond of beauty, and can't make up their minds to trifling with their beauty, and think that everything is not enough for them, and that it is the right thing for them to be proud of their beauty, and that it is the right thing for them to be fastidious and to shrink from the worst form of murder because they are only shaking in their shoes like a scared hare, and because they think that this is the worst form of murder of anyone who may be thinking of it, and that they themselves are not trembling like a hare because they are going to do something that is only a step from what they are doing themselves, because they are going to do something that is just as stupid as what they are doing, because they are going to do something quite new, something that people do not shrink from, something that is not a matter of mere conjecture, but something that is certainly stupid, that is certain to be stupid, and that everybody will see at once that it is stupid, and that they will call you a fool for your pains, and you will be ashamed of your boldness, because not everybody is a fool and a coward like you, because when you have once been a fool and a coward like that, no one will call you a fool or a coward, because, when you have once been a fool and a coward like that, everybody will be ashamed of you, and that is just what you deserve