

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Fyodor Dostoyevsky
Crime and Punishment

Read by
Michael Sheen

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA300912D

1	A visit to the 'pawnbroker woman'	6:40
2	Raskolnikov meets Marmeladov	8:59
3	The home of Marmeladov	3:29
4	A letter from Raskolnikov's mother	10:07
5	The letter takes its effect	8:23
6	Preparation for murder	8:37
7	At the door of the pawnbroker	6:13
8	An unexpected appearance	8:00
9	After the murder	4:44
10	The Police Station	8:52
11	Fever	2:40
12	Raskolnikov's friends are concerned	7:16
13	Zossimov tells Dushkin's story	3:54
14	Luzhin makes his appearance	7:55
15	Raskolnikov reads the newspaper	5:57
16	Return to the scene	6:19
17	The death of Marmeladov	8:26

18	Family discussions	5:57
19	On the way to Porfiry Petrovitch	4:32
20	Porfiry begins to question Raskolnikov	11:54
21	An encounter with a stranger	6:22
22	Luzhin despatched	10:04
23	Raskolnikov and Sonia	6:22
24	The story of Lazarus	5:10
25	At the Police Station again	7:24
26	The interrogation continues	5:32
27	Nikolay is brought in	5:18
28	Raskolnikov confides in Sonia	7:02
29	Madness	4:41
30	Porfiry Petrovich in command	11:07
31	The decision is made	8:25
32	Siberia	6:42

Total time: 3:43:29

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Crime and Punishment

In July 1865, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a middle-aged author of some minor achievement, signed a contract with a publisher to produce a novel by November 1866. The contract included – given Dostoyevsky's fecklessness – punitive penalties in the event of the writer failing to honour the agreement. At once, he ran off with his advance to meet his mistress in Wiesbaden, and lost the money on the roulette wheels. This was typical: his career was driven by an assiduous courtship of poverty – which in Russia at that time could be fatal. It was, in a sense, Russian roulette. In desperation he tried everything he could. It was at this point that the idea behind *Crime and Punishment* came to him: an idealistic young man, trapped by poverty, murders a loathsome old pawnbroker. The completed novel was published in 1866, the first of a series of masterpieces by himself and Tolstoy which would make the Russian realistic novel a genre comparable in depth and scope with Greek tragedy and Elizabethan drama.

Dostoyevsky was born in 1821, the son

of a doctor. After graduating as a military engineer, he became a full-time writer and enjoyed almost immediate success with his novel *Poor Folk*. However, the works that followed were not reviewed so favourably, and his career was due to come to an untimely end when, in 1849, he was arrested and the following year condemned to death for conspiring against the Tsar. A few minutes before he was due to be shot, he and his associates received a reprieve, and he was sent to Siberia for four years. This traumatic experience seems to have led to a revulsion against radical politics – which he came to see as a criminal offence against God and the Russian soul – and to a belief in the spiritually regenerative power of suffering. It was Dostoyevsky's own crime and punishment and it provided the essential fuel for the novels which established and maintained his reputation until his death in 1881.

The extreme nature of Dostoyevsky's own character and experience, which included a history of epileptic fits, gave him an unparalleled insight into the wilder shores

of human life. And the world of *Crime and Punishment* is certainly an extreme one in which a gripping psychological thriller quite naturally takes place amidst comedy and even farce. At the same time, the novel is a horribly prophetic one. The most terrible crimes of the twentieth century have undoubtedly been the result of just such idealistic theories – in which dubious means justify the ends – as ensnared Dostoyevsky in his youth and Raskolnikov in the novel.

Dostoyevsky's philosophical position is therefore one which specifically defies a

reasoned analysis towards a neat formulaic conclusion. Nor can any amount of psychological analysis of his characters unlock the secret workings of their being. His philosophical insights still leave us to contemplate the ultimately intractable nature of human motivation. It is this fact that makes Dostoyevsky's novels – the most deeply Russian of Russian novels – works of comprehensive imagination and universal appeal.

Notes by Duncan Steen

The music on this CD taken from the NAXOS catalogue

RACHMANINOV The Isle of the Dead Op.29/
Symphonic Dances
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Enrique Bátiz

8.550583

Cover picture: They did not expect him, by I. Repin. (Detail)

The main characters in Crime and Punishment

Rodion Romanovich **Raskolnikov** – a former student
Pulcheria Alexandrovna **Raskolnikov** – his mother
Avdotya (Dunya) Romanovna **Raskolnikov** – his sister
Arkady Ivanovich **Svidrigaylov** – Dunya's former employer
Marfa Petrovna **Svidrigaylov** – his wife
Andrey **Lebetziatnikov** – his friend
Dmitri Prokofich **Razumihin** – Rodion Raskolnikov's friend
Alyena Ivanovna – a pawnbroker
Lizaveta Ivanovna – her sister
Semyon **Marmeladov** – a former government officer
Katerina Ivanovna **Marmeladov** – his wife
Sofya (**Sonia**) Semyenovna Marmeladov – his daughter
Polina, Lenya, Kolya – the children of Katerina Ivanovna
Natasha Petrovna – servant to Raskolnikov's landlady
Porfiry Petrovich – the Examining Magistrate
Zossimov – a doctor
Alexander **Zametov** – chief clerk in the police office
Fomich **Nikodim** – chief of police
Peter Petrovich **Luzhin**, suitor to Dunya

Abridged by Duncan Steen. Produced by Nicholas Soames
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Company
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Crime and Punishment

Read by **Michael Sheen**

A century after it first appeared, *Crime and Punishment* remains one of the most gripping psychological thrillers. A poverty-stricken young man, seeing his family making sacrifices for him, is faced with an opportunity to solve his financial problems with one simple but horrifying act: the murder of a pawnbroker. She is, he feels, just a parasite on society. But does the end justify the means?

Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov makes his decision and then has to live with it. Dostoyevsky, in masterly fashion, contrasts the comedy and tragedy of life in St Petersburg with the anguish and turmoil of Raskolnikov's inner life.



Michael Sheen is one of Britain's most exciting young actors. Since leaving the RADA, he has played Romeo for the Royal Exchange, Manchester, appeared in the world première of Harold Pinter's *Moonlight* and taken the title role of Peer Gynt in Ninagawa's world tour production. His film credits include *Mary Reilly*. He has appeared regularly on television and radio.

"Classy and tense reading of the great debate."

THE TIMES

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Total time
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