
PART ONE

Chapter 1

Identity

1. Who is the main character?

Ans: Our main character is Raskolnikov. His first name is Rodion.

2. Describe Raskolnikov.

Ans: He is a young student in his early twenties, poor and unsure of himself. Justifying himself by raging against others, he blames his landlady and everyone else for his troubles. He broods much of the time and views himself with an exasperated air, yet imagines himself as talented and potentially a great benefactor of man. As a disconnected and faithless young man who periodically doubts his own sanity, he expresses many of the same values and philosophies as do many modern people.

3. What does Raskolnikov plan to do in order to prove or authenticate himself?

Ans: He plans to murder his pawnbroker, the old lady who lends money. Though he is not sure of whether or not he will actually carry out his diabolical plan, the plan itself has become an obsession. He spends his meager energies sneaking around and avoiding his neighbors in an effort to sustain his imagined criminal mode.

Author's Technique

1. How does the author describe the pawn-broker, Alyona Ivanovna?

Ans: She is portrayed in disgusting ways so as to prepare the reader for what is to happen. She is seen only through the eyes of Raskolnikov, who despises her and plans her murder. Her kindness and liberality will be shown later. At this point the reader is not supposed to want to sympathize.

2. How is Raskolnikov presented?

Ans: He is someone we struggle to understand or sympathize with, even though he is our main character. If we are honest we can identify with some of his attitudes.

Chapter 2

Identity

1. Who is Marmeladov?

Ans: He is an unemployed government clerk who Raskolnikov met in the tavern after noticing the man staring at him. He seems to have much the same situation as does Raskolnikov.

Interpretation and Appreciation

1. Marmeladov is not afraid of his wife's anger, her pulling his hair and her blows. What does he fear when he takes Raskolnikov to his hovel?

Ans: He fears his wife's eyes, her convicting look.

2. Why does the scoundrel, Marmeladov, submit himself to his wife's curses and hair pulling?

Ans: Like most drunkards he needs to make his atonement. Allowing her to strike and curse him for a while allows him to feel that he has made a sufficient payment for his sinful actions.

3. As Raskolnikov escapes the melee in the grimy apartment he leaves a few coins on the sill. Why does he do this?

Ans: He senses the crime being committed and makes a small contribution for the woman and her children. Immediately, he thinks differently and regrets having given his few coins.

4. What is the *irony* of this scene?

Ans: Raskolnikov is in the same situation as his odd drinking buddy, Marmeladov. He too has failed to keep a job and support his family.

5. Raskolnikov heads back to his own hovel trying to formulate his philosophy about life, the whole race of mankind and his own case. What does he conclude?

Ans: He thinks that perhaps man is not a scoundrel, perhaps everything is as it should be and the problem is with others.

World View

All the classic arguments, excuses, complaints, boasts and insecurities are voiced by Marmeladov. His rambling speech to Raskolnikov in the bar is a masterpiece of analysis of the nature of man. He gives a justification for every misdeed, a cause behind every crime. He realizes that he is a cheat and a fool, but immediately recrowns himself as rightful king of life and reason. He is a master at blame-shifting and sympathy-seeking.

Class consciousness is evident throughout the work.

Zaharovich has met and married the widow, Katerina Ivanovna, who was the daughter of an officer. She had danced at the governor's ball. Destitute, she had agreed to marry, but could never allow her government-clerk-husband to forget her high beginnings. Katerina is miserable, but largely because of her own ways.

The author is saying that human beings need misery and suffering as much as they need daily food. This is so they will feel truly alive. Most of the characters not only experience afflictions, but they seek them out.

Chapter 3

Identity

1. Who is poor Dounia? What does she do in order to help support her mother and brother?

Ans: Dounia is the sister of Raskolnikov and has accepted the
