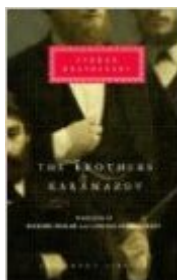


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The Brothers Karamazov (Everyman's Library)



Synopsis

The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky's last and greatest novel, published just before his death in 1881, chronicles the bitter love-hate struggle between the outsized Fyodor Karamazov and his three very different sons. It is above all the story of a murder, told with hair-raising intellectual clarity and a feeling for the human condition unsurpassed in world literature. Dostoevsky's towering reputation as one of the handful of thinkers who forged the modern sensibility has sometimes obscured the purely novelistic virtues—“brilliant characterizations, flair for suspense and melodrama, instinctive theatricality”—that made his work so immensely popular in nineteenth-century Russia. This award-winning translation by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky “the definitive version in English” “magnificently captures the rich and subtle energies of Dostoevsky's masterpiece.” (Book Jacket Status: Jacketed)

Book Information

Series: Everyman's Library (Book 70)

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (424 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Before you dedicate many hours to reading this masterpiece, you must be sure you select the appropriate translation for your reading style. The Pevear translation - although highly acclaimed - may make it difficult for most readers to grasp the essence of this beautiful story, and therefore I would almost always recommend the McDuff version ahead of the Pevear. The Brothers Karamazov presents the same challenge for every English translator; namely, Dostoevsky took pride in creating distinct voices and syntax for each of his characters, and most translations have sacrificed the

syntax and voicing to make it more readable - in the process losing much of the tone of each character. Pevear's translation is known for being the truest to the original, as it replicates the syntax with an almost academic precision. However, in being so true to the syntax and voicing, Pevear leaves sentence structures that are so unfamiliar-sounding to the native English speaker as to be disruptive. Many times as I read this translation I found myself jolted out of the flow of reading because the phrasing felt so awkward. As an example of a difficult sentence: Pevear: "These occasions were almost morbid: most depraved, and, in his sensuality, often as cruel as a wicked insect, Fyodor Pavlovich at times suddenly felt in himself, in his drunken moments, a spiritual fear, a moral shock, that almost, so to speak, resounded physically in his soul.

I think I am going to read this wonderful book again. There is so much life and passion in it, that reading it again will definitely enrich my soul even further. I want to tell you how this novel changed my life. It was recommended to me by a Russian Orthodox priest who considered it the best source of Russian Orthodox spirituality in literature. So I read it. I read it because at the time I was striving to become a true Orthodox Christian myself. The result, however, turned out the opposite: I lost any faith I ever had in the truth of the Church and all its dogmas. This book gave me an idea that if there is God, it is certainly not what we are taught He is. I think that in this work Dostoevsky reached the very height of what I would call "a war with oneself". He created this unforgettable contrast between what he wanted to believe (and, indeed believed at times) and what he actually was going through in his spiritual search, which were probably indescribable spiritual torments of doubt. I now have this indelible image of Ivan confiding in Alesha, arguing with Satan and, at last, denying God himself in his search for the truth. It was he, who stirred my whole being and it was Dostoevsky himself speaking through Ivan with the most profound sincerity and desperation. On the opposite, Dostoevsky introduces Alyosha, who didn't doubt, but just loved and believed. This young man, according to Dostoevsky's plan, is a prototype of Jesus Christ himself, a man in whom the truth is open within, a man through whom one can truly feel God's love. It is a fascinating character, although, Dostoevsky depicts him in the light of Christian Orthodoxy, as an example of TRUE spirituality, as opposed to any other spirituality.

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