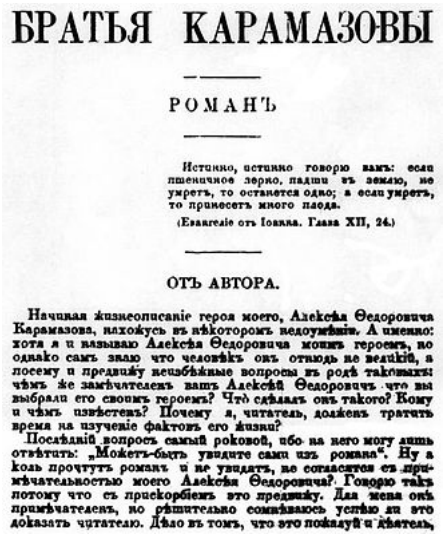
The Brothers Karamazov

The Brothers Karamazov (Russian: Бра́тья Карама́зовы, *Brat'ya Karamazovy*, pronounced [ˈbratʲjə kərɐˈmazəvɨ]), also translated as ***The Karamazov Brothers***, is the final novel by Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky spent nearly two years writing *The Brothers Karamazov*, which was published as a serial in *The Russian Messenger* from January 1879 to November 1880. Dostoevsky died less than four months after its publication.

Set in 19th-century Russia, *The Brothers Karamazov* is a passionate philosophical novel that enters deeply into questions of God, free will, and morality. It is a theological drama dealing with problems of faith, doubt and reason in the context of a modernizing Russia, with a plot that revolves around the subject of patricide. Dostoevsky composed much of the novel in Staraya Russa, which inspired the main setting.[1] Since its publication, it has been acclaimed as one of the supreme achievements in world literature.[2]

The Brothers Karamazov



БРАТЬЯ КАРАМАЗОВЫ

РОМАНЪ

Истинно, истинно говорю вамъ: если пшеничное зерно, падши въ землю, не умретъ, то останется одно; а если умретъ, то принесетъ много плода.

(Евангеліе отъ Іоанна. Глава XII, 24.)

ОТЪ АВТОРА.

Начиная жизнеописаніе героя моего, Алексѣя Ѳедоровича Карамазова, нахожусь въ нѣкоторомъ недоумѣніи. А именно: хотя я и называю Алексѣя Ѳедоровича моимъ героемъ, но однако самъ знаю что человѣкъ онъ отнюдь не великій, а посему и предвижу неизбѣжные вопросы въ родѣ такихъ: чѣмъ же замѣчателенъ вашъ Алексѣй Ѳедоровичъ, что вы выбрали его своимъ героемъ? Что сдѣлалъ онъ такого? Кому и чѣмъ извѣстенъ? Почему я, читатель, долженъ тратить время на изученіе фактовъ его жизни?

Послѣдній вопросъ самый роковой, ибо на него могу лишь отвѣтить: „Можетъ-быть увидите сами изъ романа". Ну а коль прочтутъ романъ и не увидятъ, не согласятся съ примѣчательностью моего Алексѣя Ѳедоровича? Говорю такъ потому что съ прискорбіемъ это предвижу. Да жена онъ примѣчателенъ, но рѣшительно сомнѣваюсь успѣю ли это доказать читателю. Дѣло въ томъ, что это покажутъ и дѣятель,

The first page of the first edition of *The Brothers Karamazov*

Author	Fyodor Dostoevsky
Original title	*Братья Карамазовы (Brat'ya Karamazovy)*
Country	Russia
Language	Russian
Genre	Philosophical novel Theological fiction
Publisher	*The Russian Messenger* (as serial)
Publication date	1879–80; separate edition 1880
Preceded by	*A Gentle Creature*
Followed by	*A Writer's Diary*

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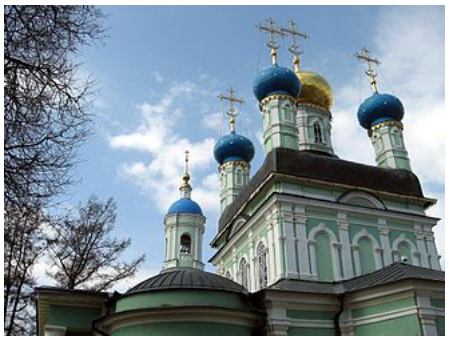
Background



Optina Monastery served as a spiritual center for Russia in the 19th century and inspired many aspects of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Although Dostoevsky began his first notes for *The Brothers Karamazov* in April 1878, the novel incorporated elements and themes from an earlier unfinished project he had begun in 1869 entitled *The Life of a Great Sinner*.[3] Another unfinished project, *Drama in Tobolsk* (Драма. В Тобольске), is considered to be the first draft of the first chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dated 13 September 1874, it tells of a fictional murder in Staraya Russa committed by a *praporshchik* named Dmitry Ilynskov (based on a real soldier from Omsk), who is thought to have murdered his father. It goes on to note that the father's body was suddenly discovered in a pit under a house.[4] The similarly unfinished *Sorokoviny* (Сороковины), dated 1 August 1875, is reflected in book IX, chapter 3–5 and book XI, chapter nine.[5]

In the October 1877 *Writer's Diary* article "To the Reader", Dostoevsky mentions a "literary work that has imperceptibly and involuntarily been taking shape within me over these two years of publishing the *Diary*." The *Diary* covered a multitude of themes and issues, some of which would be explored in greater depth in *The Brothers Karamazov*. These include patricide, law and order, and a variety of social problems.[6]

The writing of *The Brothers Karamazov* was altered by a personal tragedy: in May 1878, Dostoevsky's 3-year-old son Alyosha died of epilepsy,[7] a condition inherited from his father. The novelist's grief is apparent throughout the book. Dostoevsky named the hero Alyosha, as well as imbuing him with qualities that he sought and most admired. His loss is also reflected in the story of Captain Snegiryov and his young son Ilyusha.

The death of his son brought Dostoevsky to the Optina Monastery later that year. There he found inspiration for several aspects of *The Brothers Karamazov*, though at the time he intended to write a novel about childhood instead. Parts of the biographical section of Zosima's life are based on "The Life of the Elder Leonid", a text he found at Optina and copied "almost word for word."[8]

Major characters

Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov

Fyodor Pavlovich, a 55-year-old "sponger" and buffoon, is the father of three sons—Dmitri, Ivan and Alexei—from two marriages. He is rumored to have also fathered an illegitimate son, Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov, whom he employs as his servant. Fyodor Pavlovich takes no interest in any of his sons, who are, as a result, raised apart from each other and their father. The relationship between Fyodor and his adult sons drives much of the plot in the novel.

Dmitri Fyodorovich Karamazov

Dmitri Fyodorovich (a.k.a. **Mitya**, **Mitka**, **Mitenka**, **Mitri**) is Fyodor Karamazov's eldest son and the only offspring of his first marriage, with Adelaida Ivanovna Miusov. Dmitri is considered to be a sensualist, like his father, and regularly indulges in nights of champagne-drinking and whatever entertainment and stimulation money can buy. Dmitri is brought into contact with his family when he finds himself in need of his inheritance, which he believes is being withheld by his father. He was engaged to be married to Katerina Ivanovna, but breaks that off after falling in love with Grushenka. Dmitri's relationship with his father is the most volatile of the brothers, escalating to violence as he and his father begin fighting over his inheritance and Grushenka. While he maintains a relationship with Ivan, he is closest to his younger brother Alyosha, referring to him as his "cherub".

Ivan Fyodorovich Karamazov

Ivan Fyodorovich (a.k.a. **Vanya**, **Vanka**, **Vanechka**) is the 24-year-old middle son, and the first from Fyodor Pavlovich's second marriage. Ivan is sullen and isolated, but also intellectually brilliant. He is disturbed by the unspeakable cruelty and senseless suffering in the world. In the chapter "Rebellion" (Bk. 5, Ch. 4), he says to Alyosha: "It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return him the ticket." Ivan's relationship with his father and brothers is rather superficial in the beginning. He finds his father repulsive, and has no positive affection towards Dmitri. While he doesn't dislike Alexei, he seems not to have any deep affection for him either. Ivan falls in love with Katerina Ivanovna, who was Dmitri's betrothed, but she doesn't start to return his feelings until the end. Fyodor Pavlovich tells Alyosha that he fears Ivan more than he fears Dmitri. Some of the most memorable and acclaimed passages of the novel involve Ivan, including the chapter "Rebellion", his "poem" "The Grand Inquisitor" immediately following, the three conversations with Smerdyakov, and his nightmare of the devil (Bk. 11, Ch. 9).

Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov

Alexei Fyodorovich Karamazov (a.k.a. **Alyosha**, **Alyoshka**, **Alyoshenka**, **Alyoshechka**, **Alexeichik**, **Lyosha**, **Lyoshenka**) at age 20 is the youngest of the Karamazov brothers, the youngest child by Karamazov's second wife and thus Ivan's full brother. The narrator identifies him as the hero of the novel

in the opening chapter, as does the author in the preface. He is described as immensely likable. At the outset of the events, Alyosha is a novice in the local Russian Orthodox monastery. His faith is in contrast to his brother Ivan's atheism. His Elder, Father Zosima, sends him into the world, where he becomes involved in the sordid affairs of his family. In a secondary plotline, Alyosha befriends a group of school boys, whose fate adds a hopeful message to the conclusion of the novel.

Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov

Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov is the son of "Reeking Lizaveta", a mute woman of the street who died in childbirth. His name, Smerdyakov, means "son of the reeking one". He is rumored to be the illegitimate son of Fyodor Pavlovich. He was brought up by Fyodor Pavlovich's trusted servant Grigory Vasilievich Kutuzov and his wife Marfa. He is shown to have been intellectually precocious as a child, having engaged in open and often irreverent discussion with Grigory, his erstwhile tutor, about the nature and existence of God, which led to a mutual dislike between the two. Smerdyakov becomes part of the Karamazov household as a servant, working as Fyodor Pavlovich's lackey and cook. He is morose, haughty and sullen, and suffers from epilepsy. The narrator notes that as a child, Smerdyakov collected stray cats in order to hang and bury them. Generally aloof, Smerdyakov admires Ivan and shares his atheism. Despite his evident shrewdness, he is widely mistaken by the other characters as being of subpar intelligence.

Agrafena Alexandrovna Svetlova

Agrafena Alexandrovna Svetlova (a.k.a. **Grushenka**, **Grusha**, **Grushka**), is a beautiful and fiery 22-year-old woman with an uncanny charm for men. In her youth she was jilted by a Polish officer and subsequently came under the protection of a tyrannical miser. The episode leaves Grushenka with an urge for independence and control of her life. Grushenka inspires complete admiration and lust in both Fyodor and Dmitri Karamazov. Their rivalry for her affection is one of the most damaging factors in their relationship. Grushenka seeks to torment and deride both Dmitri and Fyodor as an amusement, a way to inflict upon others the pain she has felt at the hands of her "former and indisputable one". However, as a result of her growing friendship with Alyosha, she begins to tread a path of spiritual redemption, and hidden qualities of gentleness and generosity emerge, though her fiery temper and pride are ever present.

Character names

Russian and romanization		
First name, nickname	**Patronymic**	**Family name**
Фёдор Fyódor	Па́влович Pávlovich	Карама́зов Karamázov
Дми́трий, Ми́тя Dmítry, Mítya	Фёдорович Fyódorovich	
Ива́н, Ва́ня Iván, Ványa		
Алексе́й, Алёша Alekséy, Alyósha		
Па́вел Pável		Смердяко́в Smerdyakóv
Аграфе́на, Гру́шенька Agraféna, Grúshenka	Алекса́ндровна Aleksándrovna	Светло́ва Svetlóva
Катери́на, Ка́тя Katerína, Kátya	Ива́новна Ivánovna	Верхо́вцева Verkhóvtseva
Илья́, Илю́ша Ilyá, Ilyúsha	Никола́евич Nikoláyevich	Снегирёв Snegiryóv
ста́рец Зо́сима stárets Zósima		
An acute accent marks the stressed syllable.		

Katerina Ivanovna Verkhovtseva

Katerina Ivanovna Verkhovtseva (a.k.a. **Katya**, **Katka**, **Katenka**) is Dmitri's beautiful fiancée, despite his open forays with Grushenka. Her engagement to Dmitri is chiefly a matter of pride on both their parts, Dmitri having bailed her father out of a debt. Katerina is extremely proud and seeks to act as a noble martyr, suffering as a stark reminder of

everyone's guilt. Because of this, she cannot bring herself to act on her love for Ivan, and constantly creates moral barriers between him and herself. By the end of the novel, she too, begins a real and sincere spiritual redemption, as seen in the epilogue, when she asks Mitya and Grushenka to forgive her.

Father Zosima, the Elder

Father Zosima is an Elder and spiritual advisor (*starets*) in the town monastery and Alyosha's teacher. He is something of a celebrity among the townspeople for his reputed prophetic and healing abilities. His spiritual status inspires both admiration and jealousy among his fellow monks. Zosima provides a refutation to Ivan's atheistic arguments and helps to explain Alyosha's character. Zosima's teachings shape the way Alyosha deals with the young boys he meets in the Ilyusha storyline.

The character of Father Zosima was to some extent inspired by that of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk.[9]

Ilyusha

Ilyusha (a.k.a. **Ilyushechka**, or simply **Ilusha** in some translations) is one of the local schoolboys, and the central figure of a crucial subplot in the novel. His father, Captain Snegiryov, is an impoverished officer who is insulted by Dmitri after Fyodor Pavlovich hires him to threaten the latter over his debts, and the Snegiryov family is brought to shame as a result. The reader is led to believe that it is partly because of this that Ilyusha falls ill, possibly to illustrate the theme that even minor actions can touch heavily on the lives of others, and that we are "all responsible for one another".

Synopsis

Book One: *A Nice Little Family*

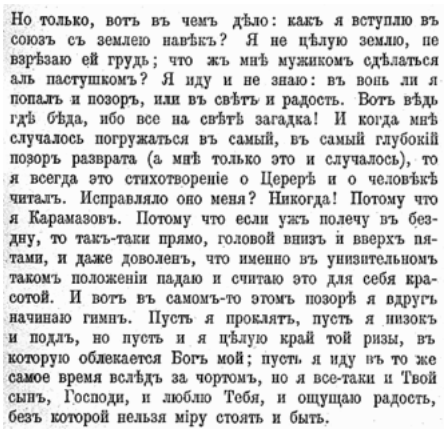
The opening of the novel introduces the Karamazov family and relates the story of their distant and recent past. The details of Fyodor Pavlovich's two marriages, as well as his indifference to the upbringing of his three children, is chronicled. The narrator also establishes the widely varying personalities of the three brothers and the circumstances that have led to their return to their father's town. The first book concludes by describing the mysterious Eastern Orthodox tradition of the Elders. Alyosha has become devoted to the Elder at the local monastery.

Book Two: *An Inappropriate Gathering*

Book Two begins as the Karamazov family arrives at the monastery so that the Elder Zosima can act as a mediator between Dmitri and his father in their dispute over the inheritance. It was the father's idea, apparently as a joke, to have the meeting take place in such a holy place in the presence of the famous Elder. Fyodor Pavlovich's deliberately insulting and provocative behaviour destroys any chance of conciliation, and the meeting only results in intensified hatred and a scandal. This book also contains a scene in which the Elder Zosima consoles a woman mourning the death of her three-year-old son. The poor woman's grief parallels Dostoevsky's own tragedy at the loss of his young son Alyosha.

Book Three: *Sensualists*

The third book provides more details of the love triangle between Fyodor Pavlovich, his son Dmitri, and Grushenka. Dmitri hides near his father's home to see if Grushenka will arrive. His personality is explored in a long conversation with Alyosha. Later that evening, Dmitri bursts into his father's house and assaults him: as he leaves he threatens to come back and kill him. This book also introduces Smerdyakov and his origins, as well as the story of his mother, Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya. At the conclusion of this book, Alyosha is witness to Grushenka's humiliation of Dmitri's betrothed Katerina Ivanovna.


Но только, вотъ въ чемъ дѣло: какъ я вступлю въ союзъ съ землею навѣкъ? Я не цѣлую землю, не взрѣзаю ей грудь; что жъ мнѣ мужикомъ сдѣлаться аль пастушкомъ? Я иду и не знаю: въ воинъ ли я попалъ и позоръ, или въ свѣтъ и радость. Вотъ вѣдь гдѣ бѣда, ибо все на свѣтѣ загадка! И когда мнѣ случалось погружаться въ самый, въ самый глубокій позоръ разврата (а мнѣ только это и случалось), то я всегда это стихотвореніе о Церерѣ и о человѣкѣ читалъ. Исправляло оно меня? Никогда! Потому что я Карамазовъ. Потому что если ужъ полечу въ бездну, то такъ-таки прямо, головой внизъ и вверхъ пятами, и даже доволенъ, что именно въ унизительномъ такомъ положеніи падаю и считаю это для себя красотой. И вотъ въ самомъ-то этомъ позорѣ я вдругъ начинаю гимнъ. Пусть я проклятъ, пусть я низокъ и подлъ, но пусть и я цѣлую край той ризы, въ которую облекается Богъ мой; пусть я иду въ то же самое время вслѣдъ за чортомъ, но я все-таки и Твой сынъ, Господи, и люблю Тебя, и ощущаю радость, безъ которой нельзя міру стоять и быть.

An original page of book 3, chapter 3 of *The Brothers Karamazov*

Book Four: *Lacerations/Strains*

This section introduces a side story which resurfaces in more detail later in the novel. It begins with Alyosha observing a group of schoolboys throwing rocks at one of their sickly peers named Ilyusha. When Alyosha admonishes the boys and tries to help, Ilyusha bites Alyosha's finger. It is later learned that Ilyusha's father, a former staff-captain named Snegiryov, was assaulted by Dmitri, who dragged him by the beard out of a bar. Alyosha soon learns of the further hardships present in the Snegiryov household and offers the former staff captain money as an apology for his brother and to help Snegiryov's ailing wife and children. After initially accepting the money with joy, Snegiryov throws it to the ground and stomps it into the mud, before running back into his home.

Book Five: *Pro and Contra*

Here, the rationalist and nihilistic ideology that permeated Russia at this time is defended and espoused by Ivan Karamazov while meeting his brother Alyosha at a restaurant. In the chapter titled "Rebellion", Ivan proclaims that he rejects the world that God has created because it is built on a foundation of suffering. In perhaps the most famous chapter in the novel, "The Grand Inquisitor", Ivan narrates to Alyosha his imagined poem that describes an encounter between a leader from the Spanish Inquisition and Jesus, who has made his return to Earth. The opposition between reason and faith is dramatised and symbolised in a forceful monologue of the Grand Inquisitor who, having ordered the arrest of Jesus, visits Him in prison at night.

> Why hast Thou come now to hinder us? For Thou hast come to hinder us, and Thou knowest that... We are working not with Thee but with him [Satan]... We took from him what Thou didst reject with scorn, that last gift he offered Thee, showing Thee all the kingdoms of the earth. We took from him Rome and the sword of Caesar, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth... We shall triumph and shall be Caesars, and then we shall plan the universal happiness of man.

The Grand Inquisitor accuses Jesus of having inflicted on humankind the "burden" of free will. At the end of the Grand Inquisitor's lengthy arguments, Jesus silently steps forward and kisses the old man on the lips. The Inquisitor, stunned and moved, tells him he must never come there again, and lets him out. Alyosha, after hearing the story, goes to Ivan and kisses him softly on the lips. Ivan shouts with delight. The brothers part with mutual affection and respect.

Book Six: *The Russian Monk*

The sixth book relates the life and history of the Elder Zosima as he lies near death in his cell. Zosima explains that he found his faith in his rebellious youth, after an unforgivable action toward his trusted servant, consequently deciding to become a monk. Zosima preaches people must forgive others by acknowledging their own sins and guilt before others. He explains that no sin is isolated, making everyone responsible for their neighbor's sins. Zosima represents a philosophy that responds to Ivan's, which had challenged God's creation in the previous book.

Book Seven: *Alyosha*

The book begins immediately following the death of Zosima. It is a commonly held perception in the town and the monastery that true holy men's bodies are incorrupt, i.e., they do not succumb to putrefaction. Thus, the expectation concerning the Elder Zosima is that his deceased body will not decompose. It therefore comes as a great shock that Zosima's body not only decays, but begins the process almost immediately following his death. Within the first day, the smell is already unbearable. For many this calls into question their previous respect and admiration for Zosima. Alyosha is particularly devastated by the sullying of Zosima's name due to nothing more than the corruption of his dead body. One of Alyosha's companions in the monastery—Rakitin—uses Alyosha's vulnerability to set up a meeting between him and Grushenka. However, instead of Alyosha becoming corrupted, he acquires new faith and hope from Grushenka, while Grushenka's troubled mind begins the path of spiritual redemption through his influence: they become close friends. The book ends with the spiritual regeneration of Alyosha as he embraces and kisses the earth outside the monastery (echoing, perhaps, Zosima's last earthly act before his death) and cries convulsively. Renewed, he goes back out into the world, as his Elder instructed.

Book Eight: *Mitya*

This section deals primarily with Dmitri's wild and distraught pursuit of money for the purpose of running away with Grushenka. Dmitri owes money to his fiancée Katerina Ivanovna, and will believe himself to be a thief if he does not find the money to pay her back before embarking on his quest for Grushenka. Dmitri approaches Grushenka's benefactor, Samsonov, who sends him to a neighboring town on a fabricated promise of a business deal. All the while Dmitri is petrified that Grushenka may go to his father and marry him because of his wealth and lavish promises. When Dmitri returns from his failed dealing in the neighboring town, he escorts Grushenka to her benefactor's home, but later discovers that she has deceived him and left early. Furious, he runs to his father's home with a brass pestle in his hand, and spies on him from the window. He takes the pestle from his pocket. There is a discontinuity in the action, and Dmitri is suddenly running away off his father's property. The servant Gregory tries to stop him, yelling "Parricide!", but Dmitri hits him in the head with the pestle. Dmitri, thinking that he has killed the old man, tries to attend to the wound with his handkerchief, but gives up and runs off.

Dmitri is next seen in a daze on the street, covered in blood, with a pile of money in his hand. He soon learns that Grushenka's former betrothed has returned and taken her to a lodge near where Dmitri just was. Upon learning this, Dmitri loads a cart full of food and wine and pays for a huge orgy to finally confront Grushenka in the presence of her old flame, intending all the while to kill himself at dawn. The "first and rightful lover" is a boorish Pole who cheats the party at a game of cards. When his deception is

revealed, he flees, and Grushenka soon reveals to Dmitri that she really is in love with him. The party rages on, and just as Dmitri and Grushenka are making plans to marry, the police enter the lodge and inform Dmitri that he is under arrest for the murder of his father.

Book Nine: *The Preliminary Investigation*

Book Nine introduces the details of Fyodor Pavlovich's murder and describes the interrogation of Dmitri, who vigorously maintains his innocence. The alleged motive for the crime is robbery. Dmitri was known to have been completely destitute earlier that evening, but is suddenly seen with thousands of rubles shortly after his father's murder. Meanwhile, the three thousand rubles that Fyodor Pavlovich had set aside for Grushenka has disappeared. Dmitri explains that the money he spent that evening came from three thousand rubles that Katerina Ivanovna gave him to send to her sister. He spent half that at his first meeting with Grushenka—another drunken orgy—and sewed up the rest in a cloth, intending to give it back to Katerina Ivanovna. The investigators are not convinced by this. All of the evidence points toward Dmitri; the only other person in the house at the time of the murder, apart from Gregory and his wife, was Smerdyakov, who was incapacitated due to an epileptic seizure he suffered the day before. As a result of the overwhelming evidence against him, Dmitri is formally charged with the murder and taken away to prison to await trial.

Book Ten: *Boys*

Boys continues the story of the schoolboys and Ilyusha last referred to in Book Four. The book begins with the introduction of the young boy Kolya Krasotkin. Kolya is a brilliant boy who proclaims his atheism, socialism, and beliefs in the ideas of Europe. Dostoevsky uses Kolya's beliefs, especially in a conversation with Alyosha, to satirize his Westernizer critics by putting their words and beliefs in the mouth of a young boy who doesn't really understand what he is talking about. Kolya is bored with life and constantly torments his mother by putting himself in danger. As part of a prank Kolya lies between railroad tracks as a train passes over and becomes something of a legend for the feat. All the other boys look up to Kolya, especially Ilyusha. Since the narrative left Ilyusha in Book Four, his illness has progressively worsened and the doctor states that he will not recover. Kolya and Ilyusha had a falling out over Ilyusha's maltreatment of a local dog: Ilyusha had fed it a piece of bread in which he had placed a pin, at the bidding of Smerdyakov. But thanks to Alyosha's intervention the other schoolboys have gradually reconciled with Ilyusha, and Kolya soon joins them at his bedside. It is here that Kolya first meets Alyosha and begins to reassess his nihilist beliefs.

Book Eleven: *Brother Ivan Fyodorovich*

Book Eleven chronicles Ivan Fyodorovich's influence on those around him and his descent into madness. It is in this book that Ivan meets three times with Smerdyakov, desperately seeking to solve the riddle of the murder and whether Smerdyakov, and consequently he himself, had anything to do with it. In the final meeting Smerdyakov confesses that he had faked the fit, murdered Fyodor Pavlovich, and stolen the money, which he presents to Ivan. Smerdyakov expresses disbelief at Ivan's professed ignorance and surprise. Smerdyakov claims that Ivan was complicit in the murder by telling Smerdyakov when he would be leaving Fyodor Pavlovich’s house, and more importantly by instilling in Smerdyakov the belief that, in a world without God, "everything is permitted." The book ends with Ivan having a hallucination in which he is visited by the devil, who torments him by personifying and caricaturing his thoughts and ideas. Alyosha finds Ivan raving and informs him that Smerdyakov hanged himself shortly after their

final meeting, apparently dejected at failing to win Ivan's admiration for his nihilistic act. The timing of Smerdyakov's suicide means that he cannot be interrogated about the murder, cementing Dmitri's guilty verdict.

Book Twelve: *A Judicial Error*

This book details the trial of Dmitri Karamazov for the murder of his father. The courtroom drama is sharply satirized by Dostoevsky. The men in the crowd are presented as resentful and spiteful, and the women as irrationally drawn to the romanticism of Dmitri's love triangle with Katerina and Grushenka. Ivan's madness takes its final hold over him and he is carried away from the courtroom after recounting his final meeting with Smerdyakov and the aforementioned confession. The turning point in the trial is Katerina's damning testimony against Dmitri. Impassioned by Ivan's illness which she believes is a result of her assumed love for Dmitri, she produces a letter drunkenly written by Dmitri saying that he would kill his father. The section concludes with lengthy and impassioned closing remarks from the prosecutor and the defence counsel and the verdict that Dmitri is guilty.

Book Thirteen: *The Brothers Karamazov*

The final section opens with discussion of a plan developed for Dmitri's escape from his sentence of twenty years of hard labor in Siberia. The plan is never fully described, but it seems to involve Ivan and Katerina bribing some guards. Alyosha cautiously approves, because he feels that Dmitri is not emotionally ready to submit to such a harsh sentence, that he is innocent, and that no guards or officers would suffer for aiding the escape. Dmitri and Grushenka plan to escape to America and work the land there for several years, and then return to Russia under assumed American names, because they cannot imagine living without Russia. Dmitri begs for Katerina to visit him in the hospital, where he is recovering from an illness, before he is due to be taken away. When she does, Dmitri apologizes for having hurt her; she in turn apologizes for bringing up the implicating letter during the trial. They agree to love each other for that one moment, and say they will love each other forever, even though both now love other people. The novel concludes at Ilyusha's funeral, where Ilyusha's schoolboy friends listen to Alyosha's "Speech by the Stone". Alyosha promises to remember Kolya, Ilyusha, and all the boys and keep them close in his heart, even though he will have to leave them and may not see them again until many years have passed. He implores them to love each other and to always remember Ilyusha, and to keep his memory alive in their hearts, and to remember this moment at the stone when they were all together and they all loved each other. Alyosha then recounts the Christian promise that they will all be united one day after the Resurrection. In tears, the twelve boys promise Alyosha that they will keep each other in their memories forever. They join hands, and return to the Snegiryov household for the funeral dinner, chanting "Hurrah for Karamazov!"

Style

Although written in the 19th century, *The Brothers Karamazov* displays a number of modern elements. Dostoevsky composed the book with a variety of literary techniques. Though privy to many of the thoughts and feelings of the protagonists, the narrator is a self-proclaimed writer; he discusses his own mannerisms and personal perceptions so often in the novel that he becomes a character. Through his descriptions, the narrator's voice merges imperceptibly into the tone of the people he is describing, often extending into the characters' most personal thoughts. There is no voice of authority in the story.[i] In addition to the principal narrator, there are several sections narrated by other characters entirely, such as the story of The Grand Inquisitor and Zosima's confessions.

Dostoevsky uses individual styles of speech to express the inner personality of each person. For example, the attorney Fetyukovich (based on Vladimir Spasovich) is characterized by malapropisms (e.g. 'robbed' for 'stolen', and at one point declares possible suspects in the murder 'irresponsible' rather than innocent). Several plot digressions provide insight into other apparently minor characters. For example, the narrative in Book Six is almost entirely devoted to Zosima's biography, which contains a confession from a man whom he met many years before. Dostoevsky does not rely on a single source or a group of major characters to convey the themes of this book, but uses a variety of viewpoints, narratives and characters throughout.

Dostoyevsky's notes for Chapter 5 of *The Brothers Karamazov*

Influence

The Brothers Karamazov has had a deep influence on many public figures over the years for widely varying reasons. Admirers include scientists such as Albert Einstein,[10] philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein[11] and Martin Heidegger,[12] as well as writers such as Virginia Woolf,[13] Cormac McCarthy,[14] Kurt Vonnegut,[15] Haruki Murakami,[16] and Frederick Buechner.[17]

British writer C. P. Snow writes of Einstein's admiration for the novel: "*The Brothers Karamazov*—that for him in 1919 was the supreme summit of all literature. It remained so when I talked to him in 1937, and probably until the end of his life."[18]

Sigmund Freud called it "the most magnificent novel ever written" and was fascinated with what he saw as its Oedipal themes. In 1928 Freud published a paper titled "Dostoevsky and Parricide" in which he investigated Dostoevsky's own neuroses.[19] Freud claimed that Dostoevsky's epilepsy was not a natural condition but instead a physical manifestation of the author's hidden guilt over his own father's death. According to Freud, Dostoevsky (and all other sons) wished for the death of his father because of latent desire for his mother; citing the fact that Dostoevsky's epileptic fits began at age 18, the year his father died. It followed that more obvious themes of patricide and guilt, especially in the form of the moral guilt illustrated by Ivan Karamazov, were further literary evidence of his theory.

Franz Kafka felt indebted to Dostoevsky and *The Brothers Karamazov* for its influence on his own work. Kafka called himself and Dostoevsky "blood relatives", perhaps because of the Russian writer's similar existential motifs. Kafka felt immensely drawn to the hatred the brothers demonstrated toward their father in the novel, dealing with his version of the strained father-son relationship, such as he personally experienced, in many of his works (most explicitly in the short story "The Judgment").[20]

James Joyce wrote:

> [Leo] Tolstoy admired him but he thought that he had little artistic accomplishment or mind. Yet, as he said, 'he admired his heart', a criticism which contains a great deal of truth, for though his characters do act extravagantly, madly, almost, still their basis is firm enough underneath... *The Brothers Karamazov*... made a deep impression on me... he created some unforgettable scenes [detail]... Madness you may call it, but therein may be the secret of his genius... I prefer the word exaltation, exaltation which can merge into madness, perhaps. In fact all great men have had that vein in them; it was the source of their greatness; the reasonable man achieves nothing.[21]

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein is said to have read *The Brothers Karamazov* "so often he knew whole passages of it by heart."[22] A copy of the novel was one of the few possessions Wittgenstein brought with him to the front during World War I.[22]

Martin Heidegger, the seminal figure of existentialism, identified Dostoevsky's thought as one of the most important sources for his early and best known book, *Being and Time*.[23] Of the two portraits Heidegger kept on the wall of his office, one was of Dostoevsky.[24]

According to philosopher Charles B. Guignon, the novel's most fascinating character, Ivan Karamazov, had by the middle of the twentieth century become the icon of existentialist rebellion in the writings of existentialist philosophers Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre.[24] Camus centered on a discussion of Ivan Karamazov's revolt in his 1951 book *Rebel*. Ivan's poem "The Grand Inquisitor" is arguably one of the best-known passages in modern literature due to its ideas about human nature, freedom, power, authority, and religion, as well as for its fundamental ambiguity.[24] A reference to the poem can be found in English novelist Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World Revisited* and American writer David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest*.

Nobel Prize laureate William Faulkner reread the book regularly, claiming it as his greatest literary inspiration next to Shakespeare's works and the Bible. He once wrote that he felt American literature had produced nothing yet great enough that might compare to Dostoyevsky's novel.[13]

In an essay on *The Brothers Karamazov,* written after the Russian Revolution and the First World War, Nobel Prize-winning author Hermann Hesse described Dostoevsky as not a "poet" but a "prophet".[25] British writer W. Somerset Maugham included the book in his list of ten greatest novels in the world.[26]

Contemporary Turkish Nobel Prize-winning writer Orhan Pamuk said during a lecture in St. Petersburg that the first time he read *The Brothers Karamazov*, his life was changed. He felt Dostoyevsky, through his storytelling, revealed completely unique insight into life and human nature.[13]

American philosophical novelist Walker Percy said in an interview:[27]

> I suppose my model is nearly always Dostoevsky, who was a man of very strong convictions, but his characters illustrated and incarnated the most powerful themes and issues and trends of his day. I think maybe the greatest novel of all time is *The Brothers Karamazov* which...almost prophesies and prefigures everything—all the bloody mess and the issues of the 20th century.

Pope Benedict XVI cited the book in the 2007 encyclical *Spe Salvi*.[28]

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had read Dostoevsky since his youth and considered the author as a great psychologist. His copy of *The Brothers Karamazov* reveals extensive highlights and notes in the margins that he made while reading the work, which have been studied and analyzed by multiple researchers.[29][30] Russian politician Vladimir Putin has described *The Brothers Karamazov* as one of his favorite books.[31]

According to Serbian state news agency Tanjug, Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić described Dostoevsky as his best-loved novelist, saying: "*The Brothers Karamazov* may be the best work of world literature."[2] American First Lady Laura Bush has said she is an admirer of the novel.[32]

Translations

Although *The Brothers Karamazov* has been translated from the original Russian into a number of languages, the novel's diverse array of distinct voices and literary techniques makes its translation difficult. Constance Garnett did the first English translation, in 1912.[33]

In 1958, David Magarshack and Manuel Komroff released translations of the novel, published respectively by Penguin and The New American Library of World Literature.[34] In 1976, Ralph Matlaw thoroughly revised Garnett's work for his Norton Critical Edition volume.[35] This in turn was the basis for Victor Terras' influential *A Karamazov Companion*.[36] Another translation is by Julius Katzer, published by Progress Publishers in 1981 and later re-printed by Raduga Publishers Moscow.

In 1990 Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky released a new translation; it won a PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize in 1991 and garnered positive reviews from *The New York Times Book Review* and the Dostoevsky scholar Joseph Frank, who praised it for being the most faithful to Dostoevsky's original Russian.[37]

Peter France

In *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translations*, academic Peter France comments on several translations of Dostoevsky's work. In regard to Constance Garnett's translations, he writes:[38]:595–6

> [Her] translations read easily...the basic meaning of the Russian text is accurately rendered on the whole. It is true, as critics such as Nikoliukin have demonstrated, that she shortens and simplifies, muting Dostoevsky's jarring contrasts, sacrificing his insistent rhythms and repetitions, toning down the Russian colouring, explaining and normalizing in all kinds of ways.... Garnett shortens some of Dostoevsky's idiosyncrasy in order to produce an acceptable English text, but her versions were in many cases pioneering versions; decorous they may be, but they allowed this strange new voice to invade English literature and thus made it possible for later translators to go further in the search for more authentic voice.

On David Magarshack's Dostoevsky translations, France says:[38]:596

> [I]t is not certain that Magarshack has worn as well as Garnett. He certainly corrects some of her errors; he also aims for a more up-to-date style which flows more easily in English.... Being even more thoroughly englished than Garnett's, Magarshack's translations lack some of the excitement of the foreign.

On Andrew R. MacAndrew's American version, he comments: "He translates fairly freely, altering details, rearranging, shortening and explaining the Russian to produce texts which lack a distinctive voice."[38]:596 On David McDuff's Penguin translation:[38]:596–7

> McDuff carries this literalism the furthest of any of the translators. In his *Brothers Karamazov* the odd, fussy tone of the narrator is well rendered in the preface....At times, indeed, the convoluted style might make the reader unfamiliar with Dostoevsky's Russian

> question the translator's command of English. More seriously, this literalism means that the dialogue is sometimes impossibly odd—and as a result rather dead....Such 'foreignizing' fidelity makes for difficult reading.

On the Pevear and Volokhonsky's translation, France writes:[38]:597

> Pevear and Volokhonsky, while they too stress the need to exhume the real, rough-edged Dostoevsky from the normalization practised by earlier translators, generally offers a rather more satisfactory compromise between the literal and the readable. In particular, their rendering of dialogue is often livelier and more colloquial than McDuff's.... Elsewhere, it has to be said, the desire to replicate the vocabulary or syntax of the Russian results in unnecessary awkwardness and obscurity.

In commenting on Ignat Avsey's translation, he writes: "His not entirely unprecedented choice of a more natural-sounding English formulation is symptomatic of his general desire to make his text English.... His is an enjoyable version in the domesticating tradition."[38]:597

List of English translations

This is a list of the unabridged English translations of the novel:[39][38]:598

- Constance Garnett (1912)
  - revised by Alexandra Kropotkin (1949)
  - revised by Susan McReynolds Oddo (2011)
- David Magarshack (1958)
- Andrew R. MacAndrew (1970)
- Julius Katzer (1980, as *The Karamazov Brothers*)
- Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (1990)
- David McDuff (1993)
- Ignat Avsey (1994, as *The Karamazov Brothers*)

Adaptations

Film

There have been several film adaptations of *The Brothers Karamazov*, including:

- *The Brothers Karamazov* (1915 silent film, lost, directed by Victor Tourjansky)[40]
- *Die Brüder Karamasoff* (1921, directed by Carl Froelich)[41]
- *Der Mörder Dimitri Karamasoff* (1931, directed by Erich Engels & Fyodor Otsep, starring Fritz Kortner, Anna Sten)[42]
- *I fratelli Karamazoff* (1947, directed by Giacomo Gentilomo)[43]
- *The Brothers Karamazov* (1958, directed by Richard Brooks, starring Yul Brynner and William Shatner)

- *The Brothers Karamazov* (1969, directed by Kirill Lavrov, Ivan Pyryev and Mikhail Ulyanov)
- *The Brothers Karamazov* (1969, directed by Marcel Bluwal)

Television

A Russian 12-episode mini-series was produced in 2009, and is considered to be as close to the book as possible.[44]

The 2013 Japanese TV drama *Karamazov no Kyōdai* is an adaptation of the book set in modern-day Japan[45] [46] that was created by executive producer Sato Misato, screenwriters Ouka Shizuka and Takei Aya, and directors Tsuzuki Junichi, Murakami Shosuke, and Satō Genta.[47]

The Open University produced a version of the Grand Inquisitor in 1975 starring John Gielgud.[48]

The Grand Inquisitor was adapted for British television as a one-hour drama titled *Inquisition*. Starring Derek Jacobi as the inquisitor, it was first broadcast on Channel 5 on 22 December 2002.

A 30-episode drama series named "Oulad El Moukhtar" (Mokhtar's sons) was produced by Nabil Ayouch for Al Aoula in 2020. The adaptation of the book is set in Morocco, with some aspects changed to resemble the local Moroccan culture. [49]

i. See Mikhail Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* for more on the relationship between Dostoevsky and his characters.

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5. *Complete Works*, vol. 17, p. 430
6. Lantz, pp. 40–41
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External links

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