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Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (Simplified Edition by ChatGPT)

Part 1

On a very hot evening early in July, a young man came out of the small room he rented under the roof of a tall house. The room was so small that it felt more like a box than a place to live. He stepped into the street slowly, almost as if he was unsure where he was going. He had managed to leave without meeting his landlady on the stairs, and this gave him a small feeling of relief.

The landlady lived one floor below him. Each time he went out, he had to pass her kitchen door, which was almost always open. Whenever he walked by, he felt nervous and ashamed. He owed her money and feared she would stop him and speak about his debt. It was not that he lacked courage. In truth, he had become very tired in mind and spirit. He avoided people because speaking to anyone felt heavy and painful.

Poverty pressed on him, yet lately even that no longer troubled him in a normal way. He had stopped caring about daily matters. He no longer tried to fix his situation. What he feared most was not danger, but being forced into long talk, excuses, and lies. Rather than face that, he preferred to slip quietly down the stairs like a cat and escape unseen.

As he reached the street, he suddenly became aware of his own fear and smiled strangely to himself. "I want to try something important," he thought, "and yet I am afraid of small things." He shook his head. He often spoke to himself now. He had spent many days alone in his room, thinking and thinking without rest.

Sometimes he wondered whether his plans were serious or only dreams made to pass the time.

The heat outside was heavy and hard to bear. Dust filled the air. People hurried past. The smell of drink shops mixed with sweat and smoke. Drunken men appeared again and again along the street, even though it was still a workday. All this made the young man feel sick. His face showed deep dislike for everything around him.

He was a handsome young man, tall and thin, with dark eyes and brown hair. Yet his clothes were in terrible condition. Even someone used to poor dress might feel shame wearing such things. In that part of the city, however, strange and worn clothing was common, so few people noticed. Still, when he met former students or people he once knew, he felt uneasy and tried to avoid them.

A drunken man riding past suddenly shouted at him and laughed at his hat. The young man stopped at once and grabbed it nervously. The hat was tall and round but badly worn and bent to one side. Fear, not shame, filled him. "I knew it," he muttered. "A small detail can ruin everything." He worried that such a noticeable hat might make people remember him. Small things, he believed, often destroyed great plans.

He knew exactly how far he had to walk: seven hundred and thirty steps. He had counted them once during earlier walks filled with strange thoughts. At that time, he had laughed at those thoughts. Now he no longer laughed. He was going to test something, almost like a practice. With each step, his heart beat faster.

Soon he reached a large house crowded with workers and poor families. People came and went through its gates without pause. He was glad no one noticed him as he entered and climbed a narrow, dark back staircase. He knew this staircase well and felt safer in its shadows.

"If I am this afraid now," he thought, "what would happen if I truly did it?" The idea made him uneasy.

On the fourth floor, workers were moving furniture out of a room. He learned from this that only one other tenant remained on that floor: an old woman. He felt oddly pleased by this detail. He rang her bell. It made a weak tin sound that

seemed to echo too loudly in his ears.

After a moment, the door opened slightly. Two sharp eyes watched him through the gap. When the old woman saw others on the stairs, she opened the door wider. He stepped into a dark entryway.

She was small and thin, about sixty years old, with sharp eyes and a narrow nose. Her hair was oily and without a covering. A worn fur cape hung on her shoulders despite the heat. She coughed often while studying him with suspicion.

“Raskolnikov,” he said quickly, bowing a little. “A student. I came here before.”

“I remember,” she replied, still watching him closely.

“I have come again on the same matter,” he added, feeling uneasy under her gaze.

She moved aside and let him enter the room. Sunlight filled the small space. Yellow paper covered the walls. Old furniture stood neatly arranged. Everything was very clean. A small lamp burned before an icon in the corner.

Raskolnikov looked around carefully, trying to remember every detail. The room held little of value, yet he studied it closely. He noticed another small room behind a curtain and guessed it contained her bed and chest.

“What do you want?” the old woman asked sharply.

“I have something to pawn,” he said, taking out a flat silver watch. “It belonged to my father.”

“The time for your last pledge has passed,” she said. “You owe interest.”

“I will pay soon. Please wait a little longer.”

“That depends on me,” she answered coldly.

He asked how much she would give for the watch. She offered very little. He tried to argue but finally accepted her price. She went behind the curtain to fetch money. While waiting, he listened carefully to the sounds of keys and drawers opening. He tried to guess where she kept her valuables and noticed the keys she carried.

When she returned, she counted the money slowly and explained every small deduction for interest. He received far less than he hoped. Anger rose in him, but he controlled himself.

“I may bring another item soon,” he said, trying to sound calm. “A silver case.”
“We will discuss it then,” she replied.

As he left, he casually asked whether she lived alone. She answered sharply, suspicious of the question. He quickly said goodbye and went out.

On the stairs, confusion filled him. By the time he reached the street, disgust overwhelmed him. “How horrible it all is,” he cried softly. “Can I really do such a thing?” He felt both fear and hatred toward himself. For a moment he walked like a drunk man, barely aware of people around him.

Soon he noticed a tavern entrance nearby. Without thinking, he went down the steps. He had never entered such a place before, but now he felt weak and terribly thirsty. He ordered a glass of beer and drank it quickly.

Almost at once he felt calmer. His thoughts seemed clearer. “It is nothing,” he told himself. “Only sickness from hunger and heat.” He looked around the room more peacefully, though a faint unease remained.

There were only a few people inside: two drunk men, a silent worker, and another man who looked like a poor clerk. The air smelled of drink and smoke. Food lay on the counter, giving off an unpleasant odor. The young man sat quietly, unaware that this meeting would soon change his thoughts in ways he could not yet understand.

Part 2

Raskolnikov was not used to being among people. For many weeks he had avoided company and preferred to remain alone in his narrow room. Yet now, after drinking the beer, he felt a strange wish to sit near others and listen to human voices. He did not know why this feeling came over him. Perhaps he was tired of his own thoughts, which had pressed on him without rest for many days.

The tavern was dark and dirty. The air was thick with smoke and the sharp smell of strong drink. Behind the counter stood a boy of about fourteen, while another younger boy carried food and cups from table to table. The owner moved in and out from another room, his boots making heavy sounds on the floor before the rest

of him appeared. Everything in the place seemed worn and tired.

At a nearby table sat a man who drew Raskolnikov's attention at once. The man looked like a former government clerk. He was about fifty years old, with a swollen face and red eyes that shone strangely. Though clearly drunk, there was still something thoughtful in his expression, as if he carried deep feeling inside him. His clothes were old and torn, yet he had buttoned one remaining button carefully, trying to keep some sign of dignity.

The man kept looking toward Raskolnikov, as though wishing to speak. At last he rose, took his drink, and moved closer.

"May I speak with you, sir?" he said loudly but politely. "Your appearance tells me you are an educated man, not one who drinks often. I respect education when it is joined with feeling. My name is Marmeladov. I hold the rank of titular counsellor. May I ask—have you served in government work?"

"No," Raskolnikov answered. "I am a student."

"Just as I thought!" Marmeladov cried, pleased. He sat beside him, swaying slightly but speaking with energy. "Experience, sir! I have much experience." He tapped his forehead proudly.

Though Raskolnikov had wished for company, he now felt his usual discomfort when a stranger spoke too freely. Still, he listened.

"Poverty is not a crime," Marmeladov began solemnly. "But begging—ah, begging destroys a man. In poverty one may still keep dignity. In begging, dignity is swept away like dirt from the floor." He drank again and sighed deeply.

Some people nearby laughed quietly, clearly familiar with his speeches. Marmeladov ignored them and spoke only to Raskolnikov.

"Have you ever slept on a hay barge by the river?" he asked suddenly.

"No," Raskolnikov replied, surprised.

"I have," said Marmeladov. "Five nights now." Pieces of hay still clung to his clothes. His hands were dirty, his nails black with grime.

The tavern keeper approached, listening with lazy interest. Marmeladov continued as if giving an important speech.

"Why do I not work?" he asked himself loudly. "Do you think my heart does

not suffer? A month ago a man beat my wife while I lay drunk nearby. Do you understand such shame?"

Raskolnikov listened silently.

"Have you ever asked for money when you knew you would not receive it?" Marmeladov asked.

"Yes," said Raskolnikov quietly.

"Then you understand! A man goes anyway because he must go somewhere. Every person must have at least one place to turn." His voice trembled. "When my daughter received her yellow passport, I had nowhere else to go."

Laughter came from the counter, but Marmeladov raised his head proudly.

"I am not ashamed," he said. "Yes, I am a pig—but she is a lady! My wife, Katerina Ivanovna, is educated, the daughter of an officer. I am a scoundrel, yet she is noble."

He struck the table with sudden force.

"I sold her stockings for drink," he cried. "Not shoes—stockings! Her shawl too. We live in cold and hunger. She coughs blood, yet works from morning until night. And I drink more because I feel my guilt more deeply."

He lowered his head, overcome.

"Young man," he continued softly after a moment, "I saw sadness in your face when you entered. That is why I speak to you. I seek not laughter but understanding."

Raskolnikov felt uneasy but could not stop listening.

Marmeladov began telling the story of his wife. She had once lived well and received honors at school. She had married an officer for love but became a widow with three children and no help from family. Proud yet desperate, she accepted Marmeladov's offer of marriage because she had nowhere else to go.

"For one year," he said, "I worked honestly and did not drink. But I lost my position. Then I fell again." He sighed deeply. "My daughter Sonia grew up without education. She tried to earn money by sewing, but honest work pays almost nothing."

His voice grew quieter.

“One evening there was no food for the children. My wife spoke harshly in her despair. Sonia asked softly if she must do such a thing. That night she went out. When she returned, she placed thirty roubles on the table without a word and lay down facing the wall. My wife fell at her feet and kissed them all night. And I... I lay drunk.”

The tavern became silent for a moment. Even those who mocked him listened now.

“Since then,” Marmeladov went on, “Sonia cannot live with us. She visits only at night and gives us what she can. She lives in a poor room with a tailor’s family.”

He suddenly brightened.

“But recently, sir, I found work again! A good man trusted me. My family was joyful. They walked softly so I could rest. They made coffee for me before work. My wife dressed proudly again. For a short time, I felt like a human being.”

His smile faded.

“And then,” he whispered, “five days ago, I stole the money I earned. Like a thief. I drank it all. I lost my job again. My uniform is gone. Everything is finished.”

He laughed weakly, though tears stood in his eyes.

“This morning I went to Sonia,” he added. “I asked her for money. She gave me her last thirty copecks. She said nothing. She only looked at me with pity.”

The tavern keeper shouted that he deserved no pity. Others laughed.

Marmeladov stood unsteadily, raising his arm.

“Why pity me?” he cried. “I should be punished, not pitied! Yet God will forgive those who suffer and love much. He will forgive my Sonia. And perhaps... even me.”

His strength left him, and he collapsed back onto the bench, exhausted.

After a moment he turned suddenly to Raskolnikov.

“Come with me,” he said. “I must go home—to Katerina Ivanovna.”

Raskolnikov hesitated but finally rose. He had already decided to help the man walk. Marmeladov leaned heavily on him as they left the tavern and stepped into the night air.

Part 3

Marmeladov leaned more and more heavily on Raskolnikov as they walked through the dark street. His steps were unsteady, and his voice trembled between fear and strange excitement. The night air was cooler now, but it did little to clear his head.

“I am not afraid of blows,” he muttered as they went along. “When she pulls my hair, it is nothing. That is not what frightens me. It is her eyes... her breathing... when she is angry and sick at the same time. And the children crying—that is what I fear most.”

He stopped for a moment, holding tightly to Raskolnikov’s arm.

“If Sonia has not brought food today,” he whispered, “I do not know what will happen. But punishment... punishment I deserve. It eases her heart.”

They entered a narrow yard and crossed toward a tall building. The staircase inside was dark and smelled of damp wood and smoke. As they climbed higher, the air grew heavier. Though it was summer, darkness filled the upper floors.

At last they reached the top. A small dirty door stood partly open. Light from a weak candle shone through the gap, revealing a poor room beyond.

Raskolnikov stepped inside first. The room was long and narrow, filled with disorder. Torn clothing lay everywhere. A ragged sheet hung across one corner, hiding what was likely a bed. Two broken chairs and an old table stood in the middle. A candle burned weakly, its flame shaking in the stale air.

From nearby rooms came loud voices, laughter, and the sound of people playing cards. Smoke drifted in through an open inner door.

A woman walked quickly back and forth across the room. She was thin and pale, yet still graceful. Her dark hair was beautiful though poorly kept, and her cheeks burned with a feverish red color. She pressed her hands against her chest as she breathed in short, painful gasps. Her eyes shone with restless energy.

This was Katerina Ivanovna.

She did not notice them enter at first. A small girl slept curled on the floor near the sofa. A boy stood crying quietly in a corner. Beside him, an older girl held him

close, trying to calm him while watching their mother with frightened eyes.

Marmeladov suddenly fell to his knees in the doorway, pulling Raskolnikov forward with him.

Katerina Ivanovna turned and saw them. For a moment she stared without understanding. Then recognition came, and her face changed completely.

“Ah!” she cried in a sharp voice. “He has come back! The criminal!”

She rushed toward him.

“Where is the money? Show me your pockets! And your clothes—where are your clothes?”

She searched him wildly. Marmeladov lifted his arms obediently, offering no resistance. There was nothing in his pockets.

“He has drunk it all!” she screamed in despair. “All of it!”

She seized his hair and dragged him into the room. Marmeladov crawled willingly, almost gratefully.

“This is comfort to me!” he cried loudly. “It does not hurt—it comforts me!”

The sleeping child woke and began to cry. The boy screamed in fear and ran to his sister. The eldest girl trembled like a leaf.

“They are hungry!” Katerina Ivanovna cried, pointing to the children. “Hungry! Accursed life!”

Suddenly she noticed Raskolnikov.

“And you!” she shouted. “You drank with him too! Go away!”

Raskolnikov stepped back silently. People from the neighboring rooms began to gather at the door, laughing and staring. Faces appeared through smoke—men in loose clothing, holding cards and cups. Their laughter grew louder as they watched Marmeladov being dragged across the floor.

The landlady’s voice rose above the noise, shouting angrily and threatening to throw the family out.

Raskolnikov hurried toward the exit. As he passed the window, he reached into his pocket and quietly placed the coins he had received earlier onto the sill. No one noticed.

Outside on the stairs, he stopped suddenly.

“What a foolish thing,” he thought. “They have Sonia... and I need money myself.”

For a moment he considered going back to take it. Then he shook his head and continued downward.

“It is impossible now,” he murmured. “And I would not take it anyway.”

He stepped into the street again. The night felt heavy around him.

“Sonia needs money too,” he said bitterly to himself. “Such a life costs money.”

He laughed harshly, though there was no joy in the sound. His thoughts moved quickly and darkly.

“They depend on her,” he continued inwardly. “They cry, then grow used to it. People grow used to everything.”

He walked without direction, lost in thought.

Suddenly he stopped.

“But what if I am wrong?” he said aloud. “What if man is not truly vile? What if fear and rules exist only in our minds?”

The question disturbed him deeply. He could not answer it.

The next morning he woke late after restless sleep. His body felt heavy and sick. Anger rose in him without reason as he looked around his small room.

The space was barely large enough to live in. The yellow paper on the walls peeled away. Dust covered books and papers that had long been untouched. Three broken chairs stood near a small table. A wide worn sofa served as his bed. He slept on it without sheets, wrapped in his old coat, using piled clothing as a pillow.

The disorder of the room matched his state of mind. In fact, he almost preferred it this way. He had withdrawn completely from other people, like an animal hiding in its shell. Even the servant girl annoyed him when she entered.

That morning she came in carrying tea.

“Get up,” said Nastasya. “It is past nine. Will you drink some tea? You must be starving.”

Raskolnikov sat up slowly.

“From the landlady?” he asked weakly.

“From her? No,” Nastasya said. “From me.”

She placed a cracked teapot and two small pieces of sugar on the table.

He searched his pocket for coins to give her, moving slowly, still half lost between sleep and waking thought, unaware that the events of the previous night had already begun to shape the path he would soon follow.

Part 4

Raskolnikov searched in his pocket for coins but found almost nothing. He looked at the small pieces of sugar and the weak tea, then at Nastasya. His movements were slow, as if even simple actions required effort.

“Take it,” he said at last, placing a few small coins in her hand. “For the tea.”

“Keep it,” she replied. “You need it more than I do.” She watched him carefully. “You hardly eat. You lie here all day like a sick man.”

He said nothing. His head felt heavy, and his thoughts moved slowly, yet beneath this weakness something restless continued to stir.

Nastasya remained standing, clearly wishing to speak.

“The landlady is angry,” she added. “She says she will complain to the police if you do not pay.”

Raskolnikov frowned but showed little concern.

“Let her complain,” he muttered.

Nastasya shook her head. She had grown used to his strange moods and no longer tried to argue. After a moment she handed him a folded letter.

“This came yesterday,” she said. “From the post. I paid the messenger three copecks myself.”

Raskolnikov stared at the letter as if he did not understand what it was. Then suddenly he seized it.

“A letter... from my mother,” he whispered.

His hands trembled. For several moments he did not open it. A mixture of fear and longing filled him. At last, when Nastasya left the room, he broke the seal quickly.

The letter was long. His mother wrote in careful, loving words, telling him of

her health and of his sister, Dunya. She spoke warmly and tried to sound cheerful, yet anxiety appeared between the lines.

As he read, his face changed again and again. Sometimes he smiled faintly; sometimes his eyes darkened.

She explained that life had been difficult after losing their small income. They depended greatly on Dunya's work as a companion in a wealthy house. At first the position seemed fortunate, but soon trouble began.

The master of the house, a man named Svidrigailov, had behaved badly toward Dunya. He pursued her with unwanted attention and spoke to her in secret. When his wife learned of this, she blamed Dunya instead of her husband. Rumors spread quickly. Dunya suffered humiliation and lost her position.

Raskolnikov clenched the letter tightly as he read this part. Anger rose within him.

His mother wrote that later the truth became known. The wife understood her mistake and apologized publicly. Dunya's honor was restored, yet the experience had been painful for them all.

Then came news that shocked him even more.

Dunya had accepted a marriage proposal from a man named Luzhin, a lawyer living in the capital. According to his mother, Luzhin was practical and respectable. He wished to marry a poor but honest girl who would feel grateful and obedient to her husband. His mother described this as a wise opportunity that would secure their future.

Raskolnikov stopped reading and stared at the wall. A cold feeling spread through him.

"Grateful and obedient," he repeated softly.

He returned to the letter. His mother explained that Luzhin planned to come to the city soon and hoped to meet Raskolnikov. She believed the marriage would allow them all to live together again. She dreamed of happiness and stability at last.

At the end she wrote with deep affection, encouraging him to continue his studies and reminding him that he was their greatest hope.

When he finished, the letter slipped from his hands onto the table. He remained still for a long time.

At first he felt warmth from his mother's love. Then another feeling replaced it—pain mixed with anger.

“She is sacrificing herself,” he murmured. “For me.”

He stood suddenly and began pacing the small room.

He imagined Dunya agreeing to marry a man she did not love, only to help her family and support her brother. The thought filled him with shame and rage. He believed he understood Luzhin's true intention: to marry a poor girl who would always feel dependent on him.

“No,” Raskolnikov said aloud. “It will not happen.”

Yet he knew he had no power to stop it. He had no money, no position, no future. He himself depended on others.

This realization struck him deeply. His thoughts turned inward again, toward the ideas that had troubled him for weeks.

He sat down heavily on the sofa and covered his face with his hands.

Time passed without his noticing. The room grew warmer as the day advanced. Outside, distant street noises reached him faintly.

At last he rose again, restless and unable to remain still. He reread parts of the letter, each word now cutting more sharply than before. Love, sacrifice, suffering—all seemed tied together in a painful knot.

“Everything depends on money,” he thought bitterly. “Everything.”

The idea returned again—the same thought that had followed him for days, growing stronger each time it appeared. He tried to push it away but could not.

He suddenly felt that remaining in the room was unbearable. Without finishing his tea, he put on his hat and left.

The air outside felt heavy but alive. He walked quickly, almost without direction, his mind burning with new intensity. The letter had awakened something inside him, something that would not rest.

As he crossed the street, one thought repeated itself again and again: that a single bold action might change everything—not only for himself, but for those

he loved.

And though he tried not to name this thought clearly, it followed him step by step, growing more real with every moment he walked through the crowded city.

Part 5

Raskolnikov walked quickly through the streets, hardly aware of where he was going. The city moved around him in noise and heat, but he noticed little. His mother's letter echoed again and again in his mind. Each sentence seemed to press upon him with new force.

"They expect everything from me," he thought. "And what am I able to give?"

The thought filled him with bitterness. He imagined his mother waiting with hope, his sister preparing to marry a man she did not love, all for his sake. The idea wounded his pride deeply.

He turned suddenly onto another street, walking faster. People brushed past him, but he paid them no attention. His thoughts moved between anger and cold reasoning.

"Dunya will sacrifice herself," he said inwardly. "She will endure humiliation so that I may live more easily. And they call this happiness."

He stopped for a moment beneath the shadow of a building, breathing heavily. A strange excitement began to rise in him, mixed with despair.

"No," he whispered. "It must not happen."

Yet he knew he had no money and no position. Words alone could change nothing. This helplessness drove him almost to madness.

He resumed walking and soon found himself near a crowded square. Market stalls stood everywhere. Voices shouted, carts rolled past, and the smell of food mixed with dust and sweat. The noise pressed against him, making his thoughts feel sharper.

He suddenly noticed a young girl walking unsteadily ahead of him. She looked very young, perhaps fifteen or sixteen. Her dress was torn and poorly fastened, and her face was pale with confusion. She moved as if she did not understand

where she was.

A well-dressed man followed close behind her, watching carefully. His expression made Raskolnikov uneasy at once.

The girl stopped near a bench and sat down heavily, as though exhausted. She leaned back, closing her eyes. It was clear she was not sober. Someone had taken advantage of her innocence.

The man approached slowly, pretending not to notice her condition. Raskolnikov felt sudden anger.

He stepped closer and addressed the man sharply.

“What do you want here?”

The man looked annoyed. “That is none of your business.”

Raskolnikov stared at him with open hostility. The man hesitated, then stepped away a short distance, pretending interest elsewhere.

Raskolnikov turned to the girl. She barely opened her eyes and muttered something unclear. She seemed lost and frightened, unable to protect herself.

A policeman nearby noticed the situation and approached.

“What is happening here?” he asked.

Raskolnikov quickly explained that the girl needed help and should be taken home. The policeman nodded and spoke gently to her, trying to learn her address.

Meanwhile the well-dressed man waited at a distance, clearly unwilling to leave. Raskolnikov felt disgust toward him.

He reached into his pocket and found a few remaining coins.

“Take this,” he said to the policeman. “Hire a carriage and send her safely home.”

The policeman accepted the money with approval.

But as soon as Raskolnikov stepped away, a sudden thought struck him. He stopped and turned back, watching from afar.

“Why did I interfere?” he asked himself bitterly. “What is it to me? Perhaps she will fall again tomorrow. Perhaps this is her path already.”

His mood changed quickly. Compassion gave way to cold reasoning.

“People grow used to everything,” he thought. “Even suffering.”

Ashamed of his own thoughts yet unable to escape them, he walked away rapidly.

Soon exhaustion overcame him. The heat, hunger, and restless thinking drained his strength. He wandered into a quiet area filled with trees and empty benches. Finding one in the shade, he sat down heavily.

His head spun. The sounds of the city faded. For the first time since morning, his thoughts slowed. He leaned back and closed his eyes.

Sleep came almost at once.

At first his dreams were unclear. Then one memory rose sharply from his childhood.

He saw himself again as a small boy walking beside his father along a country road. The air was bright and clear. They passed a village tavern where a crowd had gathered.

In the dream, a thin old horse stood harnessed to a heavy cart. The animal was weak and trembling. A group of drunken men laughed loudly around it.

One of them shouted that the horse should pull the overloaded cart even though it was clearly impossible. They began striking the horse with whips.

The young Raskolnikov in the dream cried out in fear. He begged them to stop. The horse struggled desperately, trying to move the cart, but its strength failed.

The men laughed harder. They beat the animal again and again. At last one man seized a heavy stick and struck it with terrible force.

The child ran forward, weeping, trying to protect the horse. He wrapped his arms around its bleeding head, crying for mercy.

But the blows continued until the animal collapsed and died.

The boy screamed in horror and clung to the dead horse while the crowd laughed.

Suddenly Raskolnikov awoke.

He sat upright on the bench, breathing hard. Sweat covered his face. For several moments he could not understand where he was.

The dream filled him with deep pain. Tears stood in his eyes.

“Why such a dream?” he whispered.

The cruelty he had witnessed as a child returned to him with terrible clarity. The helpless suffering of the horse seemed unbearable.

Slowly he rose from the bench. The world around him felt strangely quiet, as if something within him had shifted.

“No,” he said firmly. “I could never do such a thing.”

For a brief moment, relief entered his heart. The dark idea that had followed him seemed to weaken. He felt almost free from it.

Yet even as he began to walk away, another thought stirred faintly beneath the surface, waiting, patient and silent, as though the struggle within him was far from over.

Part 6

Raskolnikov walked slowly away from the park, still shaken by the dream. The image of the beaten horse remained clear before his eyes. He felt both sorrow and relief, as if something heavy had lifted from his heart.

“No,” he repeated to himself. “It is impossible. I could never cross that line.”

His breathing became calmer. For the first time in many days, his thoughts seemed simple and clear. The terrible idea that had troubled him now appeared foolish and unreal. He wondered how he could ever have taken it seriously.

“What madness,” he said quietly. “Only a sick mind could think such things.”

He walked without hurry, almost peacefully. The evening light softened the streets, and people passed him without drawing his attention. He felt tired but lighter than before.

Yet as he moved through the city, his steps slowly carried him toward a familiar district. He did not notice at first where he was going. His thoughts wandered, and his body followed old paths by habit.

Suddenly he stopped.

He stood near the very building he had visited the day before—the house of the old pawnbroker.

He stared at it in surprise.

“How did I come here?” he asked himself.

For a moment he felt uneasy, as though fate itself had guided his steps. He tried to turn away, but curiosity held him still.

Workers stood near the entrance, speaking loudly. One mentioned that the old woman’s sister would be away the next evening at a certain hour. The words reached Raskolnikov clearly.

He froze.

The conversation continued casually, without noticing him. Yet each word struck him with force. The sister—Lizaveta—would not be at home tomorrow evening.

A sudden chill passed through him.

The thought returned at once, no longer weak but sharp and alive. The opportunity appeared before him as if arranged by chance itself.

He walked away quickly, almost running, unable to remain near the building. His heart beat violently.

“It is decided,” he whispered without fully meaning to speak.

He felt neither joy nor fear, only a strange certainty. The struggle he believed finished returned stronger than before. What had seemed impossible now appeared inevitable.

As he moved through the streets, everything around him looked different. People’s faces, houses, sounds—all seemed distant, unreal. His mind focused on a single point.

He reached his room without remembering the path. Once inside, he sat down heavily on the sofa. His thoughts moved rapidly, yet with cold clarity.

He began to consider details: time, movement, small actions. Every step seemed suddenly necessary. He examined each idea carefully, as though solving a problem.

Still, deep within him another voice protested. The memory of the dream, of the suffering horse, rose again. For a moment he pressed his hands against his head, trying to silence the conflict.

“Enough,” he said aloud.

Exhaustion soon overcame him. The tension of the day drained his strength completely. Without undressing, he lay down and fell into a deep, heavy sleep.

When he awoke later, evening shadows filled the room. For several seconds he did not remember anything. Then the realization returned all at once.

Tomorrow.

The word struck him like a blow.

He jumped up quickly. Panic mixed with determination. He felt he had lost precious time.

Moving quickly, he began preparing small things he believed necessary. He searched through his belongings and found an old piece of cloth. With careful hands he wrapped it around a wooden object, tying it firmly. His movements were mechanical, as though guided by thought alone.

Every sound in the building made him start. He listened constantly, afraid someone might enter. Yet no one disturbed him.

At times doubt returned, and he paused, staring at his work in horror. Then another wave of cold reasoning pushed the doubt away.

“It is only a test,” he told himself. “Only courage is required.”

The room grew darker as night approached. Hunger troubled him, but he ignored it. His mind remained fixed on the coming evening.

Later Nastasya entered briefly, bringing food. He barely noticed her presence. She spoke casually, unaware of the storm inside him. After she left, silence returned.

He lay down again, not intending to sleep, yet sleep seized him suddenly and deeply. His body demanded rest before what lay ahead.

When he woke again, it was late. The air felt heavy and still. For a moment he felt terror, thinking he had overslept. Then he realized there was still time.

He rose slowly, his movements stiff. Everything now felt unreal, like a dream from which he could not wake. He dressed carefully, listening to every sound around him.

The city outside waited in evening quiet. Somewhere far away a clock struck the hour.

Raskolnikov stood in the center of his small room, breathing slowly. The path before him seemed already fixed, as if events had begun moving without his control.

Without looking back, he took his hat, opened the door, and stepped into the corridor, carrying with him the silent weight of a decision that would soon change his life forever.

Part 7

Raskolnikov closed the door quietly behind him and stood still for a moment in the dark corridor. His heart beat so loudly that he feared others might hear it. He listened carefully. The building was silent. Somewhere below, a door shut, and distant footsteps faded away.

He moved slowly down the stairs, holding the wrapped object hidden beneath his coat. Each step felt heavy, as if he were walking not by choice but by force. His thoughts were strangely calm, almost empty. Only one idea remained clear: he must continue.

Outside, evening shadows covered the streets. The air was warm, yet he felt cold. He walked steadily, avoiding people when possible. Every passerby seemed dangerous to him, though no one paid attention.

At times he felt sudden fear and wished to turn back. Then another thought answered immediately, pushing him forward again. He walked faster.

When he reached the familiar district, his breathing grew uneven. The houses appeared larger and darker than before. He slowed his steps and tried to appear natural, though he felt certain that everyone could see his agitation.

At the entrance to the building he paused once more. A porter stood nearby but looked away without interest. Raskolnikov entered quickly and moved toward the back staircase.

The narrow stairs were dark and silent. He climbed slowly, counting each step without meaning to. His hands trembled slightly. Several times he stopped, listening for movement above.

At last he reached the fourth floor.

Everything was quiet.

He stood before the old woman's door and listened carefully. No sound came from inside. He rang the bell gently. Its thin metallic sound echoed faintly.

For a moment nothing happened. Then he heard slow steps approaching. The door opened slightly, just as before, and the old woman's sharp eyes appeared in the gap.

"Who is it?" she asked suspiciously.

"It is I... Raskolnikov," he said, trying to keep his voice steady. "I have brought something to pawn."

She hesitated but finally opened the door wider and allowed him inside.

The room looked exactly as he remembered. The setting sun shone through the window, lighting the yellow walls and old furniture. Everything was clean and orderly.

"What do you want?" she asked impatiently.

He handed her the wrapped object, pretending nervousness suitable for a poor student. She turned toward the window to examine it more closely.

In that instant his thoughts stopped completely. A terrible silence filled his mind. He felt as though he were watching himself from far away.

Slowly, almost without awareness, he drew out the hidden object from beneath his coat.

For one second he hesitated.

Then everything happened quickly.

The old woman turned slightly, confused. Before she could cry out, he struck her. She fell at once. The room became silent except for his heavy breathing.

He stood frozen, staring, unable to understand what he had done. Fear rose suddenly, sharp and overwhelming.

After several moments he forced himself to move. His hands shook violently as he searched for keys. He remembered where she kept them and found them at her side. Every sound seemed loud to him—the rustle of clothing, the faint creak of furniture.

He hurried behind the curtain into the small bedroom. There he found a chest and opened it with trembling fingers. Inside were small boxes, chains, and objects wrapped carefully in paper.

He grabbed several items without examining them closely, placing them into his pockets. His thoughts were confused. He no longer felt certain or controlled. Panic grew with each passing second.

Suddenly he heard footsteps outside.

He froze.

The outer door opened.

Lizaveta entered the room.

She stopped at once, seeing what lay before her. Her face filled with terror. She raised her hands slightly but made no sound.

Raskolnikov stared at her in horror. This moment had never entered his plans. For a brief second he seemed unable to move.

She stepped backward slowly, trembling.

Driven by fear and confusion, he acted again before thought returned. The room fell silent once more.

He stood motionless, overcome by shock. The reality of what had happened pressed upon him with unbearable weight. The careful reasoning that had guided him vanished completely, replaced by dread.

Time seemed to stop.

Then sudden noises from the stairway reached him—voices, footsteps, movement nearby. Terror seized him fully now.

He rushed about the room, wiping his hands, listening desperately. Every second felt endless. He feared discovery at any moment.

Someone stopped outside the door and rang the bell loudly.

Raskolnikov held his breath.

The bell rang again.

Two men spoke outside, wondering why no one answered. One tried the handle. The locked door prevented entry, but their voices grew suspicious.

Raskolnikov stood perfectly still, barely breathing. He felt certain his heartbeats

could be heard through the walls.

After several tense moments, the men decided to fetch help and went downstairs.

The instant their footsteps faded, Raskolnikov moved quickly. He locked the inner door, checked the corridor, and slipped out silently. His legs felt weak, yet fear drove him forward.

He descended the staircase rapidly but carefully, listening for anyone returning. On one floor he heard voices and hid briefly in an empty apartment where painters had been working. When the path cleared, he continued downward.

At last he reached the street.

Fresh air struck his face, yet brought no relief. The city moved as usual around him, unaware of what had just occurred. He walked quickly away, trying not to run.

Every sound behind him felt like pursuit. Every glance from strangers seemed accusing. He clutched his coat tightly, hiding what he carried.

Somehow he reached his lodging house and climbed the stairs without meeting anyone. Inside his room he locked the door and leaned against it, trembling from head to foot.

The silence of the small room surrounded him.

Only then did he fully realize that nothing could return to what it had been before.

Part 8

Raskolnikov remained pressed against the door for a long time, unable to move. His whole body trembled. The silence in the room felt heavy, almost unbearable. He listened carefully, certain that footsteps would soon rush up the stairs and that someone would knock at any moment.

Nothing happened.

Slowly he stepped away from the door and looked around his small room as if seeing it for the first time. Everything appeared strange and distant. The dusty

table, the torn sofa, the peeling walls—all seemed unreal.

Suddenly he remembered the objects hidden in his pockets.

Fear returned at once. He hurried to the corner and emptied everything onto the table. Small boxes, chains, and trinkets fell out, wrapped in paper and cloth. He stared at them with confusion.

“Why did I take these?” he whispered.

He felt no satisfaction, only disgust and panic. The items meant nothing to him now. They seemed dangerous, almost alive, accusing him simply by existing.

He began searching desperately for a place to hide them. After looking around the room, he lifted a loose piece of wallpaper near the corner and pushed the objects into a narrow gap behind it. His hands worked quickly, almost blindly. When he finished, he pressed the paper back into place and stepped away.

For a moment he felt relief. Then doubt returned.

“It is too obvious,” he thought. “Anyone could find it.”

He paced the room, unable to decide what to do. His thoughts moved without order. At times he believed he heard voices outside, but when he listened carefully there was only silence.

Exhaustion suddenly overcame him. The tension of the day drained his strength completely. Without undressing, he collapsed onto the sofa.

His body shook with fever. Heat and cold passed through him in waves. He tried to think clearly but could not hold any thought for long. Images returned again and again—the room, the sound of the bell, the faces he could not forget.

At last sleep came, heavy and troubled.

When he woke, it was already late the next day. Light filled the room. For several seconds he lay still, unsure where he was. Then memory returned all at once.

He jumped up with a cry.

“Yesterday!” he whispered.

Panic seized him again. He rushed to the corner and checked the hiding place. The objects remained where he had left them. Seeing them brought no relief, only renewed fear.

His head ached badly. His throat felt dry. Fever burned in him. He tried to stand but nearly fell. The room spun around him.

A knock sounded at the door.

He froze.

“Who is it?” he asked weakly.

“It is me,” came Nastasya’s voice. “Open.”

He hesitated, then unlocked the door slowly. She entered carrying soup and bread.

“You have slept like a dead man,” she said, looking at him closely. “You look ill.”

Raskolnikov said nothing. He feared she might notice something strange in his face.

“A letter came from the police office,” she added casually. “They ask you to come there today.”

The words struck him like a blow.

“The police?” he repeated.

“Yes. Perhaps about your debt to the landlady.”

She placed the food on the table and watched him with curiosity.

His heart raced wildly. He believed at once that everything had been discovered. The summons seemed like certain proof.

After she left, he sat motionless, trying to understand what to do. Fear and weakness fought within him. Several times he thought he might faint.

“I must go,” he said finally.

Dressing felt difficult. His hands shook as he put on his clothes. Every small action required effort. The fever made his thoughts slow and confused.

At last he left the room and walked toward the police office. The streets appeared bright and loud, almost painful to his senses. People’s voices sounded distant, as if coming from far away.

When he arrived, he climbed the stairs slowly. Inside, clerks moved about, speaking and writing as usual. No one paid special attention to him.

He waited nervously until called forward. A clerk questioned him sharply—not

about any crime, but about unpaid rent. The landlady had filed a complaint demanding payment.

Relief and exhaustion rushed through him at once. He nearly collapsed.

While the clerk spoke, Raskolnikov suddenly felt dizzy. The room darkened before his eyes. Voices blended together into noise. He tried to answer but could not.

Without warning he fainted.

When he regained consciousness, several people stood around him. They spoke casually, believing his illness caused by hunger and weakness. No one suspected anything more.

He answered their questions with difficulty and soon was allowed to leave.

Outside, he walked slowly, barely able to stand. The realization that he was not suspected brought temporary relief, yet fear remained deep within him.

Every passing moment reminded him that he carried a secret no one else knew—a secret that now lived inside him, silent but growing heavier with each step he took through the crowded streets.

Part 9

Raskolnikov returned to his room with slow and uncertain steps. His body felt weak after fainting, and the fever still burned inside him. Each sound in the stairway made him uneasy, yet no one stopped him. When he reached his door, he entered quickly and locked it behind him.

He lay down on the sofa at once. His strength seemed completely gone. Thoughts came and disappeared without order. Sometimes he believed he heard voices calling his name, but when he listened carefully there was only silence.

Hours passed in confusion. At times he slept; at times he lay awake, staring at the ceiling. Memories of the previous evening returned again and again. He tried not to think, yet thinking could not be stopped.

Suddenly he sat up.

“The things,” he whispered.

Fear returned sharply. He hurried to the corner and pulled back the loose paper. The hidden objects were still there. He stared at them with growing dread.

“They must not remain here,” he thought.

The idea filled him with urgency. Anyone might discover them. The walls themselves seemed to accuse him.

Without fully planning, he gathered the items and wrapped them in a cloth. His hands trembled as he tied the bundle. He listened constantly, afraid someone might enter.

When evening came and the building grew quieter, he slipped out of his room carrying the bundle hidden beneath his coat. His legs felt weak, but determination pushed him forward.

Outside, the air felt cooler. He walked quickly, avoiding bright streets and crowded places. His mind worked only toward one goal: to get rid of everything.

After wandering for some time, he reached a deserted courtyard near a canal. Broken stones and rubbish lay scattered around. No one appeared nearby.

He searched until he found a large stone partly buried in the ground. With great effort he lifted it slightly and placed the bundle underneath. Then he pushed the stone back into place.

For a moment he stood still, breathing hard.

“It is finished,” he whispered.

A strange feeling came over him—not relief, but emptiness. The objects were gone, yet nothing felt resolved. He realized he had not even examined what he had taken. The effort had brought him nothing except fear.

He laughed quietly, though the sound held no joy.

“So much for that,” he said.

He walked away quickly, leaving the courtyard behind. The city lights began to appear as evening deepened. People moved about their ordinary lives, unaware of him.

Returning home felt easier now that he carried nothing. Yet exhaustion soon returned. His fever grew worse, and by the time he reached his room he could barely stand.

He collapsed onto the sofa again.

During the night he drifted in and out of troubled sleep. Strange dreams mixed with waking thoughts. Sometimes he imagined footsteps outside his door. Sometimes he believed someone stood beside him watching.

In the morning Nastasya entered quietly. Seeing his condition, she shook her head.

“You are truly ill,” she said. “You should see a doctor.”

He tried to answer but his voice was weak. She brought water and helped him drink. Her simple kindness confused him. He avoided her eyes, fearing she might see something hidden within him.

Later a friend from university, Razumikhin, arrived unexpectedly. He had heard that Raskolnikov was sick and came to check on him. Razumikhin was tall, energetic, and cheerful, speaking loudly as he entered.

“So this is how you live!” he said, looking around the poor room. “You nearly disappear from the world and then fall ill.”

Raskolnikov listened without responding much. Razumikhin spoke easily, filling the silence with talk about studies and acquaintances. His presence felt both comforting and irritating.

At one moment Razumikhin mentioned news spreading through the city: the murder of an old pawnbroker and her sister. The crime shocked many people because of its brutality.

Raskolnikov felt cold at once.

He turned his face toward the wall so his expression would not be seen. Razumikhin continued speaking, unaware of the effect his words had.

“The police have no clear suspect,” he said. “They question many people, especially those who had dealings with the old woman.”

Raskolnikov’s heart pounded violently. He forced himself to remain still.

Razumikhin soon noticed his friend’s weakness and stopped talking about the matter. He promised to return later and help him recover.

After he left, silence filled the room again.

Raskolnikov lay motionless, staring at nothing. The outside world had begun

speaking openly about the event he alone carried within himself. The distance between his secret and ordinary life seemed to shrink.

He realized that from now on every conversation, every glance, every rumor might touch upon what he had done.

And though no one yet suspected him, the weight of knowledge pressed upon him more heavily than before, growing stronger with each passing hour.

Part 10

Raskolnikov remained in bed for several days. Fever held him tightly, and his thoughts moved in broken pieces. Sometimes he slept deeply; sometimes he woke suddenly, certain that someone stood beside him. The boundary between dream and waking life became unclear.

Nastasya cared for him as best she could. She brought soup, water, and tea, often shaking her head at his condition. He answered her questions only with short words. Speaking required too much effort.

During his illness, fragments of conversation reached him. He heard voices in the hallway, neighbors talking, doors opening and closing. Often he imagined they were speaking about him. Each sound filled him with anxiety.

One morning Razumikhin returned. He entered noisily, bringing energy into the small room.

“You are still alive,” he said with relief. “Good. I was afraid you would die alone in this place.”

He sat beside the sofa and spoke cheerfully, trying to raise Raskolnikov’s spirits. He explained that he had visited several times but found him asleep or delirious. Now he intended to help properly.

Razumikhin brought news from the university and from acquaintances. He spoke about work opportunities and small plans for the future, as if ordinary life could easily return.

Raskolnikov listened quietly, half grateful, half irritated by the constant talking.

Soon a doctor arrived with Razumikhin. The doctor examined Raskolnikov

calmly, asking simple questions. He concluded that the illness came from exhaustion, hunger, and nervous strain.

“He must rest,” the doctor said. “No heavy thinking. Good food and quiet.”

Razumikhin agreed strongly, promising to watch over him.

After the doctor left, Razumikhin continued speaking, telling stories to distract him. At one point he mentioned again the murder that occupied the city’s attention.

“Everyone talks about it,” he said. “The investigators question many people. They even examined those who had pawned items there.”

Raskolnikov’s breath caught slightly, but he forced himself to remain calm.

“They say the killer took very little,” Razumikhin added. “Strange, isn’t it? As if the person did not even know what he wanted.”

Raskolnikov turned his face away, pretending fatigue. Razumikhin quickly changed the subject, thinking the topic unpleasant for a sick man.

Later that day another visitor arrived: a man named Zossimov, a friend of Razumikhin and the doctor who had examined him. Zossimov spoke slowly and carefully, watching Raskolnikov with professional interest. His calm manner made Raskolnikov uncomfortable, as if he were being studied.

The conversation again drifted toward the crime. Zossimov discussed possible motives, speaking logically about criminals who act under strange ideas or sudden impulses.

“Sometimes,” he said, “a man convinces himself he has the right to act beyond ordinary rules. He believes himself stronger or wiser than others.”

Raskolnikov felt a sharp reaction within him. The words seemed directed at his hidden thoughts. He sat up suddenly, then lay back again, pretending weakness.

Razumikhin laughed at the doctor’s theories and argued cheerfully, but Raskolnikov barely heard them. The conversation echoed painfully in his mind.

When the visitors finally left, exhaustion returned. Yet sleep did not come easily. He stared at the ceiling, replaying every word.

“They speak of it as a puzzle,” he thought. “As if it were only an idea.”

The distance between his inner world and the ordinary talk of others felt unbearable. He wanted both to confess and to remain silent. Opposite desires

struggled inside him.

The next morning brought another surprise. A servant delivered a parcel and money sent by his mother. Razumikhin opened it eagerly and explained that his family worried greatly about his health.

Raskolnikov accepted the money without joy. The reminder of his mother and sister returned him to painful thoughts about sacrifice and expectation.

Razumikhin also announced that a man named Luzhin—the one engaged to his sister—had arrived in the city and wished to meet him soon.

At this news, Raskolnikov felt sudden irritation.

“I do not wish to see him,” he said sharply.

Razumikhin looked surprised but said nothing further.

After he left, silence filled the room again. Raskolnikov felt slightly stronger physically, yet inwardly more troubled. Recovery of the body only made his thoughts clearer, and clarity brought no peace.

Outside, life continued normally. People worked, talked, laughed. Inside the small room, however, Raskolnikov felt separated from all of it, as if he stood behind an invisible wall.

He understood that illness had protected him for a short time. As his strength returned, he would again face the world—and with it, the growing pressure of his secret.

And though no accusation had yet reached him, he sensed that events were slowly moving closer, step by step, toward a moment he could neither escape nor fully imagine.

Part 11

Raskolnikov’s strength slowly returned over the next few days, though his mind remained restless. He could now sit up for longer periods and even walk a little around the room. Yet calm did not come with recovery. Instead, awareness sharpened, and every thought seemed heavier than before.

Razumikhin visited often. His cheerful energy filled the small space, bringing

food, news, and conversation. He spoke openly and honestly, treating Raskolnikov not as a sick man but as a friend who needed help returning to life.

One afternoon Razumikhin arrived with particular excitement.

“Your family is coming,” he announced. “Your mother and sister have arrived in the city. They will visit soon.”

Raskolnikov felt sudden tension.

“So soon?” he asked quietly.

“Yes,” Razumikhin said. “They worry deeply about you. I met them already. They are kind people.”

The news unsettled him. The thought of facing them filled him with both longing and dread. He feared their love almost as much as he desired it.

After Razumikhin left, he paced the room slowly. He imagined his mother’s anxious face and Dunya’s calm strength. Shame rose within him again.

“They come with hope,” he thought. “And what am I now?”

That evening another visitor appeared: Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin. He entered carefully, dressed neatly, carrying himself with controlled dignity. His manner was polite but distant, as though he measured every movement.

Luzhin introduced himself formally and spoke about practical matters—his work, his plans, and his intention to build a respectable household with Dunya. He emphasized reason, order, and independence.

Raskolnikov listened silently, studying him.

Luzhin explained his belief that a poor woman made the best wife because she would value her husband’s support and remain grateful. He spoke as if describing a logical arrangement rather than a human relationship.

These words angered Raskolnikov deeply.

“So you wish gratitude,” he said coldly. “Not love.”

Luzhin seemed surprised by the tone but continued calmly, defending his views. He argued that practical marriages created stability and avoided foolish passion.

The conversation grew tense. Raskolnikov’s irritation increased with every sentence. Finally he spoke sharply.

“I do not approve of this marriage.”

Luzhin stiffened.

“Your opinion,” he replied carefully, “is perhaps influenced by illness.”

The words sounded polite, yet carried hidden insult. Raskolnikov’s anger rose further. The room felt suddenly too small.

After several strained exchanges, Luzhin stood to leave, clearly offended. He announced that future discussions would occur in the presence of the family and departed with formal politeness.

When the door closed, Raskolnikov felt both relief and exhaustion.

Soon after, Razumikhin returned and learned of the meeting. He laughed at Luzhin’s seriousness and tried to calm Raskolnikov, but concern showed in his face.

“You must not upset yourself,” he said. “Your family will arrive tomorrow. Rest tonight.”

Night came slowly. Raskolnikov lay awake, unable to sleep. Thoughts moved endlessly through his mind—his sister’s future, Luzhin’s intentions, and beneath everything, the hidden crime that separated him from them all.

The next day his mother, Pulcheria Alexandrovna, and his sister, Dunya, arrived.

When they entered the room, emotion filled the air at once. His mother rushed forward, tears in her eyes, speaking quickly with joy and worry. Dunya stood beside her, calm and strong, watching her brother closely.

For a moment Raskolnikov felt warmth and happiness. He embraced them awkwardly, unsure how to respond to such open affection.

Yet almost immediately discomfort returned. Their love felt painful, reminding him of what he concealed.

His mother spoke endlessly, describing their journey and hopes for the future. Dunya listened quietly, observing him with careful attention, as if sensing something troubled beneath his calm.

The meeting soon became strained. Raskolnikov spoke little and answered sharply at times without intending to. His sudden moods confused and hurt them.

When Luzhin’s name arose in conversation, tension returned. Raskolnikov openly criticized him, declaring the marriage wrong. His mother tried to calm the

discussion, while Dunya defended her decision with dignity.

“I choose freely,” she said firmly. “I do this for our future.”

Raskolnikov turned away, unable to argue further without revealing too much of his inner turmoil.

The visit ended sooner than expected. His mother left worried, while Dunya looked at him with deep concern.

After they departed, the room felt emptier than before.

Raskolnikov sat alone, overwhelmed by conflicting feelings—love, anger, guilt, and fear. The presence of his family had not brought comfort. Instead, it made the distance between his secret life and theirs painfully clear.

He understood now that he could not remain hidden forever. Every meeting, every conversation drew him closer to confrontation—with others and with himself.

And though outwardly nothing had changed, inwardly the pressure continued to grow, silently shaping the path that lay ahead.

Part 12

After his mother and sister left, Raskolnikov remained seated for a long time without moving. The room felt strangely quiet, as if their presence had filled it with life that now suddenly disappeared. He stared at the floor, replaying every word of the meeting.

Their love troubled him deeply. Instead of comfort, it brought a painful awareness of separation. He felt unable to stand beside them honestly, yet equally unable to push them away.

A knock sounded at the door. Razumikhin entered again, full of concern.

“You frightened them,” he said gently. “Your mother worries very much. But they understand you are still ill.”

Raskolnikov did not answer at once. At last he said quietly, “I should not have spoken so harshly.”

Razumikhin waved his hand.

“You will make peace soon. Rest is what you need.”

He spoke warmly of Dunya and her strength, clearly impressed by her character. Raskolnikov noticed this and studied his friend carefully. For the first time, a faint sense of trust toward Razumikhin grew within him.

Their conversation soon turned again toward the investigation of the murders. Razumikhin described rumors spreading through the city. The police questioned many people but still lacked clear evidence.

“They even suspected painters who worked in the building,” he said. “One of them behaved strangely during questioning.”

Raskolnikov listened closely despite himself.

“The investigators search for small details,” Razumikhin continued. “They believe the killer may return to ordinary life too calmly, as if nothing happened.”

These words disturbed Raskolnikov deeply. He felt as though invisible eyes watched him constantly.

After Razumikhin left, he could no longer remain still. He paced the room, his thoughts growing sharper and more restless.

“They search for behavior,” he thought. “For signs.”

Fear mixed with defiance inside him. At moments he felt certain he could outthink everyone. At other moments he believed discovery inevitable.

Later that day he decided suddenly to leave the room and walk outside. The air felt heavy, but movement eased his agitation slightly. He wandered through familiar streets without direction.

Before long he found himself near the police office again. Without fully deciding, he entered the building.

Inside he encountered Porfiry Petrovich, the investigating magistrate assigned to the case. Porfiry greeted him politely, already aware of his connection to the old pawnbroker through pawned items.

The conversation began calmly. Porfiry spoke in a friendly manner, asking casual questions about Raskolnikov’s studies and health. His tone appeared relaxed, almost playful.

Yet beneath the friendliness Raskolnikov sensed careful observation.

Porfiry mentioned an article Raskolnikov had once written about crime and morality. According to the article, some individuals might possess the right to break laws if their actions served a greater purpose.

Hearing this, Raskolnikov felt sudden tension.

Porfiry smiled gently. “You argued that extraordinary people may step beyond ordinary rules. A fascinating idea.”

Raskolnikov defended himself carefully, explaining that such individuals were rare and often misunderstood. He spoke logically, yet felt increasingly uneasy.

The discussion turned philosophical. Porfiry asked questions that seemed simple but carried hidden meaning. He watched closely, noting every reaction.

Raskolnikov struggled to remain calm. At moments he felt the investigator already knew everything. At others he believed the conversation merely intellectual.

When the meeting ended, Porfiry shook his hand warmly and invited him to return anytime.

Outside, Raskolnikov breathed deeply, shaken by the encounter.

“He suspects,” he thought. “Or perhaps he only plays with me.”

The uncertainty troubled him more than open accusation would have. He realized that the investigation now touched him directly. Words, gestures, even silence might reveal too much.

As evening approached, he walked slowly back toward his lodging. The city lights began to glow, and ordinary life continued around him without pause.

Yet inside him tension grew stronger. Each meeting—with family, friends, or investigators—tightened the invisible circle surrounding him.

He felt caught between confession and resistance, unable to choose either path fully.

And as he climbed the stairs to his small room once more, he understood that the struggle had moved beyond action itself. Now the true conflict lived within his own mind, where no escape was possible.

The meeting with Porfiry Petrovich stayed in Raskolnikov's thoughts long after he returned home. He walked back and forth across his small room, trying to understand the investigator's manner. Porfiry had spoken kindly, even joking at times, yet every word seemed carefully placed.

"He knows... or he guesses," Raskolnikov thought. "But why does he not accuse me?"

The uncertainty troubled him more than open danger. A clear accusation would have allowed resistance. Instead, Porfiry's calm curiosity left him trapped between fear and doubt.

That evening Razumikhin visited again, full of energy as always. He spoke about meeting Raskolnikov's mother and sister earlier in the day. He praised Dunya's strength and intelligence with open admiration.

Raskolnikov listened quietly. For the first time, he noticed genuine warmth between Razumikhin and his sister. The idea brought him unexpected comfort. He trusted Razumikhin's honesty far more than Luzhin's careful politeness.

Soon the conversation turned again to the investigation.

"Porfiry Petrovich is clever," Razumikhin said. "He prefers to observe rather than accuse. He lets people reveal themselves."

These words struck Raskolnikov sharply.

"Reveal themselves," he repeated softly.

Razumikhin continued, unaware of his friend's inner struggle. He explained that the investigators examined psychological signs as much as physical evidence.

After Razumikhin left, Raskolnikov sat alone in darkness. He felt watched even in solitude. Every memory of the conversation with Porfiry returned with new meaning.

He remembered Porfiry's questions about extraordinary people and moral permission. At the time he had defended his theory calmly, but now the ideas sounded dangerous even to himself.

"Was I testing myself?" he wondered. "Or proving something?"

He could no longer separate theory from action. The ideas that once seemed

abstract now felt painfully real.

The next day he decided suddenly to visit Sonia.

Her lodging stood in a poor district, inside a crowded building filled with noise and narrow passages. When she opened the door, she looked surprised but gentle, as if she had expected him.

The small room was simple and nearly empty. A table, a chair, and a bed stood close together. Everything was clean despite poverty.

Sonia greeted him quietly. Her pale face showed kindness mixed with sadness. She spoke softly, asking about his health.

Raskolnikov felt uneasy in her presence. Her calm compassion made him uncomfortable, yet he could not leave.

They spoke about Marmeladov's death and the hardship faced by the family. Sonia described her efforts to help Katerina Ivanovna and the children. She spoke without complaint, accepting suffering as something natural.

Watching her, Raskolnikov felt a strange mixture of respect and pain.

"Why do you endure all this?" he asked suddenly.

She looked at him with simple surprise.

"Because they need me," she answered.

The words were spoken without pride or sadness—only truth. This simplicity affected him deeply.

Silence followed. Raskolnikov struggled with thoughts he could not express. At last he asked her to read from a religious book lying on the table.

Sonia hesitated but opened it and began reading aloud. Her voice was quiet and steady. The story spoke of death and return to life, of hope beyond suffering.

Raskolnikov listened closely. The words seemed distant yet powerful, touching something hidden within him. For a moment he felt both comfort and fear.

When she finished reading, silence filled the room again.

He stood suddenly.

"I will come again," he said.

Sonia nodded gently, sensing his turmoil but asking no questions.

Outside, Raskolnikov walked slowly through the evening streets. The meeting

left him unsettled. Sonia's faith and patience stood in sharp contrast to his own restless mind.

He realized that she accepted suffering openly, while he fought constantly against it.

"She lives beyond judgment," he thought. "While I remain trapped within it."

The city lights shone around him as night deepened. People laughed, talked, and hurried past, unaware of his inner struggle.

Returning to his room, he felt the conflict within him grow stronger. Reason, pride, guilt, and longing pulled him in different directions.

He understood now that the crime itself had been only the beginning. The true burden lay not in what he had done, but in what he must now become.

And as he lay awake that night, listening to distant sounds of the city, he sensed that the path ahead would lead him toward a decision he could no longer delay.

Part 14

The days that followed passed in growing tension for Raskolnikov. He moved between moments of calm and sudden waves of anxiety. Sometimes he believed he had regained control of himself; at other times a single thought was enough to disturb him completely.

News soon reached him that Katerina Ivanovna's condition had worsened. After Marmeladov's death, her health declined quickly. Poverty and grief exhausted her strength. Sonia struggled to care for the children while managing her own hardships.

Raskolnikov felt drawn again toward Sonia, though he could not clearly explain why. Her presence seemed painful yet necessary to him, as if she understood something he himself could not face.

One evening he visited her once more. She welcomed him quietly, her gentle manner unchanged. The small room looked the same as before—simple, clean, and filled with silence.

He sat without speaking for some time. Sonia waited patiently, sensing that he

wished to talk but could not begin.

At last he spoke.

“If someone committed a terrible act,” he said slowly, avoiding her eyes, “and believed it right at the time... what should that person do afterward?”

Sonia looked at him with concern.

“If it was wrong,” she answered softly, “then he must suffer and ask forgiveness.”

Her reply was simple, without argument or judgment. Yet the words struck him deeply.

“And if he cannot bear the suffering?” he asked.

She lowered her gaze.

“Then he must still bear it,” she said. “There is no other way.”

Silence followed again. Raskolnikov felt both anger and relief at her certainty. Her belief seemed stronger than any reasoning he possessed.

He rose abruptly and began walking around the room.

“People speak of justice,” he said bitterly. “But who decides what is just? Some people live in misery all their lives while others rule over them.”

Sonia listened quietly, her expression filled with compassion rather than disagreement.

“You suffer,” she said gently. “That is clear.”

These simple words weakened his resistance. For a moment he nearly spoke openly, yet fear stopped him. Instead he turned away.

“I will come again,” he said quickly, preparing to leave.

As he reached the door, Sonia suddenly spoke.

“You should not carry everything alone.”

He paused but did not turn back. Without answering, he left.

Outside, night air cooled his face. Her words echoed within him. He felt both drawn toward confession and terrified by it.

Meanwhile, tension grew within his family. Luzhin had written a letter complaining about Raskolnikov’s behavior and demanding that Dunya choose between her brother and himself. The message angered both Dunya and her

mother.

A meeting was arranged to settle the matter.

When they gathered together, Luzhin spoke formally, accusing Raskolnikov of disrespect and harmful influence. He insisted that harmony required distance between them.

Dunya listened calmly. When Luzhin finished, she spoke with quiet firmness.

“I will not choose between my brother and my future husband,” she said. “If such a choice is required, then the marriage cannot continue.”

Luzhin reacted with shock and anger. He attempted to defend himself, but Dunya’s decision remained firm. At last he left, deeply offended.

After his departure, relief filled the room. Raskolnikov watched his sister with admiration. For the first time since their arrival, warmth returned between them.

Razumikhin, who had attended the meeting, openly supported Dunya’s decision. His respect and kindness toward her became even clearer. Raskolnikov noticed this and felt genuine gratitude.

Yet despite this moment of family unity, his inner conflict remained unchanged. Happiness around him only reminded him of the secret separating him from them.

Later that night he walked alone through the streets again. The city seemed restless, mirroring his thoughts. Every light, every passing face appeared charged with meaning.

He realized that events moved steadily toward a turning point. Porfiry’s questions, Sonia’s compassion, his family’s presence—all pressed upon him from different sides.

He could no longer remain suspended between denial and confession forever.

Standing beneath a street lamp, he felt sudden clarity: the struggle was no longer about escaping suspicion, but about deciding who he truly was.

And though he did not yet know what choice he would make, he sensed that the moment of decision was approaching quickly, drawing nearer with every passing day.

Part 15

After the meeting in which Dunya refused Luzhin, a brief sense of calm entered Raskolnikov's life. His mother felt relieved, and Razumikhin's cheerful presence helped restore warmth among them. Yet this peace existed only on the surface. Inside, Raskolnikov's thoughts grew darker and more intense.

He began avoiding long conversations, especially with his family. Their affection felt almost painful to him. Each kind word reminded him of the truth he hid. He often left suddenly, walking alone through the streets for hours.

One afternoon he received a message requesting another visit with Porfiry Petrovich. Though the invitation sounded casual, anxiety returned immediately. He knew the meeting would not be simple.

When he arrived, Porfiry greeted him warmly, almost like an old friend. The investigator spoke lightly at first, discussing ordinary matters. Tea was served, and the atmosphere appeared relaxed.

Yet gradually the conversation turned again toward crime and human nature.

"Some people," Porfiry said thoughtfully, "believe themselves permitted to act beyond moral limits. They imagine they serve a higher purpose."

Raskolnikov felt tension rise but answered calmly.

"Ideas alone do not make a crime," he said. "Action depends on character."

Porfiry smiled slightly.

"Exactly. And character often reveals itself after the act, not before."

The words carried hidden weight. Raskolnikov sensed that the discussion no longer remained theoretical.

Porfiry began describing how criminals sometimes return to investigators voluntarily, drawn by inner pressure. He spoke gently, almost sympathetically, as if explaining a natural human condition rather than accusing anyone.

Raskolnikov struggled to remain composed. He felt examined from within, as though Porfiry watched not his words but his thoughts.

At last Porfiry mentioned that new evidence had appeared and that another man had confessed to the murders. The suspect was a painter who had worked in the building.

The announcement shocked Raskolnikov.

For a moment relief flooded him so strongly that he nearly showed it openly. Yet Porfiry observed him closely, and suspicion returned at once.

“The case is not yet settled,” Porfiry added calmly. “Confessions can be false.”

The conversation ended soon afterward. Porfiry shook his hand again, smiling kindly, and invited him to visit anytime.

Outside, Raskolnikov felt dizzy. The news of another confession brought temporary freedom, yet uncertainty remained. He sensed that Porfiry’s interest in him had not disappeared.

Walking through the streets, he struggled to understand his own reaction. Instead of relief, he felt emptiness. The possibility of escape did not bring peace.

“Why am I not glad?” he asked himself.

That evening he went again to Sonia. Her room felt familiar now, a place where he could speak more freely than anywhere else.

She noticed his agitation immediately.

“Something troubles you,” she said softly.

He told her about the false confession and the investigation without revealing his own role. Sonia listened carefully, her face filled with concern.

“Truth cannot remain hidden forever,” she said quietly. “Even when people try to hide it, it finds a way to appear.”

Her words unsettled him deeply.

He sat in silence for a long time. At last he spoke in a low voice.

“If a man stood at a crossroads,” he said, “unable to move forward or backward, what should he do?”

Sonia answered without hesitation.

“He must choose truth.”

The simplicity of her reply struck him more strongly than any argument. He felt both resistance and longing at once.

Before leaving, he suddenly took her hand.

“If I tell you something terrible,” he said, “will you still remain beside me?”

Sonia looked at him with quiet certainty.

“Yes,” she said.

He released her hand quickly, frightened by his own impulse.

Outside, night had fallen. The city seemed unusually still. Raskolnikov walked slowly, feeling that an invisible boundary lay before him.

The false confession offered him safety, yet his conscience refused rest. Sonia’s words echoed within him, growing stronger with every step.

He began to understand that punishment might come not from the law but from within himself. The struggle he faced was no longer about avoiding discovery—it was about whether he could continue living with silence.

And as he returned once more to his small room, he sensed that the final decision approached, closer now than ever before, waiting for him to face it openly.

Part 16

That night Raskolnikov did not sleep. He lay on the sofa staring into darkness while Sonia’s words repeated in his mind: *choose truth*. The phrase returned again and again, simple yet impossible to escape. Each time he tried to push it away, it came back with greater force.

Morning arrived slowly. Pale light entered through the window, revealing the same poor room, the same worn furniture. Yet everything felt changed. He sensed that the time of delay was ending.

He rose and walked restlessly across the floor. At moments he felt ready to confess everything at once. At other moments pride rose sharply within him, arguing that confession meant defeat.

“Why must I suffer?” he asked himself. “Was my purpose not greater than ordinary rules?”

But even as he spoke the thought, it sounded empty. The reasoning that once seemed powerful now felt weak against the weight pressing on his heart.

Later that day Razumikhin visited again. He spoke happily about plans for work and about helping Raskolnikov recover fully. His honest concern touched Raskolnikov deeply.

“You will return to study soon,” Razumikhin said. “Life can begin again.”

Raskolnikov forced a faint smile but said little. The idea of ordinary life seemed distant, almost impossible.

After Razumikhin left, Raskolnikov went directly to Sonia’s room. His steps were quick, driven by urgency he no longer tried to resist.

Sonia opened the door and immediately saw the change in his face.

“You have decided something,” she said quietly.

He entered and stood in silence for several moments. Words seemed difficult to form. At last he spoke.

“I came to tell you who killed them.”

Sonia grew pale but did not step away.

“It was I,” he said.

The words fell into the room with terrible weight. For a moment neither moved. Raskolnikov watched her closely, expecting fear or rejection.

Sonia trembled, covering her mouth with her hands. Tears filled her eyes, yet she did not cry out.

“No...” she whispered, not in denial but in sorrow.

He began speaking rapidly, explaining everything—the plan, the reasoning, the accident with Lizaveta, the fear afterward. His voice rose and fell as if he struggled against himself.

Sonia listened without interruption. Her face showed deep pain, yet also compassion stronger than shock.

When he finished, silence returned.

“What have you done to yourself?” she said softly at last.

Her words struck him harder than accusation would have.

He tried to defend his actions, speaking of injustice, poverty, and strength. Yet even as he spoke, he felt the arguments lose meaning.

Sonia stepped closer.

“You must go and confess,” she said gently but firmly.

He shook his head at once.

“No. They cannot prove anything.”

“It is not about proof,” she answered. “You cannot live like this.”

Tears ran down her face now.

“Go to the crossroads,” she said. “Bow down before everyone and say aloud what you have done. Then God will give you life again.”

Raskolnikov turned away, overwhelmed.

“I am not ready,” he murmured.

Sonia took a small cross from around her neck and held it out to him.

“Take this,” she said. “When you are ready, wear it.”

He hesitated, then accepted it slowly. The simple object felt heavy in his hand.

They sat together in silence for a long time. No more arguments were needed. Something essential had already changed between them.

At last he rose to leave.

“Will you come with me?” he asked quietly.

“Yes,” Sonia replied. “Wherever you go.”

Outside, the evening air felt different to him. For the first time since the crime, he had spoken the truth aloud. Though fear remained, a strange lightness appeared beneath it.

Yet the final step still lay ahead.

He walked through the streets slowly, holding the cross in his pocket. Crowds moved around him, ordinary life continuing as always. He wondered how many people carried hidden burdens like his own.

Reaching a busy square, he stopped. Sonia’s words returned clearly: *bow down before everyone*.

His heart pounded. Pride resisted fiercely. People passed without noticing him, yet he felt exposed before them all.

He stood there for a long time, unable to move.

Finally he turned away and walked back toward his lodging. The decision was not yet complete. Confession stood before him like a door he feared to open.

But now the path was clear. He could no longer pretend ignorance or escape into theory. The truth lived outside him as well as within.

And as night closed over the city, Raskolnikov understood that only one step

remained between suffering and release—a step he knew he must soon take.

Part 17

The night after his confession to Sonia passed slowly for Raskolnikov. Though he had finally spoken the truth, peace did not come at once. Instead, he felt a strange emptiness, as if something long carried had been set down but still lay close beside him.

He walked through the streets without clear direction. The city lights blurred before his tired eyes. Every sound seemed distant. Yet beneath his exhaustion, a quiet certainty began to form: the moment of decision could no longer be delayed.

The next morning he visited his mother and sister. They welcomed him warmly, unaware of what had changed within him. His mother spoke with relief at seeing him stronger, while Dunya watched him carefully, sensing a serious mood.

He tried to speak normally, but emotion pressed heavily upon him. Their kindness felt almost unbearable now that he knew he would soon leave them.

At last he rose to go.

“I may travel soon,” he said quietly.

His mother looked surprised. “So suddenly?”

He avoided her eyes. “There are matters I must settle.”

Dunya stepped closer, studying his face.

“Something troubles you deeply,” she said. “You do not need to hide it from us.”

For a moment he nearly told everything. The words rose to his lips, but he stopped himself. He feared causing them pain before it became necessary.

“Trust me,” he said instead. “Whatever happens, remember that I love you.”

His mother embraced him with tears. Dunya held his hand firmly, as if promising silent support. Their affection strengthened his resolve while increasing his sorrow.

After leaving them, he walked directly toward Sonia’s lodging. She had been waiting, anxious but calm.

“Have you decided?” she asked.

He nodded slowly.

“Yes. I will go.”

Sonia crossed herself quietly. Though sadness filled her eyes, relief appeared as well.

Together they walked toward the police station. Sonia followed a short distance behind, respecting his need to take the final steps alone.

As they reached a crowded square, Raskolnikov suddenly stopped. The memory of her instruction returned clearly.

He looked around at the people moving past—workers, children, merchants, strangers living ordinary lives. A powerful feeling rose within him.

Slowly, trembling, he knelt and touched the ground.

People nearby stared in surprise. Some laughed softly, not understanding. Others simply passed without interest.

Raskolnikov felt shame burn within him, yet also a strange release. He stood again and continued walking.

Entering the police station, he felt calm for the first time. Clerks moved about their work, unaware of his purpose.

He approached a desk and spoke quietly.

“I wish to confess,” he said.

The words sounded simple, almost ordinary, yet they changed everything.

Soon he found himself before officials who listened carefully as he described the crime. He spoke clearly, without excuse. Each sentence felt heavy, yet also freeing.

When he finished, silence filled the room.

The officers exchanged glances, surprised by the direct confession. Questions followed, but he answered steadily. Resistance no longer existed within him.

Outside the building, Sonia waited anxiously. When she saw him led away under guard, she understood immediately. Tears filled her eyes, yet she smiled faintly through them.

Raskolnikov noticed her and felt sudden gratitude. Her presence gave him

strength as he stepped into a new life shaped by punishment and truth.

In the days that followed, formal procedures began. Evidence confirmed his confession, and the investigation ended. The false suspect was released.

His mother struggled to understand the news when it reached her. Shock and sorrow overwhelmed her. Dunya remained stronger, supported by Razumikhin, whose devotion became clear to all.

During the trial, Raskolnikov spoke honestly but without dramatic emotion. He admitted his actions fully. The court considered his illness, confession, and circumstances when deciding his sentence.

He was condemned to years of hard labor in a distant land.

When the judgment was announced, he felt neither anger nor despair. Instead he experienced quiet acceptance. The long struggle within him had ended. What lay ahead would be difficult, yet clear.

Sonia promised to follow him and remain near, offering support despite hardship. Her loyalty touched him deeply, though he still struggled to understand the depth of her faith.

As preparations for departure began, Raskolnikov realized that punishment marked not an ending but a beginning. The ideas that once guided him had collapsed, leaving space for something new he did not yet fully grasp.

And as he left the familiar streets of the city under guard, he carried with him both the weight of his past and the faint possibility of renewal waiting somewhere beyond suffering.

Part 18

The journey to the distant prison camp was long and exhausting. Raskolnikov traveled with other prisoners under constant guard. Days passed in slow movement across wide lands, through towns and empty fields. The rhythm of travel allowed little time for thought, yet his mind often returned to the past.

At first he felt separated from everything he had known. The city, his family, and his former life seemed unreal, like memories belonging to another person.

The future appeared uncertain, shaped only by work and discipline.

Sonia followed later, keeping her promise. Though she could not travel with the prisoners, she arranged to live near the settlement where he would serve his sentence. Her quiet determination amazed those who learned of it.

When Raskolnikov arrived at the camp, reality struck him fully. The barracks were crowded and rough. Prisoners lived closely together, sharing limited space and hard labor. Guards watched constantly. Days began early and ended late with physical exhaustion.

The other prisoners viewed him with suspicion at first. Many sensed his distance and pride. He rarely spoke and avoided forming friendships. Though he worked as required, his heart remained closed.

He still believed, deep inside, that his ideas had been misunderstood rather than entirely wrong. This hidden pride separated him from others and prevented peace.

Sonia visited whenever allowed. She brought small comforts—food, letters, and gentle conversation. The prisoners soon learned of her kindness and treated her with respect.

During visits she spoke little about the past. Instead she encouraged patience and hope. Raskolnikov listened but often remained silent, unable to share her faith.

Months passed.

Winter came, covering the land in snow. Work grew harder, and illness spread among prisoners. Raskolnikov endured physical suffering without complaint, yet emotional change came slowly.

One day he fell seriously ill and was moved to the prison hospital. Fever returned, similar to the sickness he had known before. During long hours of weakness, memories returned with new clarity.

He thought of the dream of the beaten horse, of Sonia's compassion, of his mother's love. For the first time he allowed himself to feel not only guilt but sorrow for others as well as himself.

Sonia visited often during his illness. She sat quietly beside his bed, reading softly or simply remaining present. Her patience required nothing in return.

Gradually his resistance weakened.

One morning he awoke feeling calmer than he had in many years. The fever had broken. Sunlight entered through the window, touching the simple room with warmth.

Sonia sat nearby, sewing quietly. When he looked at her, emotion rose suddenly within him—gratitude, humility, and something new he could not yet name.

Without speaking, he reached for her hand.

She looked up in surprise.

Tears filled his eyes as he realized how deeply she had shared his suffering without judgment. For the first time he felt genuine love and connection, not built on pride or theory but on shared humanity.

Sonia understood at once. Tears came to her eyes as well, though she smiled gently.

No words were needed.

In that moment, something changed within Raskolnikov. The burden he carried began to lift, not because punishment ended, but because he accepted it fully.

He no longer thought of himself as separate from others. The suffering he once rejected now became part of a path toward renewal.

Outside the hospital window, spring approached. Snow melted slowly, revealing earth beneath. Prisoners spoke of warmer days ahead.

Raskolnikov understood that his sentence still stretched far into the future. Hard labor and hardship would continue. Yet for the first time he sensed that life itself remained possible.

The ideas that once drove him had fallen away, replaced by quiet awareness that change required time and patience.

Holding Sonia's hand, he felt the beginning of a new understanding—one not based on superiority or power, but on compassion and shared struggle.

And though many years remained before freedom, he sensed that true renewal had already begun within him, opening slowly like spring after a long and painful winter.

Here the story reaches its end, not with completion but with the promise of a life still unfolding beyond suffering and toward hope.

