

Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 1

Svidrigailov announces that he has come to see Raskolnikov for two reasons: First, he has long wanted to meet him, and second, he wants help in obtaining an interview with Dunya. Raskolnikov's immediate response is a negative one, and Svidrigailov begins to reveal himself freely and openly to Raskolnikov by confiding in Raskolnikov many episodes of his past life. He cannot see that he has done anything wrong: He admits that once he took a riding whip to his wife Marfa Petrovna, but believes some women like such dominance; he admits that he did make proposals to Dunya, but many women are pleased at such attentions, and others are "highly gratified at being outraged, in spite of their pretended indignation. . . women in general love to be affronted."

- THOUGHTS! – Boys first... what do you think about any of these claims? Do they have any merit?
- Girls second: *feel free not to answer... but please do if you have some thoughts*

This type of degenerate talk on such intimate terms prompts Raskolnikov to get up and leave at once, but his curiosity keeps him from doing so. In the midst of the conversation, Svidrigailov points out that he and Raskolnikov have a great deal in common. Raskolnikov rejects this idea, and yet he is fascinated with the talk of this admitted "vulgarian and sensualist" who is simply saturated with experiences of every kind. As Raskolnikov listens attentively and with some fascination, Svidrigailov again repeats his idea that there is "something in common" between them, encouraging a vague sense of camaraderie.

- To what might Svidrigailov refer?
- Can you think of anything they might have in common?

Finally, Svidrigailov announces that he wants to meet Dunya and makes her a present of 10,000 roubles (a LOT of money) so as to aid in her a rupture with Luzhin. He maintains that Dunya "is sacrificing herself, with great nobility for her family." If she does not accept his gift, she will be taking money from Luzhin instead and would be dreadfully confined in such a cruel marriage.

- What should Dunya do? What would you do?

Again Svidrigailov emphasises that "there is something about you like me," and he vows if Raskolnikov does not help him arrange a meeting with Dunya, he will do so himself. As he leaves, he tells Raskolnikov that Marfa Petrovna (his dead wife) left Dunya 3,000 roubles in her will.

- Why might Marfa Petrovna have left Dunya money?

On his way out, Svidrigailov collides in the doorway with the entering Razumikhin.

Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 2

On their way to the meeting with Luzhin, Rodya explains who Svidrigailov is and says: "I don't know why, but I am very afraid of that man." He hopes Razumihkin will help him guard Dunya from Svidrigailov, and, of course, Razumihkin agrees.

- Why might Raskolnikov be afraid of Svidrigailov?

They meet Luzhin outside the apartment, and at the meeting, Luzhin relates some additional stories about Svidrigailov. They include one about his supposed seduction of a 15-year-old deaf and dumb girl who later hanged herself. Another is about Svidrigailov's servant Philip who hanged himself as a result of Svidrigailov's beatings and mockery. Luzhin concludes that Svidrigailov is the most horrible, "the most depraved, the most completely abandoned to vice" of anyone he knows. Dunya's view of each episode differs; for example, she heard that the servant Philip was addicted to drugs and that the other servants were good and loyal to Svidrigailov. Luzhin is offended that his "fiancée" seemingly defends Svidrigailov. Raskolnikov reveals that Marfa Petrovna has left Dunya 3,000 roubles, which she should receive soon.

- What is ironic here?
- Do we believe Dunya, or Luzhin, or neither?

When Rodya refuses to tell about his interview with Svidrigailov, Luzhin takes it as a personal affront and pretends he has to go. When Luzhin is confronted with the lies he wrote concerning Marmeladov's death, and Sonya's position (that he exaggerated the scene in order to paint Raskolnikov in a bad light), he is trapped and resorts to innuendo about Rodya's behaviour (his cavorting with a prostitute). As the argument intensifies, Luzhin becomes more horrible and insulting until finally he insults Dunya by saying he accepted her in spite of all the unpleasant rumours about her reputation. At this, Rodya laughs, Pulcheria is furious, Dunya calls him a "base, malicious person," and Razumihkin threatens him physically; Dunya then orders him to go. Even as he leaves, he is conceiving of a way to disparage Rodya and Sonya even further.

- Was Raskolnikov right about Luzhin all along?
- Does this justify his early reaction to his sister "it's him or me"?

Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 3

Luzhin refuses to believe that such a magnificent prize as Dunya could possibly escape him. "In his dreams, he was already her lord and master," and he plans to use her mainly to forward his own career.

Meanwhile, Rodya tells his sister that Svidrigailov wants to see her and make her a present of 10,000 roubles. This offer puzzles everyone, and they decide to avoid all contact with him. Razumihkin offers a plan whereby they can all profit from the 3,000 roubles left to Dunya by Marfa Petrovna. He wants to open a small printing firm that will cater to publishing translations. It seems a valid and potentially prosperous idea.

Rodya suddenly announces that he must leave. He asks pardon of his mother but insists that he is not well:

"I wanted to tell you it would be better if we parted for a short time. I feel ill. I am not at peace. . . Leave me, leave me alone. . . I want to be alone; for me altogether, it's better. Don't make inquiries about me. When I can, I will come of myself or . . . I will send for you. . . but if you love me, give me up. . . otherwise, I feel I shall begin to hate you."

- What external circumstances have changed that Rodya now feels he *can* leave his mother and sister... ?
- Why does he feel the need to be alone?

As he leaves, Razumikhin follows him. Rodya is able to darkly communicate a strange secret by "some hint," and Razumikhin allows Rodya to go (he hints to Razumikhin that he is in some way implicated in the crime – thereby, Razumikhin, although puzzled, allows him to leave without further question.

Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 4

"Raskolnikov went straight to. . . where Sonya lived." His appearance there agitates and frightens Sonya. Rodya is stunned at how her apartment reeks of poverty and at how thin she is. As they sit together, Rodya questions her about her landlord Kapernaumov, about her profession, and then about her relationship to Katerina Ivanovna. Even though Sonya is ashamed and embarrassed with his questions, she answers with simplicity and innocence.

He then paints a horrible, depressing future life for Katerina and the children. He taunts her with the thought that Katerina will soon die — she is coughing up blood now — and the children will be left without anything. He taunts her with her inability to save any money. He taunts her with the thought that Polenka (her younger sister) will probably have to also enter into a life of prostitution. To all of these taunts, Sonya responds with despair and dismay, and maintains that "God will not allow it to be so." To Raskolnikov's taunt that perhaps there is no God, Sonya's suffering increases even more because she cannot conceive of life without God.

- Why does Raskolnikov taunt her so? *A deep question... but one that makes psychological sense...*

At this point, Raskolnikov suddenly bows down to Sonya and kisses her foot, and says "I did not bow down to you, I bowed down to all the suffering of humanity." And he shocks Sonya by telling her that he did his sister honour by seating her next to his sister, "not because of your dishonour and your sin but because of your great suffering." He asks her to explain how "such shame and such baseness can exist in you side by side with other feelings, so different and so holy?" Rodya then realises that there are only three options open to her: suicide, the madhouse, or abandonment into total debauchery.

- How are the two painted as mirror characters here?
- How are they different (foil characters)?
- Why *is* Raskolnikov so attracted to Sonya?

He spots an old worn Bible on the dresser, and he is surprised to learn that it was a gift from Lizaveta who was her good friend and she has had a requiem said for Lizaveta. He asks her to read to him the story of the raising of Lazarus. She hesitates because she does not want to read to an unbeliever, but slowly and carefully, she reads the story for both of them.

- What do we/you know about the story of Lazarus? Do a quick google – won't take long.
- How many days has it been since the murder (symbolic)?
- In what ways might the story of Lazarus be symbolic?
- What might Dostoevsky be trying to say about suffering? About absolution? About redemption? And ultimately, about the role, or place, of punishment...

After she finishes reading the story, Raskolnikov tells her how much he needs her and asks her to join him and go the same road with him because they both have transgressed against life (that is, Sonya has transgressed against her own life, and he has taken life). As he is about to leave, he tells Sonya that if he comes tomorrow, he will tell her who killed Lizaveta.

At the end of the chapter, we discover that Svidrigailov has been standing and listening in the next room, an empty one between his room and Sonya's. He so thoroughly enjoyed their conversation that he brings a chair so as to be more comfortable for their next meeting in which Raskolnikov has promised to reveal the murderer.

Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 5

Note: if you would rather watch this scene, please do:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYZqr20OWPE> – it is very good to watch the masterful way that Porfiry interrogates Raskolnikov.

The day after his meeting with Sonya, Raskolnikov performs the unpleasant task of going to the Criminal Investigating section of the police department to officially file a claim to his two pawned items. He is filled with intense dread because he hates Porfiry "with an intense, unmitigated hatred" and is afraid his hatred might betray him (that his emotion might get the better of his rationality). He is kept waiting for a long time and becomes very nervous and edgy.

- Is Raskolnikov right to hate Porfiry?

Porfiry receives Raskolnikov very cordially and acts as though it is a pleasant social visit, forgetting that a person should not be kept waiting so long for a social visit. Raskolnikov tries to keep the meeting formal and business-like; in fact, he keeps threatening to leave unless Porfiry comes to the point and examines him in an official way. Nothing, however, seems to deter Porfiry from performing his duties in his own way, and in his own time, and he is determined to talk about all types of subjects, especially theories about crime and crime detection.

As he talks about this and that, he paces constantly about the room and stops frequently at the door and listens to see if perhaps someone is still there. His pacing makes Raskolnikov more and more nervous. The interview continues for so long and

is filled with so much seemingly inconsequential chatter, along with irrelevances, that finally Raskolnikov loses his patience and tells Porfiry that he realises the type of "cat and mouse game" he is playing. Raskolnikov then asserts that if he is suspected of being the murderer of "that old woman and her sister Lizaveta," then he demands to be arrested immediately or allowed to leave. "If you find that you have a legal right to prosecute me or arrest me, then do it! But I will not permit anyone to laugh in my face and torment me."

- How would you describe Porfiry's 'interrogation' methods?
- Are they 'moral'?
- How much does he understand of Raskolnikov's psychology? *Hard to answer from the chapter summary alone – one to ponder on for later.*

To detain Raskolnikov, Porfiry reveals that he knows many unusual things about Raskolnikov, such as his trip to the scene of the crime when he rang the doorbell and asked to see the blood. Porfiry also explains his technique: He can always arrest a person, but he prefers a suspect to have his own time to think over his crime. In Raskolnikov's case, Porfiry says that he likes him and wants to help him in a friendly manner, but Raskolnikov rejects his friendship and is about to leave when Porfiry reminds him of a little surprise that is behind the door in the next room. Before he can unlock the door, something strange and unforeseen occurs.

- Who/what might be behind the door? What might Porfiry have 'up his sleeve'?
- Think of the juxtaposition of the plot points:
Sonya to Porfiry and then back to Sonya...

What might be the significance, in terms of Raskolnikov's redemption...

In other words, what do Porfiry and Sonya each represent, in terms of Raskolnikov's **punishment** and potential **redemption**... ?

KEY QUESTION: Whose methods (and what they symbolise) can offer more to Rodya: Sonya's, or Porfiry's?

Who is more likely to succeed in transforming him – in leading to his ultimate redemption/rehabilitation (which is the role of punishment, is it not?-to make someone be better?)

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Crime & Punishment Summary: Part 4 – Chapter 6

This chapter is told "afterwards. . . Raskolnikov recalled it this way." In other words, the action is described after it happens, not as it happens.

There is (suddenly) an unexpected amount of noise and the unexpected arrival of several subordinates. Porfiry is very annoyed that his interrogation, and his 'plan' has been interrupted, but a prisoner (Nikolay, the house painter at the scene of the crime) is brought in, and he confesses to the murder of Alyona and Lizaveta. This confession is an overwhelming surprise to both Porfiry and Raskolnikov, neither of whom expected it. Porfiry is so vexed that he is not logical and he refuses to believe

it, but recovering quickly, he dismisses Raskolnikov and reminds him that they will see each other again.

- Can you think of any reason why Nikolai, the painter, might have confessed?

Raskolnikov leaves and goes home, where the strange man who had once so mysteriously appeared and called him a murderer, comes and explains that *he* was hidden in the closet in Porfiry's office. He feels sympathetic to how Porfiry toyed with Raskolnikov (especially now that Nikolai has confessed), and apologises for calling him a murderer and for the trouble he has caused him. With the confession by Nikolai and the apology of the stranger, Raskolnikov feels renewed and hopeful; he resolves to make a new struggle for life and freedom.

Questions and Notes:

- Why might it be told afterwards, through Raskolnikov's recollection?
- Ironically, we find out later – Nikolai belongs to a religious sect that values suffering for others' sins: his desire to suffer for the murderer (Raskolnikov) darkly mirrors what Raskolnikov himself has begun to *feel* – that his suffering may be the path to his own redemption; only here, ironically, it enforces his desire to keep fighting for his freedom and to not confess to the murders – to not embrace the 'truth' of his actions, but to instead embrace the suffering of continuing to believe in his Theory – his 'right' to be an extraordinary man...

This is another example of fate or destiny placing a decision in front of Raskolnikov – and again, when thinking 'rationally', Raskolnikov takes the selfish path – it is a temptation by which he is seduced into taking the easy path (although he believes it to be the harder path)...

Make sense?

Have you noticed a narrative pattern with most Parts? Especially how each Part ends?