

Crime and Punishment

SYNOPSIS

In a filthy tavern, MARMELADOV, a CLERK and a PAINTER commiserate about how the local pawnbroker has cruelly oppressed them and how much better off the world would be if someone would simply kill the old woman. (**Sorrow**) RASKOLNIKOV overhears their fantasies, and we hear his PSYCHE begin to contemplate whether such a murder is possible. (Raskolnikov's Psyche is sung by six voices.) Before he's conscious of what he's doing, Raskolnikov visits the pawnbroker and kills her and her sister with an axe. (**Crime**) His dreams are tortured and tormented, and give him a burning desire to confess his crime and accept his inevitable punishment. (**Nightmare**).

Raskolnikov is summoned to the police station about an eviction notice (**Summons**) but his Psyche's nervousness causes him to collapse in a dead faint. He flees the police station and hides the pawnbroker's money. (**Atonement**) He attempts to find solace in the tavern, but he discovers Marmeladov has been struck by a carriage and now lies dying. Marmeladov's daughter, SONYA, comforts Marmeladov as he dies, a beatific confession on his lips. (**Revelation**).

Disturbed by so much spirituality, Raskolnikov flees aimlessly, and ends up in the pawnbroker's old apartment where he rationalizes the woman's death and his own contribution to society. (**Credo**) The apartment is being cleansed by the nervous painter, who grows spooked by Raskolnikov's presence. Raskolnikov goes back to the police station, ostensibly to confess, but instead is confronted by a steely-eyed interrogator, PETROVICH, who pins all sorts of leading but ambiguous questions on Raskolnikov. (**Gambit**) Raskolnikov ducks Petrovich's psychological games, secretly gloating he is far cleverer than Petrovich. Raskolnikov congratulates himself that he has left behind no evidence whatsoever. (**Assessment**). However, Raskolnikov is completely rattled by a visit from his MOTHER and SISTER, particularly when they thrust all manner of charity upon him. (**Sacrifice**) Raskolnikov disowns them and casts away their money, instead flinging himself back into the arms of Sonya, who comforts/disturbs him with Biblical readings about Lazarus and his resurrection. (**Scripture**).

Raskolnikov can stand the guilt no longer, and marches back to Petrovich, only to witness the Painter confess to the pawnbroker's murder. Raskolnikov revels in his second chance, his own resurrection.

ACT TWO

Petrovich dismisses the Painter's bizarre confession. A tormented Raskolnikov insists that if Petrovich thinks Raskolnikov is guilty, he should simply accuse him, and not play psychological games with him. But Petrovich insists the psychology lures the criminal inexorably towards confession, like a moth to a candle flame. (**Patience**).

Meanwhile, Raskolnikov's Mother reminisces on her son's innocent boyhood, and fondly recalls the times when they were close companions. (**Reminiscence**)

Raskolnikov's tortured Psyche leads him to confess his crime to Sonya, who declares with religious insistence that Raskolnikov's only salvation lies in confession and suffering. (**Covenant**). Raskolnikov resists, but his Psyche is weakening and growing weary, so when Petrovich pays a surprise visit, Raskolnikov loses the ensuing cat-and-mouse game, and Petrovich announces that Raskolnikov has a day and a half left of freedom before he is incarcerated. (**Denunciation**).

Raskolnikov sees little point resisting, and bids his mother and sister an emotional farewell (**Exodus**). His mother, sister and Sonya pray for Raskolnikov's salvation (**Prayer**) and Raskolnikov goes to the police station, where he drops to his knees and at last confesses to the crime.