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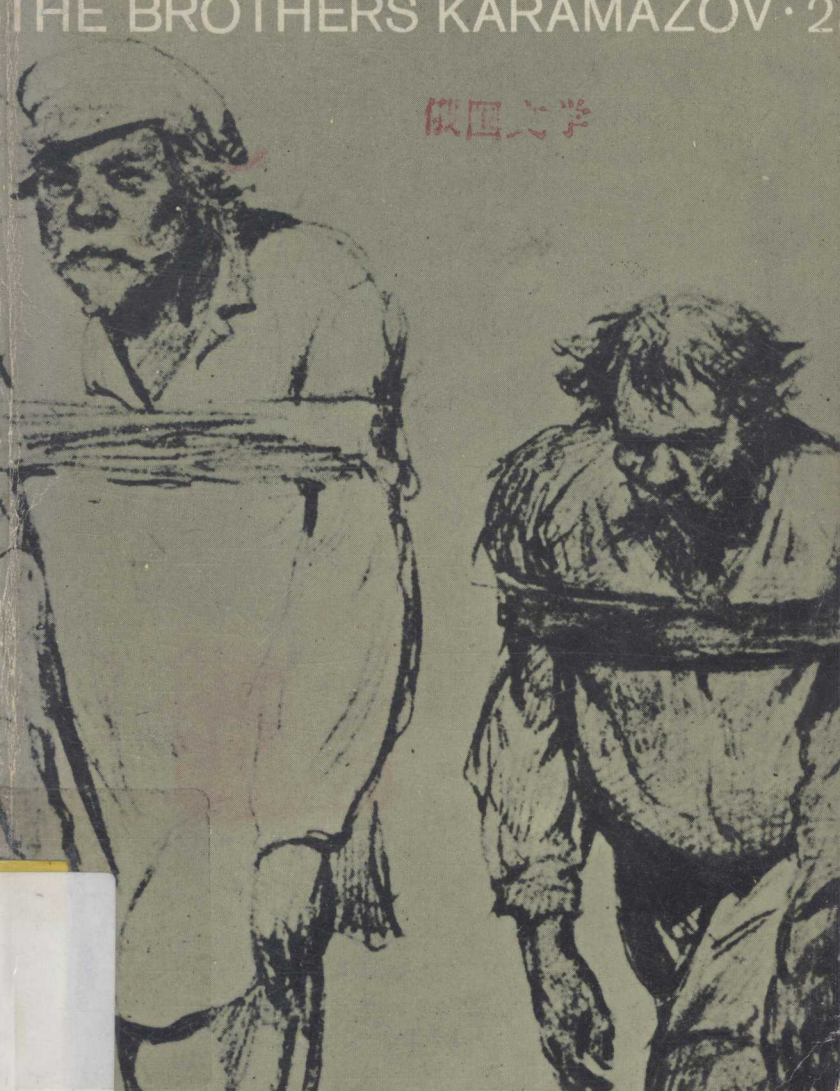

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

TRANSLATED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
DAVID MAGARSHACK

VOLUME
2

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FYODOR MIKHAIL DOSTOYEVSKY was born in Moscow in 1821, the second of a physician's seven children. His mother died in 1837 and his father was murdered a year later. When he left his private boarding school in Moscow he studied from 1838 to 1843 at the Military Engineering College in St Petersburg, graduating with officer's rank. His first story to be published, 'Poor Folk' (1846), had a great success. In 1849 he was arrested and sentenced to death for participating in the 'Petrashevsky circle'; he was reprieved at the last moment but sentenced to penal servitude, and until 1854 he lived in a convict prison at Omsk, Siberia. Out of this experience he wrote *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* (1861). In 1861 he began the review *Vremya* with his brother; in 1862 and 1863 he went abroad where he strengthened his anti-European outlook, met Mlle Suslova who was the model for many of his heroines, and gave way to his passion for gambling. In the following years he fell deeply into debt, but from 1867, when he married Anna Grigoryevna Snitkina, his second wife helped to rescue him from his financial morass. They lived abroad for four years, then in 1873 he was invited to edit *Grazhdanin*, to which he contributed his *Author's Diary*. From 1876 the latter was issued separately and had a great circulation. In 1880 he delivered his famous address at the unveiling of Pushkin's memorial in Moscow; he died six months later in 1881. Most of his important works were written after 1864: *Notes from the Underground* (1864), *Crime and Punishment* (1865–66), *The Gambler* (1866), *The Idiot* (1869), *The Devils* (1871), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880).

DAVID MAGARSHACK was born in Riga, Russia, and educated at a Russian secondary school. He came to England in 1920 and was naturalized in 1931. After graduating in English literature and language at University College, London, he worked in Fleet Street and published a number of novels. Since 1948 he has mainly been working on translations of the Russian classics. For the Penguin Classics he has translated Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*; *Dead Souls* by Gogol; *Oblomov* by Goncharov; and *Lady with Lapdog and Other Tales* by Chekhov. He has also written biographies of Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Gogol, Pushkin, Turgenev and Stanislavsky; and he is the author of *Chekhov the Dramatist*, a critical study of Chekhov's plays, and a study of Stanislavsky's system of acting.

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PART THREE

Book Seven: Alyosha

I

The Odour of Corruption

THE BODY OF THE DECEASED PRIEST AND MONK FATHER Zossima was prepared for burial in accordance with the established ritual. It is a well-known fact that monks and ascetics are not washed. 'If any one of the monks depart in the Lord [it is said in the Prayer Book], the appointed monk [that is to say, the monk whose duty it is] shall wipe his body with warm water, first making the sign of the cross with a sponge on the forehead of the deceased, on the breast, on the hands and feet and on the knees, and nothing more.' All this was performed by Father Paissy, who, after wiping his body, clothed him in his monastic garb and wrapped him in his cloak, which he slit a little, according to the rule, so as to be able to fold it round him in the form of a cross. On his head he put a cowl with an octagonal cross. The cowl was left open, but the face of the deceased was covered with the black cloth used to cover the chalice. In his hands was put the icon of the Saviour. So arrayed, he was put just before daybreak in his coffin (which had been got ready long before). It was decided to leave the coffin all day in the cell (in the first large room where the elder used to receive the monks and lay visitors). As the deceased was, according to his rank, a priest and a monk, leading a life of the strictest monastic rules, the Gospel, and not the Psalter, had to be read over him by monks who were ordained priests or deacons. Immediately after the requiem service Father Joseph began the reading; Father Paissy, who had expressed the wish to read later on all day and night, was for the present very busy and preoccupied, as was the Father Prior of the

Hermitage, for something extraordinary, an unheard-of and 'unseemly' excitement and impatient expectation, became suddenly apparent among the monks as well as among the laymen who arrived in crowds from the monastery inns and the town. As time went on, this excitement grew more and more intense. Both the prior and Father Paissy did all they could to calm as much as possible the excited and bustling crowds. When it was broad daylight, people began arriving from the town with their sick, especially children, just as though they had been waiting expressly for this moment, evidently hoping for the power of healing which, according to their faith, would be immediately manifested. And it was only now that it became apparent to what an extent everyone in our town had been accustomed to consider the deceased elder, even during his lifetime, as an incontestably great saint. And many of those who came did not by any means belong to the lower orders. This great expectation on the part of the believers, betrayed so hastily and so openly, and even with impatience and almost with insistence, seemed to Father Paissy a clear incitement to sin, and though he had long foreseen it, it actually greatly exceeded his fears. Coming across some of the monks who shared this excitement, Father Paissy even began to rebuke them: 'So great and immediate an expectation of something miraculous,' he told them, 'is sheer levity, admissible only among laymen, but unseemly in us.' But they paid little attention to him, and Father Paissy noticed it uneasily, though even he (to be quite truthful), exasperated as he was by this too impatient expectation, which he found both thoughtless and vain, secretly, at the bottom of his heart, expected almost the same thing as the excited crowds, which he could not but admit to himself. Nevertheless, he was greatly perturbed by the misgivings some of these people aroused in him. He could not help feeling that something untoward would happen. In the crowd in the dead man's cell he noticed with inward revulsion (for which he at once reproached himself) the presence, for instance, of Rakitin or the visitor from the remote Obdorsk monastery, who was still staying in the monastery. Of both of them Father Paissy for some reason felt suddenly suspicious, though they were not by any means the only ones he felt suspicious of. The Obdorsk monk stood out among the excited crowd as the most fidgety; he could be seen everywhere; everywhere he was asking questions, everywhere he was listening, everywhere he

was whispering with a sort of strangely mysterious air. He looked most impatient and he even seemed to resent that the miracle they had all been expecting so long was so late in coming. As for Rakitin, he had arrived at such an early hour at the hermitage, as it appeared later, at the express request of Mrs Khokhlakov. As soon as that kindly but weak-willed woman, who could not herself be admitted to the hermitage, woke up and heard of the elder's death, she was seized by such intense curiosity that she at once sent Rakitin off to the hermitage to keep an eye on things and report to her in writing about every half hour *everything that took place*. She considered Rakitin to be a most religious and devout young man – so well did he know how to pull the wool over the eyes of people who could be of the slightest use to him. It was a clear, bright day, and many of the visitors were swarming round the graves, which were particularly numerous near the church and scattered all over the hermitage. Taking a walk round the hermitage, Father Paissy suddenly remembered Alyosha and that he had not seen him for some time, not since that night. And no sooner did he remember him than he caught sight of him in the farthest corner of the hermitage, by the wall, sitting on the tombstone of a monk who had died a long time ago and who was famous for his life of great piety. He sat with his back to the hermitage and his face to the wall, as though hiding himself behind the tombstone. Going up to him, Father Paissy saw that he was weeping quietly but bitterly, his face buried in his hands and his body shaking with sobs. Father Paissy stood over him for a few minutes.

'Come, dear son, come, my friend,' he said at last with feeling, 'what are you weeping for? Rejoice and do not weep. Don't you know that this day is one of *his* greatest days? Remember where he is now, at this moment – remember that!'

Alyosha looked up at him, revealing his face, which was swollen with crying like a little child's, but he turned away at once, without uttering a word, and again buried his face in his hands.

'Well, I daresay you're right,' said Father Paissy thoughtfully, 'I daresay you're wise to weep. Christ has sent you these tears. Your heart-felt tears,' he added to himself, walking away from Alyosha and thinking lovingly of him, 'are only a relief for your soul and will serve to gladden your dear heart.' He was in rather a hurry to move away, for he felt that, looking at him, he might burst into tears himself.

Meanwhile the time was passing and the monastery services and the requiem for the dead man followed in due order. Father Paissy again saw Father Joseph at the coffin and again took over the reading of the Gospel from him. But before three o'clock in the afternoon something took place, which I have already mentioned at the end of the last book, something so utterly unexpected by anyone and so entirely contrary to the general hope that, I repeat, the smallest detail of this trivial affair is still vividly remembered in our town and all over our district. Here I will add a personal remark, namely that I find it almost revolting to recall this trivial and reprehensible incident, though quite natural and unimportant, as a matter of fact, and I should, of course, not have mentioned it in my story at all, had it not exercised a most powerful influence on the heart and soul of the chief, though *future*, hero of my story, namely Alyosha, forming a crisis and a turning-point in his spiritual life, causing a violent shock, but finally strengthening his mind for the rest of his life and giving it a definite aim.

And so to return to my story: when before daybreak they put the elder's body, made ready for burial, into the coffin and took it out into the front room, which during his lifetime he used as a reception-room, the question whether or not to open the windows was raised among those who stood around the coffin. But the question, put casually and in passing by someone, remained unanswered and almost unnoticed – except that it was noticed, and that too without comment, by some of those present, but only in the sense that to expect putrefaction and the odour of corruption of the body of so great a saint was an utter absurdity, deserving pity (if not a smile) for the frivolity and lack of faith of the man who asked that question. For they expected something quite different. And then, soon after midday, something happened, which was accepted without comment by those who went in and out of the room, each one quite obviously being afraid to communicate the suspicion in his mind; but by three o'clock in the afternoon it could be detected so clearly and unmistakably that the news of it at once spread all over the hermitage and among all the visitors and monks in the hermitage and immediately penetrated into the monastery as well, throwing all the monks there into amazement, and, finally, reached the town in the shortest possible time and caused great excitement both among the believers and unbelievers. The unbelievers were delighted, and as for the believers, there were some among them

who were even more delighted than the unbelievers themselves, for 'men love the downfall of the righteous and their disgrace', as the elder himself had said in one of his sermons. What happened was that an odour of corruption began to come from the coffin, growing more and more perceptible, and by three o'clock in the afternoon it could no longer be mistaken and was, indeed, becoming gradually stronger and stronger. And never in the whole history of our monastery had there been such a scandal, so vulgarly unrestrained and quite impossible in any other circumstances, which showed itself immediately after this discovery among the monks themselves. Many years afterwards, some of our more intelligent monks, recalling the events of the whole of that day, were amazed and horrified at the dimensions this scandal took on at the time. For before, too, it had happened that monks who had led righteous lives had died, God-fearing elders, whose righteousness was recognized by all, and yet from their humble coffins, too, the odour of corruption had come naturally, as from all dead bodies, but that had not given rise to a scandal, nor even to the slightest excitement. Of course, there had been in the old days some monks in our monastery whose memory has been preserved and whose remains, according to tradition, showed no signs of decomposition, a fact that had a moving and mysterious effect on the monks and was preserved by them as something wonderful and miraculous and as a promise of still greater glory from their tombs in the future, if only by the grace of God the time for it should come. One of these, Father Job, a celebrated ascetic renowned for his fasting and silence, whose memory was particularly cherished, died at the beginning of the present century at the age of a hundred and five. His grave was pointed out to all the pilgrims on their first visit to the monastery with special and quite extraordinary respect and mysterious hints of certain great hopes in this connexion. (That was the grave on which Father Paissy had found Alyosha sitting in the morning.) In addition to this long-since deceased elder, the memory of another famous priest and monk, Father Varsonofy, who had died comparatively recently, was also held in great reverence in the monastery. It was he Father Zossima had succeeded in the eldership and it was he whom all the pilgrims who arrived at the monastery regarded as a saintly fool. Those two, according to tradition, had lain in their coffins as though they were alive and were buried without showing any signs of decom-

position, their faces looking happy and serene in their coffins. And some monks even insisted that a distinctly discernible sweet odour came from their bodies. But in spite of these impressive memories, it would still be difficult to explain the direct cause of so thoughtless, absurd, and spiteful a demonstration at the coffin of Father Zossima. So far as I am concerned, it is my opinion that all sorts of other causes were simultaneously responsible for what happened. One of these, for instance, was the deeply-rooted hostility to the institution of elders as a pernicious innovation, which was firmly embedded in the minds of many monks in the monastery. And, above all, there was, finally, of course, the jealousy of the dead man's saintliness, so firmly established during his lifetime that it seemed almost forbidden to question it. For although the late elder had won the love and affection of many people, and not so much by miracles as by love, and had gathered round him, as it were, a whole world of loving followers, none the less, or rather on that account, in fact, he had created many enviers and, subsequently, bitter enemies, both open and secret, not only among the monks in the monastery, but also among the laymen outside. He never did any harm to anyone, but, they asked, 'Why do they think him such a saint?' And that question alone, continually repeated, gave rise at last to a great surge of insatiable hatred. That was why, I think, many people, noticing the odour of corruption coming from his body, and so soon, too, for not a day had passed since his death, were so greatly delighted; just as there were some among the elder's devoted disciples who had hitherto revered him but who were almost outraged and personally offended by this incident. The whole thing gradually developed as follows:

As soon as decomposition set in, it was possible to tell from the very faces of the monks why they had come into the cell. They came in, stayed a little, and went out quickly to confirm the news to the crowd waiting outside. Some of these shook their heads mournfully, but others did not even attempt to conceal the delight which gleamed malevolently in their eyes. And no one thought of reproaching them any more, no one raised his voice in protest, which was rather strange, for, after all, the majority of the monks in the monastery were loyal to the elder: but apparently God himself had this time let the minority gain the upper hand for the time being. Soon laymen, too, for the most part educated visitors, went into the cell for the same purpose

of spying. Few of the common people went into the cell, though large crowds of them gathered at the gates of the hermitage. What could not be denied was that after three o'clock the rush of lay visitors greatly increased just because of the scandalous news. People who would perhaps not have arrived that day at all and who had, indeed, never intended to come, now came deliberately, among them some of high rank. However, there was so far no breach of decorum, and Father Paissy, looking stern, went on reading aloud the Gospel slowly and firmly, as though unaware of what was happening, though he had, as a matter of fact, observed something unusual for some time. But presently voices, at first rather subdued, but gradually louder and more confident, began to reach him too. 'Seems God's judgement is not as man's', Father Paissy heard suddenly. The first to say this was a layman, an elderly civil servant of our town, a man known for his great piety, but what he said aloud merely repeated what the monks had for some time been whispering to each other. They had long before given voice to this despairing utterance, and the worst of it was that almost every moment a sort of triumphant note could be more and more perceived at the repetition of this sentence. Soon, however, even the pretence at decorum was beginning to be abandoned and everyone almost seemed to feel that he had a right to abandon it. 'And why should *that* have happened?' some of the monks said, at first with a certain show of regret. 'He had a small body, dried up, nothing but skin and bones, where would the odour come from?' 'Therefore,' others hastened to add, 'it must be a special sign from heaven.' And their opinion was at once accepted without question, for it was again pointed out that if the odour had been natural, as in the case of every dead sinner, it should have come later, at least after a lapse of twenty-four hours, and not with such apparent haste, for 'this is a violation of the laws of nature' and therefore it was undeniably God's doing and the finger of God was quite evident. He meant it as a sign. This opinion struck everyone as incontrovertible. Gentle Father Joseph, the librarian and a great favourite of the late elder's, attempted to reply to some of these backbiters that 'it is not by any means held everywhere', that the incorruptibility of the bodies of the righteous was not a dogma of the Orthodox Church, but only an opinion, and that even in the most Orthodox countries, at Mount Athos, for instance, they were not in the least upset by the odour of

corruption and that there it was not the incorruptibility of the bodies that was considered to be the chief sign of the sanctification of the saved, but the colour of their bones when their bodies had lain many years in the earth and had decayed in it. 'And if the bones become as yellow as wax, that is the chief sign that the Lord has glorified the dead saint; but if they are not yellow but black, it means that the Lord has not deemed him worthy of such glory. That is what they believe on Mount Athos, a famed place, where the Orthodox doctrine has been preserved since olden times inviolate and in its brightest purity,' Father Joseph concluded. But the gentle Father's words made no impression and even evoked a sarcastic rejoinder. 'That's all pedantry and innovation,' the monks decided among themselves. 'It's no use listening to it. We stick to the old doctrine. There are all sorts of innovations nowadays. Are we going to ape them all?' 'We have had as many holy Fathers as they,' the most jeering of the monks joined in. 'They all live there under the Turks and they have forgotten everything. Even their Orthodox faith has long grown impure, and they have no church-bells, either.' Father Joseph walked away mournfully, particularly as he himself expressed his opinion not very confidently, but as though hardly believing in it himself. But he foresaw with distress that something highly unseemly was beginning and that disobedience itself was raising its head. One by one, after Father Joseph, all the sober voices fell silent. And somehow or other it just happened that all those who loved the late elder and had accepted the institution of elders with devout obedience suddenly became terribly frightened of something and, when they met, exchanged timid glances with one another. But those hostile to the institution of elders as an innovation, held up their heads proudly. 'There was no odour of corruption from the late Father Varsonofy, but a sweet odour,' they recalled maliciously. 'But he was deemed worthy of it not because he was an elder, but because he was a saint himself.' And this was followed by a flood of condemnations and even accusations against the newly-departed elder. 'His teachings were false. He taught that life was a great joy and not tearful self-abasement,' some of the more muddle-headed ones said. 'His faith was too modern, he did not recognize material fire in hell,' others, who were even more muddle-headed, joined in. 'He was not strict in fasting. He allowed himself sweet things. He took cherry jam in

his tea. He loved it. Ladies used to send it to him. Is it fitting for an ascetic to gorge himself on tea?' some of the more envious declared. 'He sat in pride,' the most malicious ones said brutally. 'Considered himself a saint. People used to fall on their knees before him and he took it as his due.' 'He abused the sacrament of confession,' the fiercest opponents of the institution of elders added in a malicious whisper, and these were from among the oldest monks, strictest in their devotions, true adherents of a life of fasting and silence, who had kept silent during the life of the deceased elder, but whose lips were suddenly unsealed now, which was terrible, indeed, for their words had a great influence on the young monks whose views were still unsettled. The Obdorsk visitor, the little monk from St Sylvester, listened to all this avidly, heaving deep sighs and shaking his head. 'Aye,' he thought to himself, 'it seems Father Ferapont was quite right in what he said yesterday.' And at that very moment Father Ferapont made his appearance; he seemed to have come for the express purpose of increasing the confusion.

I have mentioned earlier that he rarely left his wooden cell by the apiary. Even in church he appeared very rarely and he was allowed that as a saintly fool upon whom the monastery rules were not binding. And to tell the truth, he was allowed that privilege out of necessity. For it seemed shameful to insist on burdening a man who was so dedicated to a life of fasting and silence and who spent all his days and nights in prayer (he even fell asleep on his knees), with the general monastic rules, if he refused to obey them himself. 'Why,' some monks might have objected, 'he's holier than any of us and follows much harder rules than the official regulations. As for his not going to church, he knows when he ought to go: he has his own rules.' It was because of these possible murmurs and the scandal that might ensue that Father Ferapont was left in peace. As was well-known to everyone, Father Ferapont disliked Father Zossima intensely; and now the news had reached him in his cell that 'God's judgement, it seems, was not the same as man's' and that what had happened was 'a violation of the laws of nature'. It may well be supposed that among the first to run to him with this news was the Obdorsk visitor, who had visited him the day before and had left him in terror. I have also mentioned the fact that Father Paissy, who was standing firmly and immovably reading the Gospel over the coffin,

though unable to see or hear what was going on outside the cell, had foreseen most of it unmistakably in his heart, for he knew his monastery thoroughly. But he was not disturbed, but waited without fear, for what might still happen, watching with penetrating insight for the inevitable outcome of the excitement, which he could already apprehend with his inner eye. Suddenly an extraordinary noise in the passage, which was quite an unmistakable breach of decorum, burst upon his ears. The door was flung wide open and Father Ferapont appeared on the threshold. Behind him, as could be clearly seen from the cell, was a crowd of monks with some laymen among them, who had accompanied him and stopped at the bottom of the front steps. They did not, however, enter the cell or mount the steps, but waited to see what Father Ferapont would say and do, for they felt, and indeed feared, that in spite of his well-known arrogance he had not come for nothing. Stopping on the threshold, Father Ferapont raised his arms, and from under his right arm peeped out the sharp and inquisitive eyes of the Obdorsk visitor; he was the only one who, in his intense curiosity, could not restrain himself from running up the steps after Father Ferapont. All the others, on the contrary, were overcome with sudden terror and pressed further back the moment the door was flung open. Raising his hands aloft, Father Ferapont suddenly roared:

'Casting out, I cast out!' and at once began making the sign of the cross at each of the four walls and corners of the cell in succession. All who accompanied Father Ferapont at once understood his action; for they knew that wherever he entered he always did this and that he would not sit down or utter a word till he had driven out the evil spirits.

'Satan, get thee hence! Satan, get thee hence!' he repeated every time he made the sign of the cross. 'Casting out, I cast out!' he roared again.

He was wearing his coarse cassock girt with a rope. His bare chest, covered with grey hair, could be seen under his hempen shirt. His feet were bare. As soon as he started waving his arms, the iron chains he wore under his cassock began shaking and clanking. Father Paissy interrupted his reading, stepped forward and stood waiting before him.

'What have you come for, reverend Father? Why do you break