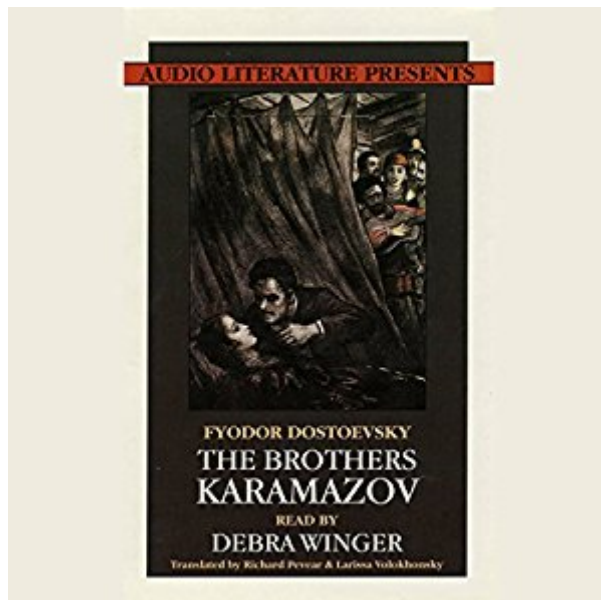


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The Brothers Karamazov



Synopsis

A masterpiece of world literature, in a bold new translation that makes no attempt to smooth out the rough diction, hesitations, or double-takes in the Russian--linguistic traits essential to the integrity and life of this text that is truer to the original than any other ever produced. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Before you dedicate many hours to reading this masterpiece, you must be sure you select the appropriate translation for your reading style. The Pevear translation - although highly acclaimed - may make it difficult for most readers to grasp the essence of this beautiful story, and therefore I would almost always recommend the McDuff version ahead of the Pevear. The Brothers Karamazov presents the same challenge for every English translator; namely, Dostoevsky took pride in creating distinct voices and syntax for each of his characters, and most translations have sacrificed the syntax and voicing to make it more readable - in the process losing much of the tone of each character. Pevear's translation is known for being the truest to the original, as it replicates the syntax with an almost academic precision. However, in being so true to the syntax and voicing, Pevear leaves sentence structures that are so unfamiliar-sounding to the native English speaker as to be disruptive. Many times as I read this translation I found myself jolted out of the flow of reading because the phrasing felt so awkward. As an example of a difficult sentence: Pevear: "These occasions were almost morbid: most depraved, and, in his sensuality, often as cruel as a wicked insect, Fyodor Pavlovich at times suddenly felt in himself, in his drunken moments, a spiritual fear, a

moral shock, that almost, so to speak, resounded physically in his soul." Compare that to McDuff "These were instances that almost seemed to involve some morbid condition: most depraved, and in his voluptuous lust often brutal, like an evil insect, Fyodor Pavlovich would on occasion suddenly experience within himself, in his drunken moments, a sense of spiritual terror and moral concussion that echoed almost physically, as it were, within his soul". This is a good example of the tradeoffs each translator makes. Generally: Pevear's is tight, precise, uses simple language and is truest to the original and punchy sentence structure. It requires a high tolerance for odd syntax. McDuff's uses a broader vocabulary (e.g. "moral concussion"), but his flow/ear is much more natural to most English speakers. The sacrifice is that McDuff uses probably 5%-10% more words, but I personally believe these additions make it far more readable. It is still generally true to the sentence structure, but by taking a quarter step away from the purist version, he sheds much more light on the underlying text than Pevear. Based on research, other reviewers and my own experience: if you are familiar with Russian, Pevear is for you. If you value precision, read for words instead of flow, or are better able to tolerate difficult phrasing than difficult vocabulary, then Pevear is for you. If you are more comfortable with a wider repertoire of words, and typically read with a background sense of the "flow" of each sentence, I believe McDuff will be far more readable while maintaining all the essence of the original work.

I am listening to this audiobook as a complement to my actual reading of the hard copy. I was finding it hard to get through the book and was running out of time to get through it (work is starting to pick up pace). I purchased this audiobook so I can listen to it on longer drives as well as refresh what I had read and maybe even move ahead. I really enjoyed the voice 'acting' of the reader. His voice is pleasant, accented, but doesn't overdo the personalities of the characters. I really love how he reads Fyodor Karamazov's part. Totally better than how it was in my head! The women are not read in any sort of falsetto, which I appreciated very much. His pacing was perfect. It's rare that an audio CD is better than if I'd read it myself, but this was one of those rarities. This reading comes in a DVD-sized casing with two CD's. This is particularly convenient for listening in cars since I don't have a multi-CD changer and I don't have to reach over and change CD's often. I was going to give this audio CD away after I was done with it, but I am falling in love with his voice and with how this book was read. Awesome. Totally recommended.

I lost the old Modern Library edition of THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV I bought in DaNang in 1969, and so replaced it with this excellent and very nicely priced edition. THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

is perhaps THE novel, and the labor in reading it will repay you spiritually and intellectually (for your first visit to Dostoyevsky's Russia, take along a SparkNotes or Cliff's Notes). I have read it several times, and it is always better and better.

I have noticed a tendency, perhaps only in myself, but I believe it occurs in many people of a learned discussion bent....to speak about the classics of literature as if they had read them cover to cover, when they haven't. I admit my own guilt in the matter of The Brothers Karamazov, which is particularly galling to admit when I consider that my own family is part-Russian. As in, right-off-the-boat Russian. Dostoyevsky's portrayal of a society at mid-nineteenth century, in transformation as the historical record shows us, and with foreshadowings (especially seen through the lens of Ivan Fyodorovich) of the upheavals that were to befall Imperial Russia in '05 and '17, is spot on. It provides the reader with a microcosm of the eruptions bubbling below the surface of a post-serfdom, pre-revolutionary and particular Slavic, Eastern Orthodox-centric assessment of the types of characters who would become so prominent in the years leading up to the Tsardom's downfall. It portrays these characters, warts and all, which Dostoyevsky slyly jumbles into a masterpiece of conflict and intrigue. In a sense, by the time we reach the novel's earlier pages, we are already aware of the dreaded outcome. Truly great literature.

In short:Pros - some nice philosophical gems here, although I didn't actually find that much to ruminate on for long. I will put this down to character (reader) differences, however, as different personalities are attracted to different lines of thinking.Cons - you may have to read through extended monologues and long dry bits to get to the gems. Furthermore, I apologize to fans, but I found most of the characters to be terribly annoying. I also did not discover the great individual traits of character that Dostoevsky is written of embellishing, for the most part. However, I realize this may have been largely a matter of translation.

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