



Silverlight Café – A Crossroads for Authors & Readers

“The Job of the Artist is to always deepen the mystery” – Francis Bacon

“There is no subject so old that something new cannot be said about it.” - Fyodor Dostoevsky

STARBUCKS ASTOR PLACE, DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN – WHERE I SPENT HUNDREDS OF WRITING HOURS. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO WRITE?

THIS ISSUE: CRIME FICTION/TRUE CRIME

Gary Dorion

In this first issue, several crime fiction and true crime writers discuss their craft and what attracted them to it.

Crime fiction has always been very popular. Writers like Fyodor Dostoevsky (Crime and Punishment) to Franz Kafka (The Trial) to Leo Tolstoy (Resurrection) to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes series) to modern crime fiction writers, the genre has only gained in popularity. From books to films to television series like NYPD Blue, the genre seems to remain tremendously popular. What is it about crime that draws people? As a young writer, I too was drawn to it. Reading some of the great Russian crime novels such as Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov as well as Kafka's The Trial influenced my

choice to become a court news reporter for ten years during the 1980s. I still don't know why I was magnetically attracted to writing about crime except that I saw it as an exploration of an omnipresent and ongoing human tragedy - an essential part of the human condition - and that my favorite authors had deeply explored it. So I explored it too ten years specializing in felony cases with an average of one murder trial alone per week in addition to numerous other crime cases. It became routine after a while just as crime reporting is very much a routine in the news today.

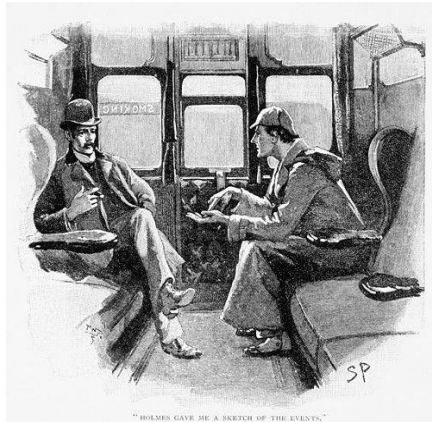
I remember one of my first murder trials about a white manager for a major department store in Massachusetts who went home one day and murdered his black wife and their children, leaving a note that stated, "Black and white don't mix." He had another relationship with another woman. He then tried

to kill himself by crashing his car at high speed into a bridge abutment. Why does somebody do that? Just recently, a Thai man doused his girlfriend with gasoline while she laid in her bed with her three-year-old and set them afire. She was going to leave him.

Human behavior is complicated. Ordinary people sometimes kill when their personal interests are threatened, when their lives as they know it are endangered or when they are intoxicated. Often it depends on so many other factors too - a bad day at the office or the factory; an unexpected bill; a chance encounter with an old enemy; or a "religious" vision that inspires a killing rampage. A man who strangles his wife to death on one day because she refused to sleep with him laughs it off on another day when a similar event happened. Is it rage that caused the Thai man to walk out of

the house, get a can of gasoline, return, and then set his loved ones on fire? Revenge? Hopelessness? An aberrant gene? An alcoholic lifestyle? Drug-addicted?

And in war, ordinary people do extraordinarily horrible things to others and sometimes the victims are not even the enemy but innocent civilians. The same soldier who murders an innocent civilian one day may risk his life to save another civilian on another day. Why do crime fiction writers write about crime? What are they trying to understand? For most, I suspect, it's much more than simply making money on a popular genre. It's something that reveals a much



deeper connection and the reasons are various depending upon the individual. What is it then? Hopefully our authors can shed some more light on what it is about crime that is so magnetic.

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Our first crime-writing author in this first issue on crime fiction and true crime writers is Gaynor Torrance, a UK author who studied psychology at the University of Warwick and Swansea University.



Gaynor Torrance

(All featured authors were asked to respond to two questions: What was the attraction to crime writing and why are people so fascinated with crime in all of its media representations including real situations? Gaynor provided an interesting insight.

What attracted me to the crime fiction genre? For me, crime fiction is the ultimate brain-teaser where I'm drip-fed information to sift through in order to figure out who has committed a crime and why.

It's an opportunity to test myself and prove my worth against twisted devious minds which I would not dare to do in reality, but actually relish the challenge within the safety of a fictional setting. Having studied psychology at university I have a keen interest in what makes us tick, and I particularly enjoy the challenges posed by crime fiction shows or novels which incorporate psychological elements into the story. My first experience of the crime fiction genre was when I visited my local library as a child and borrowed a Nancy Drew book.

I had no real idea what it was going to be like, but as soon as I started reading it I was hooked. From then on I used to save up all of my pocket money to get more of the books. I just couldn't put them down. I thought they were very exciting and she was so daring, brave and clever. It made my life seem quite boring by comparison. I really wanted to be Nancy and whilst I was engrossed in those stories I became her.

“These days there is so much more on offer and I am like a kid in a sweet shop. As a reader, writer or TV viewer the crime fiction genre offers me such a wide array of possibilities. Stories can be set in any place, any time, and be told from so many different viewpoints. In my first novel, **Revenge**, I was able to take a local setting and link the here and now with ancient mythology. At the back of my mind was my own enjoyment of Agatha Christie stories which are full of misdirection, and I tried to achieve this by creating detailed back stories for quite a few incidental characters in order to create a modern take on whodunit.

I am currently working on a far different type of crime thriller which I hope will be published by the end of the year. **Step Up or Die** is set in both New York and London where the backdrop is a series of seemingly unconnected attacks against the US and the UK. These attacks have major

implications for their respective countries, but the investigations into them remain incidental.

Although each of these events are relevant to the story, I focus on only one of these incidents and the impact it has on an American family. In particular, how - after a

series of awful events - one woman is forced to change her life when the only choice she feels that she has is to step up or die.

Why are people so drawn to crime stories, whether they be in the news, novels, non-fiction or real life experiences?

“It’s human nature to crave a little excitement in our lives,” Torrance continued. “Many of us are fortunate enough to live peacefully within a relatively safe environment, but crime stories allow us to experience aspects of danger which excite, scare, and even repel us in a non-threatening way. These stories often rip us out of our comfort zones and challenge us to look at the world through the eyes of individuals we often have no affinity with.

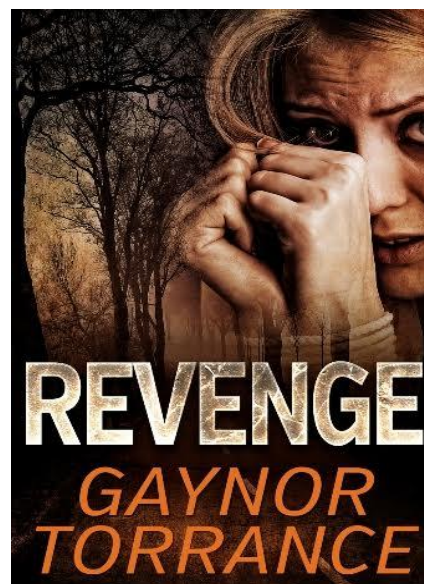
“I recall that I was once a passenger in a vehicle which drove past a fatal traffic accident where a motorcycle had collided with a wall. I didn’t want to look at the scene but, to my shame, I couldn’t stop myself. For those few seconds I became a voyeur on someone else’s tragedy, and I experienced a rush of emotions from the shocking brutal reality of what I saw. It’s the same with crime stories whether they are real or fictional. For a limited period of time you become a voyeur. You surrender yourself to the unfolding of the story, compelled to discover every detail and occasionally recoiling at the awfulness of specific events. When the resolution is finally reached you feel relieved that it hasn’t happened to you, or to anyone that you know. It’s akin to sinking to the depths and finally coming up to – what I believe – is that we, as readers or viewers, to a certain extent like to feel that we stand tall on the moral high ground, looking down

judgmentally on those who break the law.

“A sense of righteous indignation provides a warm smug glow (albeit sometimes misguided) when viewing the carnage and devastation others have wreaked,” Gaynor added. “It’s all too easy to believe that, if you called the shots, the world would be a far better place. I experienced one of those self-righteous moments recently when I went to see the film, **The Big Short**. I already knew what it was about but, as I watched it, I felt so angry and sickened at how easy it was for people to engineer the global financial crisis and how no one seemed to feel any remorse for the part they played in it. That film affected my mood long after I returned home. There were no murders committed but, in a way, this white-collar crime was far worse.

“In my opinion,” said Gaynor, the film is a masterpiece of emotional manipulation as it took the outrage

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and contempt which I have always felt towards the key players of that catastrophe to a whole new level.

For me this is great storytelling. And that is the real power of crime stories whether based on fact or purely fictional. They allow us to experience such a diverse set of emotional reactions like no other genre could, as quite frankly anything goes.”

Over a number of years, Gaynor worked on a voluntary basis at an adult residential home where people with mental illnesses, personality disorders and learning difficulties were cared for and taught life skills to enable them to gain the confidence to live more independently.

Throughout this period, she developed a strong interest in psychological and psychiatric conditions, particularly the effect on behavior and the impact it has on others.

Gaynor's debut 'who-dun-nit' novel, **Revenge**, featuring Detective Inspector Jemima Huxley, is available as an e-book at Amazon (click cover image below) and in paperback. **Step up or Die** is expected to be published in 2016.

Torrance further describes her book as:

“A fast-paced tale of hedonism, obsession and murder. When mutilated corpses are discovered in an exclusive city suburb, it falls to DI Jemima Huxley to find the murderer before they kill again. Exhausted and disillusioned, she struggles to focus on the facts and keep her emotions in check. Beset with self-doubt she comes to believe that the victims have been selected to implicate an innocent person, and it becomes a race against time to save another life.”



Our next crime-writing author is actually a former crime fighter as well. Meet Robert White. Here is a bit of White's story:

"I was born February 1958, in a small town called Boston Spa, just a few miles from the industrial city of Leeds, England. The illegitimate son of a jazz musician and a factory girl, I was passed on to my maternal grandparents before I was a year old, never to return to my birth parents.

Despite being raised in a strict Methodist environment, I was a rebel at school, and I figure they disliked me, as much as I, in my teenage angst kind of way, hated them and all things authoritative.

I left my education behind at sixteen and went to work, taking any manual jobs I could find until, in the summer of 1980, I met a guy in a bar who would change my life



Robert White

forever. He was a detective, and suggested I apply to become a cop.

I served fifteen years, my last five as a tactical firearms officer. Police officers in the UK are not routinely armed so this was an unusual choice. I suppose the closest thing in the USA would be SWAT. In 1996, I moved to Abu Dhabi, and my life was to change again. I met my wife Nicola and began to write crime and action and adventure stories.

In 2000, I returned to small town life, and now live in Lancashire, England, with my wife and two terribly-behaved terrier dogs, Flash and Tia. I have published four full-length novels and am currently working on a further three. They, like me, are pretty raw and straight talking. Not for the squeamish or the lover of the happy- ever-after, they show the dark side of British life. Take a look, I hope you enjoy. (***See below to view the blurb of this apparently thrilling novel!***)

"Why Crime Fiction?"

I'm going to mix in some action and adventure here, together with some political conspiracy and gangland brutality as it would be rude of me not to.

I believe in the old adage of 'write what you know,' or at least using this knowledge as your starting point. I'm not advocating, that anyone reading this, contemplating writing a novel about a marathon runner, get off their couch and do the twenty-six miles themselves, but it would help. The pain, the blisters, the training...not everything can be achieved by research alone.

I've been involved in several murder investigations. They are long, tortuous and very often boring to work on. That said, standing in a room next to a guy with his throat cut is a sobering experience that you don't forget in a hurry. The art of writing good crime fiction is, telling the reader how the cop caught the bad guy, and not sending them to sleep in the process. Believe me, 'real' crime detection isn't all that interesting.

Thankfully for people like me, there seems to be no end to the public's desire for new crime fiction novels, films and television series. We have a naturally ghoulish appetite for the dark, brutal, seedy underside of society. We don't want to be involved in that car crash, but we can't help but slow down and look eh?

For me, I love to create a bad guy equally as much as a tired downtrodden cop who is struggling to catch him. I don't think I will ever tire of that.

And that can only be a good thing.

"UNREST, the novel I have featured here today," White said, "is just as much about seasoned Detective Sergeant Ewan Striker, as it is about terrorism, racism and the failings of our modern society. Readers have told me, the book scared them, made them laugh and a story about the relationship

between the young rookie Tag Westland and the brutal made them cry. I must have done a good job. Thanks for reading about me.

Here's the blurb:

“Abu Al Zachari lands in Greece, holding a small child, posing as a refugee. In truth, he is Syrian, trained by the Afghans, and a vicious terrorist. Al Zachari travels to the north of England where he begins to plan the biggest terrorist atrocity ever seen in the UK. Everything is going to plan, until a teenage boy, radicalized by Zachari, is found tortured and murdered near a burning mosque. Mohammed Hussain is hanging from a meat-hook with a sign around his neck that announces his crime....'Terrorist.'”



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“Detective Sergeant Ewan Striker is called in to investigate. Can Striker prevent the horror that Al Zachari is planning? And exactly who is murdering radicalized British kids?”

According to his amazon page, White is an Amazon best-selling crime fiction author. His two published novels **DIRTY** and

THE FIX have sold over ten thousand copies and have appeared in the top ten downloaded novels in the genre. Robert is an ex-cop, who captures the brutality of northern British streets in his work. He combines believable characters, slick plots and vivid dialogue to immerse the reader in his fast paced storylines.

White has a total of five books on Amazon.

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Our next crime writer was strongly influenced by her dad. Meet Ellen Ann Callahan, author freelance writer and former lawyer.

Ellen’s articles and essays have appeared in Maryland Life Magazine, The Washington Post, Washington Family Magazine, and Chicken Soup for the Breast Cancer Survivor’s Soul. She was an adoption attorney until she retired to pursue the writing life. She lives with her husband in Deep Creek, Maryland.

What attracted me to the crime fiction genre? I need to give credit **to my father.** While I was a growing up, my father liked action movies (he called them “shoot 'em ups”). My mother didn’t care for them, so my father took me to all the shoot 'em up movies. I spent my formative years watching Clint Eastwood, Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson and Gene Hackman movies. I loved the car chases and the fights.

I later developed an interest in crime fiction novels.



Ellen Ann Callahan

One of the first things I learned from my writing classes was “write what you know.” Crime fiction is what I know, so that’s what I decided to write. I have a chase scene in my book, but it’s on a bicycle and not in a car. Of course, there are fight scenes and a “shoot 'em up.”

Why are people so drawn to crime stories? Crime stories are rife with good vs. evil conflict. Will the police catch the perpetrator? Will the victim survive? Will justice prevail? A criminal act can reveal the most corrupt and the noblest of human nature.

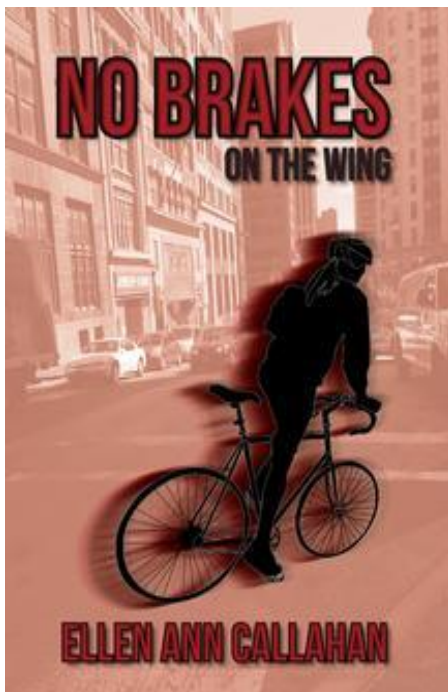
The resolution of criminal conflict, whether in the worlds of fiction or true life, is compelling.

About My Book:

Brakes on the Wing is set in Baltimore, Maryland, AKA “Charm City.” It’s a city rich in history, diversity and culture. Population-wise, it’s Maryland’s largest city; character-wise it’s a small town—the kind of place where people sit on their front steps and chat with neighbors. I lived in Baltimore

while I attended law school. Fortunately for my story, Baltimore has many hills as well as plenty of quirky, fun residents. My goal was to write a fun, page-turner. Lucy Prestipino is a twenty-one-year-old bicycle messenger on the hunt for a killer. She thwarts ruthless gangsters, maneuvers through the court system to obtain crucial evidence, and outwits gangsters and prosecutors. She uncovers a web of long-kept secrets that may destroy her.

Allison Leotta, the author of **The Last Good Girl**, described my book: *“As fast and exhilarating as a bike messenger darting through traffic, No Brakes On the Wing is a thrilling ride through Baltimore and its most fascinating citizens. Part love story, part mystery, and all heart, you’ll cheer for Callahan’s spunky heroine, Lucy, and hope she figures out the real story behind two very different men before it’s too late. Fun, smart, and hard to put down, this is a great read.”*



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I am writing the sequel, **Plowed Over: On the Wing**. Lucy is a snow-plow driver in a small town nestled in Maryland’s Allegheny Mountains. The action begins when Lucy plows up a dead body.

Book Blurb:

“Lucy Prestipino has only minutes to deliver a lawsuit to the Baltimore City courthouse. She’s a twenty-one-year-old bicycle messenger on a mission—saving a crying lawyer from missing the statute of limitations. She’s promised to file the lawsuit before the court closes, no matter what.

No matter what propels Lucy into a horrific crash with handsome and charismatic Romero Sanchez. She becomes romantically entangled with Sanchez until Rick McCormick, the chief of the new gang unit of the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office, warns her of the depth of Sanchez’s criminality. Her relationship with Sanchez violently disintegrates. A brutal murder draws her into a ruthless vendetta between Sanchez and McCormick. She’s convinced the police are on the wrong track and launches her own murder investigation. The long-kept secrets Lucy unearths during her hunt for a killer force her to confront choices that may destroy her.”

EXCERPT

“Lucy passed the morning browsing inside Surveillance Spyware, the largest spy-equipment retail store in the world, according to the ad she saw in the Los Angeles Times. She wanted to buy a tiny, covert camera so she could secretly record her conversations with Romero. The store was massive. There were nanny cams in coffee pots and clocks, recording devices tucked into everyday

household items—air fresheners, computer flash drives, and tissue boxes. She considered buying the baseball hat with the pinhole-sized recorder implanted above the rim. No, Romero’s not dumb. He’ll have me searched.

The personal protection department was by far the largest. Stun grenades and pepper blasters. Taser guns disguised as pens, key chains, and lipstick cases. Three aisles over, Lucy found her heart’s desire: a Flashbang bra holster. The holster attached to a women’s bra, between the breasts, concealing the gun. Even under a T-shirt.

Lucy debated buying it. Wearing the holster in LA was out. Romero would find it in a second. Besides, she’d left her gun in Baltimore. She decided to buy the holster anyway—sometimes a woman needs to spoil herself.

“With practice, you can draw your gun in under three seconds,” the saleswoman said, “I’ll take it.”

Contact links:

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<https://twitter.com/ECallahanAuthor>

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<http://www.ellenanncallahan.com>

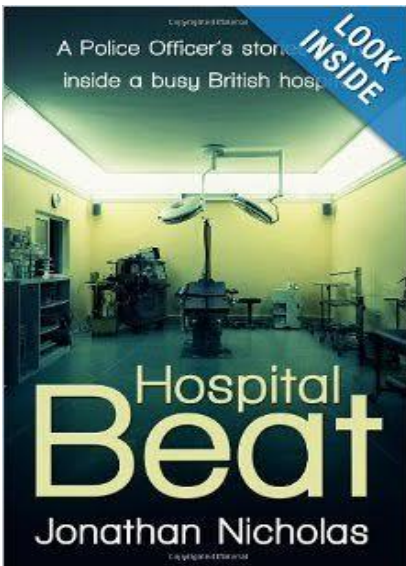
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Meet Jonathan Nicholas, Nottingham, England, another UK crime-writing, crime-fighting author who had an unusual beat – at least as far as people usually conceive of the jobs cops do.



Jonathan Nicholas

“Why write about crime? It was after work in the pub one night, having just dealt with a doctor for masturbating at female colleagues - people didn't believe me,” Nicholas related. “When I dealt with a cancer nurse stealing from patients right at the point of death they said 'you should write a book!'. Fact is very much stranger than fiction!”



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People are drawn to crime stories for several reasons. Firstly, their natural curiosity, then the interest in the macabre. In my case, everyone uses hospitals, so there was a ready market waiting for readers.

Nicholas' book: “Hospital Beat.” True life tales of ten years as a hospital cop in a busy inner-city British hospital. Thieving doctors, nurses, patients, and visitors. Even a doctor with a very strange and disturbing sexual habit.” Though 99% of the book's content is true, said Nicholas, it was officially classed as 'fiction' to avoid litigation.

Jonathan Nicholas was born in England. He has always maintained a passion for aeroplanes, and became a glider pilot and pilot of light aircraft. He has always been a fanatical diary keeper. When he was just eighteen, Jonathan left the UK to live on the border with Lebanon and Syria, where he was frequently caught up in air raids. His diary from this time provided the source material for the best-selling book 'Kibbutz Virgin'.

Jonathan then worked in a bank in Grantham, Lincolnshire, but left the UK again to live in the Negev Desert close to Gaza. Days off were frequently spent in Gaza City drinking coffee and chatting with the locals.

He then worked in Germany as a laborer, living in an old red-brick tenement with a group of “mad” Polish workers and some crazy craic-loving Irishmen. He then travelled to Australia. He stayed in “Oz” for twelve months, becoming an illegal immigrant by over-staying his six-week tourist visa. He undertook casual work and had an unforgettable adventure when he hitchhiked across the continent, from Brisbane to Darwin, down across the Red Centre to Adelaide, and back to Brisbane. He then spent three months in New Zealand, hitchhiking around the North Island. His astonishing experiences down under are

detailed in his non-fiction travel book 'Oz- A Hitchhiker's Australian Anthology'.

On his eventual return to the UK, Jonathan became a police officer and for the next thirty years he worked in some very busy and challenging multi-cultural areas of “Inner city England” as a uniformed police officer, almost always on the 'front line'. He worked in the City of Nottingham at various police stations, for ten years working as the beat officer for the Nottingham City Hospital. He dealt with some bizarre cases such as a doctor with disturbing sexual habits, dishonest staff and patients, and unscrupulous thieves who ruthlessly targeted the hospital campus on a daily basis. His extraordinary experiences as a hospital cop are detailed in his book 'Hospital Beat.'

He was commended several times during his police career culminating in 2007 when he won the coveted Community Police Officer of the

Year Award. For a while he wrote a regular column in the national UK police magazine Police Review, where his professional writing began.

I found this five-star review of **Hospital Beat** on Nicholas' Amazon site:

“I started this book, thinking I would just skim through the parts that got boring. I read every word. It is well written, incredibly descriptive, and has left me wanting more from this author. It could be any police officer, in any hospital, in any city.....however most will finish the book hoping it is their police officer, in their hospital in their city. There were a few disturbing

incidents, however it is reassuring to know how seriously and professionally they are dealt with.” – Amazon reviewer.



Visit Jonathan Nicholas' website at:
www.jonathannicholas.org.uk

Authors Interested in Being Featured: contact Gary Dorion after subscribing to my email list:

<http://goo.gl/HMauBo> Please make submissions five days before publication. Click here to see schedule/guidelines.
<http://goo.gl/J69sdG>



For this first issue, we end with the first chapter of Dostoevsky's great novel, Crime and Punishment – the free public domain version which you can find at the Guttenberg Project.

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Translator's Preface

A few words about Dostoevsky himself may help the English reader to understand his work. Dostoevsky was the son of a doctor. His parents were very hard-working and deeply religious people, but so poor that they lived with their five children in only two rooms. The father and mother spent their evenings in reading aloud to their children, generally from books of a serious character. Though always sickly and delicate Dostoevsky came out third in the final examination of the Petersburg school of Engineering. There he had already begun his first work, "Poor Folk."

This story was published by the poet Nekrassov in his review and was received with acclamations. The shy, unknown youth found himself instantly something of a celebrity. A brilliant and successful career seemed to open before him, but those hopes were soon dashed. In 1849 he was arrested.

Though neither by temperament nor conviction a revolutionist, Dostoevsky was one of a little group of young men who met together to read Fourier and Proudhon. He was accused of "taking part in conversations against the censorship, of reading a letter from Byelinsky to Gogol, and of knowing of the intention to set up a printing press." Under Nicholas I. (that "stern and just man," as Maurice Baring calls him) this was enough, and he was condemned to death. After eight months' imprisonment he was with twenty-one others taken out to the Semyonovsky Square to be shot. Writing to his brother Mihail, Dostoevsky says: "They snapped words over our heads, and they made us put on the white shirts worn by persons condemned to death. Thereupon we were bound in threes to stakes, to suffer execution. Being the third in the row, I concluded I had only a few minutes of life before me. I thought of you and your dear ones and I contrived to kiss Plestcheiev and Dourov, who were next to me, and to bid them farewell. Suddenly the troops beat a tattoo, we were unbound, brought back upon the scaffold, and informed that his Majesty had spared us our lives." The sentence was commuted to hard labor.

One of the prisoners, Grigoryev, went mad as soon as he was untied, and never regained his sanity.

The intense suffering of this experience left a lasting stamp on Dostoevsky's mind. Though his religious temper led him in the end to accept every suffering with resignation and to regard it as a blessing in his own case, he constantly recurs to the subject in his writings. He describes the

awful agony of the condemned man and insists on the cruelty of inflicting such torture. Then followed four years of penal servitude, spent in the company of common criminals in Siberia, where he began the "Dead House," and some years of service in a disciplinary battalion.

He had shown signs of some obscure nervous disease before his arrest and this now developed into violent attacks of epilepsy, from which he suffered for the rest of his life. The fits occurred three or four times a year and were more frequent in periods of great strain. In 1859 he was allowed to return to Russia. He started a journal—"Vremya," which was forbidden by the Censorship through a misunderstanding. In 1864 he lost his first wife and his brother Mihail. He was in terrible poverty, yet he took upon himself the payment of his brother's debts. He started another journal—"The Epoch," which within a few months was also prohibited. He was weighed down by debt, his brother's family was dependent on him, he was forced to write at heart-breaking speed, and is said never to have corrected his work. The later years of his life were much softened by the tenderness and devotion of his second wife.

In June 1880 he made his famous speech at the unveiling of the monument to Pushkin in Moscow and he was received with extraordinary demonstrations of love and honour.

A few months later Dostoevsky died. He was followed to the grave by a vast multitude of mourners, who "gave the hapless man the funeral of a king." He is still probably the most widely read writer in Russia.

In the words of a Russian critic, who seeks to explain the feeling inspired by Dostoevsky: "He was one of ourselves, a man of our blood and our bone, but one who has suffered and has seen so much more deeply than we have his insight impresses us as wisdom... that wisdom of the heart which we seek that we may learn from it how to live. All his other gifts came to him from nature, this he won for himself and through it he became great."

Chapter 1

On an exceptionally hot evening early in July a young man came out of the garret in which he lodged in S. Place and walked slowly, as though in hesitation, towards K. bridge.

He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase. His garret was under the roof of a high, five-storied house and was more like a cupboard than a room. The landlady who provided him with garret, dinners, and attendance, lived on the floor below, and every time he went out he was obliged to pass her kitchen, the door of which invariably stood open. And each time he passed, the young man had a sick, frightened feeling, which made him scowl and feel ashamed. He was hopelessly in debt to his landlady, and was afraid of meeting her.

This was not because he was cowardly and abject, quite the contrary; but for some time past he had been in an overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria. He had become so completely absorbed in himself, and isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting, not only his

landlady, but anyone at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him. He had given up attending to matters of practical importance; he had lost all desire to do so. Nothing that any landlady could do had a real terror for him. But to be stopped on the stairs, to be forced to listen to her trivial, irrelevant gossip, to pestering demands for payment, threats and complaints, and to rack his brains for excuses, to prevaricate, to lie—no, rather than that, he would creep down the stairs like a cat and slip out unseen.

This evening, however, on coming out into the street, he became acutely aware of his fears.

"I want to attempt a thing *like that* and am frightened by these trifles," he thought, with an odd smile. "Hm... yes, all is in a man's hands and he lets it all slip from cowardice, that's an axiom. It would be interesting to know what it is men are most afraid of. Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what they fear most.... But I am talking too much. It's because I chatter that I do nothing. Or perhaps it is that I chatter because I do nothing. I've learned to chatter this last month, lying for days together in my den thinking... of Jack the Giant-killer. Why am I going there now? Am I capable of *that*? Is *that* serious? It is not serious at all. It's simply a fantasy to amuse myself; a plaything! Yes, maybe it is a plaything."

The heat in the street was terrible: and the airlessness, the bustle and the plaster, scaffolding, bricks, and dust all about him, and that special Petersburg stench, so familiar to all who are unable to get out of town in summer—all worked painfully upon the young

man's already overwrought nerves. The insufferable stench from the pot-houses, which are particularly numerous in that part of the town, and the drunken men whom he met continually, although it was a working day, completed the revolting misery of the picture. An expression of the profoundest disgust gleamed for a moment in the young man's refined face. He was, by the way, exceptionally handsome, above the average in height, slim, well-built, with beautiful dark eyes and dark brown hair. Soon he sank into deep thought, or more accurately speaking into a complete blankness of mind; he walked along not observing what was about him and not caring to observe it. From time to time, he would mutter something, from the habit of talking to himself, to which he had just confessed. At these moments he would become conscious that his ideas were sometimes in a tangle and that he was very weak; for two days he had scarcely tasted food.

He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags. In that quarter of the town, however, scarcely any shortcoming in dress would have created surprise. Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise. But there was such accumulated bitterness and contempt in the young man's heart, that, in spite of all the

fastidiousness of youth, he minded his rags least of all in the street. It was a different matter when he met with acquaintances or with former fellow students, whom, indeed, he disliked meeting at any time. And yet when a drunken man who, for some unknown reason, was being taken somewhere in a huge wagon dragged by a heavy dray horse, suddenly shouted at him as he drove past: "Hey there, German hatter" bawling at the top of his voice and pointing at him—the young man stopped suddenly and clutched tremulously at his hat. It was a tall round hat from Zimmerman's, but completely worn out, rusty with age, all torn and bespattered, brimless and bent on one side in a most unseemly fashion. Not shame, however, but quite another feeling akin to terror had overtaken him.

"I knew it," he muttered in confusion, "I thought so! That's the worst of all! Why, a stupid thing like this, the most trivial detail might spoil the whole plan. Yes, my hat is too noticeable.... It looks absurd and that makes it noticeable.... With my rags I ought to wear a cap, any sort of old pancake, but not this grotesque thing. Nobody wears such a hat, it would be noticed a mile off, it would be remembered.... What matters is that people would remember it, and that would give them a clue. For this business one should be as little conspicuous as possible.... Trifles, trifles are what matter! Why, it's just such trifles that always ruin everything...."

He had not far to go; he knew indeed how many steps it was from the gate of his lodging house: exactly seven hundred and thirty. He had counted them once when he had been lost in dreams. At the

time he had put no faith in those dreams and was only tantalizing himself by their hideous but daring recklessness. Now, a month later, he had begun to look upon them differently, and, in spite of the monologues in which he jeered at his own impotence and indecision, he had involuntarily come to regard this "hideous" dream as an exploit to be attempted, although he still did not realize this himself. He was positively going now for a "rehearsal" of his project, and at every step his excitement grew more and more violent.

With a sinking heart and a nervous tremor, he went up to a huge house which on one side looked on to the canal, and on the other into the street. This house was let out in tiny tenements and was inhabited by working people of all kinds—tailors, locksmiths, cooks, Germans of sorts, girls picking up a living as best they could, petty clerks, etc. There was a continual coming and going through the two gates and in the two courtyards of the house. Three or four door-keepers were employed on the building. The young man was very glad to meet none of them, and at once slipped unnoticed through the door on the right, and up the staircase. It was a back staircase, dark and narrow, but he was familiar with it already, and knew his way, and he liked all these surroundings: in such darkness even the most inquisitive eyes were not to be dreaded.

"If I am so scared now, what would it be if it somehow came to pass that I were really going to do it?" he could not help asking himself as he reached the fourth story. There his progress was barred by some porters who were engaged in moving furniture out of

a flat. He knew that the flat had been occupied by a German clerk in the civil service, and his family. This German was moving out then, and so the fourth floor on this staircase would be untenanted except by the old woman. "That's a good thing anyway," he thought to himself, as he rang the bell of the old woman's flat. The bell gave a faint tinkle as though it were made of tin and not of copper. The little flats in such houses always have bells that ring like that. He had forgotten the note of that bell, and now its peculiar tinkle seemed to remind him of something and to bring it clearly before him.... He started, his nerves were terribly overstrained by now. In a little while, the door was opened a tiny crack: the old woman eyed her visitor with evident distrust through the crack, and nothing could be seen but her little eyes, glittering in the darkness. But, seeing a number of people on the landing, she grew bolder, and opened the door wide. The young man stepped into the dark entry, which was partitioned off from the tiny kitchen. The old woman stood facing him in silence and looking inquiringly at him. She was a diminutive, withered up old woman of sixty, with sharp malignant eyes and a sharp little nose. Her colorless, somewhat grizzled hair was thickly smeared with oil, and she wore no kerchief over it. Round her thin long neck, which looked like a hen's leg, was knotted some sort of flannel rag, and, in spite of the heat, there hung flapping on her shoulders, a mangy fur cape, yellow with age. The old woman coughed and groaned at every instant. The young man must have looked at her with a rather peculiar expression, for a gleam of mistrust came into her eyes again.

"Raskolnikov, a student, I came here a month ago," the young man made haste to mutter, with a half bow, remembering that he ought to be more polite.

"I remember, my good sir, I remember quite well your coming here," the old woman said distinctly, still keeping her inquiring eyes on his face.

"And here... I am again on the same errand," Raskolnikov continued, a little disconcerted and surprised at the old woman's mistrust. "Perhaps she is always like that though, only I did not notice it the other time," he thought with an uneasy feeling.

The old woman paused, as though hesitating; then stepped on one side, and pointing to the door of the room, she said, letting her visitor pass in front of her:

"Step in, my good sir."

The little room into which the young man walked, with yellow paper on the walls, geraniums and muslin curtains in the windows, was brightly lighted up at that moment by the setting sun.

"So the sun will shine like this *then* too!" flashed as it were by chance through Raskolnikov's mind, and with a rapid glance he scanned everything in the room, trying as far as possible to notice and remember its arrangement. But there was nothing special in the room. The furniture, all very old and of yellow wood, consisted of a sofa with a huge bent wooden back, an oval table in front of the sofa, a dressing-table with a looking-glass fixed on it between the windows, chairs along the walls and two or three half-penny prints in yellow frames, representing German damsels with birds in their hands—that was all. In the corner a light was burning before a small ikon.

Everything was very clean; the floor and the furniture were brightly polished; everything shone.

"Lizaveta's work," thought the young man. There was not a speck of dust to be seen in the whole flat.

"It's in the houses of spiteful old widows that one finds such cleanliness," Raskolnikov thought again, and he stole a curious glance at the cotton curtain over the door leading into another tiny room, in which stood the old woman's bed and chest of drawers and into which he had never looked before. These two rooms made up the whole flat.

"What do you want?" the old woman said severely, coming into the room and, as before, standing in front of him so as to look him straight in the face.

"I've brought something to pawn here," and he drew out of his pocket an old-fashioned flat silver watch, on the back of which was engraved a globe; the chain was of steel.

"But the time is up for your last pledge. The month was up the day before yesterday."

"I will bring you the interest for another month; wait a little."

"But that's for me to do as I please, my good sir, to wait or to sell your pledge at once."

"How much will you give me for the watch, Alyona Ivanovna?"

"You come with such trifles, my good sir, it's scarcely worth anything. I gave you two roubles last time for your ring and one could buy it quite new at a jeweler's for a rouble and a half."

"Give me four roubles for it, I shall redeem it, it was my father's. I shall be getting some money soon."

"A rouble and a half, and interest in advance, if you like!"

"A rouble and a half!" cried the young man.

"Please yourself"—and the old woman handed him back the watch. The young man took it, and was so angry that he was on the point of going away; but checked himself at once, remembering that there was nowhere else he could go, and that he had had another object also in coming.

"Hand it over," he said roughly.

The old woman fumbled in her pocket for her keys, and disappeared behind the curtain into the other room. The young man, left standing alone in the middle of the room, listened inquisitively, thinking. He could hear her unlocking the chest of drawers.

"It must be the top drawer," he reflected. "So she carries the keys in a pocket on the right. All in one bunch on a steel ring.... And there's one key there, three times as big as all the others, with deep notches; that can't be the key of the chest of drawers... then there must be some other chest or strong-box... that's worth knowing. Strong-boxes always have keys like that... but how degrading it all is."

The old woman came back.

"Here, sir: as we say ten kopecks the rouble a month, so I must take fifteen kopecks from a rouble and a half for the month in advance. But for the two roubles I lent you before, you owe me now twenty kopecks on the same reckoning in advance. That makes thirty-five kopecks altogether. So I must give you a rouble and fifteen kopecks for the watch. Here it is."

"What! only a rouble and fifteen kopecks now!"

"Just so."

The young man did not dispute it and took the money. He looked at the old woman, and was in no hurry to get away, as though there was still something he wanted to say or to do, but he did not himself quite know what.

"I may be bringing you something else in a day or two, Alyona Ivanovna—a valuable thing—silver—a cigarette-box, as soon as I get it back from a friend..." he broke off in confusion.

"Well, we will talk about it then, sir."

"Good-bye—are you always at home alone, your sister is not here with you?" He asked her as casually as possible as he went out into the passage.

"What business is she of yours, my good sir?"

"Oh, nothing particular, I simply asked. You are too quick.... Good-day, Alyona Ivanovna."

Raskolnikov went out in complete confusion. This confusion became more and more intense. As he went down the stairs, he even stopped short, two or three times, as though suddenly struck by some thought. When he was in the street he cried out, "Oh, God, how loathsome it all is! and can I, can I possibly.... No, it's nonsense, it's rubbish!" he added resolutely. "And how could such an atrocious thing come into my head? What filthy things my heart is capable of. Yes, filthy above all, disgusting, loathsome!—and for a whole month I've been...." But no words, no exclamations, could express his agitation. The feeling of intense repulsion, which had begun to oppress and torture his heart while he was on his way to the old woman, had by now reached such a pitch and had taken such a definite form that he did not

know what to do with himself to escape from his wretchedness. He walked along the pavement like a drunken man, regardless of the passers-by, and jostling against them, and only came to his senses when he was in the next street. Looking round, he noticed that he was standing close to a tavern which was entered by steps leading from the pavement to the basement. At that instant two drunken men came out at the door, and abusing and supporting one another, they mounted the steps. Without stopping to think, Raskolnikov went down the steps at once. Till that moment he had never been into a tavern, but now he felt giddy and was tormented by a burning thirst. He longed for a drink of cold beer, and attributed his sudden weakness to the want of food. He sat down at a sticky little table in a dark and dirty corner; ordered some beer, and eagerly drank off the first glassful. At once he felt easier; and his thoughts became clear.

"All that's nonsense," he said hopefully, "and there is nothing in it all to worry about! It's simply physical derangement. Just a glass of beer, a piece of dry bread—and in one moment the brain is stronger, the mind is clearer and the will is firm! Phew, how utterly petty it all is!"

But in spite of this scornful reflection, he was by now looking cheerful as though he were suddenly set free from a terrible burden: and he gazed round in a friendly way at the people in the room. But even at that moment he had a dim foreboding that this happier frame of mind was also not normal.

There were few people at the time in the tavern. Besides the two

drunken men he had met on the steps, a group consisting of about five men and a girl with a concertina had gone out at the same time. Their departure left the room quiet and rather empty. The persons still in the tavern were a man who appeared to be an artisan, drunk, but not extremely so, sitting before a pot of beer, and his companion, a huge, stout man with a grey beard, in a short full-skirted coat. He was very drunk: and had dropped asleep on the bench; every now and then, he began as though in his sleep, cracking his fingers, with his arms wide apart and the upper part of his body bounding about on the bench, while he hummed some meaningless refrain, trying to recall some such lines as these:

*"His wife a year he fondly loved
His wife a—a year he—fondly
loved."*

Or suddenly waking up again:

*"Walking along the
crowded row
He met the one he used to
know."*

But no one shared his enjoyment: his silent companion looked with positive hostility and mistrust at all these manifestations. There was another man in the room who looked somewhat like a retired government clerk. He was sitting apart now and then sipping from his pot and looking round at the company. He, too, appeared to be in some agitation."

