

towards the porch in order to bless those who were awaiting him. But Fyodor Pavlovich managed to stop him at the door of the cell.

"Most blessed man!" he cried out with feeling, "let me kiss your dear hand once more. No, still you're a man one can talk to, a man one can get along with. Do you think I always lie like this and play the buffoon? I want you to know that all the while I've been acting on purpose in order to test you. I've been getting the feel of you, seeing whether one can get along with you. Whether there's room for my humility next to your pride. I present you with a certificate of honor: one can get along with you! And now, I am silent, from here on I'll be silent. I'll sit on my chair and be silent. Now it's your turn to speak, Pyotr Alexandrovich, you are the most important man left—for the next ten minutes."

## Chapter 3

### *Women of Faith*

Below, crowding near the wooden porch built onto the outside wall, there were only women this time, about twenty of them. They had been informed that the elder would come out at last, and had gathered in anticipation. The Khokhlakov ladies, who were also waiting for the elder, but in quarters set aside for gentlewomen, had come out to the porch as well. There were two of them, mother and daughter. Madame Khokhlakov, the mother, a wealthy woman, always tastefully dressed, was still fairly young and quite attractive, slightly pale, with very lively and almost completely black eyes. She was not more than thirty-three years old and had been a widow for about five years. Her fourteen-year-old daughter suffered from paralysis of the legs. The poor girl had been unable to walk for about half a year already, and was wheeled around in a long, comfortable chair. Hers was a lovely little face, a bit thin from illness, but cheerful. Something mischievous shone in her big, dark eyes with their long lashes. Her mother had been intending to take her abroad since spring, but was detained through the summer by the management of her estate. They had already spent about a week in our town, more for business than on pilgrimage, but had already visited the elder once, three days before. Now they suddenly came again, though they knew that the elder was almost unable to receive anyone at all, and, pleading insistently, begged once again for "the happiness of beholding the great healer."

While awaiting the elder's appearance, the mama sat on a seat next to her daughter's chair, and two steps away from her stood an old monk, not from our monastery, but a visitor from a little-known cloister in the far north. He, too, wanted to receive the elder's blessing. But when the elder appeared on the porch, he first went directly to the people. The crowd started pressing towards the three steps that connected the low porch with the field. The elder stood on the top step, put on his stole, and began to bless the women who crowded towards him. A "shrieker" was pulled up to him by both hands. She no sooner saw the elder than she suddenly began somehow absurdly screeching, hiccuping, and shaking all over as if in convulsions. The elder, having covered her head with the stole, read a short prayer over her, and she at once became quiet and calmed down. I do not know how it is now, but in my childhood I often used to see and hear these "shriekers" in villages and monasteries. Taken to the Sunday liturgy, they would screech or bark like dogs so that the whole church could hear, but when the chalice was brought out, and they were led up to the chalice, the "demonic possession" would immediately cease and the sick ones would always calm down for a time. As a child, I was greatly struck and astonished by this. And it was then that I heard from some landowners and especially from my town teachers, in answer to my questions, that it was all a pretense in order to avoid work, and that it could always be eradicated by the proper severity, which they confirmed by telling various stories. But later on I was surprised to learn from medical experts that there is no pretense in it, that it is a terrible woman's disease that seems to occur predominantly in our Russia, that it is a testimony to the hard lot of our peasant women, caused by exhausting work too soon after difficult, improper birthing without any medical help, and, besides that, by desperate grief, beatings, and so on, which the nature of many women, after all, as the general examples show, cannot endure. This strange and instant healing of the frenzied and struggling woman the moment she was brought to the chalice, which used to be explained to me as shamming and, moreover, almost as a trick arranged by the "clericals" themselves—this healing occurred, probably, also in a very natural way: both the women who brought her to the chalice and, above all, the sick woman herself, fully believed, as an unquestionable truth, that the unclean spirit that possessed the sick woman could not possibly endure if she, the sick woman, were brought to the chalice and made to bow before it. And therefore, in a nervous and certainly also mentally ill woman, there always occurred (and had to occur), at the moment of her bowing before the chalice, an inevitable shock, as it were, to her whole body, a shock provoked by expectation of the inevitable miracle of healing and by the most complete faith that it would occur. And it would occur, even if only for a mo-

ment. That is just what happened now, as soon as the elder covered the woman with his stole.

Many of the women who pressed towards him were shedding tears of tenderness and rapture, called up by the effect of the moment; others strained to kiss at least the hem of his clothes, and some were murmuring to themselves. He gave blessings to everyone and spoke with several. The "shrieker" he knew already; she came not from far away but from a village only four miles from the monastery, and had been brought to him before.

"But she comes from far away!" He pointed to a woman who was not at all old yet but very thin and haggard, with a face not tanned but, as it were, blackened. She was kneeling and stared at the elder with a fixed gaze. There was something frenzied, as it were, in her eyes.

"From far away, dear father, far away, two hundred miles from here. Far away, father, far away," the woman spoke in a singsong voice, rocking her head gently from side to side with her cheek resting in her hand. She spoke as though she were lamenting. There is among the people a silent, long-suffering grief; it withdraws into itself and is silent. But there is also a grief that is strained; a moment comes when it breaks through with tears, and from that moment on it pours itself out in lamentations. Especially with women. But it is no easier to bear than the silent grief. Lamentations ease the heart only by straining and exacerbating it more and more. Such grief does not even want consolation; it is nourished by the sense of its unquenchableness. Lamentations are simply the need to constantly irritate the wound.

"You must be tradespeople," the elder continued, studying her with curiosity.

"We're townspeople, father, townspeople, we're peasants but we live in town. I've come to see you, father. We heard about you, dear father, we heard about you. I buried my baby son, and went on a pilgrimage. I've been in three monasteries, and then they told me: 'Go to them, too, Nastasia'—meaning to you, my dear, to you. So I came, yesterday I was at vespers, and today I've come to you."

"What are you weeping for?"

"I pity my little son, dear father, he was three years old, just three months short of three years old." I grieve for my little son, father, for my little son. He was the last little son left to us, we had four, Nikitushka and I, but our children didn't stay with us, they didn't stay. When I buried the first three, I wasn't too sorry about them, but this last one I buried and I can't forget him. As if he's just standing right in front of me and won't go away. My soul is wasted over him. I look at his clothes, at his little shirt or his little boots, and start howling. I lay

out all that he left behind, all his things, and look at them and howl. Then I say to Nikitushka, that's my husband, let me go on a pilgrimage, master. He's a coachman, we're not poor, father, not poor, we run our own business, everything belongs to us, the horses and the carriages. But who needs all that now? Without me, he's taken to drinking, my Nikitushka, I'm sure he has, even before I left he'd give in to it, the minute I turned my back. And now I don't even think about him. It's three months since I left home. I've forgotten, I've forgotten everything, and I don't want to remember, what can I do with him now? I'm through with him, through, I'm through with everybody. And I don't even want to see my house now, and my things, I don't want to see anything at all!"

"Listen, mother," said the elder. "Once, long ago, a great saint saw a mother in church, weeping just as you are over her child, her only child, whom the Lord had also called to him. 'Do you not know,' the saint said to her, 'how bold these infants are before the throne of God? No one is bolder in the Kingdom of Heaven: Lord, you granted us life, they say to God, and just as we beheld it, you took it back from us. And they beg and plead so boldly that the Lord immediately puts them in the ranks of the angels. And therefore,' said the saint, 'you, too, woman, rejoice and do not weep. Your infant, too, now abides with the Lord in the host of his angels.' That is what a saint said to a weeping woman in ancient times. He was a great saint and would not have told her a lie. Therefore you, too, mother, know that your infant, too, surely now stands before the throne of the Lord, rejoicing and being glad, and praying to God for you. Weep, then, but also rejoice."

The woman listened to him, resting her cheek in her hand, her eyes cast down. She sighed deeply.

"The same way my Nikitushka was comforting me, word for word, like you, he'd say: 'Foolish woman, he'd say, 'why do you cry so? Our little son is surely with the Lord God now, singing with the angels.' He'd say it to me, and he'd be crying himself, I could see, he'd be crying just like me. 'I know, Nikitushka, I'd say, 'where else can he be if not with the Lord God, only he isn't here, with us, Nikitushka, he isn't sitting here with us like before! If only I could just have one more look at him, if I could see him one more time, I wouldn't even go up to him, I wouldn't speak, I'd hide in a corner, only to see him for one little minute, to hear him the way he used to play in the backyard and come in and shout in his little voice: 'Mama, where are you?' Only to hear how he walks across the room, just once, just one time, pat-pat-pat with his little feet, so quick, so quick, the way I remember he used to run up to me, shouting and laughing, if only I could hear his little feet pattering and know

it was him! But he's gone, dear father, he's gone and I'll never hear him again! His little belt is here, but he's gone, and I'll never see him, I'll never hear him again . . . !"

She took her boy's little gold-braided belt from her bosom and, at the sight of it, began shaking with sobs, covering her eyes with her hands, through which streamed the tears that suddenly gushed from her eyes.

"This," said the elder, "is Rachel of old 'weeping for her children, and she would not be comforted, because they are not.'<sup>2</sup> This is the lot that befalls you, mothers, on earth. And do not be comforted, you should not be comforted, do not be comforted, but weep. Only each time you weep, do not fail to remember that your little son is one of God's angels, that he looks down at you from there and sees you, and rejoices in your tears and points them out to the Lord God. And you will be filled with this great mother's weeping for a long time, but in the end it will turn into quiet joy for you, and your bitter tears will become tears of quiet tenderness and the heart's purification, which saves from sin. And I will remember your little child in my prayers for the repose of the dead. What was his name?"

"Alexei, dear father."

"A lovely name! After Alexei, the man of God?"

"Of God, dear father, of God. Alexei, the man of God."

"A great saint! I'll remember, mother, I'll remember, and I'll remember your sorrow in my prayers, and I'll remember your husband, too. Only it is a sin for you to desert him. Go to your husband and take care of him. Your little boy will look down and see that you've abandoned his father, and will weep for both of you: why, then, do you trouble his blessedness? He's alive, surely he's alive, for the soul lives forever, and though he's not at home, he is invisibly near you. How, then, can he come to his home if you say you now hate your home? To whom will he go if he does not find you, his father and mother, together? You see him now in your dreams and are tormented, but at home he will send you quiet dreams. Go to your husband, mother, go this very day."

"I will go, my dear, according to your word, I will go. You've touched my heart. Nikitushka, my Nikitushka, you are waiting for me, my dear, waiting for me!" The woman began to murmur, but the elder had already turned to a very old little old lady, dressed not as a pilgrim but in town fashion. One could see by her eyes that she had come for some purpose and had something on her mind. She introduced herself as the widow of a noncommissioned officer, not from far away but from our own town. Her dear son Vaska had served somewhere in the army commissariat and then gone to Siberia, to Irkutsk. He wrote twice from there, but it had already been a year now since he stopped

writing. She made inquiries about him, but to tell the truth she did not even know where to inquire.

"Just the other day, Stepanida Ilyinishna Bedyagin, she's a merchant's wife, a wealthy woman, said to me: 'I tell you what, Prokhorovna, go to church and put your son on a list to be remembered among the dead. His soul,' she says, 'will get troubled, and he'll write to you. It's just the thing to do,' Stepanida Ilyinishna says, 'it's been tested many times.' Only I'm not so sure . . . Dear father, is it right or wrong? Would it be a good thing to do?"

"Do not even think of it. It is shameful even to ask. How is it possible to commemorate a living soul as one of the dead, and his own mother at that! It is a great sin, it is like sorcery, it can be forgiven only because of your ignorance. You had better pray to the Queen of Heaven, our swift intercessor and helper, for his health, and that you be forgiven for your wrong thoughts. And I will tell you something else, Prokhorovna: either he himself, your boy, will soon come back to you, or he will surely send you a letter. I promise you that. Go, and from now on be at peace. Your boy is alive. I tell you."

"Dear father, may God reward you, our benefactor, pray for all of us and for our sins . . ."

But the elder had already noticed in the crowd two burning eyes seeking his, the eyes of a wasted, consumptive-looking, though still young, peasant woman. She stared silently, her eyes pleaded for something, but she seemed afraid to approach.

"What is it, my dear?"

"Absolve my soul, dear father," the woman said softly and unhurriedly, and she knelt and prostrated at his feet.

"I have sinned, dear father, I am afraid of my sin."

The elder sat on the bottom step, and the woman approached him, still on her knees.

"I'm three years a widow," she began in a half-whisper, with a sort of shudder. "My married life was hard, he was old, he beat me badly. Once he was sick in bed, I was looking at him and I thought: what if he recovers, gets up on his feet again, what then? And then the thought came to me . . ."

"Wait," said the elder, and he put his ear right to her lips. The woman continued in a soft whisper, almost inaudibly. She soon finished.

"It's the third year?" the elder asked.

"The third year. At first I didn't think about it, and now I've begun to be ill, grief has caught hold of me."

"Have you come from far away?"

"Over three hundred miles from here."

"Did you tell it at confession?"

"I did. Twice I confessed it."

"Were you allowed to receive communion?"

"I was. I'm afraid, afraid to die."

"Do not be afraid of anything, never be afraid, and do not grieve. Just repentance not slacken in you, and God will forgive everything. There is not and cannot be in the whole world such a sin that the Lord will not forgive one who truly repents of it. A man even cannot commit so great a sin as would exhaust God's boundless love. How could there be a sin that exceeds God's love? Only take care that you repent without ceasing, and chase away fear altogether. Believe that God loves you so as you cannot conceive of it; even with your sin and in your sin he loves you. And there is more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ten righteous men"—that was said long ago. Go, then, and do not be afraid. Do not be upset with people, do not take offense at their wrongs. Forgive the dead man in your heart for all the harm he did you; be reconciled with him truly. If you are repentant, it means that you love. And if you love, you already belong to God . . . With love everything is bought, everything is saved. If even I, a sinful man, just like you, was moved to tenderness and felt pity for you, how much more will God be. Love is such a priceless treasure that you can buy the whole world with it, and redeem not only your own but other people's sins. Go, and do not be afraid."

He blessed her three times, took a little icon from around his neck, and put it on her. She bowed deeply to him without speaking. He stood up and looked cheerfully at a healthy woman with a little baby in her arms.

"I'm from Vyshnegorye, dear father."

"Why, you've worn yourself out walking four miles with a baby! What do you want?"

"I came to have a look at you. I was here before, don't you remember? Your memory isn't so good if you've forgotten me! Our people said you were sick, and I thought, well, I'll go and see him myself. So, now I see you, and you don't look sick at all! God be with you, really, you'll live another twenty years! With all the people you've got praying for you, how could you be sick!"

"Thank you for everything, my dear."

"By the way, I have a little favor to ask you: here's sixty kopecks; give them, dear father, to some woman who's poorer than I am. As I was coming here, I thought: better give them through him, he'll know who to give them to."

"Thank you, my dear, thank you, kind woman. I love you. I'll be sure to do it. Is that a little girl in your arms?"

"A little girl, father. Lizaveta."

"The Lord bless you both, you and your baby Lizaveta. You've gladdened my heart, mother. Farewell, my dears, farewell, my dearest ones."  
He blessed them all and bowed deeply to them.

## Chapter 4

### *A Lady of Little Faith*

The visiting lady landowner, looking upon the whole scene of the conversation with the people and their blessing, shed quiet tears and wiped them away with her handkerchief. She was a sentimental society lady whose inclinations were in many respects genuinely good. When the elder finally came up to her, she met him in raptures.

"I experienced so much, so much, looking on at this moving scene . . . , she was too excited to finish. "Oh, I understand that the people love you, I myself love the people, I want to love them, and how can one not love them, our beautiful Russian people, so simple in their majesty!"

"How is your daughter's health? Did you want to talk with me again?"

"Oh, I begged insistently, I pleaded, I was ready to go down on my knees and stay kneeling even for three days under your window until you let me in. We have come to you, great healer, to express all our rapturous gratitude. You have surely healed my Liza, healed her completely. And how? By praying over her on Thursday, by laying your hands on her. We have hastened here to kiss those hands, to pour out our feelings and our reverence!"

"What do you mean—healed? Isn't she still lying in her chair?"

"But her night fevers have completely disappeared, for two days now, since Thursday," the lady nervously hurried on. "Besides, her legs have grown stronger. This morning she woke up healthy, she slept through the night, look at her color, at her bright eyes. She used to cry all the time, and now she's laughing, gay, joyful. Today she insisted on being helped to her feet, and she stood for a whole minute by herself, without any support. She wants to make a wager with me that in two weeks she'll be dancing the quadrille. I summoned the local doctor, Herzenstube, and he shrugged and said: amazing, baffling. And you want us not to trouble you, not to fly here and thank you? Thank him, Lise, thank him!"

Lise's pretty, laughing little face suddenly became serious for a moment.



She rose from her chair as much as she could, and, looking at the elder, clasped her hands before him, but she couldn't help herself and suddenly burst out laughing . . .

"It's at him, at him!" she pointed to Alyosha, childishly annoyed with herself because she could not keep from laughing. If anyone had looked at Alyosha, who was standing a step behind the elder, he would have noticed a quick blush momentarily coloring his cheeks. His eyes flashed and he looked down.

"She has a message for you, Alexei Fyodorovich . . . How are you?" the mama continued, suddenly addressing Alyosha and holding out to him an exquisitely gloved hand. The elder turned and suddenly looked at Alyosha tentively. The latter approached Liza and, grinning somehow strangely and awkwardly, held out his hand. Lise put on an important face.

"Katerina Ivanovna sends you this by me." She handed him a small letter. "She especially asks that you come to her soon, soon, and not to disappoint her but to be sure to come."

"She asks me to come? Me . . . to her . . . but why?" Alyosha muttered, deeply astonished. His face suddenly became quite worried.

"Oh, it's all about Dmitri Fyodorovich and . . . all these recent events," her mama explained briefly. "Katerina Ivanovna has now come to a decision . . . but for that she must see you . . . why, of course, I don't know, but she asked that you come as soon as possible. And you will do it, surely you will, even Christian feeling must tell you to do it."

"I've met her only once," Alyosha continued, still puzzled.

"Oh, she is such a lofty, such an unattainable creature . . . ! Only think of her sufferings . . . Consider what she's endured, what she's enduring now, consider what lies ahead of her . . . it's all terrible, terrible!"

"Very well, I'll go," Alyosha decided, glancing through the short and mysterious note, which, apart from an urgent request to come, contained no explanations.

"Ah, how nice and splendid it will be of you," Lise cried with sudden animation. "And I just said to mother: he won't go for anything, he is saving his soul. You're so wonderful, so wonderful! I always did think you were wonderful, and it's so nice to say it to you now!"

"Lise!" her mama said imposingly, though she immediately smiled.

"You've forgotten us, too, Alexei Fyodorovich, you don't care to visit us at all: and yet twice Lise has told me that she feels good only with you." Alyosha raised his downcast eyes, suddenly blushed again, and suddenly grinned again, not knowing why himself. The elder, however, was no longer watching him. He had gotten into conversation with the visiting monk, who, as we have

already said, was waiting by Lise's chair for him to come out. He was apparently one of those monks of the humblest sort, that is, from the common people, with a short, unshakable world view, but a believer and, in his own way, a tenacious one. He introduced himself as coming from somewhere in the far north, from Obdorsk, from St. Sylvester's, a poor monastery with only nine monks. The elder gave him his blessing and invited him to visit his cell when he liked.

"How are you so bold as to do such deeds?" the monk suddenly asked, pointing solemnly and imposingly at Lise. He was alluding to her "healing."

"It is, of course, too early to speak of that. Improvement is not yet a complete healing, and might also occur for other reasons. Still, if there was anything, it came about by no one else's power save the divine will. Everything is from God. Visit me, father," he added, addressing the monk, "while I'm still able: I'm ill, and I know that my days are numbered."

"Oh, no, no, God will not take you from us, you will live a long, long time yet," the mama exclaimed. "What's this about being ill? You look so healthy, so cheerful, so happy."

"I feel remarkably better today, but by now I know that it is only for a moment. I've come to understand my illness perfectly. But since I seem so cheerful to you, nothing could ever gladden me more than your saying so. For people are created for happiness, and he who is completely happy can at once be deemed worthy of saying to himself: 'I have fulfilled God's commandment on this earth.' All the righteous, all the saints, all the holy martyrs were happy."

"Oh, how you speak! What brave and lofty words!" the mama exclaimed.

"You speak, and it seems to pierce one right through. And yet happiness, happiness—where is it? Who can call himself happy? Oh, since you were already so kind as to allow us to see you once more today, let me tell you everything that I held back last time, that I did not dare to say, everything that I suffer with, and have for so long, so long! I am suffering, forgive me, I am suffering!" And in a sort of hot rush of emotion, she pressed her hands together before him.

"From what precisely?"

"I suffer from . . . lack of faith . . ."

"Lack of faith in God?"

"Oh, no, no, I dare not even think of that, but the life after death—it's such a riddle! And no one, but no one will solve it! Listen, you are a healer, a connoisseur of human souls, of course, I dare not expect you to believe me completely, but I assure you, I give you my greatest word that I am not speaking lightly now, that this thought about a future life after death troubles me to the

point of suffering, terror, and fright . . . And I don't know who to turn to, all my life I've never dared . . . And now I'm so bold as to turn to you . . . Oh, God, what will you think of me now!" And she clasped her hands.

"Don't worry about my opinion," the elder answered. "I believe completely in the genuineness of your anguish."

"Oh, how grateful I am to you! You see, I close my eyes and think: if everyone has faith, where does it come from? And then they say that it all came originally from fear of the awesome phenomena of nature, and that there is nothing to it at all. What? I think, all my life I've believed, then I die, and suddenly there's nothing, and only 'burdock will grow on my grave,'<sup>2</sup> as I read in one writer? It's terrible! What, what will give me back my faith? Though I believed only when I was a little child, mechanically, without thinking about anything . . . How, how can it be proved? I've come now to throw myself at your feet and ask you about it. If I miss this chance, too, then surely no one will answer me for the rest of my life. How can it be proved, how can one be convinced? Oh, miserable me! I look around and see that for everyone else, almost everyone, it's all the same, no one worries about it anymore, and I'm the only one who can't bear it. It's devastating, devastating!"

"No doubt it is devastating. One cannot prove anything here, but it is possible to be convinced."

"How? By what?"

"By the experience of active love. Try to love your neighbors actively and tirelessly. The more you succeed in loving, the more you'll be convinced of the existence of God and the immortality of your soul. And if you reach complete selflessness in the love of your neighbor, then undoubtedly you will believe, and no doubt will even be able to enter your soul. This has been tested. It is certain."

"Active love? That's another question, and what a question, what a question! You see, I love mankind so much that—would you believe it?—I sometimes dream of giving up all, all I have, of leaving Lise and going to become a sister of mercy. I close my eyes, I think and dream, and in such moments I feel an invincible strength in myself. No wounds, no festering sores could frighten me. I would bind them and cleanse them with my own hands, I would nurse the suffering, I am ready to kiss those sores . . ."

"It's already a great deal and very well for you that you dream of that in your mind and not of something else. Once in a while, by chance, you may really do some good deed."

"Yes, but could I survive such a life for long?" the lady went on heatedly, almost frantically, as it were. "That's the main question, that's my most tormenting question of all. I close my eyes and ask myself: could you stand it for

long on such a path? And if the sick man whose sores you are cleansing does not respond immediately with gratitude but, on the contrary, begins tormenting you with his whims, not appreciating and not noticing your philanthropic ministry, if he begins to shout at you, to make rude demands, even to complain to some sort of superiors (as often happens with people who are in pain)—what then? Will you go on loving, or not? And, imagine, the answer already came to me with a shudder: if there's anything that would immediately cool my 'active' love for mankind, that one thing is ingratitude. In short, I work for pay and demand my pay at once, that is, praise and a return of love for my love. Otherwise I'm unable to love anyone!"

She was in a fit of the most sincere self-castigation, and, having finished, looked with defiant determination at the elder.

"I heard exactly the same thing, a long time ago to be sure, from a doctor," the elder remarked. "He was then an old man, and unquestionably intelligent. He spoke just as frankly as you, humorously, but with a sorrowful humor. 'I love mankind,' he said, 'but I am amazed at myself: the more I love mankind in general, the less I love people in particular, that is, individually, as separate persons. In my dreams,' he said, 'I often went so far as to think passionately of serving mankind, and, it may be, would really have gone to the cross for people if it were somehow suddenly necessary, and yet I am incapable of living in the same room with anyone even for two days, this I know from experience. As soon as someone is there, close to me, his personality oppresses my self-esteem and restricts my freedom. In twenty-four hours I can begin to hate even the best of men: one because he takes too long eating his dinner, another because he has a cold and keeps blowing his nose. I become the enemy of people the moment they touch me,' he said. 'On the other hand, it has always happened that the more I hate people individually, the more ardent becomes my love for humanity as a whole.'"

"But what is to be done, then? What is to be done in such a case? Should one fall into despair?"

"No, for it is enough that you are distressed by it. Do what you can, and it will be reckoned unto you. You have already done much if you can understand yourself so deeply and so sincerely! But if you spoke with me so sincerely just now in order to be praised, as I have praised you, for your truthfulness, then of course you will get nowhere with your efforts at active love; it will all remain merely a dream, and your whole life will flit by like a phantom. Then, naturally, you will forget about the future life, and in the end will somehow calm down by yourself."

"You have crushed me! Only now, this very moment, as you were speaking, did I realize that indeed I was waiting only for you to praise my sincerity,

when I told you that I couldn't bear ingratitude. You've brought me back to myself, you've caught me out and explained me to myself!"

"Is it true what you say? Well, now, after such a confession from you, I believe that you are sincere and good at heart. If you do not attain happiness, always remember that you are on a good path, and try not to leave it. Above all, avoid lies, all lies, especially the lie to yourself. Keep watch on your own lie and examine it every hour, every minute. And avoid contempt, both of others and of yourself: what seems bad to you in yourself is purified by the very fact that you have noticed it in yourself. And avoid fear, though fear is simply the consequence of every lie. Never be frightened at your own faintheartedness in attaining love, and meanwhile do not even be very frightened by your own bad acts. I am sorry that I cannot say anything more comforting, for active love is a harsh and fearful thing compared with love in dreams. Love in dreams thirsts for immediate action, quickly performed, and with everyone watching. Indeed, it will go as far as the giving even of one's life, provided it does not take long but is soon over, as on stage, and everyone is looking on and praising. Whereas active love is labor and perseverance, and for some people, perhaps, a whole science. But I predict that even in that very moment when you see with horror that despite all your efforts, you not only have not come nearer your goal but seem to have gotten farther from it, at that very moment—I predict this to you—you will suddenly reach your goal and will clearly behold over you the wonder-working power of the Lord, who all the while has been loving you, and all the while has been mysteriously guiding you. Forgive me for not being able to stay with you longer, but I am expected. Good-bye."

The lady was weeping.

"Lise, Lise, but bless her, bless her!" she suddenly fluttered herself up.

"But does she deserve to be loved? I saw how she was being naughty all this time," the elder said jokingly. "Why have you been laughing at Alexei all this time?"

Lise had, indeed, been busy teasing Alyosha all the time. She had noticed long ago, from their first visit, that Alyosha was shy of her and tried not to look at her, and she found this terribly amusing. She waited purposely to catch his eye. Alyosha, unable to endure her persistent stare, would glance at her from time to time, unwillingly, drawn by an irresistible force, and at once she would grin a triumphant grin right in his face. Alyosha would become embarrassed, and even more annoyed. Finally he turned away from her altogether and hid behind the elder's back. After a few minutes, drawn by the same irresistible force, he turned to see if he was still being looked at or not, and saw Lise, almost hanging out of her chair, peering at him sideways, wait-

ing with all her might for him to look at her. Having caught his eye, she burst into such laughter that even the elder could not help saying:

"Naughty girl, why are you shaming him like that?"

Lise suddenly and quite unexpectedly blushed, her eyes flashed, her face became terribly serious, and with hot indignation she suddenly protested rapidly, nervously:

"And why has he forgotten everything? He carried me in his arms when I was little, we played together. Why, he used to come and teach me to read, do you know that? Two years ago, when we parted, he said he would never forget that we were friends forever, forever and ever! And now all of a sudden he's afraid of me. I'm not going to bite him, am I? Why doesn't he want to come near me? Why doesn't he say anything? Why won't he come to see us? It's not that you won't let him: we know he goes everywhere. It's improper for me to invite him, he should be the first to think of it, if he hasn't forgotten. No, sit, now he's saving his soul! Why did you put those long skirts on him . . . If he runs, he'll trip and fall . . ."

And suddenly, unable to restrain herself, she covered her face with her hand and burst, terribly, uncontrollably, into her prolonged, nervous, shaking, and inaudible laughter. The elder listened to her with a smile and blessed her tenderly. As she kissed his hand, she suddenly pressed it to her eyes and started crying:

"Don't be angry with me, I'm a fool, I'm worthless . . . and maybe Alyosha is right, very right, in not wanting to come and see such a silly girl!"

"I'll be sure to send him," the elder decided.

## Chapter 5

So Be It! So Be It!

The elder's absence from his cell lasted for about twenty-five minutes. It was already past twelve-thirty, yet Dmitri Fyodorovich, for whose sake everyone had gathered, was still nowhere to be seen. But it was almost as if he had been forgotten, and when the elder stepped into the cell again, he found his guests engaged in a most lively general conversation. Ivan Fyodorovich and the two hieromonks were the main participants. Misov, too, was trying—very eagerly, it appeared—to get into the conversation, but again he had no luck; he was obviously in the background, and they scarcely even responded to him,

"To the 'Metropolis,' on the square?"

"That's the one, sir."

"It's quite possible!" Alyosha exclaimed in great excitement. "Thank you, Smerdyakov, that is important news, I shall go there now."

"Don't give me away, sir," Smerdyakov called after him.

"Oh, no, I'll come to the tavern as if by chance, don't worry."

"But where are you going? Let me open the gate for you," cried Maria Kondratievna.

"No, it's closer this way, I'll climb over the fence."

The news shook Alyosha terribly. He set off for the tavern. It would be improper for him to enter the tavern dressed as he was, but he could inquire on the stairs and ask them to come out. Just as he reached the tavern, however, a window suddenly opened and his brother Ivan himself shouted down to him:

"Alyosha, can you come in here, or not? I'd be awfully obliged."

"Certainly I can, only I'm not sure, the way I'm dressed . . ."

"But I have a private room. Go to the porch, I'll run down and meet you . . ."

A minute later Alyosha was sitting next to his brother. Ivan was alone, and was having dinner.

## Chapter 3

### *The Brothers Get Acquainted*

Ivan was not, however, in a private room. It was simply a place at the window separated by screens, but those who sat behind the screens still could not be seen by others. It was the front room, the first, with a sideboard along the wall. Waiters kept darting across it every moment. There was only one customer, a little old man, a retired officer, and he was drinking tea in the corner. But in the other rooms of the tavern there was all the usual tavern bustle, voices calling, beer bottles popping, billiard balls clicking, a barrel organ droning. Alyosha knew that Ivan hardly ever went to this tavern, and was no lover of taverns generally; therefore he must have turned up here, Alyosha thought, precisely by appointment, to meet with his brother Dmitri. And yet there was no brother Dmitri.

"I'll order some fish soup for you, or something—you don't live on tea

alone, do you?" cried Ivan, apparently terribly pleased that he had managed to lure Alyosha. He himself had already finished dinner and was having tea.

"I'll have fish soup, and then tea, I'm hungry," Alyosha said cheerfully.

"And cherry preserve? They have it here. Do you remember how you loved cherry preserve at Polenov's when you were little?"

"You remember that? I'll have preserve, too, I still love it."

Ivan rang for the waiter and ordered fish soup, tea, and preserve.

"I remember everything, Alyosha. I remember you till you were eleven. I was nearly fifteen then. Fifteen and eleven, it's such a difference that brothers of those ages are never friends. I don't even know if I loved you. When I left for Moscow, in the first years I didn't even think of you at all. Later, when you got to Moscow yourself, it seems to me that we met only once somewhere. And now it's already the fourth month that I've been living here, and so far you and I have not exchanged a single word. I'm leaving tomorrow, and I was sitting here now, wondering how I could see you to say good-bye, and you came walking along."

"So you wished very much to see me?"

"Very much. I want to get acquainted with you once and for all, and I want you to get acquainted with me. And with that, to say good-bye. I think it's best to get acquainted before parting. I saw how you kept looking at me all these three months, there was a certain ceaseless expectation in your eyes, and that is something I cannot bear, which is why I never approached you. But in the end I learned to respect you: this little man stands his ground, I thought. Observe that I'm speaking seriously, though I may be laughing. You do stand your ground, don't you? I love people who stand their ground, whatever they may stand upon, and even if they're such little boys as you are. In the end, your expectant look did not disgust me at all, on the contrary, I finally came to love your expectant look . . . You seem to love me for some reason, Alyosha?"

"I do love you, Ivan. Our brother Dmitri says of you: Ivan is a grave. I say: Ivan is a riddle. You are still a riddle to me, but I've already understood something about you, though only since this morning!"

"What is it?" Ivan laughed.

"You won't be angry?" Alyosha laughed, too.

"Well?"

"That you are just a young man, exactly like all other young men of twenty-three—yes, a young, very young, fresh and nice boy, still green, in fact! Well, are you very offended?"

"On the contrary, you've struck me with a coincidence!" Ivan cried gaily and ardently. "Would you believe that after our meeting today at her place, I



have been thinking to myself about just that, my twenty-three-year-old greenness, and suddenly you guessed it exactly, and began with that very thing. I've been sitting here now, and do you know what I was saying to myself? If I did not believe in life, if I were to lose faith in the woman I love, if I were to lose faith in the order of things, even if I were to become convinced, on the contrary, that everything is a disorderly, damned, and perhaps devilish chaos, if I were struck even by all the horrors of human disillusionment—still I would want to live, and as long as I have bent to this cup, I will not tear myself from it until I've drunk it all! However, by the age of thirty, I will probably drop the cup, even if I haven't emptied it, and walk away . . . I don't know where. But until my thirtieth year, I know this for certain, my youth will overcome everything—all disillusionment, all aversion to life. I've asked myself many times: is there such despair in the world as could overcome this wild and perhaps indecent thirst for life in me, and have decided that apparently there is not—that is, once again, until my thirtieth year, after which I myself shall want no more, so it seems to me. Some snotty-nosed, consumptive moralists, poets especially, often call this thirst for life base. True, it's a feature of the Karamazovs, to some extent, this thirst for life despite all; it must be sitting in you, too; but why is it base? There is still an awful lot of centripetal force on our planet, Alyosha. I want to live, and I do live, even if it be against logic. Though I do not believe in the order of things, still the sticky little leaves that come out in the spring are dear to me, the blue sky is dear to me, some people are dear to me, whom one loves sometimes, would you believe it, without even knowing why; some human deeds are dear to me, which one has perhaps long ceased believing in, but still honors with one's heart, out of old habit. Here, they've brought your fish soup—help yourself. It's good fish soup, they make it well. I want to go to Europe, Alyosha, I'll go straight from here. Of course I know that I will only be going to a graveyard, but to the most, the most precious graveyard, that's the thing! The precious dead lie there, each stone over them speaks of such ardent past life, of such passionate faith in their deeds, their truth, their struggle, and their science, that I—this I know beforehand—will fall to the ground and kiss those stones and weep over them—being wholeheartedly convinced, at the same time, that it has all long been a graveyard and nothing more. And I will not weep from despair, but simply because I will be happy in my shed tears. I will be drunk with my own tenderness. Sticky spring leaves, the blue sky—I love them, that's all! Such things you love not with your mind, not with logic, but with your insides, your guts, you love your first young strength . . . Do you understand any of this blather, Alyosha, or not?" Ivan suddenly laughed.

"I understand it all too well, Ivan: to want to love with your insides, your

guts—you said it beautifully, and I'm terribly glad that you want so much to live," Alyosha exclaimed. "I think that everyone should love life before everything else in the world."

"Love life more than its meaning?"

"Certainly, love it before logic, as you say, certainly before logic, and only then will I also understand its meaning. That is how I've long imagined it. Half your work is done and acquired, Ivan: you love life. Now you need only apply yourself to the second half, and you are saved."

"You're already saving me, though maybe I wasn't perishing. And what does this second half consist of?"

"Resurrecting your dead, who may never have died. Now give me some tea. I'm glad we're talking, Ivan."

"I see you're feeling inspired. I'm terribly fond of such *professions de foi* from such . . . novices. You're a firm man, Alexei. Is it true that you want to leave the monastery?"

"Yes, it's true. My elder is sending me into the world."

"So we'll see each other in the world, we'll meet before my thirtieth year, when I will begin to tear myself away from the cup. Now, father doesn't want to tear himself away from his cup until he's seventy, he's even dreaming of eighty, he said so himself, and he means it all too seriously, though he is a buffoon. He stands on his sensuality, also as on a rock . . . though after thirty years, indeed, there may be nothing else to stand on . . . But still, seventy is base; thirty is better: it's possible to preserve a tinge of nobility" while duping oneself. Have you seen Dmitri today?"

"No, I haven't, but I did see Smerdyakov." And Alyosha told his brother quickly and in detail about his meeting with Smerdyakov. Ivan suddenly began listening very anxiously, and even asked him to repeat certain things.

"Only he asked me not to tell brother Dmitri what he had said about him," Alyosha added.

Ivan frowned and lapsed into thought.

"Are you frowning because of Smerdyakov?" asked Alyosha.

"Yes, because of him. Devil take him. Dmitri I really did want to see, but now there's no need . . .," Ivan spoke reluctantly.

"Are you really leaving so soon, brother?"

"Yes."

"What about Dmitri and father? How will it end between them?" Alyosha said anxiously.

"Don't drag that out again! What have I got to do with it? Am I my brother Dmitri's keeper or something?" Ivan snapped irritably, but suddenly smiled somehow bitterly. "Cain's answer to God about his murdered brother, eh?"

Maybe that's what you're thinking at the moment? But, devil take it, I can't really stay on here as their keeper! I've finished my affairs and I'm leaving. Don't think that I'm jealous of Dmitri and have been trying all these three months to win over his beauty Katerina Ivanovna! Damn it, I had my own affairs. I've finished my affairs and I'm leaving. I just finished my affairs today, as you witnessed."

"You mean today at Katerina Ivanovna's?"

"Yes, and I'm done with it all at once. And why not? What do I care about Dmitri? Dmitri has nothing to do with it. I had my own affairs with Katerina Ivanovna. You know yourself, on the contrary, that Dmitri behaved as if he were conspiring with me. I never asked, not at all, but he himself solemnly handed her over to me, with his blessing. It all smacks of the ludicrous! No, Alyosha, no, if only you knew how light I feel now! I was sitting here eating my dinner and, believe me, I almost wanted to order champagne to celebrate my first hour of freedom. Pah! half a year almost—and suddenly at once, I got rid of it all at once. Did I suspect, even yesterday, that it would cost me nothing to end it if I wanted?"

"Are you talking about your love, Ivan?"

"Love, if you wish, yes, I fell in love with a young lady, an institute girl. I tormented myself over her, and she tormented me. I sat over her . . . and suddenly it all blew away. This morning I spoke inspiredly, then I left—and burst out laughing, do you believe it? No, I'm speaking literally."

"You're also speaking quite cheerfully, now," Alyosha remarked, looking closely at his face, which indeed had suddenly turned cheerful.

"But how could I know that I didn't love her at all! Heh, heh! And it turns out that I didn't. Yet I liked her so! How I liked her even today, as I was reciting my speech. And, you know, even now I like her terribly, and at the same time it's so easy to leave her. Do you think it's all fanfare?"

"No. Only maybe it wasn't love."

"Alyosha," laughed Ivan, "don't get into arguments about love! It's unseemly for you. But this morning, this morning, all how you jumped into it! I keep forgetting to kiss you for it . . . And how she tormented me! I was sitting next to a strain, truly! Ah, she knew that I loved her! And she loved me, not Dmitri," Ivan cheerfully insisted. "Dmitri is only a strain. Everything I said to her today is the very truth. But the thing is, the most important thing is, that she'll need maybe fifteen or twenty years to realize that she doesn't love Dmitri at all, and loves only me, whom she torments. And maybe she'll never realize it, even despite today's lesson. So much the better: I got up and left forever. By the way, how is she now? What happened after I left?"

Alyosha told him about the hysterics and that she was now apparently unconscious and delirious.

"And Khokhlakov isn't lying?"

"It seems not."

"I'll have to find out. No one, by the way, ever died of hysterics. Let her have hysterics. God loved woman when he sent her hysterics. I won't go there at all. Why get myself into that again!"

"Yet you told her this morning that she never loved you."

"I said it on purpose. Alyosha, why don't I call for champagne, let's drink to my freedom. No, if only you knew how glad I am!"

"No, brother, we'd better not drink," Alyosha said suddenly, "besides, I feel somehow sad."

"Yes, you've been sad for a long time, I noticed it long ago."

"So you're definitely leaving tomorrow morning?"

"Morning? I didn't say morning . . . But, after all, maybe in the morning. Would you believe that I dined here today only to avoid dining with the old man, he's become so loathsome to me. If it were just him alone, I would have left long ago. And why do you worry so much about my leaving? You and I still have God knows how long before I go. A whole eternity of time, immortality!"

"What eternity, if you're leaving tomorrow?"

"But what does that matter to you and me?" Ivan laughed. "We still have time for our talk, for what brought us together here. Why do you look surprised? Tell me, what did we meet here for? To talk about loving Katerina Ivanovna, or about the old man and Dmitri? About going abroad? About the fatal situation in Russia? About the emperor Napoleon? Was it really for that?"

"No, not that."

"So you know yourself what for. Some people need one thing, but we green youths need another, we need first of all to resolve the everlasting questions, that is what concerns us. All of young Russia is talking now only about the eternal questions. Precisely now, just when all the old men have suddenly gotten into practical questions. Why have you been looking at me so expectantly for these three months? In order to ask me: 'And how believest thou, if thou believest anything at all?' That is what your three months of looking come down to, is it not, Alexei Fyodorovich?"

"Maybe so," Alyosha smiled. "You're not laughing at me now, brother?"

"Me, laughing? I wouldn't want to upset my little brother who has been looking at me for three months with so much expectation. Look me in the eye,

Alyosha: I'm exactly the same little boy as you are, except that I'm not a novice. How have Russian boys handled things up to now? Some of them, that is. Take, for instance, some stinking local tavern. They meet there and settle down in a corner. They've never seen each other before in their whole lives, and when they walk out of the tavern, they won't see each other again for forty years. Well, then, what are they going to argue about, seizing this moment in the tavern? About none other than the universal questions: is there a God, is there immortality? And those who do not believe in God, well, they will talk about socialism and anarchism, about transforming the whole of mankind according to a new order, but it's the same damned thing, the questions are all the same, only from the other end. And many, many of the most original Russian boys do nothing but talk about the eternal questions, now, in our time. Isn't it so?"

"Yes, for real Russians the questions of the existence of God and immortality, or, as you just said, the same questions from the other end, are of course first and foremost, and they should be," Alyosha spoke, looking intently at his brother with the same quiet and searching smile.

"You see, Alyosha, sometimes it's not at all smart to be a Russian, but still it's even impossible to imagine anything more foolish than what Russian boys are doing now. Though I'm terribly fond of one Russian boy named Alyoshka."

"Nicely rounded off," Alyosha laughed suddenly.

"Now, tell me where to begin, give the order yourself—with God? The existence of God? Or what?"

"Begin with whatever you like, even from the other end! You did proclaim yesterday at father's that there is no God," Alyosha looked searchingly at his brother.

"I said that on purpose yesterday, at dinner with the old man, just to tease you, and I saw how your eyes glowed. But now I don't mind at all discussing things with you, and I say it very seriously, I want to get close to you, Alyosha, because I have no friends. I want to try. Well, imagine that perhaps I, too, accept God," Ivan laughed, "that comes as a surprise to you, eh?"

"Yes, of course, unless you're joking again."

"Joking." They said yesterday at the elder's that I was joking. You see, my dear, there was in the eighteenth century an old sinner who stated that if God did not exist, he would have to be invented: *Si l'existence pas Dieu, il faut l'inventer*.<sup>2</sup> And man has, indeed, invented God. And the strange thing, the wonder would not be that God really exists, the wonder is that such a notion—the notion of the necessity of God—could creep into the head of such a wild and wicked animal as man—so holy, so moving, so wise a notion,

which does man such great honor. As for me, I long ago decided not to think about whether man created God or God created man. Naturally, I will not run through all the modern axioms laid down by Russian boys on the subject, which are all absolutely derived from European hypotheses; because what is a hypothesis there immediately becomes an axiom for a Russian boy, and that is true not only of boys but perhaps of their professors as well, since Russian professors today are quite often the same Russian boys. And therefore I will avoid all hypotheses. What task are you and I faced with now? My task is to explain to you as quickly as possible my essence, that is, what sort of man I am, what I believe in, and what I hope for, is that right? And therefore I declare that I accept God pure and simple. But this, however, needs to be noted: if God exists and if he indeed created the earth, then, as we know perfectly well, he created it in accordance with Euclidean geometry, and he created human reason with a conception of only three dimensions of space. At the same time there were and are even now geometers and philosophers, even some of the most outstanding among them, who doubt that the whole universe, or, even more broadly, the whole of being, was created purely in accordance with Euclidean geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid cannot possibly meet on earth, may perhaps meet somewhere in infinity. I, my dear, have come to the conclusion that if I cannot understand even that, then it is not for me to understand about God. I humbly confess that I do not have any ability to resolve such questions, I have a Euclidean mind, an earthly mind, and therefore it is not for us to resolve things that are not of this world. And I advise you never to think about it, Alyosha my friend, and most especially about whether God exists or not. All such questions are completely unsuitable to a mind created with a concept of only three dimensions. And so, I accept God, not only willingly, but moreover I also accept his wisdom and his purpose, which are completely unknown to us, I believe in order, in the meaning of life, I believe in eternal harmony, in which we are all supposed to merge. I believe in the Word for whom the universe is yearning, and who himself was 'with God,' who himself is God, and so on, and so on and so forth, to infinity.<sup>3</sup> Many words have been invented on the subject. It seems I'm already on a good path, eh? And now imagine that in the final outcome I do not accept this world of God's, I do not admit it at all, though I know it exists. It's not God that I do not accept, you understand, it is this world of God's, created by God, that I do not accept and cannot agree to accept. With one reservation: I have a childlike conviction that the sufferings will be healed and smoothed over, that the whole offensive comedy of human contradictions will disappear like a pitiful mirage, a vile concoction of man's Euclidean mind, feeble and puny as an atom, and that ultimately, at the world's finale, in

the moment of eternal harmony, there will occur and be revealed something so precious that it will suffice for all hearts, to allay all indignation, to redeem all human villainy, all bloodshed; it will suffice not only to make forgiveness possible, but also to justify everything that has happened with men—let this, let all of this come true and be revealed, but I do not accept it and do not want to accept it! Let the parallel lines even meet before my own eyes: I shall look and say, yes, they meet, and still I will not accept it. That is my essence, Alyosha, that is my thesis. I say it to you in all seriousness. I purposely started this talk of ours as stupidly as possible, but arrived at my confession, because my confession is all you need. You did not need to know about God, you only needed to know what your beloved brother lives by. And I've told you."

Ivan ended his long tirade suddenly with a sort of special and unexpected feeling.

"And why did you start out 'as stupidly as possible'?" Alyosha asked, looking at him thoughtfully.

"Well, first, for the sake of Russianism, let's say: Russian conversations on these subjects are all conducted as stupidly as possible. And second, then, the stupider, the more to the point. The stupider, the clearer. Stupidity is brief and guileless, while reason hedges and hides. Reason is a scoundrel, stupidity is direct and honest. I brought the case around to my despair, and the more stupidly I've presented it, the more it's to my advantage."

"Will you explain to me why you do not accept the world?" said Alyosha.

"Of course I'll explain, it's no secret, that's what I've been leading up to. My dear little brother, it's not that I want to corrupt you and push you off your foundation; perhaps I want to be healed by you," Ivan suddenly smiled just like a meek little boy. Never before had Alyosha seen him smile that way.

## Chapter 4

### Rebellion

"I must make an admission," Ivan began. "I never could understand how it's possible to love one's neighbors. In my opinion, it is precisely one's neighbors that one cannot possibly love. Perhaps if they weren't so high . . . I read sometime, somewhere about John the Merciful (some saint) that when a hungry and frozen passerby came to him and asked to be made warm, he lay down with him in bed, embraced him, and began breathing into his mouth,

which was foul and festering with some terrible disease.' I'm convinced that he did it with the strain of a lie, out of love enforced by duty, out of self-imposed penance. If we're to come to love a man, the man himself should stay hidden, because as soon as he shows his face—love vanishes."

"The elder Zosima has spoken of that more than once," Alyosha remarked. "He also says that a man's face often prevents many people, who are as yet inexperienced in love, from loving him. But there is still much love in mankind, almost like Christ's love, I know that, Ivan . . ."

"Well, I don't know it yet, and I cannot understand it, nor can a numberless multitude of other people along with me. The question is whether this comes from bad qualities in people, or is inherent in their nature. In my opinion, Christ's love for people is in its kind a miracle impossible on earth. True, he was God. But we are not gods. Let's say that I, for example, am capable of profound suffering, but another man will never be able to know the degree of my suffering, because he is another and not me, and besides, a man is rarely willing to acknowledge someone else as a sufferer (as if it were a kind of distinction). And why won't he acknowledge it, do you think? Because I, for example, have a bad smell, or a foolish face, or once stepped on his foot. Besides, there is suffering and suffering: some benefactor of mine may still allow a humiliating suffering, which humiliates me—hunger, for example; but a slightly higher suffering—for an idea, for example—no, that he will not allow, save perhaps on rare occasions, because he will look at me and suddenly see that my face is not at all the kind of face that, he fancies, a man should have who suffers, for example, for such and such an idea. And so he at once deprives me of his benefactions, and not even from the wickedness of his heart. Beggars, especially noble beggars, should never show themselves in the street; they should ask for alms through the newspapers. It's still possible to love one's neighbor abstractly, and even occasionally from a distance, but hardly ever up close. If it were all as it is on stage, in a ballet, where beggars, when they appear, come in silken rags and tattered lace and ask for alms dancing gracefully, well, then it would still be possible to admire them. To admire, but still not to love. But enough of that. I simply wanted to put you in my perspective. I meant to talk about the suffering of mankind in general, but better let us dwell only on the suffering of children. That will reduce the scope of my argument about ten times, but even so it's better if we keep to children. The more unprofitable for me, of course. But, first, one can love children even up close, even dirty or homely children (it seems to me, however, that children are never homely). Second, I will not speak of grown-ups because, apart from the fact that they are disgusting and do not deserve love, they also have retribution: they are the apple, and knew good and evil, and became 'as gods.'"



And they still go on eating it. But little children have not eaten anything and are not yet guilty of anything. Do you love children, Alyosha? I know you love them, and you'll understand why I want to speak only of them now. If they, too, suffer terribly on earth, it is, of course, for their fathers; they are punished for their fathers who ate the apple—but that is reasoning from another world; for the human heart here on earth it is incomprehensible. It is impossible that a blameless one should suffer for another, and such a blameless one! Marvel at me, Alyosha—I, too, love children terribly. And observe, that cruel people—passionate, carnivorous, Karamazovian—sometimes love children very much. Children, while they are still children, up to the age of seven, for example, are terribly remote from grown-up people, as if they were different beings, of a different nature. I knew a robber in prison: he happened, in the course of his career, while slaughtering whole families in the houses he broke into and robbed at night, to have put the knife to several children as well. But he showed a strange affection for them while he was in prison. He spent all his time at the window, watching the children playing in the prison yard. He trained one little boy to come to his window, and the boy got to be very friendly with him . . . Do you know why I'm saying all this, Alyosha? I somehow have a headache, and I feel sad."

"You have a strange look as you speak," Alyosha observed anxiously, "as if you were in some kind of madness."

"By the way, a Bulgarian I met recently in Moscow," Ivan Fyodorovich went on, as if he were not listening to his brother, "told me how the Turks and Circassians there, in Bulgaria, have been committing atrocities everywhere, fearing a general uprising of the Slavs—they burn, kill, rape women and children, they nail prisoners by the ears to fences and leave them like that until morning, and in the morning they hang them—and so on, it's impossible to imagine it all. Indeed, people speak sometimes about the 'animal' cruelty of man, but that is terribly unjust and offensive to animals, no animal could ever be so cruel as a man, so artfully, so artistically cruel. A tiger simply gnaws and tears, that is all he can do. It would never occur to him to nail people by their ears overnight, even if he were able to do it. These Turks, among other things, have also taken a delight in torturing children, starting with cutting them out of their mothers' wombs with a dagger, and ending with tossing nursing infants up in the air and catching them on their bayonets before their mothers' eyes. The main delight comes from doing it before their mothers' eyes. But here is a picture that I found very interesting. Imagine a nursing infant in the arms of its trembling mother, surrounded by Turks. They've thought up an amusing trick: they fondle the baby, they laugh to make it laugh, and they succeed—the baby laughs. At that moment a Turk aims a pistol at it, four

inches from its face. The baby laughs gleefully, reaches out its little hands to grab the pistol, and suddenly the artist pulls the trigger right in its face and shatters its little head . . . Artistic, isn't it? By the way, they say the Turks are very fond of sweets."

"What are you driving at, brother?" Alyosha asked.

"I think that if the devil does not exist, and man has therefore created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness."

"As well as God, then."

"You're a remarkably good 'implicator of unholy suits,' as Polonius says in *Hamlet*," Ivan laughed. "So you caught me, but let it be, I'm glad. A nice God you've got, if man created him in his image and likeness." You asked me what I was driving at: you see, I'm an amateur and collector of certain little facts; I copy them down from newspapers and stories, from wherever, and save them—would you believe it?—certain kinds of little anecdotes. I already have a nice collection of them. The Turks, of course, are in it, but they're foreigners. I have native specimens as well, even better than the Turkish ones. You know, with us it's beating, the birch and the lash, that's our national way: with us nailed ears are unthinkable, we're Europeans after all, but the birch, the lash—that is ours and cannot be taken from us. Abroad they apparently no longer do any beating nowadays; either their morals have been purified or they've passed such laws that apparently one man no longer dares to whip another; but they've rewarded themselves with something else to make up for it, something as purely national as our way, so national that it is apparently impossible for us, though, by the way, it seems to be taking root here, especially since the time of the religious movement in our higher society. I have a lovely pamphlet, translated from the French, telling of how quite recently, only five years ago, in Geneva, a villain and murderer named Richard was executed—a lad of twenty-three, I believe, who repented and turned to the Christian faith at the foot of the scaffold. This Richard was someone's illegitimate child; at the age of six he was *presented* by his parents to some Swiss mountain shepherds, who brought him up to work for them. He grew up among them like a little wild beast; the shepherds taught him nothing; on the contrary, by the time he was seven, they were already sending him out to tend the flocks in the cold and wet, with almost no clothes and almost nothing to eat. And, of course, none of them stopped to think or repent of doing so; on the contrary, they considered themselves entirely within their rights, for Richard had been presented to them as an object, and they did not even think it necessary to feed him. Richard himself testified that in those years, like the prodigal son in the Gospel, he wanted terribly to eat at least the mash given to the pigs being fattened for market, but he was not given even that and was beaten when he

stole from the pigs, and thus he spent his whole childhood and his youth, until he grew up and, having gathered strength, went out to steal for himself. The savage began earning money as a day laborer in Geneva, spent his earnings on drink, lived like a monster, and ended by killing some old man and robbing him. He was caught, tried, and condemned to death. They don't sentimentalize over there. So then in prison he was immediately surrounded by pastors and members of various Christian brotherhoods, philanthropic ladies, and so on. In prison they taught him to read and write, began expounding the Gospel to him, exhorted him, persuaded him, pushed him, pestered him, urged him, and finally he himself solemnly confessed his crime. He repented, he wrote to the court himself saying that he was a monster, and that at last he had been deemed worthy of being illumined by the Lord and of receiving grace. All of Geneva was stirred, all of pious and philanthropic Geneva. All that was lofty and well-bred rushed to him in prison. Richard was kissed, embraced: 'You are our brother, grace has descended upon you!' And Richard himself simply wept with emotion: 'Yes, grace has descended upon me! Before, through all my childhood and youth, I was glad to eat swine's food, and now grace has descended upon me, too, I am dying in the Lord! 'Yes, yes, Richard, die in the Lord, you have shed blood and must die in the Lord. Though it's not your fault that you knew nothing of the Lord when you envied the swine their food and were beaten for stealing it (which was very bad, for it is forbidden to steal), but still you have shed blood and must die.' And so the last day came. Limp Richard weeps and all the while keeps repeating: 'This is the best day of my life, I am going to the Lord!' 'Yes,' cry the pastors, the judges, and the philanthropic ladies, 'this is your happiest day, for you are going to the Lord!' And it's all moving towards the scaffold, in carriages and on foot, following the cart of shame that is bearing Richard. They arrive at the scaffold. 'Die, brother,' they call out to Richard, 'die in the Lord, for grace has descended upon you, too!' And so, covered with the kisses of his brothers, brother Richard is dragged up onto the scaffold, laid down on the guillotine, and his head is whacked off in brotherly fashion, forasmuch as grace has descended upon him, too. No, it's quite typical. This little pamphlet was translated into Russian by some Russian Lutherizing philanthropists from high society and sent out gratis with newspapers and other publications for the enlightenment of the Russian people. This thing about Richard is so good because it's national. Though for us it's absurd to cut our brother's head off only because he's become our brother and grace has descended upon him, still, I repeat, we have our own ways, which are almost as good. We have our historical, direct, and intimate delight in the torture of beating. Nekrasov has a poem describing a peasant flogging a horse on its eyes with a knout, 'on its

meek eyes.' We've all seen that; that is Russianism. He describes a weak nag, harnessed with too heavy a load, that gets stuck in the mud with her cart and is unable to pull it out. The peasant beats her, beats her savagely, beats her finally not knowing what he's doing, drunk with beating, he flogs her painfully, repeatedly: 'Pull, though you have no strength, pull, though you die!' The little nag strains, and now he begins flogging her, flogging the defenseless creature on her weeping, her 'meek eyes.' Beside herself, she strains and pulls the cart out, trembling all over, not breathing, moving somehow sideways, with a sort of skipping motion, somehow unnaturally and shamefully—it's horrible in Nekrasov. But that's only a horse; God gave us horses so that we could flog them. So the Tartars instructed us,<sup>5</sup> and they left us the knout as a reminder. But people, too, can be flogged. And so, an intelligent, educated gentleman and his lady flog their own daughter, a child of seven, with a birch—I have it written down in detail. The papa is glad that the birch is covered with little twigs, 'it will smart more,' he says, and so he starts 'smarting' his own daughter. I know for certain that there are floggers who get more excited with every stroke, to the point of sensuality, literal sensuality, more and more, progressively, with each new stroke. They flog for one minute, they flog for five minutes, they flog for ten minutes—longer, harder, faster, sharper. The child is crying, the child finally cannot cry, she has no breath left: 'Papa, papa, dear papa!' The case, through some devilishly improper accident, comes to court. A lawyer is hired. Among the Russian people, lawyers have long been called 'hired consciences.' The lawyer shouts in his client's defense. 'The case,' he says, 'is quite simple, domestic, and ordinary: a father flogged his daughter, and, to the shame of our times, it has come to court!' The convinced jury retires and brings in a verdict of 'not guilty.' The public roars with delight that the torturer has been acquitted. Ahh, if I'd been there, I'd have yelled out a suggestion that they establish a scholarship in honor of the torturer . . . ! Lovely pictures. But about little children I can do even better, I've collected a great, great deal about Russian children, Alyosha. A little girl, five years old, is hated by her father and mother, 'most honorable and official people, educated and well-bred.' You see, once again I positively maintain that this peculiar quality exists in much of mankind—this love of torturing children, but only children. These same torturers look upon all other examples of humankind even mildly and benevolently, being educated and humane Europeans, but they have a great love of torturing children, they even love children in that sense. It is precisely the defenselessness of these creatures that tempts the torturers, the angelic trustfulness of the child, who has nowhere to turn and no one to turn to—that is what enflames the vile blood of the torturer. There is, of course, a beast hidden in every man, a beast of flog,

a beast of sensual inflammability at the cries of the tormented victim, an unrestrained beast let off the chain, a beast of diseases acquired in debauchery—gout, rotten liver, and so on. These educated parents subjected the poor five-year-old girl to every possible torture. They beat her, flogged her, kicked her, not knowing why themselves, until her whole body was nothing but bruises; finally they attained the height of fineness: in the freezing cold, they locked her all night in the outhouse, because she wouldn't ask to get up and go in the middle of the night (as if a five-year-old child sleeping its sound angelic sleep could have learned to ask by that age)—for that they smeared her face with her excrement and made her eat the excrement, and it was her mother, her mother who made her! And this mother could sleep while her poor little child was moaning all night in that vile place! Can you understand that a small creature, who cannot even comprehend what is being done to her, in a vile place, in the dark and the cold, beats herself on her strained little chest with her tiny fist and weeps with her anguished, gentle, meek tears for 'dear God' to protect her—can you understand such nonsense, my friend and my brother, my godly and humble novice, can you understand why this nonsense is needed and created? Without it, they say, man could not even have lived on earth, for he would not have known good and evil. Who wants to know this damned good and evil at such a price? The whole world of knowledge is not worth the tears of that little child to 'dear God.' I'm not talking about the suffering of grown-ups, they ate the apple and to hell with them, let the devil take them all, but these little ones! I'm tormenting you, Alyoshka, you don't look yourself. I'll stop if you wish."

"Never mind, I want to suffer, too," Alyosha murmured.

"One more picture, just one more, for curiosity, because it's so typical, and above all I just read it in one of the collections of our old documents, the *Archive, Antiquities*, or somewhere, I'll have to check the reference, I even forgot where I read it." It was in the darkest days of serfdom, back at the beginning of the century—and long live the liberator of the people! There was a general at the beginning of the century, a general with high connections and a very wealthy landowner, the sort of man (indeed, even then they seem to have been very few) who, on retiring from the army, feels all but certain that his service has earned him the power of life and death over his subjects. There were such men in those days. So this general settled on his estate of two thousand souls, swaggered around, treated his lesser neighbors as his spongers and buffoons. He had hundreds of dogs in his kennels and nearly a hundred handlers, all in livery, all on horseback. And so one day a house-serf, a little boy, only eight years old, threw a stone while he was playing and hurt the paw of the general's favorite hound. 'Why is my favorite dog limping?' It was re-

ported to him that this boy had thrown a stone at her and hurt her paw. 'So it was you,' the general looked the boy up and down. 'Take him!' They took him, took him from his mother, and locked him up for the night. In the morning, at dawn, the general rode out in full dress for the hunt, mounted on his horse, surrounded by spongers, dogs, handlers, huntsmen, all on horseback. The house-serfs are gathered for their edification, the guilty boy's mother in front of them all. The boy is led out of the lockup. A gloomy, cold, misty autumn day, a great day for hunting. The general orders them to undress the boy; the child is stripped naked, he shivers, he's crazy with fear, he doesn't dare make a peep. . . . 'Drive him!' the general commands. The huntsmen shout, 'Run, run!' The boy runs. . . . 'Sic him!' screams the general and looses the whole pack of wolfhounds on him. He hunted him down before his mother's eyes, and the dogs tore the child to pieces. . . . I believe the general was later declared incompetent to administer his estates. Well. . . . what to do with him? Shoot him? Shoot him for our moral satisfaction? Speak, Alyoshka!"

"Shoot him!" Alyosha said softly, looking up at his brother with a sort of pale, twisted smile.

"Bravo!" Ivan yelled in a sort of rapture. "If even you say so, then. . . . A fine monk you are! See what a little devil is sitting in your heart, Alyoshka Karamazov!"

"What I said is absurd, but. . . ."

"That's just it, that but. . . ." Ivan was shouting. "I tell you, novice, that absurdities are all too necessary on earth. The world stands on absurdities, and without them perhaps nothing at all would happen. We know what we know!"

"What do you know?"

"I don't understand anything," Ivan went on as if in delirium, "and I no longer want to understand anything. I want to stick to the fact. I made up my mind long ago not to understand. If I wanted to understand something, I would immediately have to betray the fact, but I've made up my mind to stick to the fact. . . ."

"Why are you testing me?" Alyosha exclaimed with a rueful strain. "Will you finally tell me?"

"Of course I'll tell you, that's just what I've been leading up to. You are dear to me, I don't want to let you slip, and I won't give you up to your Zosima."

Ivan was silent for a moment; his face suddenly became very sad.

"Listen to me: I took children only so as to make it more obvious. About all the other human tears that have soaked the whole earth through, from crust to core, I don't say a word, I've purposely narrowed down my theme. I am a bedbug, and I confess in all humility that I can understand nothing of why it's

all arranged as it is. So people themselves are to blame: they were given paradise, they wanted freedom, and stole fire from heaven,<sup>10</sup> knowing that they would become unhappy—so why pity them? Oh, with my pathetic, earthly, Euclidean mind, I know only that there is suffering, that none are to blame, that all things follow simply and directly one from another, that everything flows and finds its level—but that is all just Euclidean gibberish, of course I know that, and of course I cannot consent to live by it! What do I care that none are to blame and that I know it—I need retribution, otherwise I will destroy myself. And retribution not somewhere and sometime in infinity, but here and now, on earth, so that I see it myself. I have believed, and I want to see for myself, and if I am dead by that time, let them resurrect me, because it will be too unfair if it all takes place without me. Is it possible that I've suffered so that I, together with my evil deeds and sufferings, should be manure for someone's future harmony? I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion,<sup>11</sup> and the murdered man rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly finds out what it was all for. All religions in the world are based on this desire, and I am a believer. But then there are the children, and what am I going to do with them? That is the question I cannot resolve. For the hundredth time I repeat: there are hosts of questions, but I've taken only the children, because here what I need to say is irrefutably clear. Listen: if everyone must suffer, in order to buy eternal harmony with their suffering, pray tell me what have children got to do with it? It's quite incomprehensible why they should have to suffer, and why they should buy harmony with their suffering. Why do they get thrown on the pile, to manure someone's future harmony with themselves? I understand solidarity in sin among men, solidarity in retribution I also understand; but what solidarity in sin do little children have? And if it is really true that they, too, are in solidarity with their fathers in all the fathers' evil doings, that truth certainly is not of this world and is incomprehensible to me. Some joker will say, perhaps, that in any case the child will grow up and have time enough to sin, but there's this boy who didn't grow up but was torn apart by dogs at the age of eight. Oh, Alyosha, I'm not blaspheming! I do understand how the universe will tremble when all in heaven and under the earth merge in one voice of praise, and all that lives and has lived cries out: Just art thou, O Lord, for thy ways are revealed!<sup>12</sup> Oh, yes, when the mother and the torturer whose hounds tore her son to pieces embrace each other, and all three cry out with tears: Just art thou, O Lord, then of course the crown of knowledge will have come and everything will be explained. But there is the hitch: that is what I cannot accept. And while I am on earth, I hasten to take my own measures. You see, Alyosha, it may well be that if I live until that moment, or rise again in order to

see it, I myself will perhaps cry out with all the rest, looking at the mother embracing her child's tormentor: Just art thou, O Lord! but I do not want to cry out with them. While there's still time, I hasten to defend myself against it, and therefore I absolutely renounce all higher harmony. It is not worth one little tear of even that one tormented child who beat her chest with her little fist and prayed to 'dear God' in a stinking outhouse with her unredeemed tears! Not worth it, because her tears remained unredeemed. They must be redeemed, otherwise there can be no harmony. But how, how will you redeem them? Is it possible? Can they be redeemed by being avenged? But what do I care if they are avenged, what do I care if the tormentors are in hell, what can hell set right here, if these ones have already been tormented? And where is the harmony, if there is hell? I want to forgive, and I want to embrace, I don't want more suffering. And if the suffering of children goes to make up the sum of suffering needed to buy truth, then I assert beforehand that the whole of truth is not worth such a price. I do not, finally, want the mother to embrace the tormentor who let his dogs tear her son to pieces! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she wants to, let her forgive the tormentor her immeasurable maternal suffering; but she has no right to forgive the suffering of her child who was torn to pieces, she dare not forgive the tormentor, even if the child himself were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, then where is the harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who could and would have the right to forgive? I don't want harmony, for love of mankind I don't want it. I want to remain with unrequited suffering. I'd rather remain with my unrequited suffering and my unquenched indignation, even if I am wrong. Besides, they have put too high a price on harmony: we can't afford to pay so much for admission. And therefore I hasten to return my ticket.<sup>13</sup> And it is my duty, if only as an honest man, to return it as far ahead of time as possible. Which is what I am doing. It's not that I don't accept God, Alyosha, I just most respectfully return him the ticket."

"That is rebellion," Alyosha said softly, dropping his eyes.

"Rebellion? I don't like hearing such a word from you," Ivan said with feeling. "One cannot live by rebellion, and I want to live. Tell me straight out, I call on you—answer me: imagine that you yourself are building the edifice of human destiny with the object of making people happy in the finale, of giving them peace and rest at last, but for that you must inevitably and unavoidably torture just one tiny creature, that same child who was beating her chest with her little fist, and raise your edifice on the foundation of her unrequited tears—would you agree to be the architect on such conditions? Tell me the truth."

"No, I would not agree," Alyosha said softly.



"And can you admit the idea that the people for whom you are building would agree to accept their happiness on the unjustified blood of a tortured child, and having accepted it, to remain forever happy?"

"No, I cannot admit it. Brother," Alyosha said suddenly, his eyes beginning to flash, "you asked just now if there is in the whole world a being who could and would have the right to forgive. But there is such a being, and he can forgive everything, forgive all *and for all*,"<sup>14</sup> because he himself gave his innocent blood for all and for everything. You've forgotten about him, but it is on him that the structure is being built, and it is to him that they will cry out: 'Just art thou, O Lord, for thy ways have been revealed!'"

"Ah, yes, the 'only sinless One'<sup>15</sup> and his blood! No, I have not forgotten about him; on the contrary, I've been wondering all the while why you hadn't brought him up for so long, because in discussions your people usually trot him out first thing. You know, Alyosha—don't laugh!—I composed a poem once, about a year ago. If you can waste ten more minutes on me, I'll tell it to you."

"You wrote a poem?"

"Oh, no, I didn't write it," Ivan laughed, "I've never composed two lines of verse in my whole life. But I made up this poem and memorized it. I made it up in great fervor. You'll be my first reader—I mean, listener. Why, indeed, should an author lose even one listener?" Ivan grinned. "Shall I tell it or not?"

"I'm listening carefully," said Alyosha.

"My poem is called 'The Grand Inquisitor'—an absurd thing, but I want you to hear it."

## Chapter 5

### The Grand Inquisitor

"But here, too, it's impossible to do without a preface, a literary preface, that is—pah!" Ivan laughed, "and what sort of writer am I! You see, my action takes place in the sixteenth century, and back then—by the way, you must have learned this in school—back then it was customary in poetic works to bring higher powers down to earth. I don't need to mention Dante. In France, court clerks, as well as monks in the monasteries, gave whole performances in which they brought the Madonna, angels, saints, Christ, and God himself on stage. At the time it was all done quite artlessly. In Victor Hugo's *Notre*

*Dame de Paris*, in the Paris of Louis XI, to honor the birth of the French dauphin, an edifying performance is given free of charge for the people in the city hall, entitled *Le bon jugement de la très sainte et gracieuse Vierge Marie*,<sup>1</sup> in which she herself appears in person and pronounces her *bon jugement*. With us in Moscow, in pre-Petrine antiquity,<sup>2</sup> much the same kind of dramatic performances, especially from the Old Testament, were given from time to time; but, besides dramatic performances, there were many stories and 'verses' floating around the world in which saints, angels, and all the powers of heaven took part as needed. In our monasteries such poems were translated, recopied, even composed—and when?—under the Tartars. There is, for example, one little monastery poem (from the Greek, of course): *The Mother of God Visits the Torments*,<sup>3</sup> with scenes of a boldness not inferior to Dante's. The Mother of God visits hell and the Archangel Michael guides her through 'the torments.' She sees sinners and their sufferings. Among them, by the way, there is a most amusing class of sinners in a burning lake: some of them sink so far down into the lake that they can no longer come up again, and 'these God forgets'—an expression of extraordinary depth and force. And so the Mother of God, shocked and weeping, falls before the throne of God and asks pardon for everyone in hell, everyone she has seen there, without distinction. Her conversation with God is immensely interesting. She pleads, she won't go away, and when God points out to her the nail-pierced hands and feet of her Son and asks: 'How can I forgive his tormentors?' she bids all the saints, all the martyrs, all the angels and archangels to fall down together with her and plead for the pardon of all without discrimination. In the end she exhorts from God a cessation of torments every year, from Holy Friday to Pentecost, and the sinners in hell at once thank the Lord and cry out to him: 'Just art thou, O Lord, who hast judged so.' Well, my little poem would have been of the same kind if it had appeared back then. He comes onstage in it; actually, he says nothing in the poem, he just appears and passes on. Fifteen centuries have gone by since he gave the promise to come in his Kingdom, fifteen centuries since his prophet wrote: 'Behold, I come quickly,'<sup>4</sup> 'Of that day and that hour knoweth not even the Son, but only my heavenly Father,'<sup>5</sup> as he himself declared while still on earth. But mankind awaits him with the same faith and the same tender emotion. Oh, even with greater faith, for fifteen centuries have gone by since men ceased to receive pledges from heaven.

Believe what the heart tells you,  
For heaven offers no pledge.<sup>6</sup>

Only faith in what the heart tells you! True, there were also many miracles then. There were saints who performed miraculous healings; to some righ-

teous men, according to their biographies, the Queen of Heaven herself came down. But the devil never rests, and there had already arisen in mankind some doubt as to the authenticity of these miracles. Just then, in the north, in Germany, a horrible new heresy appeared.<sup>7</sup> A great star, 'like a lamp' (that is, the Church), 'fell upon the fountains of waters, and they were made bitter.'<sup>8</sup> These heretics began blasphemously denying miracles. But those who still believed became all the more ardent in their belief. The tears of mankind rose up to him as before, they waited for him, loved him, hoped in him, yearned to suffer and die for him as before. . . . And for so many centuries mankind had been pleading with faith and fire: 'God our Lord, reveal thyself to us,'<sup>9</sup> for so many centuries they had been calling out to him, that he in his immeasurable compassion desired to descend to those who were pleading. He had descended even before then, he had visited some righteous men, martyrs, and holy hermits while they were still on earth, as is written in their 'lives.' Our own Iyutchev, who deeply believed in the truth of his words, proclaimed that:

Bent under the burden of the Cross,  
The King of Heaven in the form of a slave  
Walked the length and breadth of you,  
Blessing you, my native land.<sup>10</sup>

It must needs have been so, let me tell you. And so he desired to appear to people if only for a moment—to his tormented, suffering people, rank with sin but loving him like children. My action is set in Spain, in Seville, in the most horrible time of the Inquisition, when fires blazed every day to the glory of God, and

In the splendid auto-da-fé  
Evil heretics were burnt.<sup>11</sup>

Oh, of course, this was not that coming in which he will appear, according to his promise, at the end of time, in all his heavenly glory, and which will be as sudden 'as the lightning that shineth out of the east unto the west.'<sup>12</sup> No, he desired to visit his children if only for a moment, and precisely where the fires of the heretics had begun to crackle. In his infinite mercy he walked once again among men, in the same human image in which he had walked for three years among men fifteen centuries earlier. He came down to the 'scorched squares'<sup>13</sup> of a southern town where just the day before, in a 'splendid auto-da-fé,' in the presence of the king, the court, knights, cardinals, and the loveliest court ladies, before the teeming populace of all Seville, the Cardinal Grand Inquisitor had burned almost a hundred heretics at once *ad majorem gloriam*

Dei!<sup>14</sup> He appeared quietly, inconspicuously, but, strange to say, everyone recognized him. This could be one of the best passages in the poem, I mean, why it is exactly that they recognize him. People are drawn to him by an invincible force, they flock to him, surround him, follow him. He passes silently among them with a quiet smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love shines in his heart, rays of Light, Enlightenment, and Power stream from his eyes and, pouring over the people, shake their hearts with responding love. He stretches forth his hands to them, blesses them, and from the touch of him, even only of his garments, comes a healing power. Here an old man, blind from childhood, calls out from the crowd: 'Lord, heal me so that I, too, can see you,' and it is as if the scales fell from his eyes, and the blind man sees him. People weep and kiss the earth he walks upon. Children throw down flowers before him, sing and cry 'Hosanna!' to him. 'It's he, it's really he,' everyone repeats, 'it must be he, it can be no one but he.' He stops at the porch of the Seville cathedral at the very moment when a child's little, open, white coffin is being brought in with weeping: in it lies a seven-year-old girl, the only daughter of a noble citizen. The dead child is covered with flowers. 'He will raise your child,' people in the crowd shout to the weeping mother. The cathedral padre, who has come out to meet the coffin, looks perplexed and frowns. Suddenly a wail comes from the dead child's mother. She throws herself down at his feet: 'If it is you, then raise my child!' she exclaims, stretching her hands out to him. The procession halts, the little coffin is lowered down onto the porch at his feet. He looks with compassion and his lips once again softly utter: '*Talitha cumi*!'—and the damsel arose.'<sup>15</sup> The girl rises in her coffin, sits up and, smiling, looks around her in wide-eyed astonishment. She is still holding the bunch of white roses with which she had been lying in the coffin. There is a commotion among the people, cries, weeping, and at this very moment the Cardinal Grand Inquisitor himself crosses the square in front of the cathedral. He is an old man, almost ninety, tall and straight, with a gaunt face and sunken eyes, from which a glitter still shines like a fiery spark. Oh, he is not wearing his magnificent cardinal's robes in which he had displayed himself to the people the day before, when the enemies of the Roman faith were burned—no, at this moment he is wearing only his old, coarse monastic cassock. He is followed at a certain distance by his grim assistants and slaves, and by the 'holy' guard. At the sight of the crowd he stops and watches from afar. He has seen everything, seen the coffin set down at his feet, seen the girl rise, and his face darkens. He scowls with his thick, gray eyebrows, and his eyes shine with a sinister fire. He stretches forth his finger and orders the guard to take him. And such is his power, so tamed, submissive, and tremblingly obedient to his will are the people, that the crowd immediately parts before the

guard, and they, amidst the deathly silence that has suddenly fallen, lay their hands on him and lead him away. As one man the crowd immediately bows to the ground before the aged Inquisitor, who silently blesses the people and moves on. The guard lead their prisoner to the small, gloomy, vaulted prison in the old building of the holy court, and lock him there. The day is over, the Seville night comes, dark, hot, and 'breathless.' The air is 'fragrant with laurel and lemon.'<sup>16</sup> In the deep darkness, the iron door of the prison suddenly opens, and the old Grand Inquisitor himself slowly enters carrying a lamp. He is alone, the door is immediately locked behind him. He stands in the entrance and for a long time, for a minute or two, gazes into his face. At last he quietly approaches, sets the lamp on the table, and says to him: 'Is it you? You? But receiving no answer, he quickly adds: 'Do not answer, be silent. After all, what could you say? I know too well what you would say. And you have no right to add anything to what you already said once. Why, then, have you come to interfere with us? For you have come to interfere with us and you know it yourself. But do you know what will happen tomorrow? I do not know who you are, and I do not want to know: whether it is you, or only his likeness; but tomorrow I shall condemn you and burn you at the stake as the most evil of heretics, and the very people who today kissed your feet, tomorrow, at a nod from me, will rush to heap the coals up around your stake, do you know that? Yes, perhaps you do know it,' he added, pondering deeply, never for a moment taking his eyes from his prisoner."

"I don't quite understand what this is, Ivan," Alyosha, who all the while had been listening silently, smiled. "Is it boundless fantasy, or some mistake on the old man's part, some impossible *qui pro quo*?<sup>17</sup>"

"Assume it's the latter, if you like," Ivan laughed, "if you're so spoiled by modern realism and can't stand anything fantastic—if you want it to be *qui pro quo*, let it be. Of course," he laughed again, "the man is ninety years old, and might have lost his mind long ago over his idea. He might have been struck by the prisoner's appearance. It might, finally, have been simple delirium, the vision of a ninety-year-old man nearing death, and who is excited, besides, by the *auto-da-fé* of a hundred burnt heretics the day before. But isn't it all the same to you and me whether it's *qui pro quo* or boundless fantasy? The only thing is that the old man needs to speak out, that finally after all his ninety years, he speaks out, and says aloud all that he has been silent about for ninety years."

"And the prisoner is silent, too? Just looks at him without saying a word?"

"But that must be so in any case," Ivan laughed again. "The old man himself points out to him that he has no right to add anything to what has already been said once. That, if you like, is the most basic feature of Roman Catholicism, in

my opinion at least: 'Everything,' they say, 'has been handed over by you to the pope, therefore everything now belongs to the pope, and you may as well not come at all now, or at least don't interfere with us for the time being.' They not only speak this way, they also write this way, at least the Jesuits do. I've read it in their theologians myself. 'Have you the right to proclaim to us even one of the mysteries of that world from which you have come?' my old man asks him, and answers the question himself: 'No, you have not, so as not to add to what has already been said once, and so as not to deprive people of freedom, for which you stood so firmly when you were on earth. Anything you proclaim anew will encroach upon the freedom of men's faith, for it will come as a miracle, and the freedom of their faith was the dearest of all things to you, even then, one and a half thousand years ago. Was it not you who so often said then: "I want to make you free"?<sup>18</sup> But now you have seen these "free" men, the old man suddenly adds with a pensive smile. 'Yes, this work has cost us dearly,' he goes on, looking sternly at him, 'but we have finally finished this work in your name. For fifteen hundred years we have been at pains over this freedom, but now it is finished, and well finished. You do not believe that it is well finished? You look at me meekly and do not deign even to be indignant with me. Know, then, that now, precisely now, these people are more certain than ever before that they are completely free, and at the same time they themselves have brought us their freedom and obediently laid it at our feet. It is our doing, but is it what you wanted? This sort of freedom?'"

"Again I don't understand," Alyosha interrupted. "Is he being ironic? Is he laughing?"

"Not in the least. He precisely lays it to his and his colleagues' credit that they have finally overcome freedom, and have done so in order to make people happy. 'For only now' (he is referring, of course, to the Inquisition) 'has it become possible to think for the first time about human happiness. Man was made a rebel; can rebels be happy? You were warned,' he says to him, 'you had no lack of warnings and indications, but you did not heed the warnings, you rejected the only way of arranging for human happiness, but fortunately, on your departure, you handed the work over to us. You promised, you established with your word, you gave us the right to bind and loose,<sup>19</sup> and surely you cannot even think of taking this right away from us now. Why, then, have you come to interfere with us?'"

"What does it mean, that he had no lack of warnings and indications?" Alyosha asked.

"You see, that is the main thing that the old man needs to speak about.

"The dread and intelligent spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-being,' the old man goes on, 'the great spirit spoke with you in the wilderness,

and it has been passed on to us in books that he supposedly "tempted" you.<sup>20</sup> Did he really? And was it possible to say anything more true than what he proclaimed to you in his three questions, which you rejected, and which the books refer to as "temptations"? And at the same time, if ever a real, thundering miracle was performed on earth, it was on that day, the day of those three temptations. The miracle lay precisely in the appearance of those three questions. If it were possible to imagine, just as a trial and an example, that those three questions of the dread spirit had been lost from the books without a trace, and it was necessary that they be restored, thought up and invented anew, to be put back into the books, and to that end all the wise men on earth—rulers, high priests, scholars, philosophers, poets—were brought together and given this task: to think up, to invent three questions such as would not only correspond to the scale of the event, but, moreover, would express in three words, in three human phrases only, the entire future history of the world and mankind—do you think that all the combined wisdom of the earth could think up anything faintly resembling in force and depth those three questions that were actually presented to you then by the powerful and intelligent spirit in the wilderness? By the questions alone, simply by the miracle of their appearance, one can see that one is dealing with a mind not human and transient but eternal and absolute. For in these three questions all of subsequent human history is as if brought together into a single whole and foretold; three images are revealed that will take in all the insoluble historical contradictions of human nature over all the earth. This could not have been seen so well at the time, for the future was unknown, but now that fifteen centuries have gone by, we can see that in these three questions everything was so precisely divined and foretold, and has proved so completely true, that to add to them or subtract anything from them is impossible.

"Decide yourself who was right: you or the one who questioned you then? Recall the first question; its meaning, though not literally, was this: "You want to go into the world, and you are going empty-handed, with some promise of freedom, which they in their simplicity and innate lawlessness cannot even comprehend, which they dread and fear—for nothing has ever been more insufferable for man and for human society than freedom! But do you see these stones in this bare, scorching desert? Turn them into bread and mankind will run after you like sheep, grateful and obedient, though eternally trembling lest you withdraw your hand and your loaves cease for them." But you did not want to deprive man of freedom and rejected the offer, for what sort of freedom is it, you reasoned, if obedience is bought with loaves of bread? You objected that man does not live by bread alone, but do you know that in the name of this very earthly bread, the spirit of the earth will rise against you and

fight with you and defeat you, and everyone will follow him exclaiming: "Who can compare to this beast, for he has given us fire from heaven!"<sup>21</sup> Do you know that centuries will pass and mankind will proclaim with the mouth of its wisdom and science that there is no crime, and therefore no sin, but only hungry men? "Feed them first, then ask virtue of them!"—that is what they will write on the banner they raise against you, and by which your temple will be destroyed. In place of your temple a new edifice will be raised, the terrible Tower of Babel will be raised again,<sup>22</sup> and though, like the former one, this one will not be completed either, still you could have avoided this new tower and shortened people's suffering by a thousand years—for it is to us they will come after suffering for a thousand years with their tower! They will seek us out again, underground, in catacombs, hiding (for again we shall be persecuted and tortured), they will find us and cry out: "Feed us, for those who promised us fire from heaven did not give it." And then we shall finish building their tower, for only he who feeds them will finish it, and only we shall feed them, in your name, for we shall lie that it is in your name. Oh, never, never will they feed themselves without us! No science will give them bread as long as they remain free, but in the end they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us: "Better that you enslave us, but feed us." They will finally understand that freedom and earthly bread in plenty for everyone are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share among themselves. They will also be convinced that they are forever incapable of being free, because they are feeble, depraved, nonentities and rebels. You promised them heavenly bread, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, eternally depraved, and eternally ignoble human race? And if in the name of heavenly bread thousands and tens of thousands will follow you, what will become of the millions and tens of thousands of millions of creatures who will not be strong enough to forgo earthly bread for the sake of the heavenly? Is it that only the tens of thousands of the great and strong are dear to you, and the remaining millions, numerous as the sands of the sea, weak but loving you, should serve only as material for the great and the strong? No, the weak, too, are dear to us. They are depraved and rebels, but in the end it is they who will become obedient. They will marvel at us, and look upon us as gods, because we, standing at their head, have agreed to suffer freedom and to rule over them—so terrible will it become for them in the end to be free! But we shall say that we are obedient to you and rule in your name. We shall deceive them again, for this time we shall not allow you to come to us. This deceit will constitute our suffering, for we shall have to lie. This is what that first question in the wilderness meant, and this is what you rejected in the name of freedom, which you placed above everything. And yet this



question contains the great mystery of this world. Had you accepted the "loaves," you would have answered the universal and everlasting anguish of man as an individual being, and of the whole of mankind together, namely: "before whom shall I bow down?" There is no more ceaseless or tormenting care for man, as long as he remains free, than to find someone to bow down to as soon as possible. But man seeks to bow down before that which is indisputable, so indisputable that all men at once would agree to the universal worship of it. For the care of these pitiful creatures is not just to find something before which I or some other man can bow down, but to find something that everyone else will also believe in and bow down to, for it must needs be *all together*. And this need for *communality* of worship is the chief torment of each man individually, and of mankind as a whole, from the beginning of the ages. In the cause of universal worship, they have destroyed each other with the sword. They have made gods and called upon each other: "Abandon your gods and come and worship ours, otherwise death to you and your gods!" And so it will be until the end of the world, even when all gods have disappeared from the earth: they will still fall down before idols. You knew, you could not but know, this essential mystery of human nature, but you rejected the only absolute banner, which was offered to you to make all men bow down to you indisputably—the banner of earthly bread, and you rejected it in the name of freedom and heavenly bread. Now see what you did next. And all again in the name of freedom! I tell you that man has no more tormenting care than to find someone to whom he can hand over as quickly as possible that gift of freedom with which the miserable creature is born. But he alone can take over the freedom of men who appeases their conscience. With bread you were given an indisputable banner: give man bread and he will bow down to you, for there is nothing more indisputable than bread. But if at the same time someone else takes over his conscience—oh, then he will even throw down your bread and follow him who has seduced his conscience. In this you were right. For the mystery of man's being is not only in living, but in what one lives for. Without a firm idea of what he lives for, man will not consent to live and will sooner destroy himself than remain on earth, even if there is bread all around him. That is so, but what came of it? Instead of taking over men's freedom, you increased it still more for them! Did you forget that peace and even death are dearer to man than free choice in the knowledge of good and evil? There is nothing more seductive for man than the freedom of his conscience, but there is nothing more tormenting either. And so, instead of a firm foundation for appeasing human conscience once and for all, you chose everything that was unusual, enigmatic, and indefinite, you chose everything that was beyond men's strength, and thereby acted as if you did not love them at

all—and who did this? He who came to give his life for them! Instead of taking over men's freedom, you increased it and forever burdened the kingdom of the human soul with its torments. You desired the free love of man, that he should follow you freely, seduced and captivated by you. Instead of the firm ancient law,<sup>23</sup> man had henceforth to decide for himself, with a free heart, what is good and what is evil, having only your image before him as a guide—but did it not occur to you that he would eventually reject and dispute even your image and your truth if he was oppressed by so terrible a burden as freedom of choice? They will finally cry out that the truth is not in you, for it was impossible to leave them in greater confusion and torment than you did, abandoning them to so many cares and insoluble problems. Thus you yourself laid the foundation for the destruction of your own kingdom, and do not blame anyone else for it. Yet is this what was offered you? There are three powers, only three powers on earth, capable of conquering and holding captive forever the conscience of these feeble rebels, for their own happiness—these powers are miracle, mystery, and authority. You rejected the first, the second, and the third, and gave yourself as an example of that. When the dread and wise spirit set you on a pinnacle of the Temple and said to you: "If you would know whether or not you are the Son of God, cast yourself down; for it is written of him, that the angels will bear him up, and he will not fall or be hurt, and then you will know whether you are the Son of God, and will prove what faith you have in your Father."<sup>24</sup> But you heard and rejected the offer and did not yield and did not throw yourself down. Oh, of course, in this you acted proudly and magnificently, like God, but mankind, that weak, rebellious tribe—are they gods? Oh, you knew then that if you made just one step, just one movement towards throwing yourself down, you would immediately have tempted the Lord and would have lost all faith in him and been dashed against the earth you came to save, and the intelligent spirit who was tempting you would rejoice. But, I repeat, are there many like you? And, indeed, could you possibly have assumed, even for a moment, that mankind, too, would be strong enough for such a temptation? Is that how human nature was created—to reject the miracle, and in those terrible moments of life, the moments of the most terrible, essential, and tormenting questions of the soul, to remain only with the free decision of the heart? Oh, you knew that your deed would be preserved in books, would reach the depths of the ages and the utmost limits of the earth, and you hoped that, following you, man, too, would remain with God, having no need of miracles. But you did not know that as soon as man rejects miracles, he will at once reject God as well, for man seeks not so much God as miracles. And since man cannot bear to be left without miracles, he will go and create new miracles for himself, his own

miracles this time, and will bow down to the miracles of quacks, or women's magic, though he be rebellious, heretical, and godless a hundred times over. You did not come down from the cross when they shouted to you, mocking and reviling you: "Come down from the cross and we will believe that it is you."<sup>22</sup> You did not come down because, again, you did not want to enslave man by a miracle and thirsted for faith that is free, not miraculous. You thirsted for love that is free, and not for the servile raptures of a slave before a power that has left him permanently terrified. But here, too, you overestimated mankind, for, of course, they are slaves, though they were created rebels. Behold and judge, now that fifteen centuries have passed, take a look at them: whom have you raised up to yourself? I swear, man is created weaker and baser than you thought him! How, how can he ever accomplish the same things as you? Respecting him so much, you behaved as if you had ceased to be compassionate, because you demanded too much of him—and who did this? He who loved him more than himself! Respecting him less, you would have demanded less of him, and that would be closer to love, for his burden would be lighter. He is weak and mean. What matter that he now rebels everywhere against our power, and takes pride in this rebellion? The pride of a child and a schoolboy! They are little children, who rebel in class and drive out the teacher. But there will also come an end to the children's delight, and it will cost them dearly. They will tear down the temples and drench the earth with blood. But finally the foolish children will understand that although they are rebels, they are feeble rebels, who cannot endure their own rebellion. Pouring out their foolish tears, they will finally acknowledge that he who created them rebels no doubt intended to laugh at them. They will say it in despair, and what they say will be a blasphemy that will make them even more unhappy, for human nature cannot bear blasphemy and in the end always takes revenge for it. And so, turmoil, confusion, and unhappiness—these are the present lot of mankind, after you suffered so much for their freedom! Your great prophet tells in a vision and an allegory that he saw all those who took part in the first resurrection and that they were twelve thousand from each tribe.<sup>26</sup> But even if there were so many, they, too, were not like men, as it were, but gods. They endured your cross, they endured scores of years of hungry and naked wilderness, eating locusts and roots,<sup>27</sup> and of course you can point with pride to these children of freedom, of free love, of free and magnificent sacrifice in your name. But remember that there were only several thousand of them, and they were gods. What of the rest? Is it the fault of the rest of feeble mankind that they could not endure what the mighty endured? Is it the fault of the weak soul that it is unable to contain such terrible gifts? Can it be that you indeed came only to the chosen ones and for the chosen ones? But if so,

there is a mystery here, and we cannot understand it. And if it is a mystery, then we, too, had the right to preach mystery and to teach them that it is not the free choice of the heart that matters, and not love, but the mystery, which they must blindly obey, even setting aside their own conscience. And so we did. We corrected your deed and based it on *miracle, mystery, and authority*. And mankind rejoiced that they were once more led like sheep, and that at last such a terrible gift, which had brought them so much suffering, had been taken from their hearts. Tell me, were we right in teaching and doing so? Have we not, indeed, loved mankind, in so humbly recognizing their impotence, in so lovingly alleviating their burden and allowing their feeble nature even to sin, with our permission? Why have you come to interfere with us now? And why are you looking at me so silently and understandingly with your meek eyes? Be angry! I do not want your love, for I do not love you. And what can I hide from you? Do I not know with whom I am speaking? What I have to tell you is all known to you already. I can read it in your eyes. And is it for me to hide our secret from you? Perhaps you precisely want to hear it from my lips. Listen, then: we are not with you, but with him, that is our secret! For a long time now—eight centuries already—we have not been with you, but with him. Exactly eight centuries ago we took from him what you so indignantly rejected,<sup>28</sup> that last gift he offered you when he showed you all the kingdoms of the earth: we took Rome and the sword of Caesar from him, and proclaimed ourselves sole rulers of the earth, the only rulers, though we have not yet succeeded in bringing our cause to its full conclusion. But whose fault is that? Oh, this work is still in its very beginnings, but it has begun. There is still long to wait before its completion, and the earth still has much to suffer, but we shall accomplish it and we shall be caesars, and then we shall think about the universal happiness of mankind. And yet you could have taken the sword of Caesar even then. Why did you reject that last gift? Had you accepted that third counsel of the mighty spirit, you would have furnished all that man seeks on earth, that is: someone to bow down to, someone to take over his conscience, and a means for uniting everyone at last into a common, concordant, and incontestable anthill—for the need for universal union is the third and last torment of men. Mankind in its entirety has always yearned to arrange things so that they must be universal. There have been many great nations with great histories, but the higher these nations stood, the unhappier they were, for they were more strongly aware than others of the need for a universal union of mankind. Great conquerors, Tamerlans and Genghis Khans, swept over the earth like a whirlwind, yearning to conquer the cosmos, but they, too, expressed, albeit unconsciously, the same great need of mankind for universal and general union. Had you accepted the world and Caesar's

purple, you would have founded a universal kingdom and granted universal peace. For who shall possess mankind if not those who possess their conscience and give them their bread? And so we took Caesar's sword, and in taking it, of course, we rejected you and followed him. Oh, there will be centuries more of the lawlessness of free reason, of their science and anthropophagy—for, having begun to build their Tower of Babel without us, they will end in anthropophagy. And it is then that the beast will come crawling to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood from its eyes. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written: "Mystery!"<sup>29</sup> But then, and then only, will the kingdom of peace and happiness come for mankind. You are proud of your chosen ones, but you have only your chosen ones, while we will pacify all. And there is still more: how many among those chosen ones, the strong ones who might have become chosen ones, have finally grown tired of waiting for you, and have brought and will yet bring the powers of their spirit and the ardor of their hearts to another field, and will end by raising their *free* banner against you! But you raised that banner yourself. With us everyone will be happy, and they will no longer rebel or destroy each other, as in your freedom, everywhere. Oh, we shall convince them that they will only become free when they resign their freedom to us, and submit to us. Will we be right, do you think, or will we be lying? They themselves will be convinced that we are right, for they will remember to what horrors of slavery and confusion your freedom led them. Freedom, free reason, and science will lead them into such a maze, and confront them with such miracles and insoluble mysteries, that some of them, unruly and ferocious, will exterminate themselves; others, unruly but feeble, will exterminate each other; and the remaining third, feeble and wretched, will crawl to our feet and cry out to us: "Yes, you were right, you alone possess his mystery, and we are coming back to you—save us from ourselves." Receiving bread from us, they will see clearly, of course, that we take from them the bread they have procured with their own hands, in order to distribute it among them, without any miracle; they will see that we have not turned stones into bread; but, indeed, more than over the bread itself, they will rejoice over taking it from our hands! For they will remember only too well that before, without us, the very bread they procured for themselves turned to stones in their hands, and when they came back to us, the very stones in their hands turned to bread. Too well, far too well, will they appreciate what it means to submit once and for all! And until men understand this, they will be unhappy. Who contributed most of all to this lack of understanding, tell me? Who broke up the flock and scattered it upon paths unknown? But the flock will gather again, and again submit, and this time once and for all. Then we shall give them quiet, humble hap-

piness, the happiness of feeble creatures, such as they were created. Oh, we shall finally convince them not to be proud, for you raised them up and thereby taught them pride; we shall prove to them that they are feeble, that they are only pitiful children, but that a child's happiness is sweeter than any other. They will become timid and look to us and cling to us in fear, like chicks to a hen. They will marvel and stand in awe of us and be proud that we are so powerful and so intelligent as to have been able to subdue such a tempestuous flock of thousands of millions. They will tremble limply before our wrath, their minds will grow timid, their eyes will become as tearful as children's or women's, but just as readily at a gesture from us they will pass over to gaiety and laughter, to bright joy and happy children's song. Yes, we will make them work, but in the hours free from labor we will arrange their lives like a child's game, with children's songs, choruses, and innocent dancing. Oh, we will allow them to sin, too; they are weak and powerless, and they will love us like children for allowing them to sin. We will tell them that every sin will be redeemed if it is committed with our permission; and that we allow them to sin because we love them, and as for the punishment for these sins, very well, we take it upon ourselves. And we will take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as benefactors, who have borne their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We will allow or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children—all depending on their obedience—and they will submit to us gladly and joyfully. The most tormenting secrets of their conscience—all, all they will bring to us, and we will decide all things, and they will joyfully believe our decision, because it will deliver them from their great care and their present terrible torments of personal and free decision. And everyone will be happy, all the millions of creatures, except for the hundred thousand of those who govern them. For only we, we who keep the mystery, only we shall be unhappy. There will be thousands of millions of happy babes, and a hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of the knowledge of good and evil. Peacefully they will die, peacefully they will expire in your name, and beyond the grave they will find only death. But we will keep the secret, and for their own happiness we will entice them with a heavenly and eternal reward. For even if there were anything in the next world, it would not, of course, be for such as they. It is said and prophesied that you will come and once more be victorious, you will come with your chosen ones, with your proud and mighty ones, but we will say that they saved only themselves, while we have saved everyone. It is said that the harlot who sits upon the beast and holds mystery in her hands will be disgraced, that the feeble will rebel again, that they will tear her purple and strip bare her "loathsome" body.<sup>30</sup> But then I will stand up and point out to you

the thousands of millions of happy babes who do not know sin. And we, who took their sins upon ourselves for their happiness, we will stand before you and say: "Judge us if you can and dare." Know that I am not afraid of you. Know that I, too, was in the wilderness, and I, too, ate locusts and roots; that I, too, blessed freedom, with which you have blessed mankind, and I, too, was preparing to enter the number of your chosen ones, the number of the strong and mighty, with a thirst "that the number be complete."<sup>31</sup> But I awoke and did not want to serve madness. I returned and joined the host of those who have *corrected your deed*. I left the proud and returned to the humble, for the happiness of the humble. What I am telling you will come true, and our kingdom will be established. Tomorrow, I repeat, you will see this obedient flock, which at my first gesture will rush to heap hot coals around your stake, at which I shall burn you for having come to interfere with us. For if anyone has ever deserved our stake, it is you. Tomorrow I shall burn you. *Dixi!*"<sup>32</sup>

Ivan stopped. He was flushed from speaking, and from speaking with such enthusiasm; but when he finished, he suddenly smiled.

Alyosha, who all the while had listened to him silently, though towards the end, in great agitation, he had started many times to interrupt his brother's speech but obviously restrained himself, suddenly spoke as if tearing himself loose.

"But . . . that's absurd!" he cried, blushing. "Your poem praises Jesus, it doesn't revile him . . . as you meant it to. And who will believe you about freedom? Is that, is that any way to understand it? It's a far cry from the Orthodox idea . . . It's Rome, and not even the whole of Rome, that isn't true—they're the worst of Catholicism, the Inquisitors, the Jesuits . . . ! But there could not even possibly be such a fantastic person as your Inquisitor. What sins do they take on themselves? Who are these bearers of the mystery who took some sort of curse upon themselves for men's happiness? Has anyone ever seen them? We know the Jesuits, bad things are said about them, but are they what you have there? They're not that, not that at all . . . They're simply a Roman army, for a future universal earthly kingdom, with the emperor—the pontiff of Rome—at their head . . . that's their ideal, but without any mysteries or lofty sadness . . . Simply the lust for power, for filthy earthly lucre,<sup>33</sup> enslavement . . . a sort of future serfdom with them as the landowners . . . that's all they have. Maybe they don't even believe in God. Your suffering Inquisitor is only a fantasy . . ."

"But wait, wait," Ivan was laughing, "don't get so excited. A fantasy, you say? Let it be. Of course it's a fantasy. But still, let me ask: do you really think that this whole Catholic movement of the past few centuries is really nothing

but the lust for power only for the sake of filthy lucre? Did Father Paisy reach you that?"

"No, no, on the contrary, Father Paisy once even said something like what you . . . but not like that, of course, not at all like that," Alyosha suddenly recollected himself.

"A precious bit of information, however, despite your 'not at all like that. I ask you specifically: why should your Jesuits and Inquisitors have joined together only for material wicked lucre? Why can't there happen to be among them at least one sufferer who is tormented by great sadness and loves mankind? Look, suppose that one among all those who desire only material and filthy lucre, that one of them, at least, is like my old Inquisitor, who himself ate roots in the desert and traved, overcoming his flesh, in order to make himself free and perfect, but who still loved mankind all his life, and suddenly opened his eyes and saw that there is no great moral blessedness in achieving perfection of the will only to become convinced, at the same time, that millions of the rest of God's creatures have been set up only for mockery, that they will never be strong enough to manage their freedom, that from such pitiful rebels will never come giants to complete the tower, that it was not for such geese that the great idealist had his dream of harmony. Having understood all that, he returned and joined . . . the intelligent people. Couldn't this have happened?"

"Whom did he join? What intelligent people?" Alyosha exclaimed, almost passionately. "They are not so very intelligent, nor do they have any great mysteries and secrets . . . Except maybe for godlessness, that's their whole secret. Your Inquisitor doesn't believe in God, that's his whole secret!"

"What of it! At last you've understood. Yes, indeed, that alone is the whole secret, but is it not suffering, if only for such a man as he, who has wasted his whole life on a great deed in the wilderness and still has not been cured of his love for mankind? In his declining years he comes to the clear conviction that only the counsels of the great and dread spirit could at least somehow organize the feeble rebels, 'the unfinished, trial creatures created in mockery,' in a tolerable way. And so, convinced of that, he sees that one must follow the directives of the intelligent spirit, the dread spirit of death and destruction, and to that end accept lies and deceit, and lead people, consciously now, to death and destruction, deceiving them, moreover, all along the way, so that they somehow do not notice where they are being led, so that at least on the way these pitiful, blind men consider themselves happy. And deceive them, notice, in the name of him in whose ideal the old man believed so passionately all his life! Is that not a misfortune? And if even one such man, at least, finds



himself at the head of that whole army 'lusting for power only for the sake of filthy lucre,' is one such man, at least, not enough to make a tragedy? Moreover, one such man standing at its head would be enough to bring out finally the real ruling idea of the whole Roman cause, with all its armies and Jesus-its—the highest idea of this cause. I tell you outright that I firmly believe that this one man has never been lacking among those standing at the head of the movement. Who knows, perhaps such 'ones' have even been found among the Roman pontiffs. Who knows, maybe this accursed old man, who loves mankind so stubbornly in his own way, exists even now, in the form of a great host of such old men, and by no means accidentally, but in concert, as a secret union, organized long ago for the purpose of keeping the mystery, of keeping it from unhappy and feeble mankind with the aim of making them happy. It surely exists, and it should be so. I imagine that even the Masons have something like this mystery as their basis,<sup>3</sup> and that Catholics hate the Masons so much because they see them as competitors, breaking up the unity of the idea, whereas there should be one flock and one shepherd . . . However, the way I'm defending my thought makes me seem like an author who did not stand up to your criticism. Enough of that."

"Maybe you're a Mason yourself!" suddenly escaped from Alyosha. "You don't believe in God," he added, this time with great sorrow. Besides, it seemed to him that his brother was looking at him mockingly. "And how does your poem end," he asked suddenly, staring at the ground, "or was that the end?"

"I was going to end it like this: when the Inquisitor fell silent, he waited some time for his prisoner to reply. His silence weighed on him. He had seen how the captive listened to him all the while intently and calmly, looking him straight in the eye, and apparently not wishing to contradict anything. The old man would have liked him to say something, even something bitter, terrible. But suddenly he approaches the old man in silence and gently kisses him on his bloodless, ninety-year-old lips. That is the whole answer. The old man shudders. Something stirs at the corners of his mouth; he walks to the door, opens it, and says to him: 'Go and do not come again . . . do not come at all . . . never, never!' And he lets him out into the 'dark squares of the city.'<sup>35</sup> The prisoner goes away."

"And the old man?"

"The kiss burns in his heart, but the old man holds to his former idea."

"And you with him!" Alyosha exclaimed ruefully. Ivan laughed.

"But it's nonsense, Alyosha, it's just the muddled poem of a muddled student who never wrote two lines of verse. Why are you taking it so seriously? You don't think I'll go straight to the Jesuits now, to join the host of those who

are correcting his deed! Good lord, what do I care? As I told you: I just want to drag on until I'm thirty, and then—smash the cup on the floor!"

"And the sticky little leaves, and the precious graves, and the blue sky, and the woman you love! How will you live, what will you love them with?" Alyosha exclaimed ruefully. "Is it possible, with such hell in your heart and in your head? No, you're precisely going in order to join them . . . and if not, you'll kill yourself, you won't endure it!"

"There is a force that will endure everything," said Ivan, this time with a cold smirk.

"What force?"

"The Karamazov force . . . the force of the Karamazov baseness."

"To drown in depravity, to stifle your soul with corruption, is that it?"

"That, too, perhaps . . . only until my thirtieth year maybe I'll escape it, and then . . ."

"How will you escape it? By means of what? With your thoughts, it's impossible."

"Again, in Karamazov fashion."

"You mean 'everything is permitted'? Everything is permitted, is that right, is it?"

Ivan frowned, and suddenly turned somehow strangely pale.

"Ah, you caught that little remark yesterday, which offended Miusov so much . . . and that brother Dmitri so naively popped up and rephrased?" he grinned crookedly. "Yes, perhaps 'everything is permitted,' since the word has already been spoken. I do not renounce it. And Mitrenka's version is not so bad."

Alyosha was looking at him silently.

"I thought, brother, that when I left here I'd have you, at least, in all the world," Ivan suddenly spoke with unexpected feeling, "but now I see that in your heart, too, there is no room for me, my dear hermit. The formula, 'everything is permitted,' I will not renounce, and what then? Will you renounce me for that? Will you?"

Alyosha stood up, went over to him in silence, and gently kissed him on the lips.

"Literary theft!" Ivan cried, suddenly going into some kind of rapture. "You stole that from my poem! Thank you, however. Get up, Alyosha, let's go, it's time we both did."

They went out, but stopped on the porch of the tavern.

"So, Alyosha," Ivan spoke in a firm voice, "if, indeed, I hold out for the sticky little leaves, I shall love them only remembering you. It's enough for me that you are here somewhere, and I shall not stop wanting to live. Is that

enough for you? If you wish, you can take it as a declaration of love. And now you go right, I'll go left—and enough, you hear, enough.<sup>36</sup> I mean, even if I don't go away tomorrow (but it seems I certainly shall), and we somehow meet again, not another word to me on any of these subjects. An urgent request. And with regard to brother Dmitri, too, I ask you particularly, do not ever even mention him to me again," he suddenly added irritably. "It's all exhausted, it's all talked out, isn't it? And in return for that, I will also make you a promise: when I'm thirty and want to smash the cup on the floor, then, wherever you may be, I will still come to talk things over with you once more . . . even from America, I assure you. I will make a point of it. It will also be very interesting to have a look at you by then, to see what's become of you. Rather a solemn promise, you see. And indeed, perhaps we're saying goodbye for some seven or ten years. Well, go now to your Pater Seraphicus,<sup>37</sup> he's dying, and if he dies without you, you may be angry with me for having kept you. Good-bye, kiss me once more—so—and now go . . ."

Ivan turned suddenly and went his way without looking back. It was similar to the way his brother Dmitri had left Alyosha the day before, though the day before it was something quite different. This strange little observation flashed like an arrow through the sad mind of Alyosha, sad and sorrowful at that moment. He waited a little, looking after his brother. For some reason he suddenly noticed that his brother Ivan somehow swayed as he walked, and that his right shoulder, seen from behind, appeared lower than his left. He had never noticed it before. But suddenly he, too, turned and almost ran to the monastery. It was already getting quite dark, and he felt almost frightened; something new was growing in him, which he would have been unable to explain. The wind rose again as it had yesterday, and the centuries-old pine trees rustled gloomily around him as he entered the hermitage woods. He was almost running. "Pater Seraphicus—he got that name from somewhere—but where?" flashed through Alyosha's mind. "Ivan, poor Ivan, when shall I see you again . . . ? Lord, here's the hermitage! Yes, yes, that's him, Pater Seraphicus, he will save me . . . from him, and forever!"

Several times, later in his life, in great perplexity, he wondered how he could suddenly, after parting with his brother Ivan, so completely forget about his brother Dmitri, when he had resolved that morning, only a few hours earlier, that he must find him, and would not leave until he did, even if it meant not returning to the monastery that night.

## Chapter 6

### *A Rather Obscure One for the Moment*

And Ivan Fyodorovich, on parting from Alyosha, went home to Fyodor Pavlovich's house. But, strangely, an unbearable anguish suddenly came over him, and, moreover, the closer he came to home, the worse it grew with every step. The strangeness lay not in the anguish itself, but in the fact that Ivan Fyodorovich simply could not define what the anguish consisted of. He had often felt anguish before, and it would be no wonder if it came at such a moment, when he was preparing, the very next day, having suddenly broken with everything that had drawn him there, to make another sharp turn, entering upon a new, completely unknown path, again quite as lonely as before, having much hope, but not knowing for what, expecting much, too much, from life, but unable himself to define anything either in his expectations or even in his desires. And yet at that moment, though the anguish of the new and unknown was indeed in his soul, he was tormented by something quite different. "Can it be loathing for my father's house?" he thought to himself. "Very likely. I'm so sick of it, and though today I shall cross that vile threshold for the last time, still it makes me sick . . ." But no, that was not it. Was it the parting with Alyosha and the conversation he had had with him? "For so many years I was silent with the whole world and did not deign to speak, and suddenly I spewed out so much gibberish!" Indeed, it could have been the youthful vexation of youthful inexperience and youthful vanity, vexation at having been unable to speak his mind, especially with such a being as Alyosha, on whom he undoubtedly counted a great deal in his heart. Of course there was that, too, that is, this vexation, there even had to be, but it was not that either, not that at all. "Anguish to the point of nausea, yet it's beyond me to say what I want. Perhaps I shouldn't think . . ."

Ivan Fyodorovich tried "not to think," but that, too, was no use. Above all, this anguish was vexing and annoyed him by the fact that it had some sort of accidental, completely external appearance; this he felt. Somewhere some being or object was standing and sticking up, just as when something sometimes sticks up in front of one's eye and one doesn't notice it for a long time, being busy or in heated conversation, and meanwhile one is clearly annoyed, almost suffering, and at last it dawns on one to remove the offending object, often quite trifling and ridiculous, something left in the wrong place, a hand-