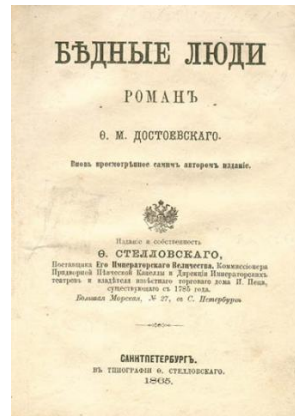


0. ARRESTED - Story Preface
1. WHO WAS DOSTOEVSKY?
2. ST. PETERSBURG - BEGINNINGS
3. LIFE in ST. PETERSBURG
- 4. ARRESTED**
5. DEATH SENTENCE
6. DOSTOEVSKY in LOVE
7. DOSTOEVSKY the GAMBLER
8. TRAGEDIES in DOSTOEVSKY'S LIFE
9. SAVED - BY STENOGRAPHY
10. FALLING IN LOVE
11. FROM SECRETARY to WIFE
12. TIMELY WRITING; UNTIMELY DEATH



One of Dostoevsky's early works—a novella called *Poor Folk* in its English translation—was published to great literary acclaim in 1846. Not long after that positive event in the writer's life, he experienced a trauma so profound that he would never forget it. Image online via Wikimedia Commons.

During Dostoevsky's formative years, Russia was flooded with philosophical and social ideas from the West. "Socialism" and "materialism" were new concepts even to Russian intellectuals. Caught up in the wave of "fixing" Russian society (its 20 million serfs were not freed until 1861), Dostoevsky learned first-hand how a repressive regime views "freedom of thought."

By 1848, as people in Western Europe revolted against restrictive government policies, the young writer (whose *Poor Folk* had already been published, to great acclaim, in the literary journal *Peterburgi Sbornik*) was emboldened. Could Russia also change? If so, how? Could the serfs be freed and censorship eliminated? If so, when?

Joining a secret society (known as the "Petrashkevsky Circle") whose members (called "Petrashkevtsy") wanted more freedom and less autocracy for Russia, Dostoevsky put himself on a dangerous path. Tsar Nicholas I, already worried about the winds of change blowing into Russia, would not tolerate dissent - or groups of young thinkers who read Fourier and had access to printing presses. The government made sure informers were part of the group.

On the night of April 15, 1849, an informer heard Dostoevsky read a censored work (the forbidden letter from V.G.Belinsky to Nikolai Gogol) which included, among other things, the following observation:

...what Russia needs is for its people to be awakened to their own human dignity.

Not only did he read the letter - Dostoevsky allowed it to be copied. That was enough for the 27-year-old writer to be arrested (along with twenty-three other members of the Petrashevsky Circle).

The Peter and Paul Fortress (which dominates St. Petersburg's skyline) became Dostoevsky's "home" for many months. As an investigation dragged on, he spent time with every imaginable form of vermin. His cell - number nine - had a notorious reputation. It was there, in the Alekseevsky Ravelin, that Peter the Great had his son and heir, Alexei, tortured to death.

Another death sentence was about to be handed down to a resident of cell number nine.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ARRESTED-Dostoevsky>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ARRESTED-Dostoevsky>



Poor Folk - by Fyodor Dostoevsky

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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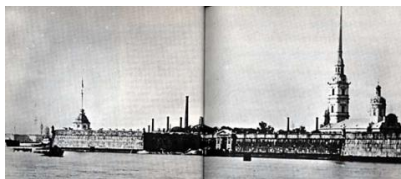


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Peter and Paul Fortress

Image online, courtest the Dartmouth College website.

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Skyline of St. Petersburg

Image online, courtesy Bill Casselman's Words of the World website.

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Alekseevsky Ravelin

Image online, courtesy the Dostoyevsky blog site.

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Portrait of Peter the Great

Image of a portrait, depicting Tsar Peter the Great, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Portrait of Alexei Petrovich

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