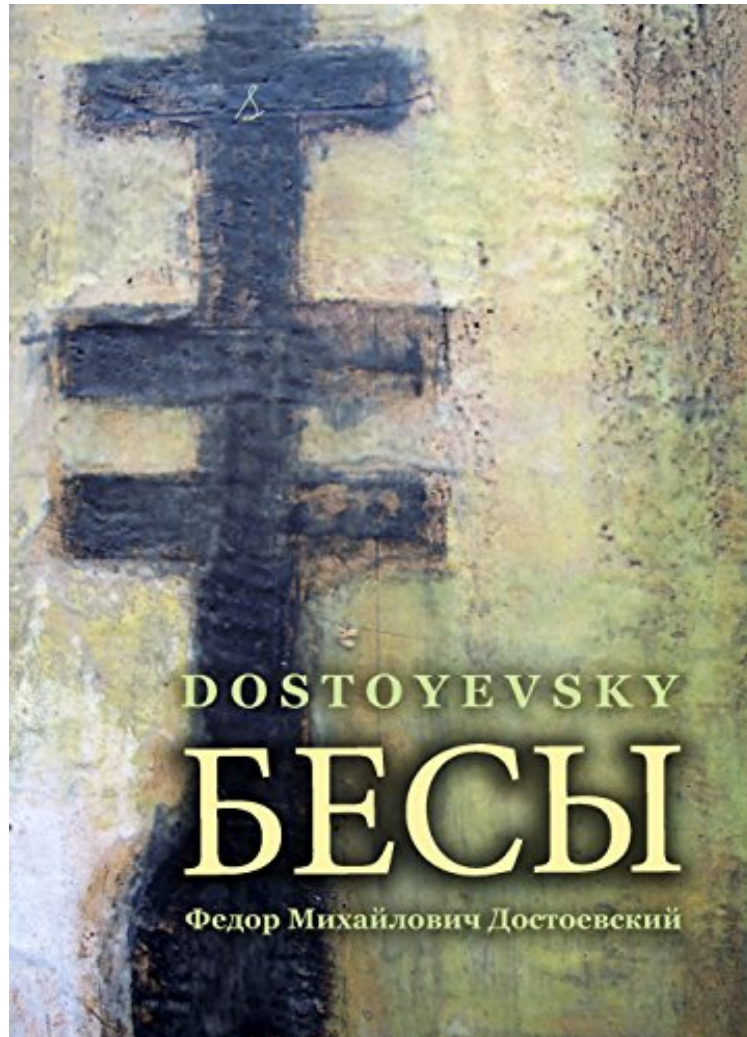


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## Demons

Von Fyodor Dostoyevsky  
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**Von Fyodor Dostoyevsky : Demons** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Demons:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.  
Provocative Mystery of RevolutionVon Shirley LiDostoyevsky himself is a victim of youthful frenzy, of revolution's dangerous freedom, and of radicals' ruthless betrayal. A powerful work of dark messages, Demons also known as The Possessed, crowns Dostoyevsky literature before the brilliance and magnitude of The Brothers Karamazov. Written more of severe historical recounts than a lighter fiction work such as The Idiot, Dostoyevsky gained the permanent abhorrence of contemporary radicals whose presence was lushly painted with angry strokes of danger and of depravity. Base on an actual accident that took place in 1869, Demons retells the story of an ailing radical, Shatov,

whose emerging faith makes him an obstacle in the way of one obscure town's intellectual circle. The murder of Shatov is by no means a beginning of Dostoyevsky's lustrous characterization going deep into the dark psyche of revolution; instead, it is marked as an ending to a period of great turmoil and of intellectual unrest that wake blinded followers as well as the observant surrounding to the painful truth of progress. At the beginning, the readers are introduced to a Nihilist father Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky, a retired lecturer and educator who has been under the patronage of a local aristocrat Varvara Petrovna Stavrogin. Stepan Trofimovich's mind of uncertainty leaves behind a tremendous mess of doubts and of hatred in his son, Pyotr Stepanovich, head of the local secret society. The true hero of the story is Nikolai Vsevolodovich Stavrogin, son of Varvara Petrovna, a troubled young man whose dubious past haunts his present in the small town. Like other heroes of Dostoyevsky, Stavrogin is handsome, rich, and dashing; unlike Raskolnikov or Dimitri Karamazov, Stavrogin commits himself to worldly evils unwarily as if in a state of dreams. The heart of Demons is the possession of unguarded intellect turning into a possessive spirit, and at the center of the dark confusions of ideas, of theories, and of rebellions, Stavrogin is chosen to unveil the face of the demons. Pyotr Stepanovich, on the other hand, is characterized by his pretentious presence in front of the weak and obsequious malice facing the powerful. His real-life counterpart being Nechayev who led his political society against Ivan Ivanov's (Shatov) struggle to break free, Pyotr is portrayed with care, shrouded in shadow, and hidden in intellectualism. With some of the most provocative suggestions on revolution, Demons seems to challenge the rigid intellect that is obsessed with replacing the old with something revolutionary.

DO READ WITH AN OPEN MIND. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Most Prophetic Novel of All Time Von Allan from San Francisco Most readers probably know that the character of the amoral nihilist Peter Verkhovensky is based--not too loosely, either--on the real-life figure of Sergei Nechayev (pronounced neech-aye-eff), who collaborated with the anarchist Bakunin while they were both hiding out in Western Europe. (Bakunin finally learned that Nechayev was a total fanatic who'd stop at nothing--even blackmail, betrayal, and murder--and disassociated himself with Nechayev, warning friends against him.) Nechayev murdered a member of his conspiratorial group, suspecting the victim of betrayal, a scene portrayed in the novel. What most readers may not know is that Lenin was fascinated with the career of Nechayev (who was eventually caught for the murder and extradited to Russia, where he died in prison), called him a "titanic revolutionary," and said that Bolsheviks should try to find everything Nechayev had ever written, and study it. If Peter Verkhovensky was a caricature, he turned out to be a caricature that came to life in Lenin and Hitler and Stalin. Yet it is important to remember that these men were not, and could not be, dangerous all by themselves. It is only the possession of an ideology that makes them dangerous, ESPECIALLY if it is one that claims to be supremely moral and virtuous. Why is this so? Because self-righteous people who believe themselves to following a supremely moral path would almost certainly conclude that anyone who OPPOSES this supreme virtue must therefore be supremely IMMORAL--and what should be done with immoral people? Dostoevsky tells us something very important here: ideology kills, especially if it's the kind that exudes proclamations of goodness and virtue. In CRIME AND PUNISHMENT, he has the policeman Porfiry Petrovich tell the murderer Raskolnikov: "You know, it's just as well you only killed the old woman. Because if you'd come up with another THEORY, that would have been a thousand times MORE hideous." In THE DEMONS, Dostoevsky has Peter Verkhovensky admit to Stavrogin that he is a rogue, not a socialist. But he had socialism to use as a foundation--a rationale--and he used it. Without it, a rogue would just be a rogue, no different than an ordinary criminal. But Peter Verkhovensky is far from ordinary. Dostoevsky knew he'd be called a "reactionary" for implying that ends-justify-means fanaticism--terror and immorality in the name of a "better world" to come--must end in utter destruction. But he nevertheless went ahead and wrote this novel to illustrate this theme. And Lenin, admiring Nechayev, did exactly what the great novelist foresaw--he created a monstrous tyranny that destroyed Russia, perhaps (as we are now seeing) even beyond repair. We admire Orwell's 1984 for its insights and innovative ideas, but THE DEMONS turned out to be the more accurate and prophetic book of the two. Russian novels tend to be long on characterization and short on plot--as well as very lengthy--but don't let that deter you from reading this masterpiece. Incidentally, I once queried the companies who write student guides for novels (i.e., Cliff's Notes; Monarch Notes) about why no such guide had EVER been written for this book (even though they do exist for Dostoevsky's CRIME AND PUNISHMENT), and even though the collapse of Communism should have produced a renewed academic interest in THE DEMONS. The reply was that professors assign Dostoevsky as class reading less and less, and that very few assign this book, so there wouldn't be enough of a market for such a guide. Class reading, hell -- the profs know full well how devastating this novel would be to their own efforts to instill their own utopian political beliefs in their students. As Malcolm Muggeridge once said, everything that happened in 20th century Russia was predicted in this novel. This was what originally inspired me to read it, and he was right.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. dark , but also funny Von Ein Kunde The only thing that I have to add is that this book is also funny. For example, the vanity of writers is brilliantly lampooned in the character Karmazinov (Turgenev). Political correctness is not new, and what Dostoyevsky satirizes in nineteenth century Russia will not be lost on modern readers.

Kurzbeschreibung Inspired by the true story of a political murder that horrified Russians in 1869, Fyodor Dostoevsky conceived of *Demons* as a "novel-pamphlet" in which he would say everything about the plague of materialist ideology that he saw infecting his native land. What emerged was a prophetic and ferociously funny masterpiece of ideology and murder in pre-revolutionary Russia. From the Trade Paperback edition. From Kirkus sDostoevsky's sprawling political novel is given new life in this fresh translation. The previous translations of the husband-and-wife team of Larissa Volokhonsky and Richard Pevear--*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *Notes From Underground*--have been universally praised for capturing Dostoevsky's force and subtlety, and all three works are now considered the English standards. Now they have successfully tackled one of Dostoevsky's most complex and dense works. Mistakenly translated in the past as "The Possessed," the title refers to the infestation of foreign political and philosophical ideas that swept Russia in the second half of the 19th century. Pevear writes in the introduction, "These demons, then, are ideas, that legion of -isms that came to Russia from the West: idealism, rationalism, empiricism, materialism, utilitarianism, positivism, socialism, anarchism, nihilism, and, underlying them all, atheism." Dostoevsky, taking as his starting point the political chaos around him at the time, constructs an elaborate morality tale in which the people of a provincial town turn against one another because they are convinced of the infallibility of their ideas. Stepan Trofimovich, an affable thinker who does little to turn his liberal ideas into action, creates a monster in his student, Nikolai Vsevolodovich Stavrogin, who takes his spiritual father's teaching to heart, joining a circle of other nihilists who will justify any and all violent excesses for the sake of their ideas. Stavrogin aims for a "systematic corrupting of society and all its principles" so that out of the resulting destruction he may "raise the banner of rebellion." A chilling foreshadowing of Stalinist logic. Volokhonsky and Pevear's translation brings to the surface all of Dostoevsky's subtle linguistic and nationalist humor, and the copious notes are indispensable for making one's way through the thicket of 19th-century Russian politics. -- Copyright 1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From Library Journal Pevear and Volokhonsky have found critical acclaim with previous translations of Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (Classic Returns, LJ 8/90), *Crime and Punishment* (Classic Returns, LJ 1/92), and *Notes from Underground* (Classic Returns, LJ 7/93). Their *Demons* should be equally respected. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.