the moment of eternal harmony, there will occur and be revealed something so precious that it will suffice for all hearts, to allay all indiguation, 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 I 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 nigh... 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 humilates 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 ate 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 'implorator 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 Lutheranizing 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 upon 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, 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 inflames the vile blood of the torturer. There is, of course, a beast hidden in every man, a beast of rage,
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, flailed her, kicked her, not knowing why themselves, until her whole body was nothing but bruises; finally they attained the height of finesse: 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 anguish, 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 eat 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," Alyoshka 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 forget where I read it. It was in the darkest days of serfdom, back in 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 reported 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 wolves 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!" Alyoshka 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?" Alyoshka 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," 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, 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' evildoings, 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!' 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. 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," Alyosa 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," 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 thine ways have been revealed!'"

"Ah, yes, the 'only sinless One' 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, Alyosa—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 Alyosa.

"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, in which she herself appears in person and pronounces her bon jugement. With us in Moscow, in pre-Petrine antiquity, 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, 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 exerts 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.' "'Of that day and that hour knoweth not even the Son, but only my heavenly Father,' 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.

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. A great star, 'like a lamp' (that is, the Church), 'fell upon the fountains of waters, and they were made bitter.' 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,' 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 Tyutchev, 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.  

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.  

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.' 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' 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
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.' 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 upon 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?"

"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-fe 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'? 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,' 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. 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 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!" 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, 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 deprived, 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 deprived 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 community 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, 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.” But you heard and rejected the offer and did not yield and did not throw yourself down. Oh, of course, in this you acted truly 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." 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. 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, 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, 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 anhint—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, Tamerlanes 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!” 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-
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." 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. Dixit."

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 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, enslavement... a sort of future servitude 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 Paissey teach you that?"

"No, no, on the contrary, Father Paissey 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 raved, 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 Jesuits—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,” 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.” 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 Miurov 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 Mitenka'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.” 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 good-bye for some seven or ten years. Well, go now to your Pater Seraphicus;” 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-