

[Download] The Idiot

## The Idiot

*Fyodor Dostoevsky*

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**Fyodor Dostoevsky : The Idiot** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Idiot:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. UnexpectedBy VA DuckYou should like a literary masterpiece more than 3-stars: apologies to Fyodor but this was not one of my favorites. The Brothers Karamazov and the Crime and Punishment set up my expectations for more - the swirl of mischief, or mystery, or even murder. And while murder does finally appear, Dostoyevsky, uses this novel to play with the relationships of a dozen (or more) personalities that span the full spectrum of 19th century Russian society. The protagonist, Prince Lef Nicolaievitch Myshkin is afflicted with epilepsy and the effects of that condition cause others to presume his idiocy. In fact he is no idiot at all but his naive simplicity (honesty) becomes an obstruction for many of the cast of characters. A special characteristic of his was the naive candour with which he always listened to arguments which interested him, and with which he answered any questions put to him on the subject at issue. In the very expression of his face this naivete was unmistakably evident, this disbelief in the insincerity of others, and unsuspecting disregard of irony or humour in their words. The Prince represents a purity, or goodness that counters the selfishness or deviousness of the other characters, and that interaction is what Dostoyevsky plays-out for the reader. Characters can move past quickly in this novel- then disappear for chapters - and reappear by last name, or first middle, or a diminutive name for which Russians seem to have a fondness. The swirl of personalities - some only very briefly described - can be confusing. And the Sophie's Choice (W. Styron-esque) conclusion seemed well artificial after all that proceeded. More interesting than the plot are the many philosophical observations of the characters. The Prince to Parfin Rogojin: The essence of religious feeling has nothing to do with reason, or atheism, or crime, or acts of any kind it has nothing to do with these things and never

had. There is something besides all this, something which the arguments of the atheists can never touch. But the principal thing, and the conclusion of my argument, is that this is most clearly seen in the heart of a Russian. or from Hippolyte to The Prince: "It is much simpler, and far more likely, to believe that my death is needed the death of an insignificant atom in order to fulfil the general harmony of the universe in order to make even some plus or minus in the sum of existence. Just as every day the death of numbers of beings is necessary because without their annihilation the rest cannot live on There was always a readiness to close the book by the end of a selected chapter and that - great literature or not - is a reason for the tepid 3-stars I offer for your consideration. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Read this to remember that humanity is really rather quite static By Joel D. Hirst I've always wondered why history chooses certain books for preservation, for posterity and others are discarded. It is said that a classic is a book that is still being read 100 years after its publication. For this reason, and if for no other reason, "The Idiot" deserves to be read. Like Gabo once said about Dostoevsky (or maybe it was Tolstoy?) "(...) reading it was an agony, sweating and struggling through each word (a paraphrase)". Borges once said "(...) if something doesn't come naturally, if you find yourself struggling through reading something, you shouldn't for it is not for you (also a paraphrase)". That is of course wrong - and Borges should posthumously thank God that nobody followed his advice or he too would be lost. Yet I digress. All that to say, this is a hard novel to read. If you are struggling, know you are in good company. The prose is thick, it is old Russian and translated - and I imagine it also loses something going from Russian to English. For those who know, they say that Russian is a beautifully poetic language - the language of artists and, yes, novelists. Much of that doesn't cross the language barrier. What fascinated me most was a glimpse first-hand into the life of pre-revolutionary Russia; when there were still nobles and lords, when the Tsar was hanging out in Petersburg and his subjects, those not plowing the potato fields, were engaged in mischief. It is full of quotes that are as relevant today, almost two hundred years later and a world away as they were then, showing that humanity changes much and also not at all: "I'll tell you one fact, ladies and gentlemen" he went on in the same tone, that is, with extraordinary enthusiasm and warmth and at the same time almost laughing, perhaps at his own words, "a fact, the observation and even the discovery of which I have the honor of ascribing to myself, and even to myself alone; at least it has not been spoken of or written about anywhere. This fact expresses the whole essence of Russian liberalism of the sort I am talking about. First of all, what is liberalism, generally speaking, if not an attack (whether reasonable or mistaken is another question) on the existing order of things? Isn't that so? Well, so my fact consists in this, that Russian liberalism is not an attack on the existing order of things, but is an attack on the very essence of our things, on the things themselves and not merely on their order, not on Russian order but on Russia itself. My liberal has reached the point where he denies Russia itself, that is, he hates and beats his own mother. Every unfortunate and unsuccessful Russian fact evokes laughter in him and all but delight. He hates Russian customs, Russian history, everything. If there's any vindication for him, it is perhaps only that he doesn't understand what he's doing and takes his hatred of Russia for the most fruitful liberalism..." "One can see people today even debating the same ideas, their merits and their dangers. The Idiot is mostly a novel about mischief. The Idiot, Prince Myshkin, is "entirely positive... with an absolutely beautiful nature" according to Joseph Frank. He loves two women, one perhaps a scoundrel and the other also naive and somehow star-crossed. Neither love works out - but, that is the nature of love. It could be a simple novel, but it is complex - coming as it does from the mind of a master. We read the old books to look back in the past, to remember that there were sophisticated people walking the planet long before we arrived to stumble across it glued to our iPhones; and to realize that while technology "progresses", humanity - our dreams, fears, concerns. Our morality. Is really rather quite static. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's Dostoevsky, but he certainly was NOT on steroids. By B. Penza I enjoy reading Dostoevsky. The Brothers Karamazov - Great stuff, , Crime Punishment - A bit long winded but enjoyable. Unfortunately, with The Idiot, I have to say after reading about half of it, I went over to spark notes for a finish (and realized that there wasn't really much more that would happen). The story is a great idea, the pure hero in an unpure world, but it just doesn't go anywhere. And the characters! Good luck trying to keep the names straight in this one. Generals and ladies and friends mish mosh into each other and I had trouble keeping them straight. And of course, the old trick with using 3 or 4 completely different names for the same character. I didn't mind it in the other classics, but in this one, sorry to say it didn't seem worth the effort. So, if you're into swashbuckling excitement with adventure around each and every page turn, by all means, you should NOT choose this one. Then again, you really can't give Dostoevsky a bad review, can you? Who am I? It's Dostoevsky, but in a much more sedated and eventless story.

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