BOOK V
PRO AND CONTRA

CHAPTER 3

The Brothers Make Friends

There was no, however, in a separate room, but only in a place shut off by a screen, so that it was unseen by other people in the room. It was the first room from the entrance, with a buffet along the wall. Waiters were continually dashing to and fro in it.

I asked for the waiter and ordered soup, jam, and tea.

"I remember everything, Abysha. I remember you till you were eleven; I was nearly fifteen. There's such a difference between fifteen and eleven that brothers are never companions at these ages. I don't know whether I was fond of you even. When I went away to Moscow, for the first few years I never thought of you at all. Then, when you came to Moscow yourself, we only met once somewhere, I believe. And now I've been here more than three months, and so far we have scarcely said a word to each other. Tomorrow I am going away, and I was just thinking as I sat here how I could see you to say good-bye, and now there you are!"

"Were you very anxious to see me then?"

"Very. I want to get to know you once and for all, and I want you to know me. And then to say good-bye. I believe it's always best to get to know people just before leaving them. I've noticed how you've been looking at me these three months. There has been a continual look of expectation in your eyes, and I can't endure that. That's why I've kept away from you. But to the end I have learned to respect you. The little man stands firm, I think. Though I am laughing, I am serious. You do stand firm, don't you? I like people who stand firm like that, whatever it is they stand by, even if they are such little fellows as you. Your expectant eyes ceased to annoy me; I grew fond of them in the end. Those expectant eyes. You seem to love me for some reason, Abysha!"
"I do love you, Ivan. Dmitriy says of you—Ivan is a tomb! I say of you, Ivan is a riddle. You are a riddle to me even now. But I understand something in you, and I did not understand it till this morning."

"What's that?" laughed Ivan.

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

"Well?"

"That you are just as young as other young men of twenty-three, that you are just a young and fresh and nice boy, grown in fact! Now, have I insulted you dreadfully?"

"On the contrary I am struck by a coincidence," cried Ivan, warmly and glad-humouredly. "Would you believe it that ever since this morning, I have thought of nothing else but my youthful greenness, and just as though you guessed that, you begin about it. Do you know, I've been sitting here thinking to myself that if I didn't believe in life, if I lost faith in the woman I love, lost faith in the order of things, were convinced in fact that everything is a disorderly, damnable, and perhaps devil-ridden chaos, if we were struck by every horror of man's disillusionment—still I should want to live and, having once tasted of the cup, I would not turn away from it till I had drained it! At thirty, though, I shall be sure to lose the cup, even if I've not emptied it, and turn away—where I don't know. But until I am thirty, I know that my youth will triumph over everything—everything disillusionment, every disgust with life. I've asked myself many times whether there is not in the world any despair that would overcome this frantic and perhaps unseemly thirst for life in me, and I've come to the conclusion that there isn't that, it is, until I am thirty, and then I shall lose it of myself, I fancy. Some dwindling consumptive mortalities—and poets especially—often call that thirst for life base. It's a feature of the Karamazovs, it's true, that thirst for life regardless of everything: you have it no doubt too, but why is it base? The centrifugal force on our planet is still fearfully strong, Alyosha. I have a longing for life, and I go on living in spite of logic. Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring. I love the blue sky. I love some people, whom one loves, you know, sometimes without knowing why. I have some great deeds done by men, though I've long ceased perhaps to have faith in them, yet from old habit one's heart prizes them. . . . I want to travel in Europe, Alyosha; I shall set off from here. I know that I am only going to a graveyard, but it's a most precious graveyard, that's what it is! Precious are the dead that lie there; every stone over them speaks of such burning life in the past, of such passionate faith in their work, their truth, their struggle, and their science, that I know I shall fall on the ground and kiss those stones and weep over them, though I'm convinced in my heart that it's long been nothing but a graveyard. And I shall not weep from despair, but simply because I shall be happy in my tears. I shall steep my soul in my emotion. I love the sticky leaves in spring, the blue sky—that's all it is. It's not a matter of intellect or logic; it's loving with one's inside, with one's stomach. One loves the first strength of one's youth. Do you understand anything of my talk, Alyosha?" Ivan laughed suddenly.

"I understand too well, Ivan. One longs to love with one's inside, with one's stomach. You said that so well, and I am awfully glad that you have such a longing for life," cried Alyosha. "I think everyone should love life above everything in the world."

"Love life more than the meaning of it?"

"Certainly, love it regardless of logic as you say; it must be regardless of logic, and it's only then one will understand the meaning of it. I have thought so a long time. Half your work is done, Ivan. You love life; now you've only to try to do the second half and you are saved."

"You are trying to save me, but perhaps I am not lost! And what does your second half mean?"

"Why, one has to raise up your dead, who perhaps have not died after all . . . ."

"It's different for other people, but we in our green youth have to settle the eternal questions first of all," [said Ivan]. "That's what we care about. Young Russia is talking about nothing but the eternal questions now. Just when the old folks are all taken up with practical questions. Why have you been looking at me in expectation for the last three months? To ask me, 'What do you believe, or don't you believe at all?' That's what your eyes have been saying these last three months, haven't they?"

"Perhaps so," smiled Alyosha. "You are not laughing at me now, are you, Ivan?"

"Me laughing! I don't want to wound my little brother, who has been watching me with such expectation for three months. Alyosha, look straight at me! Of course, I am just such a little boy as you are, only not a novice. And what have Russian boys been doing up till now,
some of them, I mean? In this stinking tavern, for instance, they meet and sit down in a corner. They've never met in their lives before and, when they go out of the tavern, they won't meet again for forty years. And what do they talk about in that momentary halt in the tavern? Of the eternal questions, of the existence of God, and immortality. And those who do not believe in God talk of socialism or anarchism, of the transformation of all humanity on a new pattern, so that it all comes to the same; they're the same questions turned inside out. And masses, masses of the most original Russian boys do nothing but talk of the eternal questions, isn’t it so?"

"Yes, for real Russians, the questions of God’s existence and of immortality, or, as you say, the same questions turned inside out, come first and foremost. Of course, and so they should," said Alyosha, still watching his brother with the same genial and inquiring smile."

"Well, Alyosha, it’s sometimes very unwise to be a Russian at all, but anything stupider than the way Russian boys spend their time one can hardly imagine. But there's one Russian boy called Alyosha I am awfully fond of."

"How nicely you put that in!" Alyosha laughed suddenly.

"Tell me where to begin, give your orders. The existence of God, chief."

"Begin where you like. You declared yesterday at father's that there is no God." Alyosha looked searchingly at his brother.

"I said that yesterday at dinner on purpose to tease you, and I saw your eyes glow. But now I've no objection to discussing it with you, and I say so very seriously. I want to be friends with you, Alyosha, for I have no friends and want to try it. Well, only fancy, perhaps I too accept God," laughed Ivan, "that's a surprise for you, isn't it?"

"Yes, of course, if you are not joking now."

"Joking? I was told at the elder's yesterday that I was joking. You know, dear boy, there was an old sermon in the eighteenth century who declared that, if there were no God, he would have to be invented. S'il n'existait pas Dieu, il faudrait l'inventer. And man has actually invented God. And what's strange, what would be marvellous, is not that God should really exist; the marvellous is that such an idea, the idea of the necessity of God, could enter the head of such a savage, vicious beast as man. So holy it is, so touching, so wise, and so great a credulity does it to man. As for me, I've long resolved not to think about whether man created God or God man. And I won't go through all the axioms laid down by Russian boys on that subject, all derived from European hypotheses; for what's a hypothesis, there is an axiom with the Russian boy, and not only with the boys but with their teachers, too, for our Russian professors are often just the same boys themselves. And so I eschew all the hypotheses. For what are we aiming at now? I am trying to explain as quickly as possible my essential nature, that is, what manner of man I am, what I believe in, and what I hope for; that's it, isn't it? And therefore I tell you that I accept God simply. But you must note this: if God exists and if He really did create the world, then, as we all know, He created it according to the geometry of Euclid and the human mind with the conception of only three dimensions in space. Yet there have been and still are geometers and philosophers, and even some of the most distinguished, who doubt whether the whole universe, or to speak more widely the whole of being, was only created by Euclid's geometry; they even dare to dream that two parallel lines, which according to Euclid can never meet on earth, may meet somewhere in infinity. I have come to the conclusion that, since I can't understand even that, I can't expect to understand about God. I acknowledge humbly that I have no faculty for settling such questions; I have a Euclidian earthly mind, and how could I solve problems that are not of this world? And I advise you never to think about it either, my dear Alyosha, especially about God, whether He exists or not. All such questions are utterly inappropriate for a mind created with an idea of only three dimensions. And so I accept God and am glad to, and what's more I accept His wisdom, His purpose—which are utterly beyond our ken; I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life; I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended. I believe in the Word to Which the universe is striving, and Which itself was "with God," and Which itself in God, and so on, and so on, to infinity. There are all sorts of phrases for it. I seem to be on the right path, don't I? Yet, would you believe it, to the final result I don't accept this world of God's, and, although I know it exists, I don't accept it at all. It's not that I don't accept God, you must understand; it's the world created by Him I don't and cannot accept. Let me make it plain. I believe like a child that suffering will be healed and made up for, that all the humiliating absurdity of human contradictions will vanish like a sinful mirage, like the desirable fabrication of the impossible and infinitely small Euclidian mind of man; that in the world's finale, as the moments of eternal harmony,
something so precious will come to pass that it will suffice for all hearts, for the comforting of all resentments, for the atoning of all the crimes of humanity, of all the blood they've shed; that it will make it not only possible to forgive but to justify all that has happened with men—but though all that may come to pass, I don't accept it. I won't accept it. Even if parallel lines do meet and I see it myself, I shall see it and say that they've met, but still I won't accept it. That's what's at the root of me, Alyosha, that's my creed. I am in earnest in what I say. I began our talk as stupidly as I could on purpose, but I've led up to my confession, for that's all you want. You didn't want to hear about God, but only to know what the brother you love lives by. And so I've told you."

Ivan concluded his long tirade with marked and unexpected feeling.

"And why did you begin 'as stupidly as you could'?" asked Alyosha, looking thoughtfully at him.

"To begin with, for the sake of being Russian. Russian conversations on such subjects are always carried on incomprehensibly. And, secondly, the stupid one is, the cleverer one is to reality. The stupid one is, the clever one is to reality. Stupidity is brief and artless, while intelligence wiggles and hides itself. Intelligence is a knife, but stupidity is honest and straightforward. I've led the conversation to my despot, and the more stupidity I have presented it, the better for me."

"You will explain why you don't accept the world?" said Alyosha.

"To be sure I will. It's not a secret; that's what I've been leading up to. Dear little brother, I don't want to corrupt you or to turn you from your stronghold; perhaps I want to be healed by you..." Ivan smiled suddenly quite like a little gentle child. Alyosha had never seen such a smile on his face before.

BOOK V
CHAPTER 4
Rebellion

"I must make you one confession," Ivan began. "I could never understand how one can love one's neighbors. It's just one's neighbors, to my mind, that one can't love, though one might love those at a distance. I once read somewhere of John the Merciful, a saint, that when a hungry, frozen beggar came to him, he took him into his bed, held him in his arms, and began breathing into his mouth, which was purifying and soothing from some awful disease. I am convinced that he did that from 'self-laceration,' from the self-laceration of fate, for the sake of the charity imposed by duty, as a penance laid on him. For anyone to love a man, he must be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face, love is gone."

"Father Zosima has talked of that more than once," observed Alyosha. "He, too, said that the face of a man often hinders many people not practiced in love, from loving him. But still there's a great deal of love in mankind, an almost Christlike love. I know that myself, Ivan."

"Well, I know nothing of it so far; and can't understand it, and the incommensurable mass of mankind are with me there. The question is whether that's due to men's bad qualities, or whether it's inherent in their nature. To my thinking, Christlike love for one's is a miracle, impossible on earth. He was God. But we are not gods. Suppose I, for instance, suffer intensely. Another can never know how much I suffer, because he is another and not I. And what's more, a man is rarely ready to admit another's suffering (as though it were a distinction). Why won't he admit it, do you think? Because I am unpleasant, because I have a stupid face; because I once trod on his foot. Besides, there is suffering and suffering. Degrading, humiliating suffering, such as humble me—hunger, for instance—my benefactor will perhaps allow me; but when you come to higher suffering—for an idea, for instance—he will very rarely admit that, perhaps because my face
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"You speak with a strange air," observed Alyosha unevenly, "as though you were not quite yourself."

"By the way, a Bulgarian I met lately in Moscow," I went on, seeming not to hear his brother's words, "told me about the crimes committed by Turks and Circassians in all parts of Bulgaria through fear of a general rising of the Slavs. They burn villages, murder, outrage women and children; they nail their prisoners to the ears of the fence, leave them till morning, and in the morning they hang them—all sorts of things you can't imagine. People talk sometimes of beastly cruelty, but that's a great injustice and insult to the beasts; a heart can never be so cruel as a man, so artistically cruel. The tiger only tears and gnaws, that's all he can do. He would never think of maiming people by the ears, even if he were able to do it. These Turks took a pleasure in torturing children, too; cutting the unborn child from the mother's womb and tossing babies up in the air, and catching them on the pinion of their hystaspes before their mother's eyes. Doing it before the mother's eyes was what gave zest to the amusement. Here is another scene that I thought very interesting. Imagine a trembling mother with her baby in her arms, a circle of invading Turks around her. They're pleased a diversion; they pet the baby, laugh to make it laugh. They succeed; the baby laughs. At that moment, a Turk points a pistol four inches from the baby's face. The baby laughs with glee, holds out its little hands to the pistol, and he pulls the trigger in the baby's face and blows out its brains. Artistic, wasn't it? By the way, Turks are particularly fond of swats things; they say,"

"Brother, what are you doing there?" asked Alyosha.

"I think if the devil doesn't exist, but man has created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness."

"Just as he did God, then?" observed Alyosha.

"It's wonderful how you can turn words, as Peter says in Hamlet," laughed Ivan, "You turn my words against me. Well, I am glad. Your Excellency must be a fine God, if man created him in His image and likeness. You asked just now what I was driving at. You see, I am fond of collecting certain facts, and, would you believe it, I even copy anecdotes of a certain sort from newspapers and books, and I've already got a fine collection. The Turks, of course, have gone into it; but they are foreigners. I have specimens from home that are even better than the Turks. You know we prefer beating—rods and scourges—that's our national institution. Maiming ears is unspeakable for us, for
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we are, after all, Europeans. But the rod and the scourge we have always with us, and they cannot be taken from us. Although they perhaps do not bear so severely as the rods they were originally invented for, yet they are a constant reminder of the power of the state.

now even I have found grace. I am dying in the Lord. 'Yes, Richard, die in the Lord; you have shed blood and must die. Though it is not in your hands to bring it about, yet you have shed blood and you must die.' And Richard, with a calmness that must have been tinged with an undercurrent of bitterness, said, 'I am ready to die.'

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progressively at every blow they inflict. They beat for a minute, for five minutes, for ten minutes, more often and more savagely. The child screams. At last the child cannot scream; it gasps, 'Daddy! daddy!' By some diabolical, unisoned case the case was brought into court. A counsel is engaged. The Russian people have long called a barrister 'a conscience for hire.' The counsel protests in his client's defence. 'It's such a simple thing,' he says, 'an everyday domestic event. A father corrects his child. To one shame be it said, it is brought into court!' The jury, convinced by him, gives a favorable verdict. The public roars with delight that the torturer is acquitted. Ah, pity I wasn't there! I would have proposed to raise a subscription in his honor!... Charming pictures.

'Yes, I've still better things about children. I've collected a great, great deal about Russian children, Alyosha. There was a little girl of five who was hated by her father and mother, 'most worthy and respectable people, of good education and breeding.' You see, I must repeat again, it is a peculiar characteristic of many people, this love of torturing children, and children only. To all other types of humanity these torturers behave mildly and benevolently, like cultivated and humane Europeans; but they are very fond of tormenting children, even fond of children themselves in that sense. It's just their defencelessness that tempts the tormentor, just the angelic confidence of the child who has no refuge and no appeal, that sets his vile blood on fire. In every man, of course, a demon lies hidden—the demon of rage, the demon of lustful heat at the screams of the tortured victim, the demon of lawlessness let off the chain, the demon of diseases that follow on voc, gout, kidney disease, and so on.

'This poor child of five was subjected to every possible torture by those cultivated parents. They beat her, threw her, kicked her for no reason till her body was one bruise. Then, they went to greater refinements of cruelty: they kept all night in the cold and frost in a privy, and because she didn't ask to be taken up at night (as though a child of five sleeping its angelic, sound sleep could be trained to wake and ask), they smeared her face and filled her mouth with excrement, and it was her mother, her mother who did this. And that mother could sleep, hearing the poor child's groans! Can you understand why a little creature, who can't even understand what's done to her, should bear her little aching heart with her tiny feet in the dark and the cold, and weep her meek unresentful tears to dear, kind God to protect her? Do you understand that, friend and brother, you pious and humble
to see it, and if I am dead by then, let me rise again, for if it all happens without me, I will be too unfair. Surely I haven't suffered, simply that I, try crimes and my sufferings, may observe the soul of the future harmony for somebody else. I want to see with my own eyes the blood lie down with the lion and the victor rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for. All the religions of the world are built on this longing, and I am a believer. But then there are the children, and what am I to do about them? That's a question I can't answer. For the hundreds times I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I've only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is so unanswerably clear. I want if all must suffer to pay for the eternal however, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It's beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why they should pay for the harmony! Why should they too, furnish an occasion to enrich the soil for the history of the future? I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in contributions, too, but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for all their fathers' crimes, such a truth is out of this world and is beyond my comprehension. Some jester will say, perhaps, that the child would have grown up and have sinned, but you see he didn't grow up, he was thrown to pieces by the dogs, at eight years old. Oh, Aloysha, I am not blasphemying! I understand, of course, what an upheaval of the universe it will be, when everything in heaven and earth blends in one hymn of praise and everything that lives and has lived cries aloud: "This art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed." When the monster embraces the friend who threw her child to the dogs, and all three cry aloud with tears. These are just, O Lord! Then, of course, the crown of knowledge will be reached and all will be made clear. But what pulls me up here is that I can't accept that harmony. And while I am on earth, I must hate to take my own measure. You see, Aloysha, perhaps it really may happen that if I live and understand, all I know is that there is suffering and that there are none guilty, that effect follows cause, simply and directly; that everything flows and finds its level—but that only EUROPEANS nonsense, I know that, and I can't consent to live by it! What comfort is it to me that there are none guilty and that effect follows cause simply and directly, and that I know I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself. I have believed in it. I want
around for, or these can be no harmony. But how? How are you going to avenge them? Is it possible? By their being avenged? But what do you care for avenging them? What do I care for a hell for opprobrius? What good can hell do, since those children have already been tortured? And what becomes of harmony, if there is hell? I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don't want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dog! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the insufferable suffering of her mother's heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive; she dare not forgive the torturer, even if the child were to forgive him! And if that is so, if they dare not forgive, what becomes of harmony? Is there in the whole world a being who would have the right to forgive and could forgive? I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it. It would rather be left with the unavenged suffering. I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unavished indignation, even if I were wrong. Besides, too high a price is asked for harmony: 'it's beyond our means to pay so much to enter on it. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and it is an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. And that I am doing. It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket."

"That's rebellion," murmured Alyosha, looking down.

"Rebellion! I am sorry you call it that," said Ivan earnestly. "One can hardly live in rebellion, and I want to live. Tell me yourself, I challenge you—answer. Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end, giving them peace and rest at last, but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature—that baby beating its breast with its fist, for instance—and to find that edifice on its unavenged tears, would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell the truth."

"No, I wouldn't consent," said Alyosha softly.

"And can you admit the idea that men for whom you are building it would agree to accept their happiness on the foundation of the unavenged blood of a little victim? And accepting it would remain happy for ever?"

"No, I can't admit it. Brother," said Alyosha suddenly, with flashing