

The Idiot

[music: *Swan Lake* by *Tchaikovsky*]

Hello and welcome to the *nomadamin* English podcast. I'm Amin Bahmani Yeganeh, an English teacher and the founder of *nomadamin*. Every episode, a fascinating subject is chosen to help you improve your English, and gain new perspectives on the world. I, the storyteller, will be using intermediate English with a **pinch of** higher-level language for you to learn. If you miss something, you can always skip back and listen again. Full transcripts are also offered at <http://nomadamin.com/podcast>.

[Introduction]

Today, we're taking a look at the **renowned** novel, *The Idiot*, by *Fyodor Dostoevsky*.

[Author]

Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian novelist, is regarded as one of the greatest writers in history. He's been one of the most popular and influential authors, and not just among readers, but also among other great authors such as *Camus*, *Kafka*, and *Hemingway*, **to name a few**. Born in 1821, his works explore the complexities of Russian society, and through this, the human psychology. Also, his writing style is known for its **vivid** character portrayals, which is perhaps one of the reasons why his novels are pretty long.

[Plot]

But what is the story of *The Idiot*? Don't worry. I'm not **gonna** spoil it for you. [I] promise. The novel, which was published in 1869 **by the way**, tells the story of *Prince Myshkin*, a kind and simple man who returns to Russia after spending several years in a Swiss **sanatorium**. The novel explores the clash between *Myshkin's* **innocence** and the **corrupt** society he encounters. In fact, *Dostoevsky* highlights themes of **morality**, love, and human relationships through the interactions between *Prince Myshkin*, the idiot, and a group of characters, each **representing** different qualities of Russian society.

[Concepts]

The main concept explored in *The Idiot* is the question of what it means to be a truly good person in a morally **complex** world. *Prince Myshkin* symbolizes a *Christ-like* **figure**, whose innocence and kindness sharply contrasts with the **immoral** society around him.

[music: *Scheherazade* by *Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov*]

Through this character, *Dostoevsky* raises questions about the nature of innocence, the corrupting influence of society, and the possibility of true goodness in a dark world.

[Quotes]

Here are a couple of **thought-provoking** quotes from the novel, giving you a taste of this book:

- *"Beauty will save the world, but who will save beauty?"* This line, spoken by *Prince Myshkin*, reflects his belief in the saving power of beauty and love, even in the darkness and **despair**.

Here's another one:

- *"I am a fool with a heart but no brains, and you are a fool with brains but no heart; and we're both unhappy, and we both suffer."*

And as the last one, I'm sharing one of my favorites with you, which is about the death penalty:

- *"I believe that to **execute** a man for murder is to punish him **immeasurably more dreadfully** than is equivalent to his crime. A murder by **sentence** is **far more dreadful** than a murder committed by a criminal."*

[Reviews]

The Idiot received mixed reviews when it was released in 1869, with some **critics praising** its psychological and social aspects, while others **found fault** with its complex structure. However, over time, the novel has been regarded as one of *Dostoevsky's masterpieces*, **admired** for its exploration of moral **dilemmas** and its portrayal of characters. Let's take the review from *The Guardian* as an example: *"a **mesmerizing** novel that challenges the reader's understanding of good and evil, leaving a **lasting** impact long after the final page."*

[Other Books]

Well, I guess *Dostoevsky's* works are so famous that you wouldn't need me to recommend any of **em**. However, if you enjoyed reading *The Idiot*, I'd recommend exploring more of his books. Some of his other **notable** novels include *Crime and Punishment*, a **tale of guilt and redemption**, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, exploring belief, morality, and the human soul. Both books offer **profound** insights into the human condition and are attractive to most readers.

[Closing]

Alright, **that's it** for this episode. [I] hope you enjoyed my introduction to this great novel.

The *nomadamin* podcast is and will be free to make enjoyable education accessible to everyone. So, if you enjoy listening to this podcast, please make a donation using the button on the player or the link in the description to support the channel and play your part.

Remember to pick up a copy of *The Idiot* for a truly **immersive** reading experience. Until next time, happy reading!



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Words List

a pinch of: a small amount of something

renowned: famous

to name a few: to give only these examples, although more could be mentioned

vivid: clear

gonna: going to

by the way: incidentally

sanatorium: a hospital for the treatment of mental disorders

innocence: the quality of not being guilty

corrupt: dishonest, immoral

morality: ethics, the quality of being right, honest, or acceptable

to represent: to be a symbol of that idea or quality

complex: complicated

figure: a person

immoral: morally wrong, unethical

thought-provoking: making you think a lot about a subject

despair: hopelessness, a feeling of being without hope

to execute: to kill someone as a legal punishment

immeasurably: extremely

dreadfully: awfully

sentence: a punishment that a judge gives to someone

far more: much more, a lot more

critic: a person who judges artistic works

to praise: to hail, to acclaim, to admire

to find fault: to criticize someone or something

masterpiece: a work of great artistry

to admire: to praise, to acclaim, to hail

dilemma: a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made

mesmerizing: very attractive, making you want to keep looking

lasting: continuing to exist for a long time

of'em: of them

notable: worthy of attention, remarkable

tale: story

guilt: the fact of having done something wrong

redemption: the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil

profound: deep, heartfelt

that's it: used when something has ended

immersive: involving, making you feel you are really taking part in the events