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Insulted and the Injured

F.M. Dostoevsky

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F.M. Dostoevsky : Insulted and the Injured before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Insulted and the Injured:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Helli Mericaexcellent0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Overlooked ClassicBy chrisamWritten in the same period as the justly more famous Crime and Punishment, this is the precursor of the 4 "great novels. " For the uninitiated , these are generally considered to be CP, The Idiot, The Adolescent, and The Brothers Karamazov. However, according to educated Russians of my acquaintance, this book is regarded as both the 1st and the 5th of the "great novels" of the greatest novelist ever. I agree , but suggest reading the better-known novels first. It takes time to recognize genius sometimes.14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. A moving tale of suffering and forgivenessBy A CustomerIt's really a shame that The Insulted and Injured is as hard to find as it is; though it's not on as grand a scale as most of Dostoevsky's better known novels, it may be as touching as anything he wrote. Narrated by a young author, Vanya, who has just released his first novel (which bears an obvious resemblance to Dostoevsky's own first novel, Poor Folk, making me wonder how much of the story might be autobiographical), it consists of two gradually converging subplots. One deals with Vanya's close friend and former love object, Natasha, who has left her family to live with her new lover, Alyosha. Alyosha is the saintly but dimwitted son of Prince Valkovsky, who hopes to gain financially by marrying Alyosha off to an heiress, Katya. Valkovsky's cruel machinations to break up Alyosha and Natasha make him one of the most memorable "predatory types" (a la Stavrogin in The Possessed) that Dostoevsky created. The other branch of the plot deals with the approximately 13-year old orphan Nellie, whom Vanya saves from an abusive household by taking her

into his apartment, and whose deceased mother's story in some ways parallels that of Natasha. It's unusual to see a well-developed character as young as Nellie in a Dostoevsky novel, but Nellie may be one of his most moving creations, and she in particular shows the influence of Dickens (whom Dostoevsky is known to have read during the Siberian exile near the end of which this novel was conceived). The Insulted and Injured could justly be criticized for melodrama, as the characters' behavior is a bit too extreme to be believed. There's not even a hint of jealousy anywhere in the love quadrilateral between Vanya, Natasha, Alyosha, and Katya, as none of them want anything other than the happiness of their beloved--whether that happiness is with someone else is utterly (and unrealistically) immaterial to them. Also, at the other end of the spectrum, Prince Valkovsky is rather implausibly evil, especially toward his own son, who though not exactly brilliant has done nothing to justify Valkovsky's cruelty. However, these extreme characters make the novel very emotionally involving and didn't really bother me while I was reading it, though of course your mileage may vary. One of the most important themes throughout Dostoevsky's work is the expiatory value of suffering, and *The Insulted and Injured*, with its tragically moving plot and characters, develops that theme splendidly. At this writing, unfortunately, lists it as unavailable; hopefully that will change soon. (Also, although at present the out-of-print search service isn't offered for this translation, it is available for a translation under the title "The Insulted and Humiliated," so you might try searching under that title.)