

The Forged Coupon

Part I

The forged coupon and its effects is passed along in the following manner:

From Fyodor Mihailovich Smokovnikov (father) to his son Mitya (at first worth 2.50 – two rubles and fifty copeks). ch. I

Mitya takes it to Makhin who “tempts” him with forging it to the value of 12.50. ch. II

Makhin and Mitya fool the shopkeeper’s wife, who cashes it for the boys. Ch. III

Her husband, Evgeny Mihailovich, discovers the forgery and is furious with his wife. She, in turn, resents his anger. ch. IV

At a tea party, Evgeny Mihailovich tells his wife that he passed off the forged coupon, and tells the company of the story. Ch. V

Evgeny Mihailovich convinces the peasant Ivan Mironov to take the coupon. Ivan Mironov is arrested in the tavern where the barman recognized the coupon to be forged. ch. VI

Mironov bribes his way out of jail after failing to convince the police that it was Evgeny Mihailovich who gave him the forged coupon. Evgeny Mihailovich, in turn, has his porter lie for him after offering him five roubles to do so. ch. VII

Vassily the porter becomes more and more corrupt, adopting “city ways” and abandoning the morality of the village. He becomes a thief and must return to his village. ch. VIII

Horses are stolen from the stable of Pyotr Nikolaich Sventitsky, an honest man who dealt fairly with his workers. His mood seems to change after these thefts. ch. IX

Ivan Mironov, bitter over his mistreatment, becomes a horse thief. ch. X

Proshka is suspected of stealing the horses. Though innocent, he goes to jail for stealing some oats from Pyotr Nikolaich Sventitsky. Deeply depressed and embittered by this, he takes to drink and stealing, and is sent to prison for a longer sentence. ch. XI

Mitya Smokovnikov’s mother finds out about the forged coupon from Maria Vassilievna (the photographer’s wife), and though she pays back Maria Vassilievna, she urges Mitya to tell no one including his father. Fr. Mikhaill Vvedensky, a rather hypocritical priest gets involved. He eventually is tonsured the monk Misail. ch. XII

Vassily the yard porter from ch. VII & VII, becomes a thief again after serving as a watchman. ch. XIII

Ivan Mironov is brutally murdered by Stepan Pelageyushkin and the village peasants after stealing their horses. ch. XIV

Stepan, freed from prison, murders an innkeeper and his wife with an axe, and then steals their money. ch. XV

Introduction of Maria Semyonovna. She reads the Sermon on the Mount to a lame tailor. ch. XVI

A hardened Pyotr Nikolaich is killed by the peasants in a dispute over cattle. Ch. XVII

The lame tailor begins to preach the Gospel to some other peasants. Ivan Chuyev takes this teaching to heart and begins to change his life. Ch. XVIII

The local bishop, caricatured by Tolstoy, gives Misail (not a true believer himself) the task of teaching the peasants so as to return them to the Church. Ch. XIX

A fight between the Orthodox of the village and the sectarians. Chuyev, now a sectarian, charged with seduction and blasphemy and is sentenced to exile for knocking out the eye of a man with an iron poker. Ch. XX

Introduction of Miss Turchaninova, a revolutionary activist. Ch. XXI

Miss Turchaninova attempts to assassinate a local minister. She is arrested and placed in detention. Ch. XXII

Stepan brutally murders Marya Semyonovna and her family. Marya Semyonovna meekly accepts her death. Ch. XXIII

Part II

Stepan, troubled in his conscience, confesses to his many murders and is sent to prison. He becomes a model prisoner. Ch. I

Stepan attempts suicide, and has a dream of Marya Semyonovna that brings him some comfort. Ch. II

Stepan hears the Gospel – MATT. 25:31-46; LK. 23:32-43 - in prison from Chuyev and Vassily. Begins to believe in Christ. Ch. III

Stepan Pelageyushkin learns to read in solitary confinement from the Gospels, beginning with the Lord's Prayer. Ch. IV

Makhorkin, the "murderer-hangman," refuses to perform another state-sanctioned execution. Ch. V

Makhin returns now as an examining magistrate. He hears Stepan before him and is troubled by his honesty and inner freedom. Ch. VI

The hangman, Makhorkin, under the influence of Stepan, refuses to carry out his duties any longer. Makhin is further impressed with Stepan. Ch. VI

Lisa Eropkin, a potential bride of Makhin's, is deeply impressed by the character of Marya Semyonovna, and decides to give away her possessions. Makhin surprisingly supports Lisa. Ch. VII

Vassily plans to break from prison with Stepan's assistance. Ch. VIII

Vassily's escape described. Ch. IX

Introduction to Natalya Ivanovna, the widow of Pyotr Nicolaich, who is secretly glad to be rid of her tyrannical husband. Nevertheless, she is glad when his murderers are sentenced to be hanged. However, she avoids the gallows by staying in. She thinks of herself and the not the condemned and their families. Ch. X

The hangman was to hang the murderers of Pyotr Nikolaich Sventitsky. His refusal to do so had a deep impact on Natalya Ivanovna, Sventitsky's widow, who now petitions the czar to commute the death sentence. Ch. XI

Lisa Eropkin, detecting the "divine" in the soul of Makhin, wants to convert him to his true self. She visits an elder who is impressed by her love of Christ – seeing his own weakness in the process - and is transformed himself into a powerful preacher. Ch. XII

Vassily "robs the rich to give to the poor" and is eventually caught and exiled, after cheerfully defending himself. He tells everyone that he will escape. Ch. XIII

The elder preaches a fiery sermon before the czar that attacks the abuses of the government. He is exiled to a distant monastery in Suzdal and placed under the observation of Fr. Misail. Ch. XIV

The tsar has a dream in which his conscience is troubled, but his duties as tsar outweigh his humane impulses to change things in Russia. Ch. XV

Prokopy meets Stepan in prison and is drawn to him. When death comes he is not afraid of it, though he stated that death means annihilation. Ch. XVI

Vassily helps Evgeny Mihailovich, the earlier shop owner who lied about the forged coupon, with four hundred roubles and admonishes him for doing him great harm before over the case of the forged coupon. This deeply moves Evgeny Mihailovich. Ch. XVII

The elder Isidore confronts Fr. Misail with his hardheartedness. Fr. Misail has the elder released, together with other supposedly heretical priests, and resigns his position. Ch. XVIII

Mitya Smokovnikov – the original teen-ager who allowed Makhin to forge his coupon - meets Stepan in Siberia and has a change of heart that leads him toward a more moral and ethical life helping the peasants. Ch. XIX

Mitya's father is surprised over this change, but realizes his own guilt from the past. Ch. XX

