



The Gambler and The House of the Dead (Wordsworth Classics)

Dostoevsky, Fyodor

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Translated by Constance Garnett With an introduction by A. D. P. Briggs. The House of the Dead is a stark account of Dostoyevsky's own experience of penal servitude in Siberia. In graphic detail he describes the suffering of the convicts their squalor and degradation, their terror and resignation, from the rampages of a psychopath to the brief serenity of Christmas Day. Amid the horror of labour in the sub-zero work camp, we hear the stories of the prisoners, and live through the freezing isolation and pain of day after day of misery. We see a young intellectual forced to live, eat and sleep with men from a background of cruelty, coarseness and brutality. The Gambler is set in a spa town with its casino and international clientele. Alexey Ivanovitch is a young tutor in the household of a general. He is both observer and actor in the tempest which surrounds his impoverished employer, as he envies and mocks the airs and pretensions of his supposed superiors. Everyone is waiting for the death of Granny, the general's rich aunt, but so far from dying, she turns up alive and well, and makes her way to the casino . . .

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