

# **The Double Study Guide**

## **The Double by Fyodor Dostoevsky**

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# Plot Summary

The Double is a novella written by the Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky. It tells the tragic but comic tale of the polite and well-established titular councilor Yakov Petrovitch Golyadkin. His problems begin when his exact double enters his life and begins to take over. Golyadkin turns to his colleagues for help, but no matter whom he talks to, he increasingly feels surrounded by enemies.

The novel begins with Golyadkin waking at his usual hour of 8am. He counts his 750 rubles in his notebook before checking on his servant Petrushka. Petrushka is talking to some fellow lackeys and Golyadkin orders him back into the apartment to make breakfast. After breakfast, Golyadkin climbs in a waiting carriage and tells the driver to stop at his doctor's house.

The doctor tells Golyadkin he needs to get out and enjoy himself. At this point, Golyadkin begins to cry, rambling on about the number of enemies he has. The doctor listens with such patience that Golyadkin feels the need to apologize for his behavior before leaving the surgery. As he climbs back into his carriage, he sees the doctor watching him intently from a window.

Later on that evening Golyadkin goes to the birthday party of his benefactor's daughter Klara. He is refused entry, but manages to get into the house through the back door and hides himself in a cupboard. After much indecision, he comes out of the room and walks into the drawing room where he approaches Klara and his boss Andrey Filopovitch. Golyadkin's nervous and disconnected speech upsets both of them and eventually two servants arrive to escort him out of the door. Once outside Golyadkin runs off into the night.

Golyadkin does not stop running until he reaches a canal. Here he sees a man approaching him who, from his clothes to his physical appearance, is his exact double. Golyadkin calls to him, but when the man approaches, he decides he does not want to talk to him and continues running back towards his house. Inside his building, he sees his double enter his apartment. After a few moments, Golyadkin goes in himself and finds his double sitting on his bed.

At work Golyadkin's double comes into the office. Golyadkin cannot believe nobody notices their likeness and asks his colleague Anton Antonovitch if he sees any similarities. Antonovitch tells him there are similarities, but it is nothing to worry about and it happens all the time. After work, Golyadkin is walking back home when his double approaches him offering the hand of friendship. Golyadkin states a need to see him sink back into the earth, but his natural politeness forces him to invite his double back to his house.

Back in his apartment, Golyadkin and his double share a meal and a number of rums. With both men slightly drunk, their tongues loosen and they share intimate secrets. Golyadkin's double tells Golyadkin how he came to St. Petersburg and how only the



kindness of a Christian stopped him from falling into poverty. He writes Golyadkin a verse that touches him so much he invites his double to stay the night.

When Golyadkin wakes up his double has left the apartment. He asks Petrushka where he has gone and Petrushka says his master left an hour and a half ago on business. Golyadkin tells Petrushka he is his master and not his look-alike, but Petrushka just nods his head and leaves. On his way out of his apartment, Golyadkin meets his double and asks where he has been. His double states he is too busy to talk and leaves. At work, Andrey Filippovitch calls Golyadkin into his office. Golyadkin is just collecting his papers when his double walks into the office. He pretends to help Golyadkin before snatching the papers away and strolling into Andrey Filippovitch's office himself. After work, Golyadkin catches up with his double and tells he is playing a complicated game. His double ignores him and leaves in a cab.

Golyadkin has a series of nightmares. They begin with him enjoying great popularity until his double appears and takes away all the attention. When he wakes up, it is 2pm and he is hours late for work. When Goyladkin enters the office, he tries to get in to see his boss, but the young clerks surround him and block his path. A moment later, Golyadkin's double walks through the crowd, shaking everyone's hand before stopping to taunt Golyadkin. Humiliated, Golyadkin keeps to himself for the remainder of the day. When he sees his double leave for home, Golyadkin runs after him.

Golyadkin persuades his double to go to a nearby coffee shop and talk over their problem. His double's friendly and open attitude wins him over and soon Golyadkin is apologizing for his behavior. However, when his double goes to pay, he taunts Golyadkin by wiping the hand he had moments ago offered Golyadkin. Golyadkin leaps up from his chair and his double runs out of the shop. Golyadkin goes after him and manages to leap onto his double's carriage. The carriage stops outside Olsufy Ivanovitch's house and Golyadkin watches his double enter the house before he runs back home. Back in his apartment, he finds a letter from Klara telling him she wants him to meet her outside her house at 2am.

Golyadkin waits in Olsufy Ivanovitch's yard for a signal from Klara. The signal does not come and instead Golyadkin sees Ivanovitch's guests staring at him from a window. His double comes outside to tell Golyadkin to come into the house and Golyadkin reluctantly agrees. To his surprise, everyone is showing great kindness to him. They all lead him to Olsufy Ivanovitch and then to his doctor Krestyn Ivanovitch. Krestyn Ivanovitch takes him to a waiting carriage and they leave for a mental asylum.



# Chapter I

## Chapter I Summary

Yakov Petrovitch Golyadkin wakes up in his apartment in St. Petersburg not sure if he is still dreaming. At his dressing table, he admires himself in his looking glass, thinking everything is looking good, but at the same time wondering how he would react if he looked in the mirror and saw a face full of spots staring back at him. He counts all the money inside a notebook before putting it neatly back. Golyadkin searches for his manservant, annoyed that he doesn't find him right away, but the man soon arrives, puts on his livery, and goes to ready the carriage.

Golyadkin's good mood changes when he looks out of his carriage window and sees two clerks from his work place. He dives into the shadows, but it is too late and the youngsters shout out his name. A bit further down the road, Golyadkin sticks his head out of the carriage window again, only to come face to face with his boss Andrey Filippovitch. Mr. Filippovitch looks so shocked Mr. Golyadkin feels as if he has done something drastically wrong. He pulls the bell on his carriage and orders the driver to turn back and head towards his doctor's house. He rings his doctor's doorbell, but suddenly changes his mind, thinking he has nothing to say. It is too late, however, and he can hear footsteps coming towards the door.

## Chapter I Analysis

In this opening chapter, Dostoevsky foreshadows many of the major events. When Golyadkin first wakes up, he does not know whether he is still dreaming and this foreshadows his descent into a nightmarish world where he is constantly asking himself whether it is all a dream. When he gets out of bed, Golyadkin looks into a looking glass and wonders what would happen if some "intrusive pimple made an appearance" or if something bad happened. This foreshadows the appearance of his double who, in his mind, ruins his life. Golyadkin then makes sure his servant is out of the house before counting all his money. Firstly, this shows what a private person he is, a characteristic that leads to him isolating himself from others, and secondly introduces the recurring motif of Golyadkin constantly trying to prove he has money.

From this perspective it is interesting Dostoevsky initially presents Golyadkin as quite mean with his money—for example, in the following chapter he will not even give the shop keeper any money for a deposit. However, as the story continues he pays for everything even when he does not have to, suggesting a desperate ploy to win back his popularity. Finally Dostoevsky shows Golyadkin's nervous disposition when Golyadkin shows great embarrassment and even paranoia at seeing first the clerks from his work place and then secondly his boss.



# Chapter II

## Chapter II Summary

The doctor is not pleased to see Golyadkin, who is the last person he wants to see at this time in the morning. The doctor asks if Golyadkin followed through with his previous advice, which was to make more friends, go to clubs, drink alcohol and generally enjoy his life. Golyadkin says he has not done this because he does not like going out and in fact, he is proud that he lives a quiet life. Golyadkin bursts into tears and says he has enemies who want to destroy him. Finally Golyadkin finishes the description of his enemies, apologizes for keeping them and leaves the surgery.

## Chapter II Analysis

Golyadkin proves he is already ill when he visits the doctor. Firstly, he is restless and unable to decide whether to sit or stand and then secondly he goes into a tearful rant about his enemies. The doctor struggles to cope with Golyadkin's behavior—mental illness is not something 19th century society understands. In fact, it becomes apparent when the doctor asks Golyadkin if he has followed his previous advice that Golyadkin has been ill for a while.

The doctor's advice is to go out more, drinking and partying with friends, suggesting his patient's problems stem from isolating himself from society. However, the irony is the more Golyadkin tries to become a part of society, the more isolated he becomes and the more unpredictable his behavior. This suggests one of the contributing factors to his illness is the reaction of others. In this chapter, instead of helping his patient, the doctor humors him firstly with his advice and secondly when Golyadkin goes into his rant. As the story continues people become increasingly wary of Golyadkin's behavior, but communicate it either through ignoring him or laughing at him. Either way Golyadkin notices something is amiss. In this chapter, he sees the doctor staring at him through a window.



## Chapter III

### Chapter III Summary

Golyadkin arrives in Nevsky Prospect and immediately goes into the arcade to do his shopping. He exchanges all his large notes for smaller ones. He has to pay a commission, but is pleased the greater pile of notes makes his notebook look fatter. He tells a couple shopkeepers to hold something for him and he'll return with the deposit for the items. Golyadkin stops for lunch and is paying for his meal when he meets the same two clerks he saw earlier on the street. He does not want to talk to them, but at the same time he does not want to appear rude so he greets them with a smile. He asks whether the bear is still in the office and when they do not know what he is talking about, Golyadkin hits one playfully on the shoulder and says he is talking about their boss. The two youngsters tell Golyadkin he is still in the office and was asking after him. This sends Golyadkin into another one of his ramblings. Golyadkin stops to have dinner with friends, but the butler says he has strict orders not to let Golyadkin into the house. Andrey Filippovitch runs after him for a chat. He asks Golyadkin what is wrong and Golyadkin says that this is his private life and it has nothing to do with work. He orders his driver home, but changes his mind and ends up at another restaurant, where he paces in a private room.

### Chapter III Analysis

The story is set within a small area of St.Petersburg and Golyadkin continuously visits the same places, such as Ismailovsky Bridge and Nevsky Prospect. This symbolizes how much Golyadkin has isolated himself from the rest of the world and how little he seeks other people's company. In this chapter, he goes to a restaurant to eat on his own and meets two young clerks from his work. His first reaction is to ignore them, but not wanting to seem rude, he stops to talk. In fact, this is the irony of Golyadkin's situation. He wants to live his own quiet life, yet by restricting himself to such a small area everyone knows who he is and by the end knows the extent of his problems. Dostoevsky foreshadows this when firstly the butlers will not allow Golyadkin inside Olsufy Ivanovitch's house and then his boss Andrey Filippovitch rushes outside to ask if he is okay. Golyadkin's reply that this is his private life and has nothing to do with his boss, shows just how inseparable his private and work life is in such a small space.



# Chapter IV

## Chapter IV Summary

The narrator begins the chapter describing the birthday party of Klara Olsufyevna. It is one of those joyful occasions that even when problems occur, they add to the fun.

Golyadkin watches the party from behind the back stairs, who debates going inside and talking to Klara; however, by the time Golyadkin has made up his mind someone walks through the door. Cursing himself, he waits until they are gone and enters the room immediately. He is so focused on getting to Klara, he does not notice he treads on a lady's dress, bumps into a man, and almost causes a waiter to drop his tray.

Golyadkin offers Klara his congratulations. Unfortunately, he soon stumbles on his words, conscious the whole room is staring at him in silence. Filippovitch shakes his head in disbelief and leads Klara away. The butler tells Golyadkin someone important is here to see him. Golyadkin states there is probably no such person. He is entering into a harangue about how the chandelier could fall on people's head when the polka starts.

Golyadkin watches Klara as she leaves the dance to rest and decides he must go up to her. When he gets there he offers his hand, which she takes out of habit more than want. Golyadkin leads her onto the dance floor, but falls on his face, causing Klara to scream. People lift him up and push him out the front door. Golyadkin runs off into the night, stating his need to go anywhere.

## Chapter IV Analysis

In this chapter, Golyadkin goes to Klara's birthday party. Klara is a young woman who Golyadkin is obviously obsessed with and later on becomes a part of his imagined world. Interestingly Golyadkin never voices his love for her, but instead tries to justify his feelings to himself by either acting as if she is the one that wants him or pretending his intentions are completely genuine. For example, towards the end Golyadkin claims she writes him a letter asking him to save her from marrying a man she hates and he hides at the back of her house before walking up to her and offering his congratulations. The reader can guess something is happening or has happened between them by firstly, the way Andrey Filippovitch acts towards Golyadkin when he approaches and then secondly by the way the crowd pushes Golyadkin out of the house. In fact, it is likely Klara is the "impudent slut" Golyadkin referred to in the previous chapter, prompting the question of whether he had a relationship with her before his illness, and if they did have a relationship, how much the break up is responsible for his mental deterioration.





# Chapter V

## Chapter V Summary

Golyadkin runs away in fright from what he defines as his enemies, describing Andrey Filippovitch as having murderous eyes. He turns to see a man wearing clothes similar to himself. Golyadkin feels frightened, but notices the man also looks scared.

Golyadkin is wondering if he is going crazy when the man appears again. This time he stops under a street lamp and Golyadkin can clearly see his whole profile. The man looks familiar and Golyadkin says he knows his name and his father's name. Golyadkin is disturbed by his presence and would never want to talk to him. Finally, the man disappears again and Golyadkin runs home. He stops near his house to catch his breath and sees the man again. He is running in exactly the same direction. Golyadkin follows him until they reach Golyadkin's apartment where the man knocks on Golyadkin's door and Petrushka lets him in. Golyadkin also enters and goes to his bedroom. The man is sat on his bed smiling. From clothes to his physical appearance, he is Golyadkin's exact double.

## Chapter V Analysis

In this chapter, Golyadkin meets his double for the first time. After he runs from the party, he stops at a canal and stares into the black water. Usually someone can see their reflection, but here Golyadkin sees nothing, symbolizing the dark and nightmarish world, he is about to enter. It also serves to confuse the reader as to how much the Double is Golyadkin's own repressed desires. The usual metaphor would be for Golyadkin to see his doppelganger reflected in the water and instead Golyadkin actually sees his double run up to him. In proceeding chapters the reader finds out the double is actually a real person, which in many ways adds credence to Golyadkin's conspiracy theories. Are people really trying to get rid of him? If he is real, the fact that he gets back to Golyadkin's house first points places the blame on his servant Petrushka who must have let him in. However, at the same time, it is difficult to think of a motive behind his look-alike's actions and to justify the other character's reaction to his double suddenly appearing. From either point of view, Dostoevsky is suggesting a person is responsible for themselves and as soon as he or she becomes dependent on others, problems occur.



# Chapter VI

## Chapter VI Summary

Golyadkin wakes up thinking his enemies played a trick on him. Golyadkin can hear Petrushka next door and wonders why he is so late with his breakfast. He thinks he should probably call out to his servant, but feels strangely frightened. A while later, Petrushka comes into the room, but refuses to make eye contact, leaving Golyadkin in a state of paranoia.

Golyadkin thinks he should stay away from work, convincing himself he has a cold; however, he goes to work and avoids talking to anyone. His double arrives and bows to the boss. Golyadkin looks around and no one seems to notice the double. Anton Antonovitch has a conversation with Golyadkin about the double, who Antonovitch says he sees, but adds that having a double is not unusual and that his aunt saw her double on the day she died.

At the end of the day, Golyadkin feels a bit calmer and is happy to walk home when he realizes his double is walking next to him. His double says that ever since he saw him, he has felt drawn to Golyadkin. Golyadkin wants the man to sink into the earth, but his natural politeness forces him to invite him back to his apartment.

## Chapter VI Analysis

Dostoevsky writes from the point of view of Golyadkin and therefore the narrative is entirely unreliable. In this chapter, for example Golyadkin is upset that his servant refuses to make eye contact with him and puts it down to something he has done. Later on in the book, Dostoevsky suggests Petrushka is upset because his master has a double and no respectable man should have one, but again this is through Golyadkin's eyes and in the strange world he is creating around him. In reality Petrushka could have just had a bad night and he may be just reacting to his master's strange behavior.

If anything, this highlights Golyadkin's sensitive disposition and how negative thoughts can accumulate until they take over a person's mind and eventually come true. For example, as soon as Petrushka gives Golyadkin the cold shoulder, Golyadkin implicates him in his conspiracy theory, which is further encouraged by a letter telling him his servant is no good. However, the letter itself is open to debate because firstly his friend could be merely implying his servant is a drunk and secondly the letter may only exist in Golyadkin's mind. At the end of the book, Golyadkin receives a letter from Klara, but the letter strangely disappears, putting into doubt that he ever received it.



# Chapter VII

## Chapter VII Summary

Golyadkin walks into his house with his guest. He wonders what Petrushka will think, but Petrushka shows little surprise. Golyadkin's guest is exceptionally nervous and fumbles around. When Golyadkin drops his hat, his guest springs forward, picks it up and dusts it off.

The two men enjoy a good supper before retiring to the lounge. Here Golyadkin's visitor tells Golyadkin they share the same name as well as looks. For this reason he has come to appeal to his generosity and ask for protection. At this point Petrushka brings in some rum and over four hours Golyadkin's guest tells his life story. He came to St. Petersburg after inheriting money from his aunt. In St. Petersburg, finding no work, he lived in poverty, eating only a crust of bread a day. Fortunately, a Christian took him in and helped him get his life back on track. Golyadkin's double then asks for a pen and paper, writes a verse and hands it to Golyadkin. Taken aback with emotion, Golyadkin embraces his guest and tells him he understands him like a brother and will help wherever possible.

Golyadkin decides he can stay the night and calls in Petrushka to make up a bed. They have no spare bed so he has to put together chairs. This is the perfect arrangement for Golyadkin's double because he usually sleeps on bare wooden floors. Petrushka leaves the room and Golyadkin follows him to find out why he is acting so strangely. However, like earlier, Petrushka ignores his presence. He looks at the sleeping guest and wonders if the guest is making a fool of him (Golyadkin).

## Chapter VII Analysis

It is interesting that the worse Golyadkin becomes, the more isolated he becomes from society. Already he is isolated from his benefactor's house and on his way to becoming isolated from work. In this chapter, Dostoevsky lays the foundations for Golyadkin becoming isolated from his own home.

He invites his double back to his apartment and they share a meal and some rum. During this time, Golyadkin acts quite normally as if his problems stem from a fear of isolation and he actually appreciates the company. It is only when he begins to feel hated that his strange ideas surface, almost as if he is trying to shut out the reality of his situation. In this chapter, he seems exceptionally happy with his visitor until he goes to talk to Petrushka. Petrushka's rudeness upsets him and he goes back to his room. Here he stands over his sleeping Double with a candle and states his Double is nothing but a joker.



# Chapter VIII

## Chapter VIII Summary

Golyadkin wakes up feeling he played the fool the previous night. He looks over to where his double is sleeping, but he has disappeared. At this point Petrushka comes in with his tea tray and again avoids eye contact. Golyadkin asks where the visitor is and Petrushka tells him his master left an hour and a half ago to deal with some important business. Golyadkin insists that he is Petrushka's master.

On his way to work Golyadkin passes his visitor in the corridor. His visitor does not notice him and Golyadkin has to call out. His visitor starts to say he is far too busy to waste time talking in the corridor, but then notices it is Golyadkin and asks him he had a good sleep.

At the office, Antonovitch thinks Golyadkin is rude. Andrey Filippovitch calls him into his office. At the same time Golyadkin is collecting his papers, his double rushes through the door. The double grabs Golyadkin's documents and marches into Filippovitch's office. Golyadkin tries to run in after him, but Filippovitch says he does not have the time to listen to personal problems and it will have to wait.

When his double comes back into the main office Golyadkin stops him in his tracks. His double winks at a few of the clerks as if to say this should be funny and then squeezes Golyadkin's cheek, calls him darling and pokes him in the stomach. Golyadkin knows that his double has the favor of everyone in the room. After work, Golyadkin grabs his double and tells him he is playing a very complicated game.

## Chapter VIII Analysis

In this chapter, Golyadkin becomes isolated from his own home. Dostoevsky symbolizes this when firstly Petrushka denies Golyadkin is his master and secondly when he passes his double in the corridor and he acts as if Golyadkin does not live there. However, in reality Petrushka could just be confused by the fact, his master has someone who looks so much like him and his double could be acting so brash because he is in a hurry. In this respect, Golyadkin is creating his own world, giving people characteristics that fit into this world in order to justify his paranoid thoughts.

Unfortunately, the society Golyadkin lives in is ill-prepared to cope with such problems and do not know to react. This is particularly the case for Golyadkin's double. Golyadkin's double cannot understand why Golyadkin sees him as someone he most likely is not and reacts defensively, taunting Golyadkin in front of the clerks. Similarly, Anton Antonovitch can only justify Golyadkin's behavior by presuming he is being rude. Both examples have the effect of isolating Golyadkin so much, he no longer has anyone to turn to. In the end, it seems he feels he has no choice but to withdraw into his mind and shut out reality.



# IX

## IX Summary

Golyadkin almost decides to give up, but instead goes home and tells Petrushka he is going out to dinner at Filippovna's house. Filippovna's servant tells Golyadkin that Filippovna is out, so Golyadkin goes to a restaurant to eat himself. When Golyadkin is through eating, he goes to pay, but is told he owes for more than one pie. Golyadkin sees his double has tricked him, pays the bill, goes home and writes a letter to his double. He gives the letter to his servant to deliver.

Later that evening, Golyadkin asks his servant, Petruschka, if he delivered the letter to Golyadkin's double. Petruschka affirms that he did and that the double had nothing to say about it. Golyadkin finds a letter addressed to him. It is from his old friend and colleague Vahramyev who calls Golyadkin a disgrace and that he longer sees him as his friend. Golyadkin writes back denying all charges.

## IX Analysis

In this book, Dostoevsky presents Golyadkin as being a very indecisive person. At the end of the last chapter, he states he feels defeated and here, continuing from the scene in the previous chapter, he states he is unconquered. This points to the fact he has two separate personalities, one that is exceptionally polite and likes nothing more than shrinking into the background and another that demands attention. In this respect, he is directing his more extroverted self onto the person he thinks is his double.

In this chapter, he visits a restaurant and initially mistakes his double for a looking glass. This indicates that firstly his double is a reflection of his desires and secondly that at times he is imagining his presence and in order to defend his less honorable side. For example when the waiter accuses him of wanting to pay for one pie when he ate 11, Golyadkin immediately sees his double laughing at him, allowing him presume that it was his double who ate all the food. That he does not approach his double highlights the idea that it could be a hallucination.



# Chapter X

## Chapter X Summary

Golyadkin suffers a bad night and has a series of nightmares. In all of them, there are his doubles, often taking the attention away from Golyadkin. Golyadkin eventually wakes at 2 pm. He has no idea how he could have slept for so long and wonders why his servant did not wake him. Golyadkin writes a quick letter to his double saying he wants him to stop what he is doing and then heads off to the office.

Golyadkin sees a clerk from the office and interrogates him but learns nothing. He gives the clerk a letter and tells him to give it to his double. His double walks out of the office and drives off but is back shortly. Golyadkin follows him into the office. In the office, the atmosphere is very relaxed and the young clerks are either talking or playing penny-farthing. Golyadkin tries to go into his boss' office, but the workers do not allow it. His double is telling jokes and gaining popularity.

Golyadkin finally gets inside His Excellency's office door and meets Andrey Filippovitch. Golyadkin tells him that they have an imposter working for them, but Filippovitch says he is not interested. Moments later, his Excellency comes into the room with several other people including Anton Antonvitch. Golyadkin asks Antonvitch what is happening. Antonvitch says he'll soon know. Golyadkin then finds himself in his office foyer standing in wet goulashes.

## Chapter X Analysis

This chapter marks the point of Golyadkin's full descent into madness. It begins with Golyadkin dreaming a series of nightmares about his double destroying his popularity. When he wakes up it is like his nightmare has become part of his reality. One of the important things in Golyadkin's life is his routine and here he wakes up at 2 pm, hours late for work. His servant should have woken him, but he has left him alone in the house, showing Golyadkin is now truly isolated from everyone. At this point, he decides to go to work and get back what he once had. Unfortunately, he is so confused by the turn of events he comes across as strange. For example, when he gets to work instead of going into the office he waits outside. Here he chats to a young clerk and asks him to deliver a message. Yet, the young clerk does not know what he is talking about, which suggests Golyadkin is delusional. When he finally gets inside the office, everyone acts very strangely towards him, confusing him even further. This highlights the fact Russia at that time had had no way of dealing with such illness, which Dostoevsky suggests they see as a threat to their social order. The only way people can deal with their fear is by showing him up as a fool. For example, here Golyadkin's double taunts him in front of the young clerks. This has the effect of re-establishing his importance as a member of the firm, which he must feel Golyadkin has threatened with his absurd claims he is purposely destroying Golyadkin's life.



# Chapter XI

## Chapter XI Summary

Golyadkin runs after his double and convinces him to have coffee in a shop. The double is genial and kind. So much so, Golyadkin begins to feel guilty that he wrote such angry letters. His double says he forgives him and holds out his hand to seal their newfound friendship before walking up to the coffee counter. Here Golyadkin spies him repeating his earlier joke, wiping his fingers clean as if Golyadkin has a disease. His anger back, Golyadkin steps towards his enemy and his double rushes out of the shop. Golyadkin is following him when the German shopkeeper rings her bell to signify they have not paid and Golyadkin runs back and hands her some notes. By this time, his double's carriage is just setting off and he can only manage to leap onto the outer part.

As snow falls and the carriage lurches forward into fog, the double tries to push Golyadkin into the mud. However, it is not until the carriage stops that Golyadkin falls off. The double climbs out and walks up the step to what Golyadkin recognizes as Olsufy Invanovitch's house. Golyadkin finds a letter from Klara which tells him she knows what is happening and Golyadkin should meet her outside her house in a carriage at 2am. Golyadkin goes back to his house where he finds Petruska getting ready to leave the apartment for good.

## Chapter XI Analysis

Since his nightmare, the story has become increasingly surreal and Dostoevsky's use of free association more prevalent. This works to link Golyadkin's subconscious with the real world. Of course, the sub-conscious is something that is usually repressed and Dostoevsky is relating its opening to being a major cause of Golyadkin's mental illness. In this chapter, Golyadkin does things that go against his usual self. For example, he jumps aboard his double's moving carriage and tries to fight him. However, Golyadkin occasionally seems aware of his situation, Dostoevsky showing moments where Golyadkin is scared he is losing his mind. For example, when the double's carriage stops, Golyadkin does not follow him inside, but runs off.





# Chapter XII

## Chapter XII Summary

Petrushka informs his master he is leaving employment. Golyadkin asks Petrushka for advice and Petrushka suggests he buy a fur cloak from the lady downstairs. Admitting that is the best thing he could do, Golyadkin gives his servant some money and sends him downstairs to buy the coat.

Golyadkin reflects on what could happen to him if he meets Klara and takes her away. He thinks it is probably illegal to take a young woman away from her parents and they are likely to insist on his arrest. Nevertheless, Golyadkin orders a cab and asks the driver to take him to Ismailovsky Bridge.

He knocks on the door to his Excellency's house. Inside, Golyadkin begins talking to His Excellency about his problems, but His Excellency claims he does not know who Golyadkin is. When Golyadkin becomes emotional, his double steps forward, showing disgust that he could bring such business to His Excellency's abode. His Excellency orders his servants to take Golyadkin away and Golyadkin's double follows them to the front door. Golyadkin calls his double a vile, vicious snake and in reply receives nothing but taunts.

## Chapter XII Analysis

In this chapter, Dostoevsky shows how small Golyadkin's world is and how such a small world contributes to his paranoia. Dostoevsky highlights this when Petrushka says everyone knows what Golyadkin is up to. Golyadkin asks for his servants advice and Petrushka tell him to buy a fur coat, foreshadowing the fact, he is about to go somewhere faraway. Golyadkin thinks that is a good idea and sends Petrushka to buy one. However, Petrushka takes so long that Golyadkin tries to find him, spying him on the stairwell talking to a group of old ladies about him. In Golyadkin's state, this only proves his thoughts that the people within in his world are conspiring against him. As usual, he reacts against this by trying to prove he is not the bad person everyone thinks he is and goes to see His Excellency. Unfortunately, what he has to say comes across as fevered and confused.





# Chapter XIII

## Chapter XIII Summary

Golyadin waits for a signal from Klara in Olsufy Ivanovitch's yard. He sees a crowd of people looking out of Olsufy Ivanovitch's window and straight at him. He hears his name called and he turns to see his double walking down the steps of the apartment and inviting Golyadkin inside. The house is the last place he wants to go, but feeling obliged he follows his namesake into the building. Ivanovitch's guests greet Golyadkin with sympathetic eyes, gathering around him and then escorting him to Olsufy Ivanovitch and Andrey Filippovitch. Here Andrey Filippovitch leads him to his doctor Krestyn Ivanovitch. With a solemn air, the doctor takes him to a waiting carriage and they head off to an unspecified location. The doctor tells him "You get free quarters, wood, with light, and service, the which you deserve not."

## Chapter XIII Analysis

If the reader had not guessed Golyadkin is ill, he or she will certainly guess he is in this chapter. Here he can hardly put a coherent sentence together, but when he does, it feels forced. For example, when he talks to the cab driver he moves from anguish to asking him why he came to St. Petersburg. Furthermore, even when he tries to talk properly his thoughts are still manic, coming across in both his rapid speech and sudden changes of thought. For example, after asking the coachman stay, he pays him a large sum of money and tells him to leave.

The tragedy and tension of the novel does not come from the fact everyone is ganging up on Golyadkin, but Golyadkin thinks they are and his personality cannot cope with such a thought. Dostoevsky shows this when Golyadkin walks into his benefactor's house, happy that people are finally showing him kindness. However, the novel does not have a happy ending and when he leaves in a cab with the doctor, it becomes clear he will not receive the levels of kindness Dostoevsky suggests he needs to get better.



# Characters

## Golyadkin

Golyadkin works as a titular councilor at an office in St. Petersburg in Russia. Dostoevsky portrays him as quiet and affable gentlemen who lives by his daily routine. Every morning he wakes up at 8am and his servant Petrushka comes in with his tea tray. After breakfast, he smokes a pipe, shaves and walks to his office. His daily life is so dull that when he visits his doctor about how strange he feels, his doctors prescribes him an increase in both his alcohol intake and social engagements. However, Golyadkin is proud of his lifestyle, feeling it presents him as an upstanding citizen, and refuses any change in his routine.

When Golyadkin's doppelganger forces him out of his routine, he becomes confused and unhappy. His evil twin, as he is named, takes over his life and ruins everything he has worked so hard for. Suddenly Golyadkin is cast out of Russian high society, losing the respect of his servant, friends and elders. Golyadkin tries to get it all back, but in doing so becomes such an embarrassment no one will tell him why they have a problem.

Dostoevsky presents this as Golyadkin's worst nightmare and subsequently an environment he finds it difficult to cope with. Increasingly, he becomes paranoid, thinking everyone is working to destroy his life, with his doppelganger as the ring leader. In fact, his doppelganger takes over his position at work, taunts him and in general plays with his mind. Golyadkin, however, is a patient and polite man and the book details his many attempts at trying to get onto his double's good side. At one stage, he confronts his doppelganger at a coffee shop and tells him he must stop what he is doing right away. However as soon as his doppelganger begins to show some kindness, it is Golyadkin who finds himself apologizing, showing not only his natural humility but also the indecisiveness which plagues him throughout.

By the end of the book it becomes clear Golyadkin is mentally ill and his double is a reflection of his less desirable characteristics. In this case, Dostoevsky is suggesting repression is the cause of his mental illness and though by being genial Golyadkin is trying to maintain a certain standing, he would probably find it easier to maintain if he were just himself.

## Golyadkin Jr

Golyadkin Jr is Golyadkin's exact double. He first meets Golyadkin by the canal where Dostoevsky presents him as nervous and shy. However, as the story continues it becomes clear this was just an act to become part of Golyadkin's life and then eventually take it over. The first part of his act is to win over Golyadkin with his genial and modest manner. At Golyadkin's house, he tells him he came to St. Petersburg after



he had inherited financial problems from his aunt. In St. Petersburg, he struggled to find any work and ended up living close to poverty, sleeping on the bare floors of any house he could find. Fortunately, a Christian saved him and helped him to find his current job at Golyadkin's office.

Upon hearing his tale Golyadkin lets his new found friend stay the night at his apartment, but in the morning he has gone and Golyadkin's life has changed forever His servant now sees Golyadkin Jr as his master, his bosses look upon Golyadkin Jr as their new best worker and he has lost all his popularity. In fact, Golyadkin Jr delights in taunting Golyadkin and it is perhaps because he knows him so well that he can do it so effectively. For example, he has enough understanding of Golyadkin to draw him in with compliments, force him to apologize and then once again destroy his self esteem with a nasty remark or action.

However all is not as it seems and when it becomes clear Golyadkin is insane the reader develops a slightly different perspective. The reader still sees Golyadkin Jr as a vindictive person who abuses someone who is ill, but the reader wonders how much did he have to put up with himself. If Golyadkin's thoughts were part of his crazed imagination then Golyadkin Jr must have had to deflect a lot of the attention bestowed on him in order to make a good impression at what was a new and important job.

## **Andrey Filippovitch**

Andrey Filippovitch is Golyadkin's boss. He is initially sympathetic toward Golyadkin, but becomes increasingly impatient with him as the story goes on.

## **Anton Antonovitch**

Anton Antonovitch is the head clerk at Golyadkin's office. Golyadkin confides in him about his double, but Antonovitch tells him he has nothing to worry about. Dostoevsky describes Antonovitch as someone who enjoys a gossip.

## **His Excellency**

His Excellency owns the business where Golyadkin works. The reader does not see His Excellency until towards the end of the story, but Dostoevsky mentions him throughout the book. Usually he is in his office talking to Andrey Filippovitch.

## **Klara Olsufyevna**

Klara is the only daughter of Olsufy Ivanovitch. She is due to marry a Prince, but near the end she writes a letter to Golyadkin, stating the marriage is against her wishes and asking him to meet her outside her house and take her away.



## **Olsufy Ivanovitch**

He is the father of Klara and Golyadkin's benefactor.

## **Vahramyev**

Golyadkin used to count Vahramyev as a friend, but within the scope of this tale Golyadkin sees him as his enemy and one of the main cogs in his imagined conspiracy. Vahramyev is never present in the story, but he corresponds with Golyadkin by letter.

## **Krestyan Ivanovitch**

Krestyan Ivanovitch is Golyadkin's doctor. At the end of the book Dostoevsky hints that he is taking Golyadkin to a mental asylum.

## **Petrushka**

Petrushka is Golyadkin's servant. He often has a gruff manner with his master and openly displays his displeasure towards him. Initially the reader thinks he is like this because he has worked so long for him that he feels comfortable enough to show what he thinks and in reality, he is quite loyal. However, in the end he abandons Golyadkin for another master.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Golyadkin's Apartment**

He lives here with his servant Petrushka.

### **Office**

Golyadkin works at a clerk's office.

### **Olsufy Ivanovitch's House**

Golyadkin goes to Olsufy Ivanovitch's house to celebrate Klara's birthday

### **Golyadkin's Notebook**

Golyadkin keeps his money in his notebook.

### **St. Petersburg**

The story takes place in St. Petersburg.

### **Nevsky Prospect**

Golyadkin visits Nevsky Prospect to go shopping at an arcade and eat out at a restaurant.

### **Nevsky Prospect Restarant**

Golyadkin visits the same restaurant twice during the story. The second time he is charged for 11 pies when he only ate one.

### **The Doctor's Surgery**

Golyadkin visits the doctor at the beginning of the book. He is told he needs to go out more.



## **Ismailovsky Bridge**

Ismailovsky Bridge is a rich area of St. Petersburg. Golyadkin comes here to visit Olsufy Ivanovitch's house.

## **His Excellency's House**

Near the end of the book Golyadkin visits His Excellency's house situated near Ismailovsky Bridge.

## **His Excellency's Office**

Golyadkin often mentions His Excellency's office, but he never gets to go inside.



# Themes

## Mental Illness and the Repressed Self

The novel depicts Golyadkin's slide into mental illness. However, it does not begin with him as sane, but as someone who is already deep into a schizophrenic episode. From the start, he shows unusual paranoia when he passes his boss in his carriage and is unusually jovial and eccentric when he goes shopping, characteristics Dostoevsky later shows are contrary to his quiet and amiable nature. In fact, Dostoevsky suggests it is his delicate disposition that is the main cause of his problems. Golyadkin is so keen to present himself as a good person he cannot cope with his friends' increasingly negative opinions towards him. Added to this is his self-imposed isolation. He likes to keep to himself so much he cannot communicate a problem which has obviously been developing for sometime. Dostoevsky shows this at the beginning when Golyadkin visits the doctor and struggles to express his problem. The doctor tells him he needs to get out more, make friends and get drunk.

The way the story unfolds, the reader could argue the doctor makes a valid point and Golyadkin's insistence he is a too much of a quiet person is far too defensive to be true. In this respect, his double is a reflection of his repressed self. Dostoevsky symbolizes this a number of times when Golyadkin sees his double in a mirror.

As the story moves on and his double becomes more popular, it must feel to Golyadkin as if he looking into an alternative reality, a life that could have been his if he had followed his doctor's advice. However, in retrospect, he is most likely delusional, creating a world for his double that is full of his own desires.

## The Subconscious

Golyadkin's inner world plays a big part in the novel. From the very beginning Golyadkin wonders if he is still dreaming and as his life becomes more bizarre it is as if his dream world has taken over his life. In fact, on the first and last morning, he has a series of nightmares involving his double ruining his life. Then he wakes up and for the rest of day it is like the dreams have become a reality and his now popular double taunts him, first at work, then at a coffee shop, and then finally at His Excellency's house. The situation becomes so difficult for Golyadkin to comprehend that the only way he can cope is by withdrawing into his own mind, until finally he is living in his subconscious world. Dostoevsky shows this by using free association when narrating Golyadkin's thoughts. Dostoevsky's use of free association becomes increasingly prevalent until finally it spills out into Golyadkin's speech, symbolizing the end of his sanity.



## Social Hierachy

Dostoevsky 's mid 19th century Russia has a strict and unbreakable social order. Firstly, all the men in the book have a manservant. Above the manservants are the young clerks in Goyladkin's office. Next in rank is head clerk, a role represented by Anton Antonovitch. Above Antonovitch is Golyadkin's position as titular councilor, followed by his boss Andrey Filippovitch and then lastly His Excellency. Dostoevsky further highlights this social order by showing the same groups living in the same street. For example, His Excellency and Golyadkin's benefactor Olsufy Ivanovitch both reside near Ismailovsky Bridge and characters such as Andrey Filoppovitch and Golyadkin's double like to be seen at some of the area's restaurants and parties.

In general, everyone knows their place and is happy with the sense of identity it provides. However, Dostoevsky represents it as so rigid that when Golyadkin steps outside the order he finds himself ostracized. His manservant can hardly bring himself to look at him, his benefactor will not let him into his house, his double ridicules him, the clerks stop him from visiting His Excellency and his boss seems fearful of him. The only way they can cope with Golyadkin's increasingly disruptive behavior is by removing him from society altogether





# Style

## Point of View

Dostoevsky writes in the third person, but limits the point of view to the main character Golyadkin. As a result, the reader gets an insight into Golyadkin's descent into madness, constantly knowing the strangeness of his ideas, firstly through Dostoevsky's use of free association and secondly by the extent he isolates himself from others. From the beginning it is obvious his strange behavior has been going on for a while by the way the characters react towards him. However, he rarely questions them personally on why they are acting in that way. This becomes Golyadkin's downfall because his mind becomes so withdrawn that he has no choice but to see the laughs, stares and bluntness of the people around him as the reactions of an enemy.

Since the reader sees everything through Golyadkin's eyes, Dostoevsky can convincingly present the characters as all part of a conspiracy to destroy Golyadkin. This is particularly the case with Golyadkin Jr who through Golyadkin's eyes the reader sees as a bully. However, in reality, this is mostly all in Golyadkin's mind. For example when Golyadkin sees his double at the canal and then the same night finds him sitting on his bed, it is very likely a hallucination. Similarly in reality, Golyadkin probably writes all the letters he receives. In fact, Dostoevsky suggests this twice when firstly Petrushka does not know what letter Golyadkin is referring to and secondly when Golyadkin thinks his letter from Klara has vanished from his pocket. At these moments, the reader is likely to believe the conspiracy theories unfolding in Golyadkin's mind and in the end, the limited point of view works to provide the genuinely shocking twist that Golyadkin is actually insane.

## Setting

The Double is set within a small area of St. Petersburg. Golyadkin lives in an apartment in Shetilovotchny Street with his servant Petrushka. On the first day, he stops his carriage in Liteyney Street to see his doctor and then orders his driver to the main street in St. Petersburg, Nevsky Prospect. Here he shops in the arcade for silver cutlery and changes his money. Afterwards he has lunch at a restaurant, which he visits for a second time later on in the book. In the evening, he visits his benefactor's house near Ismailovsky Bridge, an area where his boss also lives. When his benefactor's servants throw Golyadkov out of the house, he walks to the Fontanka Quay where he meets his double for the first time. Other settings include his office and a coffee shop. Though Dostoevsky does not associate them with a street name, they are both within walking distance of Golyadkin's home.

The small setting symbolizes Golyadkin's isolation and shows how easy it is for him to live in his own world. At the same time he knows everybody, so when he loses his mind



the privacy he holds so dear is lost and his troubles become local knowledge. In fact, near the end of the book his servant states everyone knows what he is doing.

## Language and Meaning

As a translation, it is difficult to know what meaning the novel has lost from its original language. One area that probably loses a little meaning is the main character's position in high society. His actions suggests he is a rich man of some significance; for example, he always has a lot of money and tips generously. However the way he speaks neither differentiates him from his servants nor his bosses.

Instead, the dialogue reflects Golyadkin's quick descent into insanity and the other characters reaction to his decline. Initially the dialogue shows Golyadkin as slightly eccentric, for example, he enters a shop and tells the owner he will just have to wait for the deposit. However, as the story continues the other characters begin to react badly to his eccentricity and Golyadkin's dialogue becomes increasingly rambling until it seems he does not know what he is talking about. In turn, the other characters become increasingly impatient with him. For example, Andrey Ivanovitch firstly tries to talk to Golyadkin, secondly becomes curt with him, thirdly ignores him and finally shows a degree of sympathy. However, this is Andrey Ivanovitch's own method of dealing with Golyadkin's mental illness and what Dostoevsky does well in the dialogue is show each individual separate reaction. Golyadkin Jr plays with his mind and at time even taunts him, Anton Antonovitch is probably the only one to speak to him as a peer and his servant speaks to him less and less, until the end when he speaks to him out of sympathy.

What is most interesting about the dialogue is the worse Golyadkin gets, the more his dialogue reflects his inner thoughts. These inner thoughts become increasingly random until Dostoevsky is writing in long passages of free association, showing the symbolism of his subconscious world is becoming part of his waking life. In fact, throughout the novel Golyadkin refers to his dreams and whether or not he is actually still asleep. So through his use of free association Dostoevsky is connecting insanity to the opening of a person's subconscious mind.

## Structure

The structure reflects the disintegration of Golyadkin's mind over four days and his isolation from society. His day begins normally, waking up at 8am, having his breakfast and then going shopping. His visit to the doctor in between comes across as the regular visit of a hypochondriac. However, when he goes to a party in the evening, he is refused entry and decides to go around the back of the house and sneak in. Inside the house, he begins to act very strangely and the servants throw him out, the first example of his friends isolating him from society. When he goes back to his own house, he finds his double sitting on his bed, the first example of Golyadkin's double isolating him his own home.



On the second day, Golyadkin again wakes up at 8am. This time when his servant takes in his breakfast his servant refuses to meet his eye, a further example of Golyadkin being isolated from his own private space. He goes to work where to his relief he experiences complete normality. That is until his double walks into the office and breaks Golyadkin's last link to his much needed routine.

On the third day Golyadkin experiences further isolation when firstly, Petrushka refuses to accept Golyadkin as his master and then, secondly, his double steals his manuscript and claims it as his own. Golyadkin tries to talk to Anton Antonovitch, the only person in the story Golyadkin can call a friend, but Anton Antonovitch claims Golyadkin is rude.

On the fourth and final day, he wakes up at 2pm, hours late for work and with his servant nowhere to be seen. He goes to his office, but the young clerks surround him, refusing to allow him into his boss's office. By the end of the working day, he realizes he is nothing to anyone and in his eyes his double has taken over his life and popularity. By the time he reaches Olsufy Ivanovitch's house, he is a broken man, knowing his fate lies away from the confines of society.

On each day, there is an increasingly stronger link to dreams. On the first day, he wakes up wondering if he is still dreaming. On the second day, he tells himself all the strange events from the previous night were all a delusion and when later his double walks into the office, he wonders if he is having a waking dream. The third day does not allude to any dream world, but becomes so confusing to him it resembles a nightmare. These nightmares manifest themselves on the fourth morning when Golyadkin has a series of bad dreams. The rest of the day is so nightmarish it is like he never woke up.



## Quotes

"But what was the amazement, the stupefaction and fury, what was the horror and the shame of Mr. Golyadkin senior, when his enemy and mortal foe, the dishonourable Mr. Golyadkin junior, noticing the mistake of that persecuted, innocent, perfidiously deceived man, without a trace of shame, of feeling, of compassion or of conscience, pulled his hand away with insufferable rudeness and insolence. What was worse, he shook the hand as though it had been polluted with something horrid; what is more, he spat aside with disgust, accompanying this with a most insulting gesture; worse still, he drew out his handkerchief and, in the most unseemly way, wiped all the fingers that had rested for one moment in the hand of Mr. Golyadkin senior," p. 98.

"An unpleasant picture! A burlesque, a regular burlesque, and that's the fact of the matter!" p. 72

"The stranger did, in fact, stop ten paces from Mr. Golyadkin, so that the light from the lamp-post that stood near fell full upon his whole figure — stood still, turned to Mr. Golyadkin, and with impatient and anxious face waited to hear what he would say," p. 36.

"Mr. Golyadkin took breath and looked about him. Yes! every one in the room, all had their eyes fixed upon him, and were listening in a sort of solemn expectation. The men had crowded a little nearer and were all attention. A little further away the ladies were whispering together. The master of the house made his appearance at no great distance from Mr. Golyadkin, and though it was impossible to detect from his expression that he, too, was taking a close and direct interest in Mr. Golyadkin's position, for everything was being done with delicacy, yet, nevertheless, it all made our hero feel that the decisive moment had come for him," p. 30.

"You must follow the treatment prescribed to you; I explained to you that what would be beneficial to your health is a change of habits. . . . Entertainment, for instance, and, well, friends — you should visit your acquaintances, and not be hostile to the bottle; and likewise keep cheerful company," p. 10.

"Everything will be explained in due time," Anton Antonovitch replied sternly and emphatically, and as Mr. Golyadkin fancied with an air that give him plainly to understand that Anton Antonovitch did not wish to continue the conversation. "You will soon know all about it. You will be officially informed about everything today," p. 102.

"You mean . . .? To be sure! But why are you so interested in that? I tell you not to upset yourself. All this is temporary to some extent. Why, after all, you know, you have nothing to do with it. So it has been ordained by God Almighty, it's His will, and it is sinful repining. His wisdom is apparent in it. And as far as I can make out, Yakov Petrovitch,



you are not to blame in any way. There are all sorts of strange things in the world! Mother Nature is liberal with her gifts, and you are not called upon to answer for it, you won't be responsible. Here, for instance, you have heard, I expect, of those — what's their name? — oh, the Siamese twins who are joined together at the back, live and eat and sleep together. I'm told they get a lot of money," p. 89.

"Mr. Golyadkin ran out into the street and began trying to take a cab in order to drive straight to his Excellency's, or, at any rate, to Andrey Filippovitch, but — horror! the cabman absolutely refused to take Mr. Golyadkin, saying, "We cannot drive two gentlemen exactly alike, sir; a good man tries to like honestly, your honour, and never has a double," p. 120.

"Beside himself with shame and despair, the utterly ruined though perfectly just Mr. Golyadkin dashed headlong away, wherever fate might lead him; but with every step he took, with every thud of his foot on the granite of the pavement, there leapt up as though out of the earth a Mr. Golyadkin precisely the same, perfectly alike, and of a revolting depravity of heart. And all these precisely similar Golyadkins set to running after one another as soon as they appeared, and stretched in a long chain like a file of geese, hobbling after the real Mr. Golyadkin, so there was nowhere to escape from these duplicates — so that Mr. Golyadkin, who was in every way deserving of compassion, was breathless with terror; so that at last a terrible multitude of duplicates had sprung into being; so that the whole town was obstructed at last by duplicate Golyadkins, and the police officer, seeing such a breach of decorum, was obliged to seize all these duplicates by the collar and to put them into the watch-house, which happened to be beside him," p. 87.

"In spite of all this our hero felt as though he had risen from the dead, as though he had withstood a battalion, as though he had won a victory when he succeeded in clutching the overcoat of his enemy," p. 103.

"So this was how the chief plot was hatched!" cried Mr. Golyadkin, slapping himself on the forehead, opening his eyes wider and wider; "so in that filthy German woman's den the whole power of evil lies hidden now! So she was only making a strategic diversion in directing me to the Ismailovsky Bridge — she was putting me off the scent, confusing me (the worthless witch), and in that way laying her mines!" p. 123.

"You get free quarters, wood, with light, and service, the which you deserve not," Krestyan Ivanovitch's answer rang out, stern and terrible as a judge's sentence," p. 135.



## Topics for Discussion

How much do you think Golyadkin's double is a reflection of Golyadkin's less desirable qualities?

How much do you think Golyadkin's double contributes to Golyadkin's downfall? Do you think his reaction was more fear or nastiness?

What do you think Klara's role is in the story?

Dostoevsky shows everything through the point of view of Golyadkin. How does this work to keep the story's tension and work towards the tragic twist?

In what ways does the novel's structure reflect Golyadkin's descent into madness?

Why do you think the story's characters treat Golyadkin so badly? Do they know he is ill?

In what way does Dostoevsky link dreams, the subconscious and mental illness?