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The Gambler

Fyodor Dostoevsky · *1866 · Constance Garnett (The Gambler and Other Stories, Heinemann, 1914)*

At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg. I imagined that they were expecting me with the greatest eagerness; I was mistaken. The hosted text is Constance Garnett's 1914 English, complete in seventeen chapters. For older students (10–12).

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What happens to a man who needs money now, come what may, and how should a school read a confession of roulette without treating it as a game to learn?

"At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg."
Chapter I

Alexey Ivanovitch is a tutor in a Russian household at a German spa. He loves Polina Alexandrovna; the General's party is waiting on a will; roulette becomes the short road to money and then the road itself. Teach the bondage, the pride, and the waste, with gravity, for grades 10–12. This is not a manual. Keep Garnett's "Roulettenburg" and "Granny."

KEY CHARACTERS

The narrator (Alexey Ivanovitch)
A tutor who comes back to Roulettenburg and cannot leave the table or Polina

Polina Alexandrovna
The woman at the center of his will, who also needs money

The General
The head of the household, independent, expecting news and guests

Granny
The old woman whose death the household has been waiting on; Garnett's word is "Granny"

A FORTNIGHT'S ABSENCE

> *"At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg."*
> Chapter I

Grades 10–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Back to Roulettenburg
CHAPTER I

The narrator has been a fortnight away. The household is already at the spa. The General is independent and condescending. Polina asks why he has been away so long, and does not wait for an answer.

- The first sentences are exact, including "Roulettenburg."
- This is Garnett, 1914, complete in seventeen chapters. Quote the story, not a later version.
- They are expecting guests; as soon as there is money there is a dinner-party.
- The tutor is already slightly out of place in the house he serves.

> *"At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg."*
> Chapter I

02
Polina, and a Blow
EARLY CHAPTERS

Polina Alexandrovna is the center of the narrator's will. When she must have money, the Casino is close. He feels as though he had had a blow on the head.

- Keep "Polina Alexandrovna."
- The need of money "now, come what may," is already a confession.
- Teach the attachment as bondage, not as a romance only.
- For grades 10–12, with tact.

> *"I must have money now, come what may."*
> Early chapters

03
Granny
MID-BOOK

News comes that Granny was very ill, and then that she seemed to be dying. The household has been hoping for nothing else for months. Garnett's word is "Granny."

- Do not import a later translator's "Grandmother" or a Russian pet-name that this file does not use here.
- The waiting on a death is part of the book's moral weather.
- Teach it as Dostoevsky writes it: ugly, comic, and grave.
- Quote Garnett, not a paraphrase.

> *"Granny was very ill, and then, two days later, that she seemed to be dying."*
> Mid-book

04
The Table
THE CASINO CHAPTERS

Roulette is not a pastime in this book. It is a way of trying to force a life to come out right at once. The wins, when they come, do not end the need.

- The book is a confession of a passion, not a lesson in play.
- Do not treat the table as a puzzle to be solved.
- Pride, shame, and hope turn on the same wheel.
- Teach with gravity.

> *"I must have money now, come what may."*
> Early chapters

05
Seventeen Chapters
THE BOOK AS A WHOLE

The hosted file is complete. A school should finish the bondage and not stop at the first win. The book is short, and it is not light.

- Translator: Constance Garnett, 1914.
- Catalogue 10–12.
- Keep "Roulettenburg."
- This is not a crime manual and not a game book.

> *"At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg."*
> Chapter I

Bondage | Pride | Money Now | A Household in Suspense | A Confession

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 10–12

1. The story opens: "At last I have come back from my fortnight's absence. Our friends have already been two days in Roulettenburg." Keep Garnett's spelling.
2. This is Constance Garnett, 1914, complete in seventeen chapters. For grades 10–12.
3. Garnett's word for the old woman is "Granny." Do not import another translator's name.
4. Roulette here is a bondage, not a game to learn. Teach with gravity. This is not a manual.
5. Polina Alexandrovna is at the center of the narrator's will. Teach the attachment as the book writes it, with tact.

Quotations are verbatim from the Constance Garnett (The Gambler and Other Stories, Heinemann, 1914), Wikisource: The Gambler and Other Stories (London: Heinemann, 1914), validated transcription, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/dostoevsky-the-gambler/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.