

- The Beggar Summary

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"The Beggar" is a short story by Anton Chekhov that narrates the transformation of a man named Lushkoff, who was once a school teacher but fell into poverty and became a beggar. Advocate Sergei encounters Lushkoff begging on the street and learns about his unfortunate circumstances. Despite his initial reluctance, Sergei offers Lushkoff work chopping wood and later helps him find other jobs, including copying work. Over time, Lushkoff reforms his life, eventually becoming a notary earning a steady income. He credits Sergei and especially Olga, the cook who showed him tough love, for his change of heart and new path in life.

Key Elements

- **Characters:** Advocate Sergei, Lushkoff (the beggar), Olga (the cook)
- **Setting:** The story is set in a Russian town, primarily around Sergei's house and the streets where Lushkoff begs.
- **Plot:** The story follows Lushkoff's fall from a teacher to a beggar and his eventual rehabilitation through Sergei's help.

Textual Evidence

Lushkoff is described as wearing "rags" with "dull, sunken cheeks and red spots on either cheek," highlighting his poor condition. Sergei recalls meeting him before when Lushkoff had called himself a student, indicating his unstable past. The story quotes Lushkoff

saying, "If I had not helped him, I would still have been telling lies," showing his gratitude and transformation.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Who is Lushkoff and what was his profession before becoming a beggar?
- What kind of work did Sergei first offer to Lushkoff?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Describe the role Olga played in Lushkoff's transformation.
- How did Sergei help Lushkoff change his life?

Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the theme of compassion and rehabilitation in the story "The Beggar." How does Chekhov portray social responsibility?
- Discuss the significance of Lushkoff's statement about telling lies before Sergei's help.

Answer Key

Level 1 – Easy

- Lushkoff was a school teacher before he became a beggar.
- Sergei first offered Lushkoff the work of chopping wood.

Level 2 – Moderate

- Olga, the cook, showed tough love by rebuking Lushkoff but also helping him with chores like chopping wood, which motivated him to change.
- Sergei helped Lushkoff by giving him work, encouraging him, and introducing him to friends who provided copying jobs, leading to his rehabilitation.

Level 3 – Challenging

- The story emphasizes compassion as Sergei does not ignore Lushkoff's plight but helps him regain dignity through work. Chekhov highlights social responsibility by showing how kindness and support can transform lives.
- Lushkoff's statement reflects his past dishonesty and the new honesty he has embraced after Sergei's help, symbolizing his moral and social rehabilitation.

Quick Reference

- **Detained:** Held back or kept in custody.
- **Rags:** Torn, worn-out clothes indicating poverty.
- **Sunken:** Hollowed appearance, often due to illness.
- **Shovel:** Tool for digging or moving materials.
- **Notary:** Official authorized to witness legal documents.
- **Rebuked:** Expressed sharp disapproval.

Glossary

- **Advocate:** A lawyer who pleads cases in court.
- **Beggar:** A person who asks for money or food due to poverty.
- **Chop wood:** To cut wood into smaller pieces, often for fuel.
- **Copying work:** Writing documents or texts as a job.
- **Notary:** A person authorized to perform legal formalities.