

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 10: THE BEGGAR



THE BEGGAR

~Summary~

-by Anton Chekhov

Sergei Meets the Beggar

Sergei meets a beggar who wants him to take pity on him. His name is Lushkoff and he tells him that he was a schoolteacher in a village.

He further adds that he is jobless since a year now and although he has got a job offer in a different province, he does not have money to go there.

Sergei Recognises the Beggar

When Sergei looks at him closely he remembers that he had met him at a different street two days ago.

The beggar was posing as a student then. The beggar (Lushkoff) denies that it was not him but Sergei tells him that he is a cheat and threatens to call the police. Lushkoff then admits that it was him and says that he has to tell lies so that people take pity on him and give money or things to him.

Sergei Takes him to his House

Sergei takes him to his house and gives him the job of chopping wood. Though Lushkoff is not willing to work, he agrees to do the work. He is called first day of every month to chop wood and is given half a Rouble.

However, he starts coming at Sergei's house regularly and whenever he comes, some work is assigned to him. All his work is done by Olga (the cook at Sergei's house) as she feels pity on his miserable condition.

However, she does not tell this to Sergei. Lushkoff is happy to get paid without doing any work.

The Beggar Goes to Work for Sergei's Friend

Sergei is happy to see Lushkoff coming regularly at his home. He thinks that he is working and asks him to go to his friend's place where he can get a writing job. He is pleased at having put

Lushkoff on the right path and gives him a letter that needs to be handed to his friend. Lushkoff agrees and goes there.

Sergei and Lushkoff Meet After Two Years

Sergei and Lushkoff meet after two years at a theatre. Sergei asks about him and he tells that he has become a Notary now and is paid 35 roubles per month. Sergei is happy to know that and takes the credit for changing his life.

However, Lushkoff thanks him for his help and tells the truth. He says that Olga is responsible for his change as she used to do all the work assigned to him. Her unconditional help and concern for him made him change his ways. Lushkoff then takes a leave from Sergei as the show was about to start.

Conclusion of The Beggar

The chapter – The Beggar teaches students that if one has the will to work hard and reach a goal, with dedication and will power one can achieve success in life.

NCERT SOLUTIONS
Questions (Page No. 67-68)
(Think about it)

Question 1. Has Lushkoff become a beggar by circumstance or by choice?

Answer: Lushkoff has become a beggar by choice. Formerly, he used to sing in a Russian choir and was sent away for drunkenness. Instead of searching for another job, Lushkoff decided to become a beggar.

Question 2. What reasons does he give to Sergei for telling lies?

Answer: Lushkoff says that he was sent away from the Russian choir because of him being an alcoholic. He tells lies because if he would tell this truth, no one would ever help him or give him money.

Question 3. Is Lushkoff a willing worker? Why, then, does he agree to chop wood for Sergei?

Answer: No, he is not a willing worker. Alcohol has undermined his strength and he has no inclination towards doing any work. He agrees to chop wood for Sergei not because he was hungry or wanted to work but because he is ashamed and trapped by his own words.

Question 4. Sergei says, "I am happy that my words have taken effect." Why does he say so? Is he right in saying this?

Answer: Sergei says, "I am happy that my words have taken effect." He says so because he thinks that he is the reason why Lushkoff became a notary from being a beggar. This is partly true but Sergei is not the only one who made Lushkoff become who he was now.

Lushkoff says that although he is obliged to Sergei for showing him the right path and letting him do work of chopping wood at his home, his transformation is a result of Sergei's cook, Olga. She was the one who chopped wood and not Lushkoff.

Question 5. Lushkoff is earning thirty five roubles a month. How is he obliged to Sergei for this?

Answer: Lushkoff is earning thirty five roubles a month. He is obliged to Sergei because if he hadn't come to Sergei then he still might have been a beggar telling the same old lies of being a teacher or a student. But, Sergei helped him get out of the pit by giving him work.

Question 6. During their conversation Lushkoff reveals that Sergei's cook, Olga, is responsible for the positive change in him. How has Olga saved Lushkoff?

Answer: Sergei took Lushkoff to his home and gave him the task of chopping wood. He asked Olga, his cook, to take Lushkoff to the wood shed and to let him chop wood.

When Lushkoff becomes a notary and accidentally meets Sergei, he tells him that all that while, Olga was the one who chopped wood. She felt pity for Lushkoff and did the chopping herself instead of letting Lushkoff do it.

Lushkoff says that her kindness changed him to be a better person and to earn for his living.

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