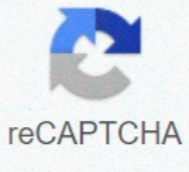


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Moral lesson of the bet by anton chekhov

Question by ichliebe_katzen: Can you please enumerate the moral lessons in the short story "The Bet" by Anton Chekhov? I really need them ASAP. Thanks. Answers and Views: Answer by Seth BThis story addresses: capital punishment, gambling, greed, violence. "The Bet"AuthorAnton ChekhovOriginal title"Пари"CountryRussian EmpireLanguageRussianPublished inNovoye VremyaPublisherAdolf Marks (1901)Publication date14 January 1889 The Bet (short story) "The Bet" (Russian: "Пари", romanized: Pari) is an 1889 short story by Anton Chekhov about a banker and a young lawyer who make a bet with each other following a conversation about whether the death penalty is better or worse than life in prison. The banker wagers that the lawyer cannot remain in solitary confinement voluntarily for a period of fifteen years. Publication On 17 December 1888 Nikolai Khudekov asked Chekhov to write a story for Peterburgskaya Gazeta which he was an editor of. Chekhov came up with "The Cobbler and the Devil" (published on 25 December) and informed Alexey Suvorin of that. Suvorin, the Novoye Vremya's editor, took it almost as an insult, so Chekhov promised to produce a similar kind of fable for this newspaper before the New Year Eve. He started writing it on 22 December, and on the 30th sent the story by post.[1] Divided into three parts, it appeared in the 1 January 1889, No. 4613 issue of Novoye Vremya, titled "Fairytale" (Сказка). With a new title, "The Bet", revised and cut (part 3 of the original text now has gone) it was included in Volume 4 of Chekhov's Collected Works, published in 1899–1901 by Adolf Marks.[2] As I was reading the proofs, I came to dislike the end, it occurred to me that it was too cold and cruel," he explained the reason for the omission in 1903.[3] Plot As the story opens, a banker recalls the occasion of a bet he had made fifteen years before. Guests at a party that he was hosting that day fell into a discussion of capital punishment; the banker viewed it as more humane than life imprisonment, while a young lawyer disagreed, insisting that he would choose life in prison rather than death. They agreed to a bet: if the lawyer could spend fifteen years in total isolation, the banker would pay him two million rubles. The lawyer would have no direct contact with any other person, but could write notes to communicate with the outside world and receive whatever comforts he desired. Confined to a lodge on the banker's property, the lawyer suffers from loneliness and depression at first but eventually begins to read and study in a wide range of subjects. As the lawyer takes advantage of the solitude to educate and amuse himself in various ways over the years, the banker's fortunes begin to decline. The banker realizes that if he loses, paying off the bet will lead to bankruptcy. In the early hours of the day when the fifteen-year period is to expire, the banker resolves to kill the lawyer, but finds him greatly emaciated and sleeping at a table. A note written by the lawyer reveals that he has chosen to abandon the bet, having learned that material goods are fleeting and that divine salvation is worth more than money. Shocked and moved after reading the note, the banker kisses the lawyer on the head and returns to bed. When the banker wakes up later that morning, a watchman reports that the lawyer has climbed out the window and fled the property, forfeiting the bet. To prevent the spread of rumors, the banker locks the note in his safe. Characters There are two major characters featured in "The Bet": the lawyer and the banker, neither of which have official names in Chekhov's short story. The lawyer This section possibly contains original research. Please improve it by verifying the claims made and adding inline citations. Statements consisting only of original research should be removed. (April 2014) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) The lawyer is seen to be persistent, intelligent and self-motivating. He does not break down in the 15 years of imprisonment as the banker foretold. He is intelligent by the virtue of reading so many books, which reflects in his eagerness to associate with other men, rather than claiming the final prize. He starts as a young, impatient person, ready to spend 15 best years of his life for 2 million. His character of being a person with no interest in materialistic luxury is reflected when he renounces the 2 million and settles with just having proved his point. The banker This section possibly contains original research. Please improve it by verifying the claims made and adding inline citations. Statements consisting only of original research should be removed. (April 2014) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) The banker likes to be in a position of authority and likes to wield power over others, especially those who happen to disagree with him. The character changes drastically from the beginning of the story when he seems to be very free handed as he easily bets to pay two million and later, his lack of wealth drives him to dishonesty and plan for murder. This also signifies the weak character of the banker. He is very attached to the materialistic luxuries of life and values human life less than his luxuries as he plans on killing the lawyer. He plans on killing the lawyer for money and nothing but money changes his mind. References ^ Sokolova M.A. Commetaries to Саложник и нечистая сила. // Чехов А. П. Полное собрание сочинений и писем в тридцати томах. Сочинения. Т. 7. — М.: Наука, 1977. С. 665. ^ Муратова, К. D. Commentaries to Пари. The Works by A.P. Chekhov in 12 volumes. Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, Moscow, 1960. Vol. 6, pp. 512 ^ "The History of One Story". A.P. Chekhov's Unpublished Letter // Прохоров Г. История одного рассказа. Неопубликованное письмо А. П. Чехова. — «Литературная газета», № 88 от 14 июля 1934. - Когда я читал корректуру, мне этот конец очень не понравился [...], показался не в меру холодным и суровым. External links Wikisource has original text related to this article: The Bet and Other Stories/The Bet Пари, the Russian text The Bet, 1915 and 1918 English translations The Project Gutenberg eBook of Best Russian Short Stories, including "The Bet" "The Bet" - Chamber opera in 14 scenes by Lior Navok Retrieved from " " "Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two million!" "Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man. And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said: "Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two million is a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you." And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: "What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two million? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money ..." Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted - books, music, wine, and so on - in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there exactly fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him the two million. For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character: novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on. In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying. In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies - so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner: "My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden. Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels. In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another. The old banker remembered all this, and thought: "To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two million. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined." Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation and the excitability whic h he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!" It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house. It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the pillar, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here ... " The banker took the page from the table and read as follows: "To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world. "For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women ... Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God ... In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms ... "Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you. "And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe. "You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sort, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you. "To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two million of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact ..." When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping. Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

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