

Reading Seeded Literature

- Get ready to **connect** information you already know to a little new information the authors want you to learn.
- In the beginning, it **will take more time** to read seeded literature because word meanings and other kinds of information are added to what the authors have written.

BUT...

- You will know more as you read.
- **You do not have to stop reading to look for information in a dictionary or on the internet, because it is right there where you are reading.**
- You will be thinking more as you read.
- You will be remembering more as you read.
- You will be able to answer “Why” and “How” questions more easily.
- As you read more and more seeded literature, **you will see that you are reading more quickly.** There will be less to read, because **you will teach yourself how to skip over information that you have already learned.**

Classic Short Stories

This “seeded” edition of classic short stories includes “seeds” of information about vocabulary, factual references, and phrasing that may have been easily understood in the 19th and 20th. In the 21st Century, however, some of these words and phrases are not so clearly understood and could make comprehension and interpretation of the text more difficult. Additionally words and phrases can have multiple meanings. Therefore, “seeds” of explanation are included here to focus the reader on the authors’ contextual meaning in the short stories. This contextual meaning is found in parentheses and brackets as noted in the key that follows.

KEY:

Vocabulary words are in **bold**, and the meaning is in (parentheses) i.e. “Tom's wife was a tall **termagant** (nagging person)... roots which **afforded** (gave) **precarious** (tricky and dangerous) **footholds** (places to walk) among deep **sloughs** (swamps)...”

Factual references are in **bold italics** and the meaning is in (parentheses) i.e. ‘How?’ said he. “**Amontillado** (dry/not sweet sherry wine), **A pipe** (large barrel holding 126 gallons)? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!”.... there was a great amount of treasure buried by **Kidd the pirate** (Captain Kidd, hung in England in 1701 for being a pirate).”

Challenging phrases or sentence/s are underlined and the meaning is in [brackets] i.e. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of [decided where to hide] the money, and took it under his guardianship [guarded it].... in the fashion of [like] the great **catacombs** (underground graves) of Paris.”

The Bet

By Anton Chekhov

(The MacMillan Company 1921)

I

IT WAS a dark **autumn** (fall) night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one **autumn** (fall) evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment [killing someone for a crime/death penalty]. The majority of the guests, among whom were many **journalists** (newspaper writers) and **intellectual** (smart) men, disapproved of the death penalty. They **considered** (thought) that form of punishment out of date [old fashioned], **immoral** (sinful), and **unsuitable** (not correct) for Christian States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge, I think, the death penalty is more **moral** (right) and more **humane** (kind) than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more **humane** (kind), he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of [for] many years?"

"Both are equally **immoral** (wrong)," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object--to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot **restore** [be given back] when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally **immoral** (wrong), but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion **arose** (started). The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement [all alone in jail] for five years."

"If you mean that in earnest [really]," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I **stake** (bet) two millions!"

"Agreed! You **stake** (bet) your millions and I **stake** (bet) my freedom!" said the young man.

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and **frivolous** (never caring about important things), with millions beyond his reckoning [who had so much money it had no value], 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 millions are a trifle [nothing], 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 (doing it yourself) **confinement** (prison) is a great deal harder to bear than **compulsory** (when it is forced on you). 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 [left and then right], 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 millions? 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** (quick, not really thought about idea) of a **pampered** (too rich) 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 [being watched all the time] in one of the **lodges** (cabins) in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the **threshold** (doorway) of the **lodge** (cabin), 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 [rules], the only **relations** (contacts) he could have with the outer world were by a little window made **purposely** (just) for that **object** (reason). He might have anything he wanted--books, music, wine, and so on--in any quantity [as many as] he **desired** (wanted) by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The **agreement** (rules they agreed to) provided for [explained] every detail and every **trifle** (little thing) that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary [very much alone], 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