

THE BET (summary)

The old banker was walking in his study room one dark autumn night. He was worried because fifteen years ago he had entered into a bet with a young lawyer. He had promised to pay the lawyer two million roubles if he remains alone in a cell for fifteen years. This was the last night of the lawyer in the cell.

There was a young lawyer also present at the banker's party. They discussed capital punishment. They called it immoral and against christianity to take anybody's life. The banker argued that capital punishment was more humane because it caused instant death. During life imprisonment, one is killed by inches.

The young lawyer favoured life imprisonment to death sentence. He argued that it was better, to live somehow than not to live at all. The banker threw a challenge. The lawyer accepted it. He agreed to stay alone in a cell for fifteen years if the

the banker promised to pay him two million roubles. The banker agreed to stake his freedom. Both had the bet out of excitement. The agreement was drawn up.

The banker locked up the lawyer in the garden wing of his house. The lawyer was permitted to read books, write letters, drink and ~~some~~ smoke during his confinement. He would neither receive letters nor hear any human voice. He would lose the money if he made any attempt to escape.

The lawyer felt quite lonely and bored during the first year of his imprisonment. He read books of light character and played on the piano. He asked for classics, the next year. He finished studying languages and philosophy in the sixth year. He finished ~~five~~ hundred volumes in the next four years. He read the bible for one year. He studied poetry and sciences during the last two years of his imprisonment.

The banker had fallen short of money, he had undergone heavy losses in business. The next day was the day of the lawyer's release. The banker could escape bankruptcy only if the lawyer died. At night he went near the lawyer's room to kill him. The doubt would fall on the watch man who was not found there.

The banker entered the lawyer's room. The prisoner was like a heap of bones. He was sitting motionless by the table. The banker could kill him with the pillow. It would be treated as a natural death. Just then, the banker caught sight of a note. It said that he (the lawyer) had lost all interest in freedom, life, health and worldly riches. Reading book has granted him wisdom. He had realised that the world was an illusion and death alone was a real thing. So he would escape five minutes before the fixed period of imprisonment. Thus he would forgo his claim of money. The banker went out sobbing. He began to hate himself.

The lawyer kept his word and
escaped at night. The banker locked
the lawyer's note in his safe.

The Bet

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Question & Answers

Capital punishment is more humane than life imprisonment. Discuss

ANSWER:-

Life has to be lived. We should celebrate life and live it happily and meaningfully. It should not become a perennial torture or burden. Capital punishment means an instant death.

It is far more humane and relieving. It does not cause death by inches. Both the capital punishment and life imprisonment are immoral. Life imprisonment brings life long disgrace. Therefore, capital punishment is far more humane than life imprisonment. It removes woes, disgraces and disillusionments within a second. It does not prolong man's sufferings indefinitely like life imprisonment.

In "The Bet", in fifteen years, the lawyer lost his health and two million roubles but he was a gainer. Do you agree? Explain.

The lawyer lost both his health and wealth. In spite of all that we consider him a gainer. He gained ample knowledge. It created in him a sense of bitter disillusionment. He despised not only money, life, health and the other blessings of the world but also freedom. He rose from a greedy lawyer to a saintly figure. By escaping from the prison he saved his own life. The banker must have killed him. It was his biggest gain.

Even the banker who had lost his conscience for the sake of money considered himself a loser.

What did the lawyer look like at the end of fifteen years of imprisonment?

Answer: -

The lawyer looked like a skeleton. His skin drawn tight over his bones. He had long curls and a shaggy beard. His face had become pale. His cheeks were hollow, his back



was long and narrow. His hands were thin and delicate. His aged-looking emaciated face was dreadful in looks. He looked quite old.

How did the lawyer spend the second half of the sixth year?

ANSWER:-

The lawyer (Prisoners) began to study languages, philosophy and history in the second half of the sixth year. He wrote fluently and correctly in six languages. He wrote fluently and the lines to the banker to let the expert read them and confirm their accuracy.

Why did the Banker recall the party he gave fifteen years ago?

ANSWER:-

The banker was mentally perturbed. He had hosted a grand party fifteen years ago. A young lawyer had made a bet with him in the party. The lawyer staked his freedom.

and that he had staked two millions
roubles. The banker recalled the party
because the lawyer would gain his
freedom the next day, he would
lose two millions.

What did the prisoner suffer from in
the first year of his confinement? How
do you know about it?

ANSWER:-

In the first year of his
confinement, the prisoner suffered
severely from loneliness and depression.
It is clear because the sound
of the piano could be heard from
his lodge day and night. He
refused wine and tobacco. He
longed to see human faces
and hear human voices.

What did the prisoner read in the
last two years?

ANSWER:-

During the last two years



The prisoner read an immense number of books on natural sciences, romantic poetry, chemistry, medicine, novels and treatises on philosophy and theology.

What were the conditions of the agreement between the banker and the young lawyer.

ANSWER:-

The following were the conditions of the agreement between the banker and the young lawyer:

- (1) The lawyer would get two million roubles if he remained confined to the solitary cell.
- (2) The lawyer would ~~lose~~ lose his claim on money if he tried to escape even two minutes before the expiry of the agreed period.
- (3) He could write letters though not receive them.
- (4) He could have books, tobacco wine etc. as much as he needed.

Summarise the things that the lawyer learnt from books in Prison:

ANSWER:-

The lawyer read a large number of books including the New Testament in prison. He learnt the following things from them:

- (1) Freedom, life, health and the other so-called blessing of the world are all worthless.
- (2) Every thing is void, weak, fleeting, delusive and transitory like a mirage.
- (3) Life is not worth living. Only one thing remains certain. It is death. Death would soon wipe away everything.

Fill in the blanks! -

The old banker was pacing from corner to corner of his study

The state is not God

It's better to live some how than not to live at all

The banker had too many ^{millions} to count

The lawyer confinement was strictly solitary

In the tenth tenth year the the lawyer read New Testament

The prisoner read both Byron and Shakespeare

The banker thought that the lawyer must die

Death will wipe you from the face of the earth