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The Miserable Beggar

It was a cold winter afternoon and the streets looked quite *deserted*. A lawyer named Sartoff was passing by when all of a sudden a beggar stopped him on the way.

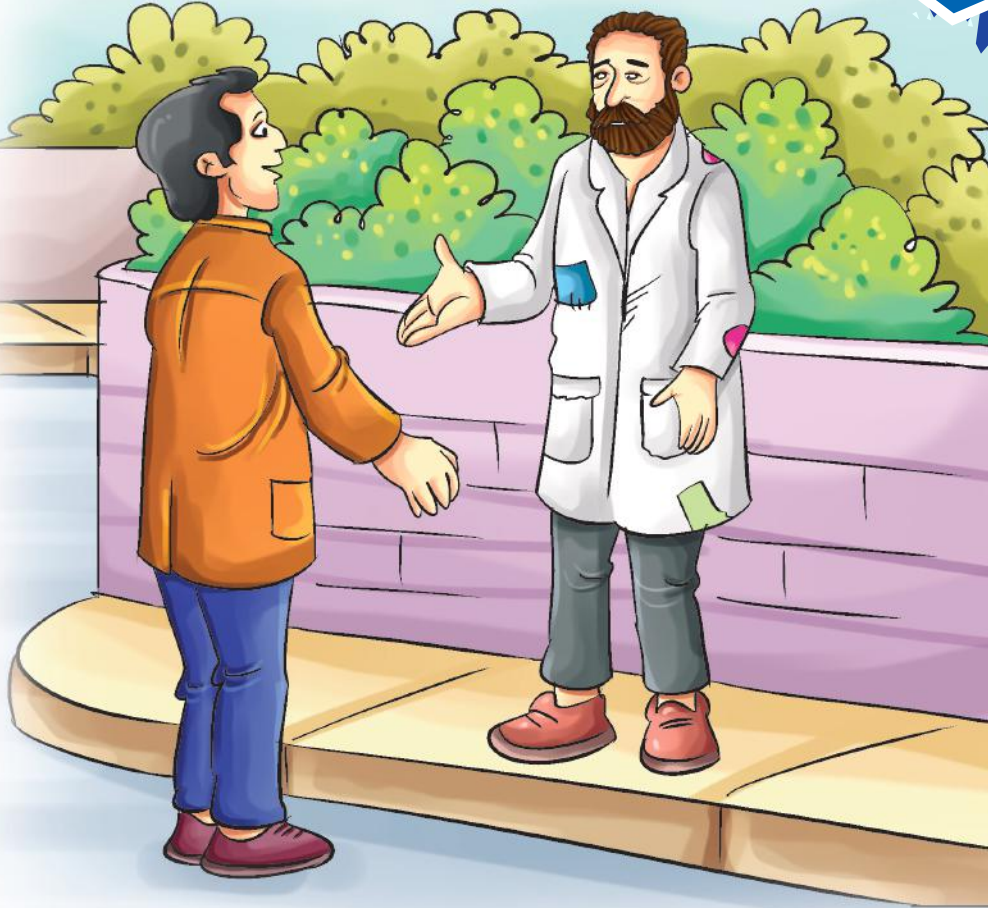
“Have *mercy* on the poor beggar,” he said. “I haven’t eaten anything for the past three days. I am very hungry. At one time, I served as a school teacher. But I lost my job due to some reasons.”

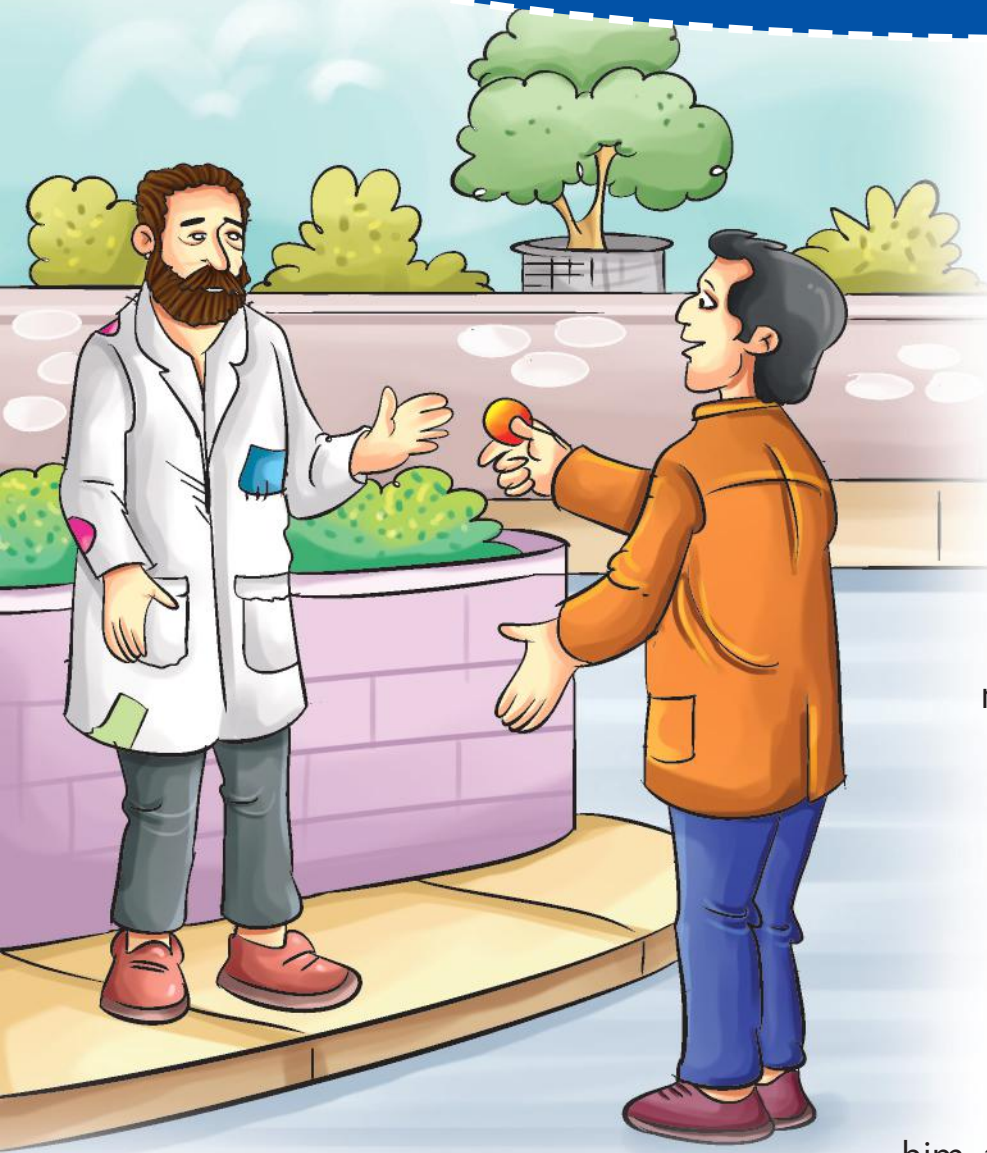
The lawyer looked at the beggar silently. He observed the minute details of the beggar—his eyes, the *ruddiness* on his cheeks and his *overcoat*.

“I’ve seen this man before,” said the lawyer to himself.

The beggar, however, kept speaking, “I have recently found a job for myself in Kaluga but do not have the *fare* for reaching there. Please help me.”

Sartoff kept on listening carefully. Then all of a sudden, his eyes fell on the beggar’s shoes. One shoe was high while the other was low. “I remember now! I saw you the other day in Sadovaya Street. You were begging there too. The only difference is that then you said you were a student and not a school teacher. Do you remember or not?”





The beggar was *taken aback* for a while but then said, “No-no, you are kindly mistaken. I am a former school teacher and nothing else.”

But the lawyer was clever. He was in fact *annoyed* with the beggar. “You liar,” he said.

The beggar finally gave up and said, “You are right. I am neither a teacher nor a student. I have no job. Please help me!”

Sartoff stood staring at him for sometime, and finally asked the beggar, “Are you willing to work?”

“Yes, certainly,” came the reply. Then the lawyer led him to his own house. On reaching

there, he asked for his cook, Olga. When she arrived, Sartoff said, “Olga, lead this man to the yard and he will chop some wood for us.” Olga did as she was told.

Sartoff sat and waited while the beggar was away in the *yard*, chopping wood. After sometime, he returned and said, “I have done my work.”

Sartoff was pleased and handed over a rouble in his hand, saying, “This is your reward. Return on the first day of every month.”

The beggar left happily. He would return every month to finish his task and receive the payment. Slowly, he also started doing other small jobs such as *shovelling* the snow, dusting the rugs and a few more for the lawyer.

One day the lawyer called him and said, “I am pleased with your work. Now tell me one thing. Can you read and write?” “Why! Of course, I can,” answered the beggar excitedly. “In that case, I have a better job for you,” said the lawyer.

Handing over a letter to the beggar, he said, "Take this to a friend of mine and he will give you a job." The beggar was excited and thanked Sartoff. Just as he was about to leave, Sartoff asked him, "What is your name?"

"Lushkoff," came the reply.

Two years passed by since the two had met. Then finally, one day as Sartoff was buying a ticket outside a theatre, he ran to Lushkoff. "How are you doing?" asked Sartoff. Lushkoff smiled and said, "I earn five roubles a month. All thanks to you and, of course, your cook, Olga."

The lawyer was surprised and asked, "What has Olga got to do with it?"

Lushkoff smiled and said, "When we used to go inside the shed, Olga would sit and cry. On seeing my miserable condition, she felt very sad for my misfortunes. Out of pity, she would chop all the wood for me. I didn't chop a single log for you." Just then the bell rang and the door of the theatre opened to let the people in. "It's time to go," said Lushkoff and bowing his head he entered the gallery. Sartoff stood there dumbstruck.



Word Treasure

deserted : empty

ruddiness : redness

fare : money paid for travel

annoyed : angry

shovelling : removing

mercy : pity

overcoat : long coat worn on top

taken aback : surprised

yard : an open area outside the house



EXERCISE TIME

Comprehension Skills

A. Tick (✓) the correct option :

1. It was a cold winter afternoon and the streets looked quite _____.
a. busy b. open c. deserted
2. He observed the _____ details of the beggar.
a. minute b. written c. second
3. One shoe was _____ while the other was low.
a. short b. high c. up
4. He was in fact _____ with the beggar.
a. happy b. satisfied c. annoyed
5. Sartoff sat and _____ while the beggar was away in the yard, _____ wood.
a. waited, chopping b. chopping, waiting c. waited, waiting

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct option :

shovelling, reasons, clever, letter, high, miserable

1. The beggar lost his job due to some _____.
2. The lawyer was very _____.
3. The lawyer handing over a _____ to the beggar.
4. Olga would cry to see the _____ condition.

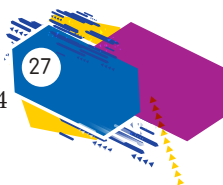
C. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statements :

1. The name of the beggar was Sartoff.
2. The beggar was a former teacher in a respected school.
3. Sartoff observed the minute details of the beggar.
4. The lawyer led the beggar to his friend's house.
5. Sartoff was satisfied with Lushkoff's work.



D. Answer the following questions :

1. Who stopped Sartoff on the way ?
2. Describe the appearance of the beggar.
3. Where had Sartoff seen the beggar earlier ?
4. Did Sartoff help the beggar ?



5. Who was Olga ?

6. Where did the two people meet after two years ?

Essential Grammar

E. Give other two forms of the following verbs :

Present Indefinite

Past Indefinite

Past Participle

1. arise

2. become

3. draw

4. choose

5. cling

6. dig

7. drive

8. fall

Essential Speaking

F. Olga chopped all the logs of wood for Lushkoff. What does this tell you about her character?

- She is a timid lady
- She is a powerful lady.
- She is full of kindness.
- She loves to do good to other people.

G. Choose the correct answer and discuss it in the class.

Essential Writing

H. Write a brief summary of the story in your own words.