

Chapter- 10

The Beggar

STUDY NOTES

- Lushkoff, due to his alcoholism, is no longer able to work and has to resort to begging, in order to survive, and resorts to lying about his misfortune to get money from strangers. Sergei shows Lushkoff little or no compassion, believing that hard work will cure him of his homelessness and addiction to alcohol.
- Though Sergie's suggestion does not work for Lushkoff, the kindness of Olga, changes his life and he gives up drinking. It is through listening and talking to Olga that Lushkoff sees the error of his ways and is able to mend his life.
- Though it is true that Sergei provided the impetus (or work) for Lushkoff to change, it is Olga who should be given full credit for the compassion and kindness that she showed to Lushkoff.
- If it was not for Olga, Lushkoff's life would not have changed for the better. It is also worth noting that Sergei is allowing his ego to take credit for helping Lushkoff improve his life.
- Through some critics might suggest that Lushkoff continued to lie to Olga about being unable to chop the wood and played on her good nature, it is more likely that Lushkoff, because of his alcoholism was unable to physically exert himself.
- Something that is lost on Sergei. It is also worth noting that though Sergei thinks he is acting out of charity, he is in fact gaining something. He is getting his wood chopped.
- He is not acting selflessly, though, would like other to see him in that light. Whether it be chopping the wood or helping to move furniture.
- He cleans his soul by way of paying Lushkoff and in many ways patronising him. At no stage in the story is there a sense that Sergei understands Lushkoff's alcoholism.

- Olga is perhaps the most important character in the story because of her behaviour. She helps Lushkoff by chopping the wood and giving him advice on the evils alcohol.
- Lushkoff is grateful to Olga, something that the reader becomes aware of, when he is talking to Sergei at the theatre. Despite the passing of time, he has not forgotten all that Olga has done for him, which appears to come as a surprise to Sergei.

