

One of Timothy's favourite amusements was to stalk anyone who should play with him, and so, when I came to live with Grandfather, I became one of the tiger's favourites. With a crafty look in his glittering eyes, and his body crouching, he would creep closer and closer to me, suddenly making a dash for my feet, rolling over on his back and kicking with delight, and pretending to bite my ankles.

He was by this time the size of a full-grown retriever, and when I took him out for walks, people on the road would give us a wide berth. When he pulled hard on his chain, I had difficulty in keeping up with him. His favourite place in the house was the drawing room, and he would make himself comfortable on the long sofa, reclining there with great dignity, and snarling at anybody who tried to get him off.

Timothy had clean habits, and would scrub his face with his paws exactly like a cat. He slept at night in the cook's quarters, and was always delighted at being let out by him in the morning.

'One of these days', declared Grandfather in her prophetic manner, 'we are going to find Timothy sitting on Mahmoud's bed, and no sign of the cook except his clothes and shoes !'

Of course, it never came to that, but when Timothy was about six months old a change came over him; he grew steadily less friendly. When out for a walk with me, he would try to steal away to stalk a cat or someone's pet Pekinese. Sometimes at night we would hear frenzied cackling from the poultry house and in the morning there would be feathers lying all over the veranda. Timothy had to be chained up more often. And, finally, when he began to talk Mahmoud about the house with what looked-like villainous intent, Grandfather decided it was time to transfer him to a zoo.

The nearest zoo was at Lucknow, two hundred miles away. Reserving a first class compartment for himself and Timothy -no one would share a compartment with them- Grandfather took him to Lucknow where the zoo authorities were only too glad to receive as a gift a well fed and fairly civilized tiger.

Comprehension check:

- 1) Who are there in this part of the story ?
- 2) Who named the tiger cub and who brought it up ?
- 3) What was the diet of the tiger cub ?
- 4) Who were Timothy's companions at home ?
- 5) What was Timothy's favorite amusement ? How did the writer become Timothy's favourite ?
- 6) What kind of change came over Timothy, when he was six months old ?
- 7) Grandfather decided to transfer Timothy to a zoo. Why ?
- 8) Where did Grandfather take him and how ?
- 9) Do you think Timothy will be happy at the new place ?

Read the last part of the story and see whether your prediction is right or wrong.

III

About six months later, when my grandparents were visiting relatives in Lucknow, Grandfather took the opportunity of calling at the zoo to see how Timothy was getting on. I was not there to accompany him, but I heard all about it when he returned to Dehra.

Arriving at the zoo, Grandfather made straight for the particular cage in which Timothy had been locked up. The tiger was there, crouched in a corner, full-grown and with a magnificent striped coat.

'Hello Timothy !' said Grandfather and, climbing the mailing with ease, he put his arm through the bars of the cage.

The tiger approached the bars, and allowed Grandfather to put both hands around his head. Grandfather stroked the tiger's forehead and ticked his ear, and, whenever he growled, smacked him across the mouth, which was his old way of keeping him quiet.

He licked Grandfather's hands and only sprang away when a leopard in the next cage snarled at him. Grandfather 'shoed' the leopard away, and the tiger returned to lick his hands; but every now and then the leopard would rush at the bars, and the tiger would slink back to his corner.

A number of people had gathered to watch the reunion when a keeper pushed his way through the crowd and asked Grandfather what he was doing.

'I'm talking to Timothy', said Grandfather. 'Weren't you here when I gave him to the zoo six months ago?'

'I haven't been here very long', said the surprised keepers, 'Please continue your conversation. But I have never been able to touch him myself, he is always very bad tempered.'

'Why don't you put him some where else?' Suggested Grandfather. 'That leopard keeps frightening him. I'll go and see the Superintendent about it.'

Grandfather went in search of the Superintendent of the zoo, but found that he had gone home early; and so, after wandering about the zoo for a little while, he returned to Timothy's cage to say goodbye. It was beginning to get dark.

He had been stroking and slapping Timothy for about five minutes when he found another keeper observing him with some alarm. Grandfather recognized him as the keeper who had been there when Timothy had first come to the zoo.

'You remember me', said Grandfather. 'Now why don't you transfer Timothy to another cage, away from this stupid leopard?'

'But- sir-' stammered the keeper, 'it is not your tiger'.

'I know, I know' said Grandfather testily. 'I realize he is no longer mine. But you might at least take a suggestion or two from me'.

'I remember your tiger very well,' said the keeper. 'He died two months ago.'

'Died'! exclaimed Grandfather.

'Yes, Sir, of pneumonia. This tiger was trapped in the hills only last month, and he is very dangerous!'

Grandfather could think of nothing to say. The tiger was still licking his arm, with increasing relish. Grandfather took what seemed to him an age to withdraw his hand from the cage.

With his face near the tiger's he mumbled, 'Goodnight, Timothy', and giving the keeper a scornful look, walked briskly out of the zoo.

Ruskin Bond

Comprehension check :

- 1) Read the last part of the story and say what it is about.
- 2) When did Grandfather visit the zoo and why ?
- 3) What did Grandfather do at the cage where Timothy was kept ?
- 4) How did the tiger behave towards Grandfather?
- 5) What did he suggest the Keeper ?
- 6) Was the tiger really Timothy ? How do you know this ?
- 7) What did the Keeper say to Grandfather about the tiger ?
- 8) What made Grandfather give a scornful look to the keeper ?
- 9) Which character in this story do you like most and why ?
- 10) Can you give another title to the story ? Give reasons for your new title ?

C. Glossary :

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| expedition | : | party / trip |
| sumptuous | : | impressive |
| howdah | : | a seat for riding on the back of an elephant or a camel, often for more than one person |
| stroll | : | a slow relaxed / leisurely walk |
| intricate | : | having a lot of different parts and small details that fit together |
| tempting | : | attractive |
| mongrel | : | a kind of dog (that is a mixture of different breeds) |
| dart | : | run suddenly |
| stalk | : | follow stealthily / quietly |
| crouch | : | bend the knees and bring the upper body forward and down. |
| retriever | : | a large dog with thick black or light brown fur |

D. Writing :

Answer the following questions in about fifty words.

- 1) Who was Timothy ? What made Grandfather to bring him home with him ?
- 2) Who were Timothy's companions and how was he brought up at home ?
- 3) Why did Grandfather decide to transfer Timothy to a zoo ?
- 4) What things did Grandfather do at the cage when he visited the zoo ?
- 5) How did the tiger react to Grandfather's activities ?
- 6) What made Grandfather become so sad and what happened to him in the end ?
- 7) Can you suggest some more lines to end the story in a different way ?

E. Activity :**Activity -1**

Read the statements under column 'A' and write the names of the characters under 'B' (Who said) and the names under 'C' (To whom?). The first one has been done for you.

| 'A' | 'B' | 'C' |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Statements of the Characters (What?) | Who said ? | To whom ? |
| I become one of the tiger's favourites I'm talking to Timothy. It is not your tiger. I realize he is no longer mine. He died two months ago. Good night ! Timothy | The writer | The readers |

Activity-II

Read the following jumbled sentences and arrange them in proper order to get the summary of the story, '**The Tiger in The House**':

- 1) Grandfather took Timothy to a zoo at Lucknow.
- 2) Timothy was brought up properly by attractive and good diet.
- 3) Timothy was discovered by Grandfather on a hunting expedition and was brought home.
- 4) The zoo authorities were glad to receive the well fed and fairly civilized tiger as a gift.
- 5) When Timothy was about six months old, a change came over him and he became less friendly and more furious.
- 6) About six months later, Grandfather visited the zoo to see Timothy, the tiger.
- 7) Grandfather left the zoo very sadly.
- 8) The Keeper said that the tiger had died two months before.
- 9) Timothy lived happily like one of the members of the writer's family.



THE BEGGAR

A. Before you read :

- 1) Before you start reading the story, take a close look at the title '**The Beggar**'. What do you think the writer is going to tell us in the story ?
- 2) You must have seen beggars everywhere in our country. Where do you find more beggars ?
- 3) How do you feel when you come across a beggar begging at your door or a beggar requests you for help ?
- 4) Do you like people to beg ? Why ? / Why not ?
- 5) Can we have a society without beggars ? Suggest some ways.

Now read the story to know what the writer tells us about the beggars.

B. The Text

I

"Kind sir, have pity; turn your attention to poor, hungry man ! For three days I have had nothing to eat; I haven't five copecks for a lodging. I swear it before God. For eight years I was a village school teacher and then I lost my place through **intrigues**. It is a year now since I have had anything to do."

The advocate, Sergei, looked at the ragged, fawn- coloured overcoat of the suppliant, at his dull, drunken eyes, at the red spot on either cheek, and it seemed to him as if he had seen this man somewhere before.

"I have now had an offer of a position in the province of Kaluga," the mendicant went on. "But I haven't the money to get there. Help me kindly; I am ashamed to ask, but - I am obliged to by circumstances".

Sergei's eyes fell on the man's overshoes, one of which was high and the other low, and he suddenly remembered something.

"Look here, it seems to me I met you the day before yesterday in Sadovya Street," he said; 'but you told me then that you were a student who had been expelled, and not a village school teacher. Do you remember ?"

"N-no, that can't be so", mumbled the beggar, taken aback. "I am a village school teacher, and if you like I can show you my papers".

"Have done with lying ! You called yourself a student and even told me that you had been expelled for. Don't you remember ?"

Sergei flushed and turned from the ragged creature with an expression of disgust.

"This is dishonesty, my dear sir !" he cried angrily. "This is swindling- I shall send the police for you. Damn you !".

"Sir !" He said, laying his hand on his heart, "the fact is I was lying ! I am neither a student nor a school teacher. All that was fiction. Formerly I sang in a Russian choir and was sent away for drunkenness. But what else can I do ? I can't get along without lying. No one will give me anything when I tell the truth, what can I do ?"

"What can you do ? You ask what you can do ?" cried Sergei, coming close to him. "Work ! That's what you can do ! You must work !"

"What-yes. I know that myself; but where can I find work ?"

"How would you like to chop wood for me ?"

"I wouldn't refuse to do that, but in these days even skilled wood-cutters find themselves sitting without bread."

"Will you come and chop wood for me?"

"Yes sir, I will".

"Very well; we'll soon find out."

Comprehension check :

- 1) Who are the characters described in this part of the story? What are they doing?
- 2) Which country are they from ? How do you know this ?
- 3) What does the beggar look like ?
- 4) Did Sergei get angry with the beggar ? Why ?
- 5) Do you think the beggar was lying ? What made him tell lies ?
- 6) Did Sergei help the beggar to find work ? What kind of work did he suggest for the beggar ?
- 7) The advocate asked the beggar to do hard work like chopping wood. Was it a punishment or help ?
- 8) Do you think the beggar would give up begging and work for Sergei ?

What will happen next ? Will the beggar work for Sergei ? Read the next part to know the answer.



Sergei hastened along, rubbing his hands. He called his cook out of the kitchen.

“Here, Olga,” he said, “take this gentleman into the woodshed and let him chop wood.”

The scarecrow of a beggar shrugged his shoulders, as if in perplexity, and went irresolutely after the cook. It was obvious from his gait that he had not consented to go and chop wood because he was hungry and wanted work, but simply from pride and shame and because he had been trapped by his own words. It was obvious too that his strength had been undermined by vodka and that he was unhealthy and did not feel the slightest inclination for toil.

Sergei hurried into the dining room. From its windows one could see the woodshed and everything that went on in the yard. Standing at the window, Sergei saw the

cook and the beggar come out into the yard by the back door and make their way across the dirty snow to the shed. Olga glared wrathfully at her companion, shoved him aside with her elbow, unlocked the shed, and angrily banged the door.

Next he saw the pseudo-teacher scat himself on a log and become lost in thought with his red cheeks resting on his fists. The woman flung down an axe at his feet, spat angrily, and, juggling from the expression of her lips, began to scold him. The beggar irresolutely pulled a billet of wood towards him, set it up between his feet, and tapped it feebly with the axe. The billet wavered and fell down. The beggar again pulled it to him, blew on his freezing hands, and tapped it with his axe cautiously, as if afraid of hitting his overshoe or of cutting his finger; the stick of wood again fell to the ground.

Sergei's anger had vanished and he now began to feel a little sorry and ashamed of himself for having set a spoiled, drunken, perhaps sick man to work at menial labour in the cold.

An hour later Olga came in and announced that the wood had all been chopped.

"Good ! Give him half a rouble," said Sergei. "If he wants to he can come back and cut wood on the first day of each month. We can always find work for him."

On the first of the month the **waif** made his appearance and again earned half a rouble, although he could barely stand on his legs. From that day on he often appeared in the yard and every time work was found for him. Now he would shovel snow, now put the wood-shed in order; now beat the dust out of rugs and mattresses. Every time he received from twenty to forty copecks, and once, even a pair of old trousers was sent out to him.

When Sergei moved into another house he hired him to help in the packing and hauling of the furniture. This time the waif was sober, gloomy, and silent. He hardly touched the furniture, and walked behind the wagons hanging his head, not even making pretence of appearing busy. He only shivered in the cold and became embarrassed and his tattered, fancy overcoat, after the moving was over Sergei sent for him.

“Well, I am happy that my words have taken effect”, he said handing him a rouble. “Here’s for your pains. I see you are sober and have no objection to work. What is your name ?”

“Lushkoff”.

“Well, Lushkoff, I can now offer you some other, cleaner employment. Can you write ?”

“ I can.”

“Then take this letter to a friend of mine tomorrow and you will be given some copying to do. Work hard, don’t drink, and remember what I have said to you. Goodbye!”

Pleased at having put a man on there right path, Sergei tapped lushkoff kindly on the shoulder and even gave him his hand at parting. Lushkoff took the letter, and from that day forth came no more to the yard for work.

Comprehension check :

- 1) What is this part of the story about ? Did Lushkoff agree to chop wood for Sergei?
- 2) What did Sergei see from the window of the dining room ?
- 3) What other work did Lushkoff have to do besides chopping wood ?
- 4) What kind of person was Sergei, Kind/ cruel ? How do you know this ?
- 5) Sergei said “Well, I am happy that my words have taken effect. Why did Sergei say so ? Was he right in saying this ?
- 6) Did Lushkoff know reading and writing ? What did Sergei want Lushkoff to do for earning money ?
- 7) Do you expect that Lushkoff will get a better job and he won’t come to Sergei for chopping wood ?

(Read the last part to know about Sergei’s future life.)