

# **The Bet: Short Story**

Anton Chekhov



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At a banker's party fifteen years ago, a young lawyer defends the position that life in prison is far less humane than capital punishment. The banker disagrees and proposes they bet—two million rubles in exchange for fifteen years of solitary confinement. The terms of their agreement allow the lawyer to have access to books, food, and wine, and over the course of his imprisonment, he reads widely. Nearing the end of the fifteen years, the banker comes to realize that he will be ruined by the lawyer's winning of the bet, and both men find their lives changed by the lessons that the bet has taught them.

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