

For residents of [Your Community]

THIS WEEK'S STORY · WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2026 · A 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION

"The Bet"

by Anton Chekhov · Russia, 1889

THE STORY IN BRIEF

At a dinner party, a wealthy banker and a young lawyer argue about whether a long life shut away from the world is better than no life at all. They settle it with a bet: two million rubles if the lawyer can live alone, with no human company, for fifteen years.

PLEASE READ IT BEFORE WE MEET

It is in Sunday's edition of The World Desk (September 27). Read it in large print, or press Listen to hear it read aloud. It takes about 20 minutes.

THREE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. What do you think fifteen years of solitude would do to a person?
2. If you had fifteen quiet years with nothing but books, what would you read?
3. What would you give up two million rubles for?

SET THE TABLE

Strong black tea with a slice of lemon and a spoonful of jam on the side, the old Russian way, with plain biscuits.

Day

Time

Room

For residents of [Your Community]

The young lawyer says, "It's better to live somehow than not to live at all." Did he still believe it fifteen years later? Do you?

MY NOTES: A LINE, A MOMENT OR A QUESTION TO BRING

Come to talk, or just to listen. Coffee is on us.

Want to know more about Chekhov? Try [britannica.com/biography/Anton-Chekhov](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anton-Chekhov). **Next week:** "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant (France, 1884).