

MISERY (THE LAMENT) BY ANTON CHEKHOV

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INTRODUCTION

Iona and his son Kuzma Ionitch are very close and affectionate. However, Iona suffers the biggest tragedy of a parent's life when his son falls ill and die. Despondent, Iona gives him a proper funeral and goes back to his horse-carriage after only a week.

He transports people on his horse for a living and he hopes that he would find a patient ear or two in his customers to unburden his sadness and share his grief.

- **The first man he meets is a sturdy and formidable army man. He is rough and polite. He hears Iona's plight but interrupts it when he complains about Iona's reckless driving. He scampers off the vehicle soon after.**
- **Discontent and grief-stricken Iona meets a band of three young men next. He invites them on board even though they are heavily intoxicated. Iona narrates his sad story but they are all too wasted to pay attention.**

SHARING SORROW

One of them tries to soothe Iona by saying that everything dies in the end. But it was more related to his own sad condition than to Iona's agony and loss.

Iona meets a delivery guy but he also dismisses him by claiming he is in a rush to complete a job. Unrequited and disturbed, Iona decides to return to the stables. There he meets a cabman. Iona opens up to him about his son's untimely death but the man falls asleep in the middle of Iona's words.

THE LOYAL HORSE

This feels like a punch to the gut for Iona and he decides to feed his horse some hay. While he is alone with his loyal horse he pours his heart out to the animal. The horse listens to Iona patiently as if trying to console his master.

Finally, even though in a crowd of thousand people, Iona finds it impossible to find a compassionate heart, he finds empathy is a silent animal.

MORAL LESSON

The story is a stinging rebuke of the modern society where there seems to be the insurmountable distance between people who live and breathe the same air and eat the same food but are too busy to share each other's sorrows.

Sometimes all it takes is patience and good intentions but they seem to be getting rare to find.
