



The Greedy and the stars

My name is Roger Dubois. A few years ago, I had everything I wanted. I had a wife, and two children. Today, I've lost everything.

I was rich, so I gambled my money at the casino and then, I lost it. The bailiff had to take my gorgeous residence in Philadelphia, so I moved with my family to a little detached house in New York. Unfortunately, my addiction got worse. So my wife divorced me and took the children with her. I almost never see them... Today, I live in a little apartment in a poor district of New York. I can hardly eat as I need, sleep, dress properly, and pay my rent. I really needed help...

I had an old friend, called Arsène Tessier, who could help me... He was a very rich middle-class man, but he was also extremely stingy, probably the stingiest person I have ever known! He kept all his money in a safe sealed by ten locks that he, and he alone had the precious key. He had a huge manor house, but he didn't have many friends, because he was greedy. When I knew him (around twenty years ago), we were in the Army. He was a military governor, and I was a simple soldier. We were good friends after we left the Army, but we lost contact over the years.

My misery became unbearable to me, so I decided to see him, hoping he would financially help me... When he saw me, I felt he was shocked because of his look.

"Oh Roger! What happened? Why do you look so tired and in a bad shape?" asked Arsène with a rare anxiety.

I told him exactly what happened to me these last ten years.

"I'm here because you, and only you can help me now!"

He hesitated before saying: "What can I do for you?"

"I would like you to lend me a bit of money for me to forget all my troubles and return to a normal life!"

I knew how precious his money was to him, so I stared at him in a pleading way (something I usually never do). He hesitated. I think he wanted to help me, because I was his only friend, but I still felt the greedy man inside him.

“Ok, he said. But to one condition: you have to spend an entire night at the top of the watch tower, naked, and without anything to get warm.”

We were in a deep winter, so the nights were icy and the wind, frosty. The conditions were not very nice, but I had to accept, I really needed this money! So the following night, Arsène locked me at the top of the watch tower, outdoor.

The night was long, very long... It was extremely cold, and the only blanket I had to protect me against it, was my skin, as had required Arsène. My teeth were chattering, my whole body was shaking, my hair stood up on my icy body, some vapor went out of my mouth at each of my breath, just like a dragon breathing fire, my lips turned blue, and my brown hair started to break, because of the cold. I almost died. However, I survived.

The following day, Arsène met me at the top of the watch tower.

“So, Roger, how was your night? Did you meet somebody or see something?” He asked me.

“No, I haven’t seen anybody or heard something. The night was dark, and only enlightened by stars.”

“Stars? The greedy exclaimed. So their light warmed you! You cheated! We don’t have a deal anymore!”

I came back to my miserable apartment, distraught. However, I invited Arsène for diner a few weeks later. It was occasional given my situation.

Arsène came in my living room.

“Let’s see if the roast is cooked.” I said.

He followed me in the kitchen, and he saw I hung a pot to the ceiling, above the gas cooker.

“The roast will never be cooked, laughed Arsène. You have to put the pot on the gas cooker, and not to hang it to the ceiling!”

“Why not, I replied. If the infinitely remote stars could warm me, I don’t see why this roast wouldn’t cook!”

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