

# Irony a common theme assignment

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Although they have very different plots with vastly different different characters, a common theme is cleverly intertwined by the authors of the following stories. “ The Interlopers,” by Saki narrates a duel between two neighbors, torn apart by their forefather’s grudge. “ Gimpel the Fool,” by Isaac Bashevis Singer, is told by a man thought of as a fool, and forgives all those who mistreat and abuse him. The play “ Pygmalion,” by Bernard Shaw shows the story of a normal flower girl becoming an upper class lady, and all the woes that come with it. The Interlopers,” “ Gimpel the Fool,” and “ Pygmalion” all share the common theme of irony. Even in such different contexts, irony is seen in these tales. “ The Interlopers” has an ironic ending that shocks the reader. Saki starts the short story with Ulrich von Gradwitz seeking his nemesis, Georg Znaeym in a vast forest he calls his own. The reason for such hate would be many generations before dispute over land and game, which was still existed. When they both face each other, they are both prepared to kill one another, until a tree falls on them.

After endless bickering under the tree, Gradwitz tells Znaeym, “ Neighbor, if you will help me to bury the old quarrel I- I will ask you to be my friend,” (4) who then agrees. After this, “ The Interlopers” abruptly ends with the two men ironically being eaten alive by a pack of wolves. In “ Gimpel the Fool,” the main character, Gimpel, is treated as a fool all his life in a village, and doesn’t let it bother him, which further convinces the townspeople of his ignorance.

This is ironic since Gimpel is actually the smartest of the bunch by thinking to himself, “ let it pass” (1) even though he is labeled throughout the story as a fool. Till the end, the village makes a fool out of Gimpel, through forcing

him to marry an outwardly unfaithful woman to acting to his face as if they don't know that all children born from her have different fathers. Finally, after his wife's death, Gimpel leaves his sad little hometown. He then travels around the world, telling tales to many audiences, and enjoying pleasurable company.

Indeed, Gimpel was not a fool. In "Pygmalion," a phonetics professor, Mr. Higgins, takes the responsibility of training a lower class flower girl, to becoming an upper class woman, which has an ironic outcome due to the fact that her new lifestyle would seem be more comfortable, but in reality is not. Mr. Higgins is forced to teach Eliza the whole English language to her once again due to her own version containing words/sounds such as "Ah-ah-ah-ow-ow-ow-oo!" (1749) Eliza already being beautiful, it only takes washing up to look like a lady.

Resulting from becoming a proper lady, ironically Eliza has to sell herself in order to find a husband, while when she was a flower girl she just had to sell flowers. Keeping up with the superficial world of appearances with everyone watching her every move proves to be too stressful, and Eliza eventually breaks. She then leaves Mr. Higgins to marry someone he considered a fool, Freddy, who was smitten with her. In all these stories, different types of irony is expressed. "The Interlopers" has situational irony since the result of the truce of the two men did not result in their freedom, but contrary, their death. In "Gimpel the Fool," there is verbal irony since Gimpel is purposely labeled as a fool by the author though the truth is the opposite. "Pygmalion" has dramatic irony since Eliza believes her life will be better as an upper class woman, though we know that will not be the case, as she herself also

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finds out the next day. Using irony not only adds twists to these stories, but also contributes to character development and increases suspense.