

Gimpel the fool



Gimpel The Fool Thesis: Although Gimpel appeared to be a fool, he was really a wise man. I. Introduction A. Thesis II. Gimpel A Fool A. Tricks played on him by towns people B. Marriage to Elka III.

Gimpel A Wise Man A. Love of children B. Religious beliefs C. Rejection of devils influence IV. Type of Story V.

Conclusion A. Restate thesis " Gimpel the Fool" is a story of laughter and sadness. Gimpel was a boy that had a reputation of being a fool since his early age. People were always playing tricks at him. Although Gimpel appeared to be a fool, he was really a wise man. He showed he was a wise man by loving the children that were not his, being a believer in his religion and by not taking advice from the Devil.

There are many ways in which Gimpel appeared to be a fool. First the young men of the village spent a great deal of time making fun of poor Gimpel (Kazin 353). It appeared that he was taken in by their stories to an extreme degree. Even as he went about his employment in the bakery, the townspeople continued to tell Gimpel fantastic tales that became more and more fantastic (Siegel 366). An example of people making fun of him was the following: " Gimpel, there is a fair in heaven; Gimpel, the rabbi gave birth to a calf in the seventh month; Gimpel, a cow flew over the roof and laid brass eggs. Gimpel, while you stand here scraping with your bakers shovel the Messiah has come. The death heaven arisen.

What do your mean? Gimpel said. I heard no one blowing the rams horn! The kid said. Are you deaf? And all began to cry, We heard it, we heard! Gimpel, your father and mother have stood up from the grave. They are looking for

you" (Singer 79). Because Gimpel believed everything that everyone told him he became the foolish boy of the town. The reason why Gimpel believed what people told him was that all of these stories were kind of real to him.

Each story of each person would reveal any want and desires that they might have in their "psyche". That was why the story was so easily to invent (Giemer 850). The worst trick that the townspeople did to him was the marriage to Elka. Elka was the towns slut. She already had a child that she said was her brother.

Gimpel, being the fool that everyone knew, believed every word that she said (Geimer 850). Then Gimpel marries Elka without knowing all her real story. Even though the people of the town knew the truth no one told him anything. In addition, on their wedding day a guy brought a crib because Elka was pregnant with another child from another man that was not Gimpel (Kazin 353). When they started living together Elka did not allow Gimpel to use the same bed with her. After four months, Elka appears with another baby (Geimer 850).

She tells Gimpel that the baby was premature. Then Gimpel tells her "Is he not a little too premature." However the thing was that Gimpel never slept with her so he must not have known how babies were formed (Singer 82). Another thing was that Elka was always with other men instead of Gimpel. At one time Gimpel caught her with another man, but she denied everything. Elka "swore and cursed" him. But he continued with her even though she was not faithful to him.

In many ways Gimpel was a wise man. The love of the children was very important to Gimpel. He always thought that they were his. When Elka became sick she told Gimpel the truth that the kids were not his and she was never faithful to Gimpel (Geimer 850-851). This was Gimpel's reaction: "What is there to forgive? You have been a good and faithful wife. Woe, Gimpel!" She said.

It was ugly how I deceived you all these years. I want to go clean to my Maker, and so I have to tell you that the children are not yours." After he knew that the children were not his, he did not disown them. He continued to treat them the same. When he went to retire he took most of his money out of the bank and divided the money into equal parts for each one of them (Singer 86-87). Furthermore Gimpel's religious beliefs are very strong.

He was Jewish and his beliefs in the religion did not let him be a bad person. Even when he knew the truth of him being mocked by others, Gimpel does not care. The only thing he does is forgive everyone and continue his life (Kazin 353). An example of this occurs when Gimpel finds Elka with another man and he goes to the rabbi to tell him what happened: "I said to the rabbi, What shall I do? You must divorce her at once, said he. And what if she refuses? I asked. He said, You must serve the divorce, that is all you'll have to do.

I said, Well, all right, Rabbi. Let me think about it. There is nothing to think about, said he. You must not remain under the same roof with her." This shows that he was a religious person, because he went directly to the rabbi and did not go to anyone else. Because he was the fool, everyone knew he does

not get upset; and he forgave Elka and he dropped the charges that he made of her cheating on him. He said that he saw a shadow and he was wrong about Elka being with another man (Singer 83-85).

Gimpel shows his wisdom, too by rejecting the devils influence. At the end Gimpel gets a visit from the devil (Geimer 857), and this is what happened:

Devil: Gimpel, why do you sleep? Gimpel: What should I be doing? Eating kreplach? Devil: The whole world deceives you, and you ought to deceive the world in your turn. Gimpel: How can I deceive all the world? Devil: You might accumulate a bucket of urine every day and at night pour it into the dough. Let the sages of Frampol eat filth. Gimpel: What about judgment in the world to come? Devil: They have sold you a bill of goods and talked you into believing you carried a cat in your belly.

What nonsense! Gimpel: Well then, and is there a God? Devil: There is no God either. Gimpel: What, is here, then? Devil: A thick mere. Then one night Elka appeared in Gimpels dream. She told him to do not do that, because the only person he was deceiving was himself. After all he did not take any advice from the devil (Singer 87).

The story " Gimpel the Fool" was a wonderful and humorous story. This story presents a humorous psychological study as well as an analysis of the nature of reality. This kind of story can only be done by a " Jewish writer" (Kazin 353). For Singer people do not have to be " insane" to make this kind of story. From the beginning, Gimpel was not sure why people treated him like a fool.

His apparent foolishness consists in his taking the line of least resistance to avoid the " world" around him. The people around him mostly created the

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world that Gimpel lives (Buchen 363). Gimpel the intelligent " or sainted fool" was an invention of " Yiddish fiction." The way that Singer showed this character was in a different way that concludes that Gimpel was a creation of " irony" in way (Siegel 365). In conclusion Gimpel was a saint, he looked and acted like a fool because of his innocence. He showed that his foolishness was intelligence and because of his good heart he never let anyone suffer not even himself. The rejection of the devil showed his beliefs in God and the possession of a good and understanding heart.

Forgiving everyone of what they did to him was a wise thing to do. Here on earth it does not matter much if you are a fool like Gimpel who forgives and forgets; it only means that people can pick on you and make fun of you. However, in Gods view it is the most important and amazing thing to do. Gimpel himself showed everyone that being a fool has some benefits.

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