



Ivan the Fool: A Literary Fairy Tale (Leo Tolstoy Classics)

Leo Tolstoy

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Ivan the Fool

By Leo Tolstoy

A Literary Fairy Tale

"Ivan the Fool" (also known as "Ivan the Fool and his Two Brothers") is an 1886 short story (in fact, a literary fairy tale) by Leo Tolstoy, published in 1886.

It describes the struggles of three brothers and a sister with the Old Devil. The name "Ivan the Fool" hints to a popular hero of Russian folklore.

Simeon (a soldier)

Tarras-Briukhan ("Tarras the fat belly", a merchant)

Ivan (a fool)

Milania (a mute)

Although the story is usually considered a children's fairy tale, it is also used as an indication of Tolstoy's political leanings in support of Christian anarchism. Though his brothers are easily tempted by money and military power, unsophisticated Ivan, with his simple way of life, defeats the treacherous devil. Ivan eventually becomes the ruler of the country despite the lack of a standing army or currency. All of the citizens are welcome at Ivan's table, where workers are fed first and intellectuals (those without calluses on their hands) have to eat the leftovers.

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