

The Price of Fools

Once upon a time a certain peasant drove a wagonful of goods far and wide with his master's horses. He did this in order to make lots of money for his lord. At last he arrived home and his master, after taking from him all the money he had earned, decided to have some fun with the poor peasant.

“Where were you, Ivan?”

“Where wasn't I, master? I was everywhere—in Kiev, in Odessa, in Poltava.”

“What did you see there, Ivan?”

“I saw many, many things, Master.”

The rich man then said, “And what is the price of fools now, Ivan?” As he said this he laughed, thinking to make fun of the peasant. But Ivan replied calmly, “Well, that depends on the fools, Master. A peasant-fool naturally sells at a very low price, but a gentleman-fool like yourself brings in about a thousand!” When the peasant said this, his master was stunned with fury at the clever answer.