



CLASS X
ENGLISH LITERATURE READER
CHAPTER 4 - THE IMP AND THE PEASANT'S BREAD
(LEO TOLSTOY)

NOTES

1. **Imagery:** *The fox's, wolf's and swine's blood*, "*The Imp and the Peasant's Bread*" is a parable written by *Leo Tolstoy* and it is used to illustrate a moral lesson. It tells us the dangers of alcohol in our society.
2. The story is also titled "*Promoting a Devil*" also ("*The Imp And The Crust*")
3. Literary devices used with examples:
 - a) **Simile:** *Now they are raging like wolves.*
 - b) **Imagery :** *The fox's, wolf's and swine's blood*
 - c) **Metaphor:** "*If only he goes drinking, he will always be a beast!*"

SUMMARY

In the story "*The Imp and the Peasant's Bread*", the writer shows the harmful effects of alcohol on men in our society. As the title implies, it is the story of an imp who stole a peasant's bread with the intention of making him commit sin by swearing and calling on the *Devil*. But he failed in his attempt to convert the peasant into a sinner and this made his master, the *Devil* angry. He gave the imp three years' time to redeem himself and made the peasant fall into his trap and if he failed to do so the *Devil* threatened to punish the imp severely by dipping him in holy water. So, the frightened imp scampered back to earth to manipulate the peasant. He disguised himself as a labouring man and took service with the peasant. He advised the peasant for two years where to grow his corn and made him rich as he harvested his corn much more than he could consume.

Then, the imp showed him how strong drink could be made from the corn by mashing the grain and distilling spirit from it. The peasant consumed the drink and also gave to others. The peasant, under the influence of alcohol, rebuked his wife openly, mocked at the poor peasant and like a beast started fighting with others. The story ends with the *Devil* praising the imp for successfully transforming the honest peasant into a *corrupt soul*.
