



# The Wise Folk of Chelm

*Seymour Rossel*

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• Welcome to CHELM! •

A cornucopia of irrepressible characters awaits within **The Wise Folk of Chelm** to welcome you to Europe's most famous town of fools. All this, author Seymour Rossel explains, is to bring the Chelm tradition into the twenty-first century. For the past hundred years, most Chelm stories have been published for children though only a handful of the tales are child-appropriate. It is no great surprise that the same few stories regularly reappear while many of the best of the stories—those that have amused and bemused adults since the seventeenth century—largely go unseen.

For a decade, Rossel has combed the traditional Yiddish, Hebrew, and English canons of Chelm stories. He has turned up fascinating research on the origins of Chelm. He has experimented with telling the stories in so many ways to so many different groups that colleagues have taken to calling him "the *Houstoner Maggid*," which loosely translates as "the parable-maker from Houston." Indeed, it has been said--mainly by his wife and children--and with some justification--that he knows his way around Chelm better than around Houston.

**The Wise Folk of Chelm** is Rossel's new vision of the classic tales. First, the new heroes and heroines you will want to meet... Second, new streets to walk with them, new cafés and shops wherein to laugh with them, and new chances to attend the flamboyant, ever-surprising deliberations of Chelm's town council... Third, Rossel serves up a new kind of narrative that begs to be read out loud. He calls it "narrative slapstick" or "slapstick narrative." You'll call it entertainment.

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"**The Wise Folk of Chelm** is a delightful foray into the topsy-turvy world of the men and women of Chelm. A sweet, modern telling that will rekindle fond memories for those who grew up with the stories and bring smiles and laughter to those who have never before encountered Chelm." -- **Bob Alper**, rabbi and standup comic, author of *Life Doesn't Get Any Better Than This* and *A Rabbi Confesses*

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