

Tales from the Decameron: Day V

Fiametta's Story

Boccaccio

This short story is about sacrifice and willingness to give. Federigo Delgi Alberighi is in love with Madame Giovanna. However, the woman does not love him. He spends a great deal of money to win her affection but in vain. He gives up everything he has for her sake and when she knows, she agrees to marry him. As a result of marrying her, he does not only win her in marriage, but also her wealth.

The word "Fortune" is capitalized because it meant everything to people at that time. It determines people's lives. Fortune is not fair because it favours certain people without any reason. The story of Federigo is told by Goppo di Borghese. He says that Federigo is very faithful to the woman he loves. In spite of all the money he has wasted on her, he is still steadfast in his love for her. No one ever knew about his love except for Giovanna herself. Giovanna's husband falls sick and her husband makes all his wealth pass through the hands of his son. The writer does not mention the funeral procedures or the wife weeping for her husband. He wants to make his story light-hearted; he wants to maintain the humorous tone throughout the story.

Federigo loses all his wealth except for a hawk and a very small farm where he retires. Madame Giovanna's only son falls sick after his father's death. He is obsessed with Federigo's hawk. Thus, Madame Giovanna goes to ask Federigo for the hawk. She is in a dilemma and she does not know how to act. She knows that if she asks Federigo for that favour he will never hesitate to give her the hawk. Therefore, she decides to take advantage of his love for her and goes to him to take the hawk; Federigo is thrilled. The situation is ironic; he is offering her the very thing she is coming to ask for. He does not regret offering her the hawk. He is willing to give her everything he has. He kills it for her to eat. Her son dies after knowing about what Federigo has done. She finally decides to marry him.

The main theme of the story is true love which transcends the social boundaries and the financial status. One should be willing to give rather take all the time. Federigo loses all his fortune for the one he loves and never waits for a reward. He kills the only bird he has for the woman he loves to eat on dinner.

The plot is well-constructed as one even leads to the other naturally. It is linear and logical. The ending is expected since Federigo is rewarded for his true love.

The main characters in the story are Federigo and Giovanna. Federigo's character is flat and static. It does not develop or change. He is a kind man and he really loves Giovanna. This is emphasized by his actions. The readers accept the character and sympathize with it. We know about the character through narration. Madame Giovanna is a round character. She develops and agrees to marry Federigo when she knows how much he loves her. She finally learns that she should give. She finally learns that she should not depend on her charm to get everything she wants.

In the end, the reader is not surprised since the writer prepares for the ending by indicating it in the beginning.