

Author's Note

Villages like Chelm live in the footnotes of history. In this work of fiction, history lives in the footnotes. And there are occasions when the historical facts accidentally get in the way of a good story.

For example, mention of the construction of The Brooklyn Bridge sets the book near the end of the 19th century, but at that time Poland didn't exist. Furthermore, there was no king in Poland during this period, so several of the major turning points of the book seem to have been completely invented.

They say that history is written by the victors. If so, the Schlemiels lost.



Those who leave Chelm end up in Chelm.

Those who remain in Chelm are certainly in Chelm.

All roads lead to Chelm.

All the world is one big Chelm.

—I. B. Singer