

- The Happy Prince Summary

## The Happy Prince Summary

The Happy Prince is a touching story by Oscar Wilde about a beautiful statue of a prince who, after his death, sees the suffering of the poor in his city. A little swallow, who rests at the feet of the statue, becomes the prince's messenger. The prince asks the swallow to distribute his precious jewels and gold leaves to help the needy. The swallow obeys, giving a ruby to a poor seamstress, sapphires to a playwright and a match girl, and gold leaves to others in need. Despite the swallow's desire to migrate to Egypt, he stays to help the prince until he dies from the cold. The prince's leaden heart breaks, and both the heart and the dead swallow are taken to Heaven by an angel as the most precious things in the city.

### Key Elements

- **Characters:** The Happy Prince, the Swallow, the poor seamstress, the playwright, the match girl.
- **Themes:** Compassion, selflessness, social injustice, sacrifice, true happiness.
- **Setting:** A city with rich and poor people, where the statue stands.

### Textual Evidence

"The Happy Prince was a beautiful statue."

"The Happy Prince told him about the misery around him."

"The bird said that he was leaving for the House of Death."

## Solved Example

**Q:** Why did the swallow decide to stay with the Happy Prince instead of flying to Egypt?

**A:** The swallow was moved by the prince's compassion and the misery of the poor people. He decided to stay and help the prince distribute his jewels and gold to those in need, showing his selflessness and kindness.

## Practice Set

### Level 1 – Easy

- Who was the Happy Prince?
- What did the swallow do for the poor seamstress?

### Level 2 – Moderate

- Explain the significance of the swallow's sacrifice in the story.
- Describe the social message conveyed by the story.

### Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the symbolism of the Happy Prince's leaden heart and the swallow's death.
- Discuss how Oscar Wilde uses the characters to highlight social inequality.

## Answer Key

- **Who was the Happy Prince?** – A beautiful statue of a prince who cared deeply for the poor and wanted to help them.

- **What did the swallow do for the poor seamstress?** - The swallow gave her a ruby from the prince's sword to help her.
- **Explain the significance of the swallow's sacrifice in the story.** - The swallow gave up his migration to Egypt and eventually died to help the poor, symbolizing true selflessness and compassion.
- **Describe the social message conveyed by the story.** - The story highlights the importance of kindness and helping the less fortunate, criticizing social inequality.
- **Analyze the symbolism of the Happy Prince's leaden heart and the swallow's death.** - The leaden heart represents the prince's compassion and sorrow for the suffering, while the swallow's death shows the cost of true sacrifice.
- **Discuss how Oscar Wilde uses the characters to highlight social inequality.** - The prince and swallow represent compassion and generosity, while the poor characters show the harsh realities of poverty and neglect.

## Quick Reference

- **Happy Prince:** Statue that helps the poor.
- **Swallow:** Bird who helps distribute the prince's wealth.
- **Themes:** Compassion, sacrifice, social justice.
- **Setting:** City with rich and poor.

## Glossary

- **Seamstress:** A woman who sews clothes professionally.
- **Playwright:** A person who writes plays.
- **Sapphire:** A precious blue gemstone.
- **Plucked:** To pull or pick quickly.
- **Leaden:** Heavy and dull like lead.
- **Furnace:** A device for heating or melting.
- **Heap:** A large pile of things.