

## Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde

(fragment)

"All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. "Where shall I put up<sup>1</sup>?" he said; "I hope the town has made preparations."

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

"I will put up there," he cried; "it is a fine position, with plenty of fresh air." So he alighted<sup>2</sup> just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

"I have a golden<sup>3</sup> bedroom," he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. "What a curious thing!" he cried; "there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful<sup>4</sup>."

Then another drop fell.

"What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off<sup>5</sup>?" he said; "I must look for<sup>6</sup> a good chimney-pot," and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up<sup>7</sup>, and saw - Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow<sup>8</sup> was filled with pity.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I am the Happy Prince."

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<sup>1</sup> to put up = a găzdui, a adăposti

<sup>2</sup> to alight = a se așeza

<sup>3</sup> golden = auriu

<sup>4</sup> dreadful = îngrozitor

<sup>5</sup> keep (smth) off = a ține ceva la distanță

<sup>6</sup> to look for = a căuta

<sup>7</sup> to look up = a privi în sus

<sup>8</sup> swallow = rândunică

"Why are you weeping<sup>9</sup> then?" asked the Swallow; "you have quite drenched<sup>10</sup> me."

"When I was alive and had a human heart," answered the statue, "I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty<sup>11</sup> wall, but I never cared to ask what lay<sup>12</sup> beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers<sup>13</sup> called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness<sup>14</sup> and all the misery<sup>15</sup> of my city, and though<sup>16</sup> my heart is made of lead<sup>17</sup> yet I cannot chose but weep."

(...)

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger?" ...

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<sup>9</sup> to weep (weep, wept, wept) = a vărsa lacrimi, a plânge

<sup>10</sup> drenched = udat (până la piele)

<sup>11</sup> lofty = impunător, măreț, înalt

<sup>12</sup> to lie (lie, lay, lain) = a se întinde, a se situa

<sup>13</sup> courtier = curtean

<sup>14</sup> ugliness = urâțenie

<sup>15</sup> misery = durere, mizerie, nefericire

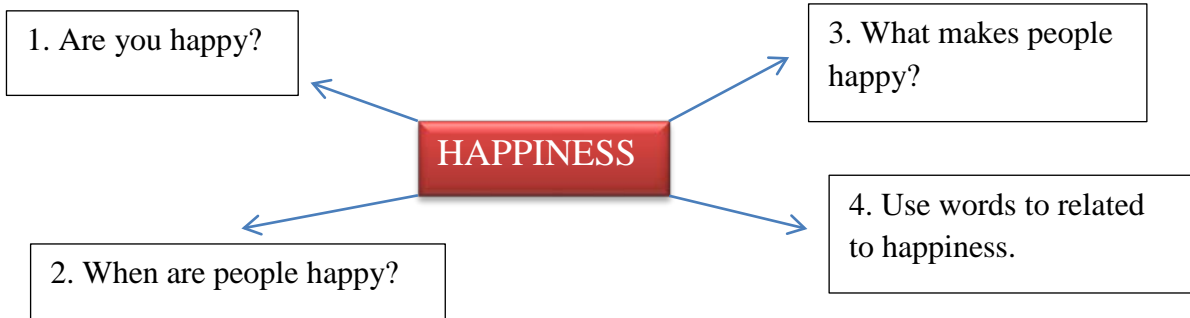
<sup>16</sup> though = deși

<sup>17</sup> lead = plumb

# Activities

## • PREREADING ACTIVITIES:

1. Look at the picture and answer the following questions:
  - a) What does the Prince look like?
  - b) How do you think the Prince and the bird feel?
  - c) What is the place they are in? How can you tell?
  - d) What kind of story do you think you are going to read? Scary, funny, sad? Give reasons why you chose a certain answer.
  - e) Give another title to this story based upon this picture.
  
2. Think about what happiness means and answer the questions:



1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

- WHILE READING:

3. Read the text and circle the correct answer:

**a) The Prince's eyes were full of.....:**

- A) tears    B) rain    C) glass

**b) When the Prince was alive, he lived in.....**

- A) a house    B) flat    C) palace

**c) People called him the Happy Prince because he was always**

.....

- A) laughing and singing    B) crying and shouting    C) singing and dancing

**d) The Prince cried when he saw his people.....**

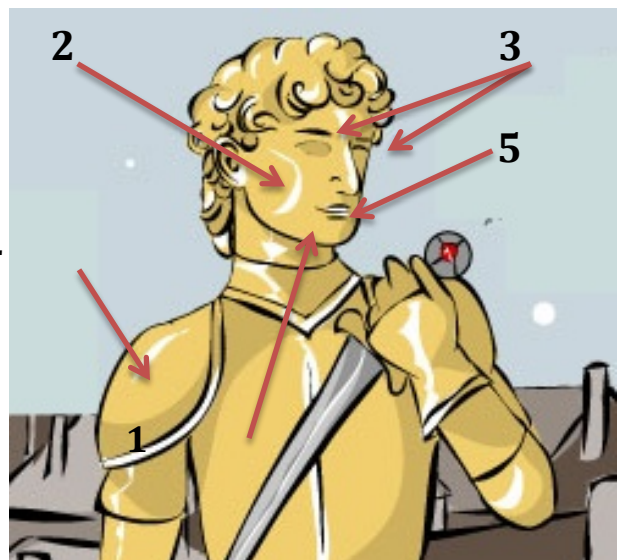
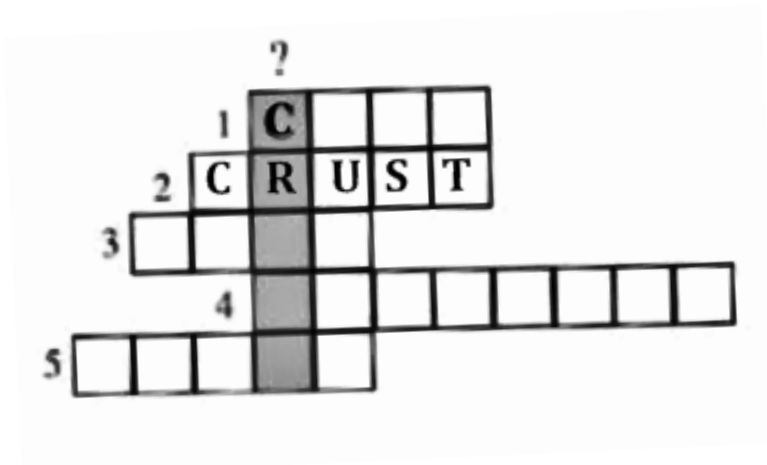
- A) shout    B) cry    C) suffer

**e) For how many nights the Swallow is asked to stay and help the Prince?**

- A) for one night    B) for two nights    C) for three nights

- AFTER READING:

4. Complete the crossword with the words of the body and find the hidden word.



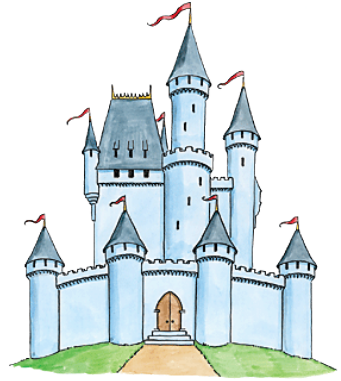
5. Below are six pictures which will help you summarize this fragment. Write a sentence for each picture and find the main ideas of the text.



1



2



3



4



5



6

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Put the sentences into present simple tense and underline the forms:**

1. All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city.
2. I did not know what tears were.
3. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance.
4. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it.
5. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was.

**7. Answer the questions:**

- a) Why did the Prince think his city was a terrible place?
- b) Do you feel bad or indifferent when you see poor, hungry and lonely people? What would you do to help them?
- c) If somebody asked for your help would you help them if this means giving up something you love?
- d) What's a Prince supposed to do in order to make other people happy?
- e) \* Why do birds leave cold places in the winter?

**8. Creative writing:**

- a) Continue the story in about 5 lines: "Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger?" ...
- b) Imagine you need help and you have to choose an animal. What animal would you choose and for what purpose? How would you convince it to stay and help you with something very important?

## Teacher's guide

### The Author

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland, on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1854. His father was a doctor and his mother was a writer. Oscar was a very good student. He was clever and he enjoyed writing. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Oxford University in England. When he finished university, Oscar travelled to London, Paris and the USA. While he was in London, he met Constance Lloyd. They married and had two sons.

Oscar worked as a teacher and also wrote reviews for newspapers. He later became the editor of a magazine. In 1881, Oscar published a book of poems. In 1888, he wrote a collection of fairy tales called *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. He published his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in 1891 and in 1892 wrote his first play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The play was very successful, and Oscar became quite rich. He wrote several other plays, including *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Oscar Wilde died on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900. People still perform and watch his plays today and his stories are very popular. People remember him as a very clever and funny writer.

### The Plot

When the Happy Prince dies, the people of the town place a statue of him in the center of the city. He always has a smile on his face and this makes the people of the city very happy. But the prince isn't really happy at all. From the top of the column where his statue stands, he can see all the city. He sees many things that make him very sad. He sees how poor and hungry the people are and he wants to help them, but he cannot move. A little swallow, on his way to Egypt for the winter, stops to rest on his statue. They become friends and the bird becomes his messenger and helps the people of the city. One by one, the swallow takes the jewels and gives them to the poor. Soon all the people from the city

have food and clothes and all they have needed. Everyone is very happy, and the two of them remain friends forever in a very special place.

## Key to Exercises

3. a-A; b-C; C-c; d-C; e-A

4. 1-chin; 2- crust; 3- eyes; 4-shoulder; 5-mouth.

6. 1. All day long **he flows**, and at night-time **he arrives** at the city.

2. I **do not** know what tears **are**.

3. In the daytime **I play** with my companions in the garden, and in the evening **I lead** the dance.

4. Round the garden **runs** a very lofty wall, but I never **care** to ask what **lies** beyond it.

5. My courtiers **call** me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I **am**.

7. Some birds need the warmth of the sun to survive and they also need to be able to get food easily. In the winter is very difficult to find food and warmth. So they travel thousands of miles to warmer places. The swallow is one of the birds which travel to warmer places.

## References

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