**The Happy Prince – Oscar Wilde**

High above the city, on a tall column stands the statue of the Happy Prince. He is covered with thin leaves of fine gold. His eyes are made of jewels. Everybody admires him.

One night, a Swallow flies over the city. His friends are in Egypt. He falls behind. He falls in love with the beautiful Reed.

The Swallow asks Reed to travel with him but Reed refuses. She is so attached to her home. The Swallow gets bored of his lady-love. Other swallows disapprove of their relationship because Reed has far too many relatives and no money.

The Swallow wants to spend one night on the statue on the tall column. He falls asleep. A big drop of water falls on him. The eyes of the Happy Prince are filled with tears. They are running down his golden cheeks. He tells the Swallow about his life when he was alive.

The Prince lived in the palace of happiness. He did not know what tears were. In the daytime he played with his companions in the garden.

In the evening he led the dance in the Great Hall. He was called the Happy Prince

Now so high, he can see all the ugliness and all the misery of his city all around. He tells the Swallow about a poor woman. The woman is a seamstress.  Her face is thin and worn, she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen’s maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball.

The poor woman’s son is ill. The boy wishes for oranges. However, his mother doesn’t have any money to buy them. The Happy Prince asks the Swallow to help him.

The Swallow picks the big red ruby from the Prince’s sword. He takes the jewel to the poor woman’s house. He leaves it on the table.

The Prince tells the Swallow about a poor young man who is writing a play. It is so cold in his house that he can’t work. The Prince asks the Swallow to pluck out one of his eyes.

The Prince’s eyes are rare sapphires. The Swallow takes the valuable jewel to the young man. The man can buy food and firewood and finish his play.

The Prince tells the Swallow about a little Match-Girl who is selling the matches in the street. Her matches fell in the gutter. She can’t sell them.

The little Match-Girl is crying. She can’t go home without money. The Prince asks the Swallow to pluck out his other sapphire eye.

The Swallow takes the expensive jewel to the Match-Girl. The girl runs home, she is happy. The Happy Prince has no eyes anymore, he is blind now.

The Happy Prince asks the Swallow to leave for Egypt. The Swallow promises to stay with the Prince forever. The next day, the Swallow sits on the Prince’s shoulder and tells the stories of what he has seen in strange lands. He tells him of red ibises, that stand on the banks of the Nile and catch goldfish; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal.

The Swallow flies over the great city and tells the Prince what he has seen. He tells how the poor people are leading a miserable life in the city.  The Happy Prince asks the Swallow to pick off the pieces of gold he is covered with. The Swallow gives them to the poor people of the town.

That winter the Swallow dies because of the cold. Before he dies, he kisses the Happy Prince on the lips. The Prince’s leaden heart breaks when his beloved Swallow falls down dead at his feet.

The Happy Prince looks ugly, he is not golden anymore. The mayor thinks that the statue is little better than a beggar. He orders it to be pulled down. The statue is melted but the broken lead heart does not melt.

Workmen throw the broken heart on a dustheap where the dead Swallow is also lying.

One day God sends one of his angels to the city. He asks to bring him two most precious things from the city. The Angel takes the leaden heart and the dead bird.  God is very happy with the Angel’s choice. God tells that this little bird shall sing for evermore and in his city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise him.