



The Happy Prince

Oscar Wilde

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More than a hundred years ago, Oscar Wilde created this moving story for his children. Now shimmering illustrations, as bejeweled and golden as the Prince himself, give glowing life to the many dimensions of his tale. His story of friendship, love, and a willingness to part with one's own riches may be more important today than ever before. Full color.

The Happy Prince Details

Date : Published January 1st 1995 by Dutton Books (first published May 1888)

ISBN : 9780525453673

Author : Oscar Wilde

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From Reader Review The Happy Prince for online ebook

Effie says

B.R.A.CE. 2018 ?να βιβλ?ο που σε ?κανε να κλ?ψεις

Antonella says

A beautiful story about the cruelty of life

Lorraine says

This book is about the friendship between a swallow and a statue of a Happy Prince. The Happy Prince truly was just that- happy- in life because he lead a sheltered existence. "My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness." This distinction foreshadows the story's intent to outline for us a deeper meaning in happiness. In life, the Prince was shielded from all misery. He passed, and was immortalized in the statue, which looked down upon the city.

We meet the swallow in springtime, when he falls in love with Reed. They share a summer courtship, a "ridiculous attachment," according to his fellow swallows. The flock leaves in autumn, and swallow's life is silent and lonely. He determines to change his life, and he decides to meet the flock in Egypt. He is enamoured by the fantasy of guilded tombs, jewels, and lotus flowers blooming on the Nile.

At this point our swallow meets the Happy Prince.

The Happy Prince teaches the swallow by his own example the distinction between pleasure and happiness. They come to understand life and love at God's right hand.

This story was beautiful, and I cried buckets. I find the seasons to represent the seasons of human life, and we are the swallow. The Happy Prince came to me as God's voice within each of us. We can chose the birds' eye view of our cities, acknowledging suffering and doing what we can to help, or we can be like the many unenlightened examples of the city - lacking in compassion.

Nayereh Ahmadian says

"He was happy , if pleasure was happiness ."

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Ahmed Ejaz says

There is no Mystery so great as Misery

Stories like this are the reason I still love Classic short stories. I loved the concept. But again, this story has a bitter-sweet ending. Like it's the rule of classic literature to not give happy endings. I understand, I really do, that they just show reality. But don't know why they just make me over-sad.

The living always think that gold can make them happy.

OVERVIEW

There is a statue of a prince called 'Happy Prince' at the place where everyone can see it. It is decorated with precious things like gold, ruby and sapphires.

One day a Swallow, while going to Egypt because it's cold here, comes across the statue of Happy Prince and came to know it can talk. The statue tells him the story of its being Happy Prince that how he was a prince and how much pleasures he had and how he didn't know his people were in miserable state while he was enjoying behind the walls of palace and finally died.

The Prince commands the Swallow to help the people of his town by giving them precious decorations of his body. He do has he says because he is good by nature.

When the Prince gives away his sapphire rock eyes, the Swallow decides to live with him forever. And Swallow dies of cold even though he could go to Egypt. He didn't left his blind friend. :(



This is a great short story. I would recommend this. No matter how old you are, I think you can get something from this.

Sad Quotes

"I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?"

"As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful" (said the mayor when he the dull statue of Prince). (-__-)

Link to the story:

<https://americanliterature.com/author...>

September 24, 2017

[Name Redacted] says

Having now re-read this, I still feel as though I cannot be sure if I read it once before. It's possible! But it's

also possible that I only heard it read! Odd.

In any event, it is a lovely, simple fairy-tale about sacrifice, selflessness and the responsibility of rulers to care for their subjects -- but also about the ways in which good deeds can go unappreciated, and about the blindness which charitable people can exhibit in their desperate quest to serve the needy.

Also, here is the line which prompted the review which prompted MY Goodreads-deleted review which caused that big to-do last week:

"He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales."

Hardly the most insulting contemporary picture of Jewish people, especially from Wilde (which is extremely sad, when you think about it). And, excluding that line, the general message and spirituality of the story could easily be Jewish, the sort of thing one might have heard from one's *bubbe* or even read in a later redaction of the Talmud. Oh, Oscar. You came so close to perfection!

ORIGINAL POSTING:

Goodreads is a mixed bag.

I planned to re-read this, because I didn't remember it, but was sure I'd read it in the past. Also, I had read an otherwise excellent review in which a reviewer commented on the fact that Wilde's own brand of anti-Semitism pops up in the story. That reviewer railed against some Goodreads fans of Wilde who had complained about her willingness to bring up that aspect of the story. She was right to do so. The racism and bigotry of past luminaries is a subject many wish to ignore or gloss over, but it remains painful to those of us against whom it was directed. Even much-beloved figures like Gandhi and Marx are not innocent, for instance -- the former having made several anti-Jewish, anti-black, and pro-caste-system comments, and the latter asserting the ultimate worthlessness of various ethnic groups -- but heaven help you if you bring these aspects of the figures up. People don't want to hear it, unless they already dislike those figures.

Sadly, the reviewer made an erroneous claim about the nature of Jewish identity, asserting that the concept of a Jewish "ethnicity" is just a product of anti-Semites because Judaism is only a religion; I tried to politely correct them because I am, myself, (ethnically) Jewish and a Jewish studies professor, and I assumed the review was written in good faith. In response, they deleted my comment, launched into a series of largely-unrelated personal attacks against me, then blocked me so that I could not rebut their claims -- something they had done against the Wilde fans as well, evidently.

In my own preliminary review of the story, I detailed this experience, then briefly discussed the relevant aspects of Jewish history and identity, and concluded by briefly discussing how both had impacted my plans to re-read the book. In response, they and their friends reported my review and had it flagged as "abusive"; Goodreads responded according to their wishes and deleted my review. I had already reported the reviewer's personal (and potentially-racist) attacks against me, but my report went unheeded. A disturbing precedent.

Again, I do plan to re-read this. But I feel like need to set the record straight about Jewish identity.

In short, it all depends on who you ask. For some (usually those outside of the Jewish community) Jewishness is a matter of religion; for some it is a matter of ethnicity; for some it is a matter of culture; and for some it is all-of-the-above. Thus a gentile might convert to Judaism, even as an atheist with a mouth full of grilled shrimp and bacon cheeseburgers clutched in both fists might still be considered Jewish (even by the Jewish community). The TaNaKh and the Talmud both make it clear that Jewishness is an ethnicity bound to a concomitant religious tradition, and even the New Testament seems to accept that view within certain parameters; Lawrence Schiffman actually wrote an excellent book (*Who Was A Jew?: Rabbinic And Halakhic Perspectives On The Jewish Christian Schism*) arguing that the break between Jews & Christians was actually a result of divergent understandings of "Jewishness", with pre-Rabbinic Jews arguing for ethnicity tied to religion, while early Christians argued for a religion that imputed ethnicity to adherents. The concept of religion as a matter of faith and choice is, in many respects, a modern, Christian, post-Enlightenment construct, which definitely complicates matters. It is for this reason that the 18th century "Wissenschaft des Judentums" came into being. It is for this reason that books like *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* are written. And it is for this reason that Jews For Jesus consider themselves an evangelical religious organization which just HAPPENS to consist of those who are ethnically Jewish, even as every year men from the Hasidic Chabad-Lubavitch movement stand in Time Square and try to call lapsed Jews back to the religion while ignoring interested non-Jews; the latter in particular see Torah-compliance as a religious requirement of the whole ethnicity, believing that an ethnically-Jewish person's rightful religious identity is decreed by Ha-Shem and is with them from birth to death, whether they abide by it or not.

So, ironically, the "racial" aspect of Jewishness is something which the Hasidim and Wilde could have agreed upon. The religious aspect however? Not so much. (And the less said about Marx's views re: Jewish religion, the better!)

In any event, I'll get around to this text again sooner or later. I just have to put some distance between myself and the whole previously-mentioned mess, and regain some of my confidence in Goodreads' "report" system.

Laysee says

The Happy Prince led a privileged and sheltered life and knew only pleasure. In the city, his image as the Happy Prince was immortalized in the form of a bejeweled statue covered in fine gold leaves, set aloft on a tall column. But a transformation came over the Happy Prince when his new vantage point opened his sapphire eyes and leaden heart to the suffering of the poor in the city. The Happy Prince began to weep.

Oscar Wilde wove an uplifting story of friendship, loyalty, compassion and sacrifice. The Happy Prince met a lovelorn Swallow that sought a resting place in the golden bedroom at the prince's feet. Winter was fast approaching and he was on his way to Egypt. But he heeded the Prince's plea, "Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow... will you not stay with me one night longer?" What unfolded was a poignantly moving story about their tender friendship and mutual sacrifice. Their magnanimity was juxtaposed against the vanity of the town councillors and the frivolity of the rich.

This is the third story by Oscar Wilde I have read in just over a week. Whether it was the *Canterville Ghost* or the *Selfish Giant* or the *Happy Prince*, each had a second chance at making amends and finding love and acceptance. Thank you, Oscar Wilde, for these memorable characters. They hold a special place in my heart.

Radwa says

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Khush says

I read this short story after a long time. The story is as beautiful as I found it on my first reading. However, this time I noticed something important that I missed before – the theme of 'same-sex love' – quite a fete in England of the times, even if it is subtly dealt with. This story has been written before Wilde's other significant and longer works such as 'The Picture of Dorian Grey', his brilliant plays and 'De Profundis.' Clearly, he is struggling to put across in his ingenious style what is so close to his heart so that the Victorian sensibilities could be altered for the better. Of course, later on in his work, Wilde has taken bigger risks that eventually cost him his life. In this story, however, he is subtle. He camouflaged his theme from the city officials and revealed something of 'love that cannot be named' to those it matters.

The Happy Prince is a statue of the King with human attributes. It stands in the centre of the city. The Prince helps, by giving away his limbs – one by one – the destitute in his Kingdom. He wants everyone to be happy in his kingdom. A migratory birds helps the Prince.

For no logical reason, I think of birds as only having a female gender. The story clearly states that the Bird is male. (This is the point when the idea of same-sex love strikes, since one still remembers the terrible court trial of Oscar Wilde.) Wilde could easily have omitted this detail, but it is central to the story's theme. First, it is the bird's need that brings him to the statue. Later, a series of events makes him see how noble and kind the Prince is. Both the bird and the statue are not a part of the life around them in any significant way – however, both contribute silently to society. For instance, the bird is somehow left behind or is ignored by other birds; while he throughout shows the urgency to join the birds, but they are nowhere to be seen. Likewise, the prince is half alive, half dead; he can live, feel and see, but he can hardly move. He lives on the margins though he is placed in the middle of the city. One can go eternally to look into these two entities and draw parallels to what life must be like for homosexuals in a society that resolutely polices and tames 'certain kinds of love.'

Toward the end, we see the indifferent officials roaming around in the city. Since the golden limbs of the Happy Prince are gone and it no longer looks beautiful, the city officials casually give order to remove it from the city-square. Towards the end, Wilde makes sure that these two loving souls should, at least, unite in death. The bird, for instance, kisses the prince just before dying and soon after their bodies become one in death.

Amelia Oswald says

I have read this story when I was at middle school but I had like zero feeling for the book. Now I get to reread it and wow I cry. The sacrifice for love, for friendship is really admired. Five stars from me !!

Petra X says

I've always liked Oscar Wilde's prose, if not his drama, but I thought this was an exercise in hypocrisy, or perhaps it was just Oscar Wilde, locked out of the gates of the wealthy aristocracy, just venting his spleen on them. You would think a man who lost everything because of the prejudice against his homosexuality might just not drop casual anti-semitism into what purports to be a children's story, wouldn't you? But perhaps he was so angry and bitter against Society that he could only see things from that viewpoint. That, like all underdogs, he was always looking for an even lower cur to kick.

As it turns out, despite being able to recite that old chestnut, "some of my best friends are Jewish", Wilde was deeply anti-semitic, a couple of quotes:

'It's unnecessary to debate with Jews. When you overrun them today, they come tomorrow with the same arguments. When you overrun those arguments, they come the day after with the same arguments as the day before.' [De Profundis].

This is just one from the many in the (wonderful) Picture of Dorian Grey,

'A hideous Jew, in the most amazing waistcoat I ever beheld in my life, was smoking a vile cigar. He had greasy ringlets, and an enormous diamond blazed in the center of a soiled shirt. Have a box, my Lord?' he said, when he saw me, and he took off his hat with an air of gorgeous servility. There was something about him that amused me. He was such a monster.'

At the same time he was being persecuted for his homosexuality and writing his Ballad of Reading Gaol detailing the terrible conditions and cruelty he suffered by imprisonment, he betrayed his best friend's plan for a small group of people to free Dreyfuss from his wrongful imprisonment and clear his name, and went further, befriending Dreyfus's persecutor, Esterhazy. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreyfus_...). Wilde lost his best friend, Blacker, over this and seemed never to truly understand why.

<http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article...>

The troll (is there another word for one who writes negative and rude personal comments about a reviewer?) seeks to justify his remarks by saying he is a Christian which really hasn't got anything to do with it, as apart from anything else, many anti-semites and their sympathisers have identified as Christians, but also by saying that it was part of the times.

There is some truth in that statement. Racism in all its forms seems to be part of every time. And it *was* part of that time especially in those who considered themselves wealthy aristocrats, but it wasn't a majority feeling. Disraeli, who was a Christian convert (he considered Christianity 'completed Judaism') had been elected Prime Minister by a majority vote. The Dreyfus Affair was a major topic in Britain and sympathisers with Esterhazy, Wilde included, were not on the winning side. Emile Zola's The Dreyfus Affair: "J'accuse" and Other Writings was massively popular both in France and, in translation, the UK. Wilde was out there in a minority, characterising Jews as 'hideous', 'horrid' 'greasy' and 'vile', seeing Jews as a race (as do all anti-semites) rather than a religion, so that conversion would make no difference to him. So the casual anti-semitism of The Happy Prince is maybe just a little jibe, a little way perhaps of influencing the children to whom the book was addressed to his own way of thinking.

Originally this review, a short one-paragraph review, had just one sentence directed at the casual anti-semitic remark made by Wilde, but in the light of the derogatory comments left on the review, I decided to expand it. However, knowing all of Wilde's history, my appreciation, or otherwise, of Wilde's work hasn't changed, I still love his prose, don't like his plays all that much, think his witty epithets among the best of quotes and one of them has always been a favourite of mine, "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."

Carlos De Eguiluz says

El precioso espejo de lo que representa la amistad, el altruismo y la verdadera felicidad.

La prosa de Wilde, es, sin duda alguna, una bocanada de aire fresco.

"My courtiers 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 and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot chose but weep."

Duane says

Metaphors abound in this Oscar Wilde fairytale. A swallow delays his migration to help the statue of the Happy Prince correct some wrongs that were overlooked when he was alive.

Sketchbook says

Written for children, between 1882-1891, these beautiful stories of delicate charm are for literate adults who alone can perceive the irony and awareness of life's cruelties.

A poetic wistfulness also mingle with the artless musical imagery. One critic says they remind him of Fragonard and Rossetti. Another is impressed by the simplicity of Biblical language.

Reviewing the fables a rather hysterical GR slams OW for anti-semitism because of a perfunctory aside 100 years before Political Correctness. Scholar Anthony Julius dissects this serious subject in his mammoth, "Trials of the Diaspora." His detailed study discusses anti-semitism in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, G Eliot, Js Joyce, GraGreene, Virginia Woolf - and countless others. I do not endorse wrongheaded emotionalism (as it oft prevails on GR). OW ? He doesn't get a mention.

Krishna says

[It's about the extraordinary friendship of a Swallow (a bird) and a statue named Happy Prince. Happy Prince came from a place where there is nothing except happiness/comfort, a place where sorrow is not allowed to enter. He never experienced misery all his life. Because of his happily lived life, people immortalized him when he died. Since then, people in the town admired him not only for living his life without anything but happiness in it but also because of his beautiful appear

AleJandra says

5 No estoy llorando, solo es una basurita en mi ojo ESTRELLAS

No logre encontrar aquí en goodreads la edición de este cuento que leí. Lo cual es una pena porque tiene una portada hermosa.

Pero bueno, no hay nada que les pueda decir de este cuento que no hayan escuchada ya. Lindo lindo.

Golondrina, Golondrinita

olivia says

"I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?"

Jon(athan) Nakapalau says

There is a sadness that permeates all of Oscar Wilde's work...but it is a sadness that helps us find joy with who we are. This story is one of my favorites; a beautiful tale for children.

Sarah says

“Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace. It may not be purchased of the merchants, for can it be weighed out in the balance for gold.”

Sarah Brownlee says

The most beautiful story I have ever read in my life. I cried reading it as a child and I still cry reading it as an adult. The Happy Prince, a short 'children's' story, tells the life of a prince who was made into a golden statue after he died. In life, he lived a sheltered happy/ignorant life, but in death he saw all the suffering throughout the city. The relationship between the prince and the sparrow is incredible - furthermore, the shallow greed and hypocrisy of the town officials and authorities at the end has an important message for the reader. The ending is breathtaking when the heart of the prince and the sparrow are considered to be more precious than anything else in the city.

Oscar Wilde knew exactly what he was talking about when it came to suffering and death. This is a story that has stayed with me throughout my life and it is the reason why Wilde will always be one of my favourite authors. Profound, moving, heart-breaking, yet undeniably beautiful, I cannot see how anyone could read this story and not come away deeply affected.
