

Chapter 21

The Happy Prince

There was once a prince who had everything he wanted so he was never sad and was called the happy prince. But alas, one day he died. His people had made his statue made. The statue was made of lead. The eyes were made of blue jewels. The statue was put up on top of a tall pillar in the middle of the town.

In the country, the winters were very cold. So, every autumn the swallows flew away to a warmer place. That year, however, one little swallow was the last to leave.

The night he came to the town he stopped to rest on top of the tall pillar, right between the feet of the happy prince! The little swallow was just going off to sleep when a drop of water fell on his head. He looked up and saw tears falling from the eyes of the statue!

"Why are you crying" asked the swallow.

"Because of the all the unhappy thing I can see in the town."

"What can you see ?" asked the swallow.

"Far off there is a house in a poor little street," said the prince. "Inside there is a woman. In a bed close to her, her little boy. He is very ill but his mother had no money to pay the doctor's fees. In think he is going to die. Little swallow, will you take her the red jewel from my sword? She can sell it and buy food."

So the swallow pecked out the jewel and flew off with it. The little swallow flew on till he came to the poor house.

The boy was tossing about in his bed, but his mother had fallen asleep with her head on the table, she was so tired. The swallow put the red jewel close by her.

Back flew the swallow to tell the happy prince what he had done. "It's funny," he said, "but I don't feel cold any more."

"That's because you did a good deed," said the prince.

All the same, the swallow still wanted to fly away to the warm land where his

Teacher's Note: Help the children to understand the meanings of the difficult words given in the lesson.

brothers and sisters had gone. So that night he said to the prince, "Good-bye, I'm off now!"

"Little swallow," replied the prince, "don't go yet. I can see a poor young man in a bare room where there is no fire. He is trying to write but his hand is too cold to hold the pen. And he has no food to eat. Take one of my eyes. They are made of blue jewels."

"But I cannot do that!" cried the swallow.

"Please do as I ask," begged the prince.

So the swallow pecked out one of the jewels from the statue's eyes and flew with it to the room of the poor young man.

He dropped the jewel into a bunch of flowers on the table,



When the young man saw it he was so pleased that he forgot he was hungry, and went on with his work.

"Now I can pay my rent and buy some food," he said. Back flew the swallow to tell the prince the good news. "And now, good-bye," he added.

"Don't go yet," pleaded the prince. "Look down there. Do you see that little girl? She was trying to sell matches but her hands were so cold that she had dropped them in the wet and now they are no use. Her father will beat her when she gets home. You must peck out the jewel from my other eye and give it to her."

"But if I do that you won't be able to see at all!" cried the swallow. "You will be blind."

"Please do as I say," begged the prince.

So the swallow took the blue jewel and dropped it in the little girl's hand. "How pretty!" she smiled when she saw it. And she ran off home to give it to the father.

Back once more flew the swallow. He said to the prince, "I cannot leave you now that you are blind. I will stay with you and you can use my eyes now that yours cannot see."

The prince wanted the swallow to fly over the town and tell him what he saw. One day, the swallow saw two little boys lying down under a bridge trying to keep one another warm. Along came a policeman and told them to go home—he did not know that they had no home to go to. They just got up and went out hand-in-hand into the rain.

When he heard this, the prince was very sad. "I have no jewels left," he said, "but my clothes are made of gold. You must peck off a bit and give it to those poor children."

Every day the swallow saw someone who needed help and before long all the gold from the prince's clothes had been given away. He stood on the top of his pillar looking dull and grey, but the faces of the poor children were no longer white—their cheeks were red and their thin arms and legs grew nice and round. They no longer had to beg for bread.

Then the snow came. The poor little swallow got colder and colder, but he would not go away from the prince. At last he knew that his end had come. "Good-bye, dear prince," he whispered as he fell at the statue's feet.

"Good-bye," replied the prince. And something broke inside him. It was his heart.

Next day the mayor and town councillors passed by the pillar and looked up at the statue.

“Dear me! How shabby our prince looks!” they cried. “He seems to have lost all his jewels and someone has stolen his gold clothes.”

“And look! There's dead bird at his feet! We can't have that here! It must be taken away at once!”

“We'd better take the statue down too,” said another councillor.

“We'll put up a better one in its place. Whose shall we put this time ?”

“Mine, of course,” said the mayor.

They took down the prince's statue and melted the lead to make the new one. But the workmen found a broken heart inside that would not melt. so they threw it on the dust-heap where the little dead swallow was lying.

That night God told his angels, “Bring me the two most precious things in this town.”

They brought Him the broken heart and the dead swallow. And God said, “You are right. This little bird shall always sing in my garden of Paradise and the happy prince shall praise my name for ever.”

Words to Learn

Oscar Wilde

unhappy
pleaded
dust-heap

fees
begged

pecked
hand-in-hand

asleep
shabby

pleased
councillor

● Skill Test ●

WORK OUT

A. Answer the following questions :

1. Why did one little swallow stay behind ?

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2. Why was the prince crying ?

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3. Where did the prince want the swallow to take the red jewel from his sword ?
Why ?

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4. Where did the prince want the swallow to take the first and the second jewel
from his eye ? Why ?

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5. Why did the people decide to take down the prince's statue ?

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GRAMMAR

Punctuate the following passage :

far off there is a house in a poor little street said the prince inside there is a woman in a bed
close to her lies her little boy he is very ill but his mother has no money to pay the doctors fees i
think he is going to die little swallow will you take her the red jewel from my sword she can sell
it and buy food.



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VOCABULARY

A. In the word, elephant, ph is pronounced of f.

Fill in the blanks with similar f words. You can choose from the box :

phantom	philatelist	phosphorus
pharaoh	photograph	physician

1. taken with a camera
2. a person who collects stamps
3. doctor of medicine
4. highly inflammable chemical used
5. ancient king of Egypt
6. an appearance of someone who is dead

B. Match the opposites :

Column A

sad
winter
cold
warmer
head
young
sell

Column B

summer
tail
old
happy
buy
colder
hot

