

Class - ix

Subject - English

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Name - Atoshi Sharma.

The Happy Prince Summary -

The Happy Prince is a beautiful story written by Oscar Wilde. It is the tale of a sculpture of the Happy Prince that was covered with gold leaves and precious gems. The statue was placed at a height such that it overlooked the city from the top. One fine day, a swallow bird took shelter under the sculpture as he was flying to Egypt. He found out that the Happy Prince was not happy indeed, but was rather miserable. So, the bird asked the Prince the reason for his unhappiness. The Prince told him that when he was alive, he used to stay happy in his palace. He stayed uninformed of his people during his lifetime. When he died, his statue was erected high on a tall column over the city. He became sad when he started noticing the misery and sufferings of the needy people of the city.

The Prince's sculpture was covered with gold and many precious jewels. His body was covered with gold leaves, his eyes had two splendid sapphires and there was an enormous red ruby that was shining on his sword handle. The sculpture of the Happy Prince looked marvellous and everyone praised the beauty of the statue. When the bird saw the Prince's eyes filled with tears upon seeing the misery of the people, he decided to become the messenger of the Prince to make him happy again. This made the Prince glad that he could help the poor people with the help of the bird. At first, the Prince asked the swallow to take the ruby from his sword and give it to the needy seamstress who had no money to take care of her ailing son. The bird did as commanded. The Prince asked the little bird to stay and help him as he could not move from that place. On another occasion, the Prince asked the bird to take out one sapphire from his eye and offer it to the poor dramatist who could not afford to make fire during winter to proceed with his composition. The playwright was feeling very weak and hungry such that he could not finish his play to deliver it to the producer on time. The bird followed the Prince's instructions.

One day, the Prince noticed a match girl who was ruthlessly beaten by her father for allowing her matches to fall in the canal. The Prince's heart was filled with pain and he promptly asked the swallow to pluck out his other eye and help the young lady. However, the swallow was unwilling to do so as this would make the Prince totally visually impaired. But the Prince insisted and the swallow plucked it and dipped past the match girl and slipped the gem into the palm of her hand. Thereafter, the compassionate bird chose not to leave the Prince who was completely blind at this point.

Despite the fact that the Prince couldn't see the distress or sufferings of the people anymore, the bird stayed with the Prince. Upon the instructions of the Prince, the swallow removed the fine gold leaves from his body and offered it to the poor people. The bird obediently followed the Prince's words and took out leaf after leaf of the gold, till the Happy Prince looked very dull and

sombre. Soon, winter came and there was snow everywhere and the bird became colder and colder. Despite being weary and cold, he didn't leave the Prince. Eventually, he became frail and died from exhaustion. Just then, there was a sudden curious crack that came from inside the sculpture, as though something had broken.

It was, indeed, the leaden heart of the Prince that had snapped directly in two pieces at the sudden demise of the sweet and kind swallow. The sculpture was therefore, no more valuable and beautiful like before. It stood abandoned. When the Mayor and the Town Councillors saw the dull statue of the Prince, they pulled it down. Soon after, they melted the sculpture in a furnace, yet the broken heart didn't melt. Thus, it was rendered useless for them so they discarded it where the dead swallow was lying.

Soon, God requested one of His Angels to bring the two most valuable things in the city. The Angel brought the leaden heart of the Prince and the dead swallow. God warmly welcomed the two beings in His garden of Paradise and regarded them as His charming creation.

The Happy Prince teaches us that we should show compassion towards the needy and help them however we can.