

SYNOPSIS

This story tells readers about the statue of the Happy Prince and his friend, the Swallow. When he still used to live as a real prince, the Happy Prince never realized that outside his palace there were lots of ugliness and misery, he always lived in pleasure and happiness so that his courtiers called him the Happy Prince. After the Prince had died, people set his statue up in the city so that the Happy Prince now could see all the ugliness and all the misery.

The Little Swallow was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and then he was falling in love with the most beautiful Reed. His friends ignored him and they left him behind flying away to Egypt. He felt lonely and began to tire of his ladylove because he loved travelling but the Reed didn't. He told her to come away with him flying to the Pyramids but she rejected, so he left her alone and began his journey to join his friends to Egypt.

One night, he arrived at the city and decided to take a rest on the tall column of the statue of the

Happy Prince. The Happy Prince was crying and the teardrops were falling on the Swallow's head. He looked up to the statue and felt pity on him.

He asked the Happy Prince why he was weeping. The Happy Prince told him about his former life as a real prince in the Palace of Sans-Souci. He had been very happy but he hadn't known that there had been ugliness and misery in his city.

The Happy Prince saw a woman and her little boy in a poor house. She was embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour. The boy was having a fever and asking for oranges. The mother didn't have anything to give but river water, so he was crying.

The Happy Prince asked the Swallow to bring her the ruby out of his sword-hilt. The Swallow didn't want to help because he thought he had to go to Egypt, but the Prince looked so sad that he was sorry, and finally stayed to be his messenger. The Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away over the roofs of the town to the poor house. He came to the house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly and the mother was sleeping. He laid the ruby on the table. He flew gently round the bed fanning the boy's forehead with his wings.

The Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince and told him what he had done. He said that it was curious but he felt quite warm although it was cold. The Prince said that it was because he had done a good action.

Then, the Swallow told the Prince that he was just starting to go to Egypt; the Prince held him once again to stay one night longer. The Swallow didn't want to stay but the Happy Prince begged him to.

The Prince wanted the Swallow to help a writer who had no firewood so that he couldn't finish writing a play for the Director of the Theatre. He was too cold and hungry to write any more. Finally, the Swallow was willing to stay.

The Prince had no other ruby to pick out, so he asked the Swallow to pluck out one of his eyes that was made of rare sapphire and give it to the writer. The writer was very happy to find the sapphire lying on his withered violets.

The next day, the Swallow told the Happy Prince again that he was just leaving for Egypt, but again the Prince wanted the Swallow to stay with him one night longer and be his messenger. The Swallow didn't want to stay, but when the Prince told him about the little match-girl who had let her matches fall in the gutter and was afraid that her father would beat her if she didn't bring home some money, he decided to

help. The Prince told him to pluck out his eye, but he refused because it would make the Prince blind.

After the Prince forced him, the Swallow plucked out the Prince's eye and give the sapphire to the girl. The girl was happy and ran home, laughing.

The Swallow finally decided to stay with the Happy Prince forever because the Prince was blind now. The Prince told him to go to Egypt but the Swallow was willing to stay with him. The Swallow sat on the Prince's shoulder and told him stories of marvellous things that he had seen in strange lands.

The Prince told the Swallow to fly over the city to see what happened with men and women. The Prince thought that the suffering of men and women is more marvellous than anything.

The Swallow flew over the city and saw some miseries that happened with the people. He flew back to the Prince and told him what he had seen.

The Prince told him to take his fine gold body leaf by leaf and give it to the people. The Prince said that the living always think that gold can make them happy. The Swallow picked off the Prince's gold body leaf by leaf until the Prince looked quite dull and grey. He gave it away to the poor of the city so they became happier

Finally, the snow and the frost came. The Swallow was getting colder and colder but he didn't want to leave the Prince because he loved him so much. He was going to die and only had enough strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. He told the Prince that he wanted to kiss his hand, but the Prince told him to kiss him on the lips because he loved him.

The Prince told him that he would finally go to Egypt but the Swallow said that he was going to the House of Death. The Swallow kissed the lips of the Prince, and then he fell down dead on the Prince's feet. The leaden heart of the Happy Prince snapped right in two because of a dreadfully hard frost.

The next morning, the Mayor and the Town Councillors found the statue of the Happy Prince look very shabby, and found a dead swallow at his feet. They decided to pull down the statue and melt it in a furnace. They held a meeting to decide what was to be done with the metal. The Mayor and the Councillors were quarrelling because they all wanted themselves to be set up on the statue substituting the statue of the Happy Prince.

The broken lead heart of the Prince could not be melted when the foundry men put it in the furnace, so they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

God told one of His Angels to bring Him two most precious things in the city, and the Angel brought him the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead Swallow. The Angel had rightly chosen, and God stated that the little Swallow shall sing forever in His garden of Paradise and the Happy Prince shall praise Him in His city of gold.