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Cover Discussion

① *Look at the front cover of the book. Answer the following questions.*

- 1 What does the Prince look like?
- 2 How do you think the Prince and the bird feel? Can you think of a reason?
- 3 What is the place they are in? How can you tell?
- 4 What time of year do you think it is?

② *Now read the blurb on the back cover. What kind of story do you think you are going to read:*

- scary? • funny? • sad?

What kind of stories do you usually like to read? Why?

The Author



Oscar Wilde



The Author

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin, Ireland, on October 16th, 1854. His father was a doctor and his mother was a writer. Oscar was a very good student. He was clever and he enjoyed writing. He studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Oxford University in England. When he finished university, Oscar travelled to London, Paris and the USA. While he was in London, he met Constance Lloyd. They married and had two sons.

Oscar worked as a teacher and he also wrote reviews for newspapers. He later became the editor of a magazine. In 1881, Oscar published a book of poems. In 1888, he wrote a collection of fairy tales called *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. He published his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in 1891 and in 1892 wrote his first play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The play was very successful, and Oscar became quite rich. He wrote several other plays, including *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Oscar Wilde died on November 30th, 1900. People still perform and watch his plays today, and his stories are very popular. People remember him as a very clever, funny writer.

The Plot

When the Happy Prince dies, the people of the town place a statue of him in the centre of the city. He always smiles, and this makes the people of the city very happy. But the Prince isn't really happy at all. From the top of the column where his statue stands, he can see all of the city. He sees many things that make him very sad. He sees how poor and hungry the people are and he wants to help them, but he cannot move. A little swallow, on his way to Egypt for the winter, stops to rest on the Prince's shoulder. They become friends, and the little bird helps the Prince to help the people of the city. One by one, the swallow takes the Prince's jewels and gold and gives them to the poor. Soon all the people of the city have food and clothes and everything they need. Everyone is very happy, and the two friends stay together forever in a very special place.





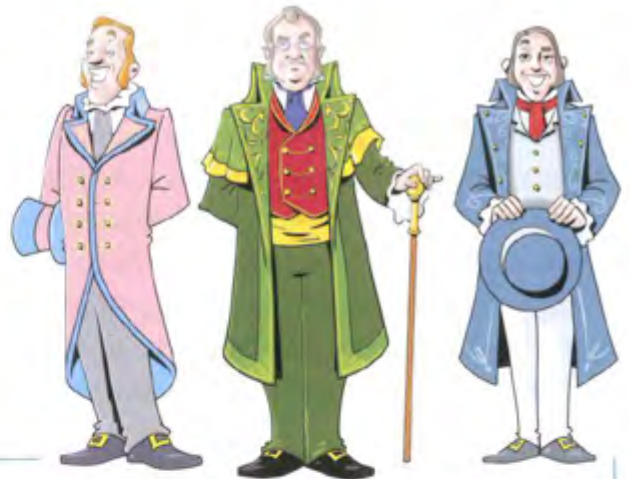
The Happy Prince

... once lived a happy life in a beautiful palace. He sang and danced and played with his friends every day. When he died, the Town Councillors put up a statue of him where he could see all of the city and all of the people of the city, too. The Prince is very kind so when he sees how poor and hungry the people are, he tries to help them.



The swallow

... is a bird that lives by the river. He stays in the city when the other swallows go to Egypt, where it is warm, for the winter. The swallow and the Prince are friends, and the little bird does many things to help the Prince and the people of the city.



The Town Councillors and the Mayor

... are the leaders of the city but they do not care about the people there. They like the statue of the Happy Prince only because it is covered with gold and jewels. They are very selfish men.

The poor match girl

... is a child who sells matches in the streets of the city. She sells them to get money for her family so that they can buy food to eat.



The writer

... is a poor man who is writing a play for the Director of the Theatre. Because he has no food or wood for a fire, he is hungry and cold. He has a lot of good ideas but he is too hungry and cold to think or write.

The poor woman

... lives with her young son, who is very sick. She sews dresses all day and all night to try to make money so they can eat.



The reed

... is a beautiful plant that lives in the river. She loves the swallow but she cannot go away with him to see the world because she loves her home.

