



Grade IX

Lesson 5. The Happy Prince

- Oscar Wilde

Supplementary Reader

Soul of the Chapter

This is the story of the statue of a prince and a little swallow who, in order to help the poor, sacrificed their lives. There was the statue of a prince called the Happy Prince standing on a tall pillar high above the city. It was a beautiful statue. It was covered with gold and had sapphires for eyes and a ruby in his sword. The Happy Prince could see the sufferings of the people in the city but was unable to move and help them. One day a little swallow, which was on his way to Egypt, landed on the statue. He was tired and so he decided to spend his night at the feet of the statue of the Happy Prince. The swallow found the statue weeping. He was very kind and full of pity. He asked the Happy Prince. The Happy Prince told him that he could see the people in the city who were hungry. He wanted to help them but could not move. He requested the swallow to stay with him for some time and help him in helping the poor. The swallow agreed. The Happy Prince helped a seamstress by sending his great ruby through the swallow. Then he requested the swallow to take out a sapphire from his eye and give it to the playwright who was about to faint because of hunger and cold.

Next day the Happy Prince requested the swallow to pluck another Sapphire from his eye and give it to the match girl who was weeping as she had no money to take home. Now the Happy Prince became blind.

The swallow decided to stay with him forever. The Prince asked him to go to Egypt but he refused. Now onward the swallow would tell the Happy Prince the stories of the poor. The Happy Prince asked the swallow to take the gold off his body and give it to the poor.

The weather had become extremely cold. The snow fell and then the frost. The poor little swallow could not survive and fell dead. At that moment, the leaden heart of the statue broke into two.

Next morning the Mayor of the city visited that site and found the statue useless and unattractive. The statue was pulled down and melted in a furnace at a foundry. But the leaden heart could not be melted. It was thrown in a dust heap where the dead swallow was also lying.





God asked one of his angels to bring him the two most precious things in the city. The angel brought Him the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead swallow. God praised the angel for the right choice. God said that the little bird would sing forever in his garden of paradise and the Happy Prince would praise Him in His city of gold.

NCERT Questions

Think About It

1. Why do the courtiers call the prince 'the Happy Prince'? Is he really happy? What does he see all around him?

The courtiers call the prince 'the Happy Prince' because he lives in the palace where sorrow was not allowed to enter. He was brought up in a luxurious environment. Now his statue is installed on a high pillar. He could now see the reality of life from that height. He could see the misery of poor and their pitiable condition.

2. Why does the Happy Prince send a ruby for the seamstress? What does the swallow do in the seamstress' house?

The Happy Prince sends his ruby through the little swallow for the seamstress who was very poor. Her son was sick and thirsty. She had no money to buy oranges for the little boy. The swallow lays the ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then, he flies round the table and fans the sick boy's forehead with his wings.

3. For whom does the prince send the sapphires and why?

The prince sends the sapphires for the playwright who was tired and hungry. He was writing a play. But his poverty did not let him complete the work. He did not have money to buy food and firewood. He took pity on him and decided to help him by sending the sapphire.

4. What does the swallow see when it flies over the city?

When the swallow flies over the city, he finds widespread poverty all around. The beggars were sitting at the gates of the rich. The starving children with faces were lying in the dark lanes. He finds the rich making merry in their beautiful houses.

5. Why did the swallow not leave the prince and go to Egypt?

The Happy Prince had become totally blind. The swallow was impressed with his charity and kindness. He had sacrificed everything for a good cause of helping the poor in their needs.





The swallow loved the Prince and could not leave him in that state. He decided not to go to Egypt. He remained there till his last breath.

6. What are the precious things mentioned in the story? Why are they precious?

The two most precious things in the city were the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead swallow. The angel considered them the most precious because they sacrificed their lives for the happiness of others.

Solved Question Bank

Soul of the Chapter

1. Where was the statue?

The statue of the Happy Prince was on a tall pillar at a high place in the city. It was a beautiful statue. It was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold. For eyes it had two sapphires.

2. Where was the swallow going? Why did he stop there?

The swallow was going to Egypt. His friends had gone to Egypt six weeks before but he had stayed behind. So he was going to join them. He stopped near the statue to take some rest during the night. There was plenty of air. So he stopped there.

3. Why did the Happy Prince ask the swallow to stay?

The Happy Prince told the swallow that he wanted to help the poor but he could not move as his feet were fastened to the pedestal. He requested the swallow to stay there and take the ruby to the seamstress.

4. What happened to the swallow in the end?

The swallow decided to help the people through the Happy Prince. He stayed there for many days. Now the winter had come and there was frost all around. In the end, the swallow died due to frost. The weather was so bad for him that he could not survive.

5. What happened to the Happy Prince's leaden heart?

Happy Prince's leaden heart did not melt in the furnace. It was thrown away. The angels considered the leaden heart the most precious thing in the city. They took it to the heaven.

6. Why did the workmen at the foundry throw the leaden heart?

The workmen at the foundry threw the leaden heart on the heap of garbage, because it did not melt in the furnace. They found it useless.





7. How did God reward the prince and the swallow?

God rewarded the Happy Prince and the swallow by giving them a place in heaven. The swallow will sing forever in the garden of paradise and the Happy Prince will live in the city of gold.

8. Why did the Swallow cry when the Happy Prince asked him to pluck out one of the sapphires?

When the happy Prince asked the swallow to pluck out one of the sapphires from his eyes he felt that it was really a cruel and painful task. He was aggrieved to such a heartless job, so he cried.

Long Answer Questions

1. How did the Happy Prince help the seamstress?

The Happy Prince helped the seamstress by giving a ruby. He could see her that she was tired due to over work. Her little son was sick. He was thirsty and asking for oranges. The poor seamstress had nothing to give him but river water. The Happy Prince felt pity for them. The prince asked the swallow to pluck out his ruby from the hilt of his sword and give it to the old poor seamstress. The swallow obeyed his order and placed the ruby beside the woman. He fanned the sick boy by his wings and made him comfortable. It shows that the Happy Prince had empathy, sympathy and kindness in his character. He acted out of concern and compassion.

2. How did the Happy Prince and the little swallow help the playwright?

How did the little swallow carry out the wishes of the Happy Prince to playwright? What do you learn from the character of the prince and the swallow?

The playwright was to finish the play for a theatre. It was very cold. He was hungry too. He did not have money to arrange for food and fire. The Happy Prince requested the swallow to pluck out the sapphire from one of his eyes and take it to the playwright. The swallow took the sapphire to the playwright. Now he could buy food and firewood. Thus the Prince and the swallow helped the young playwright. Both the Happy Prince and the swallow sacrificed their lives for others. 'Service before self' is what they teach. They were kind, sympathetic, caring and sacrificing. I learn from them that God loves those who serve others.





3. **'Goodness can never be destroyed.'** Do you agree? Illustrate with reference to the story 'The Happy Prince'.

Yes, I agree with the statement, "Goodness can never be destroyed". In the story the Happy Prince had goodness for all. He had a kind heart and was moved by the widespread poverty and misery of the people. So, he had his great will to help others in adverse circumstances. He gave his eyes, gold and jewels to the poor. The swallow was the messenger of the Happy Princes. When the swallow died at his feet, the heart of the Happy Prince was broken into two due to its death. The statue of Happy Prince was no longer useful and beautiful. It was pulled down. When the statue was melted in a furnace, the leaden heart did not melt because goodness can never be destroyed.

4. **Imagine yourself as the swallow who flew over the city and had seen the widespread poverty. Describe your feelings.**

I have been living with the Happy Prince for the last many days, helping the poor and the needy. He has already given his eyes and jewels to the poor. He still wants to help the poor. Today, I flew over the city. The rich were making merry in their beautiful houses while the beggars were sitting at their gates. When I flew into dark lanes, I saw the white-faced starving children. I saw two little boys under a bridge. They were very hungry. The watchman shouted at them and chased them away. They went out in the rain.

5. **'The two most precious things in the city' were the Happy Prince and the swallow. Do you agree? Illustrate.**

The two most precious things in the city were the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead swallow. The Happy Prince had sacrificed his all to serve the suffering humanity and help the poor. The swallow fulfilled the wishes of the Happy Prince. He sacrificed his self-interest of going to Egypt. He carried gold and jewels to the suffering people. He remained with the Prince in the bad weather. He died at the Prince's feet. So, the angle was right when it took the leaden heart of the Prince and the dead swallow to heaven.

6. **"The Happy Prince had compassion for the poor."** How do you think the swallow came to know about it?

The Happy Prince had pity and compassion for the poor. When the swallow landed there, he saw the Happy Prince weeping at the miserable condition of the people around him. The swallow at once realised that he had compassion for the poor. Compassion is a good value that everyone should have. We should have good feelings for others. We should understand the





needs of others and help them. If someone is leading a miserable life, we should have compassion for him and help. It makes us a good human being. The Happy Prince and the Swallow had compassion for the poor and the needy. They were rewarded by God for their sympathy and compassion for the poor.

7. Why could, according to you, the Happy Prince not see the misery of people when he was alive? What does it show about his character?

When the Happy Prince was alive, he could not see the misery of people because he was never out of his palace and was happy throughout his life. He lived a comfortable life inside the palace and never saw the misery and ugliness of the people around him. Being a Prince, he never knew about the sorrows and sufferings of the people. But, in real sense, his heart could feel the misery of the people around him. The Happy Prince was kind and sympathetic. When he saw misery all around he wept for others. He sacrificed everything for the good of others. It shows that he was kind and compassionate for others and helpful to the suffering society.

8. The Swallow in the story 'The Happy Prince' played a crucial role in making the Prince happy. What traits does the bird profess which makes it fulfil its tasks?

The swallow enjoyed flying and was excited about reaching Egypt, where they awaited his arrival. He was inquisitive. When he saw there was no rain falling and yet drops fell on him, before looking for a dry chimney pot, he ascertained that they were falling from the cheeks of the Happy Prince. Being extremely helpful, he offered to deliver the ruby to the seamstress so that she could buy food for her son. He also fanned the boy with his wings to cool his feverish state. The swallow was extremely compromising and delayed his departure to Egypt in order to carry out the wishes of the Happy Prince, by delivering his gems and gold to the needy in the city. The painstaking bird plucked leaf after leaf of the gold plating on the statue and gave it to the poor and sacrificed his life for her Happy Prince.

9. "Good deeds always pay." Do you agree? How were the Happy Prince and the swallow rewarded for their good deeds?

Yes, good deeds always pay in one's life. A good deed is the one which makes someone happy. When we help a person in his problems we are blessed. So, it should be our aim to help the suffering humanity. It is not only the person but God will also be happy. We are satisfied when we do a good act. A bad deed always hurts. One is never happy and satisfied. In fact, the Happy Prince and the Swallow helped the suffering people as much as they could. Both





the Happy Prince and the swallow were rewarded for their good deeds by God. They found a permanent place in heaven. Good deeds always make us warm and happy.

10. If the Happy Prince had been alive and had known the misery of people, he would have made a lot of difference to the lives of people. Do you agree? Justify.

A king full of compassion and sympathy for his people can never see them in misery. Unfortunately our traditional kings, though very kind and compassionate, were never aware of their people's misery. But the Happy Prince was a kind prince. When he was alive, he sacrificed everything for the welfare of his subordinates. But he never came to know about their misery. When he knew it, it was too late. I think if he had been alive, he would have made a lot of difference to the lives of his people.

11. How did the Happy Prince and the little swallow help the matchgirl? How will you feel if you help someone in need?

The Happy Prince told the swallow that a poor little girl sells matchboxes. Her matches had fallen in the gutter and they all were spoiled. She was crying. If she did not take money home, her father would beat her. The Prince also pointed out that she was barefooted. He requested the swallow to pluck the sapphire from his other eye and give it to the girl. The swallow plucked the sapphire and gave it to the girl. Helping someone in need is always a noble act. One is blessed. If I help someone in need, it will give me a lot of satisfaction. The sparrow and the prince found the girl in need and they helped her. It brought them close to God. It was a great act on their part.

12. How did the Happy Prince help the poor and the starving children? What lesson do you learn from the story?

The Happy Prince had become blind now. He had given his eyes to the playwright and to the matchgirl. Now he requested the swallow to stay with him forever. The swallow flew over the city and told the sufferings of the poor to the Prince. The Prince was deeply moved. He asked the swallow to take off the gold leaves from his body and give them away to the poor. The swallow picked off the gold leaf after leaf till the Happy Prince looked dull and grey. The swallow distributed the gold among the poor and the starving children to make them happy. The lesson provides a valuable lesson to be always ready to help the people in need.

