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APPENDIX

1. Synopsis of the Selected Short Stories

a) *The Happy Prince*

The gilded statue of the Happy Prince stands on a pedestal overlooking a town. Covered in gold leaf with sapphires for eyes and a ruby on his sword-hilt, the statue receives admiration from all passersby, including town councilors who want to foster a reputation for artistic tastes.

A Swallow flies over the city on his way to Egypt. He had been delayed after falling in love with a Reed attracted to her slender waist and gracefulness. When she wouldn't accompany his travels, the Swallow left alone, but ended up stopping under the statue of the Happy Prince to rest.

Surprised at what he takes to be rainfall on a clear night, the Swallow realizes that the Happy Prince has been crying. They introduce themselves, and the Happy Prince describes his childhood in a gated palace, when he lived in San Souci and played in a walled garden—a time full of superficial pleasures when he was ignorant of the suffering in his city. The Swallow is surprised to learn that the Statue is not made of solid gold, but he agrees to help the Happy Prince after he describes his pity for a seamstress sewing passion-flowers on the satin gown of a lady in waiting. She lives in the poor house and cannot care for her sick son, so the Swallow agrees to deliver the ruby from the Prince's sword hilt to her.

On the way to deliver the ruby, the Swallow sees “old Jews bargaining with each other.” He delivers the ruby and stays in order to cool the feverish boy by flapping his wings. After delivering the ruby, the Swallow returns and describes feeling “quite warm” in spite of the cold, due to his good deed. He still intends to go to Egypt and describes to the Happy Prince what marvels await him there, from the river-horses to the God Memnon on his great granite throne. Nevertheless, the Prince begs him to stay and help a young playwright freezing in his garret. The man needs to finish a play for the theater director but has become too cold. In the end, the Swallow agrees to stay another night and plucks out one of the Prince's sapphire eyes to deliver to the young man.

The Swallow returns once more to bid farewell to the Happy Prince who pleads with him to deliver his other sapphire eye to a little match girl who has dropped her matches. Without any help, the child's father will beat her. The Swallow agrees and promises also to remain in the town by the Prince's side forever, as he cannot bear to leave him alone and blind on his pedestal.

The Swallow sits on the Prince's shoulder and recounts tales of Egypt and faraway lands. He tells of the red ibises on the Nile, the Sphinx, "who is as old as the world itself," and a great green snake who "has twenty priests to feed it with honey cakes." Though the Prince calls these stories "marvelous," he asks for tales of the suffering townspeople instead, as "there is no Mystery so great as Misery."

The Swallow flies over the city and reports of the rich making merry while beggars starve at their gates, including young boy trying to warm themselves under a bridge while a passing Watchman tries to clear them out. Upon hearing these tales, the Prince wishes to distribute the fine gold leaf gilding him, to alleviate some of this misery. The Swallow agrees to help him and he delivers sheets of gold leaf to the children. While the Prince grows "dull and grey," the "children's faces grew rosier and they laughed and played games in the street."

Winter finally arrives, and the Swallow grows far too cold. Knowing that only limited time remains to him, he asks to kiss the Prince's hand. Instead, the Prince says, "you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you." The Swallow does so and falls down dead at his feet, at which point the Prince's leaden heart "snap[s] right in two."

The next morning, the Mayor spots the grey statue with the dead Swallow at its feet and complains of its shabbiness. The Town Councillors agree, calling the statue "little better than a beggar," and they decide to have the Happy Prince melted down and recast into a new statue (though they fight as to whom he should represent—the Mayor wishes a statue of himself, but each of the town councillors think it should be of them instead). The Art Professor at the University goes so far as to say, "as he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful."

The overseer of the workmen at the foundry melts down the statue but notes with shock that the broken lead heart refuses to melt. Giving up, he tosses the heart aside on a dust-heap along with the body of the Swallow. Soon after, God asks one

of his Angels to bring the “two most precious things in the city.” The Angel brings the leaden heart and the dead bird, and God agrees that he had rightly chosen. The Happy Prince and the Swallow would be rewarded eternally in Paradise for their compassion and sacrifice.

Source : <http://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-happy-prince/summary-and-analysis>.
Retrieved on 24 October 2023

b) The Nightingale and The Rose

‘The Nightingale and the Rose’ is about a Student who is in love with a woman, a Professor’s daughter. She has told him she will dance with him if he brings her red roses, but the Student’s garden does not contain any roses. The Nightingale listens to the lovelorn student lamenting his hopeless love, and feels sorry for him. She knows how rare true love is, and she knows it when she sees it. The Prince is giving a ball the following night, but although the Student and the woman he loves will both be there, she will not dance with him without a red rose.

A Lizard, a Butterfly, and a Daisy all tell the Nightingale that it’s ridiculous that the young Student is weeping over a red rose, but the Nightingale sympathises with him. She flies to a nearby grass-plot and asks the Rose-tree to give her a red rose, and in exchange she will sing for it. But the Rose-tree says it produces only white roses, so cannot give her what she wants. It suggests going to the Rose-tree by the sun-dial.

The Nightingale proposes the same deal with this tree, but it replies that it only produces yellow roses, so cannot help. However, it directs her to the Rose-tree right under the student’s window. However, although this Rose-tree does produce red roses, the winter has frozen its branches and it cannot produce any.

The Nightingale asks if there is any way she can get one red rose for the Student. The tree replies that the only way of producing a red rose is for the Nightingale to sing by moonlight while allowing a thorn to pierce her heart, so her blood seeps through to the tree and produces a red rose. The Nightingale agrees to this, because she believes Love to be more valuable than Life, and a human heart more precious than hers.

She goes and tells the forlorn Student what she is going to do, but he doesn't understand her, because he only understands things written down in books. The Oak-tree, in which the Nightingale has built her nest, does understand her words, however, and requests one last song from the Nightingale. She sings, but the student, taking out his notebook, is rather unimpressed, because the bird's song has no practical use. That night, the Nightingale sings with her heart against the thorn, until it eventually pierces her heart while she sings of love. Her heart's blood seeps into the tree and produces a red rose, but by the time the flower is formed the Nightingale has died.

The next morning, the Student opens his window and sees the red rose on the tree, and believes that it is there thanks to mere good luck. Plucking the rose, he goes to the house where his sweetheart lives, and presents her with the red rose. But another suitor, the Chamberlain's nephew, has sent her jewels, which are more valuable than flowers, so she says she will dance with him instead at the ball that night.

The Student denounces the girl for her fickleness, and she calls him rude. He throws the red rose into the gutter, where a cart rolls over it. As he walks home, he decides to reject Love in favour of Logic and Philosophy, which have a more practical use.

Source: <http://interestingliterature.com/2021/06/oscar-wilde-the-nightingale-and-the-rose-summary-analysis/> Retrieved on 24 October 2023

c) The Model Millionaire

The protagonist of the story is a young man called Hughie Erskine. Hughie is handsome, charming and popular but he has been very unlucky as far as financial matters are concerned. He was left nothing of any great value in his father's will. He has tried his hand at several different businesses, all of which have failed. Having no job, Hughie's only source of income is two hundred pounds a year which is given to him by an elderly aunt. Hughie has fallen in love with a young woman named Laura Merton and she loves him in return. Laura's father, Colonel Merton, is fond of Hughie but, due to his poor financial prospects, he does not want the young man

to marry his daughter. He has often told Hughie that he will only allow him to get engaged to Laura after he has earned ten thousand pounds.

Hughie goes to see his artist friend Alan Trevor. He finds that Alan is painting a portrait of an old man who appears to be a beggar. The old man is wearing a tattered brown cloak and boots which have been mended many times. He has a rough walking stick in one hand. In the other hand, he is holding out an old hat as if to ask for money. His face is heavily wrinkled and he looks extremely sad. Both Alan and Hughie agree that the old man is an excellent subject for a painting. Hughie, however, cannot help feeling sorry for the man. He thinks it is unfair that, although Alan's paintings regularly sell for two thousand guineas, he only pays his models one shilling an hour to pose for him and does not give them a percentage of the money which he makes from sales of their portraits.

When Alan leaves the room, Hughie looks in his pockets. He finds that the highest denomination coin which he has is a sovereign. Although it means that he will have to economize more than usual for the rest of the month, Hughie gives the coin to the old man, who appears very happy to receive it. Hughie leaves soon afterwards.

Alan and Hughie meet up again later. The artist tells his friend that, after he left, the old man asked several questions about him. Alan goes on to say that he told the old man all about Hughie, Laura Merton and the condition which Colonel Merton set that prevents their marriage. Hughie is unhappy that his friend told "that old beggar" all about his private life. The amused Alan tells Hughie that the old man he was painting was Baron Hausberg, one of the wealthiest men in Europe and someone who often buys Alan's paintings. For reasons which Alan does not really understand, the millionaire baron had asked to be painted as a beggar. The tattered clothes he was wearing were supplied by Alan. Hughie feels ashamed about having given a coin to a millionaire, although Alan tells him not to worry.

The following day, a representative of Baron Hausberg comes to Hughie's house with an envelope. The writing on the envelope says that it contains a wedding present "from an old beggar". Inside the envelope, Hughie finds a check for ten

thousand pounds. Hughie and Laura get married. Baron Hausberg attends their wedding.

Source : http://literature.fandom.com/wiki/The_Model_Millionaire. Retrieved on 24 October 2023

2. Biography of Oscar Wilde

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born on October 16, 1854, in Dublin, Ireland. His father, William Wilde, was an acclaimed doctor who was knighted for his work as a medical advisor for the Irish censuses. William later founded St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital, entirely at his own personal expense, to treat the city's poor. Wilde's mother, Jane Francesca Elgee, was a poet who was closely associated with the Young Irelander Rebellion of 1848, a skilled linguist whose acclaimed English translation of Pomeranian novelist Wilhelm

Meinhold's *Sidonia the Sorceress* had a deep influence on her son's later writing. Upon his graduation in 1874, Wilde received the Berkeley Gold Medal as Trinity's best student in Greek, as well as the Demyship scholarship for further study at Magdalen College in Oxford. At Oxford, Wilde continued to excel academically, receiving first class marks from his examiners in both classics and classical moderations. It was also at Oxford that Wilde made his first sustained attempts at creative writing. In 1878, the year of his graduation, his poem "Ravenna" won the Newdigate Prize for the best English verse composition by an Oxford undergraduate.

Upon graduating from Oxford, Wilde moved to London to live with his friend, Frank Miles, a popular portraitist among London's high society. There, he continued to focus on writing poetry, publishing his first collection, *Poems*, in 1881. While the book received only modest critical praise, it nevertheless established Wilde as an up-and-coming writer. The next year, in 1882, Wilde traveled from London to New York City to embark on an American lecture tour, for which he delivered a staggering 140 lectures in just nine months.

On May 29, 1884, Wilde married a wealthy Englishwoman named Constance Lloyd. They had two sons: Cyril, born in 1885, and Vyvyan, born in 1886. A year after his wedding, Wilde was hired to run *Lady's World*, a once-popular English magazine that had recently fallen out of fashion. During his two years editing *Lady's World*, Wilde revitalized the magazine by expanding its coverage to "deal not merely with what women wear, but with what they think and what they feel. The *Lady's World*," wrote Wilde, "should be made the recognized

organ for the expression of women's opinions on all subjects of literature, art and modern life, and yet it should be a magazine that men could read with pleasure."

Wilde's first play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, opened in February 1892 to widespread popularity and critical acclaim, encouraging Wilde to adopt playwriting as his primary literary form. Over the next few years, Wilde produced several great plays—witty, highly satirical comedies of manners that nevertheless contained dark and serious undertones. His most notable plays were *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), his most famous play.

Around the same time that he was enjoying his greatest literary success, Wilde commenced an affair with a young man named Lord Alfred Douglas. On February 18, 1895, Douglas's father, the Marquis of Queensberry, who had gotten wind of the affair, left a calling card at Wilde's home addressed to "Oscar Wilde: Posing Somdomite," a misspelling of sodomite. Although Wilde's homosexuality was something of an open secret, he was so outraged by Queensberry's note that he sued him for libel. The decision ruined his life.

Wilde emerged from prison in 1897, physically depleted, emotionally exhausted and flat broke. He went into exile in France, where, living in cheap hotels and friends' apartments, he briefly reunited with Douglas. Wilde wrote very little during these last years; his only notable work was a poem he completed in 1898 about his experiences in prison, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."

Wilde died of meningitis on November 30, 1900, at the age of 46. More than a century after his death, Wilde is still better remembered for his personal life—his exuberant personality, consummate wit and infamous imprisonment for homosexuality—than for his literary accomplishments. Nevertheless, his witty, imaginative and undeniably beautiful works, in particular his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and his play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, are considered among the great literary masterpieces of the late Victorian period.

Throughout his entire life, Wilde remained deeply committed to the principles of aestheticism, principles that he expounded through his lectures and demonstrated through his works as well as anyone of his era. "*All art is at once*

*surface and symbol," Wilde wrote in the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. "Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril. It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors. Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex and vital."*

Source : <http://www.biography.com/writer/oscar-wilde> Retrieved on 24 October 2023