

The Happy Prince – Important Questions

Q. Describe the statue of the Happy Prince as described in the beginning of the story?

Ans. At the beginning of the story the statue was fixed on a tall column, full of thin leaves of gold on the body, and had two sapphires for eyes. It had a large red ruby fixed on the hilt of the sword.

Q. Where was the swallow going? Why did he decide not to go there?

Ans. The little swallow was going to Egypt to join his friends. The happy Prince looked so sad that the swallow decided to stay back and be his messenger. The swallow died helping the happy Prince in the service of poor people.

Q. What happened when the little swallow was getting ready to sleep?

Ans. When the little swallow was getting ready to sleep, a large drop of water fell on him. It was the Prince crying on seeing the misery and suffering of the people.

Q. What were the drops of the rain actually? Why did they fall?

Ans. The drops of rain were actually the Happy Prince's tears. The Happy prince was sad and moved by the widespread poverty and misery. He had always seen happiness around him. He could not fathom that people were sick and crying because of the misery around them.

Q. What did the swallow observe when he flew over the city?

Ans. When the swallow flew over the city, he found the rich making merry. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. He saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses while beggars were sitting at the gates. He saw white faces of starving children. Two little children lying in each other's arms to keep themselves warm and the watchman telling them to leave the place and they wandered out into the rain.

Q. What did the Swallow see and hear while taking the ruby for the thirsty boys ?

Ans. While taking the ruby for the thirsty boys, he passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging on the masts of the ships.

Q. In the story *The Happy Prince* what are the two most precious things? What makes them so precious?

Ans. The two most precious things were the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead swallow. The former wept for the poor and helped them by giving sapphires, gold leaves and ruby. While the latter helped the prince in his noble cause and sacrificed her life while staying with him.

Q. How did the Happy Prince help the seamstress?

Ans. The Happy Prince asked the swallow to take the ruby out of his sword, where it was hidden and give it to the seamstress, whose son was lying on the bed with fever. The swallow took the ruby and placed it on the table.

Q. Why did the swallow not leave the Prince and go to Egypt?

Ans. The Happy Prince looked so sad that the little swallow felt sorry for him. He agreed to stay with him for one night and be his messenger. He picked out the great ruby from the prince's sword and flew away to deliver it to the poor woman.

Q. Why was the Happy Prince not really happy?

Ans. When the 'Happy Prince' was alive, he did not know what tears and sorrow were. After his death, he could see the ugliness and misery of the city. Therefore, he weeps and is not really happy.

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

Ans. The swallow cried when the Prince asked him to pluck out one of the sapphires because the Prince would go blind. The Prince himself suffered too much so as to help the poor and needy people.

Q. How did the Happy Prince help the poor children in the city?

Ans. As per the orders of the Happy Prince, the gold leaves and the jewels on his body were taken out by the swallow and distributed among the poor. Thus, the Happy Prince was able to help the poor children in the city.

Q. How did the prince and the swallow enable the playwright to finish his work?

Ans. The playwright was very poor. He could not buy food and firewood. It was difficult for him to write a play without food and firewood. The Prince took pity on him and decided to help him by sending the sapphires with the help of the swallow.

Q. How did the Happy Prince and the Swallow help the poor woman and her ill son?

Ans. The Happy Prince asked the Swallow to peck out the ruby from one of his eyes and give it to the poor woman. The Swallow wasn't ready to do this at first because the thought of the Prince becoming blind pained her. But the Happy Prince convinced her. The Swallow left the ruby near the woman's thimble and fanned the sick boy with her wings. The boy felt better instantly.

Q. Why did the town councillors decide to pull down the statue of the Happy Prince?

Ans. The Town councillors decided to pull down the statue of the Happy Prince because the statue was no longer beautiful and it looked dull and shabby. Precious stones and golden leaves were gone from the statue and now it looked little better than a beggar.

Q. What is the moral of the story *The Happy Prince*?

Ans. The moral of the story is that we must help the poor and the needy. The Prince set an example of this by giving his jewels to the poor. The swallow also proved to be a great example of love and sacrifice.

Q. Write the character sketch of Happy Prince.

Ans. When the Happy Prince was alive, he had no knowledge of sorrow and tears. He was kept away from all the sufferings and sorrows. He always saw people who were happy all around him in his kingdom. He never knew people could be poor and have problems. After his death, he was placed on a tall column. He was covered with golden leaves and had rubies and sapphires studded on him. Standing on the tall column, the Prince could see the miserable condition of the poor people. He helped all the people around him with the help of the swallow. He was generous and soft-hearted as he felt the pain of other people.

Q. What were the precious things mentioned in the story and why are they precious?

Ans. The two most precious things were the leaden heart of the Happy Prince and the dead swallow. Even after being dead, the Happy Prince's spirit helped all the needy and poor by giving away his jewels. He could not see misery around him and therefore he helped the people. His heart bled and melted for swallow carried out the wishes of the Happy Prince. Instead of going and joining his friends in Egypt, swallow carried rubies and sapphires to the poor and needy people. Just like the Happy Prince, swallow sacrificed his home, freedom and happiness for the sake of other people. Both of these characters wanted to share happiness around them. Hence they sacrificed themselves.

Q. What do you think appealed the Swallow to be the messenger of the happy prince?

Ans. The Happy Prince's tears and concern for the misery and suffering of the people and the sight of people facing extreme situations appealed the Swallow to be the messenger of the happy Prince. He saw the little girl whose match sticks had fallen in the gutter and that her father would beat her if she failed to bring money. She had no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. He saw the ailing boy with his poor mother in a hut. He saw the man who was trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre but could not do so due to cold and hunger. He saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little hungry boys were lying in each other's arms to try and keep themselves warm. All these melted his heart. He was also touched by the magnanimity of the happy prince. The Swallow must have thought that if the happy prince was ready to lose everything for the welfare of others, why shouldn't he help him?

Q. "In fact, he is little better than a beggar!" The mayor says this on seeing The Happy Prince on a frosty morning. This statement expresses the irony of the story. Explain the irony.

Ans. The mayor speaks the given statement when he finds the statue of the Happy Prince without its embellishment. The statue stood bare, ripped off its fineries, the pricey stones. This statement is ironical in two ways. Firstly, the value of a statue or a person is decided by its external appearance or beauty. As long as the statue of the Happy Prince was beautiful, decked up with precious stones, it was valuable. As soon as it lost its embellishment, the mayor scoffed at it. He didn't see the Happy Prince's innate beauty. The irony was that when he was alive, the Happy Prince had inherited his Princehood. But after his death, he became a real Prince, attained his Princehood from his sacrifice to make others life happy. The other irony that strikes us hard is that it was the same wealthy Happy prince who was now a beggar. The Happy Prince had got his name because he was always happy. He had never experienced sorrow and misery in his life. He didn't know what tears were. But he became a beggar in his silent sacrifice to wipe the tears of the poor.