

The Happy Prince - from the story by Oscar Wilde

Narrator's script

In a city somewhere in Europe there was born a prince.
The palace was splendid and had large grounds and gardens.
The prince had everything he wanted.
He never needed to leave the royal estate.
His was such a sunny nature that he was always merry and smiling.
Everyone called him the "Happy Prince".
But, on the verge of manhood, tragedy struck and he died suddenly.

1st Movement - The Palace and the Prince

In England, the swallows heard the call, "Fly to warmer lands".
But one swallow was in love with a reed.
"Won't you please love me," he said.
But the reed just bowed in the wind and said nothing.
He was the only swallow left.
In the end, he too flew south all alone.

2nd Movement - For Love of a Reed

In that city somewhere in Europe, a great procession had gone to see a
statue set high on the top of the city hall
It was the statue of the "Happy Prince".
His eyes were costly jewels and he was clothed in leaves of pure gold
And the lonely swallow came to rest at the feet of the statue.

3rd Movement - The Statue Procession

But the statue wept, and the swallow wondered why.
"They called me the Happy Prince," it said.
"But now I can see all the suffering, needy children and people in the city"
He asked the swallow to take the jewels from his eyes
and the gold leaves that covered him,
and give them to the poor and sick people of the city.
So they were happy too.
The swallow came to love the prince so much that he would not leave.
But the cold weather and the work were too much;
The little bird lay down and died at the feet of the statue,
Which, of course, was no longer beautiful.

4th Movement - Sad City and Gifts

The Mayor, who always said "I am important",
 and the Councillors, who agreed with his every word, came along.
 They saw the statue, now looking very plain indeed.
 "How terrible," said the Mayor, who was very important.
 "How plain and ugly," echoed the Councillors.
 "And here's a bird that has dared to die here.
 We must put up a notice forbidding birds to do that sort of thing".
 And all the Councillors agreed with the Mayor,
 who, of course, was so very important.

5th Movement - The Mayor and Council

They pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince
 and cast it into the furnace to melt it down.
 But the leaden heart of the statue would not melt.
 So they threw it out on to the same rubbish heap
 where they had thrown the dead swallow.

6th Movement - The Furnace

God said to his Angel
 "Bring me the two most precious things in the city."
 And the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.
 "You have chosen rightly," said God, "for in my city of gold
 the Happy Prince shall praise me;
 And in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore".

7th Movement - And God Said ----