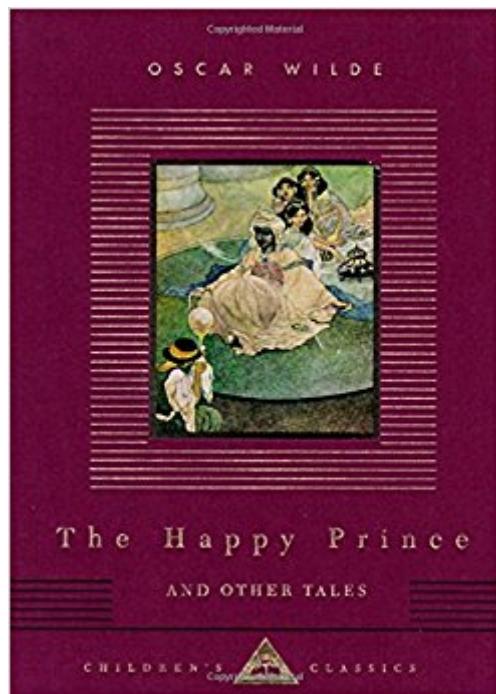


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# The Happy Prince And Other Tales



## Synopsis

A pleasure seeking prince, a selfish giant, and more: Wilde's fairy tales, first published in 1888, for childlike people from eighteen to eighty."

## Book Information

Series: Everyman's Library Children's Classics Series

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## Customer Reviews

'The Puffin Classics series is a perfect marriage of the old and the new. Enjoy some of the best books from the past and find out why and how they inspired some of the best writers of the present. - Julia Eccleshare, Lovereading4kids' - Julia Eccleshare, Lovereading4kids --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Illustrated by Charled Robinson

The Happy Prince and Other Tales is a collection of five children's short stories for ages 7 and up. These stories are: The Happy Prince, The Selfish Giant, The Nightingale and the Rose, The Devoted Friend, and The Remarkable Rocket. The stories include a wide variety of characters and settings, but all share a common thread — love, sacrifice, kindness, and the possible dangers of not having them. On the surface, these may appear as simple fairy tales to a child, but Wilde packed each story with heartfelt meaning. There are tales of true friendship, as seen in The Happy Prince, and false friendship, in The Devoted Friend. The same selfless love and sacrifice that is received with gladness in The Selfish Giant, is sadly spurned in The Nightingale and

the Rose. If only the rocket in The Remarkable Rocket had read a few of these tales, his life might have been a great deal happier. Wilde's eloquent and poetic writing makes the stories a joy to read out loud. They are an excellent read for any little dreamers or future romantics you may know. However, a word of warning: expect to shed a few tears.

Many reviewers have written excellent traditional commentary on the stories themselves, but I'd like to review the Kindle formatting. 1) The illustrations are as delightful as I remember them. They are best viewed in color with a Kindle Fire, iPad, or equivalent, but even in black and white they sing. Be aware, though, that the full-page color inserts of the original are half-pages in this rendition. They are also crisp, which is not always the case in Kindle editions. 2) Original page numbers are embedded in the text. That can be a little distracting, but it's also sometimes quite amusing. 3) The Table of Contents links are live, which is not always the case in Kindle editions from Gutenberg. 4) Go ahead. Spend the 99 cents for this one. It's well worth it for the illustrations alone.

I had an audio book of The Happy Prince when I was a child, which is what made me look for this book now. Mind you, this story is slightly different than the one I listened to in my youth (the one I had didn't end on a religious note, to be sure), but I still enjoyed it. The addition of several other selfless tales of love were a delightful surprise (I suppose I didn't read the description too carefully). These stories are beautiful and bittersweet, descriptions of selfless love given without expectation of reciprocation. Enjoy and share with the young.

This collection - one of thousands of worthwhile 'freebies' available for Kindle - offers a side of Oscar Wilde unknown to those who've only experienced his witty, cynical plays. These 'fairy tales' are gentle, moralistic, and only sometimes sardonic. I downloaded it in order to have my favorite of Wilde's short stories, "The Selfish Giant", which blends children's fantasy with Christian iconography in a charming, emotionally affecting way. Now I've read them all and I'm glad I have the set. This also led me to download another freebie, "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime", also recommended.

These stories are beautifully written (of course!) and enchanting for little ones. Some are more accessible than others (for example The Remarkable Rocket went a little above my five year old's head, while they could relate very well to The Happy Prince and The Selfish Giant). The stories do raise some potentially heavy topics for children (for example death, sacrifice, God, poverty...) so I think it's good to be prepared for questions afterwards, as you might end up talking about the stories

with your children long after they have finished.

Oscar Wilde's story of the HAPPY Prince is a timeless story for both young and old as it defines greatness as one who cares for others more than self - and sacrificing, even unto death for the good of others. Wilde sums up what inspires one to act in the behalf of others, is one who has a loving, caring, and humble heart whether that heart is the prince of the sparrow. It is the 'heart' of the prince that remains when his battered and eye sore statue is torn down and melted,

Before The Selfish Giant, which is a story included in this book, was recommended to me recently, I had forgotten that Wilde had written fairy tales. That story and The Happy Prince, which this volume reacquainted me with, are excellent. The other tales in the book are well worth reading, especially The Remarkable Rocket, a tale of a self-absorbed firework, which is very good. These fairy tales were published before the Importance of Being Earnest and The Picture of Dorian Gray, and before Wilde became a flamboyant center of London society. Some are explicitly Christian. Wilde's wit, insight, and word play are on display, particularly in The Remarkable Rocket, which can be read as a prescient allegory of Wilde's life.

These are moral tales of selflessness and selfishness. I was very touched by each of them and still feel a little choked up just thinking about most of them. They would be good for everyone to read as older children or adults, but I think might be too sad for young children. It's a very quick read with a big impact - at least on me!

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