

Оскар УАЙЛЬД

СКАЗКИ



Oscar WILDE

FAIRY TALES

- *тексты для чтения
и аудирования*
- *упражнения
на совершенствование
произношения*
- *упражнения
на перевод*
- *упражнения
на понимание текста*
- *упражнения
на закрепление новых слов*
- *творческие задания*

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словарь, упражнения
Ю. Б. Голицынского

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THE HAPPY PRINCE

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was covered all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt.

Everybody admired him. "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite so useful," he added, fearing that people would think him unpractical.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a mother of her little boy who was crying. "The Happy Prince never cries."

"I am glad there is some one in the world who is quite happy," muttered a disappointed man as he looked at the wonderful statue.

"He looks just like an angel," said the Charity Children¹ as they came out of the cathedral.

"How do you know?" said the Mathematical Master, "you have never seen an angel."

¹ **Charity** [ˈʃærɪti] **children** — приютские дети (сироты, живущие в благотворительном приюте)

“Ah! Yes, we have, in our dreams,” answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth; he had liked her slender waist so much that he had stopped to talk to her.

“Shall I love you?” said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once¹, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

“It is a strange attachment,” twittered the other Swallows; “she has no money, and too many relations;” and indeed the river was quite full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone, he felt lonely, and began to get tired of his lady-love. “She cannot speak,” he said, “and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind.” And certainly, whenever the wind blew,

¹ **liked to come to the point at once** — любил сразу приступать к сути дела

the Reed always bowed to it. "Besides, she likes to stay at home," he continued, "but I love travelling, and my wife, consequently, should love travelling also."

"Will you come away with me?" he said finally to her, but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

"You have been playing with me," he cried. "I am off to the Pyramids. Good-bye!" and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night-time he arrived at the city. "Where shall I spend the night?" he said. "I hope the town has made preparations."

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

"I will sleep up there," he cried; "it is a fine place, with plenty of fresh air." So he flew down to the feet of the Happy Prince.

"I have a golden bedroom," he said to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing, a large drop of water fell on him. "What a curious thing!" he cried; "there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful."

Then another drop fell.

"What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?" he said; "I must look for a good chimney-pot," and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw — Ah! What did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

“Who are you?” he said.

“I am the Happy Prince.”

“Why are you weeping then?” asked the Swallow; “you have quite drenched me.”

“When I was alive and had a human heart,” answered the statue, “I did not know what tears were. I lived in a beautiful palace. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I danced in the Great Hall. Round the garden there was a very high wall, but I never asked what was beyond it, everything around me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure is happiness. So I lived and so I died. And now that I am dead, they have put me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead, yet I cannot help weeping¹.”

“Far away,” continued the statue in a low musical voice, “far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman sitting at a table. Her face is

¹ **I cannot help weeping** — я не могу не плакать

thin and tired. She is a seamstress. She is embroidering flowers on a dress for one of the Queen's maids-of-honour. The girl is going to wear this dress at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room a little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move."

"I am waited for in Egypt¹," said the Swallow. "My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow cloth, and his hands are like withered leaves."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad."

"I don't think I like boys," answered the Swallow. "Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly too well for that, but still, it was a mark of disrespect."

But the Happy Prince looked so sad, that the little Swallow was sorry. "It is very cold here,"

¹ **Egypt** [ˈiːdʒɪpt] — Египет

he said; "but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger."

"Thank you, little Swallow," said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the palace and heard the sounds of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. "How wonderful the stars are," he said to her, "and how wonderful is the power of love!"

"I hope my dress will be ready in time for the Court-ball," she answered; "I have ordered flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy."

He passed over the river, and saw ships with tall masts. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was lying in his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep at the table: she was so tired. The Swallow flew in and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's hand.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. "It is curious," he remarked, "but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold."

"That is because you have done a good action," said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.



The Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak.

In the morning he flew down to the river and had a bath. "What a remarkable phenomenon!" said the Professor of Ornithology, as he was passing over the bridge. "A swallow in winter!" And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper.

"Tonight I go to Egypt," said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple.

When the moon rose, he flew back to the Happy Prince. "I've come to say good-bye," he cried; "I am going to Egypt."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"I am waited for in Egypt," answered the Swallow. "Tomorrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. Their eyes are like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is sitting at a desk covered with papers. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as a pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is

too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the fireplace, and he is hungry.”

“I will wait with you one night longer,” said the Swallow, who really had a good heart. “Shall I take him another ruby?”

“Alas! I have no ruby now,” said the Prince; “my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India¹ a thousand years ago. Take out one of them and carry it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller and buy firewood, and finish his play.”

“Dear Prince,” said the Swallow, “I cannot do that;” and he began to weep.

“Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,” said the Prince, “do as I command you.”

So the Swallow took out the Prince’s eye, and flew away to the student’s garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird’s wings, and when he looked up, he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the desk.

“Oh,” he cried; “this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play,” and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbour. He sat on the mast of a large ship and watched the sailors working. “I am going to Egypt!” cried the Swallow, but nobody paid

¹ **India** [ˈɪndiə] — Индия

attention. When the moon rose, he flew back to the Happy Prince.

“I have come to say good-bye,” he cried.

“Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,” said the Prince, “will you not stay with me one night longer?”

“It is winter,” answered the Swallow, “and the cold snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm-trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily around them. My companions are building their nests. Dear Prince, I must leave you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those which you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea.”

“In the square below,” said the Happy Prince, “there stands a little match-girl. She has dropped her matches into the gutter, and they are spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Take out my other eye and carry it to her, and her father will not beat her.”

“I will stay with you one night longer,” said the Swallow, “but I cannot take out your eye. You will be quite blind then.”

“Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow,” said the Prince, “do as I command you.”

So he took out the Prince’s other eye, and flew down with it. He flew past the match-girl,

and dropped the jewel into her hand. “What a lovely bit of glass!” cried the little girl; and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the Prince. “You are blind now,” he said, “so I will stay with you always.”

“No, little Swallow,” said the poor Prince, “you must go away to Egypt.”

“I will stay with you always,” said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince’s feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince’s shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile¹ and catch goldfish in their beaks; of the Sphinx², who is as old as the world itself and lives in the desert and knows everything; of the merchants who walk slowly by the side of their camels and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon³ who is as black as ebony; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree and has twenty priests who feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves and are always at war with the butterflies.

“Dear little Swallow,” said the Prince, “you tell me of great things, but greater than anything is the suffering of men and of women. Fly over

¹ **the Nile** [naɪl] — Нил

² **the Sphinx** [sfɪŋks] — Сфинкс

³ **the Mountains of the Moon** — Лунные горы

my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there.”

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another’s arms to try and keep themselves warm. “How hungry we are!” they said. “You must not lie here!” shouted the watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

“I am covered with fine gold,” said the Prince, “you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy.”

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children’s faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. “We have bread now!” they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the roofs of the houses, everybody was wearing furs, and the little boys skated on the ice.

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