

Oscar Wilde

The Happy Prince

Sretni princ

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded 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.

He was very much admired indeed. '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 lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

'Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?' asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. 'The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything.'

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

'He looks just like an angel,' said the Charity Children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks, and their clean white pinafores.

'How do you know?' said the Mathematical Master, 'you have never seen one.'

'Ah! but 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, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

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

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

Visoko iznad grada stajao je stup s kipom sretnoga princa. Bio je pozlaćen; dva sjajna safira bila su mu oči, a jedan veliki crveni rubin blistao se je na balčaku njegovu.

Kipu su se mnogi divili. »Lijep je kao vjetreni kokot na krovu«, primijeti jedan gradski vijećnik, kojemu je mnogo bilo do toga, da ga smatraju autoritetom u umjetničkim poslovima. »Premda nam ne donosi tolike koristi, kao kokot«, doda bojeći se, da ga ne bi držali nepraktičnim, što doista nije ni bio.

»Zašto se ne ugledaš u sretnoga princa?« zapita jedna nježna majka svoga sinčića, koji je plakao, jer nije mogao dobiti mjesec. »Sretnome princu ne pada ni na pamet, da zaplače, kad nešto ne može dobiti«.

»Milo mi je, da se ipak nalazi na svijetu netko sasvim sretan«, promrmlja jedan razočarani muž, promatrajući prekrasni kip.

»Izgleda upravo kao anđeo«, rekoše sirota djeca, koja su stala dolaziti iz katedrale u crvenim suknjicama i bijelim košuljicama.

»Kako možete to znati?« zapita profesor matematike, - »kad anđela niste nikada vidjeli?

»O, vidjeli smo ga u sanjama«, odgovoriše djeca, a profesor nabere obrve i namrgodi se, jer mu nije bilo po volji, da djeca snivaju.

Jedne noći preleti preko grada jedna mala lastavica. Njene prijateljice pošle su prije šest tjedana u Egipat, a ona je zaostala, jer je osobito voljela trstiku u šikari. U rano proljeće opazila ju je, kad je poletjela niz rijeku, pa joj se trstikin tanki struk tako svidio, da je zastala ćeretajući s njom.

»Hoćeš li, da te ljubim?« zapita lastavica, koja je rado polazila ravno prema cilju, a trstika joj se duboko naklonila. Onda lastavica obleti oko trstike i dotakne se krilima vode, ocrtavajući srebrne krugove na površini. Na ovaj način udvarala je trstici i to je tako trajalo cijelo ljeto.

»Čudan je ovo odnos!« cvrkutale su druge lastavice. »Trstika nema novaca, a prevelika joj je rodbina«. I doista cijela rijeka bila je ševarom posuta. A kad je prispjela jesen, sve su lastavice odletjele.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-love. 'She has no conversation,' 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, the Reed made the most graceful curtsies. 'I admit that she is domestic,' 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 trifling 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 put up?' he said; 'I hope the town has made preparations.'

Then he saw the statue on the tall column. 'I will put up there,' he cried; 'it is a fine position with plenty of fresh air.' So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

'I have a golden bedroom,' he said softly 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. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness.'

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.'

Kad su odletjele, osjetila se mala lastavica osamljenom, pa joj se ljubavna služba pričinila nešto dosadnom. »Teško se razgovara s trstikom, pa se bojim, da je koketna, jer uvijek flertuje s povjetarcem«. I , trstika se je doista najgracioznije savijala, kad je pirio povjetarac. »Priznajem da je kućevna«, nastavi lastavica, »no meni se mili putovanje, pa i moja žena mora zavoljeti putovanje«.

»Hoćeš li poći sa mnom?«, zapita konačno trstiku; - no ova samo mahne glavicom, jer je bila prirasla uz zemlju.

»Onda si se poigrala sa mnom«, cikne lastavica, - »ja odlazim prema piramidama. Ostaj mi zdravo!« - I lastavica odleti.

Cijeli je dan letjela, a kad se spustila noć, došla je u grad. »Gdje ću odsjesti?« zapita se. »Nadam se, da se je grad spremio na primanje gostiju!«

I lastavica ugleda kip na velikom stupu. »Ovdje ću odsjesti!« klikne. »Ovo je krasno mjesto, a ima dosta i čistoga zraka«. I spusti se baš između nogu sretnoga princa.

»Spavaonica mi je od zlata«, reče lastavica tiho u sebi, ogleda se oko sebe i spremi se za spavanje. No upravo u trenutku, kad je htjela skriti glavu pod krilo, kane jedna teška kaplja vode. »Kako je ovo čudnovato!« poviče lastavica. »Na nebu nema ni oblačka, zvijezde su jasne, a ipak prokapljuje kiša. Klima je ovdje zaista strašna. I trstika je doduše ljubila kišu, ali je to bio prosti egoizam«.

Kane druga kaplja.

»Čemu je onda ovaj kip, kad ne može zadržati kišu?« zapita se lastavica. »Radije ću se ogledati za zgodnijim mjestom«. I lastavica odluči poletjeti.

No prije nego što je razvila svoja krilašca, kane treća kaplja. Ona podigne oči, no imala je što vidjeti. Oči sretnoga princa bile su pune suza, koje su se spuštale niz zlatne obraze. A lice mu je bilo tako lijepo u mjesečini, da je lastavica osjetila u srcu duboku samilost.

»Tko si ti?« zapita.

»Sretni princ«.

»Zašto onda plačeš, da sam sva promočena?«

'When I was alive and had a human heart,' answered the statue, 'I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set 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 choose but weep.'

'What, is he not solid gold?' said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

'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 seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen's maids-of-honour to wear at the next Court-ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her 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 Egypt,' 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 linen, and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, 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.'

»Dok sam bio u životu i imao ljudsko srce«, odgovori kip, »nisam znao, što su suze, jer sam živio u palači Sanssouci, kojoj praga nikada nije prelazila tuga. Tijekom dana igrao sam se s prijateljima u vrtu, a navečer počinjao sam ples u velikoj dvorani. Oko vrta dizao se je visok zid, no ja se nisam brinuo za ono, što je ležalo izvan zida, jer je oko mene sve sjalo ljepotom. Moji su me dvorjanici zvali sretnim princem, pa sam doista i bio sretan, ako se zabava može nazvati srećom. Tako sam živio i tako umro. A pošto sam umro, postavili su me ovako visoko, da mogu vidjeti svu rugobu i svu bijedu ovoga grada, pa premda mi je srce od olova, ne mogu ništa drugo nego plakati«.

»Gle, pa on nije sav od zlata«, reče lastavica sama u sebi. No bila je odviše uljudna, a da bi na glas išta primijetila.

»Daleko odavde«, nastavi kip dubokim i zvučnim glasom, - »daleko odavde stoji jedna sirotinjska kućica u maloj ulici. Jedan joj je prozor otvoren, pa vidim ženu, koja sjedi za stolom. Lice joj je usko i ojađeno, a ruke hrapave i crvene, sve izbodene od igle, jer je švalja. Veze cvijeće u svileni ruho za najmiliju počasnu gospođicu kraljičinu, što će ga obući na prvom dvorskom plesu. Na postelji u kutu sobe leži joj bolesni sinčić. Trese ga groznica, pa bi htio piti jabukovače. No ne može mu ništa dati osim vode iz potoka, pa zato plače. Lastavice, mala lastavice, ne bi li joj ti htjela odnijeti rubin iz moga balčaka? Moje su noge prikovane na pijedestalu, pa se ne mogu maknuti«.

»Čekaju me u Egiptu«, odgovori lastavica. »Moji drugovi lete niz Nil i razgovaraju s velikim cvjetovima lotosa. Uskoro će poći na spavanje u grob velikoga kralja. On leži glavom u jednom obojenom sanduku. Omotan je žutim lanenim platnom, a balzamiran mirodijama. Oko vrata mu je ovijen lanac od blijedog i zelenog nefrita, a ruke mu naliče na uvenulo lišće«.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice«, opet će princ, »ne bi li se htjela kod mene zadržati jednu noć i biti mi glasnikom? Dječak je tako žedan, a mati žalosna«.

'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 far too well for that, and besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; 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,' 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 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. '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 State-ball,' she answered; 'I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy.'

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. 'How cool I feel,' said the boy, 'I must be getting better;' and he sank into a delicious slumber.

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.

»Znaš, ja baš mnogo ne volim dječake«, odgovori lastavica. »Kad sam ljetos stanovala uz rijeku, bila su ondje dva surova mlinarova sina, koja su se kamenjem na mene nabacivala. Dakako da me nisu pogodili. Mi, lastavice, vrlo brzo letimo, a povrh toga ja još potječem od porodice, koja je čuvena po svojoj hitrini. No pored svega toga bio je to znak nedovoljne pažnje prema meni«.

No sretni princ gledao je tako turobno, da je rastužio i lastavicu. »Ovdje je doduše hladno«, reče ona, »no ja ću ipak ostati jednu noć uz tebe i postati tvojim glasnikom«.

»Hvala ti, mala lastavice«, reče princ.

I lastavica udari kljunom u veliki rubin na prinčevu balčaku, izvadi ga i ponese iznad gradskih krovova.

Proletjela je pokraj tornja katedrale, gdje se nalaze bijeli anđeli od mramora, i doletjela do palače, iz koje se čula glazba i ples. Jedna lijepa djevojka izašla je sa svojim ljubavnikom na balkon. »Kako su krasne zvijezde«, reče joj on, - »a kako je krasna moć ljubavi!«

»Nadam se, da će moja oprava biti na vrijeme dogotovljena za dvorski ples«, odgovori ona: »Dala sam uvesti cvijetove u nju, ali švelje su tako lijene«.

Preletjela je preko rijeke i vidjela lanterne na jarbolima brodova. Preletjela je preko Ghetta i opazila, kako se stari Židovi cjenkaju i mjere novce na bakrenim kantarima. Onda dođe do sirotinjske kućice i pogleda u nju. Dječak je grozničavo kašljucao u krevetu, a mati je od umora zaspala. Lastavica odskakuće u sobu i postavi veliki rubin na stol baš pokraj naprska ženina. Onda obleti lakim zamahom krila oko kreveta, a krila joj ohladiše čelo dječakovo. »Ah, kako je ova hladovina prijatna«, reče dječak, - »sada mi je zacijelo bolje«. I dječak zapadne u laki san.

Onda lastavica odleti natrag sretnom princu i ispriповjedi mu, što je uradila. »Malo je čudno«, doda ona, »da mi je sada sasvim toplo, premda je dosta hladno«.

»To je poradi toga, što si učinila dobro djelo«, prihvati princ. Mala lastavica počne o tom razmišljati, a onda usne: Mišljenje uvijek uspavljuje.

When day broke 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. Every one quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

'To-night I go to Egypt,' said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, 'What a distinguished stranger!' so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. 'Have you any commissions for Egypt?' he cried; 'I am just starting.'

'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.

'To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes 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 leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. 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 grate, and hunger has made him faint.'

'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 India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweller, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play.'

Kad je stalo svitati, odleti do rijeke i okupa se. »Kako je ovo čudan fenomen«, reče profesor ornitologije, koji je upravo prelazio preko mosta. »Lastavica po zimi!« I o tom napiše dugo pismo za jedne novine. Svi su o tom govorili; ali je pismo bilo tako učeno složeno, da ga nitko nije pravo razumio.

»Noćas polazim u Egipat«, reče lastavica, pa je bila vrlo radosna, kad je i pomišljala na svoj put. Posjetila je još sve javne spomenike i odsjedila duže vremena na vršku crkvenoga tornja. Kudgod je dolazila, cvrkutali su vrapci i govorili jedan drugome: »Kako je ovo odličan tuđinac!« I lastavica se tome veoma radovala.

Kad se digao mjesec, odleti lastavica natrag sretnome princu. »Imaš li što poručiti u Egipat?« dovikne mu. »Ja putujem«.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice!« reče princ, ne bi li se htjela još jednu noć zadržati kod mene?«

»Očekuju me u Egiptu«, odgovori lastavica.

»Sutra će moji drugovi poletjeti do drugoga katarakta. Tamo leži nosorog u visokom ševaru, a na sjajnom prijestolju od granita sjedi bog Memnon. Svaku noć čuva zvijezde, a kad se pojavi Danica na nebu, on krikne od veselja i onda zamukne. A o podne dolaze žuti lavovi na vodu. Oči su im zelene, a rikanje njihovo jače je od rikanja katarakta«.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice«, opet počne princ, - »daleko, daleko na drugom kraju grada vidim mladog čovjeka u jednoj potkrovnici. Sjedi za pisaćim stolom, koji je sav pokriven papirima, a u jednoj čaši pokraj njega nalazi se stručak uvenulih ljubica. Kosa mu je smeđa i kovrčava, usnice crvene kao granatna jabuka, a oči velike i sanjarske. Pokušava složiti djelo za upravitelja kazališta, ali od zime ne može pisati. U kaminu nema više vatre, a glad ga je sasvim izmorila«.

»Ostat ću dakle još jednu noć uz tebe«, reče lastavica, koja je zaista bila dobroga srca. - »Da li da i njemu odnesem rubin?«

»Ah, nemam više rubina«, odgovori princ, - »moje su oči još jedino, što mi je preostalo. Učinjene su od skupocjenih safira, koji su doneseni prije mnogo tisuća godina iz Indije. Iščupaj mi jedno oko i odnesi mu ga. On će ga odnijeti draguljaru, kupit će drva i hrane, pa će dovršiti svoje djelo«.

'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 plucked 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. Through this he darted, and came into the room. 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 withered violets.

'I am beginning to be appreciated,' 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 vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. 'Heave a-hoy!' they shouted as each chest came up. 'I am going to Egypt!' cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

'I am come to bid you 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 chill 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 about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbec, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those 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 let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all 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. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her.'

'I will stay with you one night longer,' said the Swallow, 'but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then.'

»Dragi prinče!« reče lastavica, »ja to ne mogu učiniti«. I počne plakati.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice!« zamoli princ, - »učini, kako sam ti naložio!«

I lastavica iščupa princu oko, pa poleti s njim u potkrovnicu mladićevu. Lako je mogla doći do njega, jer je na krovu bila probijena rupa. Tom rupom dakle uđe ona unutra i dođe u sobu. Mladić je bio glavu zakopao među ruke i tako nije čuo lepršanje njenih krila, a kad je digao oči, našao je krasni safir na uvenulim ljubicama.

»Počeli su me cijeniti«, povikne. »Ovaj mi je kamen poslao neki moj poštovatelj. Sada ću moći dovršiti djelo!« I, lice mu se oblije srećom.

Sutradan odleti lastavica prema luci, sjedne na jarbol jedne velike lađe i počne gledati kako mornari izvlače užadima velike sanduke iz unutrašnjosti. »Ahoj! « vikali su, kadgod je koji sanduk izišao na površinu. »Putujem u Egipat«, zacvrkuće lastavica, ali se nitko nije obazirao na njen cvrkut, pa kad se digao mjesec, odletjela je opet k sretnome princu.

»Dolazim da se oprostim od tebe«, reče mu.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice, ne bi li htjela ostati kod mene još jednu noć?«

»Zima je«, odgovori lastavica, - »pa će uskoro zapasti snijeg. U Egiptu je sunce toplo, palme su zelene, a krokodili leže u mulju i lijeno se ogledaju oko sebe. Moje prijateljice grade gnijezdo u hramu Baalbekovu, a crveni i bijeli golubovi promatraju ih i guču. Dragi prinče, ja te moram ostaviti, ali te neću nikada zaboraviti, nego ću ti u proljeće donijeti dva velika draga kamena umjesto onih, koje si raspoklanjao. Rubin će biti crveniji od crvene ruže, a safir će biti plavetan kao široko more«.

»Dolje na tržnici«, reče sretni princ, »stoji mala prodavačica žigica. Pale su joj u jarak, pa su se sve promočile: Otac će je tući ako ne donese kući novaca, pa zato plače. Nema cipela ni čarapa, a mala joj je glavica bez marame. Iščupaj mi drugo oko, daj ga djevojčici, pa je otac neće tući«.

»Ostat ću dakle kod tebe još ovu noć«, odgovori lastavica, - »ali ti neću i drugo oko iščupati, jer bi onda ostao sasvim slijep«.

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

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of 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 Nile, and catch gold fish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, 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 Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree, and has twenty priests to 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 marvellous things, but more marvellous than anything is the suffering of men and of women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over 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 looking out listlessly at the black streets. 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.

»Lastavice, mala lastavice«, reče princ, -»učini kako sam ti zapovjedio«.

I lastavica iščupa drugo oko prinčevu, i odleti s njim. Preleti preko male prodavačice i spusti joj dragulj u ruku. »Kako je ovo staklo krasno!« poviče djevojčica i smijući se pojuri kući.

Onda se lastavica vrati sretnom princu. »Sada si slijep«, reče, »pa ću sasvim ostati kod tebe«.

»Ne, mala lastavice«, odgovori princ, »moraš u Egipat«.

»Ostat ću uvijek uz tebe«, reče lastavica i zaspri do njegovih nogu.

Cijeli sutrašnji dan sjedila je na ramenu prinčevu i pripovijedala mu pripovijesti o dalekim zemljama, što ih je već vidjela. Pričala mu je o crvenim ždralovima, koji stoje u dugim redovima na obali Nila, pa kljunom svojim hvataju zlatne ribice; - o Sfingi, koja je stara kao što je svijet star, pa živi u pustari i sve zna; - o trgovcima, koji lagano stupaju pokraj svojih deva i promiču kroz prste kuglice od ambre; - o kralju mjesečevih gora, koji je crn kao ebanovina, pa se klanja jednom velikom kristalu; - o velikoj zelenoj zmiji, koja živi u palminu stablu, pa ima dvadeset svećenika, koji je hrane medenjacija; - i o patuljcima, koji jedre preko jezera na širokom lišću i neprestano s leptirima boj vode.

»Draga, mila lastavice«, reče princ, - »ti mi pripovijedaš o čudesnim stvarima, no još je čudesnija bol muškaraca i žena. Misterij bijede najveći je od svijeta. Poleti, mala lastavica, iznad moga grada, pa mi onda ispripijedaš, što si vidjela«.

I lastavica poleti iznad grada. Razabra, kako su bogataši sretni u svojim kućama, a prosjaci stoje pred vratima. Poleti u tamne ulice i ugleda blijeda lišca gladne djece, koja su tužnim pogledima gledala niz crnu ulicu. Pod svodovljem mosta sjedila su dva mala dječacića, pa se zagrlila, da im bude toplije. »Tako smo gladni!« govorili su. »Ovdje ne smijete ležati!« izdere se na njih stražar, pa su izašli na kišu.

Lastavica okrene natrag i ispripijedi princu sve, što je vidjela.

'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 eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door where the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. 'Good-bye, dear Prince!' he murmured, 'will you let me kiss your hand?'

'I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow,' said the Prince, 'you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you.'

'It is not to Egypt that I am going,' said the Swallow. 'I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?'

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councillors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue:

'Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!' he said.

»Oličen sam tankim zlatom«, reče princ, »trebaš mi skinuti listić po listić i dati zlato mojim siromasima. Živi ljudi uvijek vjeruju, da ih zlato čini sretnima«.

Lastavica olupi listić po listić tankoga zlata, dok princ nije dobio sasvim siv i oguljen izgled. I lastavica odnese listić po listić siromasima, a lišca se malih dječaka zarumenješe i oni se stadoše smijati i igrati po ulicama govoreći: »Sada imamo kruha!«

Onda dođe snijeg, a za snijegom mraz. Ulice su izgledale kao da su srebrom prelivene, sjale su se i caklile. Dugi ledenjaci visjeli su poput kristalnih bodeža s krovova, a mali dječaci obukoše crvene kapute i pođoše na led klizati se.

Bijednoj lastavici bivalo je sve hladnije, ali nije htjela ostaviti princa, jer ga je vrlo ljubila. Kupila je mrvice ispred pekarovih vrata, kad pekar nije gledao, i pokuša se ugrijati lepećući krilima.

Napokon se lastavica uvjeri, da će morat umrijeti. Imala je još samo toliko snage, da se uzvine na rame prinčevu. »Ostani mi zdravo, prinče!« zacvrkuće lastavica, - »hoćeš li mi dopustiti da ti poljubim ruku?«

»No, milo mi je, da si se konačno odlučila na put u Egipat!« reče princ. »Predugo si se ovdje zadržala. No morat ćeš me poljubiti u usta, jer te ja ljubim«.

»Ne polazim u Egipat«, reče lastavica. »Polazim u kuću smrti. Smrt je sestra snu, zar ne?«

I lastavica poljubi princa u usta i padne mrtva do njegovih nogu.

U tom trenutku nešto čudnovato kvrcne u kipu, kao da je nešto puklo. I doista, olovno je srce prepuklo. Zima je bila uistinu velika.

Rano ujutro šetao se načelnik trgom u društvu sa svojim vijećnicima. Kad su došli do kamenitoga stupa, pogleda u kip.

»O, bože sveti!« reče on, - »kako nam je princ pohaban«.

'How shabby indeed!' cried the Town Councillors, who always agreed with the Mayor, and they went up to look at it.

'The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer,' said the Mayor; 'in fact, he is little better than a beggar!'

'Little better than a beggar' said the Town councillors.

'And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!' continued the Mayor. 'We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here.' And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince.

'As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful,' said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. 'We must have another statue, of course,' he said, 'and it shall be a statue of myself.'

'Of myself,' said each of the Town Councillors, and they quarrelled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

'What a strange thing!' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. 'This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.' So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

'Bring me the two most precious things in the city,' said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

'You have rightly chosen,' said God, 'for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.'

»Užasno pohaban!« povikaše gradski vijećnici, koji su uvijek bili iste misli s načelnikom. I popeše se kamenitim stepenicama, da kip bolje promotre.

»Rubin je ispao iz balčaka, očiju mu je nestalo, a zlato se istrlo«, reče načelnik. »Doista izgleda kao prosjak.

»Sasvim kao prosjak«, potvrdiše vijećnici.

»A evo i mrtva ptica do njegovih nogu«, nastavi načelnik. »Morat ćemo izdati ukaz, da ptice ovdje ne smiju umirati«. I gradski pisar zapiše ovu napomenu.

I tako skidoše kip sretnoga princa s kamienoga stupa.

»Budući da kip više nije ništa lijep, nema više svrhe«, reče sveučilišni profesor umjetnosti.

Onda rastopiše kip u jednoj peći, a načelnik sazove vijeće, da se odluči, što bi se imalo učiniti s metalom. »Moramo, dakako, načiniti novi kip«, reče on, - »a to bi imalo biti moje poprsje«.

»Moje poprsje!« reče svaki vijećnik za sebe i oni se uzeše prepirati. Kad sam ih posljednji put čuo, prepirali su se još uvijek.

»Kako je ovo čudno!« reče nadglednik talionice. »Prepuklo srce se neće nikako rastaliti. Morat ćemo ga baciti«. I baciše ga na smetlište, gdje je ležala već mrtva lastavica.

»Donesi mi dvije najdragocjenije stvari iz grada!« naloži Bog jednome anđelu: I anđeo mu donese olovno srce i mrtvu pticu.

»Dobro si odabrao!« reče Bog. »U rajskom vrtu pjevat će odsada uvijek mala ptica, a u mom zlatnom gradu neka me sretni princ dovijeka slavi!«