

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

**JUNIOR  
CLASSICS**

Oscar Wilde  
**THE HAPPY PRINCE  
AND OTHER STORIES**

Read by **Anton Lesser**



NA213912D

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1	<b>The Happy Prince</b>	6:07
2	Far away, in a little street...	4:12
3	'Swallow, little swallow...'	2:58
4	One night longer?	2:19
5	All the next day...	2:05
6	Then the snow came...	1:35
7	Early next morning...	2:32
8	<b>The Remarkable Rocket</b>	3:56
9	The Squib, the Roman Candle, the Catherine Wheel	1:49
10	The Rocket	4:20
11	The Rocket: 'What right have you to be happy?'	4:15
12	The dance – and the firework display	3:08
13	A little Frog, with bright jewelled eyes...	3:03
14	A large White Duck	3:32
15	So they piled up the wood and put the Rocket on top...	2:04
16	<b>The Nightingale and the Rose</b>	3:24
17	The Nightingale searches for a red rose	3:33
18	'Be happy; you shall have your red rose...'	4:05
19	The student opens his window	2:20
20	<b>The Selfish Giant</b>	3:55
21	A linnet singing	3:28
22	The most beautiful garden	4:01

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<b>23</b>	<b>The Young King</b>	6:16
24	He dreamed a dream	3:21
25	The second dream	2:57
26	The third dream	4:26
27	The Young King awakes	3:18
28	The Young King rides out	3:53
29	The sunlight	1:57
<b>30</b>	<b>The Devoted Friend</b>	2:19
31	Once upon a time...	4:44
32	The Linnet continues the story...	2:07
33	The Miller offers his wheelbarrow	2:30
34	The Miller's sack of flour and other jobs	3:53
35	In the storm	2:18
36	Everybody went to little Hans' funeral	2:18
<b>37</b>	<b>The Star Child</b>	4:04
38	Returning home	2:14
39	The Star Child grows up	2:35
40	The beggar woman	4:12
41	As foul as a toad	3:35
42	Three years later	2:51
43	The first task	3:47
44	The second task	2:06
45	The third task	4:35
46	A transformation	1:59

**Total time: 2:31:47**

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## Oscar Wilde

# THE HAPPY PRINCE AND OTHER STORIES

There is no better way to keep a child quiet than telling stories, and there are few storytellers better than Oscar Wilde. These are the tales Wilde told when he was tired from playing with his sons, Vyvan and Cyril. It is easy to imagine the two enthralled by their father, 'a big indolent figure, lounging in an easy chair, his face alive with delight in what he was saying, pouring out stories and descriptions, whose extravagance piled up and up until they toppled over in a wave of laughter'.

The magic Wilde wove to capture their attention has lost none of its force. The swallow in *The Happy Prince* that falls in love with a slender reed for the summer, or the garden of *The Selfish Giant* where trees carry blossom and fruit simultaneously, are still enchanting. Indeed it is a measure of how good Wilde's stories for children are, that so often they are assumed to be traditional fairy tales, as timeless as those retold by the Brothers Grimm. But then, even *Red Riding Hood* had to be told a first time. *The Happy Prince* and *The Nightingale and the Rose* will no doubt engage children

in the future for as long as any folk tale has been with the past.

Wilde used to plaster the walls of his sons' room with texts about early rising and sluggards and so forth, and tell them that, when they grew up, they must take their father as a warning and occasionally have breakfast earlier than two in the afternoon. Whether or not Cyril and Vyvan took this particular piece of wisdom to heart and became early birds, the morals found in their father's fairy tales cannot have come more attractively packaged, despite what the Water-rat says to the Linnet in *The Devoted Friend*. Instruction comes concealed in a story-world where love is the strongest force, stronger than the power of evil or the power of good.

However, the mind of a child is a great mystery, as even Wilde acknowledged. 'Do you ever dream?' Cyril once asked his father. 'Why of course my darling. It is the first duty of a gentleman to dream.' 'And what do you dream of?' asked Cyril, with a child's disgusting appetite for facts. Wilde, believing, of course, that something

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picturesque would be expected of him, spoke of magnificent things; 'I dream of dragons with gold and silver scales, and scarlet things coming out of their mouths, of eagles with eyes made of diamonds that can see over the whole world at once, of lions with yellow manes and voices like thunder...' So I laboured on with my fancy, till, observing that Cyril was entirely unimpressed, and indeed quite undisguisedly bored, I came to a humiliating stop and, turning to my son there, I said: 'But tell me, what do you dream of, Cyril?' His answer was like a divine revelation: 'I dream of pigs,' he said.

The stories here are from two collections, the first published in 1888, as *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, and the second, published a year later, entitled *The House of Pomegranates*.

**Notes by Benedict Flynn**

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

### **The Happy Prince**

**TCHAIKOVSKY** SERENADE FOR STRINGS 8.550404

Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Philippe Entremont

**GRIEG** PEER GYNT SUITE NO. 2 8.554050

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Jerzy Maksymiuk

### **The Remarkable Rocket**

**GRIEG** WEDDING DAY AT TROLDHAUGEN 8.554050

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Jerzy Maksymiuk

**TCHAIKOVSKY** THE SNOW MAIDEN 8.553856

Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Igor Golovchin

### **The Nightingale and the Rose**

**GRIEG** HOLBERG SUITE 8.554050

Bournemouth Sinfonietta, Richard Studt

### **The Selfish Giant**

**GRIEG** PEER GYNT SUITE NO. 1 8.554050

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Jerzy Maksymiuk

**LIADOV** EIGHT RUSSIAN FOLKSONGS 8.550328

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Kenneth Jean

### **The Young King**

**CORELLI** CONCERTO GROSSO OP. 6 NOS 1-6 8.550402

Capella Istropolitana, Jaroslav Krechek

### **The Devoted Friend**

**TCHAIKOVSKY** SOUVENIR DE FLORENCE 8.550404

Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Philippe Entremont

### **The Star Child**

**GRIEG** LYRIC SUITE OP. 54 8.551108

CSFR State PO (Kosice), Stephen Gunzenhauser

**GLAZUNOV** THE SEASONS 8.550079

CSR Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava), Ondrej Lenard

Oscar Wilde

# THE HAPPY PRINCE

The Remarkable Rocket • The Nightingale and the Rose  
The Selfish Giant • The Young King • The Devoted Friend  
The Star Child

Read by **Anton Lesser**

Oscar Wilde's collection of fairy stories are among the greatest and most poignant classics for children and adults alike. Humour, pathos, delightful little characters abound in the stories of *The Happy Prince* and the Swallow who agrees to keep him company despite approaching winter; *The Selfish Giant*, who doesn't want children playing in his garden, and *The Remarkable Rocket*.

In addition, there are those which are not so familiar – *The Star Child*, *The Young King* and *The Devoted Friend*.



**Anton Lesser** is one of Britain's leading classical actors. He has played many of the principal Shakespearean roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company including Petruchio, Romeo and Richard III. His career has also encompassed contemporary drama, notably *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter. Appearances in major TV drama productions include *The Oresteia*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Mill on the Floss*.

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Total time  
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