

talk  
to  
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

# Moments

## 5. The Happy Prince

by

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#### 1. Summary

This story is about a Prince who was very happy while he was alive. When he died, his people built a statue of his, and placed it on a tall pedestal. The statue was covered in gold, and had many precious stones. From that height, the Prince saw the misery and the ugliness of his people and he wept.

His tears fell on a swallow who had taken shelter between his legs. He was migrating to Egypt to join his friends who had already flown away from the cold. The swallow asked the Prince why he was crying. The Prince told him, and asked him to help by taking the precious stones and the gold from his statue, and distributing them to people in need. The swallow knew that the weather was getting colder, and he wanted to fly to Egypt to be safe with his friends. However, he kept helping the Prince because he had a good heart. Time passed, and the weather became very cold. The swallow could not bear the cold, and died. The Prince's heart broke in sorrow.

When the mayor of the town saw the statue of the Happy Prince looking very shabby, he ordered it to be pulled down and melted in the furnace. However, his broken heart would not melt and it was thrown on the dust heap, where the dead swallow was lying. When God asked for the two most precious things in the city, the Angel brought him the heart of the statue, and the body of the dead swallow.

#### 2. Something interesting

##### Migration of swallows

Egypt is in Africa. It is on the migration route for millions of birds travelling to Europe in April and Africa in September.

When Europe's temperatures drop, swallows prepare to migrate south to warmer climates. In winter, the trees lose their leaves and many insects hide away and begin hibernating. For the swallows, who feed almost completely on small flying insects, this means that if they stay there, they will starve to death. Therefore, they go south to Africa, where the temperature is warmer and there are many insects.

The journey to Africa takes about six weeks. Swallows migrate during the day, flying quite low and covering about 320 km (200 miles) each day. They fly almost 8000 miles on each migration! Since they feed on flying insects, they can snap up their food along the way. Nonetheless, many die of starvation. If they survive, they can live for up to sixteen years.

### 3. Vocabulary

1. **Column** – a tall solid usually stone post that is used to support a roof or as a decoration in a building  
The tall **columns** in front of the building added to the beauty of the building.
2. **Gilded** – made from or covered with gold  
The sword had a **gilded** handle.
3. **Sapphire** – a precious transparent stone, typically a rich blue, valued as a gemstone  
The heroine was wearing beautiful **sapphire** earrings.
4. **Hilt** – the handle of a sword or dagger  
The **hilt** of the sword was made of shiny brass.
5. **Preparations** – things that you do to get ready for something  
We were making **preparations** for the party that evening.
6. **Alighted** – to get off a vehicle  
She **alighted** from the bus and walked home.
7. **Curious** – strange or unusual; eager to investigate and learn  
The stranger was wearing a **curious** dress.
8. **Chimney pot** – a short pipe often made of clay, attached to the top of a chimney (a chimney is a hollow structure that allows smoke from a fire inside a building to escape to the air outside)  
A bird had made a nest in the **chimney pot** and blocked it.
9. **Determined** – firmly deciding to do something  
She is **determined** to score high marks in the board exams.
10. **Drenched** – to make something/somebody completely wet  
She was completely **drenched** when it started raining suddenly.

11. **Sorrow** – a feeling of great sadness  
The **sorrow** she felt at the death of her brother was almost too much to bear.
12. **Courtiers** – a person who attends a royal court as a companion/ advisor to the king or queen  
The **courtiers** bowed to welcome the Queen.
13. **Ugliness** – not attractive, unpleasant to look at  
The **ugliness** of the city was mainly due to the tall buildings and the narrow roads.
14. **Misery** – great unhappiness  
Her life in the village with no school or friends was a **misery** for her.
15. **Worn** – extremely tired  
I have been working all night and am quite **worn** out.
16. **Coarse** – textures that are rough to the touch or substances consisting of relatively large particles  
The jute bag had a **coarse** texture.
17. **Seamstress** – a woman who makes a living by sewing  
My grandmother used to be a **seamstress** and she taught me how to sew.
18. **Embroidering** - decorating with needlework  
The seamstress **embroidered** colourful flowers on the dress.
19. **Fastened** – firmly closed or secured  
Suresh **fastened** his belt and dressed for school.
20. **Pedestal** – a support or base (as for a column or statue)  
An elegant statue was placed on the marble **pedestal** at the entrance of the museum.
21. **Messenger** – someone who takes a message or a document from one person to another  
The letter was delivered to her by a **messenger** boy.
22. **Sculptured** – cut into a desired shape, create or represent (something) by carving, casting, or other shaping techniques ( better word is sculpted)  
The artist **sculpted** a lovely statue after months of hard work.

23. **Lanterns** – light in a transparent protective case  
I love decorating my house with **lanterns** on Diwali.
24. **Masts** – any sturdy upright pole  
The **masts** of the ship were brown.
25. **Tossing** – moving around restlessly  
She was **tossing** and turning in bed as she was unable to sleep.
26. **Feverishly** – in an unnaturally excited or active way  
He wrote his exam **feverishly** because he had to complete it in two hours.
27. **Hopped** – moved by jumping on one foot  
Lots of birds **hopped** from one branch of the tree to another.
28. **Thimble** – a metal or plastic cap with a closed end, worn to protect the finger and push the needle in sewing  
She puts a **thimble** over her finger when sewing.
29. **Fanning** – increase the strength of (a fire) by blowing on it or stirring up the air near it  
We started **fanning** the fire so that we could increase its heat.
30. **Delicious** – very tasty  
This restaurant serves **delicious** Chinese food.
31. **Slumber** – sleep  
He was lost in a deep **slumber** because he was so tired.
32. **High spirits** – extremely happy and having a good time  
After successfully completing the project all the workers were in **high spirits**.
33. **Prospect** – the possibility or likelihood of some future event occurring  
There is a **prospect** of the flight being cancelled because of bad weather.
34. **Monument** – a structure or building that is built to honour a special person or event  
The Taj Mahal is a **monument** built by Shahjahan in the memory of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.
35. **Church steeple** – a pointed structure at the top of a church tower  
There were lots of birds sitting on the **church steeples**.

36. **Commissions** - an instruction, command, or role given to a person or group  
**Commissions** were given to the police team to control the riot situation in the city.
37. **Garret** – small dark room at the top of the house  
I cannot climb up the steep stairs to the **garret**.
38. **Withered** - (of a part of the body) shrunken or wrinkled from age or disease  
The leaves of the plants **withered** because they were not watered for many days.
39. **Crisp** - (of a substance) firm, dry, and brittle  
We ate **crisp** and delicious chips at the picnic.
40. **Pomegranate** – a type of fruit (called 'anar' in Hindi)  
The **pomegranate** seeds were red in colour and very juicy.
41. **Dreamy** – seeming to be in a dream and not paying attention to what is happening around you; very pleasant or attractive  
The actor was so **dreamy** looking that all the girls fell in love with him.
42. **Grate** – here, a metal frame that holds the wood, coal etc. in a fireplace; to shred food, to annoy or irritate  
In winters the **grate** is always full of wood for the fireplace.
43. **Faint** - feel weak  
After fasting the whole day, I felt quite **faint**.
44. **Playwright** – a person who writes plays  
This **playwright** writes very funny plays.
45. **Plucked** – take hold of (something) and quickly remove it from its place  
I **plucked** flowers for the Pooja.
46. **Darted** – move or run somewhere suddenly or rapidly  
The bee **darted** from flower to flower in the garden.
47. **Flutter** – fly unsteadily or hover by flapping the wings quickly and lightly  
Birds **fluttered** over the flowers in the garden.

48. **Appreciated** - recognised how good someone or something is and to value him, her or it  
The hard work that she put in was **appreciated** by her boss.
49. **Admirer** – someone who finds someone else attractive  
She was a pretty girl and had many **admirers** in the locality.
50. **Harbour** – an area of water next to the coast, protected from the sea, where ships and boats can shelter  
There were many large ships in the **harbour** being loaded with goods.
51. **Vessel** – a large boat or a ship, also a container  
The submarine is a **vessel** that can move under water.
52. **Gutter** – the edge of the road where rain water flows  
The road had not been swept and the **gutter** was full of rubbish.
53. **Stockings** – long socks that cover the entire leg  
We have to wear woolen coats and **stockings** in this cold weather.
54. **Swooped** – to fly or move down suddenly  
The eagle **swooped** down and flew away with the dead rat in its beak.
55. **Marvellous** – very good, wonderful  
The Indian space research scientists have made **marvellous** progress.
56. **Suffering** – physical or mental pain  
I could bear to see the dog **suffering** and brought it home to look after it.
57. **Mystery** – something strange or not known or explained  
The **mystery** was solved when the police discovered the murder weapon.
58. **Starving** – dying because of not having enough food  
During the famine, the government did nothing to help the **starving** people.
59. **Listlessly** – lack of energy, in a tired way  
This summer was so hot that we just sat around **listlessly**.
60. **Archway** – a passage or entrance with a curved structure on top  
She stood under the **archway** at the entrance of the house.

61. **Wandered** - walked around slowly in a relaxed way, without any clear purpose or direction  
We **wandered** around the Red Fort looking at the beautiful buildings.
62. **Rosier** – rosier means more pink in colour  
After being fed properly for a month the child's cheeks were **rosier** and she looked healthy.
63. **Frost** – a thin white layer of ice that forms when air temperature is below freezing point of water, usually at night  
The **frost** during the cold nights of December damaged the crops.
64. **Furs** – hair covered skin of animals worn to keep warm in cold countries during winter  
We should not kill animals to make **fur** coats out of their skin.
65. **Skated** – moved over ice wearing special boots with thin metal bar attached at the bottom  
When the river froze in winter all the people in town **skated** on it.
66. **Crumbs** – small amounts of something, usually bread or cake  
The dog ate up all the **crumbs** of cake that were lying on the floor.
67. **Flapping** – to wave something especially wings  
The birds were bathing in the river and **flapping** their wings.
68. **Murmured** - to speak or say something very quietly  
I could not hear what the doctor **murmured** to the nurse.
69. **Leaden** – made of lead, slow or heavy  
After completing the marathon her legs felt **leaden**.
70. **Snapped** - caused something that is thin to break suddenly and quickly with a cracking sound  
The dry branches of the trees **snapped** under our feet as we walked in the forest.
71. **Dreadfully** – extremely badly  
I am missing my mother **dreadfully**, since she left to visit my grandmother.
72. **Councillors** - an elected member of a local government  
There is a meeting of **councillors** today to decide on how to clean the river.

73. **Shabby** – looking old and in a bad condition because of being used for a long time or not being cared for  
The room had a **shabby** sofa on which he slept.
74. **Proclamation** – to make an announcement or declaration  
The Government issued a **proclamation** that all markets should close at 8 PM.
75. **Suggestion** – an idea, plan or action that is shared or discussed  
They did not like my **suggestion** that we should all share the cost.
76. **Furnace** – a container that is heated to a very high temperature, so that substances that are put inside it, such as metal, will melt or burn  
In summer this room becomes as hot as a **furnace**.
77. **Overseer** - a person whose job it is to make certain that employees are working or that an activity is being done correctly  
The **overseer** at the construction site did not allow any of the workers to rest for even a few minutes.
78. **Foundry** - a factory where metal is melted and poured into special shaped containers to produce objects such as wheels and bars  
My father worked in the iron **foundry** for many years and that made his lungs very weak.
79. **Precious** – of great value because of being rare, expensive, or important  
The walls of the Taj Mahal have **precious** stones inlaid in them.
80. **Praise** – to express admiration or approval of the achievements or characteristics of a person or thing  
All the teachers **praised** Sunita when she stood first in the board examinations.

#### 4. Questions

1. **Why do the courtiers call the prince 'the Happy Prince'? Is he really happy? What does he see all around him?**
2. **Why does the Happy Prince send a ruby for the seamstress? What does the swallow do in the seamstress' house?**
3. **For whom does the prince send the sapphires and why?**
4. **What does the swallow see when it flies over the city?**
5. **Why did the swallow not leave the prince and go to Egypt?**
6. **What are the precious things mentioned in the story? Why are they precious?**

#### 5. Talk About It

The little swallow says, "It is curious, but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold." Have you ever had such a feeling? Share your experience with your friends.

#### 6. Suggested Reading

- 'The Selfish Giant' by Oscar Wilde.
- 'How Much Land Does a Man Require?' by Leo Tolstoy