



Oscar Wilde's Short Stories

Oscar **Wilde**



free Audiobook



Oscar Wilde's Short Stories



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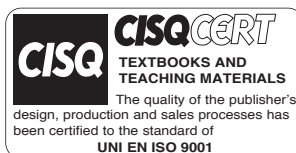
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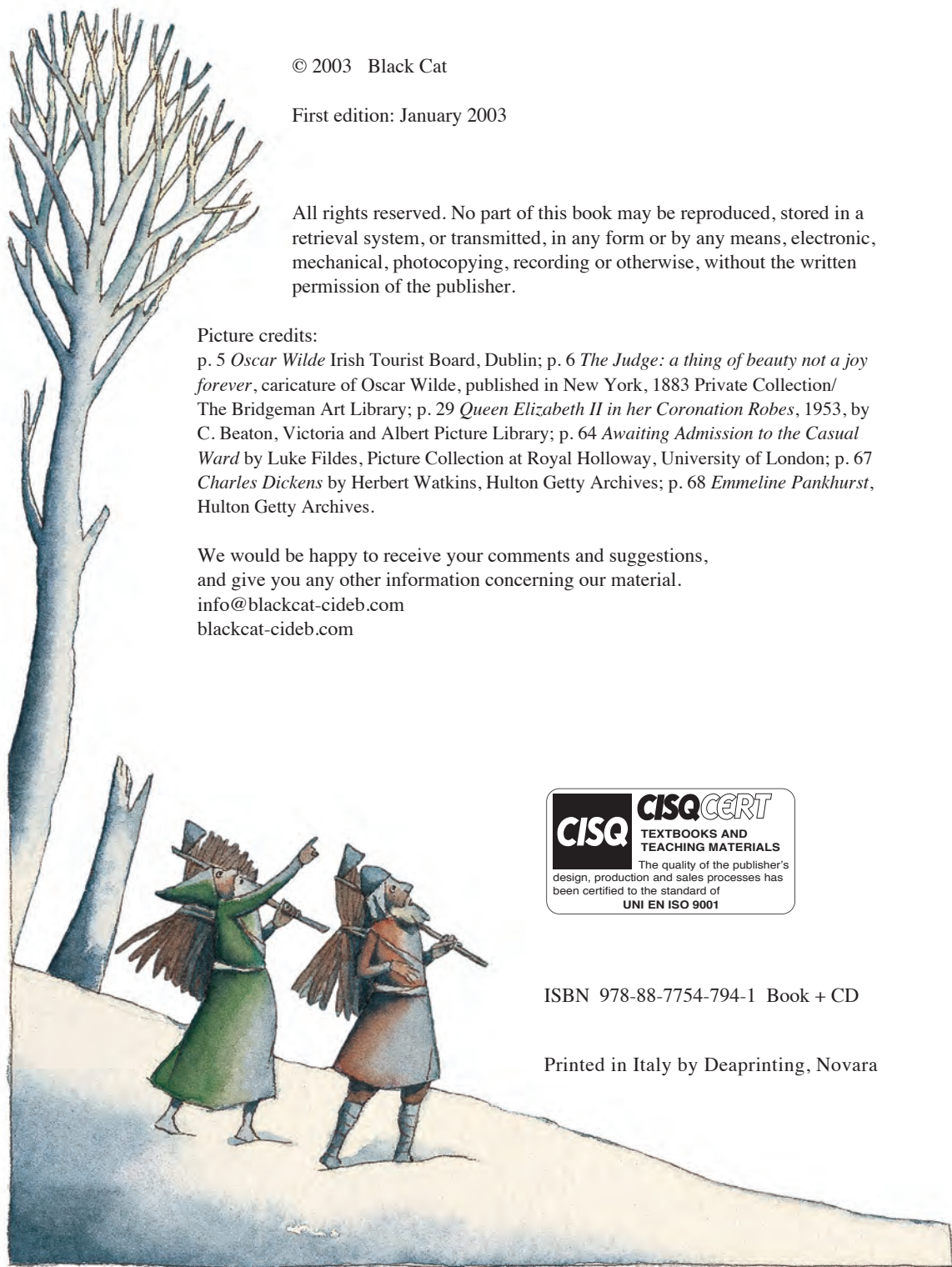
p. 5 *Oscar Wilde* Irish Tourist Board, Dublin; p. 6 *The Judge: a thing of beauty not a joy forever*, caricature of Oscar Wilde, published in New York, 1883 Private Collection/ The Bridgeman Art Library; p. 29 *Queen Elizabeth II in her Coronation Robes*, 1953, by C. Beaton, Victoria and Albert Picture Library; p. 64 *Awaiting Admission to the Casual Ward* by Luke Fildes, Picture Collection at Royal Holloway, University of London; p. 67 *Charles Dickens* by Herbert Watkins, Hulton Getty Archives; p. 68 *Emmeline Pankhurst*, Hulton Getty Archives.

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The text is recorded in full.



These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the extracts linked to the listening activities.



Oscar Wilde.

Introduction



Oscar Wilde was Irish. He was born in Dublin in 1854. His parents were very famous people. His father, William, was an important doctor. His mother was a poetess. She was called Jane but preferred the name 'Speranza'. She thought it was more interesting and romantic than Jane. Oscar's parents invited many clever and important people to their house in Dublin. They spoke together about clever and important things. When Oscar was a young boy he loved listening to them. He studied at Oxford University and won prizes for his poetry. Oscar Wilde was a very good writer but he preferred talking.

He was also a very funny and clever man. People wanted to listen to him and to laugh at his jokes. He was very popular and everybody invited him to their dinner parties.

He wrote poems, short stories, plays for the theatre and one novel. Two of his most famous works are his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



The Judge: a thing of beauty not a joy forever,
caricature of Oscar Wilde, published in New York, 1883.

Private Collection / Bridgeman Art Library

THE YOUNG KING

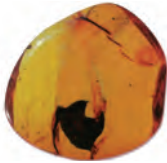


BEFORE YOU READ

- 1 Here are the names of some precious objects in the story.
What colour are they?



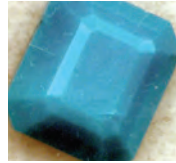
a. ivory



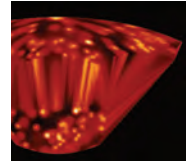
b. amber



c. jade



d. turquoise



e. ruby

- 2 Connect these people to the correct definition.

- a. This person is not free and must work for other people.
- b. This very poor person asks others for money.
- c. This person travels around the world to sell and buy things.
- d. He is a very important man in the church.
- e. This person looks after sheep and goats.



1. ☐ bishop



2. ☐ shepherd



3. ☐ merchant



4. ☐ beggar



5. ☐ slave

- 3** Here are some more words from the story. Connect the word to the correct picture.

a  b  c  d 	1. ☐ jewels 2. ☐ sceptre 3. ☐ robe 4. ☐ tomb 5. ☐ pillow 6. ☐ thorns 7. ☐ cloth 8. ☐ staff 9. ☐ pearls	i  h  g  f  e 
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- 4** Here are some verbs from the story. Do you know them?
Find the past tense of the verb and write it under the infinitive.
Then put the correct verb into the sentences.

dig	grow	throw	laugh	kneel
.....				

- a. Tommy the ball and his dog ran to get it.
- b. Amanda 10 centimetres last year!
- c. The children because the joke was very funny.
- d. The pirate a big hole because he wanted to find some treasure.
- e. When I met the Bishop, I in front of him.



The Old King's Secret



here was once an old King. He had no son to be King when he died. His people were very worried. 'Who will be the next King?' they asked. But before the King died he revealed a secret: his only daughter, the Princess, had a child. In secret, she married an ordinary man and they had a son. Some people said her husband was an artist and some people said he was a musician. But his identity was a mystery and nobody knew about their secret son.

When the baby was a week old some men took him while his mother was sleeping. The Princess died immediately. Some people said for sadness. Other people said someone gave her poison¹ in a cup of wine. The men left the baby with a very poor family. This poor family lived in the forest and the boy became a shepherd. He looked after goats all day.

1. **poison** : a substance that causes illness or death.





THE YOUNG KING

The old King made an important decision: 'The boy must be the new King when I die,' he said. He sent his servants into the forest. 'Find the boy and bring him here.'

The servants found the boy and brought him to the palace. When the boy arrived he was very happy. He immediately fell in love with all the beautiful things around him. He took off his old leather tunic and put on his fine new clothes. Then he began to explore the castle. He ran from room to room admiring all the beautiful statues, paintings and jewels in the palace. The people of the city talked about him: 'The young King spends all his time admiring statues,' they said. 'Beauty and art are the most important things for him.' In fact the young King was so fascinated with beautiful objects that he wanted more of them. He sent merchants to India to buy ivory and jade. He sent men to Persia for silk carpets, and others to find amber in the north. He sent servants to look for green turquoise in the magic tombs of the Egyptian kings.

The young King thought about all these things but most of all he thought about his coronation robe.

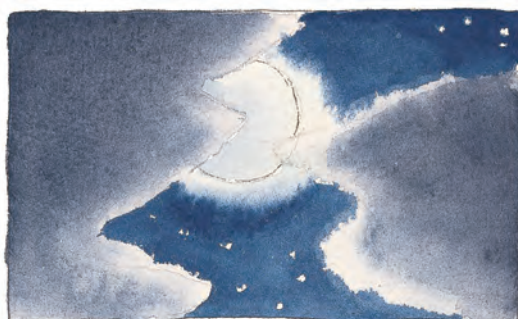
He was sixteen and it was his coronation day the next day. He was very happy because he had a beautiful coronation robe of gold, a crown of rubies and a sceptre of pearls. He ordered men to work night and day to prepare his coronation robes. 'Search the whole world for the biggest rubies for my crown and the most beautiful pearl for my sceptre,' he said.

The young King was in his beautiful bedroom and he was thinking about his coronation robes. It was night time and he looked around him. The room was full of silver and gold and

The Old King's Secret

beautiful colours. Through the window he could smell the perfume of jasmine,¹ he could hear a nightingale singing and he could see the moon shining. Servants arrived and put flower petals on his pillow. He was very happy. Tomorrow was his coronation day. He played beautiful music on his lute and at midnight he closed his eyes and went to sleep.

That night the young King had a dream.



1. **jasmine** : a type of flower.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1 Answer the following questions.

- a. Who was the princess's husband?
- b. What happened to the baby after he was born?
- c. Why was the boy happy when he arrived at the palace?
- d. What did the people of the city think of the young King?
- e. Why did the young King send his servants around the world?
- f. Describe the young King's bedroom.

PET 2 The King is very old and everyone is worried. What will happen when he dies? Look at the questions below. You will hear a conversation between the servant and the King. For each question, put a tick (✓) in the correct box.



1. The old King is very
☐ A tired ☐ B old ☐ C worried
2. The King had a
☐ A son ☐ B daughter ☐ C secret servant
3. The servant thinks that a princess couldn't be a
☐ A shepherd ☐ B problem ☐ C king
4. The princess had a secret
☐ A son ☐ B servant ☐ C boyfriend
5. When they hear the secret everybody is
☐ A worried ☐ B angry ☐ C surprised
6. The King tells his servant to
☐ A go away ☐ B bring the boy ☐ C find the princess
to the castle
7. The boy will
☐ A live in the forest ☐ B have lots of goats ☐ C be the new King
8. The servant thinks
☐ A it's a good idea ☐ B the boy is not a ☐ C the King is tired
good choice