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LANGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 3

The Young King and Other Stories

Oscar Wilde





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1.1 What's the book about?

Match the pictures and the story titles. What do you think?



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Young King' | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Nightingale and the Rose' |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Birthday of the Infanta' | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Star Child' |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Happy Prince' | 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Selfish Giant' |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 'The Fisherman and his Soul' | |

1.2 What happens first?

Look at the picture on page 1, opposite. What do you think?

- Who is the baby?
 - A poor child.
 - A child without a family.
 - A prince.
- What is going to happen to the baby next?
 - Nobody will want him.
 - He is going to live with strangers.
 - He is going to live with his parents.
- What will happen to him in the future?
 - He will spend his life in the forest.
 - His life will suddenly change.
 - He will run away from his home in the forest.

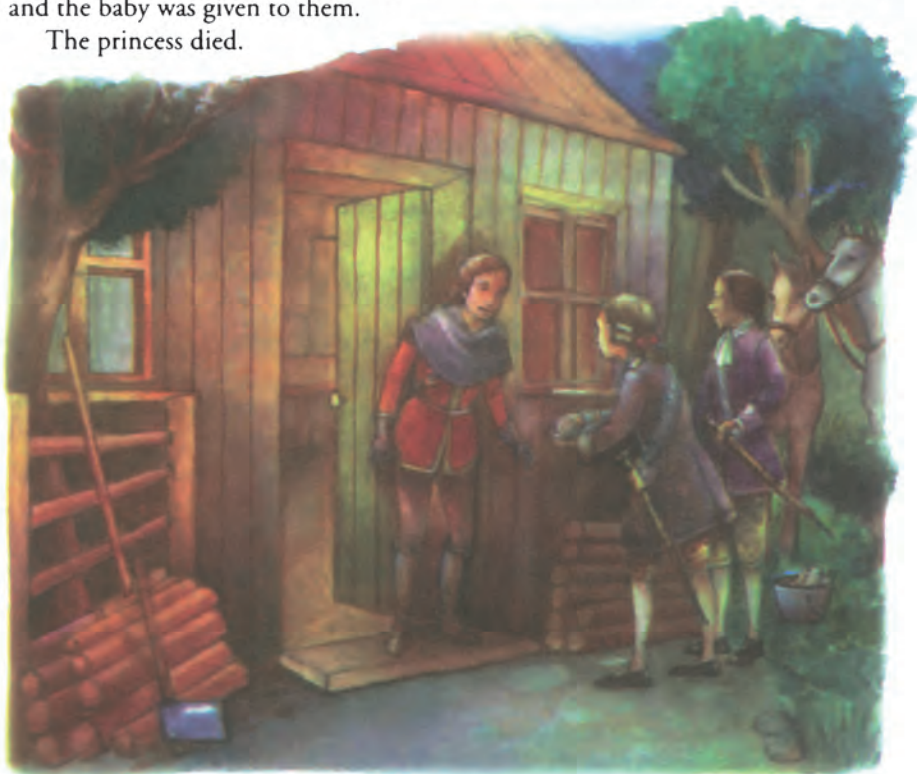
The Young King

*'This cloth was made by the white hands of pain. There is blood
in the jewels and death in the heart of the pearl.'*

The young king was alone in his beautiful room in the palace. He was only sixteen years old and he was wild-eyed, like an animal of the forest. The old king's **servants** found him in the forest. At that time, the boy believed that he was the son of a poor forester. He was brought up by the forester. But now he knew that he was the child of the old king's daughter.

The king's daughter married an ordinary man, a painter. He painted pictures on the walls of the great church where kings were **crowned**. But one day he disappeared, leaving the pictures unfinished. The week-old baby was taken away from his mother's side while she slept. The forester and his wife had no children, and the baby was given to them.

The princess died.



servant /'sɜ:vənt/ (n) someone who works in another person's house

crown /kraʊn/ (v/n) to place a circle of gold on someone's head and make them king or queen

When the old king was dying, he said, 'My heart is heavy because I have done a terrible thing. The crown must not pass away from my family. Bring my daughter's child from the forest. He will be king after me.'

When the boy was brought to the palace, he showed a strange love for beautiful things. He gave a happy cry when he saw his fine new clothes and rich **jewels**. He quickly took off the old coat that he wore in the forest. He walked through the palace from room to room, looking at everything.

A rich man came to see the young king one day. He found him on his knees in front of a beautiful picture from Venice. On another day, people searched for the king for hours. They finally found him in a little room at the north end of the palace. He was looking at the shape of the Greek **god** Adonis, cut in a jewel.

In the night, the young king thought about the beautiful clothes for his special day – a gold coat and a jewelled crown. People were working day and night to finish the clothes in time. The young king imagined himself in the great church, dressed as a king. His eyes closed, and he fell asleep. As he slept, he dreamed.

He dreamed that he was standing in a long, low room. Around him were cloth-makers at work. Only a little daylight came in through narrow windows. The men's faces were pale and thin. Little children were working with them. They were weak and hungry and their little hands shook.

The young king went to watch one of the cloth-makers. The man looked at him angrily.

'Why are you watching me?' he said. 'Did our employer ask you to watch us?'

'Who is your employer?' asked the young king.

'He is a man like me. But unlike me, he wears fine clothes. And while I am hungry, he has too much food.'

'You are not a **slave**,' said the young king. 'Your employer does not own you.'

'The rich make the poor their slaves,' answered the cloth-maker. 'We must work to live. But they pay us too little and we die. Men call us free, but we *are* slaves. But these things do not matter to you. You are not one of us: your face is too happy.'

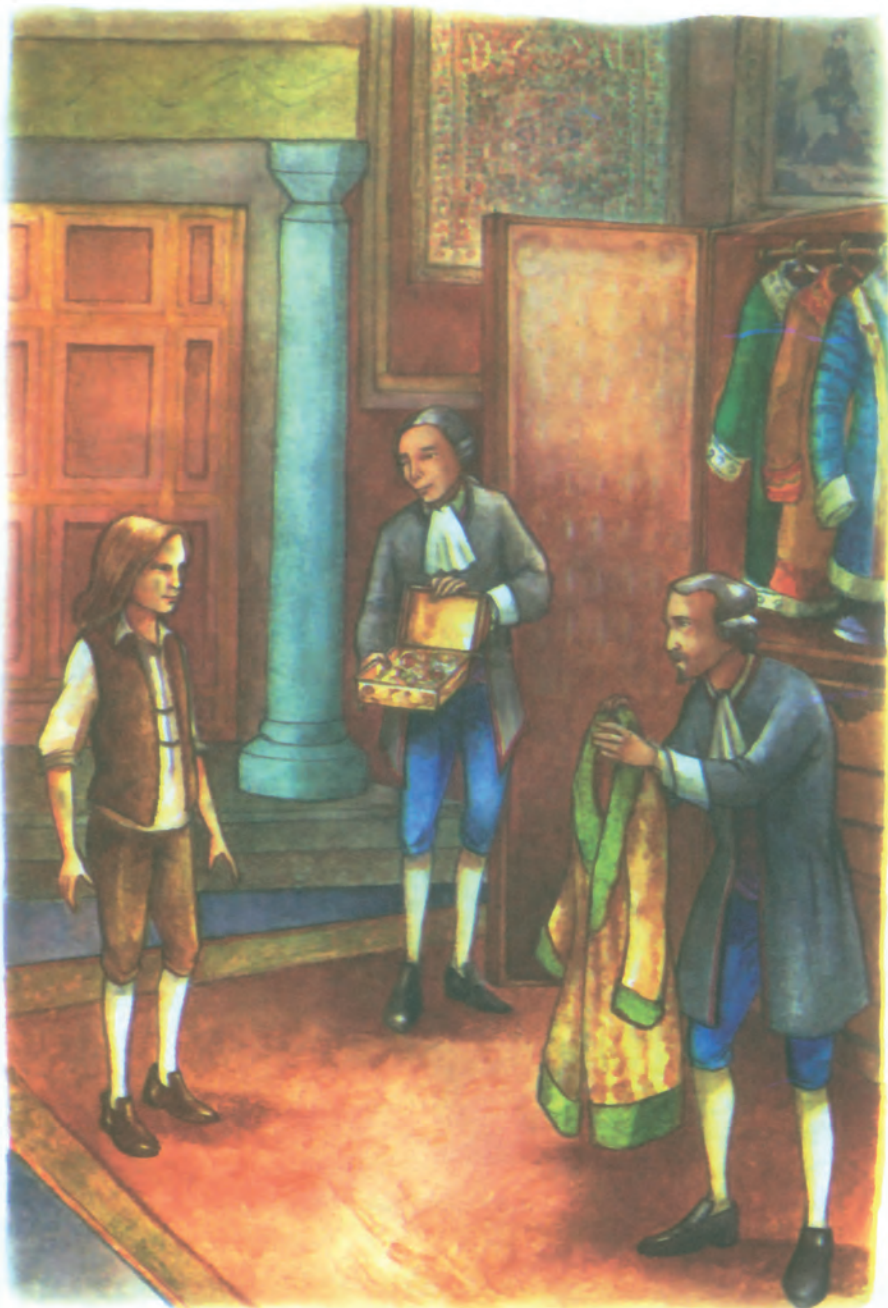
He turned away and continued his work. Then the young king saw that the cloth-maker was making gold cloth. He felt a sudden fear.

jewel /'dʒu:əl/ (n) a small, expensive stone

god /gɒd/ (n) the one who made the world and everything in it, in some religions. In other religions there is more than one *god*.

slave /sleɪv/ (n) someone who is owned by another person. A *slave* must work for his or her owner without pay.

Story 1 – The Young King



Oscar Wilde

British English
Classic

Strange and wonderful things happen in the seven short stories in this book. Oscar Wilde takes us into a world of kings and queens, mermaids and witches, giants and dwarfs, and talking animals. Exciting and amusing, happy and sad, these are stories for people of all ages.

Number of words (excluding activities): 14,738

Series Editors: Jocelyn Potter and Andy Hopkins

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200 headwords	
300 headwords	<i>Beginner</i>
600 headwords	<i>Elementary</i>

Level 3	1200 headwords	<i>Pre-intermediate</i>
	1700 headwords	<i>Intermediate</i>

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