

OSCAR WILDE

***A Poet
Can Survive
Everything
But
a Misprint***



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A Poet Can Survive Everything But a Misprint

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Oscar Wilde

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Contents

On (Im)morality	I
On Presentation	3
On Art	5
On Work and Life	7
On Oscar Wilde	9
The Decay of Lying	II
The Soul of Man under Socialism	55
The Truth of Masks	105

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On (Im)morality

Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault.

Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.

One should never listen. To listen is a sign of indifference to one's hearers.

If one tells the truth, one is sure, sooner or later, to be found out.

Sins of the flesh are nothing. They are maladies for physicians to cure, if they should be cured. Sins of the soul alone are shameful.

Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know.

The reason we all like to think so well of others is that we are all afraid for ourselves. The basis of optimism is sheer terror.

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Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.

Lovers are happiest when they are in doubt.

In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing.

The aim of love is to love: no more, and no less.

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On Presentation

The health of a nation depends very largely on its mode of dress; the artistic feeling of a nation should find expression in its costume quite as much as in its architecture . . .

All charming people, I fancy, are spoiled. It is the secret of their attraction.

Dandyism is the assertion of the absolute modernity of Beauty.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others.

A really well-made buttonhole is the only link between Art and Nature.

The only way to atone for being occasionally a little over-dressed is by being always absolutely over-educated.

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

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It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances.

A man who can dominate a London dinner table can dominate the world.

Fashion is merely a form of ugliness so unbearable that we are compelled to alter it every six months.

Manners are of more importance than morals.

To become a work of art is the object of living.

One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art.

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On Art

The aim of art is no more to give pleasure than to give pain. The aim of art is to be art.

Bad art is a great deal worse than no art at all.

All bad art is the result of good intentions.

A poet can survive everything but a misprint.

It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors.

The critic has to educate the public; the artist has to educate the critic.

Public opinion exists only where there are no ideas.

I think a man should invent his own myth.

No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style.

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I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who could call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one.

All art is at once surface and symbol.

All art is quite useless.

On Work and Life

I have always been of opinion that hard work is simply the refuge of people who have nothing whatever to do.

The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible. What the second duty is no one has as yet discovered.

Time is waste of money.

There is always more brass than brains in an aristocracy.

Good kings are the only dangerous enemies that modern democracy has.

Beer, the Bible, and the seven deadly virtues have made our England what she is.

Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness.

Industry is the root of all ugliness.

Work is the curse of the drinking classes of this country.

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We spend our days, each one of us, in looking for the secret of life. Well, the secret of life is in art.

. . . nothing is worth doing except what the world says is impossible.

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On Oscar Wilde

The only thing that sustains one through life is the consciousness of the immense inferiority of everybody else, and this is a feeling that I have always cultivated.

One should always be a little improbable.

By nature and by choice, I am extremely indolent.

Praise makes me humble, but when I am abused I know I have touched the stars.

I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best.

My duty to myself is to amuse myself terrifically.

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train.

I don't like principles . . . I prefer prejudices.

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