

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854, the son of an eminent¹ surgeon and a poet-cum-literary hostess. After reading classics at Dublin, Wilde went to Magdalen College, Oxford, where he won a poetry prize and gathered a wide circle of admirers.

His first book, *Poems*, was published in 1881. In 1884 he married Constance Lloyd and he wrote the charming fairy tales that became the highly successful *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* for their sons.

Then, after two years of working as a journal editor, Wilde returned to the literary circles in which his sparkling wit² was better appreciated. His novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published in 1890 but the low morals of its protagonist shocked the Victorian public.





When Mr Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister¹, bought Canterville Chase², everyone told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of absolute honor, had felt it his duty to mention³ the fact to Mr Otis, when they came to discuss terms.

'We have not cared to live in the place ourselves,' said Lord Canterville, 'since my grand aunt, the Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit⁴ from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner; and I feel bound⁵ to tell you, Mr Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector⁶ of the parish⁷, the Rev.⁸ Augustus Dampier. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, because of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library.'

1 minister ['mɪnɪstə] (n.) 外交使節

2 chase [tʃes] (n.) 狩獵地；獵場

3 mention ['menʃən] (v.) 提及

4 fit [fɪt] (n.) 痙攣或抽搐的突然發作

5 bound to [baʊnd tu] 一定會（做）

6 rector ['rektə] (n.) 教區牧師

7 parish ['pærɪʃ] (n.) 教區

8 Reverend ['revərənd] (n.) 牧師
(縮寫 Rev.)