

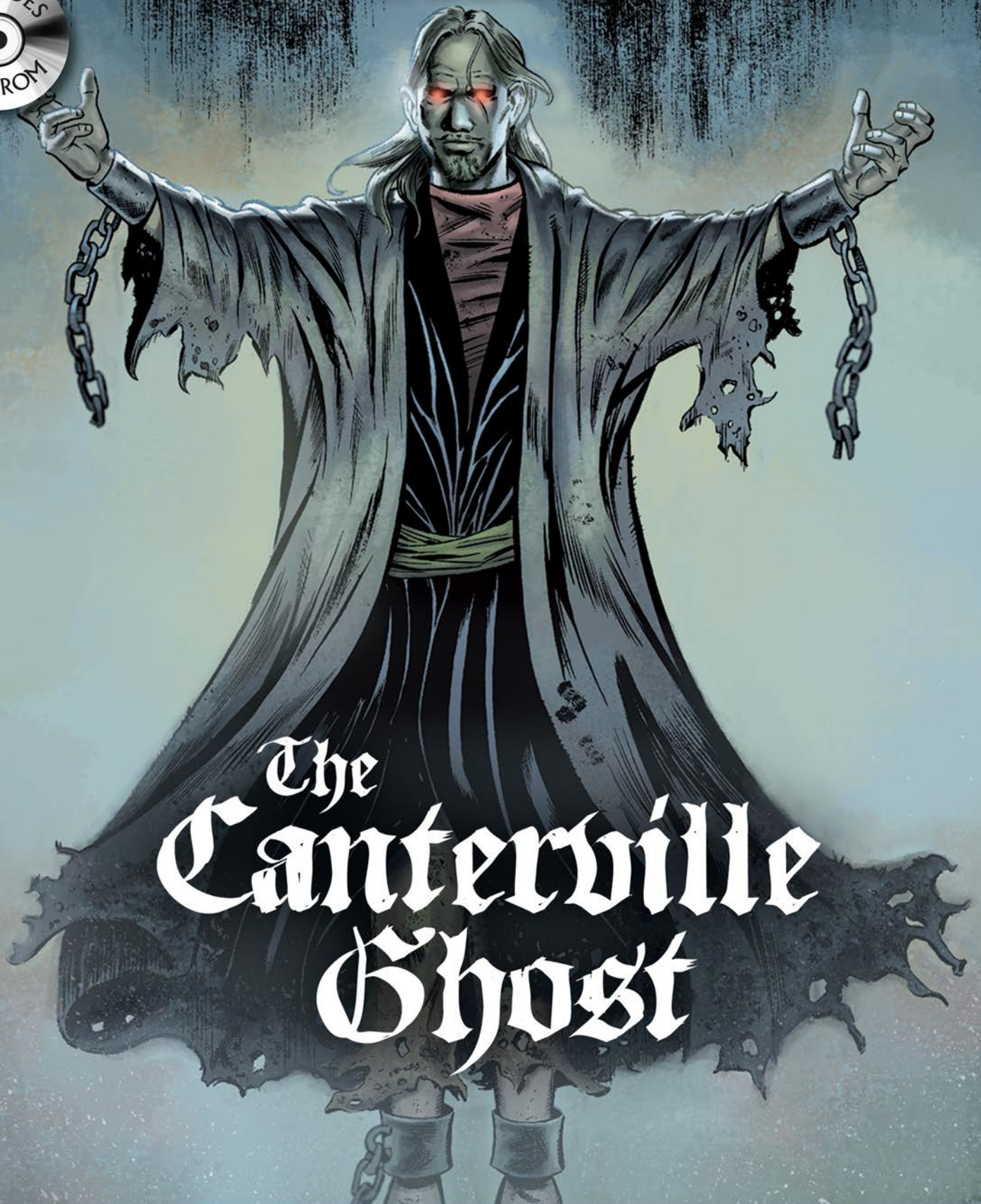
SUITABLE  
FOR  
TEACHING  
AGES 10-17

# CLASSICAL COMICS TEACHING RESOURCE PACK

Classical  
COMICS

Making the classics accessible for teachers and students

Written by: Gareth Calway



## The Canterville Ghost

TEACHING RESOURCE SAMPLE PAGES  
(WEBSITE DOWNLOAD)

# CLASSICAL COMICS TEACHING RESOURCE PACK

*The Canterville Ghost Sample Pages*

Copyright ©2016 Classical Comics Ltd.  
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or incorporated into any information retrieval system without the written permission of Classical Comics Ltd.

Copyright notice: This book is protected by international copyright law. Teachers are free to reproduce these pages by any method without infringing copyright restrictions, provided that the number of copies reproduced does not exceed the amount required in the school.

Written by: Gareth Calway  
Linework: Steve Bryant  
Colouring: Jason Millet  
Design & Layout: Jo Wheeler, Jenny Placentino & Carl Andrews  
Editor in Chief: Clive Bryant

The rights of Gareth Calway, Steve Bryant and Jason Millet to be identified as the artists of this work have been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 sections 77 and 78.

Acknowledgments: Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders of material reproduced in this book. Any rights not acknowledged here will be acknowledged in subsequent editions if notice is given to Classical Comics Ltd.

All enquiries should be addressed to:  
Classical Comics Ltd.  
PO Box 177  
LUDLOW  
SY8 9DL, UK  
Tel: 0845 812 3000  
education@classicalcomics.com

Full printed edition £19.99 ISBN: 978-1-906332-84-6  
Available from [www.classicalcomics.com](http://www.classicalcomics.com)

## BORN TO BE WILDE: TRUE OR FALSE?

TRUE OR FALSE?	ANSWER:
Wilde was born in Speranza, USA, in 1856.	
His Irish father was a surgeon, and his mother was "Speranza" the famous Irish poet.	
He won the Newdigate Prize at Oxford University in 1878 for his poem "Ravenna".	
He dressed in velvet and held a flower.	
He approved of the aristocratic fox hunt.	
He was the editor of <i>Woman's World</i> magazine from 1887-9 and at the same time published fairy stories.	
<i>The Canterville Ghost</i> was his first major successful work, at the age of 33, in 1887.	
He admitted that his "art for art's sake" novel <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> , and story <i>The Portrait of WH</i> , were immoral but aesthetic.	
He gives up writing prose from 1892, upset at all the scandals caused.	
His theatrical masterpiece is the light but biting social comedy <i>An Ideal Husband</i> (1894).	
The Marquess of Queensbury sends a bouquet of cauliflowers instead of flowers to the theatre to "congratulate" Wilde on his latest success.	
Wilde faces the death penalty when found guilty of "homosexual acts" in 1895.	
Prostitutes dance in the streets after Wilde is arrested, and workers cheer.	
In 1896, his mother sends him a Chelsea bun with a file in it so that he can escape from Reading Gaol.	
Wilde first learns about his mother's death when he reads an article about her in a newspaper.	
Lord Alfred Douglas visits Wilde in prison, meets him on his release, and they live happily ever after in Paris.	
He adopts an alias on his release, taking it from the hero of a romantic novel.	
Wilde continues to earn a fortune from his writings while in prison, on top of his wife's financial support, then lives in tax-free luxury in Europe until his death.	
"The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898) – Wilde's best poem – is about how he kept up the reading habit while in prison.	
Wilde didn't actually invent his famous fairy stories (like "The Happy Prince" and "The Selfish Giant"). They are brilliant reworkings of traditional tales.	

## ALL IN THE MIND?

“Or, in the night, imagining some fear,  
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!”  
(*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*)

In the evening before the Ghost’s first appearance, “The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of receptive expectations which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena.”

Lord Francis Stilton (the Duke of Cheshire’s grand-uncle) had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville Ghost, and he was found the next morning lying on the floor of the card room in such a helpless paralytic state ... he was never able to say anything again but “Double sixes”.

Anyone in a “spooked” state of mind is more likely to imagine ghosts, even if no ghosts are there.

There is a story from Poona in India about a man who, like Francis Stilton, once determined to prove ghosts don’t exist by taking up a challenge as follows: anyone who went into Poona cemetery at night and drove a stake into the ground at midnight was said to see a terrifying ghost. The man, a philosopher, mocked this superstition but got increasingly frightened as the evening wore on. The sounds of wild animals in the growing darkness affected him, and eerie imaginings took hold of him. By midnight, he was thoroughly spooked and very glad to be able to drive in the stake and go. He turned to leave only to feel himself yanked backwards. Because his mind was fixed on ghosts, he assumed that one was grasping his cloak. He died of a heart attack. In fact, in his terror, he had driven the stake through his own cloak.



### TASK:

Look at the two extracts from Wilde’s story above.

1. Is there any evidence that the Ghost is seen because the American family are thinking about it?
2. What about Lord Francis Stilton? Were ghosts on his mind, as they were for the philosopher in Poona, when he made the bet?

## FAIRY TALE ENDING?

### TASK:

Do you think Wilde wrote *The Canterville Ghost* as a simple fairy tale for little children readers/listeners? Or does he have a more sophisticated adult reader in mind? Or both?

Try to think of arguments for both sides. Explain your answer with reference to the kind of story it is and what you know about Wilde’s life at the time. You can refer to any part of the story, but focus particularly on the closing section.

# HAUNTED HOUSES OF ENGLAND

## TASK 1:

You are writing a history of Canterville Chase for the English Tourist Board. You have been asked to make it especially spooky and exciting, with an eye to attracting tourists.

First you need to research all the hauntings/revenges reported in Wilde's story.

With this in mind, skim-read the story again for the actual "hauntings" (there are plenty of these). Once you have marked the passages, make a careful study of them. As a historian, you will need to sift the pre-Otis hauntings (all serious and terrifyingly successful) from the Otis hauntings (it may be that none of these Otis hauntings are of any use within your promotional history of Canterville Chase).

Your account can describe the facts of the hauntings as recalled by the Ghost, and you can arrange your own narrative to suit *your* purpose.

What order will you give the hauntings? Chronological order, like a history book? Or start with the worst to hook your readers? Or work up to the worst (like a short story, saving the best for last)?

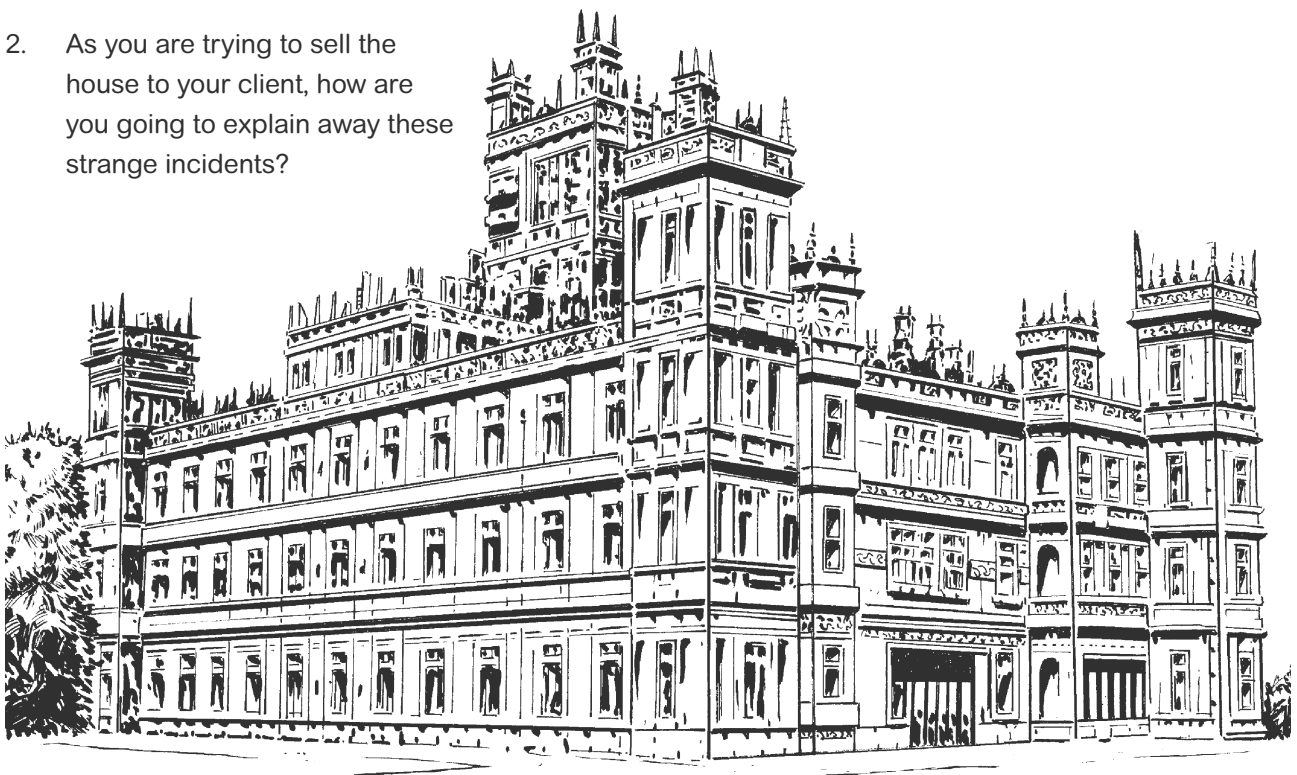
Alternatively, you could arrange it into chapters on haunted rooms, haunted grounds, and hauntings that end fatally or in madness.

The choice is yours, but you **MUST** make your readers want to come to Canterville Chase to witness the chills and thrills for themselves. Add illustrations if you think it would help.

## TASK 2:

You are an estate agent selling Canterville Chase on behalf of Lord Canterville.

1. Make a leaflet/brochure of the house and grounds, including detailed descriptions of the library, sitting room, staircase, etc. Write a comic account showing a potential buyer around, in a sudden thunderstorm, and with suitable appearances – sights, sounds, etc. – from the Ghost (e.g. the skeleton hands on the buyer's shoulders in the first page of the story, or the crash of the armour falling on the floor).
2. As you are trying to sell the house to your client, how are you going to explain away these strange incidents?



# NEWSPAPER REPORT

## TASK:


What *did* happen between Virginia and the Ghost? You are a tabloid journalist asked to find out the mystery behind the blush. In the story, it is left to our imagination to read between the lines, so no one can actually know for sure; but you're a tabloid journalist – don't let this fact get in the way of a good story! Choose one of the following headlines and write your story:

1. **GHOST ABDUCTS LITTLE GIRL – THE SUN**
2. **SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP – WASHINGTON POST / MANCHESTER GUARDIAN**
3. **PLUCKY AMERICAN GAL DISHES CANTERVILLE GHOST - BOSTON BUGLE/ DAILY TELEGRAPH**
4. **MYSTICAL UNION – THE CATHOLIC HERALD**
5. **“LOVE IS NOT JUST A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH – IT’S MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT” – GHOST WRITERS MONTHLY**

You can interview Virginia (who won't tell you) and any of the characters (who can only tell you what they believe), and you can read Chapter V and VI for clues. In the end you are going to have to speculate, because the text never tells us. Make sure when quoting that everyone speaks “in character”.

### EXAMPLE: SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP [DAILY TELEGRAPH]

**EXCLUSIVE!**



**B**eautiful and plucky Virginia Otis (19), recently made Duchess of Cheshire, did more than just win the heart of the little Duke when they were children at Canterville together. She cemented the bonds between her own energetic young country and her husband's noble and established civilisation – and she did it all by laying the Canterville Ghost to rest!

**BLUSHED**

“I can give no details of what happened beyond the wainscoting. That's a secret I will take to my grave. But it sure taught me what Life is, what Death is, and why Love

is stronger than both,” blushed the lovely Virginia when asked. Her father, Hiram B. Otis, the Republican Government Minister, US Ambassador to Great Britain and now a “special relation” of the ancient Stilton family, was more forthright. “She took a terrible risk, terrible.”

**MEDDLE**

“No ordinary person would have risked everything for the love of another being, and I'm more proud of that girl than I can say. This is what happens when you meddle in medievalism. And it took an American to fix it. What went on beyond the grave? I shudder to think.”

Stubborn, recurring stains?  
Demand ~

PINKERTON'S  
CHAMPION

Stain Remover  
now with  
PARAGON DETERGENT

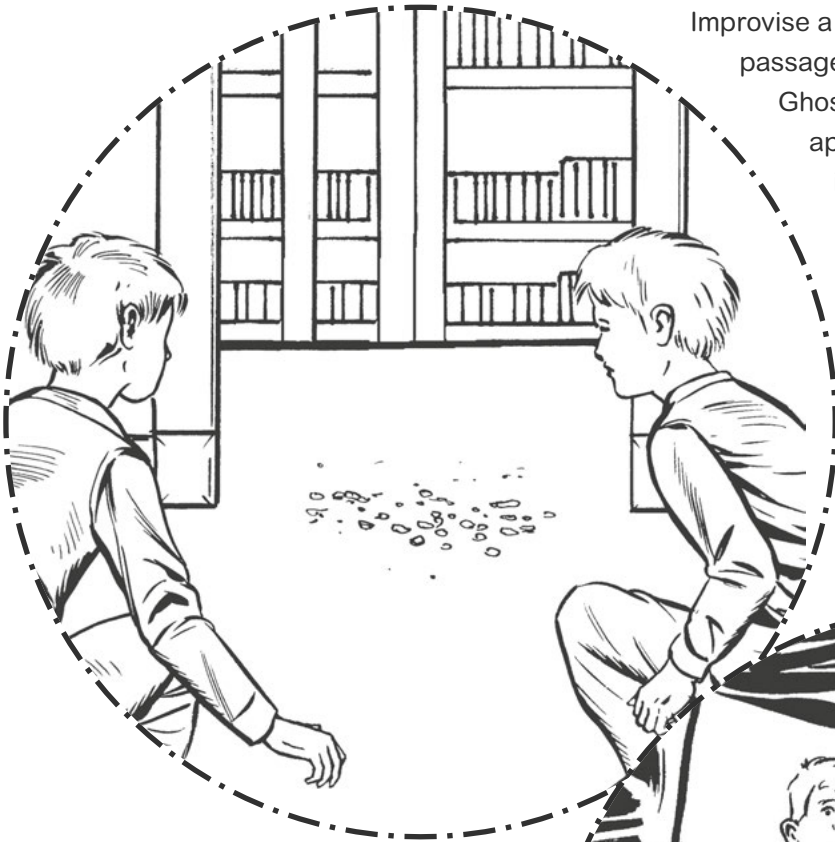


I **KNEW**  
PINKERTON  
WOULD DO  
IT.

# COMIC AND SERIOUS HAUNTINGS

## TASK:

Improvise a scene where the twins strew nutshells in the passages of the house in order to torment the Ghost. The twins think the Ghost is about to appear; it is a servant or Mr and Mrs Otis instead who complain about the mess. This is not the first time the twins have done this, and it won't be the last!



Now act a scene where the Ghost appears. Do two versions:

- (a) A comic one like the story itself.
- (b) A serious haunting where the jokes suddenly stop and the twins are genuinely frightened.

What does Oscar Wilde gain by making this story funny, rather than frightening?

Would you have preferred more chills or more laughs??

# COLOUR ME IN





# THE CANTERVILLE GHOST WORD SEARCH

The following words are hidden in the grid below. How many times does each word appear?

Canterville  
Ghost  
Virginia  
Hiram B. Otis  
Pinewoods  
Skeleton  
Lubricator

Stars and Stripes  
Simon  
Eleanor  
Oscar Wilde  
Umney  
Marchioness  
Washington

Library  
Tapestry Room  
Pinkertons  
Boston  
Pillows  
Shroud  
Twins

Duchess  
Evil  
Chanticleer  
BOO  
Joans  
Duke  
Cecil

Haunted  
Scapegrace  
Vyvyan  
Cyril  
Hemlock

J O A N S E P I R T S D N A S R A T S Y  
 C A N T E R V I L L E C Y R I L I R Y C  
 A I N I G R I V O S C A R W I L D E L I  
 E N S W O L L I P C H A N T I C L E E R  
 S A S I T O B M A R I H S S L U V O T D  
 S T S O H G U M N E Y D S E H S M S A D  
 E B O S T O A B O O O E S V N A C N P O  
 H E R G W O S I M O N N C I N D U K E N  
 C L O L I B W E W O O A W L J O A N S Y  
 U E T I N T K E I T S T Y T W I S S T S  
 D A A C S U N H R N S D R V U M N E R V  
 Y N C E D I C E O Y E S A E Y I A N Y V  
 E O I C P R K M D T H K R D W V O O R A  
 N R R E A N I U N K C Y B T U T J T O I  
 M G B M I S O U C O U M I C E C I L O B  
 U H U P N R A O L T D U L L I M H U M T  
 L O L I H H L M S C A P E G R A C E W T  
 I S W S A M E O D K E K B O S T O N S E  
 V T O J E H H D W A S H I N G T O N Y S  
 E B B H T G I T I T C E N S Y I S L E S

# BORN TO BE WILDE: TRUE OR FALSE?

## TEACHERS' VERSION

(Page 9)

TRUE OR FALSE?	ANSWER:
Wilde was born in Speranza, USA, in 1856.	<b>False. Born Dublin, Ireland, 1854.</b>
His Irish father was a surgeon, and his mother was "Speranza" the famous Irish poet.	<b>True. (Father also a famous antiquarian; mother also a famous society hostess).</b>
He won the Newdigate Prize at Oxford University in 1878 for his poem "Ravenna".	<b>True. Established a student reputation there as a long-haired aesthete and poseur.</b>
He dressed in velvet and held a flower.	<b>True! ("Nothing succeeds like excess.")</b>
He approved of the aristocratic fox hunt.	<b>False. He despised and opposed it.</b>
He was the editor of <i>Woman's World</i> magazine from 1887-9 and at the same time published fairy stories.	<b>True. Needed money after birth of second son stretched rich wife's income.</b>
<i>The Canterville Ghost</i> was his first major successful work, at the age of 33, in 1887.	<b>True. His poems and 2 early plays were minor/failures. But he said he was 31.</b>
He admitted that his "art for art's sake" novel <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> , and story <i>The Portrait of WH</i> , were immoral but aesthetic.	<b>False. "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well or badly written. That is all."</b>
He gives up writing prose from 1892, upset at all the scandals caused.	<b>False. Loves creating scandals, though uses theatre to do it now instead of prose.</b>
His theatrical masterpiece is the light but biting social comedy <i>An Ideal Husband</i> (1894).	<b><i>A Woman of No Importance</i> (1893) and <i>An Ideal Husband</i> (1894) are brilliantly funny comic plays. But his farewell coup de theatre <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i> (1895) is surely his masterpiece.</b>
The Marquess of Queensbury sends a bouquet of cauliflowers instead of flowers to the theatre to "congratulate" Wilde on his latest success.	<b>True. Wilde responds, "Thank you, Lord Douglas, whenever I look at them, I will think of you."</b>
Wilde faces the death penalty when found guilty of "homosexual acts" in 1895.	<b>False. (Though he would have done until 1861). But the trial sounded the death knell on his career as the two years' hard labour in Reading Gaol did so on his life.</b>
Prostitutes dance in the streets after Wilde is arrested, and workers cheer.	<b>True.</b>
In 1896, his mother sends him a Chelsea bun with a file in it so that he can escape from Reading Gaol.	<b>False. She dies at her home in Chelsea that year while Wilde is still in prison.</b>
Wilde first learns about his mother's death when he reads an article about her in a newspaper.	<b>False. His wife Constance travels from Switzerland to break the sad news to him personally.</b>
Lord Alfred Douglas visits Wilde in prison, meets him on his release, and they live happily ever after in Paris.	<b>False. Alfred abandons Wilde until his release, by which time Wilde has begun "De Profundis", a bitter letter of reproach and renunciation, completed in Paris.</b>
He adopts an alias on his release, taking it from the hero of a romantic novel.	<b>True. Sebastian Melmoth, hero of <i>Melmoth the Wanderer</i>.</b>
Wilde continues to earn a fortune from his writings while in prison, on top of his wife's financial support, then lives in tax-free luxury in Europe until his death.	<b>False. He is ruined by the court case, cut off from his wife's support and declared bankrupt while in prison. He dies in Paris "as I have lived" – "beyond my means".</b>
"The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898) – Wilde's best poem – is about how he kept up the reading habit while in prison.	<b>True date and his best serious poem – but False about reading. Reading, Berks is where the prison was.</b>
Wilde didn't actually invent his famous fairy stories (like "The Happy Prince" and "The Selfish Giant"). They are brilliant reworkings of traditional tales.	<b>False. They just seem like that because they are so compellingly written, however Wilde was a highly original writer of children's stories.</b>

# THE CANTERVILLE GHOST WORD SEARCH

(Page 67)

Solution:

- |                   |                       |                   |                 |                |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Canterville (1)   | Stars and Stripes (1) | Library (1)       | Duchess (3)     | Haunted (1)    |
| Ghost (3)         | Simon (2)             | Tapestry Room (1) | Evil (2)        | Scapegrace (1) |
| Virginia (1)      | Eleanor (1)           | Pinkertons (1)    | Chanticleer (1) | Vyvyan (1)     |
| Hiram B. Otis (1) | Oscar Wilde (1)       | Boston (1)        | BOO (3)         | Cyril (2)      |
| Pinewoods (1)     | Umney (3)             | Pillows (1)       | Joans (3)       | Hemlock (2)    |
| Skeleton (1)      | Marchioness (1)       | Shroud (1)        | Duke (2)        |                |
| Lubricator (1)    | Washington (1)        | Twins (4)         | Cecil (2)       |                |