

The Ballad of Reading Gaol: An Annotated Edition



The Ballad of Reading Gaol (Annotated) by Oscar Wilde

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 321 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Print length	: 72 pages
Paperback	: 112 pages
Item Weight	: 4.8 ounces
Dimensions	: 5.2 x 0.4 x 8.1 inches



The Ballad of Reading Gaol is a long poem by Oscar Wilde, written while he was imprisoned in Reading Gaol for gross indecency. The poem tells the story of a man who is hanged for the murder of his wife. The poem is notable for its use of vivid imagery and its exploration of themes such as guilt, redemption, and the death penalty.

This annotated edition of the poem provides detailed 解説 on the poem's historical context, literary allusions, and cultural significance. The annotations are written by a team of scholars who are experts in Victorian literature and Oscar Wilde's work.

Historical Context

The Ballad of Reading Gaol was written in 1897, during a time of great social and economic change in England. The Industrial Revolution had led to the growth of cities and the rise of a new working class. The Victorian era was also a time of great religious revivalism, and the death penalty was still widely used for a variety of crimes.

Wilde was arrested in 1895 and charged with gross indecency for his relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas. He was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. Wilde served his sentence in Reading Gaol, a notorious prison known for its harsh conditions.

The Ballad of Reading Gaol was written during Wilde's time in prison. The poem is a powerful indictment of the death penalty and a moving meditation on the nature of guilt and redemption.

Literary Allusions

The Ballad of Reading Gaol is full of literary allusions. Wilde draws on a variety of sources, including the Bible, Shakespeare, and classical mythology.

For example, the poem's opening lines echo the opening lines of the Book of Job:



***“In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Condemned to hang for crime.”***

Wilde also alludes to Shakespeare's play Hamlet in the poem's third stanza:



***“And all the woe that moved him so
The sights he had to see,
And all the terror that he felt
When the hour of death was near.”***

These allusions help to give the poem a sense of timelessness and universality.

Cultural Significance

The Ballad of Reading Gaol has had a significant impact on popular culture. The poem has been adapted into several films and television shows, and it has been referenced in countless songs and works of literature.

The poem's enduring popularity is due to its powerful storytelling and its exploration of universal themes such as guilt, redemption, and the death penalty. The poem is a reminder that even the most wretched of criminals can find redemption, and that the death penalty is a cruel and inhumane punishment.

Annotated Text

The following is the annotated text of The Ballad of Reading Gaol.



***“In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Condemned to hang for crime.”***

pit of shame: The prison.

wretched man: The prisoner who is about to be hanged.

“

***“He has killed a man the law said,
And he must pay the price,
And so he lies with fettered feet
And waits the sunrise.”***

He has killed a man the law said: The prisoner has been convicted of murder.

fettered feet: The prisoner's feet are shackled.

“

***“In Reading gaol by Reading town,
They hanged a man on high,
And the people gathered round to see
And watch him as he died.”***

hanged a man on high: The prisoner was hanged from a gallows.

”



***“And all the woe that moved him so
The sights he had to see,
And all the terror that he felt
When the hour of death was near.”***

all the woe that moved him so: The prisoner's grief and sorrow at being about to die.



***“And out of all that wretched throng
There is a few to tell
Of what they saw and of what they heard
When the hangman came to do his fell.”***

out of all that wretched throng: Of all the people who witnessed the hanging.

fell: Cruel or deadly.



***“In Reading gaol by Reading town,
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Condemned to hang for crime.”***

pit of shame: The prison.

wretched man: The prisoner who is about to be hanged.



***“He has killed a man the law said,
And he must pay the price,
And so he lies with fettered feet
And waits the sunrise.”***

He has killed a man the law said: The prisoner has been convicted of murder.

fettered feet: The prisoner's feet are shackled.



“In Reading gaol by”



The Ballad of Reading Gaol (Annotated) by Oscar Wilde

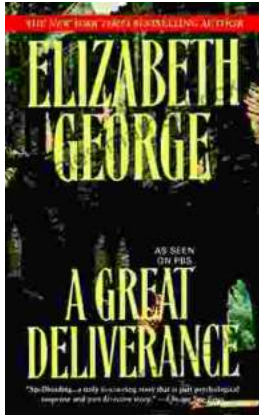
★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 321 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 72 pages
Paperback : 112 pages
Item Weight : 4.8 ounces
Dimensions : 5.2 x 0.4 x 8.1 inches

FREE

DOWNLOAD E-BOOK





The Great Deliverance Inspector Lynley: A Literary Masterpiece Unraveling the Intricacies of Policing and Human Character

: In the realm of detective fiction, Elizabeth George's "The Great Deliverance Inspector Lynley" stands as a towering literary achievement. This captivating novel delves into...



Metal Gear Solid Ground Zeroes Guide, Walkthrough, Tips, Cheats

Metal Gear Solid Ground Zeroes is a prologue to the highly anticipated Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain. It is a standalone game that was...