

# The model millionaire essay

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Oscar Wilde's *The Model Millionaire* which is a part of his collection of short stories known as 'the house of pomegranates' is a great story from one of the greatest masters of the art known as the short story. This story is a composition of various themes which can be listed as: the material aspect of our life, standards in the society, love, and most importantly the morals of the people residing in the society. Firstly, this short story emphasizes the materialistic aspects of life. It speaks about the importance of money and wealth in our lives.

It tells us how an individual with good morals but no wealth has no social standing. It would not be wrong to say that Wilde implies the money is the primary need for survival, love comes second, when an individual faces hunger it's not love but money that will buy him food. The protagonist of this story Hughie is a misfit in a mercantile world. He is sweet and kind but lacks the qualities of a businessman or a worker. He is at a loss in the world of bulls and bears. In spite of his charming appearance, he has failed in every attempt to make money.

He cannot understand the ways of the world and ends up miserably whenever he tries to be successful materially. His affair with Laura is at a stake as he has failed to raise a fund of ten thousand pounds as demanded by Laura's father who welcomes Hughie as a person but is not ready to accept him as his son-in-law. Here we can see how even though an ethical individual is appreciated he/she cannot be accepted because he does not have the resources to support Laura and himself. Hence the second sentence of the story becomes significant: "Romance is the privilege of the rich, not the profession of the unemployed."

In the end, had Baron not provided Hughie the money, the latter's marriage with Laura would not have taken place. So, making both ends meet becomes more important than the melody of love. When the stomach burns with hunger, the whole world becomes prosaic and the beautiful full moon looks like a hot flour cake. Every lover and beloved should keep it in mind.

Secondly, one must have the kindness of heart as well. Kindness shown to others pays in the end. Our acts are like a boomerang, what we throw to the world is what comes back to us.

Here in the story we see that because Hughie was under the impression that the Baron was a beggar and chose to give him a sovereign, towards the end the Baron repays Hughie's kindness by showing his generosity to sponsor the money Hughie required. Tender qualities are not to be totally dispensed with even in a thoroughly materialistic world, because even though wealth and social qualities are important we chose to go by the saying, ' the greatest are the humblest, or the humblest the greatest'.

The importance of moral and ethical values is highlighted here. The above two themes, ' money being more important than morality' or tender qualities presiding over the material aspect of our life', are undoubtedly opposed to each other. Many readers object to the very fact that this story has a fairytale quality. This story is greatly based on coincidences. What were the chances that Hughie would accidentally meet a Baron disguised as a beggar at Trevor's studio and then would get a chance to have an intimate conversation with him.

It is pure coincidence that Hughie got an audience with the baron or else why would they have a conversation in the first place, let alone an intimate one. And here is how luck works, accidentally there is a sovereign in Hughie's pocket which he decides to give the beggar even though he barely has any money to support his needs. Strangely enough the beggar turns out to be a millionaire. But we must not discard the story as based only on chance factors because we know that truth is stranger than fiction. Such chance factors are common in our life too.

However, one question remains in the end: What ultimately wins- the value system that Laura's father believes or the cordial qualities that Hughie possesses? Laura's father wants Hughie to have at least ten thousand pounds so that the father can be assured of his daughter's welfare. There is no questioning him whether his love for Laura, Hughie and their feelings is genuine or true because it has been mentioned earlier that her loves Hughie as a person but cannot accept him a son in law due to his social standard.

But we cannot deny the fact that Hughie is very kind hearted. Even though he barely has resources to support himself he thought that the penny was needed by the beggar more than him. His act of kindness is a rare sight. He placed another individual above him and looked into the beggar's welfare. There is no doubt that without ten thousand pounds the marriage would not have taken place. On the other hand, it is also true that Hughie would not have got the prize from Baron had Hughie not shown his kindness to the beggar, the disguised Baron.

Wilde is not an extremist. He believes that one must live with their heads held high but their feet fixed to the ground. By telling us about Hughie's financial problems and his need for the ten thousand pounds, Wilde shows us the materialistic aspect of life and how it is extremely important to have money so that one can fulfill one's needs. And the part where he writes about Hughie's kindness, he tells us how it is also very important for an individual to be attached with his/her roots and to know and believe in their values so as to live a happy life.

He believes that one must have a solid financial base to build the successful married life. On the other hand, he maintains that while following the ways of the world, one must not discard his cordial qualities completely. We must maintain a steady balance between the two. Wilde also highlights the 'karma' theory which implies 'what you sow so shall you reap'. Had Hughie not shown kindness to the Baron, the baron wouldn't have offered his help when Hughie was in need.

Lastly, Oscar Wilde talks about the ideal way to spend that what have, in this context, the Baron's wealth. The baron could have accepted the sovereign from Hughie while disguised as a beggar and forgotten about it, but he chose to repay Hughie's kindness by helping him. Simple monetary gains do not save one's soul unless that wealth is used to solve people's problems. By helping Hughie to marry Laura, Baron exemplifies the ideal way to spend money. That is why he raises himself to the status of a model millionaire from the status of a millionaire model.