

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 3: THE SELFISH GIANT



THE SELFISH GIANT

~Summary~

-by Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde's "The Selfish Giant" is about a giant who lived his life selfishly without thinking about others. He lived such a selfish life without **realising** his mistake. He had a beautiful garden and did not allow children to play in it. It was this selfish attitude of him that made the winter occupy his garden for many months. Spring and autumn never entered his garden. As there was no spring and autumn in the garden, **flowers** didn't blossom and **fruits** didn't grow. Birds never entered to sing in his garden around. The garden had lost its beauty and richness.

Winter, along with snow, frost, north wind, occupied the giant's garden for a very **long time**. The giant was confused about why the **spring** and **autumn** had left his garden alone despite occupying the whole country. His **confusion** was clear one day.

One morning, he noticed spring to be back in his garden, and children were playing there secretly, but it (spring) went behind the children when they ran away after seeing the giant. Winter began to occupy the garden once again due to the children's absence. The **reason** was **obvious** for the giant as to why spring and autumn had avoided his garden.

Having realised his mistake, the giant changed his mind. He decided to let the children play inside his garden and broke the garden's wall. He also helped a little kid who tried to climb up the tree, which made him **hug** and **kiss** the giant. The giant was highly attracted toward the little boy but never had a chance to meet the little boy again. But, the giant's heart always wished to meet the little boy.

As years passed, the giant turned old and weak and couldn't play with the kids but admired his garden by sitting in an armchair. Yet, his wish to see and play with that little boy persisted in his mind. It came true one winter morning, as he had seen the same little kid under a **golden tree** filled with silver fruits on it. The giant **rushed** to see the little kid and wanted to be with him. But, on getting closer to him, he found nail marks on his little hands and feet. When the giant asked him who had wounded him for killing them, the little boy replied it was the wounds of love. The little boy was none but Jesus Christ himself, who saved him from his sin of selfishness and made him realise the importance of **selfless love**. As he allowed the little boy inside his garden and served the kids all those years, God took him to his garden of **Paradise**.

~Conclusion~

The Selfish Giant dwells on the message that we should not be selfish and try to be open-minded and spread love among others and make everyone around us happy. Presenting the CBSE Class 8 English It So Happened Prose Summary of The Selfish Giant that will help students to have a complete understanding of the chapter.

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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 20) (Comprehension Check - I)

Question 1. Why is the Giant called selfish?

Answer: The Giant is called selfish because he prohibited the children from playing in his garden. He built a high wall all around it and put up a notice-board in it stating that all trespassers will be prosecuted.

Question 2. On one occasion the children said: "How happy we are here!"

Later they said: "How happy we were there!"

What are they referring to in both the cases?

Answer: In the first case, the children expressed their happiness while playing in the Giant's garden. They would go to play in the garden after returning from school and had a wonderful time playing around the garden.

In the second instance, the children were referring to the Giant's garden where they would go and play after returning from school. They talked with each other how they would enjoy playing around the garden where trees bore beautiful flowers and fruits and birds sang sweet songs. However, after the Giant stopped them by building a high wall around the garden, they could no longer enter it.

The children were referring to the Giant's beautiful garden in both the cases.

Question 3.

- a. When spring came, it was still winter in the garden. What does winter stand for or indicate here?
- b. Winter has been presented like a story with its own characters and their activities. Describe the story in your own words.

Answer:

- a. When Spring came, it was still Winter in the garden. In the story, Winter denotes desolate and negative atmosphere where the trees and flowers never blossom. Winter is also used to indicate a gloomy and depressing environment which brings in sadness and laziness. In such cold weather, there is snow everywhere and cold winds blow all around where trees tend to droop and birds do not chirp. As the children were not playing in the Giant's garden, Spring did not enter it. As a result, even the trees did not blossom and the birds did not sing sweet songs in the garden.
- b. When Spring came all over the country, the trees started to blossom and the birds started to sing except the Giant's garden, where winter had still prevailed. The birds did not sing and the trees forgot to blossom as the children did not come to play in the garden. One day, a beautiful flower blossomed from the grass but when it saw the notice-board, it felt sorry for the children and slipped back into the ground again. Seeing all this, Winter was pleased as there was Snow and Frost everywhere. Snow covered the entire garden with her huge white cloak and Frost painted all the trees in silver. They then invited the North Wind who was wrapped in furs and he blew strongly across the garden. Along with him, came Hail who rattled the roof of the castle for three hours every day until most of the slates were broken. He ran all around the garden as fast as he could. He was dressed in grey attire and his breath also felt like ice.

Question 4. Was the Giant happy or sad over the state of the garden?

Answer: The Giant was extremely saddened to see the condition of the garden. Neither Spring nor Summer or Autumn came to visit it. It was in a miserable state as Snow, Frost, North Wind and Hail did not seem to leave his garden. He often wondered why Spring was so late in arriving at his garden.

Question 5. What effect did the linnet's song have over Hail and the North Wind?

Answer: Hearing the linnet sing, the Hail stopped dancing over his head and the North Wind stopped roaring. Soon, the Giant could hear a delicious perfume come to him through the open casement and he jumped out of his bed in excitement.

Questions (Page No. 24) (Comprehension Check - II)

Question 1.

- a. The Giant saw a most wonderful sight. What did he see?
- b. What did he realise on seeing it?

Answer:

- a. The Giant saw that the children had crept into his garden through a little hole in the wall and sat on the branches of the trees. As the children filled the garden, the trees were delighted to see them and they blossomed in full swing. The Giant was mesmerized seeing this wonderful sight as he saw the birds were also twittering around in joy and the flowers bloomed in happiness.
- b. The Giant realised soon enough that Spring was late in visiting his garden because he did not allow the children to play in it. He realised that he had been very selfish in prohibiting the children from playing in his garden by building a high wall all around it.

Question 2. Why was it still winter in one corner of the garden?

Answer: As the children played in the garden, the Giant noticed that in one corner of it, there was a tree that was still covered with Snow and Frost. The North Wind blew strongly and was roaring over it. The Giant came closer and noticed a small boy was standing in front of it, who was so tiny that he could not climb the branches of the tree. As the tree remain untouched by the child, Winter still prevailed in that corner of the garden.

Question 3. Describe the first meeting of the little boy and the Giant.

Answer: The Giant met the little boy in front of the tree that was covered with Snow and Frost. Winter still prevailed in that corner of the garden. Seeing the little boy's inability to reach the branches of the tree, the Giant gently took him in his arms and put him up on the tree. Soon the tree blossomed with joy and the birds came to sing on it. The little boy stretched his tiny arms around the Giant's neck and kissed him gently to express his gratitude towards him.

Question 4. Describe their second meeting after a long interval.

Answer: One winter morning, the Giant looked out of the window as he knew that Spring was sleeping and the flowers were taking rest. He wondered if he would ever meet the little boy again

whom he loved so dearly. Suddenly while rubbing his eyes, he noticed a wonderful sight. In the farthest corner of the garden, there was a tree that was covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were golden and silver fruit hung down from them. Just underneath the tree, there stood the little boy whom he had loved so dearly and was eagerly waiting for him. The Giant quickly ran down the stairs of his house in great joy and hastened towards the garden to reach out to the child. But when he noticed the nail imprints on the little boy's hands and feet, he got angry and asked him who caused him such injury. He said that he would avenge and slay the person whoever caused the little one so much pain and injury. Hearing this, the child told the Giant that these were the wounds of love. The little boy further added that as the Giant was kind enough to allow him to play in his garden, he had come to take the Giant along with him to his garden in Paradise.

Question 5. The Giant lay dead, all covered with white blossoms. What does this sentence indicate about the once selfish Giant?

Answer: "The Giant lay dead, all covered with white blossoms." The sentence indicates that the Giant was blessed to live in Paradise after his death. As he was no longer selfish and cruel, he was covered with white blossoms in his garden. The white blossoms indicated that the Giant had a peaceful death.

Questions (Page No. 16) (Exercise)

Discuss the following topics in groups.

Question 1. The little child's hands and feet had marks of nails. Who does the child remind you of? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: The marks of nails on the little child's hands reminds us of Jesus Christ. When the Giant met the child for the second time, he noticed the imprints of nails on the little boy's palms and feet. This made the Giant angry and he cried out loudly asking who had done such harm to the little boy. If we remember the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, it reminds us that there were similar nail imprints on his palms and feet. He had sacrificed his life for the sake of humanity and he had also forgiven those who caused him such pain and dishonour. Similarly, the little boy in the story told the Giant that these marks were the wounds of love.

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