

The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde

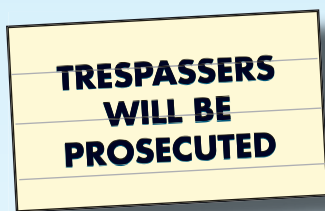
Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.

It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were peach-trees that in the springtime broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang sweetly.

One day the Giant came back. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

"What are you doing here?" he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.

"I will allow nobody to play in it but myself," said the Giant. So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a sign:



He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. "Spring has forgotten this garden," they cried, "so we will live here all the year round." The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver.

"I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming," said the Selfish Giant. "I hope there will be a change in the weather."

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. It was always Winter there.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It was a little linnet singing outside his window. "I believe the Spring has come at last," said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in. The trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene.

"How selfish I have been!" the Giant said; "now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever." He was really very sorry for what he had done.

"It is your garden now, little children," said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

Why?

Why was it winter all the time in the Giant's garden?

Why was the Giant selfish?

Why did the Giant's garden start to bloom again?
