

Summary of short story

Literature



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Summary of Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant* *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde is a short story about a giant who went away for vacation for seven years. He has a garden and a castle. While he was away the children in his neighborhood have routinely visited his flowers and trees and played in his garden. The children were very happy every time they were in the garden to listen to the singing of the birds and to smell the fragrance of the blossoming flowers. However, the giant returned. While the children were talking they heard a thunderous sound which made them leap and leave the garden immediately. When the giant saw the children he scared them away from his garden, built a high wall, and posted a notice that says, 'trespassers will be prosecuted' (Wilde 1910, 46) Because of the giant's selfish act, spring went away and the winter 'elements', snowflakes, hail, wind, and frost, came in. The winter 'elements' occupied the garden and stubbornly declined to go away until the selfish giant faces them and talks to them about the purpose of their stay in the garden. The giant grew weary of waiting for spring and he often asked himself why spring was late. The people in his neighborhood always talked about the giant's ice-covered garden. The children became more and more convinced that the giant is unkind and selfish. The reaction of the children were quite emotional because they have witnessed how the giant threw them out of the garden and prohibited them from going there again. The children's reaction is truthful and strong. And because of the persistent longing they feel for the garden the children were forced to dig a hole on the wall and go into the garden once again. When the giant saw the children in his garden he felt some kind of happiness, so he finally agreed to let the children play in his garden and to get rid of his bad manners for good.

Because of the goodness of the giant's heart the sunshine returns to his garden. He watched the children play and his heart fluttered. But on the farthest corner of the garden he saw a little boy trying to climb a tree. The little boy was crying while walking around the tree. The giant felt sorry for the little boy and suddenly felt a pang of guilt that he burst out (Wilde 1910, 50):

Now I know how selfish I have been! Now I know why Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground forever and ever.

The little boy and the giant formed a strong friendship from then on. But the little boy disappeared and did not return until many years afterward. The giant, very old this time, saw the little boy in the same spot where he helped him climb a tree many years ago. But he was furious when he saw the wounds of the little boy, "on the palms of his hands... the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails... on his little feet" (Wilde 1910, 54). But the little boy told him, "these are the wounds of Love" (Wilde 1910, 54). After hearing those words, the aged giant felt an indescribable happiness. The little boy then carried him to Paradise.

References

Wilde, Oscar. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: D. Nutt, 1910.