

The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde – Comprehension Task



Every afternoon, as they were coming home 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 twelve peach trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. 'How happy we are here!' they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

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

'My own garden is my own garden,' said the Giant; 'anyone can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.' So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice board.

**TRESPASSERS
WILL BE
PROSECUTED.**

He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had 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. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over and talk about the beautiful garden inside. 'How happy we were there,' they said to each other.

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. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again and went off to sleep. 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. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs and he roared all day about the garden and blew the chimney pots down.

'This is a delightful spot,' he said, 'we must ask the Hail to visit.' So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

1. Write down seven adjectives that the author has used in the second paragraph which begins 'It was a large ...'

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2. Tick the statements from this list that are true:

- The garden had pear trees.
- The children loved listening to the birds singing.
- The children had got used to playing in the garden as the Giant had been away for a while.
- The Giant put up a sign that said 'Stay off the grass'.

3. How did the Giant make sure that the children could not get into the garden to play in it?

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4. What did the words on his noticeboard mean?

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5. Find and copy the quotation that proves the road was not suitable for playing on.

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6. When Spring comes to the rest of the country, what happened to the birds, trees and flowers in the Giant's garden?

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7. Find and copy the sentence that proves that the garden was covered in snow and ice.

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8. How was the North Wind dressed?

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9. What damage was done to the Giant's house?

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10. Explain how the author has made the weather sound as if it is real people.

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