

# **The Selfish Giant**

**Written by Dipesh Bham | [\\_dipesh.x](#)**

## **Summary**

"The Selfish Giant" is a story about a giant who initially restricts children from coming and playing in beautiful garden but later learns the value of kindness and love.

Once, there was a giant who had a lovely garden. Children used to play there every afternoon, enjoying the beauty of the garden with its flowers and peach trees. The birds sang beautifully, and the children were happy.

The giant was gone away for seven years to visit a friend. When he returned, he was angry to find children playing in his garden. He put up a sign that said no children allowed! All the children were sad because they couldn't play in the garden.

The garden remained in winter because of the giant's selfishness. The Snow, Frost, North Wind, and Hail made it their home, and the garden stayed frozen and cold. The giant wondered why spring never came in this garden despite the season changed to spring everywhere.

One day, the Giant hears sweet music and discovers that children have entered his garden through a hole in the wall. The trees and flowers blossom to welcome the children. He sees one small boy who couldn't reach the branches of the tree. The Giant's act of kindness in helping the boy is a important moment in the story because it was the beginning of the garden's transformation and the Giant's change of heart.

However, the other children fled in fear, turning the garden back into winter. The giant was sad but continued to let the boy play there. The boy invited spring, and when the other children returned, the giant made the garden their playground.

Many years passed and the giant got very old. One day, he saw the boy again but noticed marks on his hands and feet. The boy told the giant that those marks are the sign of love. Then, the boy took the giant to Paradise as a reward of being kind.

Later, the children found the giant lying under a big tree filled with beautiful white flowers. The giant had actually died. He was surrounded by the soft white blossoms.

In summary, the short story "The Selfish Giant" teaches about being kind, changing for the better, and transformations brought by love and kindness. There are religious symbols that support the story's messages.

The mysterious boy is shown as symbol of God or Jesus. The boy acts as a guide for the giant's moral development and spiritual redemption. He helps the giant learn to care about others and realize his past selfishness. His presence leads the giant to open his garden to children and also to learn important lessons about being kind instead of selfish.

### **Understanding the text**

A. Where did the children used to play?

→The children used to play in a beautiful garden of the giant in the afternoon after school.

B. What did the Snow and the Frost do to the garden? →The Snow and the Frost covered the garden with snow and ice because the giant was being selfish and rude to the children.

C. What did the giant hear when he was lying awake in bed?

→The giant heard beautiful music when he was lying awake in bed.

D. Why do you think spring never came to the giant's garden?

→I think the spring season never came to the giant's garden because of his selfishness and his restriction on the children to play there by building the great wall.

E. How did the giant realise his mistake? →The giant realized his mistake when he saw changes in his garden like snow and wind. He felt guilty for how he treated the children. When the children returned, the garden bloomed again with leaves and flowers and birds singing. Then he understood his mistake.

### **Reference to the text**

**A. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.**

**a. "How happy we were there!" they said to each other.**

i. Where does 'there' refer to?

→'There' refers to the giant's garden where children used to play after school.

ii. What does 'they' refer to?

→'They' refers to the children who used to come and play in Giant's garden after school.

iii. Why are they saying so?

→They are saying so because they aren't allowed to play in the giant's garden.

**b. "I have many beautiful flowers," he said; "but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all."**

i. Who is the speaker?

→The speaker is an old and feeble giant who keeps on watching the children at their play sitting on his armchair.

ii. Who is he speaking to?

→ He is speaking to himself admiring his garden.

iii. Who are the children' that the speaker is referring to?

→'The Children' that the speaker is referring to are the small and innocent school children who enjoy a lot in the giant's garden.

Iv. Why is the speaker saying that 'the children are the '?

Answer. The speaker says 'children are the most.....' because like the flowers, children also bring joy and happiness in the garden.

**c. When the little child smiled at the Giant, and said to him, "You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise," shortly afterwards, the happy giant dies. What is the coincidence of this event? Describe it in relation to this fairy tale.**

The giant spent his days searching for and waiting to see the child again. His only reason for living was to meet the enchanted little one. The little child appeared again in the garden. By this time, the giant was very old and weak. The child came to repay the giant's kindness from long ago, when he let the child play in the garden. After speaking with the child that afternoon, the giant finally passed away.

The coincidence of the child reappearing highlights how love, kindness and thinking of others can transform someone. His death is not the end, but a transition to a better place. The story suggests the giant reached a peaceful state after learning empathy and making amends for past mistakes.

**B. The story makes use of personification as one of the main figures of speech. Cite three examples of personification from the story. What is the significance of the seasons personified in the story?**

The story uses personification to give human traits to non- human things. For example:

"The Spring has forgotten this garden," - Spring is personified as able to forget.

"The Frost painted all the trees silver." - Frost is personified as able to paint like an artist.

"And the tree broke at once into blossom..." The tree is personified as able to have emotional responses.

Personifying the seasons helps convey deeper meaning. Each season represents a state of the Giant's heart and garden. Winter shows his coldness while Spring shows warmth, love and renewal. By personifying seasons, the story shows how the Giant and garden change from a winter of selfishness to a spring of kindness.

**C. This story can be read as a fairytale, where the children, the seasons, the tree, the corner of the garden, the snow, the wind and the frost are all used as symbolism. Interpret those symbols.**

The Children - Represent innocence, happiness, and potential for goodness through kindness.

The Seasons (Winter, Spring, Autumn) - Represent the emotional states of the Giant and garden.

Winter is selfishness, Spring is renewal and kindness.

The Tree Represents transformation as the garden changes with the Giant's change of heart.

The Corner of the Garden - Where winter stays until the ultimate act of kindness, represents lingering selfishness.

Snow, Frost, North Wind, Hail - Represent the harshness of selfishness and isolation, and the consequences of the Giant's actions.

The Little Child - Symbolizes a divine or angelic presence, representing love, compassion, and the possibility of redemption. The child's wounds on the hands and feet are reminiscent of the crucifixion, emphasizing the theme of sacrificial love.

**D. Which figure of speech is used for 'winter, frost, snow, north wind, hail and little child'? Who is the little child compared to?**

The figure of speech used for 'winter, frost, snow, north wind, hail, and little child' can be called both personification and metaphor.

The little child is compared metaphorically to a divine or angelic being. The wounds on its hands and feet

symbolize the wounds of Jesus. This comparison shows the child represents love, redemption, and spiritual change in the story.

### **Reference beyond text**

#### **a. What is the main theme of the story?**

**Answer:** The main theme is the power of love, kindness and selflessness to transform. It shows how a selfish cruel Giant change through compassion for children. Kindness and love can change even cold hearts and bring renewal and happiness.

#### **b. Does God punish those who are cruel to children and very selfish?**

**Answer:** The story doesn't talk about God punishing cruelty. It focuses on self-redemption and people's ability to change their ways through kindness and love. It suggests selfishness leads to isolation but people can recognize mistakes, seek forgiveness, and redeem themselves through selfless acts. The main message is about transformation and possibility of change, not punishment.

### **For more Notes:**

Website: Search "Dipesh Bham" on Google.

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