

# “The Selfish Giant” by Oscar Wilder

The birds did not care to sing in the Giant’s garden. It had 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 on a 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.

“I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,” said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; “I hope there will be a change in the weather.”

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. "He is too selfish," she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. The

Hail stopped dancing over his head. The North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. "Spring has come at last," said the Giant; he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see?

He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. The trees were so glad to have the children back that they had covered themselves with blossoms and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about, twittering with delight.