

“The Selfish Giant”
by Oscar Wilder

The flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly.

The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. “Climb up! Little boy,” said the Tree. It bent its branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.

The Giant's heart melted as he looked out. "How selfish I have been!" he said; "now I know why the 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 for ever and ever." He was really very sorry for what he had done.

He crept downstairs, opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. The Giant stole up

behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree.

The tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. "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 at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye.

“But where is your little companion?” He said, “The boy I put into the tree.” The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.

“We don’t know,” answered the children; “he has gone away.”

“You must tell him to be sure and come here tomorrow,” said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.