

# The Selfish Giant

## Part II

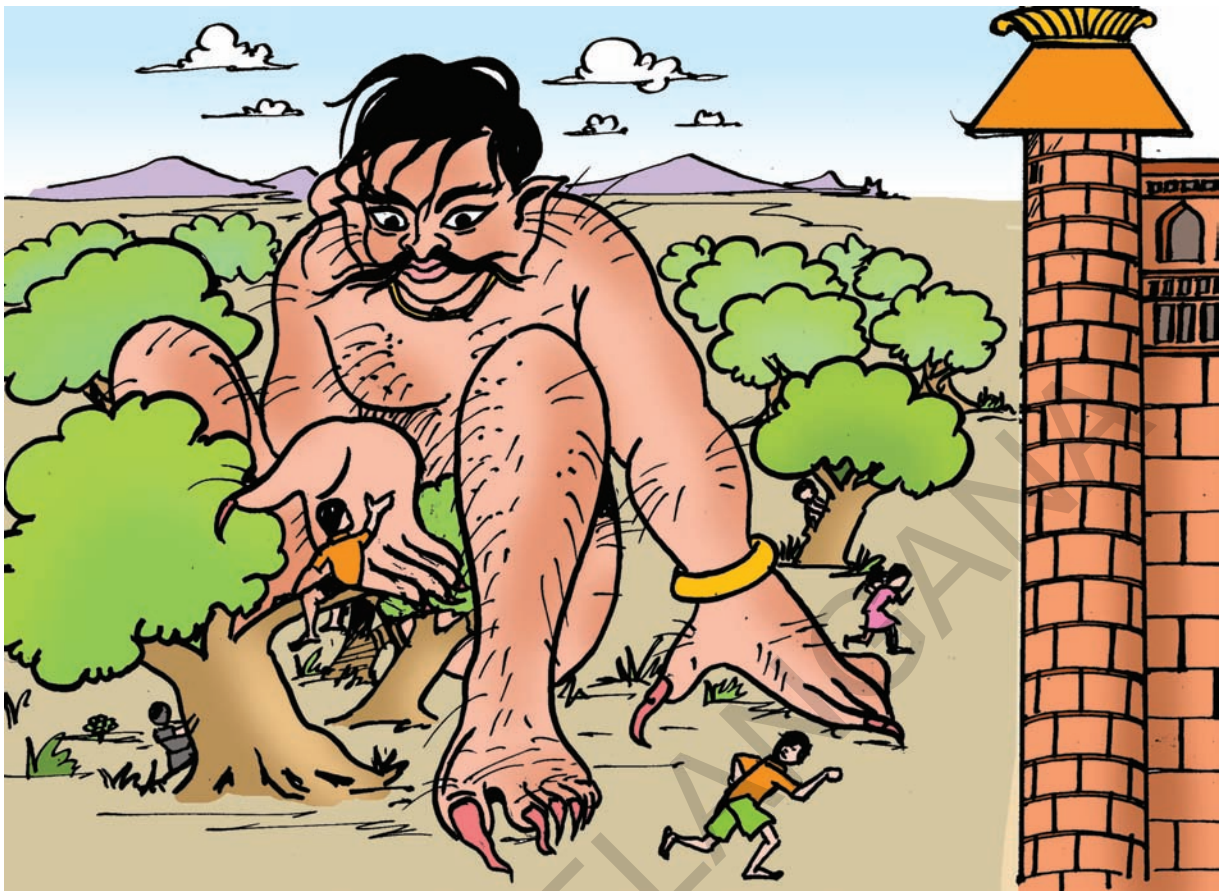
**Old Giant:** One morning I was lying awake in bed when I heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet that I thought it must be the King's musicians passing by, but it was really only a little linnet bird singing outside my window.

It was so long since I had heard a bird sing in my garden that it seemed to me to be the most beautiful music in the world.

**The Giant :** The Hail has stopped dancing over my head, and the North Wind has ceased his roaring. A delicious smell is coming from the window. I believe the SPRING has come at last!

(The Giant jumps out of bed and looks out. Through a little hole in the wall the children have crept in, and are sitting in the branches of the trees.)

**Old Giant :** In every tree I could see a little child. The trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and 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, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the little boy was too tiny. It was then that my heart melted.



**The Giant** : How selfish I have been! 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.

**Old Giant** : I was really very sorry for what I had done. So I crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw me, 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 me coming. So I stole up behind him and took him gently in my hand, and put him up into the tree. And 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 my neck, and kissed me. When the other children saw that they came running back, and with them came the Spring.

- The Giant** : It is your garden now, little children.
- Old Giant** : I took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at Twelve O' clock they found me, yes me, playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen. All day long we played, and in the evening the children came to bid me good-bye.
- Tall Girl** : Now we have somewhere to play.
- Short Boy** : This is much better than the road.
- Square Girl** : Yes, the road is so dusty, and the dust makes me sneeze.
- Graceful Girl** : And the grass is so much nicer than all those hard stones.
- Round Boy** : I like all the flowers.
- Graceful Girl** : And the trees.
- Tall Girl** : How happy we are all here! Thank you, Mr. Giant.
- Round Boy** : Yes, thank you. You are a very very nice Giant.
- The Giant** : But where is your little companion? The boy I put into the tree.
- Graceful Girl** : I don't know.
- Round Boy** : He has gone away.
- The Giant** : You must tell him to be sure to come here tomorrow.
- Tall Girl** : I don't know where he lives.
- Square Girl** : I have never seen him before.
- The Giant** : But I wanted to thank him. When he kissed me on the cheek I felt as though a great weight had been lifted from my heart.
- Short Boy** : I am sorry, but I don't think he lives around here.
- Old Giant** : Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with me. But I never saw again the little boy who I loved. Oh, I would like to see him again! I've grown old and feeble, waiting. I cannot play about with the children any more, so I sit here in my armchair, and watch the children at their games, and admire my garden. I have many beautiful flowers, but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all.

(Getting up and looking out of the window)

I no longer hate the winter. It is merely the spring asleep. The flowers are resting.

(Suddenly he rubs his eyes in wonder, and looks around).

What a marvellous sight this is! In the farthest corner of the garden... a tree covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches are all golden, and silver fruit hangs down from them, and what is this? Can it be? Oh! Can it be? He has come back! He has come back!

(The Old Giant leaps down the stairs, into the snowy garden and to the grassy patch where the child is standing. When he draws close to the child and examines him, his face grows red with anger.)

**Old Giant** : Who? Who hath dared to wound thee? Your hands. Your feet. Who hath dared to wound thee? Tell me, that I may take out my big sword and slay him.

**Child** : Nay! But these are the wounds of Love. They are necessary.

**Old Giant** : (Falling to his knees). Little child, who art thou?

**Child** : (Smiling.) You let me play once in your garden, today you shall come with me to live in my garden which is in Paradise.

The Child climbs into the Old Giant's arms. The winter melts away before them as they walk into an ever expanding garden.

- *Oscar Wilde*

(Converted into a play by *M. Ryan Taylor*)

## About the author

**Oscar Wilde** (16 October 1854 – 30 November 1900) was an Irish writer and poet. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. Today he is remembered for his epigrams and plays. Oscar Wilde is best known for the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* is a collection of children's stories.





3. The Giant knew the spring had arrived from \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) the song of a linnet bird
  - b) the sounds made by the children
  - c) the blossoms in the garden
4. The little boy \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) called the Giant by gesturing
  - b) flung hands around the neck
  - c) ran towards the Giant
5. ‘What a marvellous sight this is?’ is said by \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a) the children
  - b) the little boy
  - c) the Giant



## Vocabulary

### I. Look at the following underlined phrase taken from the text and know the meaning.

1. Peach-trees that in the spring time broke out into delicate blossom.  
In the above sentence, the phrase ‘**broke out**’ means ‘to come out’.

#### A) Refer to a dictionary and find out the phrasal verbs beginning with ‘break’. Use them in your own sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### B) Pick out some more phrasal verbs from the play ‘The Selfish Giant’.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Read the underlined part of the sentence taken from the text.

This is a delightful spot.

In the above sentence ‘**delightful**’ means ‘**pleasant**’ and the opposite (antonym) of it is ‘**gloomy**’.

**Pick out antonyms of the underlined words from the play and use them in your own sentences.**

1. Nobody likes to be in hell.

Ans: \_\_\_\_\_

2. You should beware of your foe.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

3. It started raining cats and dogs.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

4. She uncovered her head after she came out of the temple.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

5. This is the nearest shop to my house.

A: \_\_\_\_\_

**III. Look at the following sentence taken from the text.**

**Ex:** I heard the children whispering outside the wall on their way to school.

In the above sentence the underlined word indicates ‘speaking quietly’ outside the wall so that nobody else could hear.

**Now match the words in column A with those in column B with similar meaning.**

**Column-A**

1. scream
2. whisper
3. yell
4. roar
5. groan
6. weep
7. shriek
8. babble
9. wail
10. twitter

**Column-B**

- A. a continuous loud noise
- B. many people speaking at a time
- C. give a loud cry
- D. a long deep sound
- E. speak quietly
- F. a loud high shout
- G. shout loudly
- H. continuous short sounds
- I. soft quiet voice difficult to hear
- J. cry

#### IV. Choose the correct meaning for the underlined word.

1. The Giant put a notice board, trespassers will be prosecuted [ ]  
a) persons who enter the premises without permission  
b) persons who forcibly enter the premises  
c) persons who officially enter the premises
2. The Giant was wrapped in furs and roared all day about the garden. [ ]  
a) made a loud noise with anger  
b) felt frustrated  
c) looked pleased
3. There are twelve peach-trees that in spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms. [ ]  
a) leaves  
b) flowers  
c) fruits
4. He rattled on the roof the whole day. [ ]  
a) made a series of sounds  
b) shouted  
c) tapped



#### Grammar

#### Read the following sentences.

1. He is swimming in a pool.
2. Swimming is good for health.

In the above two sentences you notice that verbs are used with ‘-ing’. Do you notice any difference between them?

In the first sentence the verb + ing is preceded by **is**. The verb is in progressive form.

In the second sentence you don’t find **is, are, was** or **were** before verb + ing. Such verbs with ‘-ing’ and without helping verbs are known as ‘Gerunds’. They are normally in the subject position or object position.

#### I. Identify the gerunds in the following sentences.

1. The North Wind ceased roaring.
2. The Child did not see the giant coming.

3. I heard the children whispering outside the wall on their way to school.
4. Why is the Spring so late in coming?
5. Walking makes you healthy.



## Writing

**Read the following notice taken from the play.**

TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED

Write similar one - line notices that you may find in the following places.

1. Hospitals : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Banks : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Public places : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Schools : \_\_\_\_\_
5. At home : \_\_\_\_\_



## Listening

**Listen to the description and answer the following questions.**

1. Where is the garden located?
2. What is so special about it?



## Oral Activity

**Talk about any garden you have visited.**



## Study Skills

**Read the play 'The Selfish Giant' once again and summarise it.**

**Remember to follow the points given below.**

1. Identify the main and supporting ideas, section wise / part wise.
2. Separate the main idea from the subordinate ideas.
3. Identify the words / phrases which carry ideas.
4. Link your ideas properly with appropriate linkers.
5. Use the words / phrases that express the essence of the text.
6. Present the ideas briefly.