

Chapter 3: The Selfish Giant

Comprehension Check

Page 20**Question 1: Why is the Giant called selfish ?**

Answer: The Giant did not allow the children to enter and play in his beautiful garden. He thought that his garden was only for him. He had built a wall around his garden. That is why he is called selfish.

Question 2: On one occasion the children said: "How happy we are here!" Later they said: "How happy we were there!" What are they referring to in both the cases ?

Answer: In Giant's absence, the children would play and enjoy themselves in his beautiful garden. They felt very happy and exclaimed: "How happy we are here!" However, when the Giant came back, he stopped the children from playing in his garden. He also built the wall around his garden. Remembering the day when they enjoyed playing in Giant's garden, the children felt very sad and said: "How happy we were there!"

Question 3:

(i) When spring came, it was still winter in the garden. What does winter stand for or indicate here ?

(ii) Winter has been presented like a story with its own characters and their activities. Describe the story in your own words.

Answer: (i) In absence of the children, the Giant's garden did not blossom though it was the spring season. So, there was still winter in Giant's garden. Winter indicates the autumn season when neither flowers nor birds could be seen in the garden.

(ii) Despite spring, there seemed to be winter in Giant's garden. Neither flowers blossomed nor birds sang there as it happens in winter. Snow, frost, north wind, hail, etc. have been presented as characters or persons. They seemed to be annoyed because the Giant had banned the entry of children in his garden. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass. When it saw that children had been prohibited to play there, it also drew back. Thus we learn that the presence of children makes the garden more beautiful. Then the flowers will bloom and the birds will sing.

Question 4: Was the Giant happy or sad over the state of the garden ?

Answer: Of course, the Giant felt sad when there was winter-like situation during spring season in his garden. Neither birds flew or sang nor flowers grew there.

Question 5: What effect did the linnet's song have over Hail and the North Wind ?

Answer: When linnet started singing in the Giant's garden, the Hail stopped dancing and the North Wind stopped roaring. A delicious scent blew towards him through the open window. Such was the effect of the linnet's song over the Hail and the North Wind. The Giant felt overjoyed. He jumped out of bed happily and went downstairs.

Page 24**Question 1:**

(i) The Giant saw a most wonderful sight. What did he see?

(ii) What did he realise on seeing it ?

Answer:

(i) The Giant saw that the children had entered the garden through a gap in the wall. They were sitting on the tree branches. There was a little child in every tree. The trees were covered with flowers. They waved their branches above children's heads. The birds were flying and chirping joyfully. Flowers too had come out of grass. This was the most wonderful sight the Giant saw.

(ii) The Giant realised that he had been very selfish by closing his garden for the children. He also realised that he should not have built a wall around his garden. Because of it his garden had been without flowers and birds.

Question 2: Why was it still winter in one corner of the garden?

Answer: It was so because in that corner of the Giant's garden was standing a little boy who could not climb upon the branches of the tree. As the little boy stood on the ground and could not sit on the branches, there were neither flowers nor birds. That is why there was still winter in that corner.

Question 3: Describe the first meeting of the little boy and the Giant.

Answer: The Giant had stopped the children from playing in his garden. So, flowers did not blossom and the birds did not sing there. One day, the Giant was surprised to see the children sitting on the tree branches of his garden. In the distant corner, a little boy was standing. He was too small to climb on the tree branches. The child was crying bitterly. The Giant went towards the child. He picked him up gently in his hands. Then he put him up on the tree. As soon as he did so, flowers grew upon its branches and the birds flew up around the tree. The little boy stretched his arms around the Giant's neck and kissed him. This was the first meeting between the little boy and the Giant.

Question 4: Describe their second meeting after a long interval.

Answer: The Giant had grown fondness and love for the little boy. He used to ask other children about the little boy. He felt very sad to know that the children did not know him. The Giant had grown weak and old. One day in winter the Giant's eyes fell on the little boy for the second time. The Giant was extremely happy to see him. When he went close to the boy, he saw the prints of two nails on his hands and feet. He thought someone had injured the little boy. The Giant grew angry but the little boy told him that these were the wounds of love. Realising that he must be Jesus Christ, he knelt before the little child. The child smiled. He offered to take the Giant to his paradise.

Question 5: The Giant lay dead, all covered with white blossoms. What does this sentence indicate about the once selfish Giant?

Answer: It indicates that the Giant had been blessed with 'Paradise' after his death. During the later years of his life, he was no more selfish. Rather he was kind-hearted and his attitude towards children had completely changed. That is why God was also kind to him.

Exercise

Discuss the following topics in groups.

Question 1: The little child's hands and feet had marks of nails. What does the child remind you of? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: When the Giant saw the little child for the second time, he found marks of nails on his hands and feet. The marks of nails on the little child's hands and feet remind us about the incident of Jesus Christ's crucifixion. Nails were fixed by the Jews on his palms and feet against a wooden cross. The Giant had realised that the little boy is Jesus Christ, when he told him that these are wounds of love. That is why he knelt before the little child. I think Jesus might have wanted to teach him the lesson of kindness towards the children. The Giant became kind to them at the end. I advise.

Question 2: Is there something like this garden near where you live? Would you like one (without the Giant perhaps) and why? What would you do to keep it in good shape ?

Answer: Yes, there is a beautiful garden in the colony where I live. It is a huge garden, which opens on four sides. It opens at 5a.m and closes at 8 p.m. There are a lot of attractive trees. In spring season it looks most attractive. Flowers of various kinds and colours are grown. Sometimes I see there rare birds also. I go there for morning walk and in the evening I go there to play tennis. The garden has a small swimming

pool also. There is a great rush of visitors in the morning and evening. A lot of children play there. It is a public park, so we have no fear of any Giant there. On every Sunday, the people do honorary service for the cleanliness and maintenance of the garden. I also go there every Sunday to do so.

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