

The Tale of the Little Bird and the Evergreen Trees

Once upon a time, long, long ago it was very cold, as winter was coming you see. All the birds had flown away to the warm south to wait for spring to return, but one little bird was left behind. He had broken his wing, and so couldn't fly away with all of his friends. He didn't know what to do, and he looked all around to see if there was a place where he could stay safe and warm, when suddenly he saw the trees in the Great Forest.



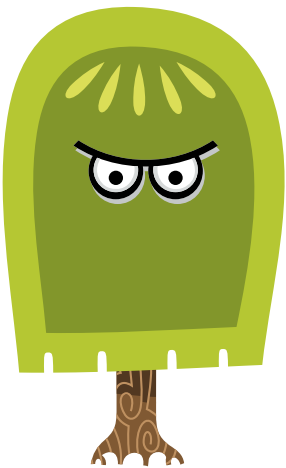
"Perhaps the trees will keep me warm through the winter," he thought to himself, and so he went to the edge of the forest, hopping and fluttering because of his broken wing.

The first tree he came to was a tall, slim Silver Birch. "Beautiful Birch tree," he said, "will you please let me live in your warm branches until the springtime comes?" "Goodness me!" Said the Birch tree, "what a thing to ask! I have to look after my own leaves all winter without looking after you too! Go away!"

And so the little bird hopped and fluttered with his broken wing until he came to a great big Oak tree. "Excuse me big Oak tree," said the little bird, "will you please let me live in your branches until the springtime comes?" "Goodness me!" Said the Oak tree, "what a thing to ask! If you stay in my branches all winter, you will eat all my acorns."



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The little bird hopped and fluttered away with his broken wing until he came to a Willow tree at the edge of the river. "Hello lovely Willow tree," he said, "will you please let me live in your warm branches until the springtime comes?" "Oh heavens no," said the Willow tree, "I never speak to strangers. Go away!"

The poor little bird did not know where to go or what to do next and so he hopped and fluttered along with his broken wing past a Spruce tree. Now, the Spruce tree had been watching the little bird, and so he asked him "where are you going little bird?"



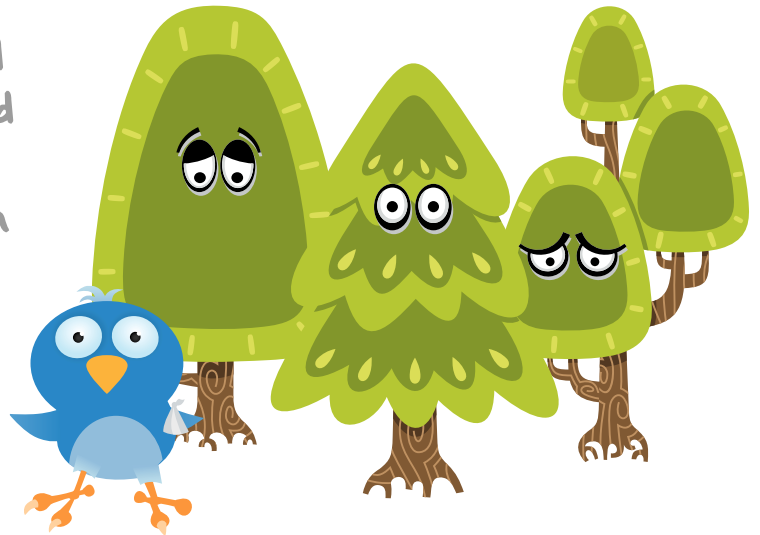
"I do not know," said the little bird, "the trees will not let me live in their branches, and with my broken wing I cannot fly," and with that the little bird began to cry. Feeling awfully sorry for him, the Spruce tree said, "you may live on one of my branches, here, this one is the warmest of them all." The little bird stopped crying and looked up at the kind Spruce tree and asked "but may I stay all winter?" "Of course," said the Spruce tree, "I would like to have you, you can keep me company."

Next to the Spruce was a Pine tree, and he had overheard this conversation. He said to the little bird "my branches are not very warm, but I can keep the wind away from you because I am big and strong". So the little bird hopped and fluttered up into the warm branch of the Spruce, while the Pine tree sheltered him from the

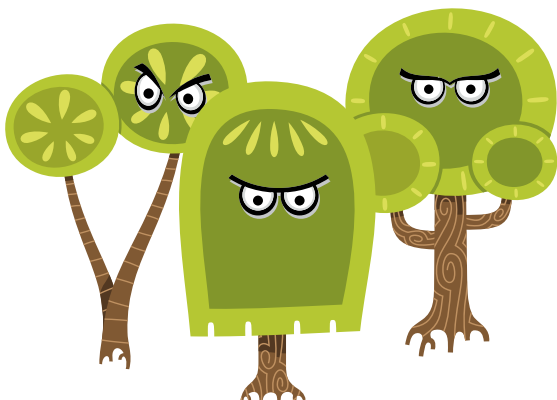
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wind. Just behind the Pine tree was a Juniper tree, and she had seen what was going on, and kindly said to the little bird "you can eat my juniper berries throughout the winter, they are very good for little birds like you."

The little bird felt very cosy and cared for in his branch, sheltered from the wind and with lots of juniper berries to eat, and with a big smile on his face he said a big "Thank You" to his new friends.



At the edge of the forest, the Birch, Oak and Willow trees gathered round - having watched what had happened. "I wouldn't take care of a strange bird." Said the Birch. "I wouldn't risk all of my acorns being eaten!" Said the Oak. "You wouldn't catch me speaking to strangers like that!" Said the Willow. And so the three trees stood up tall and proud, all feeling very pleased with themselves.



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That night the North Wind came to the woods to play in the forest. He puffed at the leaves of the Birch tree with his icy breath, and danced amongst the Oak and Willow tree, touching every leaf as he

went. One by one, every leaf fell to the ground. He wanted to touch every leaf in the forest, for he loved to see the trees with their bare branches.

"May I touch every leaf?" he asked his father, the Frost King. "No," said the Frost King, "the Evergreen trees who were kind to the little bird with the broken wing may keep their leaves." So North Wind had to leave them alone, and all the Spruce, Pine and Juniper trees, along with all the other Evergreen trees kept their leaves all through winter as a reward for their kindness, and all the Evergreen trees have done so ever since.

