

Father Tree and Little Acorn

by Elizabeth Trach

In the middle of the forest there was a tall oak tree. It rose above all the other trees and could be seen for miles. It was known a Father Oak tree by everyone who lived near the forest. No one in the nearby village wanted to cut it down. It was a beautiful tree.

The people in the village didn't know that Father Tree was really a father. Each fall, Father Tree dropped hundreds of small acorns out of his branches. They fell onto the earth below. A pillow of dry, brown leaves from many autumns made the ground soft, so it didn't hurt when acorns went plop! onto the ground.

Each acorn was light brown and round. Most had a rough little cap on its head, though some lost the caps when they fell from the tree. Some acorns blew far from Father Tree on the breeze. Others fell straight down. Some were gathered by squirrels and buried in a hole far away. Still others were picked up by curious children from the village and turned into toys.

One small acorn fell and rolled near Father Tree's largest root. The acorn looked back up into the leafy branches. "What do I do now?" the acorn called up to the tree.

"Now you grow," said Father Tree simply.

"But I don't know how to do that," the acorn said.

"Your job is to feel things," said Father Tree. "You may think you should hide from the cold rain or the hot sun, but don't. These things help you grow, even if they don't always feel good."

"But should I try to get away from a squirrel?" the acorn asked. "I could roll down the hill a bit if I tried."

"No. Even acorns that get picked up by squirrels will grow in a new place. The squirrel might seem scary, but he's helping by planting acorns all over the forest," said Father Tree. "A trip with a squirrel is a great gift if you accept it."

This made the acorn feel less afraid of being on his own. There was a lot to learn about growing, up, he thought.

