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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Fir Tree

Once upon a time in a beautiful spot in a big forest stood a young, little fir tree. The sun was shining down on him and the air was fresh. He wasn't alone, he was surrounded by a big collection of trees. This little, young fir tree only had one wish: he wanted to grow and as fast as he could! He couldn't wait until the moment that he would be as big, or even bigger, as the grown up trees around him.

That's why the young tree didn't enjoy his younger years. When he would be older he would branch out and with the tips of the branches look into the wide world. Birds would make a nest in them. 'Grown up trees have something majestic,' thought the fir tree.

By the end of the year he had grown a fair bit. By the shoots of a tree you can see how old a tree is. But for the fir tree it was taking too long. Nothing gave him pleasure. Not the birds, not the clouds, not the sun. Nothing.

In winter a little hare often came running to him to jump over him. Oh, this made the fir tree so angry! But in his third year he had gotten so big, that the hare had to go around him. 'Growing, becoming bigger, older and longer, isn't that the best thing there is?! Sighed the tree.

In fall the woodchoppers came to the forest to cut down the biggest trees. That happened every year. 'Where are they going? What has become of them?' asked the fir tree to the hare. 'I don't know,' said the hare, 'I stay in the forest. I have nothing to seek outside of it.' 'I think I know,' said the stork. 'When I was flying back from Egypt, I saw ships on the sea with big masts made of fir trees. That's probably what's waiting for you when you grow up. They reached the sky and looked content and majestic.'

'Oh, if only I was old enough to fly over the sea!' sighed the fir tree. 'What actually is the sea?' asked the tree, because he had never heard of it before. 'It's going to take forever to explain,' said the stork and flew away.

'Be happy with your growth,' said the sunbeams, 'and enjoy every new, beautiful, sunny day.' The breeze kissed the tree. But the fir tree didn't get it.

When Christmas came around, many young trees were cut down. The tree asked the sparrows: 'Where are they going? They're not bigger than me.' 'We saw!' chirped the sparrows. 'People take the younger trees into their homes and give it a nice spot. They decorate the trees with beautiful ornaments. They hang up lights and they dance and sing. It is very festive and the tree is the biggest star of all.' 'And what happens next?' asked the tree, excited about such a destination. 'We don't know,' answered the sparrows, 'but it was glorious.'

Our fir tree wasn't scared when the woodchoppers came to cut him down. He fell to the ground. It felt odd and he was sad for a moment to leave the forest. For the first time he would leave the place he was born. No, he didn't like to leave.

The tree came back to his senses when he was brought into a beautiful, big house. He was put in a big pot with sand. You couldn't see that it was a pot, because a green cloth was put over it. Young maids

started to decorate the tree. They hung up chocolates, sugar canes and candies. They also put up many lights. On top the fir tree got a big, golden star. It was beautiful! There are no words, just beautiful!

That night the lights were turned on and the tree started glowing. 'If the trees in the forest could see me now, how beautiful I look and how I glow with a thousand lights!' Nonetheless, the tree felt anxious. Suddenly the door of the room bursted open. A big pile of kids stormed to the tree. A bit rough they started to pull the goodies from the tree. After the tree was plucked bare, the presents were opened. A man read from a book. It was a story about a clumsy man who married a princess. The fir tree enjoyed the story. The lights were turned off and everybody went to bed.

'Tomorrow I won't fear and I will enjoy my beauty in all its glory,' thought the fir tree. Early in the morning the servants came in. 'Now it shall begin again,' thought the tree. But they dragged him out of the room and put him in the attic. He was put in a dark corner. 'What is happening?' the tree

thought to himself, 'what am I supposed to do here?' Nobody came to tell him. Days and nights passed but nobody came up.

'It's winter outside,' thought the tree. 'The earth is hard and covered in snow. It's not a good time to put me in the ground. That's why I am here safe and sound until the spring comes. How thoughtful! If only it wasn't so dark and so lonely up here. There is no one here. Not even a hare. Outside it was so nice and pleasant. There was snow and a hare that jumped over me. Yes, even him jumping over me. I didn't like it then, but how lonely I am now.'

In that moment a little mouse came sitting next to him. 'Where are you from?' asked the mouse and the fir tree told him the whole story. The mouse liked the story and brought his mice family to listen to it again. They came to the tree more often to listen to the story. He told them his memories. And each time he told about himself, it seemed as if those were happy days. When he told them about the Christmas story, he thought about the white

birch in the forest. She could've been the princess and he the clumsy man.

One day two rats were listening to the story. 'We think your story is stupid.' said the rats and they left. The mice also got annoyed by listening to the same story and suddenly they didn't visit anymore.

One morning people showed up who started to clear the attic. The fir tree was taking out and was thrown in a corner of the garden. He felt the fresh air and the sunbeams on his stem. 'Now I shall

really enjoy life,' he said happily and branched out his branches. But they were yellow and withered. There he was in the middle of a pile of weeds and nettles. The big, golden star was still tangling loosely on top.



In the playground the same kids were running around that had danced around the fir tree during Christmas. A boy ran up to him, walked over him and pulled the gold star from his head. The tree wished that he had stayed in the dark corner of the attic. He thought about his youth in the forest, the joyful Christmas evening and the little mice. And he thought about the story he told in the attic, his memories of his time in the forest. It was a beautiful, good place. But he had never enjoyed it, because he wanted to grow up fast.

'It's over,' said the poor tree. 'If only I had felt happy when I had reason to feel happy. But now it's over.'

The gardener chopped the tree into little bits and the tree was used for the fireplace. The boys played in front of the fire. One of them wore the golden star on his sweater.

The tree is gone and his story has come to an end. But everything has an end, just like this story.