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## Winter Trees

*Mary Graham Bonner*

The Pine Tree had a secret, and one winter evening it decided to share it with the Snow.

"Years and years ago," said the Pine Tree, "I called a meeting of my family. I put a question to them: should we drop our leaves in winter, like the other trees?"

The Snow listened, nestled close among the branches.

"We had just started to discuss it," continued the Pine Tree, "when some snowflakes came and settled on our boughs. 'Oh,' they said, 'you're so much nicer than the bare branches. With those, we have to fill in all the empty spaces. But with you, we can simply nestle down.'"

So the evergreens had stayed green.

"And then," said the Pine Tree, "the North Wind told us how much he liked having strong trees to play around — trees that wouldn't mind a bit of rough handling. He could blow and gust and have his fun without worrying about snapping us bare.

"Then the grown-ups came walking through the woods in January, and we heard them say what a comfort it was to see green trees in winter, and how bleak and bare and sad it would look without us.

"And then the children came. They walked through the snow with their chins tucked down, and then they looked up at us and said: 'Ah, how tall they are. And how warm it feels in here. These are our favorite trees — the winter trees.'

"So you see," said the Pine Tree, "why we stay."

And the Snow, nestled in among the branches, understood perfectly.



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