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The Anxious Leaf

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Once upon a time, a little leaf was heard sighing and crying, as leaves often do when a gentle wind is about.

"What's the matter, little leaf?" asked the twig.

"The wind just told me that one day it will pull me off and throw me down to lie on the ground!"

The twig told the branch it grew from, and the branch told the tree. When the tree heard, it rustled all over, and sent word back to the leaf: "Don't be afraid. Hold on tightly, and you won't go until you want to."

So the little leaf stopped sighing and went back to nestling and singing. Whenever the tree shook itself and stirred up all its leaves, the branches shook, and the little twig shook, and the little leaf danced up and down, merry as ever, as if nothing could ever pull it off.

And so it grew all summer long, until October.

When the bright days of autumn came, the little leaf noticed that all the leaves around it were turning beautiful. Some were yellow, some scarlet, and some striped with both. It asked the tree what it meant.

"All these leaves are getting ready to fly away," said the tree, "and they've put on these beautiful colours because they're joyful."

Then the little leaf began to want to go, too. Thinking about it, it grew more beautiful, until it was bright and golden. And that's when it noticed the branches, which had no colour at all.

"Oh, branches," said the leaf, "why are you grey as lead while we are golden?"



"We have to keep our work clothes on," the branches answered, "because our work isn't finished. Your clothes are for holiday, because your tasks are done."

Just then, a little puff of wind came along. The leaf let go without even thinking about it. The wind took it up, turned it over and over, and whirled it through the

air like a spark of fire. Then it drifted gently down beneath the fence, among hundreds of other leaves, and began to dream. It was a dream so beautiful that perhaps it will last forever.

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