

High in the misty mountains, there grew an enormous tree whose **roots** were said to touch the heart of the world. Travelers claimed that if you sat beneath it in silence, you could hear the pulse of the earth itself. The villagers believed the tree was older than memory, planted by ancient hands before time began. Every spring, its flowers shone with a silver light, and birds from distant lands came to rest in its branches. One day, a young shepherd climbed the mountain, searching for the source of a strange sound he heard in his dreams. When he reached the summit, he found the tree and laid his hand upon its bark. Instantly, he felt warmth spreading through him, as if the **roots** of the mountain were sharing their strength. He understood then that everything—stone, wind, and water—was connected. Years later, he became the village storyteller, and each tale he told began the same way: “Once, I listened to the **root** of the world, and it spoke.”