

A Story of Autumn Leaves

November 13, 2022

Davis Song

Long ago, there lived a spirit named Momiji that lived in a lone tree on top of the mountain. She wore a verdant green dress much like the leaves of her home. Although she was beautiful, her face always wore a distant expression of sadness.

Because she lived far away from the forest where her sisters lived, she had no one to talk to and her loneliness grew day by day.

One day, a terrible storm passed through the mountain. The wind howled, and the booming sound of thunder echoed off the sides of the mountain. Lightning flashed all around, striking the mountaintop and setting fires that were quickly put out by the rain.

The next morning, she woke up to see something still burning on the ground. Curious, she approached the embers, realizing that they formed the outline of a sleeping figure. She reached her hand out to rouse the newcomer but yelped in pain as his burning skin scorched her.

From the commotion, the figure woke up and turned around. "Who are you?" she asked. "You can call me En." he said. "Why am I here? Why am I alive?" he asked. "I don't know. I wonder the same thing. We can find out together..." she said. And so they left the protection of the tree, and wandered through the mountains, the valleys, and the rivers. All the while, they laughed, talked, and smiled, but they could never be truly close for the brittle leaves of her dress and the flames of his skin could not touch.

The night started to fall, and they began to return up the mountain. The clouds moved in around them as they climbed higher, when suddenly a single raindrop fell from the sky onto En's face. He winced in pain. Many more raindrops began to fall, each burning his skin. With nowhere to hide, he collapsed on the ground, as the rain only grew heavier.

Seeing him in pain, she covered his body with hers. But still, the embers of his skin were red hot, hot enough to burn her. Despite the pain, she refused to let go because he was the only thing she ever had in her life. The spreading flames turned the leaves of her dress into a deep, crimson red. Not able to bear the pain, she too collapsed, and the rain soaked their dying embrace.

The next day, when the storm had passed, from their bodies sprouted a single sapling with leaves red like the burnt dress of Momiji. Every Autumn, when it starts raining, all the trees of the forest turn red in memory of Momiji and En's love.