

LEVELED BOOK • G

The Little Fir Tree



Adapted by Annette Carruthers
from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Fir Tree*
Illustrated by John Kastner

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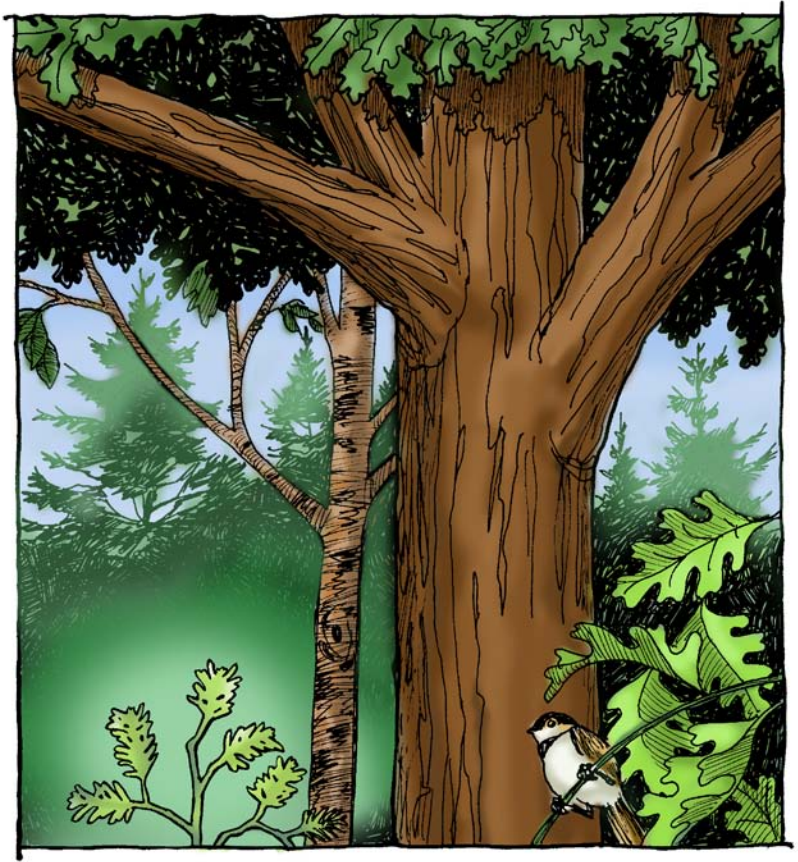


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A Young Tree

The young, pencil-thin **fir** tree stood admiring his neighbors. The tall oak made him want to be taller and grander. The other **evergreen** trees seemed to laugh at him for being so small.

He watched, year after year, as bigger trees were taken away each winter. He was sure that wherever they were going must be a **magical** place.

It seemed that each tree taken away was special. The little fir tree's greatest hope was that he could be special, too.





He just knew there was more to life than birds' **bothersome flitting** through his branches, the sun's overly bright rays shining on the meadow, and the moon's **waxing** and **waning** each month.

Every year, when the snow came and the oak tree had no leaves, the fir tree watched as happy people chose special trees.

A bird told the fir tree a wonderful tale of seeing evergreens in warm homes, dressed in **finery**. The people would laugh and sing around the tree.

The fir tree thought this was the grandest image. He imagined it every day as more and more seasons passed, and he grew taller still.

❧ A Winter Adventure ❧

The fir tree was sure this would be the year he was chosen. His branches **trembled** as he waited. The snow came, and then the happy people came. Group by group they chose evergreens from the forest. As he trembled, the snow fell from his branches.

As the sun nearly faded away, a group of laughing people gathered at his trunk.

He tried not to tremble too much. He didn't want to drop snow on them. He wanted them to think he was the grandest tree in the forest.



At last, they took out an axe and chopped him down. The happy people had taken the fir tree from his roots. The fir tree's trembling didn't stop as they strapped him to a shiny, red car that moved like the wind.



A short while later, the fir tree was carried into a warm home. They stood him upright in some kind of stand. The happy people tightened screws around his trunk. They talked about his fine needles falling all over the floor. Hearing this, the fir tree vowed to stop trembling. He didn't want to shake off his needles because the happy people might not want him anymore.

Later that night, the people took boxes down from closets. First, they placed shiny bulbs in every color of the rainbow in a string around him. The bulbs winked and twinkled at the fir tree. This made him glow inside and out.

Next, the children placed **ornaments** of wood upon his **boughs**, while the adults placed those of glass. Strings of popcorn, cranberries, and **sprigs** of holly followed.



The fir tree couldn't help but tremble just a bit. He had never been so proud.

His deepest center warmed as candy canes and gingerbread men were hung from his branches. A bright, silver star at his top added the final touch.

The family—he could tell they were a family now—gathered around him. They told stories and sang songs well into the night.

Soon, the adults said good night to the children. Then they brought out paper of shimmering reds, golds, and greens. The fir tree watched as they brought out toys and clothes and wrapped each in paper before tying on a bow. They placed the wrapped packages under his boughs. The fir tree would protect them through the night.

He thought and thought about all that had happened. The fir tree went over each detail since he had left his forest home. He could not wait to tell the birds, the other trees, and all of the forest what had happened on this night. Soon, he drifted off to sleep.

The next morning, everyone in the house woke up early. The children reached for the packages. He felt so good and warm inside when they were gathered around his branches.

The fir tree trembled with excitement. He was not scared this time.

The adults talked and laughed as the children **marveled** over their gifts. They kept mentioning Santa Claus. This Santa sounded so grand to the fir tree that he wished he had met Santa during the night.



Soon the children tore open their gifts and scattered colorful paper about the room. They ran happily around the house playing with their new toys. The adults drank hot chocolate on the couch near the fir tree. They stayed close to the fir tree throughout the day and into the night.

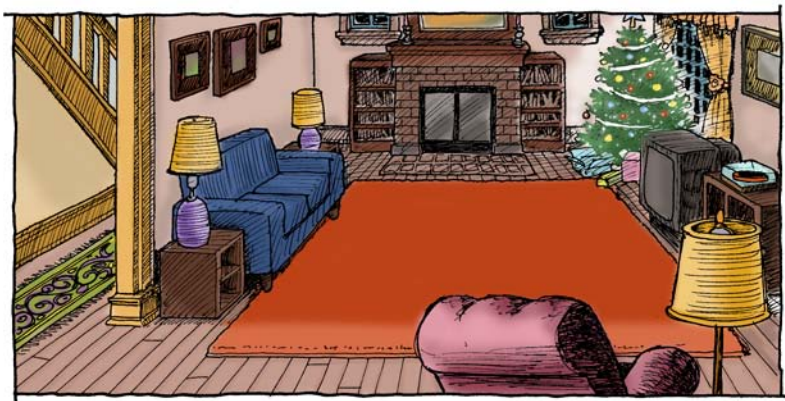
🌿 A Lonely Feeling 🌿

The fir tree awoke the next morning as the family gathered coats, mittens, and hats. He wondered if they would take him along, too.

After a short time, they were gone.

The fir tree spent most of the day in the lonely quiet. Then, when the family came home, he was so excited. They rushed past him to play games around the kitchen table. Hours later, the fir tree heard them say good night.

He spent many days watching the family hurry past him to do this and that. The fir tree began to wonder if they remembered he was there at all. Twelve days passed with the fir tree feeling lonely and **ignored**.

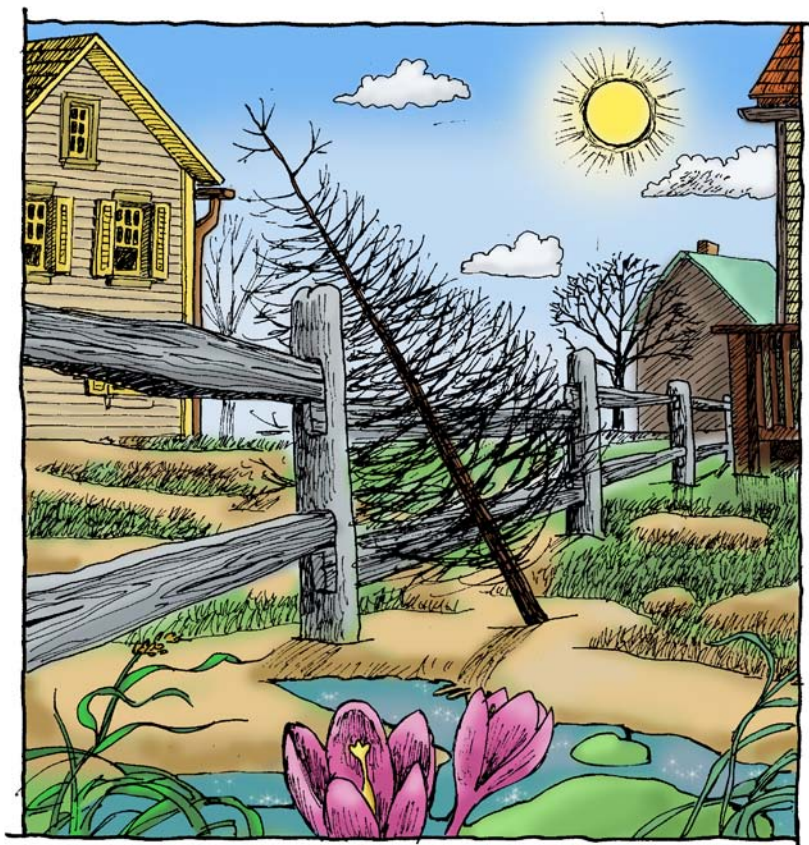


On the twelfth morning, the happy family took off his glimmering lights, glass ornaments, and the wooden ones, too.

They took him outside. He felt a gust of cold air, and he trembled.

They leaned him against a fence and left him there. It was dark and cold outside. He was lonely. He hummed quietly to himself and talked to the moon. He remembered the tunes that the family had sung on the night Santa came.





Over many months, the fir tree felt the air around him grow warmer. He longed to be decked in twinkling lights and shining ornaments again. He wanted to see his forest home and talk to the birds. He wanted to tell the oaks about what he had seen. He wanted to tell the other evergreens about being chosen by a family, and about the two most **glorious** days of his life.



🌿 Spring Is Here 🌿

One day, the fir tree felt his needles and branches tickled by a spring rain. The fir tree almost laughed with delight. Above him, the Sun shone brightly and the air smelled of earth. Birds chirped in nearby trees.

One of the happy people furrowed the dirt near him to plant a garden. It was a woman from the family. She hummed a song he had never heard. It was the sweetest sound.

The fir tree spent several weeks listening to the woman work. She had planted seeds, and they were starting to grow. “Now life is beginning again,” said the tree, **rejoicing** in the sunshine and fresh air. All around him, green things were growing, but he could feel his own life coming to an end. Before it was over, he would tell the plants and animals about the hopes and dreams of a little fir tree.





Glossary



| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| bothersome (<i>adj.</i>) | causing worry, impatience, or anger (p. 5) |
| boughs (<i>n.</i>) | branches of a tree with leaves or needles on them (p. 8) |
| evergreen (<i>adj.</i>) | green through all the seasons (p. 4) |
| fir (<i>n.</i>) | a kind of evergreen tree (p. 4) |
| finery (<i>n.</i>) | fancy clothes for special occasions (p. 5) |
| flitting (<i>v.</i>) | moving quickly by flying in and out, darting (p. 5) |
| glorious (<i>adj.</i>) | wonderful; beautiful (p. 13) |
| ignored (<i>adj.</i>) | neglected (p. 11) |
| magical (<i>adj.</i>) | beyond the ordinary, as if caused by magic (p. 4) |
| marveled (<i>v.</i>) | looked with awe or amazement (p. 10) |
| ornaments (<i>n.</i>) | beautiful decorations (p. 8) |
| rejoicing (<i>v.</i>) | feeling or expressing great joy or delight (p. 15) |
| sprigs (<i>n.</i>) | small shoots or twigs from plants (p. 8) |
| trembled (<i>v.</i>) | shook with emotion (p. 6) |
| waning (<i>n.</i>) | the process of becoming smaller (p. 5) |
| waxing (<i>n.</i>) | the process of growing bigger (p. 5) |

The Little Fir Tree was adapted by Annette Carruthers from the Hans Christian Andersen story *The Fir Tree* (1845).

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Level Q Leveled Book
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