

Gertrude the Tree

Traduzione de: L'albero Gertrude
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1

Once upon a time, there was a large forest where the trees grew however they liked.

They had strange shapes and colors in a thousand shades.

The rainbow, touching their tops, gained new colors, and butterflies flew among the leaves, feeling at home.

2

Next to the forest was the village of Greenlandia.

One day at school, they discovered they had run out of paper.

The children couldn't learn to write, read, or draw the wonders of the seasons, inventing new ways to be happy.

Mrs. Viola couldn't write her stories anymore, creating books and new, gentle ways to look at the earth.

Master Adalberto said, "Don't worry, I'll tell the mayor, and there will be paper for everyone."

The children asked him, "But what is paper made of?"

He replied, "From the trees in the big forest."

3

Every year, the mayor put tickets with the names of the trees into a basket.

The tree whose name was drawn would be cut down to make paper.

The ticket drawn read: Gertrude.

She stood in the center of the forest, in a clearing, where the tree welcomed the children's games and thoughts.

When it rained, they ran under her big branches to shelter and sing songs.

When the sun was too hot, they sat under her to read books.

4

No! Gertrude couldn't be cut down!

She was like a mother to all the village children.

The children wrote protests on their bed sheets and hung them on the houses.

But to the adults, it was important for the children to learn to read and do arithmetic, including their multiplication tables.

5

The children decided to wage war against the adults who wanted to cut down Gertrude.

They refused to go to school, set the table, or change their socks.

With used paper, they made paper balls and threw them at people passing by on the street!

6

The war to save Gertrude went on until Arturo arrived with a nice green hat and, under the hat, an idea.

"Hello, my little strawberries," he said to the children. "Hello, my little artichokes," he said to the adults.

He continued, "Wars don't make you right; they just destroy. No matter who wins, everyone loses.

If the children won, there would be a world where they couldn't write their thoughts or draw their worlds.

Viola couldn't write her books; she would be sad because she searches for words in her heart and finds the heart of the earth that holds everything.

If the adults won, the children would lose their best games, a place that nurtures their imagination.

They would lose Gertrude's love, who cuddles them and loves to be cuddled back."

The mayor replied, "So what do we do?"

Arturo exclaimed, "We make sure there's no war: we find another solution!"

Arturo continued, "In this basket, I have a special recipe for making paper without cutting down trees.

But we need the paper you throw away and... use as bombs: instead of fighting, we'll use it to save Gertrude."

Mayor Sprezzini asked, "Is that all? It sounds too simple."

Arturo replied, "It's the simple things, done every day, that change the world."

The children began collecting paper right away and turned the war... into peace.

"He must be a wizard," thought the children.

"He must be a genius," thought the adults.

That year, Gertrude was saved, and so were all the trees in the years to come.

Because once you learn something good, it stays with you for life.

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