

All Around Big Tree



Once upon a time in a wondrous land just on the other side of the faerie's veil lived a clan of gnomes in their home, the Big Tree. Early in the springtime the tree would start to gently hum, first at the roots deep under ground as Mother Earth sings the wake up song and Father Sun grows brighter and joins in. The roots know this song and the gnomes know it too. One little gnome answers the song of the roots with her voice and the roots sing louder in response. The worms and spiders find their voices too and soon all under the tree are singing together. The song travels up the roots and into the trunk of the tree and through the branches pushing one leaf after another from their resting place and out into the warm spring world. "Pop, pop, pop" the leaves pop out and begin to sing as well. The birds in the tree cannot help but burst into song themselves and the faeries, almost done waking every flower in the land, tuck away their faerie dust and flit, float and fly to the tree, singing along with their own twinkling voices all the while. Everyone sings in a symphony to be heard from miles around. Even the bells hanging from the branches ring in celebration of spring.

The daffodils and grape hyacinth have been nurtured by the faeries and the gnomes and have popped up all around the base of the tree near the blue door that leads down, down into the roots. The littlest gnomes listen to the stories the flowers have to tell of another land even further from ours than this one. As they sit and listen to the whispered tales, the older gnomes cannot hear a thing, for everyone knows only the rarest of elders can hear the stories the flowers have to tell. One young gnome, Gemma is her name, especially loves spring. Each morning she wakes, sings with the roots, runs up the stairs, sips dewdrops from the daffodils, climbs up the rope to the lowest branch of the tree, kisses each baby bird on the head, whistles a "Hello!" to all the other birds and finds her way to the tippy topiest branch at the tippy top of the tree to meet her best friend Zora, the faerie. "Ah! There you are," says Zora happily. They hear a "Whoosh!" from above and see a streak of white and know that Byron, the egret, and River, the gnome, have come to whisk them off for another adventure. All the birds in the tree wave and tweet goodbye as the three fly away.

Gemma and River hold on to Byron's neck feathers and Zora flies next to them as they soar through the valley, following the river all the way to Faerie Meadow. The meadow is a most magical place indeed. As far as the eye can see are faeries flitting floating and flying about. And the singing! Gemma loves song more than anything else in all the world. She hears a song once and can remember and sing it forevermore. The faeries have songs like she's never heard in all her days. Her heart is filled with joy.

After what must have been hours of playing and singing in the meadow, the rainclouds have come. First they hear the low rumble of thunder and then the sun slips behind a dark gray curtain. All the faeries quickly disappear, other than Zora, of course. "Byron!" the three call out, for now they must hurry before the rain begins to fall. They all hop on Byron's back just as big raindrops "Plop, plop, plop." begin to come down. Byron flies as fast as he is able to but soon it is clear they must seek shelter. A farmhouse below beckons to them as a safe spot to wait out the storm. Landing next to the weather vane they slip inside a little crack under the eave and into attic of the house. Ever so quietly they wait for their eyes to adjust to the darkness. "But wait, what is that sound?" says River. "It's singing!" exclaims Gemma. The group tiptoes toward a small light at the end of the room and what do they see? A whole family of gnomes sitting at their long table, singing a song before their meal. The gnomes at the table beckon for the visitors to join them. The four friends do and then sing and feast all the afternoon long, arriving home just in time to sing the birds, the spiders and the flowers to sleep...

