

Bertie The Beech Tree

Bertie the Beech Tree and Stella the Silver Birch Tree stood side by side in the large park . They had a prime position overlooking the lake. Of the two Bertie was the older. Counting the rings on his trunk he knew he had stood here for 200 years but in tree years that was only middle age and Bertie knew he had a lot more life in him. He stood proud and tall over 100 metres in height. He was master of all he surveyed and his branches stretched far and wide in every direction. He really was a handsome fellow. His strong roots stretched deep deep deep in to the rich black soil and nourished him . He had tried many times to count his leaves but always got distracted usually when he reached 50,000 and he had to start all over again. Some day he would manage it he promised himself but given the deep carpet of his russet leaves in the Autumn time that spread around him he knew it was a mammoth task.

He remembered being brought here and planted as a sapling many moons ago. Times had been very different then as the present park had been part of a huge estate owned by the landed gentry. He remembered gentlemen in frock coats and top hats lounging against his trunk and trying to catch the eye of strolling ladies in bustles . Often splendid picnics with servants in attendance had taken place below his branches and many sweet nothings had been murmured into delicate female ears. Indeed he had lost count of the number of marriage proposals and other proposals had been delivered beneath his branches but a gentleman never tells.

Stella on the other hand was much much younger at fifty years of age only a teenager but Bertie was very fond of her and she kept him company.

Together they had seen years and seasons come and go. Bertie liked Spring best when he could feel the energy course through his limbs and his branches would start to bud. He loved it when the birds came to nest in his branches. He wasn't keen on those old magpies and crows but he loved the blackbirds and thrushes who kept him entertained through the lengthening days with their beautiful song. Squirrels scampering through his branches made him laugh

He also liked summer when he was fully dressed in his magnificent foliage and could rustle his leaves to his hearts content in gentle balmy seasonal breezes. He was especially pleased to provide shelter against the hot sun.

Stella noticed a crumbling piece of bark on Bertie's lower trunk. "Bertie whats that on your trunk she asked are you not well?" " Oh Stella that is a stress bump and I fear there could be more to come". "What has you stressed ?"she enquired. "Well its this Climate change malarkey he replied. Have you not noticed that the seasons are all up the left and I am really worried. The weather is getting warmer and wetter in Autumn and winter which is not good for my roots . I hate wet soggy feet. I know I need water but there is a limit. Last year my buds started in January and that is not right. Then we had a sharp frost in May and all my buds fell off. Don't you remember last summer when we had weeks and weeks of hot sunshine and my leaves all shrivelled up and fell off. It looked like autumn in the middle of summer. Speaking of Autumn do you not remember the five successive terrible storms. The wind tore a lot of my poor branches off and I had to hold on tight tight tight with my roots until i thought they were going to burst right through the soil. It made me feel really weak and dizzy for ages and it took yonks to recover my strength. Think of all our cousins those mighty oaks in Seven Oaks that were torn down by that horrible hurricane . I dont want that to happen to me . I am terrified of

losing my leaves again and them not growing back. What use is a tree without leaves I will just shrivel up and die. And then there is that old ash die back disease to worry about. It could affect us.

Will those humans listen. Of course not. They just keep pouring more and more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for their own selfish purposes. Dont they know that we are the lungs of the earth yet they keep chopping our brothers and sisters in the Amazon Rain Forests down for development. I just dont know where it is all going to end.

They dont seem to realise that we trees have feeling too. We feel joy, sorrow and pain just like them and what I would not give for a hug but the very few hugs I get are from little toddlers which are great but not nearly enough. What is a tree to do. I just wish those humans would just wise up. "

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