

# Why the Evergreen Trees Keep Their Leaves in Winter

One day, a long, long time ago, it was very cold; winter was coming. And all the birds flew away to the warm south, to wait for the spring. But one little bird had a broken wing and could not fly. It did not know what to do. It looked all round, to see if there was any place where he could keep warm. And he saw the trees of the great forest.

— Perhaps the trees will keep me warm through the winter, — it thought.



So it went to the edge of the forest,  
hopping and fluttering with its  
broken wing. The first tree it came to  
was a slim silver birch.

— Beautiful birch-tree, — it tweeted,  
— will you let me live in your warm  
branches until the springtime comes?

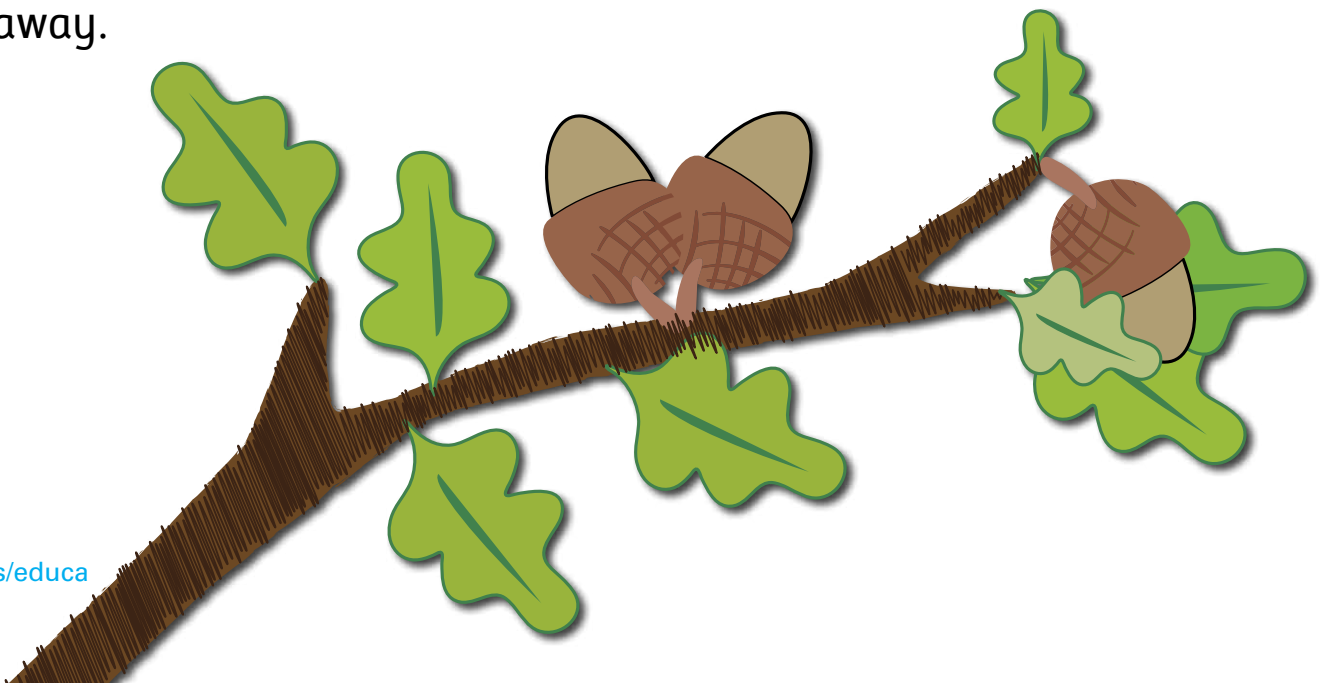
— Dear me! — shrieked the  
birch—tree, — what a thing to  
ask! I have to take care of my  
own leaves through the winter;  
that is enough for me. Go  
away.

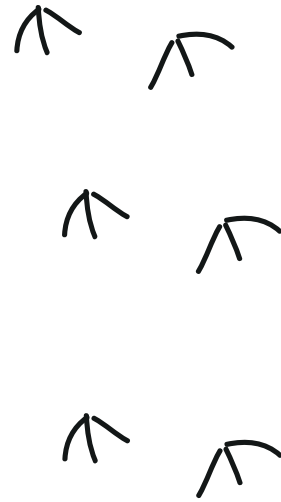


The little bird hopped and fluttered with its broken wing until it  
came to the next tree. It was a great, big oak-tree.

— O big oak-tree, — pleaded the little bird, — will you let me live  
in your warm branches until the springtime comes?

— Dear me, — blurted the oak-tree, — what a thing to ask! If you  
stay in my branches all winter you will be eating my acorns. Go  
away.

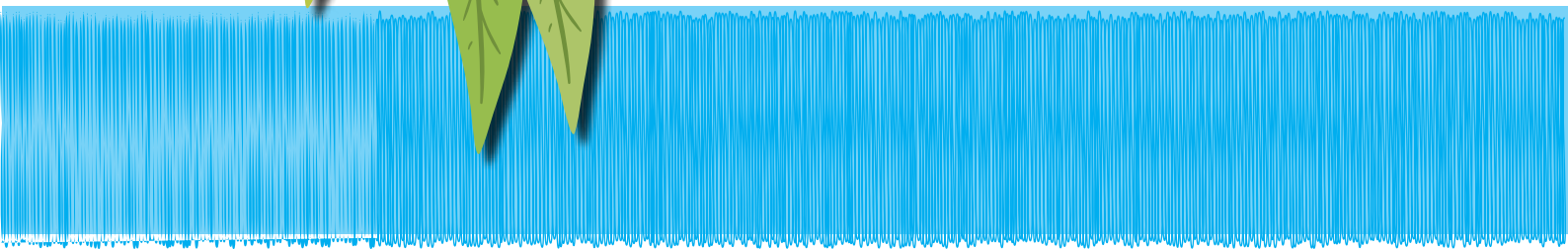




So the little bird hopped and  
fluttered with its broken wing till  
he came to the willow-tree by the  
edge of the brook.

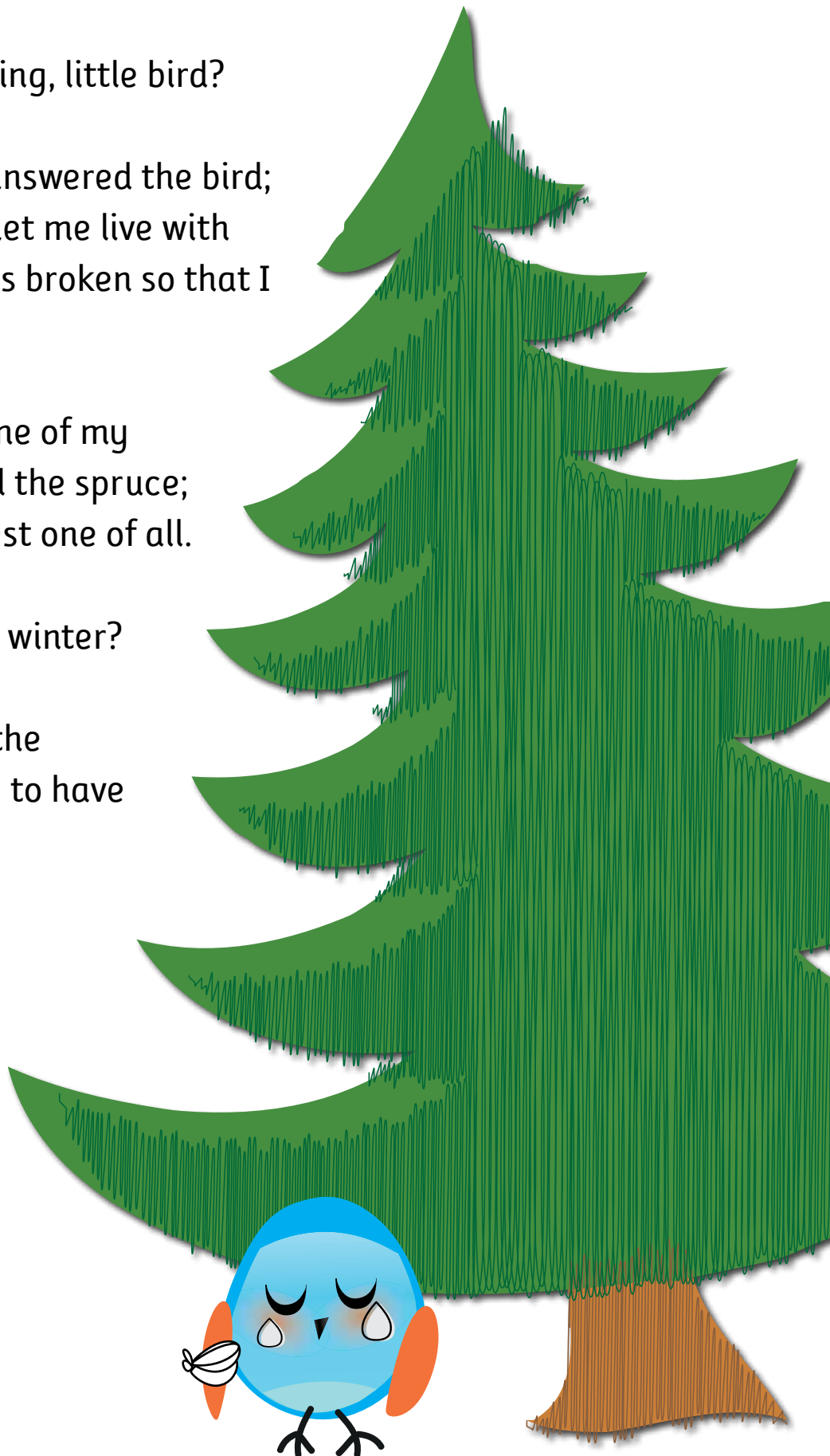
— Oh beautiful willow-tree, —  
whispered the little bird, — will  
you let me live in your warm  
branches until the springtime  
comes?

— No, indeed, — retorted the  
willow-tree; — I never speak to  
strangers. Go away.



The poor little bird did not know where to go and tears flooded its eyes; but it hopped and fluttered along with its broken wing. Presently the spruce-tree saw him, and asked:

- Where are you going, little bird?
- I do not know, – answered the bird;  
– the trees will not let me live with them, and my wing is broken so that I cannot fly.
- You may live on one of my branches, – assured the spruce;  
– here is the warmest one of all.
- But may I stay all winter?
- Yes, – confirmed the spruce; – I shall like to have you.

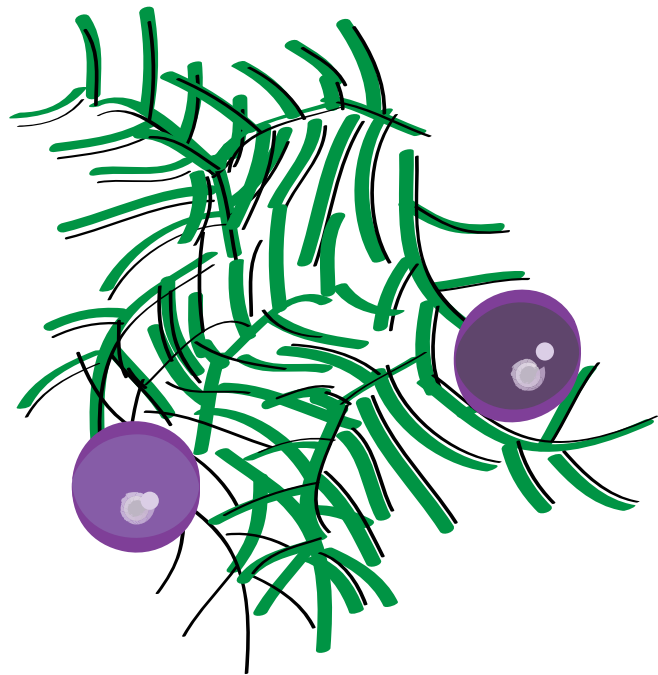


The pine-tree stood beside the spruce, and when it saw the little bird hopping and fluttering with its broken wing, it exclaimed:

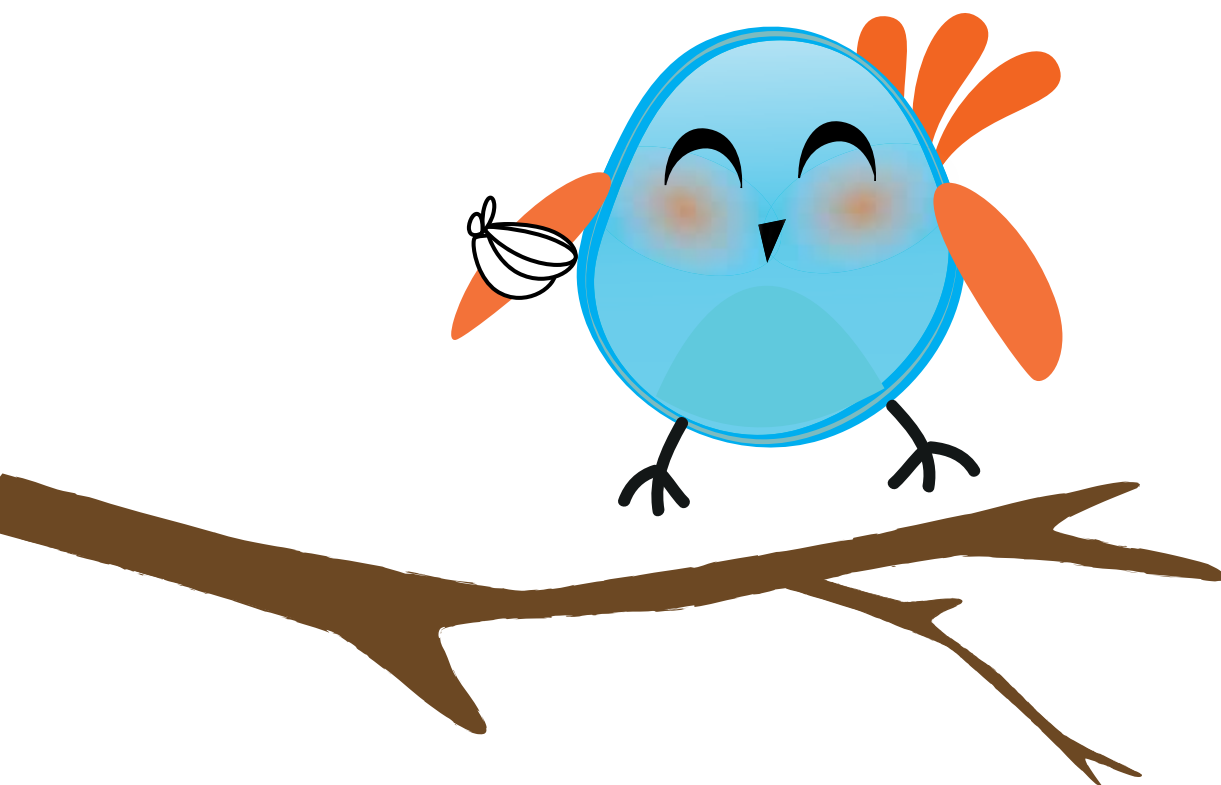
— My branches are not very warm, but I can keep the wind off because I am big and strong!



So the little bird fluttered up into the warm branch of the spruce, and the pine-tree kept the wind off its house; then the juniper-tree saw what was going on, and offered that it would give the little bird its dinner all the winter, from its branches. Juniper berries are very good for little birds.



The little bird was very comfortable in its warm nest sheltered from the wind, with juniper berries to eat.



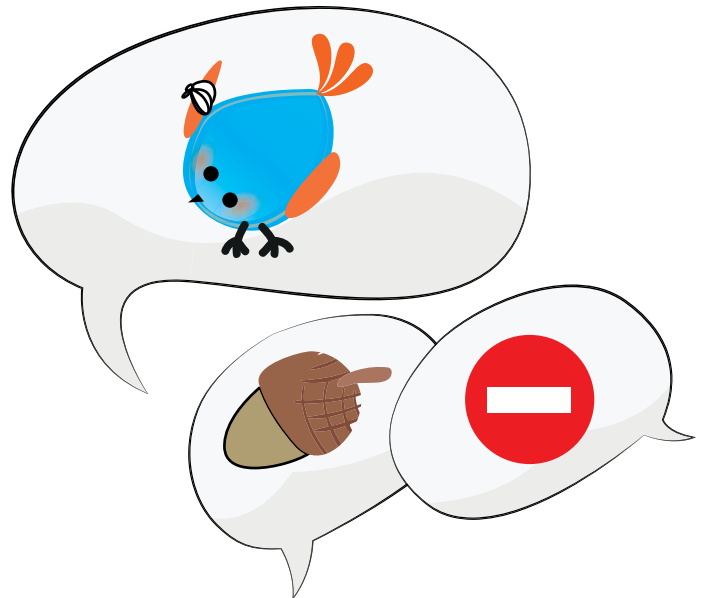
The trees at the edge of the forest remarked upon it to each other:

– I wouldn't take care of a strange bird, – affirmed the birch.

– I wouldn't risk my acorns, – claimed the oak.

– I would not speak to strangers, – added the willow.

And the three trees stood up very tall and proud.





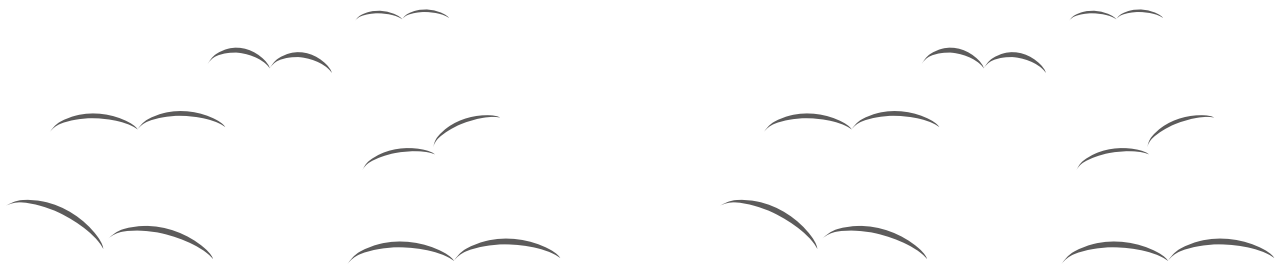
That night the North Wind came to the woods to play. He puffed at the leaves with his icy breath, and every leaf he touched fell to the ground. He wanted to touch every leaf in the forest, for he loved to see the trees bare.

— May I touch every leaf? — he requested his father, the Frost King.

— No, — stated the Frost King, — the trees which were kind to the bird with the broken wing may keep their leaves.

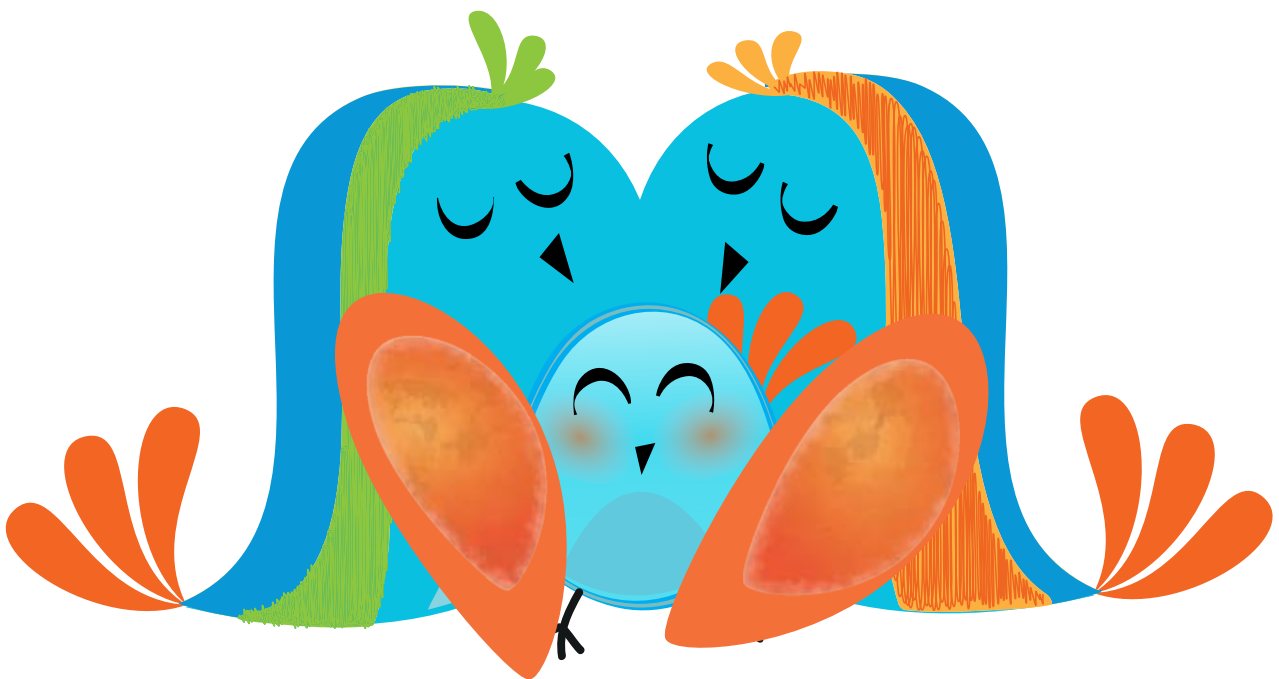


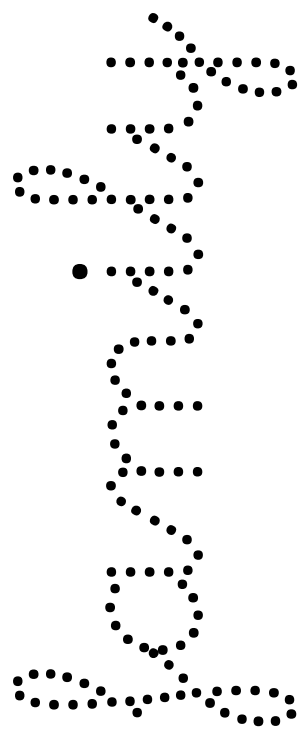




So North Wind had to leave them alone, and the spruce, the pine, and the juniper-tree could protect the little bird until its family returned in spring. They kept all their leaves through all the Winter. And they have done so ever since.

The End.







Edición

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