

The Trees Are Alive

Hi, I'm Albert the tree and oh boy, do I have some stories to tell you my dear reader. As I may seem like a sweet old man now it wasn't always this way. Believe it or not I used to be the meanest grumpiest tree in the whole forest, but before I dive into that, there was a time long before those years and probably long before you were even born. I once was just a little seed, and this kind hearted family planted me. I grew and I grew into this big beautiful willow tree and I was one of a kind. There were only three of us willow trees in our forest. This family had three of the sweetest kids. My favourite being Cindy. She was the middle child, very quiet but so very smart, she used to read novels leaning against me at such a young age. I still remember her and her huge glasses that took up most of her face. Her father made this tire swing on one of my thickest branches. Cindy and Ivan, her one brother, used to spend hours upon hours playing on it. My last memory with them was sweet but sour. It started when all three of the kids were all playing hide and seek and somehow Ivan, the youngest, climbed on me so high I was fearful I'd drop him. He sadly ended up falling and I couldn't save him. I have no idea what happened after they left. After that day I never saw any of them again.

After that day I started to become lonely and very depressed, but I knew it was my fault. All around me started to feel like a landfill because garbage was everywhere you looked. I started to notice all the trees around me getting chopped down one after another after another. I started waiting for my turn to get chopped down, day in and day out. I hated my life. I just wanted out. I became something I resented and despised. I couldn't even recognize myself especially after the once beloved tire swing fell off and hit the ground. I knew it was over for me. These random people started to leave their tires by the swing and even more garbage came my way. They started to build this park and slowly cut more trees down for more houses around this park. And I watched even more of the trees I grew up with get cut down. It felt so empty without all the other trees. I noticed that this new park was made out of wood and had three huge slides and four swings, and it looked like a child's dream come true. Then I started to go down a rabbit hole with my thoughts. I just kept thinking how all these children wouldn't get the same joy and happiness that I once gave the kids, but then again maybe it was for the better. I started to notice all these new people coming and going to this park, but sadly, that meant way way wayyy more garbage on me. I started to wonder why these people didn't care about littering, especially because there was a trash can less than twenty feet away from me. I couldn't even tell you how many times I was pissed on by all these new people. It was so disgusting.

But then this group of teenagers came over to me and at first I assumed the worst, like maybe they were here to throw more of their garbage and junk at me or maybe they'd chop me down or worse, maybe they'd pee on me too. But then they did the most unexpected thing. They started to slowly take the tires off of me and that took so many days. It felt like the first time I could breathe again. Then a few weeks later they came back but this time with more people. There must have been about 35 people and they started to unbury me from underneath all of this trash. It took almost a month to get half of me unburied, but I could feel weight lifting off of me, and it was the best feeling in the world. I started to wonder why all of a sudden these people started to clean and care about me, and literally save me from these cruel people who covered me up, covered my beauty up, with all of their disgusting trash. Weeks went by and they started to clean more of the garbage off of me. It took so long due to there being so much garbage. I was basically a dump for everyone and anyone to use. They ended up getting almost all of me cleaned up and I became so thankful and I started to feel more myself than I have in years. I couldn't even remember the last time I could look around and not only see garbage. These people kept coming back until one day when I looked brand new. They even put a new tire swing back on me. I couldn't help but wonder how they knew that I used to have a tire swing on that branch. It was even the exact same branch it used to be on years ago.

A few weeks later I felt something or someone hold on to me. It felt like I'd felt that feeling before. I looked and I noticed that it was one of the same girls who kept coming to clean me up, every day

since they started to help me. Then there was this sweet old lady who came over with her cane. She came from the exact same house that my old family lived in who used to play with me once upon a time ago. Then I looked a little harder and realized this wasn't just a random old lady. It was Cindy, my Cindy, and oh I couldn't believe I was seeing her, and this teenager who once seemed so random was truly not as random as I thought. It was actually Cindy's granddaughter, and she put this whole cleanup mission together. She had this whole plan because her grandmother, Cindy, was terribly sick and didn't have long to live. Her final wish was to have one more moment with the one place that truly felt like home, which to my surprise, was me. I was her home. And her life mission was to attempt to clean and save all the trees. Her granddaughter adored this plan and started helping but now she carries that mission of hers. Cindy and her granddaughter leaned against me and talked for hours. They were so proud of all they had done. By the end of this day Cindy knew her time had come, she was ready to go now and even I could tell she was so proud of all she had done for us trees. They had Cindy's funeral under my branches. It was so beautiful, and she would have adored it. Someone even donated two million dollars to Cindy's granddaughter for planting new trees and to clean up the planet to carry on Cindy's legacy.