
A Seasonal Treasury of Diversity Stories

~ Leslie Woolverton

After attending last year's February WECAN conference in Chestnut Ridge, NY, I was inspired to write a series of stories based upon and for the direct purpose of diversity. Not too long after that conference, our school, like many others, was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic that swept over the world.

As the Lead teacher of the Three-Day Nursery Class and Parent/Child classes at Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten & Nursery in Silver Spring, MD, my stories are short and simple. There are four seasonal stories that follow the course of the school year, from fall to summer. The fall and winter stories are shared in this issue.

The Good Soup (Fall)

One day, a mother and her young child were working in their small garden. It was fall, and it was time for harvest. The mother and child gathered the vegetables they had planted long ago, caring for them tenderly and watching them fully grow from seeds in the ground to tall stalks and bountiful vegetables. Together they had planted corn, squashes of many colors and sizes, broccoli, kale, spinach, and pumpkins. The weather was changing fast, and the little family wanted to collect as much as possible before the weather turned too cold. The young child was gentle, for as much as she and her mother would collect, the kind-hearted girl would leave a little behind, for the animals in their yard to eat.

Now, back inside their cozy warm home, it was time to make dinner.

"What will dinner be?" asked the young child.

"I am making a hearty meal. I will add a little from each of the vegetables we gathered today, to make a delicious soup." said the mother.

"I do not like all of those vegetables, and especially not all together." said her daughter.

The mother who was both wise and calm, simply replied, "We will see..."

And unbeknownst to her daughter, the two sat by the fire that evening, eating something from all that they had gathered from their garden. And the soup made from everything that had grown from the good earth was delicious.

The Green Forest (Winter)

Once upon a time, in a far-off place, past lush grass-filled meadows and beyond deep blue, babbling brooks, was a great Green Forest. There, in the forest, were so many trees of all kinds, young and old. There were mighty Maple trees. There were giant Oak trees. There were Willow trees, upon which the leaves would softly dance, as winds blew gently through their limbs with such delicate grace and beauty. In the spring, the Dogwood trees would produce the most colorful and elegant flowers that seemed as if the tips of color were put on by the most delicate paintbrushes. The Sycamores' bark resembled woven tapestries of mottled light and dark, that supported the trees' stately structure as they grew tall towards the sky. Spruces of all kinds stood in line along the edge of the meadow, full of strong green boughs.

Here, in the forest in late winter, was also a tiny evergreen, named "Little Pine." A bird had dropped the seed from a pinecone long ago, and amongst the gentle giants of the forest stood this very tree. It, too, was grand; but the Pine tree never believed this to be so, since it also believed that it was not as grand as all the others. Spring came, and Little Pine admired the Dogwood's subtle beauty. It sighed sweetly watching the Willow's grace amongst the winds. The giant Spruces, Oaks, Sycamores, and Maple trees were so impressive, that the little Pine tree wished it, too, could touch the blue sky and feel more of the golden sun from high above. Birds and animals would often find shelter amongst the other trees, but not under its smaller canopy; and the Pine tree often felt sad. Spring turned to summer. Summer turned to fall, and the Pine tree still continued each day with a heavy sigh.

Finally, the Pine tree asked all the other trees why it was not as beautiful, since it did not flower or have different-colored bark, was not as tall to touch the sky and feel the sun, not as strong to be solid when heavy rains or heavy strong winds passed through. The other trees told the Little Pine to wait. One day, forward into the future, it, too, would become everything that it desired. Little Pine, far away from its brothers and sisters along the meadow's edge, could not see the mighty pinecones it would once bear, nor how strong

and grand it too would be, nor how many animals would feel sheltered both beneath and upon its boughs.

Now, deep into fall, the little Pine tree witnessed how leaves from all the other trees began to fall, flowers of all colors from the rainbow were now long gone, and the Forest became open to its world for all to see. Birds and animals were now far less sheltered under its vast green umbrellas. The other trees now spoke again to Little Pine. “You have not lost your needles, your branches are not bare. Look how grand and protective

you now are.” And as Little Pine looked about, two of the most beautiful red Cardinals landed in the evergreen, suspended by the support of its branches. Little Pine understood in that moment how it, too, was a central part of the Green Forest, and never again did the tree feel itself to be not as good as the others.

This story includes the names of all our classrooms at Acorn Hill: Spruce, Dogwood, Sycamore, Oak, and Willow. ♦
