

jack and the wandering tree

Once upon a time, in a very ordinary house in a very ordinary neighborhood, there lived a boy named Jack.

(I have to pause here to tell you that I'm Jack and this is my story. It seems rather fantastical. I don't think I'd believe it myself except that it happened to me. Sometimes I still don't believe it. It's easier to tell you the story if I pretend that it happened to someone else.)

Jack was sitting on the couch one late fall morning, idly staring out the window, when he saw the tree in front of the window pull its roots out of the ground and walk away.

He blinked his eyes a few times - he wondered if he was still asleep - but after a few blinks, it was clear that the tree was definitely gone. He ran to the window and looked out. The tree was striding across the empty lot next door, bits of trash getting caught up in its roots as it went.

Jack didn't stop to think. He ran to the door, grabbed his jacket and slipped his feet into a pair of tennis shoes, and rushed out the door, slipping his arms into the jacket sleeves as he went. He ran through the vacant lot after the tree and followed it through two backyards.

All of a sudden, the tree stopped. Jack watched as the tree reached down with one of its branches and carefully plucked a flower from a

garden. It was one of the few gardens in Jack's neighborhood that still had flowers blooming. Jack couldn't be sure, but he thought the tree brought the flower to its nose and smelled it before setting off again. (That's what it looked like the tree was doing, but Jack wasn't sure whether trees had noses. Of course, until that moment, he didn't know trees could walk or pick flowers, either.)

The tree continued on through three more backyards - Jack following closely behind - until it came to the edge of a yard with a large tree in the far corner.

Jack was very familiar with this yard. His friend lived in the house that the yard belonged to and they had spent many hours playing in the branches of that tree.

Jack's tree slowly walked over to the tree in the corner, rather shyly it seemed to Jack, and held out the flower.

The other tree reached out with one of its branches and took the flower.

Jack couldn't be sure, but he thought the trees blushed a little. For a moment, they were suffused with a rosy red glow. Then again, maybe it was just the morning sun. All Jack knew for sure was that the air was briefly filled with the scent of spring blossoms, a scent he remembered from his hours playing in the tree.

Jack's tree shuffled its roots a bit and then turned around and headed home. There was a definite spring in its step.

When it got back to its own yard, it walked right into the hole it had left behind; the ground folded over the roots as if they had been there all along. The only evidence that anything out of the ordinary had occurred was a piece of trash from the abandoned lot that was now partially buried next to the tree.

Jack stood looking at the tree for a while. He had so many questions. How did it walk? Did it leave often? How did it know about the other tree? Could the tree take him for a ride? Did trees talk? In the end, he went inside without saying anything at all.

Later that day, Jack's mother asked him if he was feeling well. She had noticed that he was extremely quiet all day and spent most of his time sitting on the couch, just looking out the window.

Jack wanted to tell her the story, but he wasn't sure if she would believe him so he just reassured her that he was fine.

His dreams that night were full of trees.

Jack kept his eyes wide open after that, but no matter how closely he watched, he never caught his tree leaving the yard again.

the end