

Message on the Wind
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“I wish we could be together,” my leaves whispered. The wind took my message from there. I was an Aspen Tree. I lived on the east side of Pikes Peak, high up in altitude. I lived in a grove of Aspens with my family. We lived by a small strip of dirt that four-branches walked on. I was sending a message to my friend, a Ponderosa Pine that lived on the other side of the rocky mountain. It was forbidden for two trees of a different species to talk to each other, or worse, be friends with each other. We’d been friends since we were saplings in the nursery. I did envy him some, but mostly because he didn’t have to worry about pesky four-branches. He probably didn’t even remember what a four-branch looks like! I would’ve done just about anything to live near him again, and not have to worry about four-branches bothering me. We had a nice life together too. Then, four-branches took us away from each other and planted us where we stood then. But we never stopped speaking to each other. Our secret was safe for quite some time.

Summer

The hottest time of year. A certain Calliope Hummingbird would always come by and put its long, pointy mouth in a flower that was growing near me. It was a pretty typical summer. It didn’t rain much, so sometimes we had droughts which caused fires. One year, a big, red, noisy thing on wheels came by. Then I saw why. Scarlet flames were coming straight toward our Aspen grove. The fire was destroying everything in its path and we would be devoured soon too! Suddenly the red thing sprayed water on the fire, and the horrifying flames vanished. I was surprised that the four-branches had been inside the red thing. I wanted to thank them for saving my family but I didn’t know their language and they didn’t know mine. I wondered if there was a

fire on the other side of the rocky mountain where Ponderosa Pine lived. The flames were so pretty, but why did they have to be so destructive?

Autumn

The sad part of the year. Sure, seeing leaves change red, orange, and yellow was incredible, but when they fell, I wasn't able to talk. But I did get to see a Peregrine Falcon swoop down, and with an amazing turn of its head, it caught a mouse that was eating a seed. I got a reply back from Ponderosa. I had asked him if he was caught in a fire, and he said that he and his family had lived. It was good to hear that he was alright and had survived the heat. The cool weather was nice compared to the blazing heat of summer, but soon it would become too cold and my leaves would freeze right off. Even worse, the night was going to be windy and more were sure to fall off. I decided to inform my friend before I lost my voice. "I think that our talking for the season is over. My leaves will soon be gone." The wind picked up and started to carry my message to him. Would it reach him before the first snowfall?

Winter

This time of year was beautiful but fatal. Branches could snap and fall onto other trees because of the wet, heavy snow. In the beginning there was hardly any snow and the temperatures were fairly warm. Snowy Owls swooped down onto my bare branches and their hoots relaxed me and helped me sleep - but then the weather changed for the worse. It started to get bitterly cold, and I knew that a big storm would be coming. I went to sleep, not expecting it to snow. When I woke up it was still dark, but in a beam of moonlight I could see the snow. It covered the ground like a white blanket, and the flakes falling from the sky looked like the tiny lights all the way down the rocky mountain. I stood all day in the storm, wondering about

Ponderosa Pine. I went to sleep that night wondering about him. When I woke up, a cold, wet message hit me in the trunk. "Dearest Aspen, we are the parents of Ponderosa Pine. We're glad that he made a friend, even if you are a different species. We are sorry to tell you that Ponderosa has died. The weight of the snow was too much for his branches. When they snapped, his trunk split. We're so sorry..." I didn't hear the rest and I was in so much shock. Why was winter so cruel?

Spring

The first leaf that had grown in the grove was on me! Most of the past year was sorrowful, but then there was green everywhere - a rebirth. The Mountain Bluebirds were chirping their musical song. I got another message from Ponderosa Pine's parents, and they informed me that a sapling had been planted in the very spot that Ponderosa had fallen. Maybe someday we would meet through the wind. And maybe my friend Ponderosa would show himself through the new one's spirit. Wouldn't that be the most magical thing of all?