

IN EDEN'S FOREST

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Two children, on Summer holiday, come exploring in the forest and decide to climb a tree. Eden can hear them: they're climbing *his* tree.

Eden is fascinated by the adventurous children and would like them to like him, yet he worries to himself, 'They might think I'm strange'.

When the first child comes to Eden's house, she peeps in the window and waves excitedly, then climbs higher, calling to her friend, 'There's someone living here!'.

Eden paces up and down his room and thinks angrily, 'They're going to make fun of me!'

The next child peeps in and smiles at Eden. But Eden thinks for certain that she is laughing at him. Eden is so angry now, he pokes out his tongue at her!

The girl says: 'That's mean! What did *I* do?'

Eden sinks down between his armchair and bookshelf and drops his face to his knees.



Leaves are turning orange. They start to fall. Eden worries that the tree is letting its precious leaves go to waste.

On his balcony he watches them falling. They float this way, then that. Round and down and round and down. Determinedly, Eden grabs his sack, but in his heart, Eden knows, no matter how hard he tries, he can never collect all the fallen leaves. He feels silly, and yet he feels he *must* collect them. He fills his sack up again and again.

He feels angry at his tree for not holding on tightly to its leaves. His anger grows until it's bigger and stronger than he is, and all of a sudden he kicks the tree.

The tree is cross and says: 'Eden, you know the red beetles go down to the forest floor to turn the fallen leaves into food for me.'

Eden stares at his two possum friends playing with the falling leaves, wishing he could play too.



Fresh snow sparkles in the cold, white, quiet forest. It's snowman-building time.

Eden dresses in his warmest winter hat, snugly red scarf, big bright snow boots and blue velvet gloves, but, the gloves are stiff and scratchy. Eden worries that the uncomfortable feeling will get worse and worse: he's scared that soon he won't be able to bear it.

'I don't need you gloves!' he tells them angrily, pulls them off and charges outside. He sits on his branch. His possum friends want him to come and play in the snow, but he knows he can't without his gloves.

'It's not fair,' he says over and over in his head.

He is angry at the snow for being cold, but he also loves the snow. The anger and love fight inside him and he yells, 'Go away snow!'

King Winter, who sends the snow, looks down and frowns.

Eden wipes away a hot tear with a cold finger.



The forest fills with Spring. There is a flutter of shimmering silvers, pinks, greens and blue as Yaya lands beside Eden. He does not smile even though she is singing his favourite song.

‘What’s the matter?’ Yaya asks.

Eden tells Yaya how in Summer he was angry with the children, how in Autumn he was angry with his tree and how in Winter he was angry both at his gloves and the snow.

‘I get angry, too!’ says Yaya. ‘Like when I’m flying from my Winter home to my Spring one here in the forest. It’s such a long way and my wings ache. I get tired and hungry.’

‘And angry?’ asks Eden.

‘Yes. Even though *I know* it’s not their fault, I get angry at the headwinds, at the distance, and with the younger birds who have more energy.’

‘So what do you do, Yaya?’ Eden stretches his arms out like wings imagining the tiresome journey.

‘I try spotting whales, making up new songs or flying behind a friend where the wind buffets me less. You will find other things to do, too, Eden’. Before Yaya flies off to tend to her Springtime nest, she adds, ‘While you are busy with other things, your mind lets go of worries, and then you can think differently.’

Eden flaps both his arms and pretends to fly too, calling, ‘Happy Springtime, Yaya!’



Summer and the tree-climbers return. Eden briefly dares to wonder if he could ever become their friend.

When the first child peeps in, Eden is worrying to himself again, 'I just know they will make fun of me.' Eden is about to hide when he thinks of Yaya.

Eden walks to the table. He takes out his pencils and paper and begins to draw. As he draws, he thinks differently than before.

He remembers visiting the house at the edge of the forest. There he had visited the children's garden and had dared to peep in *their* window.

'Maybe the children are just as curious as me,' he thinks.

When the second child peeps in, he looks up. There is a smile on her face. Eden tries a quick wave. She replies with a longer one.

Eden can feel friendly goose bumps on the back of his neck.



An orangey-red leaf falls. Then a greenish-brown leaf. Now orange leaves with brown stripes drift towards the forest floor. Eden angrily snatches up his sack, thinking of the exhausting task ahead.

Just then, he remembers Yaya, and lets his sack slide back to the floor. He looks for something to do and takes out his knitting. As he knits, he thinks of the clever red beetles.

Now, he stands on the balcony and a single golden leaf catches his eye.

‘What a beautiful leaf!’ Eden calls to his possum friends.

‘Thank you’, whispers the tree, and Eden places his cheek against its trunk.



The first flakes of snow fell all night. Eden puts on his warmest hat, his snugly red scarf, and his big bright snow boots. Then he picks up his blue velvet gloves. He remembers how stiff and scratchy they were last Winter and he feels worried.

He puts them on.

‘You’re hurting me!’ he cries angrily at his gloves. ‘It’s not fair!’

He knows if he takes them off, he will miss out on the snow, once more.

Just then he thinks of Yaya.

He takes out his beautiful picture book and begins to look through it. The gloves still feel stiff and scratchy and it is tricky turning the pages. He so wants to take them off, but he reminds himself how much fun it will be to go walking in the powdery snow, and bravely he leaves them on.

The next book he chooses is a songbook. Soon he is on his feet, clapping, singing and dancing. Before long, his hands have become used to the strange glove feeling.

Eden walks on the forest floor and scoops up some fresh snow, tossing it into the air so that it showers back down upon him and makes his possum friends laugh with him.

Eden spins round and round and round until he falls into the soft snow and says, ‘The forest is still spinning. The forest must be happy too’.



Eden is sitting on his branch breathing in deeply Spring's sweet smells.
By his side lands an exhausted Yaya.

Eden smiles and says to her: 'Yaya, I have three gifts for you!'

'Oh!' Yaya loves presents.

'Last Spring', Eden continues, 'you suggested I find things to do
when I feel angry.

Well, when I got angry in Summer, I drew.

When I got angry in Autumn, I knitted.

When I got angry in Winter, I sang.

You were right, Yaya. I felt better and began to think differently
about the things that bothered me.'

From his little room, Eden brings out the presents he has made.
He gives Yaya a beautiful drawing to hang next to her nest and a small,
soft, knitted pillow to put in her nest. The third gift is a song that he sings
for her.

Yaya stretches her wings wide and folds them in again,
'Thank you! I will treasure your gifts.'

Eden stretches his arms wide, and, imagining his arms are Yaya's
wings, he wraps his arms around himself. The feeling is strong, as if it
will last forever.



Eden had been reading to his possum friend, and now daydreams on his branch in the sun: He sees the children coming through the forest, and he climbs back into his little home. He sits down and draws and thinks and tentatively nods to the first child who waves and climbs past.

When the next child reaches his balcony, he goes to the window and bravely says, 'Hello'. He doesn't know what else to say.

'What are you?' the girl asks.

Eden replies, 'I am Eden'.

'Eden', repeats the girl in awe. 'Do you have friends in the forest?'

'Yes!' he answers and tells her about his possum-friends who love to hide his watering can, and the cockatoos who talk all day, and the red beetles who work so hard, and about Yaya who sometimes gets angry, and sings so sweetly.

The girl is fascinated to hear about Eden and his friends. 'Can we be friends too?' she asks.

'Yes! Let's!' answers Eden, 'Tell me about you and your friends.'

The girl does, and so there, in Eden's forest, a friendship begins.



