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The Proud Tree

**Written by Luane Roche
Illustrated by Chris Sharp**



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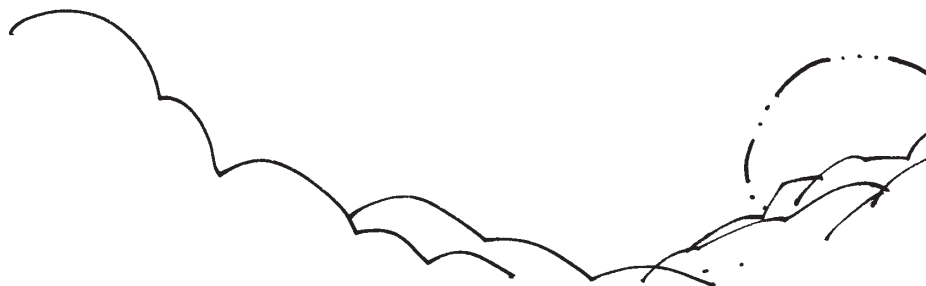


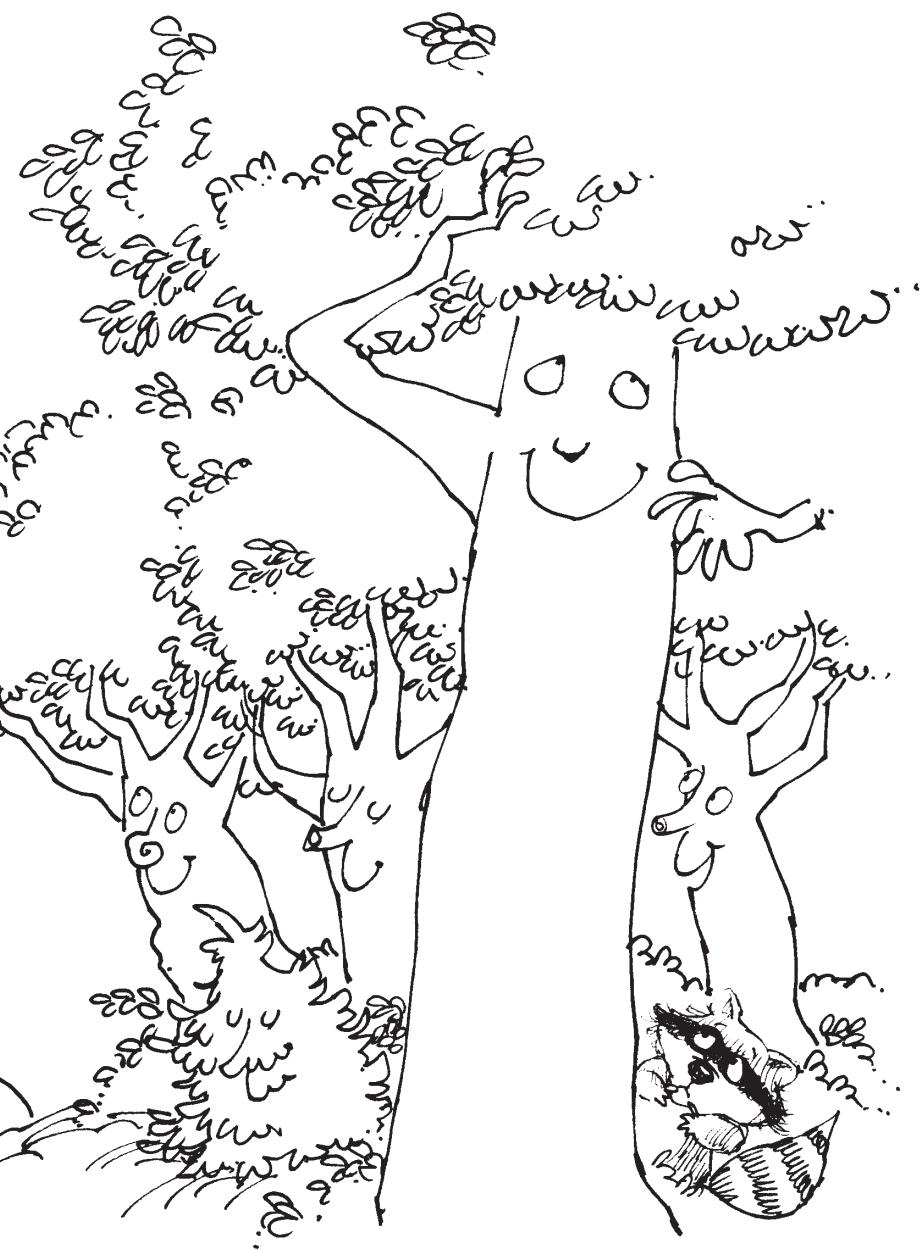
He was the straightest and sturdiest tree in the whole forest. Oh, but he was proud—too proud. "I'm the greatest," he would boast. "I'm as straight and sturdy as a Roman soldier, as brave as a centurion."

All the other trees grew tired of his constant bragging. They named him Rex (which means king) because he always acted and talked as if he were the king tree of all the forest.

Every morning at dawn and each evening at sunset, the trees of the forest would raise their branches in praise and thanks to God, their creator.

But not Rex. Rex was usually too busy admiring his own green, leafy branches glistening in the morning sun or waving in the evening breeze.







One day some Roman soldiers from Jerusalem came riding through the forest. As they passed each tree, they would stop and look the tree over carefully. Then they would shake their heads and move on.

They came to a stop right in front of Rex.

Rex straightened his trunk and waved his powerful branches in the breeze. The leader of the soldiers climbed down from his horse and walked around Rex. He nodded his head and smiled.

"This tree will be perfect for the King," he said.

