

I had never seen lights on in the house across the yard during dusk hours in many seasons. The property had long been abandoned. Now there was a family, and all four silhouettes danced around each other in the lit window. I always wondered what it would be like to be a part of a family.

I was rooted here as a Spruce tree; a misfit in a marvellous grove of Maple trees. Though I was not sure how I came to be rooted here, the Maples told me that my seed had blown here by mistake.

“Maybe... this is my chance to be a part of a family if I try hard enough,” I thought aloud as the Maples snickered.

The summer had passed, and I had yet to convince the children to play near my branches.

“Achoo! I must be allergic to this stupid tree,” the mother exclaimed.

“Ewww the sap is sticking my fingers together!” One of the kids whined.

“Ouch! I am bleeding! The tree poked me!” The other squealed as the children ran away.

The children avoided me while one of the larger Maple trees got a swing put up in its branches.

“You Maples are so lucky that the kids like you; I wish they would play with me like they do with you,” I would confess.

“No wonder the children do not want to play around you, you’re sharp and sticky,” the Maples would tell me. “Grass doesn’t even like to grow around you.”

I suppose they were right. Still, I tried to produce extra pine cones because I thought the children would like to collect them; but they were far too occupied climbing the large sturdy branches on the surrounding Maple trees. Later that night, a large wind left hundreds of cones and needles on the ground.

“Ugh. These stupid needles will take me hours to clean up”, the father grunted as he grabbed his rake to gather the mounds of droppage.

With every day further into autumn, I saw the elegant Maple’s leaves change into vibrant reds and yellows, while my forest green needles stood out like an eyesore. The children built heaping piles with the fallen leaves and raced to jump into it; they didn’t play with my sharp, sticky needles when they fell.

“I wish I was a Maple tree. I wish I was a part of the family.” I would plead out.

The first snowfall dropped a lush blanket of powder and made the ground glisten and sparkle like a diamond. I watched as the back door creaked open and four figures became clearer as they approached me.

“What are they doing?” A Maple asked.

“I don’t know. Are they going to chop me down?” I replied, slightly worried as I had never seen anything like this happen before.

Four pairs of eyes twinkled at me and the father put down a large box at the base of my trunk. The children giggled with excitement, unable to control their giddiness. The father struggled to untangle a rope with evenly spaced bobbles, and when he solved the puzzle; the family passed it around my figure. They wrapped the bobbly rope to the top of my branches.

They took out big multicolored balls out of the box. The mother stood back and ushered the children to be careful, as they raced to hang the balls on my branches.

The father grabbed a ladder, and called out “Come here and help me.”

The kids secured the base as he climbed up. He hunched over the ladder and placed a sparkly star-shaped cap on my tallest branches.

In a moment, there was an explosion of light and colour that was being emitted from the bobbly rope wound about me. The balls reflected the red-blue-green light that twinkled while the white snow on the ground created the illusion that the lights came from every direction. The family stood back to enjoy their masterpiece; I was the canvas.

“Ohhh!! Wow! Look at your branches! You are glowing. I wish they would decorate us,” The Maples gasped.

“I suppose we all have our time,” I replied.

As I sparkled, I felt special and a part of the family.

Every year the family continued the tradition, and I finally found a place among the Maples in the yard. If I ever feel alone; I remember my important role and remind myself we are all perfectly imperfect, and happiness begins when you decide to be yourself.