

TREES ARE IMPORTANT

An Orf Story written by Victoria Petro-Eschler

Premiered as a collaboration between Plan-B Theatre Company's "In the Classroom" Program and Salty Cricket Composers Collective; performed as a short film by students in second grade at Wallace Stegner Academy in May 2019.

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CHARACTERS

BIRD - Egg Shakers

SQUIRREL - Triangles

TREE - Sticks

BOY - Boomwhackers

GIRL - Buckets

NARRATOR - A Teacher

(EVERYONE sings and plays instruments to the tune of *London Bridge Is Falling Down*.)

Trees are home to birds like us;
Squirrels and their favorite nuts.
Trees clean air and do so much
Let's care for them

One day, a bright red [BIRD] flew over to a branch of an old, stately oak [TREE] to visit with her friend, Mr. [SQUIRREL]. Ms. [BIRD] was out of breath and tired. "What's wrong, Ms. [BIRD]?" Asked Mr. [SQUIRREL]. "Oh, me, Mr. [SQUIRREL]! I was just sure there used to be more places to stop between my [TREE] and your [TREE]. But, I feel like I flew for an entire day to get here with almost no place to stop!" Explained Ms. [BIRD], breathing hard. "You're not mistaken, Ms. [BIRD]," said Mr. [SQUIRREL]. "Big trucks have been coming and knocking down the [TREES]." "Knocking down [TREES]!?" gasped Ms [BIRD], "why?" "Our forest is so beautiful that it has become a very popular hiking spot for [BOYS] and [GIRLS]." Mr [SQUIRREL] explained, "People like to come here so much, that now they're making a ball field for people to play, with extra blacktop for a basketball court and grilling area. It's fun to share our home with [BOYS] and [GIRLS], but it's getting harder to find food or places to keep my family safe – and they leave so much trash on the ground!" "Oh no! That worries me so much. The [TREES] are so necessary - they are our homes, our food, our protection - not to mention they clean the air we all breathe!" Ms [BIRD]

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A short while later, a group of students came through the path near the old oak [TREE]. The students were excitedly looking under rocks and jumping over logs - and dropping litter in their path. At the back of the group, a [GIRL] with bright eyes and a [BOY] in a red hat lingered behind their friends, taking in the scenery around them. "Hello, [BOY]! Hello, [GIRL]!" Chirped Ms. [BIRD] as she floated down and perched on the [BOY]'s red hat. Mr. [SQUIRREL] climbed down the [TREE] trunk, tapping on the [GIRL]'s shoe. The [GIRL] and the [BOY] were so shocked, they were unable to make a sound! "We truly love sharing our beautiful home with you, but we're hoping we can talk to you about a few things," began Mr. [SQUIRREL]. "You see, there is so much trash being left behind." The [BOYS] eyes bulged. The [GIRL] gulped, trying to understand what was happening in front of her. "Also," chimed in Ms. [BIRD], "there are an awful lot of [TREES] being cut down. We know you all love to play games, but maybe this isn't the best place to do that? The [TREES] are so important - they are our homes. They provide us with food. They protect us. And, they clean the air that all of us breathe." Finally, the [GIRL] found the will to speak. "Oh! Please forgive us! I would hate for someone to make my house dirty and or to take it away all together. That's horrible!" The [BOY] followed her lead, "What can WE do about it, though? We're just kids!" "I'm glad you asked," said Mr. [SQUIRREL]. "You can make sure you remind your friends to take out any garbage they bring in with them. Also, if you want to go the extra mile, you could bring an extra bag with you on your hike and remove the garbage others have left behind. That would be such a big help!" "Also," joined Ms. [BIRD], "Planting [TREES] is a simple way to help the environment. When you plant a [TREE], you help the world for decades to come - the [TREE] you plant today will be around and helping long after we're all gone!" The [BOY] and the [GIRL] listened closely to Ms. [BIRD] and Mr. [SQUIRREL]. They learned about the importance of [TREES] and how to protect the environment, while enjoying it with their friends. When they were done, the [BOY] and [GIRL] promised Ms. [BIRD] and Mr. [SQUIRREL] that they'd be back soon.

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A few weeks later, Ms. [BIRD] was once again visiting Mr. [SQUIRREL] when they heard voices they recognized. "Right, this way, friends. Gather anything that doesn't belong here," said the [GIRL]. She was leading a group of students picking up wrappers, bottle caps, and papers, putting them in sacks. The [BOY] shouted, "This is the field I told you about. We convinced the adults to move the sports center closer to the school. Now we can plant [TREES] here so that the [BIRDS] and [SQUIRRELS] have homes and food - not to mention we all will have cleaner air!" Several friends followed and planted little saplings in long rows. When it was time for the students to return home, the [BOY] and the [GIRL] stayed behind and looked for Mr. [SQUIRREL] and Ms. [BIRD]. "Thank you so much, friends!" Exclaimed Ms. [BIRD]. "What a magnificent job you did," congratulated Mr. [SQUIRREL]. "We're sorry we didn't take care of your home," apologized the [BOY]. "We promise to do better in the future," promised the [GIRL]. And as they walked out of the newly cleaned and planted forest, they heard everyone sing:

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END OF PLAY