

**The Tree of Plenty**  
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A little girl was gaily running through the forest, wiggling in fun and singing to herself, gathering pine cones and small vines to make a bowl for her mother's birthday. She came upon a bushy tree which had berries of all colors of the rainbow. She took one of each color and put it in her basket of supplies. Then she thought she would take some more, in case she lost any, so she wouldn't have to run all the way back to the tree. Suddenly she heard a low voice say "Don't you have enough?" She was surprised and looked around.

"I said, didn't you take enough?" repeated the voice, but she heard that it was in a friendly kind of way, though quite firm. She realized it was the tree.

"Yes, I did, I have one of each color, but I was going to take extras in case I lost some. Who are you?"

"I am the Tree of Plenty," said the tree. "You have enough, if you are careful with them. Just don't lose them. Take them home carefully, and then there will be plenty for others to share later."

So the girl walked home more carefully than she might have, and made the nest with a little more attention than she might have. That night, her mother opened her present.

"Oh, darling, this is beautiful. And I know just what I'll use it for. I have some brushes I use to do calligraphy, and they'll fit very nicely. And what beautiful colors!" Then she paused, and looked more closely. An even deeper, calmer smile broadened her face. "I didn't realize you were mature enough to meet the Tree of Plenty."

The girl was surprised. "The Tree of Plenty?"

"Yes, dear. The Tree of Plenty appears to us when we are old enough to really learn some of life's important lessons. We only see it when we are ready for it. I'm so proud of you. I hope you will enjoy your conversations with the Tree. I certainly did."

"You knew the Tree also?"

"Oh, yes, long ago," said Mama. That was all she said. But somehow the girl knew, that the tree was part of the reason that Mama was so calm and so knowledgeable about things.

"Will I see the Tree again?" she asked.

"I believe so," said Mama. "I can't promise. But the Tree will be there, either where you found it or occasionally somewhere else, when you are in need of advice you can't hear from the others who care about you, or advice you can't hear from yourself. I'm so glad, dearheart."

And so, the girl did have many conversations with the Tree over many years.

The End