Trenton's First Christmas

Once upon a time, high on a hill, lived a tree whose name was Trenton. Trenton did not know how long he had been all by himself on top of the hill. He thought it must have been forever.

Most of the time, Trenton liked being on top of the hill. He had a wonderful view. He could see clear down the valley. He loved watching the little village that was nestled there.
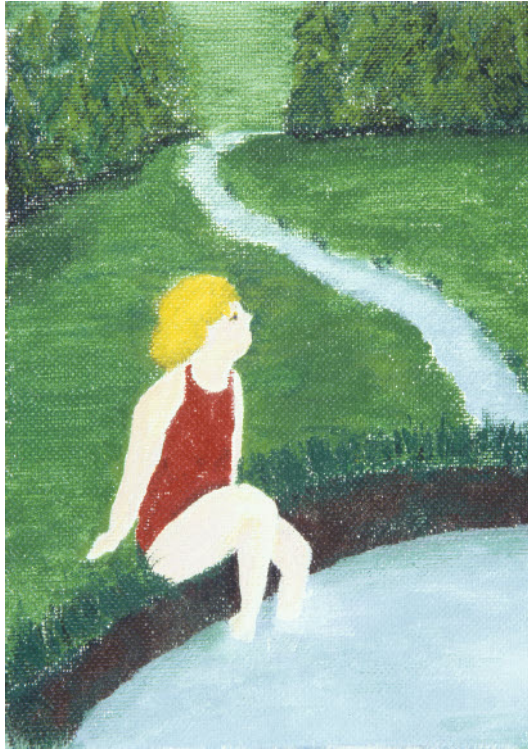
In springtime, Trenton watched everything turn green. He drank in the sweet smell of lilacs, while the birds did acrobats in the air. Trenton envied the birds. They sounded so happy when they chirped, and they were free to fly wherever they wanted to go. They could fly down to the little village and watch the children play.

More than anything, Trenton wished he could meet the village children. In summertime, they went swimming in Miller's Pond, Trenton could hear their happy shouts all the way up at the top of the hill.

Oh, how much Trenton wished, then, that he was a tree next to Miller's Pond!

In fall, the valley trees turned red and gold. The wind came along and swirled leaves high in the air. Soon there would be snow. "Brrrrr," Trenton thought. "I'll bet those trees get cold in the winter. I'm glad that all of me stays together!"

After the snowfall the children were easier for Trenton to see. They bundled up in bright jackets, scarves, and hats, and went ice skating on Miller's Pond. Some of the children had sleds. They would drag their sleds halfway up the hill and speed down laughing, all the way. Then they would start all over again. Each time, Trenton got very excited. "Maybe this time they will climb higher, and I will be able to see them."

Then winter's days grew colder
and shorter, and the children stopped
playing outside the village.
So Trenton gave up hoping.
But he gave himself a good shake
all over, when he started to feel
sorry for himself like that.

"No, I am much better off, way
up here, at the top," he reminded
himself. "But what if one day
someone does come all the way
up, and sees me?"

Then, early one bright morning,
Trenton heard voices! He held his
breath and waited....

First, Trenton saw a bright blue cap. Next he saw that the cap was on the head of one of the village boys. The boy was pulling a long sled. "Let's look up here, Dad!" the boy called out. His father and sister followed him, and all three stopped right in front of Trenton.

"I think this tree is just right!" the girl said.

"Yes," replied Father, who was the village Mayor. "It will make a perfect Christmas tree."

"I'm a fir tree – nothing can change that!" Trenton thought. "And what's a 'Christmas tree,' anyway?"

Were they going to take him to the village? How could they, when he was planted there at the top of the hill? Then Trenton felt something he never felt before – he was being dug right up and out of the ground! "Oh, me...." Trenton panicked. "What are they doing? It feels so strange. No! I do not like this at all, and I'm getting cold!"

The boy and his father lifted Trenton and laid him on the big sled. Ropes were tied all around his branches, and soon he felt the sled move. "I'm not sure I want to go sledding!" thought Trenton. "I'm not sure about *anything* right now!"

Poor Trenton. He was so confused and scared all the way down the hill, he couldn't even enjoy the ride. The sled with Trenton on it went straight to the middle of the town "I can't believe it," Trenton thought. "Finally I get to visit the village, and now I'm not sure it's where I want to be." Then he sneezed.

"Oh, dear – uprooted and tied to a sled and now I'm catching a cold!" The ropes around Trenton were untied, and he was lifted and set in a hole that had been dug in the middle of the square. The villagers quickly shoveled dirt around and over Trenton's roots, and a village girl gave him a small drink of water.

Trenton began to feel better when he saw that he still was all in one piece, and he looked around to see exactly where he was. He saw the street, the stores, and busy people carrying gaily wrapped packages.

Trenton was excited, now, about being in the village. But he was awfully tired after that scary trip down the hill. He wasn't able to look around very long, before he fell fast asleep.

It was dark when Trenton awakened from his nap. Yet right away he noticed something different about himself. Why, while he had been asleep, someone had put things on all of his branches – stars and angels, bells and gingerbread men, and different colored glass bulbs. "Such pretty things," Trenton thought. "But what are they doing on me?"

Then, when Trenton looked up, he saw the people of the village all gathered around him. "This is the most wonderful Christmas tree our town ever has had," Trenton heard the people saying to each other. And still he didn't know what a Christmas tree was! Then the Mayor's voice called out: "Ready?" Everyone grew very quiet.

"What in the world can happen to me next?" Trenton was worrying, when – all at once, all around him – colored lights were shining through the night.

Trenton heard long sighs

of ooooh and ahhhh, and

"Beautiful! How beautiful!"

What was everyone talking

about?

It was then that Trenton saw a reflection in the window of the toy shop across the street. A tree – himself! – all dressed up from head to toe in every color of the rainbow. And all the lights of red, green, blue and yellow and white, twinkling in the dark, scattering across the snow, were coming from him! "Ohhh..." Trenton sighed too. "I *am* beautiful!"

One child touched him and whispered, "You will be the most beautiful Christmas tree next year and the next year and the next, forever." Trenton still was puzzled, but he saw how much pleasure he was giving to the villagers. Even if he didn't know yet what "Christmas" was, he did know how happy he was. "Whatever a Christmas tree is," Trenton decided, "I think being one, and spending the rest of forever right here in the village with the children, is the best thing that could happen to any tree."