

Engelmann the Footloose Christmas Spruce



Lynn Mills

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First Edition

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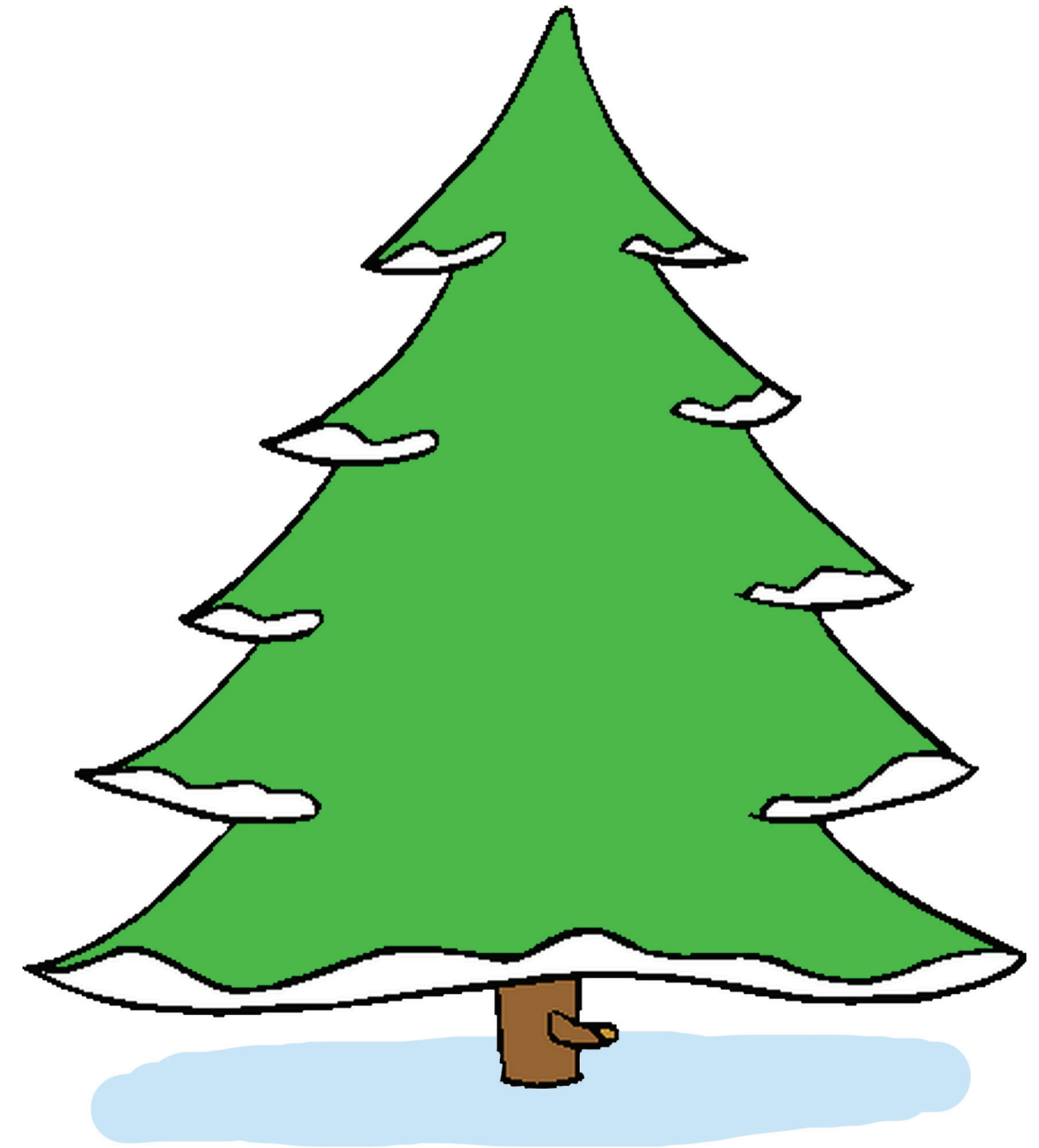
*Dedicated to Georgia and Veronica.
And Merry Christmas to all!*

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A forlorn young spruce stood six feet tall,
With feathery branches of green, but that's not all.
For he was the only one among the treelings
That had what you might call... feelings.
Was it just evergreen evolution?
Or the start of botanical revolution?



Now waiting patiently on the Christmas tree lot
 He watched with sadness as his mates got bought.
 Customers looked him up and down, and they all
 Said, "Too short!" "Too tall!" "Too big!" "Too small!"



And as Christmastime neared, he often feared
 That he'd end up spending the holiday among the weird
 Pink flocked trees no one wanted year after year,
 And he asked himself, "What am I doing here?"



His question was answered by a family named Hurley
Which numbered five, all dark haired and curly.
They loaded him up and when they got him home,
Placed him in the den where he was never alone,



Dressed with antique treasures of hand-blown glass,
Which hung beside trimmings the kids made in class,
With a pipe cleaner star. And it must be mentioned
He certainly loved being the center of attention.
The family said, "It's our best Christmas tree ever!"
"Have we had a better one?" "No, no, never."
They played festive songs, and sang in harmony,
That old classic carol, "O Christmas Tree!"



The kids strung popcorn (though they ate nearly a mile)
 But as they draped it... it seemed to smile,
 Under two shiny balls - "Wait, did one of them wink?"
 Asked one of the kids. "You know, what I think?
 This isn't an ordinary tree. We have to give him a name."
 So they thought and they thought, but nothing came,
 Till one read his species name on his tag. "Let me introduce,
 The one! The only! Engelmann, the Spruce!"



Each day they watered him to keep him fresh
 And lay under his boughs to rearrange the crèche.
 Spent nights camped at his foot, under a sheet
 Watching holiday films like "Miracle on 34th Street."
 They gathered beneath Engelmann to craft homemade gifts,
 Gluing and knitting and wrapping in shifts.



Each night they laid gifts 'neath his aromatic boughs,
 "Here's another one, Engelmann. Why, look at you now!"
 As each box was positioned, his lights blinked with pride
 While the children just wondered what must be inside.



"What do you think, Engelmann?" of a box made of shells,
 And the tree answered... by ringing its bells.
 The children's eyes widened, "I think he approves."
 "Who would believe it? But I just saw him move."

Pages 16-45 are not shown in this sample.



He seems like such a quiet, ordinary Christmas tree - but when the Hurley family takes him home, something wonderful happens.

Maybe it's the decorations (handmade by the way), or the beaming smiles of the kids, or his proud, happy name - *Engelmann*?

Who knows?

Engelmann becomes the center of the family's holiday season, among the gifts and the songs and the happiest of times.

But if Christmas doesn't last, why would Christmas trees?

Uh oh.