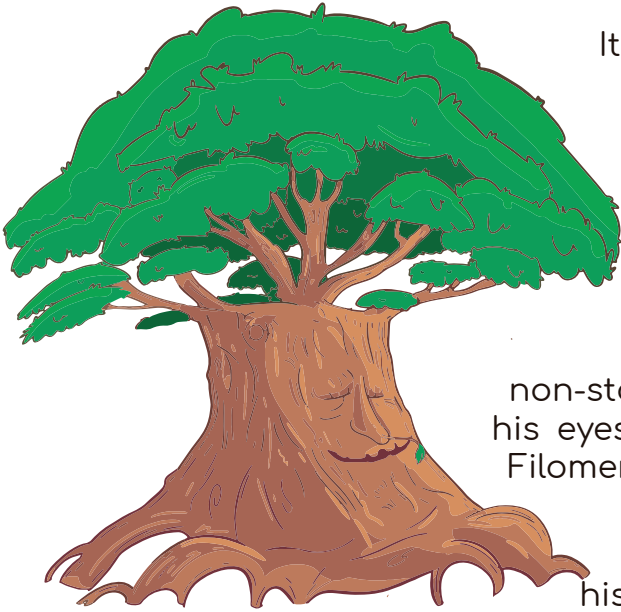


Name:

Grade:

Date:

Eco's Anger



It was early morning and the birds had only just started to sing. Eco, the big old oak, was stretching very slowly, making sure to keep the baby birds that were nesting on his upper branches safe.

Suddenly he heard a squeak, very soft and pitchy. Out of nowhere came Filomena, the crazy little squirrel that could ask questions non-stop all day long. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes, avoiding that cute and jumpy little thing. But Filomena was not to be discouraged.

She leapt to his branches and refusing to notice his closed eyes and complete stillness, began to ask in her pitchy little voice while jumping from one branch to

the other:

- "Why are your higher branches not as robust? It's a bit scary to jump on them. Do you decide where to grow leaves? Or do they just appear where they please. How long does a leaf live? Does it hurt when they fall?"

Eco remained silent and motionless, but inside him, he felt the heat of anger rising almost uncontrollably. He could almost feel his sap coming up his trunk ready to make his branches explode.

- "Oh look! You have some new seeds! How long until they are ripe? Do you think about your babies and where they might be growing? Those seeds could be anywhere! Just imagine!"

This was too much, of course trees could not keep track of all their offspring, how could they? With a deep angry growl Eco said:

- "That is enough! You have no respect! Get off!"
- "Off? From this branch? Of from this other...?" asked the squirrel.



Filomena began jumping from one branch to the other and asking what bothered him, not waiting for an answer before jumping to the next branch.

Eco had had enough. He began moving his branches trying to get her off, but the little squirrel was fast and tenacious. It took him a good shake to finally send her flying off to the ground. Confused and hurt, the little squirrel finally fell silent.

- “Tweet! Tweet! Tweet!”

The sound was soft at first, but then became louder and full of anguish. The baby birds had fallen from their nest in the angry episode, and were desperately looking for each other on the ground.

Eco’s anger dissolved immediately, and guilt took over him. He tried to grab them with his branches, but the little things were too scared of his movement and simply run off. There was only one way to help them, he would have to ask for Filomena’s help.

- “Filo, I’m sorry, you just make me so mad with your jumping and your questions. We need to get the little birds back up the nest. Please help me.”

They managed to work together and help the tiny scared babies before their mom came back with their breakfast.

- “I didn’t know you hated my questions so much. You never said.”
- “I don’t hate the questions, I just... you... I like to have my quiet mornings. I enjoy stillness and silence this time of day. And you have to let me at least participate a bit in your chit chat. Plus, you just jump all over me.”
- “I’m sorry. Would it be ok then if came in the afternoons? And kept in one branch only? I promise to behave.”

And so Eco and Filomena came to an agreement where they could both be themselves without hurting each other, understanding what triggered their anger and anxiety.

 **Think and reflect with the following questions:**

1. Have you ever been in the place of Eco or Filomena?



2. Have you felt angry to your bone and hurt something or someone?

3. What has triggered your anger?

4. Did you manage to come to an agreement?

