

THE FIR TREE - Expanded
By Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The forest

Characters: Sound effects are made by the character

Narrator 1

Narrator 2 and Ethel Calf

Baby Fir

Papa Fir

Caw-field Crow

Candy Canary

Triplet Sheep: Softy and Curly and Moe

Dudley Donkey

Creamy Cow

Narrator 1: (sparkly sounds) Once upon a time, on a sparkly night, at the root of a tall, Papa fir tree, a baby fir tree poked his head out of the frozen earth.

Baby: (pushing grunts and groans – speak with a baby lisp) My, oh my! That took a long time for me to push that heavy dirt out of my way. Whew! Now, I'll just look around and see what there is to see.

Canary: (Song of the canary and wings flapping) Oh, what a bright night!

Crow: (caw – caw) Hah! What are you talking about? It's freezing out here and all you can do is sing and flap around. (caw-caw) Get some sense, Canary! Hop on a tree branch out of the cold.

Canary: I'm happy to see a new little tree sprouting up. It's really something to sing about! (chirping)

Crow: Well, do what you want. (caw–caw) I'm ducking in this old fir tree for the night. (caw–caw)

Papa Fir: (majestic voice) Look up, little Baby. What do you see?

Baby: I don't know what it is, Papa. It seems to be floating in the inky-blue sky. What is it?

Papa: Lift up your branches and see what happens.

Narrator 2: And so little Baby lifted up his branches.

Baby: (stretching and struggling) Ow! Papa, some of my branches are stuck together.

Papa: Keep stretching, up and up. Good, Baby!

Narrator 1: As Baby stretched, his branches snapped apart. (snapping sounds)

Canary: (singing and flapping wing sounds) Hold still, baby fir, so I can get a perch.

Baby: Oh! How beautiful it is and what sweet sounds it makes. What is it called, Papa?

Papa: Why don't you ask it.

Baby: Okay! Hello! Hello! What are you?

Canary: (chirping) Why, I'm a bird.

Crow: (caw-caw) Of course it's a bird! What else could it be? (caw-caw)

Baby: And what is your name?

Crow: (sticking his head out of the large fir tree) Yoo-hoo! *I'm* a bird too! And my name is Caw-field because I'm always cawing over the fields. Get it?
(laughingly caw)

Canary: They call me Candy Canary because my song is so sweet. (tweet-tweet)
You're a little fir tree. What is your name?

Baby: I'm called Baby because I just popped out of the ground.

Crow: (caw – caw) That's pretty funny popping out of the ground. I prefer to crack out of an egg! (laughingly caw)

Narrator 2: No sooner had Baby spoken, when Candy Canary jumped up and down on Baby's branch, while Caw-field cawed loudly from deep in the large fir tree.

Papa: Now, look down the road. What do you see?

Baby: I see something with four legs and a curly white coat. Now I see *two of them!*
Oh! Now I see three! They make a different kind of sound.

3 Sheep: (speak in unison: baaa, baaa) Hello, baby tree.

Baby: Papa, Papa, they know me! What are you and what are your names?

3 Sheep: (baaa) We're called sheep and we're triplets!

Softy: I'm called Softy Sheep because my coat is so soft. (baa)

Curly: I'm called Curly Sheep because my coat is so curly. (baa)

Moe: And I'm called Moe – uh... because when they cut our coat they just mow-it-off! (baa)

Crow: Duh! Who would have thought of *those* names? This makes me crazy!
(caw-caw)

Baby: Come, little sheep and stand under my branches to get out of the cold night air.

3 Sheep: (baaa) That's so nice of you. (baa – baa, loudly)

Baby: Papa, why are the sheep baaing so loudly?

Crow: (caw – caw) Oh, no! Hey! Canary, look who's coming. (laughingly caw)

Canary: (hopping up and down Baby's branch singing sweetly) It's Dudley.
Now be nice, Caw-field.

Baby: Oh, Papa, what's that *noise*?

Narrator 1: Down the road came a donkey.

Donkey: (hee-haw loudly, many times)

Baby: Are you a different kind of sheep?

Donkey: (hee-haw) I certainly am NOT! I am a donkey. (hee-haw)

Baby: What is your name?

Donkey: (hee-haw) My name is Dudley Donkey but I haven't time to talk right now. I have a very itchy mosquito bite on my shoulder. (hee-haw) How I wish I could do something to make it stop itching. (hee-haw)

Baby: Come to my trunk, Dudley, and rub your shoulder up and down. Maybe that will make it feel better.

Donkey: (rubbing up and down) Ahhhhh, hee-haw! Ahhhhh, hee-haw! That's so much better. Ahhhhh.

Narrator 2: Just when everything began to grow quiet, a low sound came from the stream that ran through the forest.

Cow: (Mooooo, Mooooo) Oh, (moo) oh (moo). I'm about to cry. (Mooooo)

Baby: What is the matter, big brown and white animal?

Cow: I'm looking for my little calf, Ethel. (moo, boo-hoo-hoo) I've searched and searched and now *I'm* lost. (boo-hoo-hoo mooooo)

Baby: Come lie down with the sheep for a while. I think these kind friends can help you find Ethel.

Cow: Thank you. Yes, (moo-hoo-hoo) I think it would be best for me to rest awhile.

Narrator 1: Suddenly, Caw-field and Candy swooped down close to the cow.

Canary: Creamy! Creamy, our dear friendly cow! No wonder I didn't see you in the pasture today.

Softy: That's right! (baaa)

Curly: We missed you at feeding time. (baaa)

Moe: I wonder where Ethel could be? (baaa)

Donkey: (hee-haw) Ethel is bound to show up one of these days.

Cow: Oh! No! She can't be *lost for days*, Dudley. (moo, boo hoo-hoo)

Crow: No problem, Creamy! I'll fly up high and circle around until I spot her.

Narrator 2: And so Caw-field flew into the starry sky in search of Ethel. The donkey and the sheep gathered close to the cow under the fir tree to keep warm while waiting. Time passed and the stars began to dim. The sun was beginning to creep up into the sky. Suddenly, a loud caw echoed in the forest.

Crow: (caw – caw) I found Ethel! (caw!)

Canary: (chirping) Good work, Caw-field! I *knew* you could do it!

Calf: (moo) Moomie, moomie! Where are you?

Cow: (moo) Right here under the fir tree. Come quickly and get warm.

Narrator 1: And so little Ethel warmed herself next to her mother under the little fir tree. The sun began to rise in the blue sky signaling it was time to leave the forest.

Baby: Papa! Papa! Why are all of my friends leaving?

Papa: They have things to do.

Baby: What are they going to do?

Papa: They are going to bring (sing) JOY TO THE WORLD just as you do.

Baby: How do they do that, Papa?

Papa: (Each character fills in the blank)

The Canary brings joyful songs and-----.

The Crow brings hunting skills and -----.

The three sheep share their wool coat and -----.

And the donkey... well, the donkey... well, when he's very, very good, he -----.

Baby: What can I do?

Papa: You can grow into a beautiful tree. Then, everyone who sees you will receive the feeling of safety and comfort. That's what you brought to the birds of the air and the animals on the earth; you brought safety and comfort. Now I have a surprise for you.

Baby: A surprise? What is it Papa?

Papa: It's time for you to have a real name. You are no longer a baby. I shall call you -----.

Baby: I like that name, Papa. Thank you, Papa.

Narrator 2: As the days passed, ----- grew into a mighty fir tree. And every day, he gave comfort and safety to all who passed by.