

# TREES GIVE US MANY THINGS

A tale from Estonia

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

**Setting:** A forest with many different kinds of trees

**Characters:**

Narrator

Andrus

Billy Birch tree

Cathy Cherry tree

Pinja, a magic man

**Narrator:** Once upon a time, in a forest of different kinds of trees, Andrus was gathering fallen branches to bring home for fire wood. It was a lot of trouble bending over and picking up branch after branch after branch. Then he had to tie them up and sometimes his hands would get pricked by thorns or sharp edges. So he decided to do something about it.

**Andrus:** I'm going home to get my axe! Then, I'll have as much wood as I need with a few mighty swings.

**Narrator:** And so the next morning, Andrus returned with his sharpened axe. He stood in front of a Birch tree, lifted the axe high and began to chop.

**Billy:** (loudly) OUCH! STOP! STOP! Please don't cut me down.

**Andrus:** Who speaks? Is this tree talking to me? Is it saying I should not chop it down? WELL, WHY NOT?

**Billy:** Because I am a Birch tree and I give you many things.

**Andrus:** You give me things? Like what?

**Billy:** Well, you can use my bark to make baskets. And my twigs are used to make brooms. If you cut me down, you will no longer have these things.

**Andrus:** I never thought about that before. Well, you're right, so I won't cut you down because you are a useful tree.

**Billy:** Thank you, Andrus. Please remember... when you care for us in the forest, we care for you.

**Narrator:** But Andrus still needed firewood, so he roamed the forest with his sharpened axe looking for a different tree.

**Andrus:** This tree looks like it would make a nice bundle of fire wood.

**Narrator:** The blade of the axe sparkled as Andrus lifted it high into the sunlight. Down it came with a mighty whack!

**Cathy:** (loudly) Oooooh! You are hurting me. Please stop! Please don't cut me down.

**Andrus:** Is this *another* talking tree? Well, why don't you want me to cut you down?

**Cindy:** You like cherry pies, don't you?

**Andrus:** Yes! They are my *favorite* pie.

**Cindy:** I AM A CHERRY TREE, and you won't have another cherry pie if you cut me down.

**Andrus:** Yum - yummm... Cherry pie! Oh, how I'll miss cherry pie! You're right! I won't cut you down.

**Narrator:** And so it went. Day after day, Andrus looked for a tree he could cut down, but every tree told what they gave to him to make his life a happy one. Maple gave syrup; Pine gave cones; Cedar gave shelter; and Walnut gave nuts. Yes, each tree gave something.

**Andrus:** I'm tired of searching for a tree to cut down. I guess I'll just have to start picking up branches again.

**Narrator:** Suddenly, a little man named Pinja, popped out from behind a large Pine tree. In his hand he waved a wooden wand.

**Pinja:** Andrus, I've been watching you and I'm very pleased with the way you have been caring for the trees in our forest. I want to thank you by giving you this magic wand. Whenever you need something from nature, just wave this wand and ask. Go ahead. Give it a try.

**Narrator:** And so Andrus, closed his eyes, waved the wand and asked for some honey. Suddenly he heard the buzzing of bees as they flew close to him with a honeycomb dripping with honey.

**Andrus:** Oh! This is indeed a wonderful, magical gift. Thank you very much, Pinja.

**Pinja:** Andrus, I have only one warning. Never use the wand to ask for something that goes against nature.

**Narrator:** Andrus shook his head in a firm "yes" and strolled home excited to wave the wand and ask and ask. A year went by and Andrus became rich and lazy. He was filled with pride and became very bossy. One morning, the winds howled and snow swirled.

**Andrus:** It's much too cold! I HATE THIS COLD WEATHER!

**Narrator:** Andrus stamped his feet, and jumped up and down in anger. He waved his wand and shouted his command to the sky.

**Andrus:** I WANT IT TO BE HOT, HOT, HOT!

**Narrator:** Immediately the clouds parted and the sun shone brightly. The sun's rays began to burn fiercely. Andrus grew hotter and hotter and hotter until... ZAP! He and the magic wand disappeared!

Now the trees speak in whispers. So when you walk thorough a forest, listen carefully. There are faint rustling sounds in the treetops . . . "When you care for us... we will care for you."