



Ben was tall. God had created him to be a leader. Ben was so tall that over the course of his life others had always looked up to him and depended on him to guide them.

Ben had just celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

He lived on a lot just outside of a very lovely town. He watched over the children that lived in the house and enjoyed watching them play when they came outside.

The boy, Lucas, walked carefully around the yard and always saw things that others missed. Rachel was younger and had just started walking.

It was evening and Ben had felt uneasy all day. There had been a constant wind for most of the day and it was getting stronger. Ben knew from all of his years that the wind did not listen to anyone else, it blew wherever it wanted.

The family inside the house had long been asleep when Ben woke from a restless sleep. He strained his ears as he thought he could hear voices over the howl of the wind. "Save the children, save the people!" Ben snapped to attention and started calling to the others in the yard. "Wake up! Wake up! Something is happening we need to be ready!" The others trusted Ben and stood at attention waiting to see what the emergency was.

The wind was now so strong that Ben and the others swayed and had a hard time standing up straight. Ben watched as pieces of plastic and glass were whipped around the branches of the trees.

He saw Rachel's mommy leaning over her and heard her calling for Rachel's daddy. The voices in the distance were growing stronger "Save the children, save the people" The voices of other trees were being carried on the wind. They repeated this over and over. "Save the children, save the people"

And then Ben understood.

The wind could not be stopped but him and the others could protect the people that were in the path of the wind. Ben and the other trees fought the wind. They swatted at it with their great big branches. They pushed it around the houses so that those inside remained safe. In the end many of the tallest trees were toppled over.

The following morning the people of the town were devastated by the damage that the strong wind had brought to their town. They mourned the loss of so many strong beautiful Oak trees. Some of the people had damaged houses or dented cars from the trees that had fallen. Everyone agreed that it was a miracle that no one had been hurt.

Outside Rachel's window you could see where the wind had charged toward the house. Pieces of the wall were missing and the eaves through was bowed in. Ben lay on the ground where he had fallen after being sure that the family was safe. All day as people helped the family clean up the yard they brushed their fingers along his trunk and whispered words of thanks to him. One lady, as she was standing over him, cried and her tears splashed on Ben's face.

Ben knew that his life on this lot was over but he wasn't sad. He had enjoyed the gift of life that God had granted him. Ben looked at the smaller trees that were still standing and encouraged them with one last command.

"Always remember that we are all part of God's great creation. We have many different things to do in our lifetime but our highest honour is to protect the children.