

TOMAX DANCES, RUNS AND JUMPS IN THE WIND

Trees would dance and run and jump if their roots did not bind them in the earth. They would dance through jungle, run through forests and jump from woods to fields.

That is why they sway and rock, twist and turn. Some say it is the wind blowing them, some say it is the squirrels scampering across their branches, but ash trees know they want to dance or run or jump.

Tomax lives in the park. He is an ash tree and he likes to dream. He dreams of what he might do if his roots did not cling to the earth and he really could dance and run and jump.

Tomax likes to listen to the people as they pass by. They talk about places far away where there are rainforests, vast oceans and ice caps. They talk of elephants, tigers and dragons. He has heard whispers of pirates, astronauts and aliens. At night he can see the moon and stars and he dreams of being a comet flying across the galaxies.

He hears all about what people are doing and thinks of it as life behind a magic door. He imagines a life where he is not tied down to the earth and he can dance and run and jump, following the stories wherever they wish to go.

At night he dreams while squirrels scamper up his trunk and foxes and badgers pass by in their search for food. In his dreams Tomax lives in the time of magic, when dragons curled around his roots and unicorns laid their heads in the laps of maidens sitting in his shade. While caterpillars munch on his leaves and ants make nests in the hollows of his branches, he dreams of pirates burying their treasure. While butterflies flutter by and a fluffy cat sleeps in his shade, he makes friends with elephants and tigers and parrots. He stands on the surface of the moon side by side with the astronauts and they imagine the aliens who might one day come and stand next to them.

In his dreams Tomax imagines himself a bird flying through the sky – flying over the land and over the sea, looking for treasure which he gathers in a bag like Wigginton the Squirrel's made of many patchwork colours. He collects golden seeds given to him by a red dragon, ice from the South Pole that has been frozen for thousands of years, chocolate and gold given to him by trees in the rainforest.

He watches as the children pass on their way to school and he imagines running and skipping and jumping with them in the park. He imagines picnicking on bread and honey with the little girl sitting in his shade playing with her teddy bear.

If ever you are walking with your dog at dusk, especially when the wind is blowing and the branches of the trees are dancing in its gusts, your dog may stand rigid and begin to bark. Look through half-closed eyes and see if you can see the shapes of trees in the air, like dancers in the wind. You will be seeing the dreams of Tomax as he dances and dreams his stories.

Based upon the ideas of the children of Coton Green Primary School.

Written by Mal Dewhirst and Christine Genders.

