



Little Tree

By Loren Long

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For graduates, for their parents, for anyone facing change, here is a stunningly heartfelt ode to the challenges of growing up and letting go. A story as poignant for parents as for their kids, from the creator of Otis the tractor and illustrator of *The Little Engine that Could*.

"Long's gentle but powerful story about a young tree who holds tight to his leaves, even as everyone else lets theirs drop, takes on nothing less than the pain and sorrow of growing up. . . . As in Long's unaccountably profound books about Otis the tractor, a pure white background somehow adds to the depth."—*The New York Times Book Review*

In the middle of a little forest, there lives a Little Tree who loves his life and the splendid leaves that keep him cool in the heat of long summer days. Life is perfect just the way it is.

Autumn arrives, and with it the cool winds that ruffle Little Tree's leaves. One by one the other trees drop their leaves, facing the cold of winter head on. But not Little Tree—he hugs his leaves as tightly as he can. Year after year Little Tree remains unchanged, despite words of encouragement from a squirrel, a fawn, and a fox, his leaves having long since turned brown and withered. As Little Tree sits in the shadow of the other trees, now grown sturdy and tall as though to touch the sun, he remembers when they were all the same size. And he knows he has an important decision to make.

From #1 *New York Times* bestselling Loren Long comes a gorgeously-illustrated story that challenges each of us to have the courage to let go and to reach for the sun.

Praise for *Little Tree*

* "The illustrations are beautifully rendered . . . Understated and inviting, young readers will be entranced by Little Tree's difficult but ultimately rewarding journey."—*Booklist*, starred review

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leaves, even as everyone else lets theirs drop, takes on nothing less than the pain and sorrow of growing up. Season after season, Little Tree clings to his brown-leaved self until he can take a leap and shed his protection. He feels 'the harsh cold of winter,' but soon grows tall and green, and it's not bad at all. As in Long's unaccountably profound books about Otis the tractor, a pure white background somehow adds to the depth."—*The New York Times Book Review*

* "[Long's] willingness to take his time and even test the audience's patience with his arboreal hero's intransigence results in an ending that's both a big relief and an authentic triumph. Long's earnest-eloquent narrative voice and distilled, single-plane drawings, both reminiscent of an allegorical pageant, acknowledge the reality of the struggle while offering the promise of brighter days ahead."—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

"Long is sparing with the text, keeping it simple and beautifully descriptive. Brilliantly colored illustrations done in acrylic, ink, and pencil stand out on bright white pages, with Little Tree taking the center position in each double-page spread. Tender and gentle and altogether lovely."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Children will see the tree facing the scariness of change; adult readers may well feel wistful as the story underscores the need to let their babies grow toward independence. **Beautiful. Grade: A**"—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreS-Gr 1—The dramatic changes characteristic of deciduous trees have provided material for authors with personalities as diverse as Janice Udry, Carin Berger, and Shel Silverstein. Long chooses the anthropomorphic route for his simple fable. Little Tree, a young oak, is surrounded by other varieties in the forest. It is a happy life; squirrels frolic and the dove sings "her flutey song" in his branches. When autumn arrives, the sapling does not want to drop his leaves, despite the advice of woodland creatures. He holds onto his brown appendages for many years. It is not until he can no longer feel the sun or hear the birds, that he decides to let go. Long's acrylic, ink, and pencil scenes are presented in pleasing, uncluttered compositions against an abundance of white space; they mirror the straightforward text precisely. Young children will be able to follow the passage of time through the changing colors and sizes of the trees, until the verdant canopy bleeds off the pages during the conclusion. Even though the protagonist was much smaller than his peers during his existential crisis, he ultimately reaches their height. Late bloomers may be relieved at the story's implied message, while others will feel unsatisfied that this departure simply ends at the same destination. **VERDICT** This gentle story works as a seasonal primer for the very young, but those with more experience may express incredulity at the length of time the tree hangs on and—after all that—the low-key situation motivating his change of heart.—Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Library

Review

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About the Author

Loren Long has *putt puff putt* chuffed his way all over the bestseller lists with such titles as *Otis*, *Otis and the Tornado*, *Otis and the Puppy*, *An Otis Christmas*, *Drummer Boy*, *Toy Boat* by Randall de Sève,

and *Mr. Peabody's Apples* by Madonna. He's also had the opportunity to modernize the classic *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper and had the distinct honor of illustrating *Of Thee I Sing* by President Barack Obama. A graduate of the American Academy of Art in Chicago, Loren lives in Ohio with his wife, Tracy, and their two sons. You can visit Loren Long at www.OtisTheTractor.com and www.LorenLong.com. Follow @lorenlong

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mark Dunn:

The book Little Tree can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly why must we leave a good thing like a book Little Tree? Several of you have a different opinion about book. But one aim this book can give many details for us. It is absolutely proper. Right now, try to closer with the book. Knowledge or information that you take for that, you are able to give for each other; you can share all of these. Book Little Tree has simple shape nevertheless, you know: it has great and big function for you. You can look the enormous world by wide open and read a publication. So it is very wonderful.

Donna Bradford:

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