

## “Molly and Her Tree Life Adventures”

### **Characters**

MOLLY, school girl

MRS MAGNOLIA, teacher

TREE, apple tree in school yard

SAM THE SQUIRREL

BEE

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

PRINCIPAL

SCHOOL CHILDREN

OLLIE the OAK TREE

### **Setting**

Elementary school in springtime. There is a tree outside the school.

### **INTRODUCTION**

SCIENTIST: Happy spring everyone! Biologist here! I love to explore and discover the secrets and mysteries of the world around me. Some of my favorite things to study are plants because they each have a secret. You many not be able to tell by looking, but as we speak, this little guy is doing a really big job. Plants can harness the power of the sun and use that power to grow big and tall and clean the air that we breath.

I decided to take a break from my research to stop by and introduce you to my good friend Mr. Tree, who will tell you about some of the amazing things he can do. Now I know he’s around here somewhere. Oh, where did he go. He’s a tree, he can’t get too far...

**SCENE 1: THE SCHOOLYARD/TREE INTRODUCTION**

TREE: Hello everyone! My name is Tree and I have an exciting story to share with you! I know what you're thinking. You've never seen a talking tree before and you may think it's strange... but somebody has to tell my story and it might as well be me! The story begins with a little girl named Molly.

*(MOLLY skips in.)*

TREE: Here she comes now, eating a bag of Goldfish. Ah, its finally springtime... my favorite time of the year! You see, I began a long, long time ago—

*(MOLLY throws her bag of Goldfish on the grass)*

TREE: Hey, are you going to pick up that bag of Goldfish you just threw on the ground?

MOLLY: Who said that?

TREE: I did. And you've just littered. Aren't you going to pick up your trash? *(MOLLY shakes her head)* All the nice things I do for you, and this is what I get in return?

MOLLY: What do YOU do for me?

TREE: Well, fresh air... shelter and shade...and beauty. But we'll talk about all of that later.

*(SQUIRREL enters)*

SQUIRREL: Now where on earth did I leave that acorn?

MOLLY: Ew! Go away!

*(SQUIRREL picks up the Goldfish bag and scampers off)*

TREE: You should be kinder to that squirrel.

MOLLY: My dad says squirrels are just tree rats.

TREE: Well he is much more than that.

*(BEE buzzes by)*

MOLLY: Ah! A bee! *(MOLLY hides behind tree)*

TREE: Oh, Miss Bee won't hurt you. She has more important things to do.

*(BEE drops her pollen and then while trying to pick it up, scares off MOLLY)*

MOLLY: It's going to sting me!

*(MOLLY Exits)*

BEE: What's with her?

TREE: She just has a lot to learn.

*(School bell rings)*

## **SCENE 2: CLASSROOM:-SEED DISPERSAL**

PRINCIPAL: *( Enter down stage right)* Good morning students! I have some very exciting news to share! Later this week, we are beginning construction for our brand-new

parking lot out front! The the playground and schoolyard will be blocked off for construction which means... INDOOR RECESS!

*(STUDENTS groan )*

PRINCIPAL: Don't forget to tell your parents that pick-up and drop-off will be temporarily moved to the dumpster area behind the school while we remove the apple tree. Have a great day and happy Spring!

*(CHILDREN respond)*

Child #1: Oh no!

Child #2: They can't do that!

Child #3: Not our apple tree!

MRS. MAGNOLIA: Settle down, settle down. Good morning class, today we will be learning about different plants and how they spread all around the world... otherwise known as SEED DISPERSAL (*scientists hold up sign*). Seeds can spread by the wind, through the water, or by animals.... *(MRS. MAGNOLIA's voice fades into the background)*

MOLLY: *(Molly talks to herself)* I wonder how Tree got into the school yard. Tree is too heavy to be picked up by the wind. I don't think he came here in the water, because we live far away from any oceans, rivers, or lakes. And what kind of animal is strong enough to move Tree? An elephant or a Rhino maybe.

MRS. MAGNOLIA: *(voice fades in)* ...and that's why so many different kinds of plants grow right here around our school! For your homework today, I want you to go outside and make a tree bark rubbing. Be sure to have fun with it and try to find the most unique tree you can!

(School Bell rings)

*(MOLLY leaves the classroom)*

### **SCENE 3: SCHOOL YARD: SEED DISPERSAL**

MOLLY: *(enters eating an apple, places her apple in her lunchbox)* Oh, hello Tree! Could you please hold out your branch? I need to do a tree bark rubbing for homework.

TREE: *(Tree holds out branch)* How's this?

MOLLY: That's good. *(Molly begins her tree bark rubbing)* Mrs. Magnolia was just teaching us about SEED DISPERSAL... basically how plants spread around. Where did you come from?

TREE: I am from far, far away. Farther than you can run!

MOLLY: But you're a tree! How did you move so far?

TREE: I didn't move at all! My tree parents gave my seed to the world before I was born, and it took me all the way over to this very spot.

MOLLY: But aren't you sad that you're so far from your tree parents?

TREE: It is better for me and for them that I am far away. This way, we do not have to compete for food, water, or light. In fact, a lot of seedlings leave their parents.

MOLLY: I don't understand, how can seedlings get so far away from their parents?  
*(takes out apple from lunchbox, takes a bite)*

TREE: There are some plants that only grow close to water, and their seeds use the flow of the river to travel to far away lands. Other seeds travel by hitching a ride on people

like you! They might attach to your clothes, or to the fur of animals! Think about how that seed you're holding is going to spread!

MOLLY: I have a seed? Where?

TREE: Yes! You didn't even notice it, did you? It's hiding inside that apple in your hand. When you're finished eating it, if you throw the core into the woods, there's a chance that an apple tree will grow in that very spot!

MOLLY: You mean I can help grow trees just by throwing my apple core on the ground?

TREE: Yes!

MOLLY: But how can a tree grow if I don't plant the seed?

TREE: Nobody planted my seed.

MOLLY: Nobody planted your seed? Then how did you start growing?

TREE: Well I've just told you that apples have seeds! A long time ago, a boy dropped an apple right in this very spot. Once the apple sunk into the earth, the seeds pressed into the ground and grew... and grew... and grew... (*TREE grows*) until it eventually became the big apple tree that sits here today: Me!

MOLLY: Do all trees grow like that?

(*SQUIRREL enters and crosses down stage*)

TREE: No, not all trees...

SQUIRREL: Hi, Tree! Hi, Molly! Hi, everybody! I'm Sam the Squirrel and I need your help!

TREE: Again?

SQUIRREL: Again! Again! I'm afraid it's happened again!

MOLLY: What? What's wrong Mr. Squirrel?

*SQUIRREL (scurries around looking for his acorns with some adlibbing)* Oh, dear here...no there, no maybe over here.

TREE: Oh, he does this all the time! He gathers acorns for food and stores them underground and then forgets where he buried them. Why, that's how one of my good friends came into this world! Sam the Squirrel over there forgot about one of the acorns he hid, and then it grew up to be my friend...Ollie Oak tree!

OLLIE: Hey Tree!

TREE: Hey Ollie!

MOLLY: Gosh that's amazing! So Sam the Squirrel helped plant a tree too?

TREE: Yep! Germination, you know.

*(School Bell rings and STUDENTS exit the classroom and go into the schoolyard)*

#### **SCENE 4: SCHOOLYARD**

*(CONSTRUCTION WORKER enters, talking on the phone)*

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: *(on the phone)*-This area looks like it will work perfectly for a new parking lot! Sounds good. We'll look at the land and get started in the morning! *(hangs up the phone)* Back up kids! This tree is getting cut down and we need to mark this area off as a "construction zone"...

Child #1: No!

Child #2: Stop!

Child #3: You can't cut down our tree!!!

Child #1: We love playing on this tree every day at recess!

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: Well say goodbye to the tree today, kids. Come tomorrow, this tree will be torn down to make a new parking lot.

Child #2: No!!

Child #3: You can't do that.

*(SQUIRREL and BEE are panicked. SQUIRREL throws an acorn at the CONSTRUCTION WORKERS)*

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: Ow!!! Why does it feel as though the tree keeps dropping things on my head?! *(to BEE)* Shoo! Shoo!

*(SQUIRREL snickers. SQUIRREL and BEE "high 5")*

MOLLY: Please don't cut down our tree...

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: *(finishes marking the space as "construction zone")*

What's done is done. We will be back tomorrow. *(exit)*

### **SCENE 5: NEXT DAY: PHOTOSYNTHESIS**

*(SCIENTIST holds up sign that reads "THE NEXT DAY")*

*(The School Bell Rings)*

MRS. MAGNOLIA: It looks like something's bothering you Molly.



MOLLY: (*eating a fruit cup*) Well... I tried to give Tree my extra fruit cup today at lunchtime and he didn't want it. It kind of hurt my feelings. Don't trees need to eat food, too?

MRS. MAGNOLIA: Not the same way we do. Come on out into the schoolyard and I'll tell you about it.

(*MRS MAGNOLIA and MOLLY walk over to TREE. MOLLY holds out fruit cup to TREE and then sighs loudly*)

TREE: (*breathes in*) Thank you!

MOLLY: But you didn't take my fruit cup.

TREE: No need for that! You gave me all the food I need when you sighed just then! When you sigh, you give me CARBON DIOXIDE! (*scientists hold up sign*)

MOLLY: Carbon di WHAT?

TREE: Carbon Dioxide!

MOLLY: (*to MRS. MAGNOLIA*) Mrs. Magnolia, what's carbon dioxide?

MRS. MAGNOLIA: Carbon dioxide is a tiny molecule in the air. You give off a little bit of it every time you breathe out. Carbon dioxide is also in the smog that cars release as they drive past. (Car drives by, person coughing inside, MOLLY coughs). Cars give off a LOT more than you do, and that can be bad for the planet. But trees are able to take up all that carbon dioxide and use it to grow and make beautiful new leaves, branches and flowers. These carbon dioxide molecules are too tiny to see, but let's imagine them.

(molecule music/sound cue - *Boys of Bluehill* (Irish hornpipe))

(*SCIENTISTS hold up carbon dioxide molecules, take them to TREE, and TREE holds them up and takes them*)

SQUIRREL: We can *all help* the tree by breathing out lots of carbon dioxide! Ready everybody? Breathe in (*ALL breathe in*).... breathe out (*ALL breathe out*)....

TREE: And in return, I give something back to you! Trees give off the oxygen YOU need to breathe. Ahhhhhhhh!

ALL: Ahhhh.

(*MRS. MAGNOLIA returns to classroom. CONSTRUCTION WORKER enters carrying a an axe or chainsaw.*)

MOLLY: (Molly to CONSTRUCTION WORKER) Hello. Did you come to help give the tree carbon dioxide?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: No, as promised, I am here to cut down this here apple tree. You kids shouldn't be here. Cutting down trees is very dangerous. Now out of my way!

MOLLY: No!

OLLIE: Someone do something!!!

SQUIRREL: Don't worry, I'll take care of this! (*nibbles through the chord of the chainsaw, chainsaw stops*)

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: What happened? Ah man! That sneaky squirrel chewed through the wire.

ALL: *(cheering with excitement)* Yay!

Child # 3: Now you can't cut down our tree.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: You and your friends may have won this round, but I'll be back! And next time, I won't leave until this tree is cut down!

### **SCENE 6: SCHOOLYARD: SAVE THE BEES**

*(Schoolyard recess. MOLLY is sitting at the base of the tree eating an apple)*

MOLLY: You know Tree, this is my 10<sup>th</sup> apple this week. I've collected all the seeds and I'm going to start planting them! I want to help grow more trees just like you!

*(Sound cue. Bee music. Flight of the Bumblebee by Rimsky-Korsakov)*

*(BEE enters and buzzes around MOLLY. MOLLY begins swatting the BEE away.)*

TREE: Hey stop it, you two. Molly don't swat the bee! I need her!

MOLLY: She's a nasty bug and she's trying to sting me!

BEE: *(stops)* I am not JUST a nasty bug. In fact, Tree and I are good friends and we help each other out.

MOLLY: What do you mean?

BEE: Look I'm too busy to talk long so let me lay it out for you. *(Pulls out a rolled up sheet of paper. Pulls off his stinger to use as a pointer)*

BEE: In the springtime, trees makes FLOWERS *(Point. Flowers pop out of tree structure)* and these flowers make POLLEN *(point)* that bees, like myself, eat and feed to our CHILDREN *(point)*.

TREE: In return *(bee is still pointing to list)* the bee POLLINATES my flowers so that they can grow into APPLES. *(point)*

MOLLY: Bees help you make apples... like the one I'm eating?

TREE: They do indeed. And so we must protect them at all costs. No more swatting.

MOLLY: All right. I'm sorry, Miss Bee.

BEE: That's okay, Molly. Gotta buzz! Pollination, you know.

*(TREE and BEE gesture to each other. BEE buzzes off.)*

### **SCENE 7: CLASSROOM/THE MASTER PLAN**

*(CONSTRUCTION WORKER enters with a bigger chainsaw/tool to cut down the tree)*

MOLLY: *(looking out into the schoolyard)* Mrs. Magnolia, Mrs. Magnolia! The construction man is back to cut down our tree, and we need to go save it!

CHILD #1: I thought the squirrel chewed through his tools?

MOLLY: He's said he'd be back and now he's here and I.... just... please don't let them cut down our tree, Mrs. Magnolia!! It has taught me so much about plants and how we're all connected and I don't want it to be cut down!!

CHILD #2: Please Mrs. Magnolia

CHILD #3: Please help us save the tree!

MRS. MAGNOLIA: I understand, class. We don't want to lose our tree, especially if you are learning so much about the world around you because of it. I need you all to brainstorm ideas you might have for saving the tree. Can you work together as a class to think of a way to save the tree?

CHILD #2: Yeah, we can do that!

CHILD #3: Save the tree!

CHILD #4: But how?

MOLLY: I have an idea!!!

### **SCENE 8: SCHOOLYARD: FINAL SCENE**

*(CONSTRUCTION WORKER picks up her chainsaw and starts to turn it on.*

*Immediately, the CHILDREN, BEE, SAM THE SQUIRREL, MOLLY, AND MRS MAGNOLIA enter holding signs "AIR WE BREATHE", "SAVE THE BEES", "HOME SWEET HOME, TREE SWEET TREE", "GO GREEN"- ALL march in a-circle, chanting the following...)*

SQUIRREL: SAVE MY HOME!

BEE: SAVE MY POLLEN... AND BUZZ OFF!

CHILD #4: WE NEED EACH OTHER!

CHILD #3: TREES = FOOD!

CHILD #1: NO CHAINSAWS!

MRS. MAGNOLIA: RESPECT YOUR ELDERS!

MOLLY: IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT TREES!

*(PRINCIPAL rides a bike onstage)*

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: What's going on here? Get those ridiculous signs out of here.

PRINCIPAL: What's going on here is you're out of a job. Our neighboring middle school has agreed to share their parking lot with us!

CONSTRUCTION WORKER: Ha! That lot isn't big enough for all the cars you have here. What will you do?

PRINCIPAL: Well, I'm so glad you asked. With the money we were able to save from stopping construction, and with the inspiration that these children have given me, I've decided to make my contribution to the environment... by getting... BICYCLES FOR EVERYONE!!!

*(ALL clap and cheer, shouting )*

ALL: Hooray!

*(They all dance in a circle, CONSTRUCTION WORKER saunters off, defeated. PRINCIPAL cuts the construction tape surrounding tree )*

*Music -- Come Dance and Sing (traditional reel)*

*(School Bell rings)*

*(PRINCIPAL, MRS MAGNOLIA, MOLLY, and CHILDREN walk towards classroom, BEE and SQUIRREL go offstage behind TREE.)*

TREE: Pssst, Molly! *(MOLLY turns and walks up to TREE, TREE hands MOLLY a flower from one of his branches)* You did it! You saved me.

MOLLY: Without you, I would have never known that trees are so important to the world. Now I know that we are all connected. I help you breathe, you help me breathe!

*(BEE enters)*

BEE: I pollinate Tree's flowers so they can grow into fruits – like apples, and I get pollen from Tree to take home to my family.

*(Squirrel enters)*

SQUIRREL: Tree gives me food! *(opens up empty hand)* Now where did I put my acorn?

TREE: (*laughs, to audience*) And we can all do our part in helping the environment! Ask your parents and teachers if you can plant a tree at your homes or at your schools, pick up trash on the ground, ride your bikes or walk instead of using cars...

SQUIRREL: (*to audience*) ...And always remember to breathe! Ready? Inhale..... exhale...

ALL and AUDIENCE: Ahhhhhhh.

TREE: And for Molly and her Tree Life Adventures that was...

ALL: THE END! (*ALL bow*)

SCIENTIST: Thanks Mr. Tree, squirrel, bee, and Molly! (*To the audience*) Next time you look at a tree, remember Mr. Tree and be kind to nature. All it takes is a big old breath in and out to say thanks. (*Breathes in and out*). Hey, and thanks for watching our play!

Music - -- *Come Dance and Sing* (traditional reel)

CURTAIN