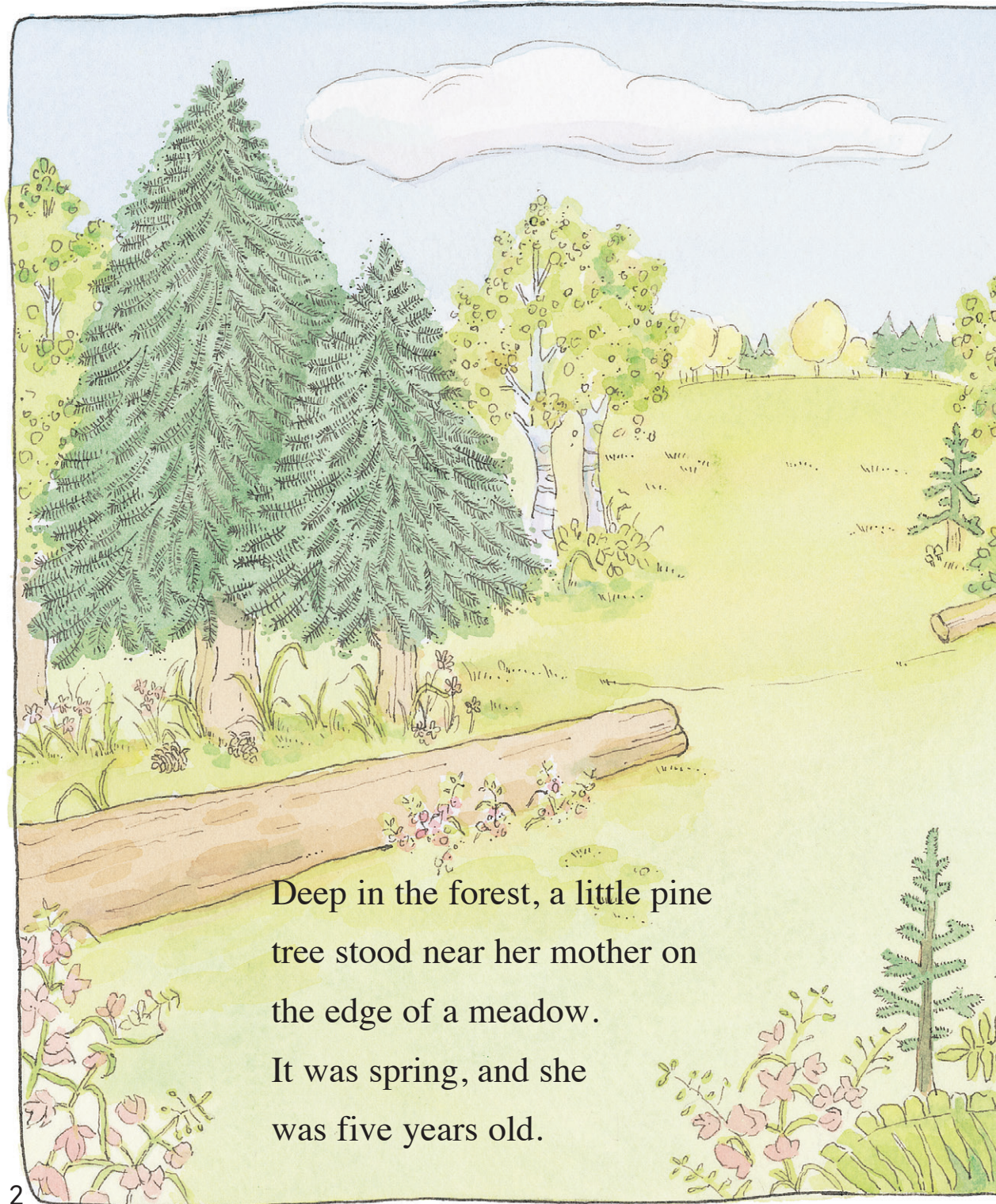


Little Tree

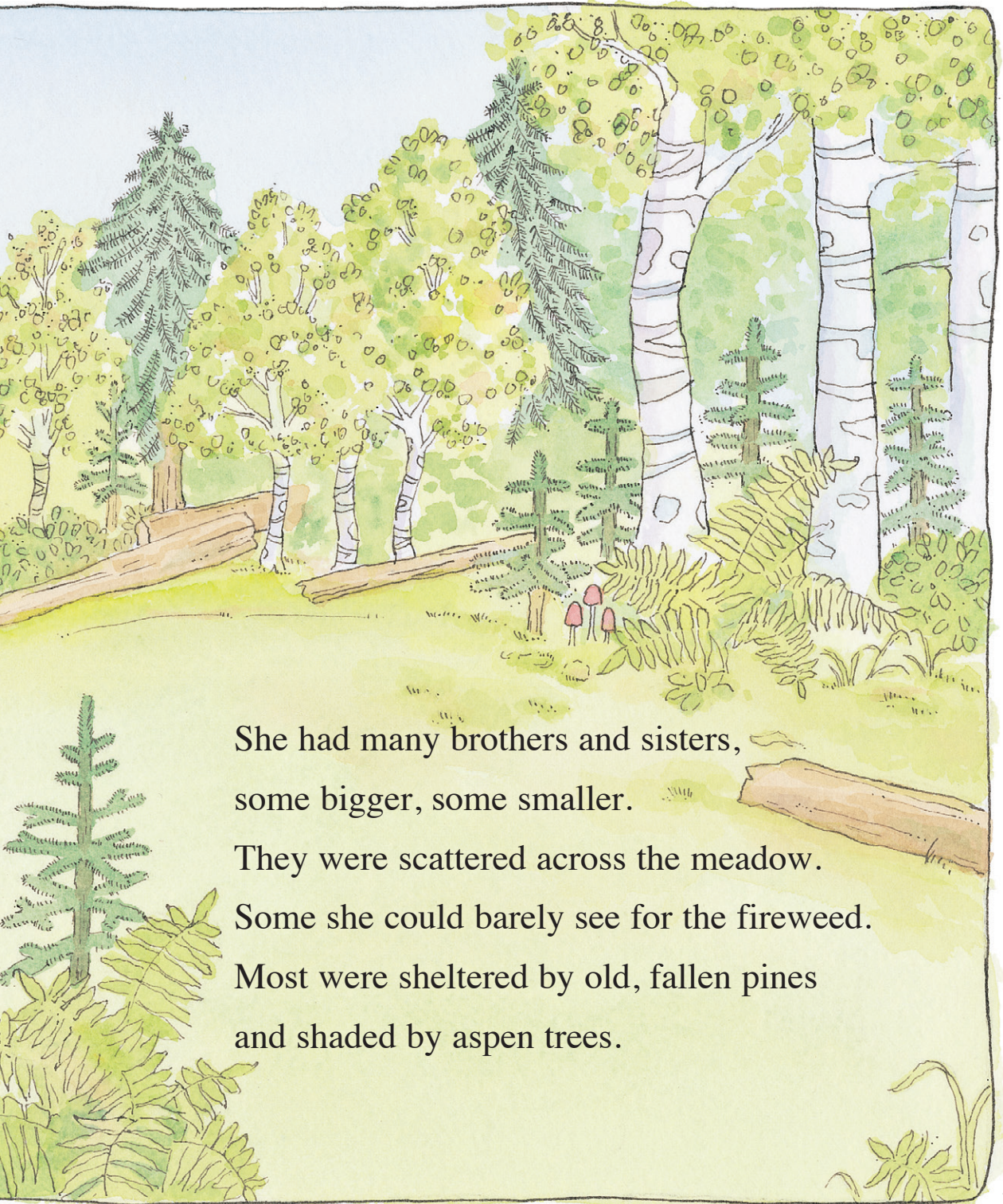


Written by Linda Conaway-Berry

Illustrated by Suzanne Smith



Deep in the forest, a little pine tree stood near her mother on the edge of a meadow. It was spring, and she was five years old.



She had many brothers and sisters,
some bigger, some smaller.

They were scattered across the meadow.

Some she could barely see for the fireweed.

Most were sheltered by old, fallen pines
and shaded by aspen trees.

Little Tree shivered and laughed.

A large beetle was climbing up her trunk.

It tickled!

A warm breeze blew through her needles.

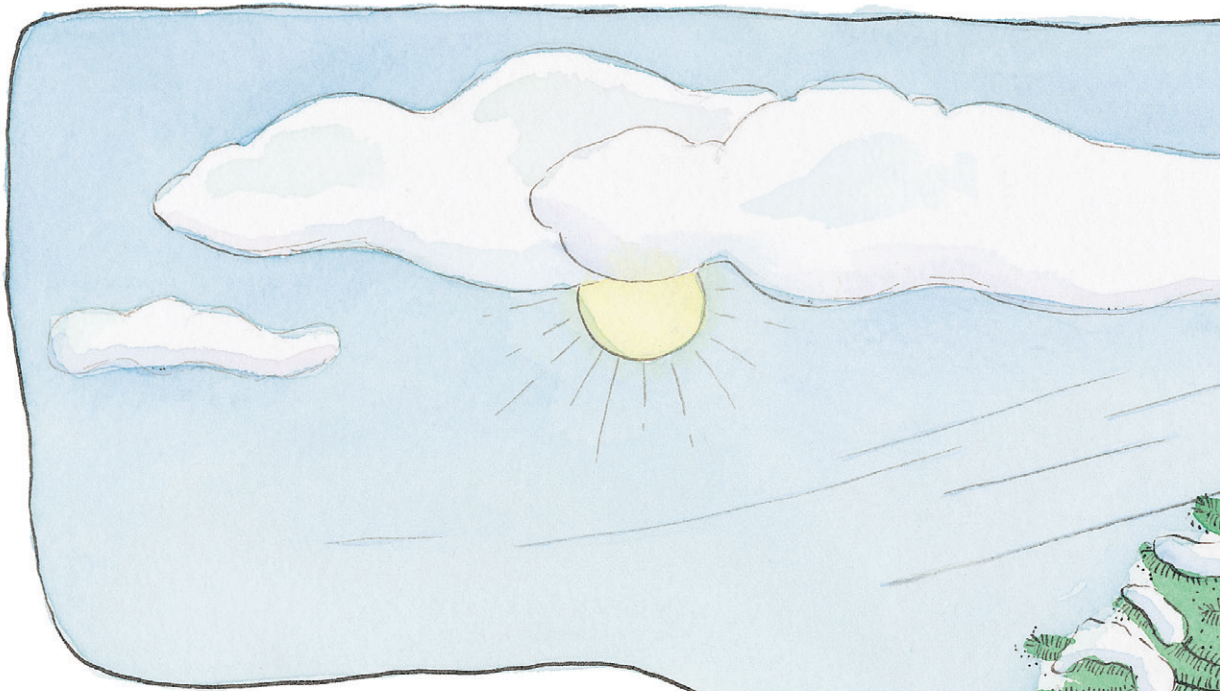
The warm sun shone on her branches.

Little Tree was happy.



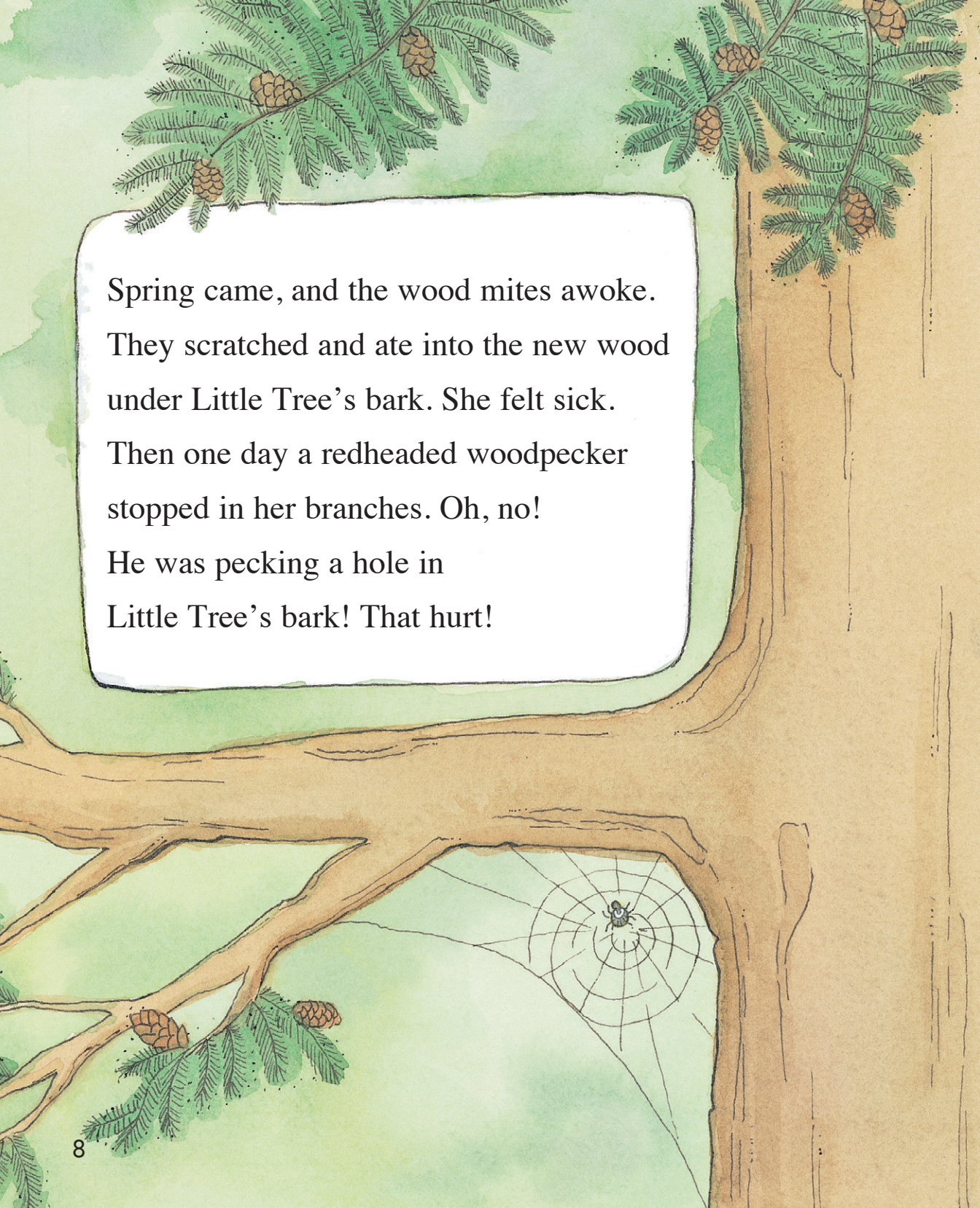


Seasons and years passed.
Little Tree was ten years old.
She had grown much taller, but she itched miserably.
Wood mites had burrowed under her bark.
Even the cool autumn winds could not soothe her.

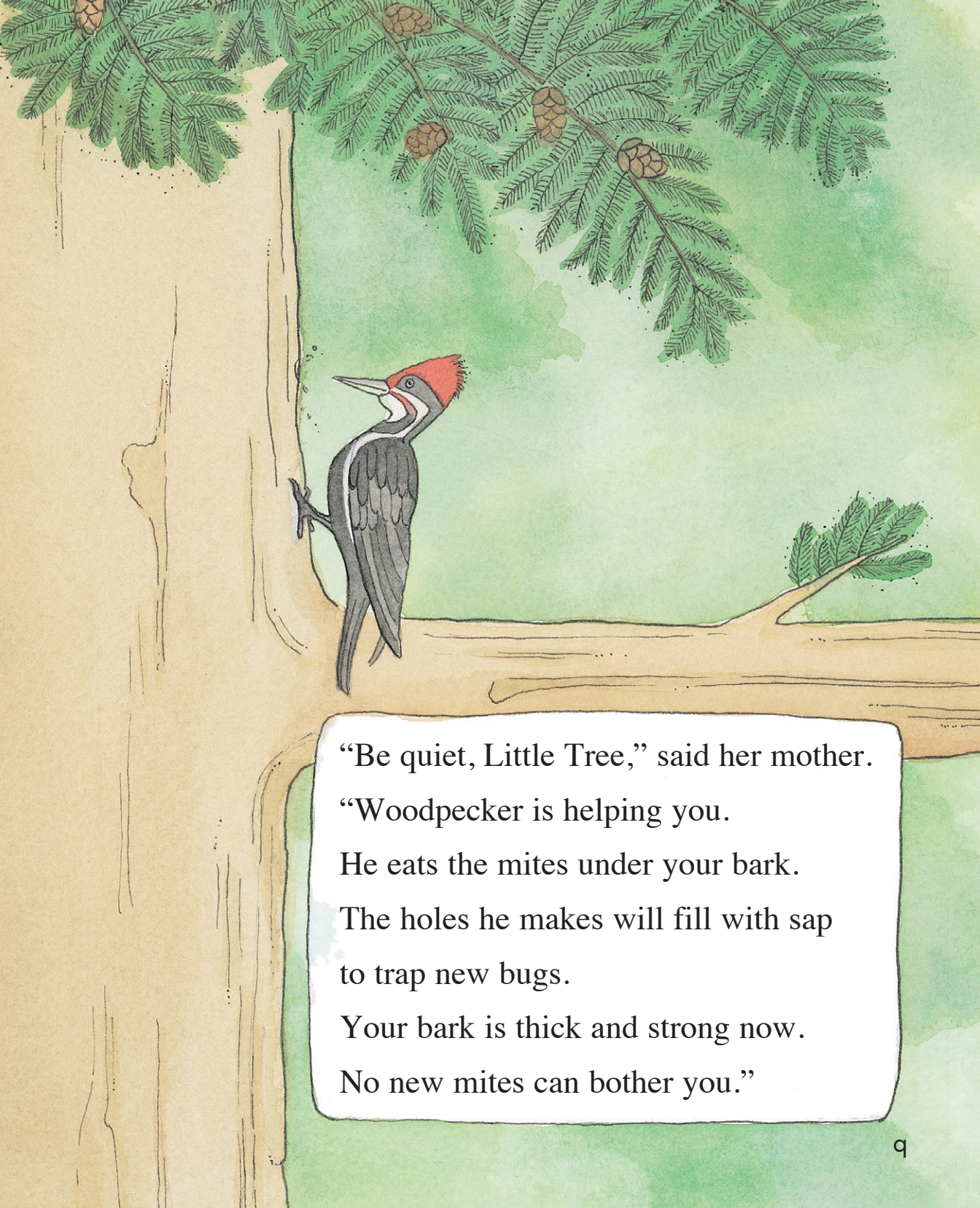


“Be patient, Little Tree,”
her mother said.
“Soon winter will come.
Then you will feel better.”
And so she did.
Snow filled the meadow.
Cold winds blew.
The wood mites under her bark went to sleep.
Little Tree drowsed happily,
nodding to the other little pines.



The illustration shows a large tree trunk on the right side of the page. Several pine branches with green needles and brown cones are scattered around the tree. A spider web is visible in the lower right quadrant, with a small spider in the center. The background is a light green wash. The text is contained within a white rounded rectangle with a black border.

Spring came, and the wood mites awoke.
They scratched and ate into the new wood
under Little Tree's bark. She felt sick.
Then one day a redheaded woodpecker
stopped in her branches. Oh, no!
He was pecking a hole in
Little Tree's bark! That hurt!



“Be quiet, Little Tree,” said her mother.

“Woodpecker is helping you.

He eats the mites under your bark.

The holes he makes will fill with sap
to trap new bugs.

Your bark is thick and strong now.

No new mites can bother you.”



And so it was.

Woodpecker ate the wood mites and flew away.

Sticky sap filled the holes.

No new mites burrowed under Little Tree's bark.

Little Tree grew and grew,
reaching toward the sky.

Her branches became thicker and wider.

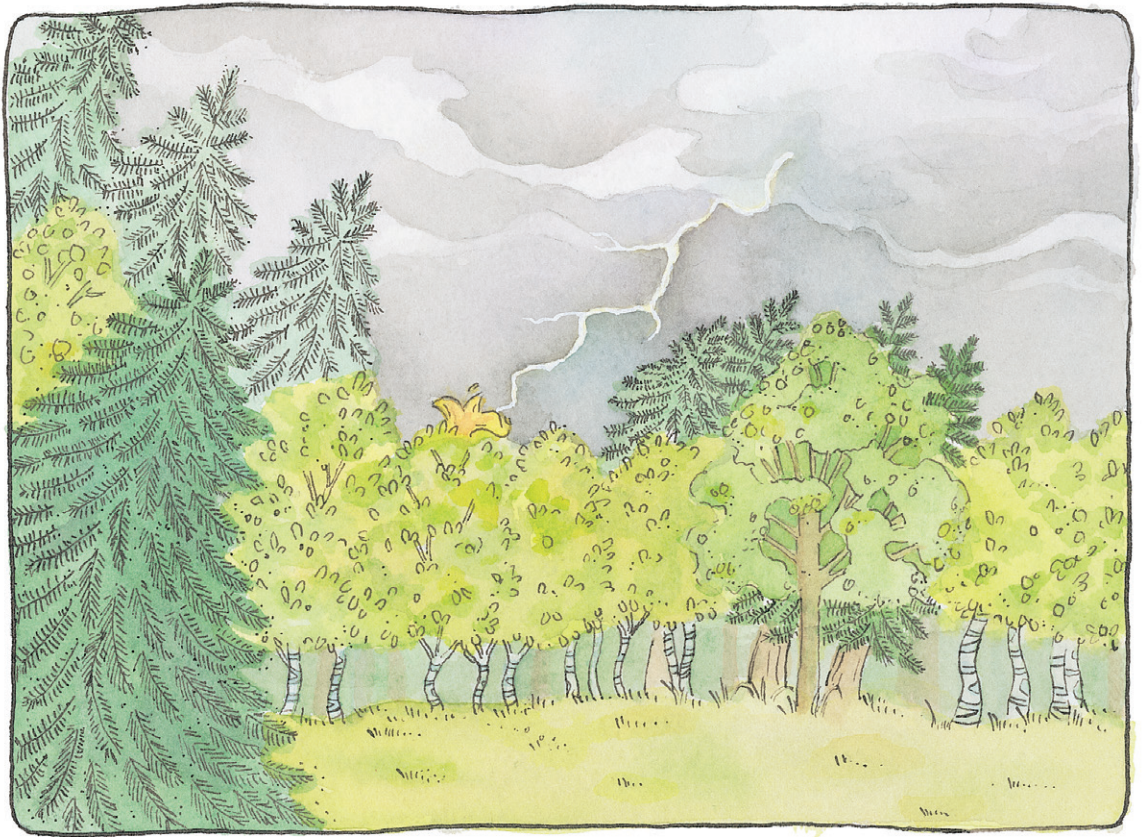
They touched the branches
of her brothers and sisters in the meadow.

At last, the meadow was no more.



On the forest floor under her branches,
ferns, mushrooms, and blackberry vines sprang up,
thick as a jungle.





One summer day the clouds piled up, hiding the sun.
The winds blew hard.
Rain spattered Little Tree's branches.
Lightning streaked from the clouds.
It struck near Little Tree.
Branches began to burn,
sending fire from tree to tree.



The wind blew hard.

It blew the fire away from Little Tree.

Then rain came down hard and fast.

It put out the fire

before it could burn up the whole forest.

Little Tree and her brothers and sisters

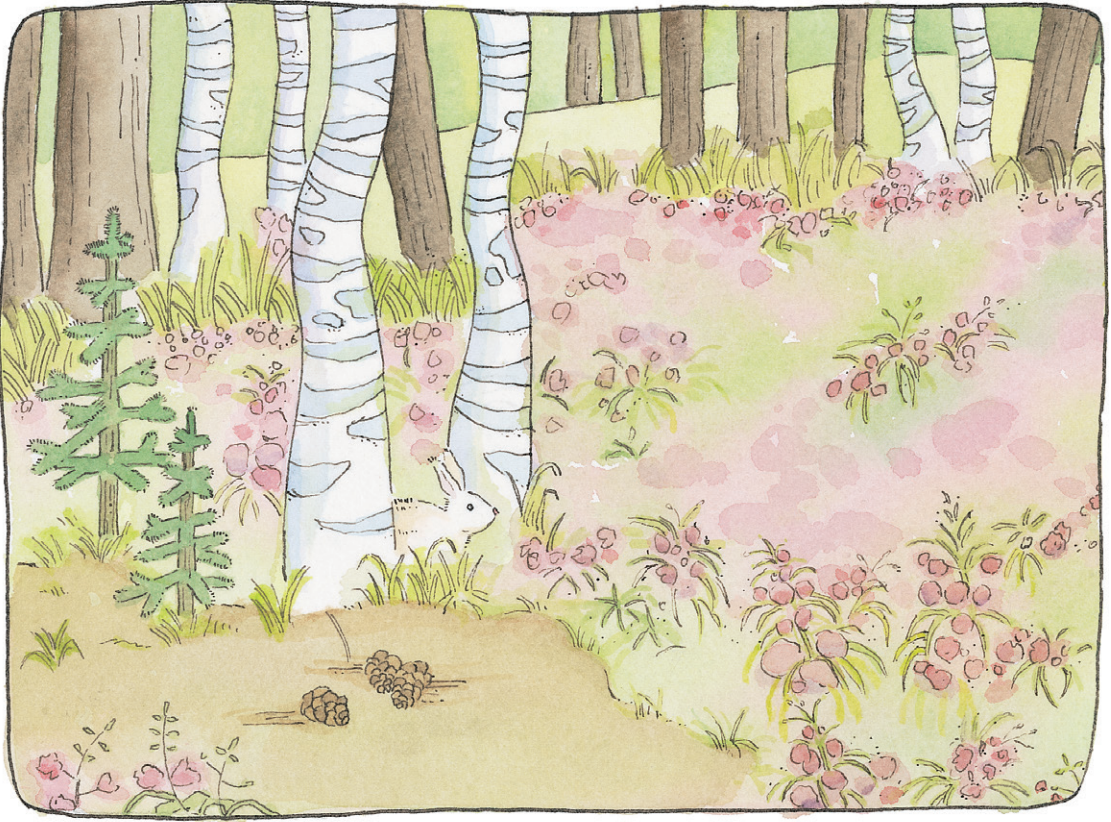
were still strong and green.

But where Little Tree's older family had stood,

there were only blackened trunks and bare ground.



For many years the meadow trees
had dropped their pinecones in the wind.
These cones were full of baby tree seeds,
but the forest was too cool and shady for them to grow.
The pinecones had fallen
on the thick forest floor and slept there.



Now the fire and the hot summer sun
awakened them.

The pinecones burst open.

When the rains came,
the seeds sank into the bare earth.

Soon the ground was dotted with tiny pine trees.



The burned pines nourished the baby trees.

Fireweed filled the open ground.

Aspen trees sprang up to shade the seedlings.

This was a new meadow.

Someday Little Tree's children would fill it,
just as Little Tree and her family had filled the old meadow.

That is the way of the earth.

Reading

Read-along books are designed to be enjoyed together and to foster a love of reading. These books help children build comprehension skills and learn new vocabulary. It is helpful to develop these skills in any language!

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