



AUGUSTUS

by Chris Blaine

Augustus looked where he was among the profusion of leaves of the giant Live Oak tree and decided that he wanted to be a twig, not a leaf. Augustus thought that he was just like all the rest; one of a thousand. He wanted to be different. He wanted to be special like the twig.

The twig, to which he was attached, told Augustus that the job of a leaf was important. Without him and the others collecting the sun light, the twig might die. If the

twig died, then the branch might die. If the branch died, then the limb might die. If the limb died, the tree might die. The twig impressed the importance of the leaf's position in keeping the tree healthy.

Augustus was not satisfied. "Just look at all the leaves! The loss of one won't have an effect. There are so many, when there are fewer twigs. No, Twig, I have changed my mind." The twig was pleased that the leaf agreed to do his part. Augustus then said, "I have decided that I would rather be a branch. That job is much more important. I can raise a family of twigs who will have leaves of their own."

"Oh no, you can't be a branch," answered the twig.

"And why not?" requested Augustus.

"Because."

"Because what?" demanded the leaf. "I want to have my own bark and lots of it."

"Because the branch has had that job forever, as long as I can remember. The limb picks who will be the branch. Since I am the twig, I can only pick who will be the leaf. You must understand that if you don't want to be a leaf, I'll have to report it to the branch. He won't be pleased with you or me."

"You'll report me to the branch! Ha, what a joke! Look at the thousands of leaves on the branch. He would never know one from the other. And what could he possibly do? I'm afraid that he is stuck with me whether he likes it or not."

"I'm glad you see it my way. I was really worried there for a moment."

"Oh, I didn't say that I agreed. I still plan to be a branch. I just need time to figure out how."

By the end of the year, Augustus noticed that he was beginning to dry out and was turning brown in spots. So were a lot of other leaves. “What is happening to me? Why am I getting dry and turning brown?” he asked the twig.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you something important.”

“What’s that?”

“Your job is almost over.”

“You mean I can be a limb now?”

“Well, no. The great tree trunk has told the limbs, that have told the branches, that have told the twigs, that all leaves must fall to the ground at his base. It is starting now.”

“You mean that the tree is dying?” asked Augustus.

“No, he wants to rest for a while. You’ll make new friends on the ground.”

“But I won’t be part of the tree anymore.”

A slight cool breeze sifted through the leaves. And with one last sniff of air, Augustus tumbled down to land a short distance from the trunk.

“I’ll miss you Augustus,” he called down to his old friend.

“I’ll miss you too Mr. Twig.”

Questions to ponder:

- 1) What does envy mean? Does it mean longing for something somebody else has but you don’t?
- 2) It is a bad thing to want to be better than you are?
- 3) Is separation painful?
- 4) What does being homesick mean? Do children feel this when they are off at camp?

Do soldiers feel homesick when they are far away from home and family?

5) How does an adult feel when he is laid off from work or fired from her job?

6) Would you miss your pillow if it were taken from your bed? Would you miss your snuggle toy?