

A Different Summer

This summer has been so peaceful! Most years, there are hundreds of children in the forest who play... but not this year, I wonder why? I stand here every day, watching the majestic stags inch their way through the forest, I didn't even realise they lived here, the people must disturb them. Now they look so peaceful, so free, oh how I wish I could be them! I see leaves fall, honey yellow and gingerbread brown. The trees stand strong and tall watching over the forest, people are normally climbing, but not this year. My favourite time of the year is when I watch the snow land on the leaves, creating a picturesque scene. When it snows, hundreds of people come to the forest with sledges; it always looks so much fun, sledging down the steep hill on a snowy day, I wonder if they'll come this year.

Summer was so peaceful this year, until the day of the fire...

It all started when I saw an imposing brown stag, charging through the trees with squirrels, birds, foxes, rabbits and all sorts of forest animals following it, as if it was the leader. They all looked so scared; terrified, it was heart breaking to see animals who are usually so calm behave like this, something bad must have happened, something really bad. I started to worry, what was it?

Next, I smelt smoke, where was it coming from? There's nobody here...

I remember the last time I smelt smoke; it was when a young man had proposed to a woman. It was the most beautiful and romantic thing I had ever seen! There were candles creating a circle around a huge picnic blanket with a cute basket. The smoke from the candles was very different from the smoke that I can smell now. It was much more pleasant. I remember that man getting down on one knee; I wished that I could have been that woman, she looked so happy. No-one has been here this year...

I am pulled back to reality, my attention is drawn back to the fire, it has nearly reached me. The flames are dancing in the breeze, they almost look peaceful, almost. I have never seen anything like it before. As I watch, it brutally takes down the tree in front of me, the fire is gaining ground quickly, I need to run. Then the fire starts to kiss me, it feels too hot to be real. I just stand there watching, as it edges ever further up me. Where are the people to put it out? Why have they not been here this summer? Why are they leaving me as food for the fire? All I can do is stand and watch. I can't do anything, I am just a tree, I am the next tree to fall. I am not a hero or a survivor, I *am* the next victim.