



The plant who didn't know

Once upon a time there was a young plant. Her name was **[children invent a name – Ella used for convenience here]**. She was growing near a wood and she had lots of pretty bright green leaves **[children use their imagination to describe her]**. There were no other plants like Ella around and everyone who passed by stopped to look at her and take pictures of her. A year had passed since she grew from her seed. All her brothers and sisters were on the other side of the wood. She wondered why she grew so far away.

Winter came and it rained. Ella liked the rain because the water in the soil is so good for her. Ella grew some more leaves.

Spring came, the weather got warm and Ella knew it was time to grow flowers. Ella's flowers were pretty and smelt very nice. The little wind carried her perfume in the air and people said "Mmmm! What a lovely scent!" and they bent down to sniff Ella's flowers. They tickled her with their long noses!

Ella knew that flowers make seeds. But **[pause]** she didn't know how! She asked Pine Tree who grew nearby:

"Big tree, you have lots of pine cones full of seeds. Can you tell me how to make seeds?"

"Yes of course my dear," said kind Pine Tree, "In spring I grow special cones with lots of pollen inside them. I give my pollen to other pine trees and they give me their pollen. When the pollen mixes, the seeds grow in the cones."

"How can you give your pollen to the other trees?" asked Ella. "You can't walk!"

"Haha, no need to walk," replied Pine Tree, "When the wind blows, my pollen flies off. The wind carries my

pollen to other pine trees and brings me their dust. So you see, the wind does the work."

"Wow, I can do that!" Ella said happily. She stretched opened her petals as wide as she could so the wind will carry her pollen to another flower. But when the wind came, nothing happened. Her pollen did not fly away. Ella was very sad.

"Why isn't the wind taking my pollen?" she asked Pine Tree.

"Oh dear," said Pine Tree. "I think your dust is too heavy and sticky for the wind to carry. I think you have to take your pollen to the other flowers yourself."

"But I cannot do that!" said Ella, "I can't walk!"

Ella began to cry. Her tears came out of the middle of the flowers. Ella's tears tasted sweet. They were special tears called nectar. The more Ella cried, the more nectar came out.

Suddenly Bee landed on Ella's flower.

"Yummy, nectar!" said Bee and began to drink. Ella was very surprised. Bee was very furry and she had lots of yellow dust stuck to her fur.

"Mmm!" said Bee, "Thank you, Ella. What a lovely drink!"

"You're welcome," said Ella, "What's that yellow stuff on your fur?"

"Oh, that's pollen," said Bee, "It sticks to me when I visit flowerzzzz. I have some of yourzzzz now too. Bye!"

Bee flew off. Then Ella heard another voice:

"Hey girlzzzz, here'zzz another one!" Wasp landed on one of her flowers, and soon ten more wasps landed too.

"Yum!" said Wasp, "Deliciouzzzz! Thankzzz Ella!"

"You're welcome," said Ella. "But how do you all know my name?"

"Haha!" laughed Wasp. "Of course we know you, Ella!

We can smell your perfume from the other side of the wood. There are more plants like you there. We've been drinking your nectar all morning!"

"Really?" said Ella. "Please can you take my pollen to my cousin plants? And can you bring me some of theirs, so I can make seeds?"

Wasp laughed. "You have some already! Bee who came before us also visited your cousin plants. When she came to drink your nectar she dropped half her load of pollen on you."

"Oh goody," said Ella happily, "And look, your legs are covered in my pollen now. When you go to the other flowers, will my pollen stick to them?"

"Yes it will," said Wasp, "We get your sticky pollen all over our bodies. But we don't mind. Well, I'm off. Here comes Bumble Bee!"

Bumble Bee was big, and black, yellow and white. And very furry! She too had lots of pollen on her legs.

Ella began to laugh. "I don't need the wind after all. My pollen is sticky because it's the insects that carry it!"

Ella laughed so hard that more tears of nectar came out of her flowers. And more insects came to drink. They all had hairy legs or bodies and they all carried pollen!

Ella made lots of nectar and she made lots of insect friends. Her favourite insect friends were the butterflies. They were so colourful, and they tickled her with their long curly tongues.

When all her nectar was finished, Ella's flowers dried up and turned into bags of seeds. Ella was so happy.

"The seeds are my babies," she said. "Next year they will all grow into beautiful new plants."