

# Gentle Willow




**A Story for Children About Dying**

SECOND EDITION

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**I**t was the time of Spring  
once again, when all  
the flowers bloomed in  
their brightest colors.  
It had been a long time  
since the big storm came  
through the forest where  
Little Tree and her friend  
Amanda lived and played.  
Since that time of the  
big storm, many new  
friends had come to live  
in the forest.

Little Tree and Amanda  
especially liked Gentle  
Willow, who lived across  
the pond. Each day as the  
sun rose in the east, Little  
Tree rustled her leaves  
and sang “good morning”  
to her friends. And each  
day Gentle Willow invited  
the wind to blow  
through her  
branches, creating  
a sound like crystal  
chimes, to say “good  
morning” back.







Amanda liked playing with Gentle Willow. Her new friend gave her places to store her nuts.

Amanda also liked to chase the big yellow butterflies who danced within Gentle Willow's long and graceful branches.



One day while Amanda  
was climbing up the trunk  
of Gentle Willow, she  
noticed that her friend  
looked different. Her bark  
was lumpy and bumpy.  
Her leaves were turning  
brown, and her branches  
were droopy.



“What is wrong, Gentle Willow?” asked Amanda.  
“I don’t know,” whispered Gentle Willow. “I just feel different.”  
“Don’t worry,” said Amanda. “Tomorrow you will feel better.”



But many tomorrows came,  
and Gentle Willow still did not feel better.

Amanda was worried. She ran around the pond and told Little Tree about their friend.



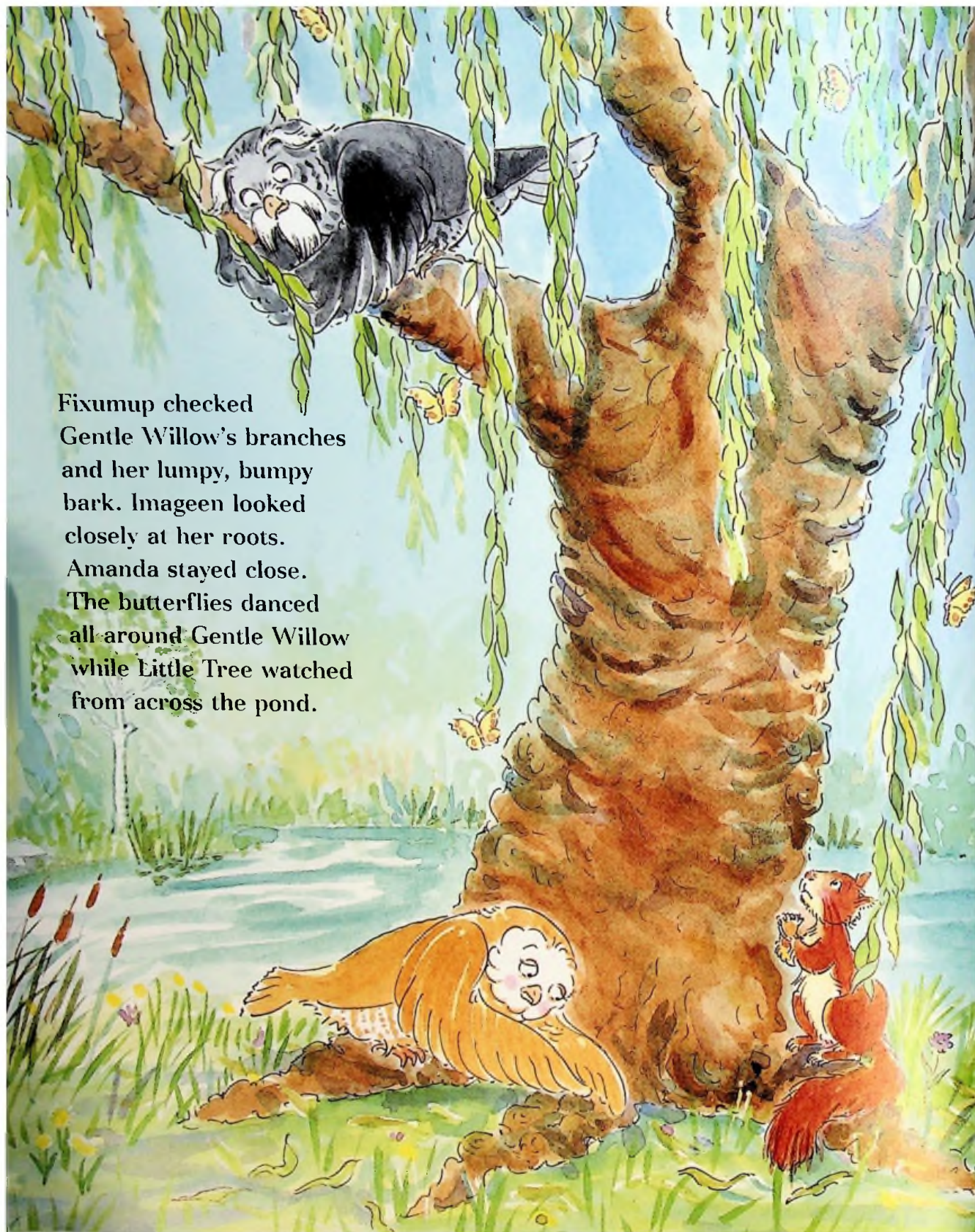
"Remember when the big storm came and I was hurt?" asked Little Tree.

"Yes!" cried Amanda.

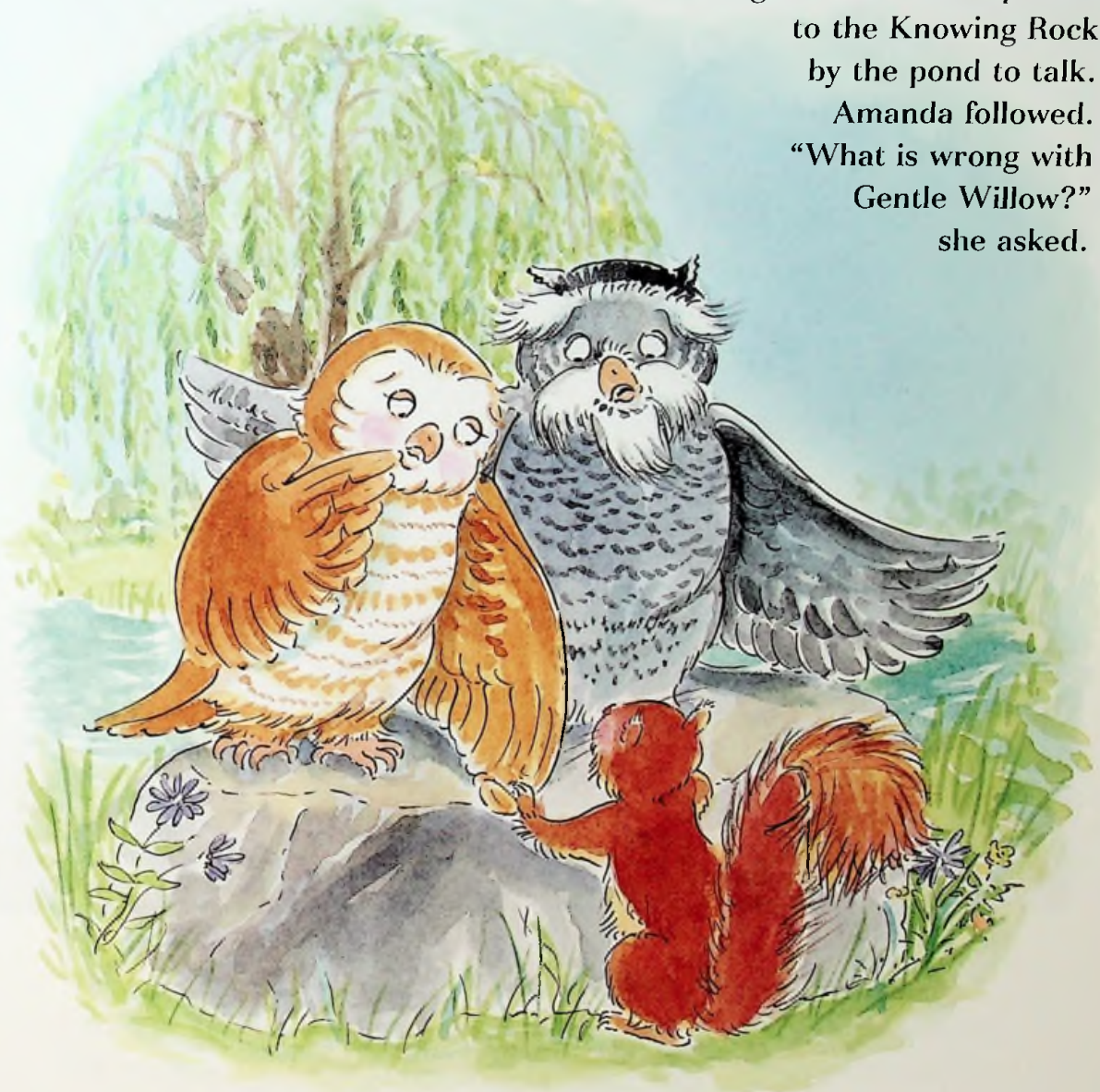
"And the tree wizards came and fixed your broken branches. I'll go get them. Maybe they can help Gentle Willow too."



Fixumup checked  
Gentle Willow's branches  
and her lumpy, bumpy  
bark. Imageen looked  
closely at her roots.  
Amanda stayed close.  
The butterflies danced  
all around Gentle Willow  
while Little Tree watched  
from across the pond.



After all the checking,  
Imageen and Fixumup went  
to the Knowing Rock  
by the pond to talk.  
Amanda followed.  
“What is wrong with  
Gentle Willow?”  
she asked.



“Your friend’s hurt is different from the hurt that  
Little Tree had because of the storm,” said Fixumup.  
“Gentle Willow has something we have seen before  
in the forest, but we cannot make it go away.”



“What do you mean?” Amanda shouted.

“You **HAVE** to help Gentle Willow.

You **HAVE** to make her better.

**YOU ARE THE TREE WIZARDS  
OF THE FOREST!”**