

Years 7 & 8

1st Place and Best Overall: Jamie Adams

Year 7, Kelmscott Senior High School

Unexpected

An unexpected memoir, by an unexpected being during unexpected times.

In a beautiful park, Borello Park, there was a tree. This was a big tree, with its roots stretching all around where it lay. This tree was over 300 years old. Its roots were extremely thick and above ground. This tree saw everything that happened around it and stored memories in its growth rings. The rings were extremely large, due to all its memories. The tree remembered everything it saw in its long life. The tree grew thicker and thicker, as the years went on, more and more memories were collected. He was an old soul, kind and compassionate and thought to be incredibly wise. He remembered a particular year in its life so clearly, 2020. That year was full of memories of good things, and strange events.

2020 started like any other year, lots of visitors under my branches, little beings climbing on my roots. It was always like this, but some years are different. For instance, in 1914, hardly no one came to say hello. Same in 1939, no one came to visit. Some years too many people came. This happened in 1917, and 1945, with lots of cheers all around. 2020 stood out like these years, but in a different way. It was very weird, lots of strange sights were seen and most people seemed stressed about something or another.

In the start of the year, many people came, one person stood out. She came to me almost every day and rested her head on my trunk. She talked to me, confided in me, about matters I hardly understood. She talked about things like her job and how she could be out on the streets any day. I did not know anything about what she said, but it gave me the feeling she was in trouble. There is not much a tree can do to help a human, except transfer a little bit of wisdom from me to her. I gave her the meaning of life, how to help others and the greatest gift of all, love. There was another man who liked her, came to the park without her knowing, obviously in love. So, I made her fall in love with him. The next day she walked up to the man and started talking. I think it worked because she hardly ever comes down to see me anymore. It is sad, but lots of humans come to me for advice.

In February, there was a short downfall in the number of people coming to me. Those that did, stuck their heads to my trunk. I wonder if the lady talked to other people about what happened. Kids running around my roots, climbing up my trunk, and overall having fun. The parents sit down and talk for hours on end. I try to eavesdrop on them, but I do not understand what they are talking about. In late February, the conversations and expressions were grim. I did not understand why, but everyone seemed worried about something. People started to keep their distance from one another, some not coming to the park at all.

When March came, the few people that used to come every day to see me, suddenly stopped. I also frequently heard the word 'virus', and I had no clue what it meant. Whatever a virus was, it was not good. The whole of March was quiet without people visiting me, however there was some strange sights. The lady who lives across the road from me was doing some strange things. First, she was screaming at her son triumphantly 'We got toilet paper'! I do not know what toilet paper is, but she has not ever done this before. She also sat in her garage counting out small, white rolls, as if they were gold. She frequently left her house to go somewhere. She left seeming happy and came back in a bad mood nearly every day. I assume she was looking for 'toilet paper'. That lady also used to have lots of humans at her house. There was lots of loud music going late into the night and less people leaving the house the next morning, which was weird. Anyway, all of that has stopped now and I think it is because of that 'virus' thingy.

When April started, I thought an apocalypse had hit my park. No one drove past. The houses always had bright lights on inside, though that normally only happened at night. Maybe humans are now at their dwellings constantly because of the 'virus'. I wondered what the 'virus' would do to me now that humans are scared. Normally humans are quite brave when it comes to life, but now they are really scared. I am starting to become increasingly worried about the 'virus'. I think I will have to do without company these next few months. It is exactly like 1918, only a bit more organised.

In May, some people were brave enough to venture out into the world. Some loyal beings came to visit me and played on my roots of wisdom. They pressed their foreheads to my trunks and in return I gave them wisdom. The lady across the street stopped overreacting over 'toilet paper'. Things looked like they were returning to almost normal, except that less people were out and about. I also swear people looked a little bigger than before this mess, maybe it is just my imagination. The being who I gave lots of wisdom to, the lover, finally visited me. The male figure had a bronze, circular thing surrounding his finger, which was odd. They were holding hands, and frequently walk to come see me. They both put their forehead to my trunk, and in return, I gave them relationship wisdom. Hopefully, that should keep them together.

At the end of May, it seemed as if everything was back to normal. Kids would run around for hours on end, their parents bathing in the sunlight. I was getting the symptoms of runny bark and suddenly remembered that winter was coming. Winter brings cold, strong winds and most importantly less visitors. Winter is freezing and no one likes it. Some brave people were strolling around in the early hours of morning and came back late in the afternoon. I am not sure what they do all day, it must be interesting though.

When June started, there was an unusual amount of sunlight for winter. I cannot complain though, more visitors came every day and sit for hours in my roots. Some kids came down and wrote on paper and asked me for ideas. So, I gave them some wisdom and they seemed satisfied. I wanted the sunny days to go on forever, but I know they will soon go. I try to spend my time wisely, but it seems there is just not

enough time. People do not use their time as wisely as they should. They should not loiter around but instead they should do something productive.

By the end of June, the warm weather was gone. Each morning the cold got to me. The sun hardly shone, and true winter was starting. Thunderstorms were often, strong winds hit, many tree's branches had fallen. I was lucky, me being the largest tree in the park, that none of my branches had fallen. The stream was flowing rapidly, the strong waters echoing through the otherwise quiet park. My only comfort was that the warm spring was drawing closer every day, and that kept me going.

When July started, the people just decided to stay in their shelter. The rain was unbearable, I was not enjoying winter like the previous ones. I hardly did anything each day and was just waiting for spring. I guess I will just have to wait. Trees also have birthdays and mine is 17th of July. My roots grow a little wiser on that special day, and I tend to transfer kindness and compassion, hope and positivity. Anyway, this birthday should be interesting.

On my birthday, one person came. It is the girl that I like very much. She seemed miserable and maybe came to me for comfort. I gave her hope and positivity, but she seemed to not change. She was different, I sensed it. I reached into her feelings and saw something dark. Heartbreak. I realised this was the one thing I could not help with. Her grief overwhelmed my powers and the only thing she could do is wait. Healing comes with time and that is also something I cannot change, nor speed up. I learned something very valuable. I must not mess with love, as love is natural for humans.

By the end of July, the positivity in the world seemed drained out. July had been a dark month, which had never happened before. July was my favourite month because it is my birthday, but if this happens every year, it will soon be hated. One of the trees in my park had fallen over onto a human settlement across from me. Many human transport vehicles had come to the rescue, although no one could help the poor tree. It looked old and weak in days prior to it falling. The world had lost a true soldier.

'One month to go' were the very words that circulated through my roots, branches and rings. It was a relief, but it came with a large price. Humans were working around the park, creating and building things as they have always done through the centuries. Whatever they were doing, it looked impressive. Humans were traveling around as normal and went out for the day often. Overall, this year has so far been very interesting. I feel like the world has learned a lesson, but I am not sure what. Maybe they have learnt to stay away from viruses. Maybe they have learned to appreciate loved ones more.

Five months later I feel this year has been extremely interesting. Not just because of weird human behaviour. The park has finished construction and now has new and colourful equipment for kids to play on. The girl now looks much better and I can transfer wisdom to her much more often. She looks at a piece of paper all day (I think other trees would be offended by this) and seems to enjoy it. I cannot see what is so

interesting about this paper, though she obviously does. Anyway, I will always cherish when humans come to visit me, especially after this year. 2020 will always be a year that I will never forget!

The End