




Ollie

Ollie's Family  
Tree



Ollie the monkey arrived at the Big Tree the day before the biggest event of the season. The 'Great Bake Off' was an annual baking exhibition which was the Forest Women's Association's largest event of the year. Edna and Hazel Magpie were co-presidents of the local chapter and bitter rivals when it came to this event. Both had been staying up for weeks trying to perfect recipes to show off the best food.






Skinny little Ollie had never heard of a Bake Off before and was just content to find a spare branch in between all the bunting to rest on, before moving on the following day. Ollie settled down for the evening and woke the next morning to the sound of bustle below, along with the most delicious smelling food.



He swung down to the foot of the tree where there were tables full of baked delights. There were ginger fluff cakes, pastries, scones and slices galore. Ollie's mouth was watering looking at the collection of food. Ollie looked over at the stage, upon which stood Edna and Hazel. Both were welcoming a large group to the annual Bake Off. No one was looking at Ollie or the food. Ollie felt overtaken with hunger. In fact, he always felt hungry. He often didn't know when his next meal would be available. He grabbed up as much food as would fit in his enormous mouth and arms, and took off up the tree, back to his branch. He shoved some food in hiding spots around about, and swallowed down the rest.





Meanwhile, Edna and Hazel had finished their speech and declared the Baking Exhibition open. Everyone gasped as they turned around to see the empty display tables. Where had all the food gone? Edna and Hazel noticed a trail of dropped baked goods leading away from the tables. They followed the trail. It led to Ollie's branch.



“You should be ashamed of yourself young man” screeched Hazel. Ollie’s head was bowed. He wanted to shrink into nothing. “I.....I.... I didn’t take your food.” Edna picked out a cellophane wrapped bunch of yo yos from a hole in the bark. “I have no idea where that came from” said Ollie. Hazel was so angry that steam was coming out of her ears. She stormed off in disgust.



Edna sat down next to Ollie. "Did you know what that was this morning?" enquired Edna. "No ma'am" replied Ollie. "There was more food than I'd ever seen and I was really hungry" said Ollie. "Where is your family?" asked Edna. "I don't know" replied Ollie after a moment's pause. "It's just me," he said. Edna left Ollie. He felt exhausted and curled up for a sleep that lasted until the following morning.



When Ollie woke up, he was met with a surprise. Someone had put a blanket over him and there was fruit salad and a milkshake on his branch. He looked around, but couldn't see anyone. Ollie ate the food and folded up his blanket before heading off for a swing around the surrounding forest. He had intended to move on that day, but something told him to stay. That evening when he returned to the branch there was a bowl of spaghetti and garlic bread sitting on the folded blanket. Ollie ate it up. What was going on he wondered?





For the following week the pattern was the same, every morning a mysterious breakfast appeared before he woke up, and dinner was waiting for him every evening when he returned. Ollie decided that he wanted to know where this food was coming from. So the next day he returned to his branch early, and hid close by until he spied someone arrive. "Aha" declared Ollie as he leapt from his hiding spot. "Oh, Golly" remarked the magpie in shock. "What are you doing here?" asked Ollie in surprise.



“Hello again” said Edna. “It was my turn to bring dinner tonight.”

“You have been feeding me?” said Ollie in disbelief. “But I wrecked your food day” he went on. “I messed up and you hate me.” “We don’t hate you. We just didn’t realise how hungry you were” said Edna. “I can look after myself” said Ollie as he folded his arms in front. “We know” replied Edna. “You can look after yourself really well, that’s what gotten you here. But you know what, you don’t have to keep doing things by yourself anymore if you don’t want to. We look after each other in this tree. We are like a family.”



Ollie looked straight at Edna. "I already have a family" he said. "Well you could have more family, if you let us?" eased Edna. Ollie felt tears coming. "What about that other magpie?" he asked. "She seemed pretty angry with me." Edna handed Ollie a cupcake and said, "she's not anymore, she understands now". Ollie and Edna shared a big hug. Ollie decided to stay in the Big Tree. After a while his empty tummy feeling went away, and he got a part-time job. With his climbing skills, he became the chief Big Tree grocery deliverer, and he never felt hungry or alone again.





Have you ever felt like you messed up? What was that like? How did the adult's around you act?

Who looks after you?

Who do you consider family?