

The
Perfect
Christmas Tree
by
Robyn Opie



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Rosie peered out the window as the car swung into the car park. She bounced with excitement. Picking a Christmas tree was almost as much fun as decorating it.



Rosie ran to the small forest of pine trees. They were in pots, ready for their new homes. Soon they would be strung with baubles and lights, and guarding a treasure-trove of brightly wrapped presents.

Rosie strolled the rows of pine trees, searching for that special one. It had to be perfect, she thought.

Ahead of her in the path, a family gazed at a tree. Rather than push past them, Rosie hung back and waited for them to move on.

'It's too short,' said the father.

As they walked away, the tree seemed to get shorter.



Rosie lingered as another family inspected the tree.

'It's too pale,' said the mother.

As they walked away, the tree seemed to get paler.

Rosie remained as another family glanced at the tree.

'It's too crooked,' said the girl.

As they walked away, the tree seemed to bend further.



Rosie dallied as another family examined the tree.

'It's too thin,' said the boy.

As they walked away, the tree seemed to get thinner.

Rosie loitered as another family contemplated the tree.

'It's too old,' said the grandma.

As they walked away, the tree seemed to get older.



Rosie felt sorry for the tree. What would happen to it if no one bought it?

But it was too short.

It was too pale.

It was too crooked.

It was too thin.

It was too old.



'I want this one,' Rosie told her parents.

They looked dubiously at the tree.

'Are you sure?' asked her father. 'It's a bit small.'

'It sags,' criticised her mother.

Rosie grinned and nodded enthusiastically. 'It's perfect!'



Her father carefully strapped the tree to the roof of the car. He frowned. 'I hope it's all right.'

Her mother shrugged doubtfully. Rosie jumped into the car.

Rosie peered out the window as the car swung into their driveway. She bounced with excitement. Decorating a Christmas tree was almost as much fun as presents.

Her father carried the tree inside the house, positioning it



in front of a window, so everyone could see it.

Rosie adorned the pine needles with baubles and tinsel. As she wound and twisted and twirled, the tree



seemed to get taller. It seemed to get greener. It seemed to get straighter.

It seemed to get thicker. It seemed to get younger.

Rosie fed long strands of lights in and out of the branches. She flicked a switch and jumped back to admire the glittering, flashing, sparkling Christmas tree.

'I hardly recognise it,' exclaimed her father.

'It's beautiful,' smiled her mother.

Every day and night people passed by Rosie's home. They all stopped to marvel over the splendour of the Christmas tree. It was the best in the neighbourhood. Some even said it was the best in town.



'It's so tall,' said a father.

'It's so green,' said a mother.

'It's so straight,' said a girl.

'It's so thick,' said a boy.

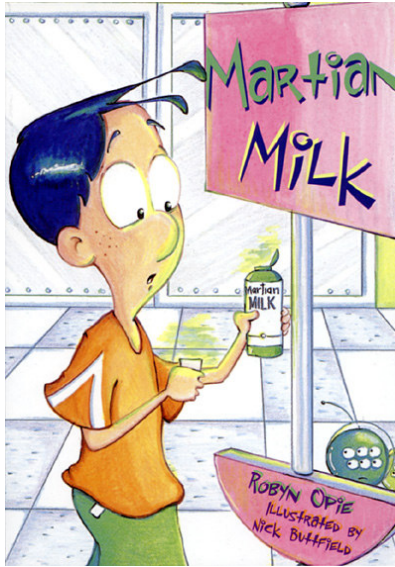
'It's so young,' said a grandma.

'It's perfect,' said Rosie.

Martian Milk

by

Robyn Opie



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Paul is afraid of trying Martian Milk.

What if it makes him turn into a Martian?

The sales lady offering him the sample of Martian Milk

says she's from Earth, but she doesn't look human.

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What will happen to Paul?

And why does he cause a disturbance in the supermarket?

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