

WEIRD TREE KID

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CAM

There was a kid in my primary school that we used to call the Weird Tree Kid... Even to his face, "Hey, Weird Tree Kid!" He wouldn't answer of course. He didn't speak to us at all, just block us as though he couldn't see us, which made him seem even weirder. We'd try and make him look at us, talk to us, but he'd just climb the old gum tree in front of the school. He would climb so high that no one could get to him. Dangle, right out on the end of those branches if anyone else tried to climb out to him. We were all too scared to go that far. He was brave. Or crazy. (*a beat*) We just called him crazy.

Every day before school he was up there, recess, lunch and after school. He'd climb up that old gum before we got there and leave after we'd gone. A couple of times we waited... Hours... Just to see if he'd come down. But nope. He'd just stay up in the tree, safe in its branches. After a while we kinda got bored and stopped hanging around the bottom of the tree. But still he didn't come down; every day he still climbed that tree. Then one night there was a big storm, and a huge branch cracked off that old gum. The next day they had to cut the tree down as it was a danger. He just stood in the yard and cried and cried. The teachers couldn't move him and after a while they had to ring his dad to come and get him. That kid never came to school again and his family moved away soon after.

I think about the Weird Tree Kid all the time...It's a pretty cool thing to be able to climb so high... I wonder if we had been friends, he would have taught me to climb like him. High amongst the branches. I kinda feel like I missed out because we were mean to him, instead of being his friend. He was only the Weird Tree Kid, because we made him the Weird Tree Kid, without us he wouldn't have had any reason to hide in that old gum tree.