



Jenny's Nest
Written by Donna Mann

Jenny Wren flew back and forth, darting here and there. Every time she tried resting on a branch - it shook.

BBRR! BBRR! There was a noise that went along with the shaking and it was so loud it caused her head to ring.

"What is going on?" Jenny chattered - never before had branches shook like this. "I know. . . I'll fly up to the hill. I can see what's going on from there."

So, she gathered herself together, fluffed her wings and flew up to big Oak tree who always welcomed her. As soon as she arrived, Jenny surveyed the hillside. She saw several men standing below, looking at the trees. Oh dear, one of them had an axe in his hand, and the other one a saw; and they were looking right at Maple where Jenny had her nest. She couldn't think of anything to do, except maybe chatter at them.

Oak opened his branches. "Well Jenny, I haven't seen you for a while. Where have you been?"

"I've been building a nest, Oak, getting all the twigs, strings and feathers; I have a nice one this year."

Jenny looked around the big branches of old Oak that were covered with fresh green leaves. "Anybody around your branches this spring?" she asked.

"Matter of fact, I have a couple of robins who have built at opposite sides of me and a sparrow who is still interested. I guess she's shopping yet - can't make up her mind - you know how they are." Oak chuckled.

Just then a loud buzz sounded across the bush and the earth shook beneath Oak's roots.

"What was that," Oak said, steadying himself.

"There are men standing by my tree. I think they are looking for trees to cut down," Jenny said, shocked.

BUZZ! BUZZ! "I suppose that's another tree gone."

CRUNCH! BANG! "I think you're right."

A sudden burst of sunlight flooded into Oak's branches. "I'm glad to get some sun on my leaves but not at the expense of my friend, Poplar."

"Oh, no! Was it Poplar that went this time?"

"He was a friend of yours too, Jenny?"

"He sure was. I had my nest in his branches last year. I liked it there. I always had a fresh breeze and no one bothered me."

Jenny's curiosity was getting the best of her. "I'll be right back," she called over her shoulder. She flew down to Poplar who lay across the roadway.

"You sure are big when you're lying down like that, Friend."

"Didn't know I was this tall did you Jenny? Sometimes a tree has to fall to be appreciated."

"Now you know that's not true, Poplar. I lived in your branches for a springtime and raised my babies on your limbs. I was always thankful for your help."

"You're right Jenny. We were good friends but now I go on to bigger and better things."

"But how do you know that? You're flat on your bark in the dust on the road. People turn trees into all kinds of things that they waste, like using too much paper."

"I realize that," said Poplar, "but I know these two men are going to use me again. I heard them talking about needing wood to build a playhouse. I'd rather be a playhouse than be run through a printer."

Poplar lay quietly, thinking about his future. "Jenny," he hesitated, "they just wouldn't cut me down and leave me here on the road. Besides, the traffic couldn't get up or down. Just wait and see Jenny. I won't be wasted. I will go on living in some other way."

BBRR! BBRR!

The men were warming up the saw again. Jenny quickly said goodbye to her friend and flew back to Oak.

"Poplar says he's going on to better things. He sends his greetings to you."

"Thanks, Jenny Wren."

BBRR! BBRR! CRA-A-ASH!

"Which one did they cut this time, Oak? Can you see? Can you see?"

"I think its Maple, Jenny. . . young Maple in behind the row of cedars."

"Oh no, Oak. They can't cut Maple."

"Why not? Was she a friend of yours too?"

"Yes. I have my nest started on her branches." Jenny worried and fretted and knew she had to go down. She called out to Oak, "I'll be right back," as she swept through Oak's branches down to Maple.

Jenny landed on Maple's green branches as Maple lay broken on the ground. She'd fallen behind a large honeysuckle bush.

"Oh, what will I do? I can't start to build my nest over again. It's too late in the spring. Ooh, what will I do?"

Maple lay quietly, looking very sad. "I'm sorry Jenny. I can't do anything right these days - can't even fall straight."

"Now Maple, I'm glad you didn't or my nest might have tipped right off your branch. But . . . what can we do?"

Jenny was very nervous now. Back and forth she went, darting here and there. Back up to Oak she went. "Maple is down - right down on the ground," she said sadly. "My nest will be lost."

"Oh, I don't know about that," Wise Oak said. "I can see it very clearly from here."

"You can, Oak?" Jenny responded hopefully.

"Why yes! Except for being a bit tipsy, your nest is actually well-protected by the honeysuckle bush."

"Hmm," Jenny replied thoughtfully as she flew on to a branch where she too could see the fallen Maple. "I believe you're right."

Again she sought the advice of Oak. "What will I do? The woodcutters will probably cut up Maple if I don't hurry and show them my nest."

"I think you're right. But, I'm sure they won't disturb you if they know about it. In fact they'll probably feel sorry they cut Maple down."

"Well, I'll do my best to tell them," Jenny said and immediately flew down into the midst of the working men. She landed on Maple's stump, fluffed her wings

and chattered away as if it meant her life. Well, it did mean her life, for she was soon to lay her eggs and little ones were her life.

Jenny was very small in stature. Her tiny body was not much bigger than a woodcutter's thumb. How could she convince them to leave Maple for at least a couple of months?

Jenny flew into their midst, circling their heads, twittering as loudly as she could. Up and down, round and round she went. She was not angry by nature, but today she was fighting for survival.

One of the woodcutters, named Mike, put his saw down. "Well, look here, Jack - a wren - isn't she pretty - a real brown isn't she?"

Looking through the branches, Jack replied: "She seems pretty cross - maybe we disturbed her nest. I wonder where it is."

"It could be in any one of these trees," Mike said. "We've cut down three this morning."

Jack pushed his hat back, as if to think. "Maybe if we watch her, she'll show us." So they sat down on the stump of one of the freshly cut trees and remained quiet.

This was the very moment Jenny had been waiting for. She trusted the men after she'd heard them talk. Away she flew to find her nest. Oak was right. Maple lay stretched across the grass, but Jenny's nest was still safe . . . a little tilted, but still safe. Jenny ruffled her feathers and settled in.

The men watched. Finally Jack walked slowly over and looked in behind the honeysuckle bush.

"Well, my goodness," he said. There was Jenny, proud as she could be. Mike quickly joined Jack. "She's got a nest in the Maple, Jack. I guess it won't hurt to leave this tree for a while. We can cut up the rest and haul them away."

Jenny could hardly wait to fly up to Oak and tell her the good news, but she didn't want to leave her nest just yet, in case the woodcutters changed their mind and came back.

The forest became quiet and Jenny knew the men had gone home. Up she flew to her friend, Oak.

"Oak, did you hear the good news? They're going to leave Maple alone until my babies fly away and I won't need my nest anymore."

That is good news. I always knew wrens had 'pull' in the human kingdom, but I didn't know you had that much."

"Next year, Oak, I'm going to come into your branches. You're so big; they'll never cut you down."

"Good thinking Jenny. Hey, I'll be glad to have you. And in the meantime, enjoy your new surroundings. I'll bet you've never laid your eggs on a slant before."

"You're right. I never have! My babies won't care. When it comes the right time, it'll be easier for them to get out of the nest - they won't have so far to look down when they're learning to fly."

"Just remember Jenny. There's something good in everything, even if at first it looks bad. Sometimes, you just have to help make good things happen."

Food for Thought:

I'm so glad you listened to this story! Do you remember a time when you had things all planned and then something happened to change everything? Not fun, is it? Jenny Wren had to think quickly to save her nest and find a way to still make a safe place for her babies. Decisions, made by someone else, often make us change our plans too. We need to stick up for ourselves, show others how important our plans are and always remain positive. Doing these things will help us think of good ways to make our plans happen.