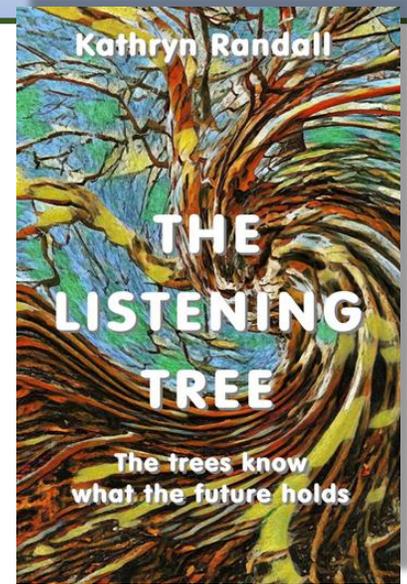


Reader's Theater

An adapted play
The Listening Tree

by Kathryn Randall



CHARACTERS

Narrator 1

Narrator 2

Narrator 3

Nana

The Listening Tree

Ruth

Michael

Arabeth

Fuzzy Grumbles

Tree in the desert

IDEAS FOR PROPS

(Props are optional)

Ruth: pinafore, small book

Michael: small tree carving

Arabeth: acorn necklace

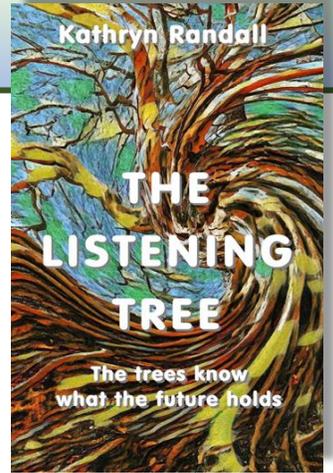
The Listening Tree: colorful leaves on a branch

Nana: small book

Fuzzy Grumbles: pencil

Tree in the desert: brown twig

Reader's Theater



The script for *The Listening Tree*

Narrator 1: The year was 1896.

Narrator 2: Ruth and her Nana sat in Nana's parlor watching the raindrops glide down the big bay window that looked out onto the street.

Narrator 3: They just finished reading the new book by Jules Verne, *The Time Machine*.

Nana (in a frail voice): The raindrops, Ruth. They have wonderful powers. Why, they can bend time for humans.

Narrator 1: Nana rocked in her chair as she glanced back and forth between the rain and her granddaughter.

Narrator 2: Nana told Ruth stories all the time. Ruth wasn't sure which ones were true. She thought Nana might be confusing the book with real life.

Ruth: (*smiling at Nana*) Oh, don't be so silly, Nana. It's just rain. There's no such thing as traveling through time.

Nana: Do you understand me, Ruth? The Listening Tree needs help. You must travel through time in the raindrops.

Narrator 1: The trolley rattled past the house, splashing water almost to the porch. Ruth jumped. Nana's cane crashed to the floor.

Nana:(in a frail voice) The Trees know, Ruth.

Ruth: What do you mean, the Trees know?

Nana: (*eyes closed, whispering*) Go to the Listening Tree. Go soon.

Narrator 2: Nana slumped forward. She sat perfectly still.

Ruth: Nana? Nana? I will go, I will.

Narrator 3: After Nana's funeral, Ruth went to her favorite place in nature, The Listening Tree.

The Listening Tree: She sat down and leaned on my trunk. She wanted me to help her. And we trees needed her to help us!

Ruth (*looking up at the Tree*): Can you help me? What did Nana mean? (*Ruth looks down at her hands*) Oh dear, what is happening? (*Ruth looks at her feet*) I think I'm being pulled into the Tree!

Narrator 2: Ruth disappeared into one of the Listening Tree roots.

Tree in the Desert: She popped out here, in a strange place she'd never been before.

Ruth: Where am I? It is so hot here. And, there's so much dust. Look at this tree. Why, it looks dead.

Narrator 3: Ruth looked around her, but she didn't see another living thing.

Tree in the Desert: Suddenly, I glistened and shook. The smell of fresh rain filled the air.

Narrator 1: And, surprisingly, a boy dressed in overalls and a dirty white T-shirt popped out.

Michael (*patting himself on his arms and legs*): Two arms! Two legs! Guess I'm all here. (*He looks around*) Wherever here is?

Ruth (*Looking shocked and holding her poetry book out like a sword*) Who are you? Are you human? Why are you here?

Michael: I don't know why I'm here. And who are you? Why are you dressed like you came out of my history book?

Ruth: This is the dress I wear every day. (*she pauses to think*) Are you an alien from a different planet and you've brought me here?

Michael (*looking around*): No, I'm not an alien. Where have I seen a place like this before? Cloudless sky, dry heat, no rain. So groovy! I get it now! Star Trek is true! I've transported to another planet.

Ruth: (*looking puzzled*): Star Trek? Who treks to the stars? What are you talking about?

Tree in the Desert: As Ruth and Michael try to figure out each other, I glistened and shook, and the smell of fresh rain once again filled the air.

Narrator 2: A girl stumbled out through the tree's bark.

Arabeth: What just happened? Did I hear someone say aliens? (*she looks Ruth and Michael up and down*) You both look human to me.

Narrator 3: The sun blazed overhead. The new girl took off her hat, and curly blue hair fell to her shoulders.

Narrator 1: She wiped the sweat from her face with her sleeve and glanced at a device on her wrist.

Michael (*talking excitedly*): Oh man! Is that a transporter on your wrist? Far out! Hey, are you from the Starship Enterprise?

Arabeth: Starship Enterprise? That was on a TV show a long time ago.

Ruth (*looking puzzled*): What year do you both think it is? I am from 1896. I'm from Sweetwater.

Michael: 1896? That explains your dress. I'm from 1966. And I'm from Sweetwater.

Arabeth: 1966? That explains your Star Trek talk. I'm from 2035. And from Sweetwater, too.

Ruth: My Nana told me I needed to travel through time in raindrops. And the trees would know. So I went to the Listening Tree.

Michael: I did, too.

Arabeth: Me, too. And I ended up here.

Tree in the Desert: Ruth, Michael and Arabeth discover they are all from the same town, Sweetwater.

The Listening Tree: They all have the same special place in nature, The Listening Tree. And they have all traveled through time in the Tree, to this place in the desert.

Arabeth (*looking at the tree in the desert*): Do you think this is our Listening Tree? What could have happened to it?

Tree in the Desert: Once again, I glistened and shook and the air filled with the smell of fresh rain.

Narrator 2: A man stumbled out of the tree.

Narrator 3: Dust speckled his white lab coat and clung to his greyish-white beard.

Narrator 1: He took off his lopsided glasses and wiped his face. Dirt flew out of his bushy eyebrows.

Fuzzy Grumbles: I see you are all here. (*he points to each of them with his pencil as he says their name*) Ruth, Michael and Arabeth. Sorry it took me so long to get here. I'm a bit discombobulated, so give me a minute.

Ruth (*surprise in her voice*): You know our names?

Michael: Did you bring us here?

Arabeth: Mr. Grundle? My science teacher?

The Listening Tree: And so begins the adventure of Ruth, Michael, Arabeth and Fuzzy Grumbles, their mentor as members of the Society of Rainwalkers.

Tree in the Desert: Rainwalkers are able to travel through time in the water in trees. Fuzzy Grumbles is the Rainwalker guardian of The Listening Tree.

Narrator 1: The Trees need help. A climate crisis is coming and Ruth, Michael and Arabeth must help the Listening Tree. Before it's too late.

Narrator 2: The clock is ticking.

Narrator 3: THE END

Tree in the Desert: but not the end of the story

The Listening Tree: The adventure continues in the book.