



Peter and the Tree Children

Books Reviewed:

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[Diana Barnes](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

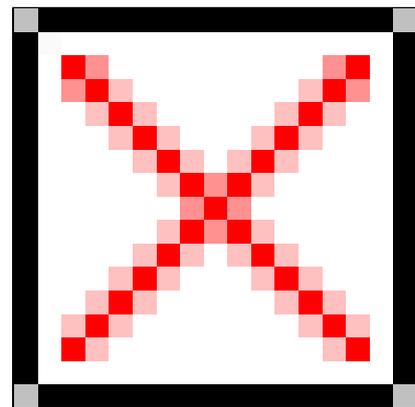
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Book

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4



Peter Wohlleben's book for adults, **The Hidden Life Of Trees**, in which he explained the interconnectedness and sensitivity of trees, was a bestseller, and in this picture book he puts forward a simpler version for children. He becomes Peter the forester, and meets a squirrel, coincidentally called Piet, who is upset because he has no family. Peter leads Piet, (though sometimes the squirrel goes too fast for him) through the forest to find tree children. They find places where young trees cannot grow because it is too hot, or flattened by machinery, but Dana and her horse towing the trees they have felled are kinder to the soil, and they have a chat. Peter is angry when he finds an area where lots of older trees have been cut down, but there are people planting saplings to replace them. These are not what Peter is looking for, though, and he explains to Piet that the young trees communicate their unhappiness at their lack of shelter from large trees, by sending out a particular smell. Finally, he shows Piet a beech tree where seeds are fluttering down like butterflies, and young beech saplings are growing underneath sheltered by the branches above them: these are tree children who are happy. As a conclusion, Piet offers to be family for Piet, and they go back to his house together.

At the end of the book, Peter Wohlleben explains about the 'wood wide web' whereby trees send messages to each other via fungal threads in the forest floor, that some trees can make their leaves bitter so that caterpillars won't eat them, and other fascinating information. He really does have a squirrel who visits him, and he knows a particular beech tree near his home: that authenticity shines through. Cale Atkinson is Canadian and also a fan of trees, so his illustrations are lovingly rendered.

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