The Tallest Tree in the Garden

by sunflowerbright

Summary

Elizabeth can get to the top - of course she can.

Notes

Written for litlover12 for International Women's Day 2012. The prompt was: 'Elizabeth as a child'

"Liz!" Jane's shout was frightened. "Liz, come down!"

"No!" Elizabeth defiantly shouted back at her older sister, looking so tiny down on the ground. "Peter said I couldn’t do it because I was a girl, but I can!"

"Liz, you'll only hurt yourself!" Jane clasped her hands together tightly, staring with wide eyes. "Liz, please come down!"

"I can get to the top!" she yelled, reaching overhead to grasp another branch, only to hear it break under her hold.

Uh-oh.

"Please, please, please don’t tell mama," she whispered with wide eyes and a pale face, staring at the bloodied bandages the doctor was wrapping her legs in. Her dad, who the question was aimed at,
merely sighed and laid a gentle hand on her shoulder.

“If you don’t want me to tell her about the tree, then what do you want me to say happened?”

“I got attacked,” Elizabeth replied, having already come up with the perfect lie, thank-you very much. Next to her, Jane had just enough strength after witnessing her little sister’s accident to send her a stern look.

Their father chuckled. “Yes, that will surely keep her calmer.”

“I got attacked by a bear,” she continued, ignoring her father’s sarcasm. “It was a big bear.”

“Elizabeth…” Jane mumbled in irritation, but her grasp on her sister’s hand only got tighter. “Honestly.”

“But she’ll forbid me from ever climbing trees again!”

“As she should!” Jane nearly shouted, causing everyone to jump at the tone the usually so calm Jane was using. “You could have died, Lizzie! And all because of some stupid tree!”

“It’s not stupid…” Elizabeth muttered, but it was only half-scornful as she stared at her sister’s tearful eyes. “I’m sorry,” she mumbled.

“Elizabeth,” her father said, glancing at her over the rim of his glasses. “I don’t want you climbing in trees anymore. Is that understood?”

“Yes papa,” she muttered, wriggling uncomfortably. If her dad had forbidden it then there must be a good reason. He reached out to gently ruffle her hair.

“At least not the tall ones.”

Jane sighed and Elizabeth shrieked in joy.

The doctor quickly packed up his supplies, muttering about insane families the entire way home.

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