



A Tree Falls in the Forest

森林裡倒下了一棵樹

Author: Lian En Lin **Illustrator:** Lian En Lin **Publisher:** Viking International

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Mr. Darcy builds his dream home in a pink tree deep within the forest, where he enjoys a peaceful and contented life each day. But one day, an unexpected guest arrives in the forest. Let's expand this concept to society. The forest is like an unknown society, dense and profound. Mr. Darcy represents any one of us, living a quiet and contented life, focusing on our own well-being.

The unexpected guest that quietly arrives in the forest might be darkness, evil, or injustice... In ways we may not even realize, these forces begin to expand their territory, slowly encroaching on our home, and eventually gnawing away at our body, mind, and spirit...

These so-called "evils" exist in every corner of the world. Have we noticed them? Or perhaps, we don't want to notice, since these unwelcome guests seem so distant from us.

So, what will happen to this world next?



Author **Lian En Lin**

Lian En Lin was born and raised in Taiwan. After graduating from university, she worked as a character and art designer at an animation company for over a year before leaving to focus on drawing. She specializes in creating with acrylics, watercolor crayons, and collage. Her works often center around current emotions or life experiences. She enjoys children's illustrations, cats and dogs, and ancient things. She has won the 2014 3x3 International Illustration Show Award, the 2015 and 2018 Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustrators Award, the 2021 Bologna Ragazzi Fiction Award, the Taipei International Book Fair Award in the Children's and Youth category, and the Golden Tripod Award.

The Waking Forest: A Social Fable from “Inaction” to “Action”

by Chen Shuting
(originally published on Okapi)

Everyone enjoys a peaceful and beautiful life, and Mr. Darcy from *A Tree Fell in the Forest* is no exception. He has paid a considerable price to achieve his dream home. However, the environment is ever-changing, and one day, a peculiar situation arises. Some people grow anxious, while others continue to hum and go about their lives, dismissing the little “oddities” that appear. Just like Mr. Darcy, who finds his usual path blocked, thinking a simple detour or a leap over the obstacle will suffice. Why make a fuss over small matters when life can still be enjoyed?

But the strange occurrences begin to multiply, and familiar routines undergo

significant changes; even retreating into his own little world no longer brings peace. At this moment, will you choose to stand up and take action, remain indifferent, or simply complain about the disruption to your tranquil life?

This book is a fable that closely mirrors the real world. Do you know anyone who is “politically apathetic” or indifferent to social issues? These are the people who might say that many efforts are futile, that voting won’t change anything, and that it’s best to quietly enjoy their own lives.

Mr. Darcy is one such person. He happily appreciates the beauty around him and enjoys life, yet refuses to care

about changes in the environment or learn more about what is happening—let alone fight alongside his fellow forest residents. One day, unexpected guests arrive from outside, but they appear distant and irrelevant to his peaceful life. Only when the situation deteriorates to an unbearable degree does he realize he must act. But in this story, it seems his realization has come too late.

What if more people, unlike Mr. Darcy, were willing to actively engage with the world and understand what is happening around them, taking the time to deeply reflect on their own circumstances? Perhaps the outcome of this story would be different.

Many parents are puzzled about how to discuss serious political issues with their children, but it’s not difficult to talk about them through picture books. In the story, Mr. Darcy loves picking flowers but ignores the fallen tree blocking the path to the garden; he rescues a poor little squirrel without asking what happened to it, and he smells a strange odor but instinctively covers his nose. In real life, we might eat rice every day without considering the farmers losing their fields to forced confiscation, take our children out but grudgingly navigate around cars parked on the sidewalk, or view parenting solely as a personal family responsibility. In truth, from infancy to old age, whether domestically or internationally, our lives are shaped by politics. Though discussing

this topic with children may feel daunting, exploring the hidden politics in daily life with them and recognizing it as part of our shared responsibility is essential.

In the book, Mr. Darcy initially believes that one fallen tree is no big deal—until the entire forest falls into ruin. Only then does he realize he has lost his cherished home. His panicked cry of, “How could it have come to this?” comes too late. If you don’t want to find yourself saying the same, you must seize the moment and take action—because once you decide to act, it’s never too late.

This essay has been edited for the purposes of this booklet.

*Chen Shuting is the Executive Supervisor of the Birth Empowerment Alliance of Taiwan. A former newspaper reporter, she is now a freelance writer with one dog, two children, and three cats. She is deeply committed to advocating for the rights of children and animals, as well as addressing concerns about future living environments. She is the author of *Towards a Gentle Path of Production* and the picture book *One Million Kisses*. She has also co-authored works such as *Real Food on the Table: Eating for Environmental Sustainability*, *Diary of an Exchange Between Moms*, *Taiwan on a Billion-Year Scale*, and more.*



Mr. Darcy calmed himself,
arranging the flowers he had brought back,
while also making a cozy nest for the squirrel
and giving it a few pinecones.
Before long, the squirrel peacefully fell
asleep.
This kind of tranquil night was one Mr. Darcy
knew well.



The faint moonlight allowed the bugs to breed rapidly in peace,
and black mist slowly began to envelop the forest.



It was an unsettling night,
and more and more birds faced the chaos in the forest.

They rallied together to fight against the bugs, grabbing weapons
and donning armor.

These normally gentle creatures transformed overnight into
decisive and brave warriors.