

Not All Black

“Look Mum,” Emma called.

Emma was looking at a tiny speck of green. Her mother couldn't see what Emma was looking at.

“What is it, Darling?” she asked.

“Here, look!” Emma said.

Her mother bent down and looked where she was pointing. On the black ground was a tiny green plant.

“How can that happen?” Emma asked.

They were walking through what had once been a beautiful forest. Now everything looked black. Everything had been burnt in the terrible fires. The little green plant was the only thing they could see that was not black.

Her mother told Emma, “The heat from the fire made the seeds crack and open. Then, when it rained last week, some of the seeds germinated.”

“What's germinated mean?”

“It means that the seed sends out roots and little leaves. Like this one.”

Emma started looking around more carefully. Suddenly she stopped and pointed down near her feet.

“Mum, here's another one!”

Her mother laughed and pointed, and said, “And there's another one here.”

“And here,” Emma answered.

Emma came across a grass tree which was all black on the outside but had new green spikes on the top.

“Mum! Come and look! I've found something else that's green.”

Her mother called back to her, “So have I. Come and look”

Emma went to where her mother was looking at a black gum tree. Her mother pointed to tiny green specks on the black trunk.

“It looks like it has green pimples,” Emma said.

“They are tiny buds breaking through the burnt bark. Soon they will grow into leaves and new branches,” her mother replied. “When we come back in a few weeks, most of the trees will be coated in new leaves growing directly from the trunks and branches. The trees will be all green and furry.”

Then they heard the call of a whip bird. It was strange because it had been so totally quiet in the burnt forest.

They walked towards the sound. It became louder, and they started hearing other birds calling.

They made their way around the end of a huge pile of rocks and saw a sight they couldn't believe. They were looking at a small patch of unburnt forest with a small creek flowing through it. There were birds flying around and singing.

“Oh Mum, it's amazing!” Emma said. She felt like crying, because she was so happy to see that some of the forest had been saved. “Why didn't the fire come here?” she asked.

Her mother answered, “I guess the fire was blown along by wind and those big rocks stopped the fire coming into the valley.”

Emma and her mother walked through the lush, green bush and enjoyed the fresh air and the sounds of birds and running water.

Emma looked at her mother. “I hope all the rest will look like this again.”

“It will,” her mother said. “It may take some years, but it will.”

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