

## The Little Hazel Tree

**S**shhh the trees are talking. Let us listen to what they have to say.

It's the trees all around Dave's grave, they are introducing themselves and welcoming our little Hazel tree.

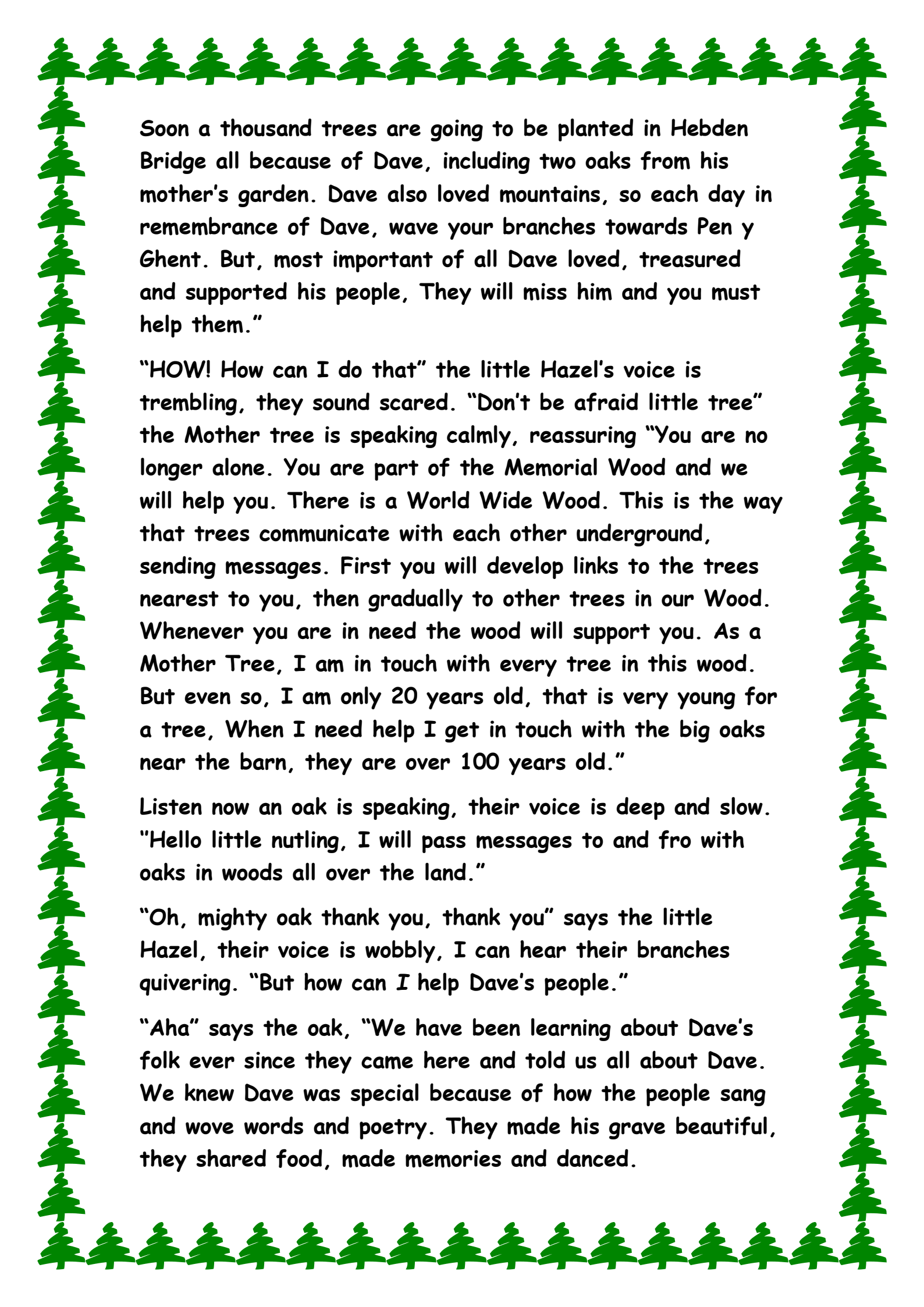
There's Crab Apple and Hawthorn, Rowan, Wild Cherry, Lime, Blackthorn and another Hazel.

Now there is another voice, a calm melodious voice. All the other trees have hushed.

"Welcome to the newcomer to our Wood. I am the Mother Tree. I am a Blackthorn. I am in contact with all the trees in the wood and carry the memories of everything that happens here. Although we each have our separate identity, together we are known as the Memorial Wood.

Now I will tell you of Dave. It is because of Dave that you have been planted here today. When Dave's family and friends came here to bury Dave, they told us much about him. We have learned more since then and you will continue to learn. We know that Dave loved trees. He had worked with trees and planted trees. His people know of Dave's love for trees and since he died trees have been planted in many places. These places are now linked to us, the trees of the Memorial Wood. Every link is sacred to us,

Dave was a far reaching human, plantings have occurred near and far: Portugal, Machynlleth and other places in Wales, France, Australia and in this country Arnside, Glastonbury and Malvern.



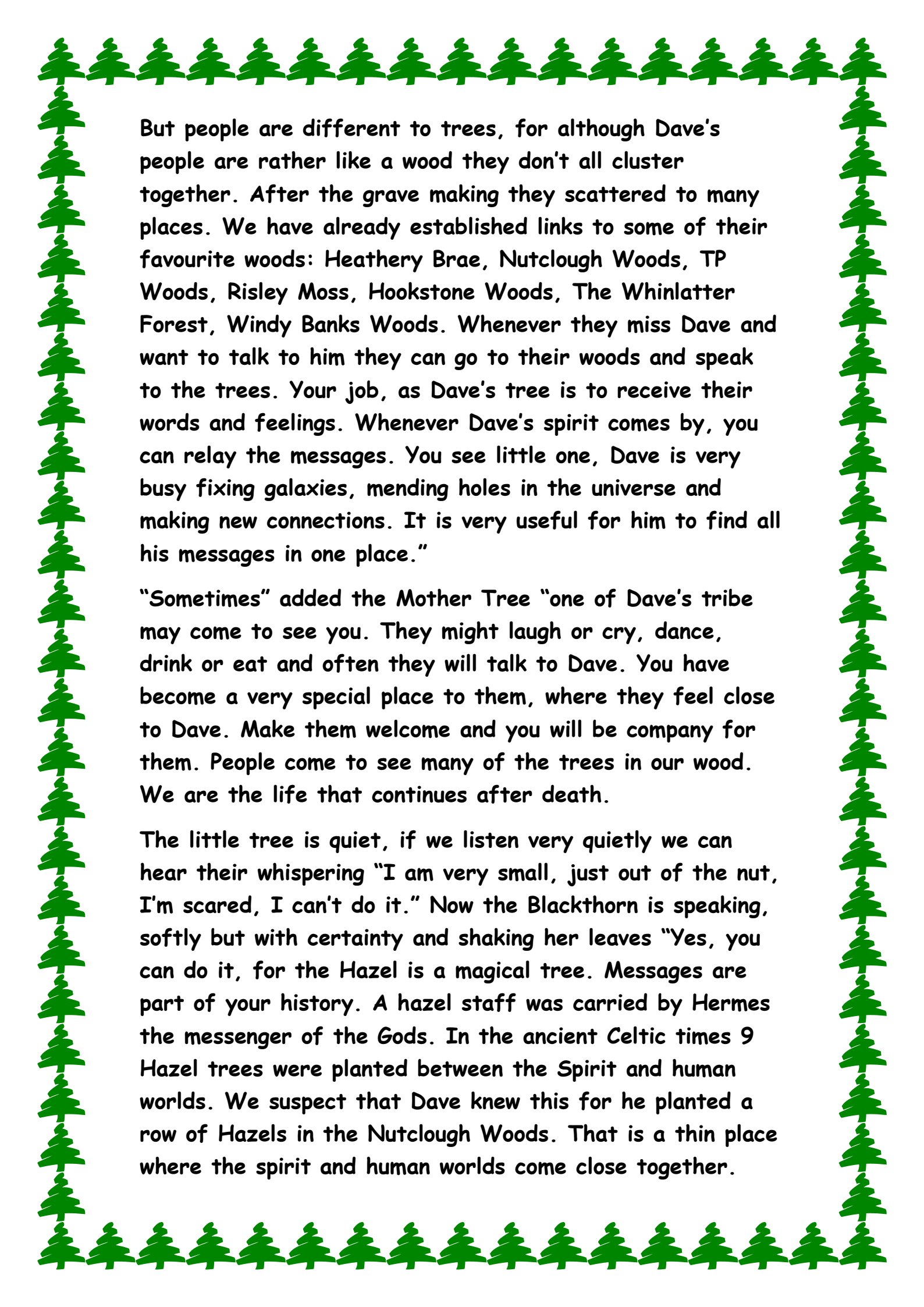
Soon a thousand trees are going to be planted in Hebden Bridge all because of Dave, including two oaks from his mother's garden. Dave also loved mountains, so each day in remembrance of Dave, wave your branches towards Pen y Ghent. But, most important of all Dave loved, treasured and supported his people, They will miss him and you must help them."

"HOW! How can I do that" the little Hazel's voice is trembling, they sound scared. "Don't be afraid little tree" the Mother tree is speaking calmly, reassuring "You are no longer alone. You are part of the Memorial Wood and we will help you. There is a World Wide Wood. This is the way that trees communicate with each other underground, sending messages. First you will develop links to the trees nearest to you, then gradually to other trees in our Wood. Whenever you are in need the wood will support you. As a Mother Tree, I am in touch with every tree in this wood. But even so, I am only 20 years old, that is very young for a tree, When I need help I get in touch with the big oaks near the barn, they are over 100 years old."

Listen now an oak is speaking, their voice is deep and slow. "Hello little nutling, I will pass messages to and fro with oaks in woods all over the land."

"Oh, mighty oak thank you, thank you" says the little Hazel, their voice is wobbly, I can hear their branches quivering. "But how can I help Dave's people."

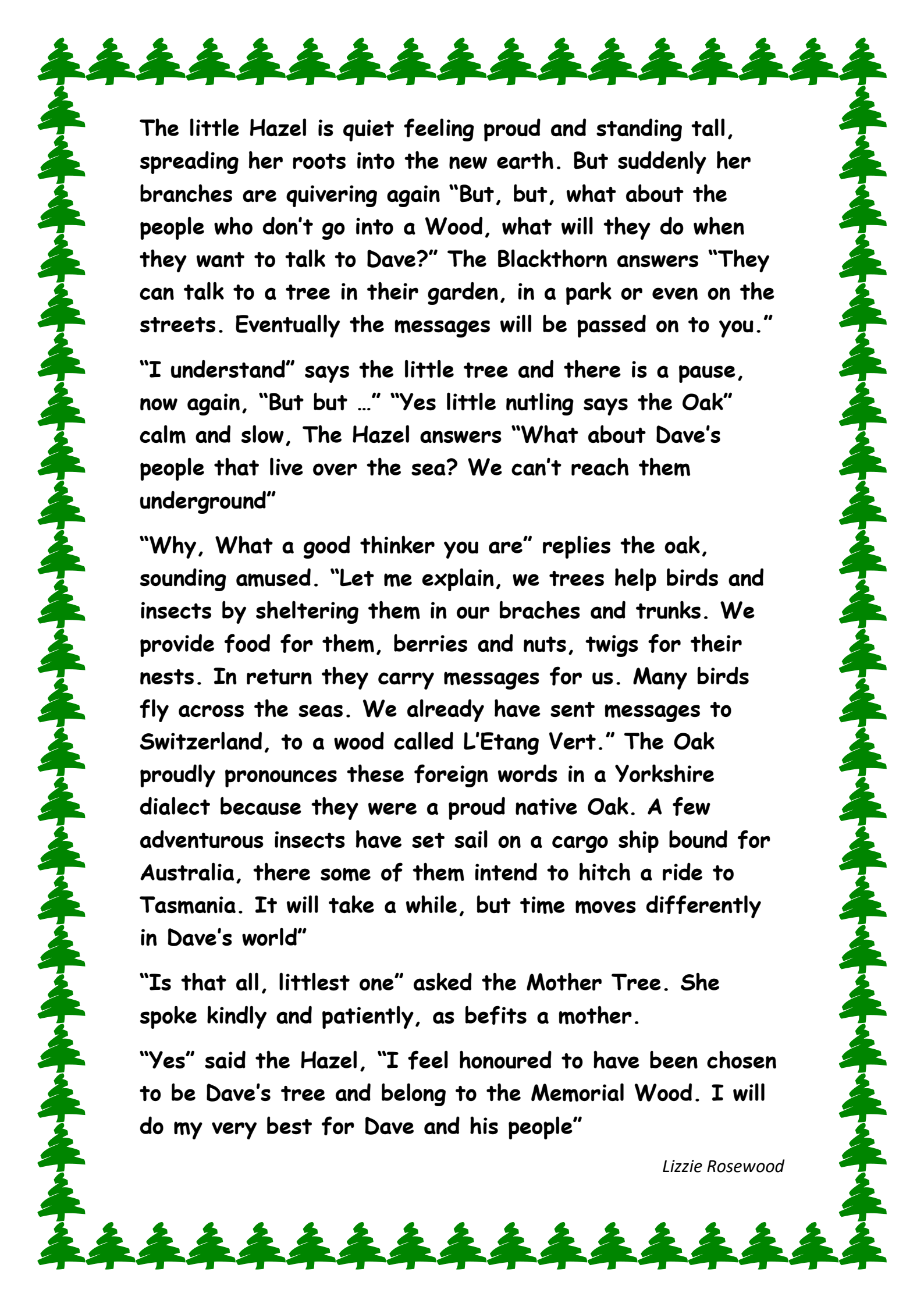
"Aha" says the oak, "We have been learning about Dave's folk ever since they came here and told us all about Dave. We knew Dave was special because of how the people sang and wove words and poetry. They made his grave beautiful, they shared food, made memories and danced.



But people are different to trees, for although Dave's people are rather like a wood they don't all cluster together. After the grave making they scattered to many places. We have already established links to some of their favourite woods: Heathery Brae, Nutclough Woods, TP Woods, Risley Moss, Hookstone Woods, The Whinlatter Forest, Windy Banks Woods. Whenever they miss Dave and want to talk to him they can go to their woods and speak to the trees. Your job, as Dave's tree is to receive their words and feelings. Whenever Dave's spirit comes by, you can relay the messages. You see little one, Dave is very busy fixing galaxies, mending holes in the universe and making new connections. It is very useful for him to find all his messages in one place."

"Sometimes" added the Mother Tree "one of Dave's tribe may come to see you. They might laugh or cry, dance, drink or eat and often they will talk to Dave. You have become a very special place to them, where they feel close to Dave. Make them welcome and you will be company for them. People come to see many of the trees in our wood. We are the life that continues after death.

The little tree is quiet, if we listen very quietly we can hear their whispering "I am very small, just out of the nut, I'm scared, I can't do it." Now the Blackthorn is speaking, softly but with certainty and shaking her leaves "Yes, you can do it, for the Hazel is a magical tree. Messages are part of your history. A hazel staff was carried by Hermes the messenger of the Gods. In the ancient Celtic times 9 Hazel trees were planted between the Spirit and human worlds. We suspect that Dave knew this for he planted a row of Hazels in the Nutclough Woods. That is a thin place where the spirit and human worlds come close together.



The little Hazel is quiet feeling proud and standing tall, spreading her roots into the new earth. But suddenly her branches are quivering again "But, but, what about the people who don't go into a Wood, what will they do when they want to talk to Dave?" The Blackthorn answers "They can talk to a tree in their garden, in a park or even on the streets. Eventually the messages will be passed on to you."

"I understand" says the little tree and there is a pause, now again, "But but ..." "Yes little nutling says the Oak" calm and slow, The Hazel answers "What about Dave's people that live over the sea? We can't reach them underground"

"Why, What a good thinker you are" replies the oak, sounding amused. "Let me explain, we trees help birds and insects by sheltering them in our braches and trunks. We provide food for them, berries and nuts, twigs for their nests. In return they carry messages for us. Many birds fly across the seas. We already have sent messages to Switzerland, to a wood called L'Etang Vert." The Oak proudly pronounces these foreign words in a Yorkshire dialect because they were a proud native Oak. A few adventurous insects have set sail on a cargo ship bound for Australia, there some of them intend to hitch a ride to Tasmania. It will take a while, but time moves differently in Dave's world"

"Is that all, littlest one" asked the Mother Tree. She spoke kindly and patiently, as befits a mother.

"Yes" said the Hazel, "I feel honoured to have been chosen to be Dave's tree and belong to the Memorial Wood. I will do my very best for Dave and his people"

*Lizzie Rosewood*