



## The Sticky, Sticky Pine

**A traditional story from Japan,  
retold and illustrated by Jem Yoshioka**

Long, long ago in Japan, deep in the forest, there lived a woodcutter. He was kind to the trees and only collected branches that had been blown down in the wind. That way, he didn't hurt the trees. The kind woodcutter knew that trees were alive, so he looked after them.

This meant that the kind woodcutter was poor because he did not have much wood to sell. However, he was happy because he knew he was helping the forest. He knew that the forest was home to all the life around him, and he also knew that he depended on the forest to live.

One day, the kind woodcutter found a big, old pine tree deep in the forest with two of its branches broken off. Sticky, sticky sap was seeping from the places where the branches had been broken. The woodcutter knew that the sap was like the blood of the tree and that the tree was in pain.

The kind woodcutter tore off strips from his clothes to make bandages. He wrapped the broken branches with the bandages, making sure that they were tight. The sap stopped flowing, and he knew the tree would now be able to heal.



Just as he finished, a river of gold coins began flowing from the tree. The kind woodcutter was astonished. It was more money than he had ever seen in his life! He knew this was the tree's way of thanking him for his kindness. He thanked the tree for its generosity and began sweeping the coins into his basket.



The woodcutter knew he would never have to worry about money again. Not only would he live the rest of his life in comfort, but he could also help all the people who lived around him. He would never go hungry or let others go hungry ever again.



The woodcutter started walking home with his basket full of coins. On the way, he met another woodcutter. This woodcutter was greedy and didn't care about the life of the trees. In his basket, there were two branches. The kind woodcutter could see that they were freshly broken from a tree.

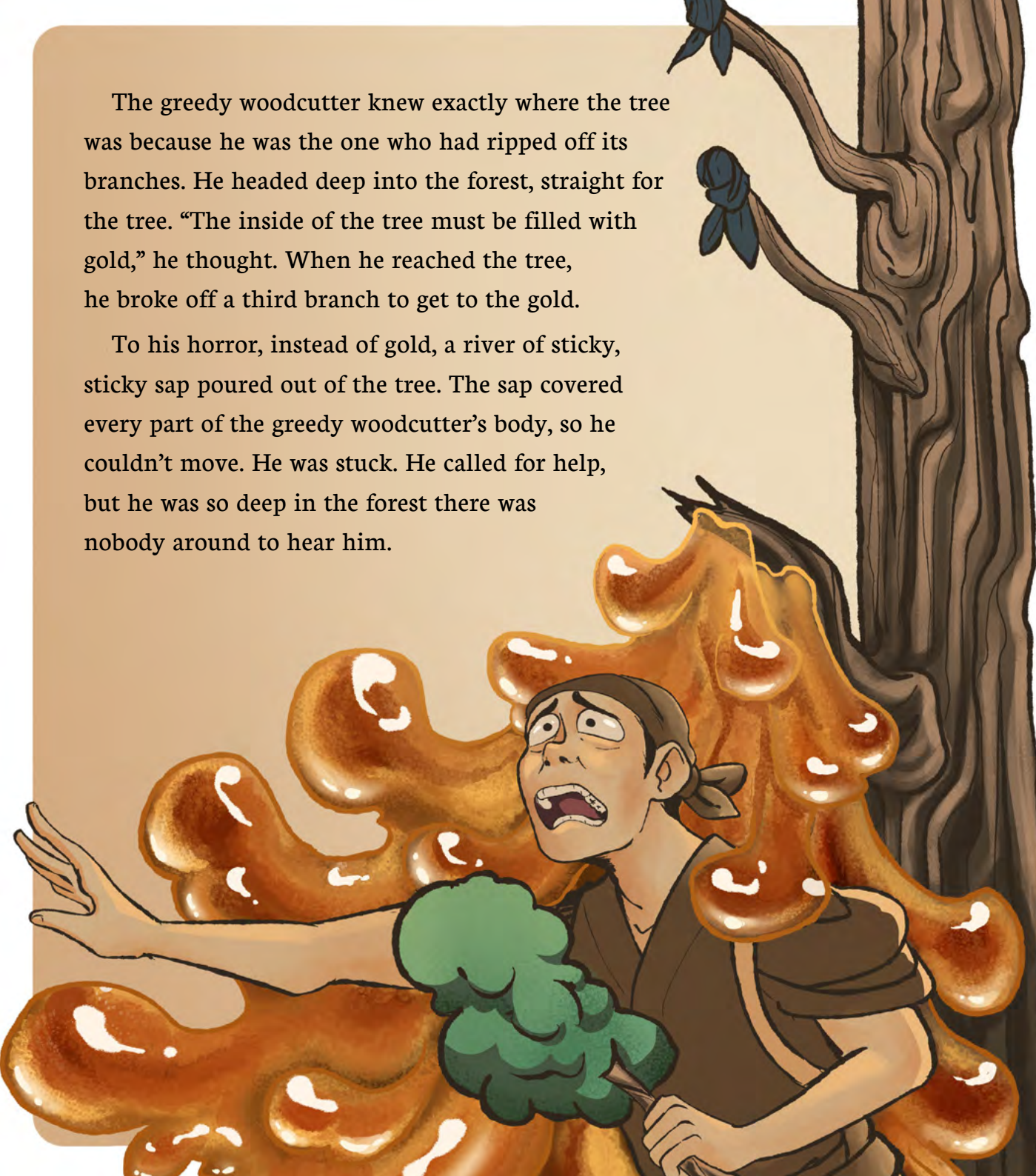
"Where did you get all that gold?" asked the greedy woodcutter. "You are surely the richest man I've ever seen."

The kind woodcutter smiled and told the greedy woodcutter about the miracle of the sticky, sticky pine. "Deep in the forest, I came across a tree with torn branches. The tree itself gave me this gold."

The greedy woodcutter's eyes opened wide. He wanted gold like this for himself. "Well done, my friend, and thank you for sharing your story. I will seek out this tree myself!" And he ran off into the forest.

The greedy woodcutter knew exactly where the tree was because he was the one who had ripped off its branches. He headed deep into the forest, straight for the tree. "The inside of the tree must be filled with gold," he thought. When he reached the tree, he broke off a third branch to get to the gold.

To his horror, instead of gold, a river of sticky, sticky sap poured out of the tree. The sap covered every part of the greedy woodcutter's body, so he couldn't move. He was stuck. He called for help, but he was so deep in the forest there was nobody around to hear him.



The greedy woodcutter was held fast in the sap for three days - one day for each branch he had taken. By the end of the third day, he was able to free himself. He knew the tree had punished him for ripping off its branches. The greedy woodcutter was so weak he had to crawl all the way back home.



From that day on, the greedy woodcutter changed his ways. He never hurt another tree, and he passed on the lesson to his children and their children. Today, his descendants know to respect the life of the forest and to look after the trees.

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