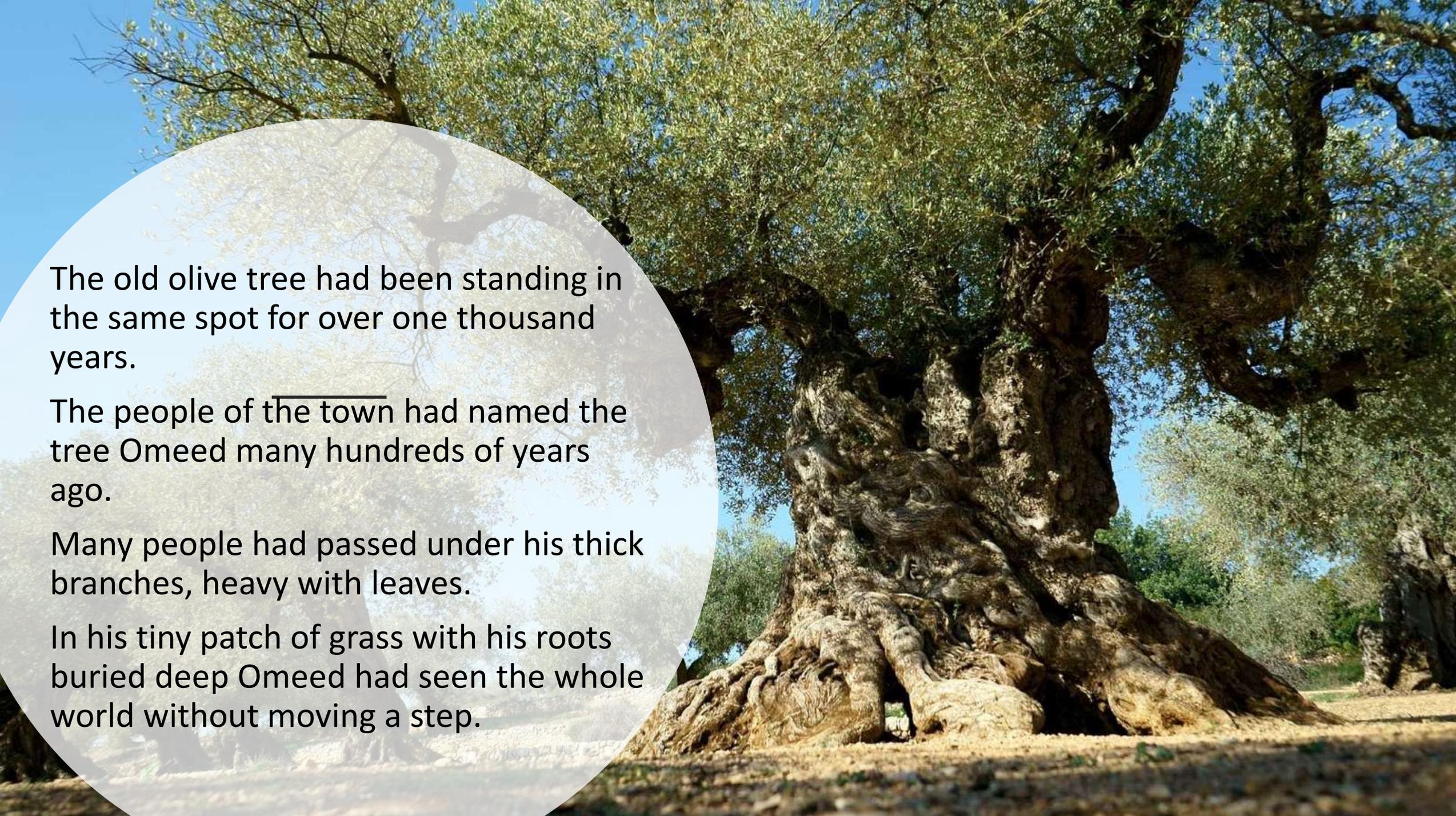




Olive



The old olive tree had been standing in the same spot for over one thousand years.

The people of the town had named the tree Omeed many hundreds of years ago.

Many people had passed under his thick branches, heavy with leaves.

In his tiny patch of grass with his roots buried deep Omeed had seen the whole world without moving a step.

In his roots lived many communities of bugs and beasts.

His leaves made air for the town to breath and his olive fruits made food and oils to feed and nourish the community.

Omeed was valued by many people and creatures but he was old and tired.





Every year the children of the local school gathered around and held out brightly coloured scarves for Omeed to drop his olives into.

"Goodbye my little ones," Omeed would call.



The children took the olives to hand out in their community. "Olives for you to eat," "oil for you to cook," "massage oil for your knees," he would hear the children calling out as they handed small baskets full of olives to people as they walked by.

Soon Omeed's little olives that had fallen into the earth began to grow again and to chatter in their tiny, little voices but Omeed was too old and tired to chat back.

One day Omeed heard a small, young voice.

"What am I Dada?" said the voice, for that is what all of the olives called old Omeed.

Omeed's branches groaned and creaked as he spoke.

"You are an olive little one, a giver of life."

The little olive thought about this and it was many days and many nights before he spoke again.



"What life can I give Dada? I am just a little, tiny thing," said the little olive in a tiny voice.

"But you will not always be so," replied Omeed.

"You must enjoy being small and young.

You must spend this time to wonder at the joy and beauty in the world and to learn all you can for one day you will be old and tired like me."





Once more the little olive fell silent as he spent the days and months watching the world go by. As he did, great old Omeed looked on and was surprised to find himself missing the olive's little voice.

"Little Olive, what have you learnt?" he asked. The little olive turned to Omeed and answered.

"Great Dada, I have learnt so many things. I have seen people paint and read and pray and I have watched you, great Dada, and I have seen that you no longer look so very old or tired."

Omeed looked at the little olive with surprised. He waved his branches and rustled his leaves and realised that he did feel full of life again.



A photograph of a park or residential street during autumn. The scene is filled with trees whose leaves are turning yellow and orange. The sun is shining brightly from the right side, creating a lens flare effect and casting long shadows on the grass. In the background, a white car is parked on a street. The overall atmosphere is warm and peaceful.

"Indeed little one." Omeed said. "I see now that we have many things still to learn from each other. I had forgotten what youth felt like."

Omeed looked around the world he had stood in for a thousand years and saw it anew with fresh eyes and the curiosity of a new olive.



As he spoke once more Omeed saw children with scarves and blankets stretched out below him in a sea of colours.

Omeed gave an almighty shake and his olives rained down like small green pebbles.

Soon the children had gone and all was quiet in the park.



“Little Olive”, said Omeed. “It is time to go. Now you must go out and make your own way in the world and one day you will be as old and tall as I am and have many children of your own.”

Omeed gave one last shake and heard a little squeak come from the olive as it broke off his branch. "Goodbye Little Olive," called Omeed.

"Goodbye great Dada," called the olive as he fell, then bounced and rolled away.

