

Pooh Invites Everyone

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Dedicated to moms, without whom none of this would be possible.

The Hundred Acre Wood is a magical forest that can be anywhere, any time, just by imagining it. For instance, it is here and now if you imagine it is. Wherever and whenever the Hundred Acre Wood goes, its inhabitants go **too, including** its most famous resident, the bear named Winnie-the-Pooh.

It was here, a very long time ago—last Fall, in fact—that Winnie the Pooh and his best friend Piglet had a great Sandhills adventure. Like most adventures, this one began with a bother.

Pooh received a letter in his mailbox.

"Oh bother!" said Pooh, "I love getting letters, but can't ever read them."

So he took his letter to the only friend he knew who could read, Owl.

While he walked to Owl's house he wondered what it would be like to be able to read, and soon his wondering became a song. It went like this:

*Oh how fine it would be
If letters could mean
What letters were meant to be meaning to me.
Oh how nice it would be
If books could teach me
What books seem to be teaching the bears who can read!
I'd read about honey, I'd read about bees,
I'd read about whatever I fancied.
I'd read about flowers, I'd read about streams
I'd read about bears who still couldn't read. hee hee!
I suppose that would mean I'd be reading 'bout me! Hoo! Hoo!*

"It's an invitation of course!" Said Owl grumpily.

"Wonderful ... Of course!" said Pooh. "How do you know?"

"Because it says here, 'Everyone is invited.' And since it says that we're invited, that means it's an invitation. Case closed." Said Owl proudly, puffing up his feathers.

"Oh lovely. Um. To *what*...? and *when*? Also *where* is everyone invited?" asked Pooh.

Owl sighed angrily and rolled his eyes all the way around as though that should be perfectly obvious. Then he leaned very close to the letter and squinted very hard. When that didn't work he tried tilting his head sideways. That seemed to do the trick, and he began reading very slowly, perhaps for dramatic effect, "Everyone is invited to a Birthday Party for the Oldest Longleaf Pine Tree in the Whole Wide World... today!" Then he looked up and said, "Of course."

"Oh my! She must be at least ten years old," said Pooh, because Owl was the oldest person he knew and he was nine.

"Oh my dear boy, she is Four Hundred and Seventy Five years old!"

"What does Four hundred and sebendy five mean?"

"Very old indeed," said Owl.

"Will you be there?"

"Of course!"

"Where?"

"There, of course. At the party."

"Ah yes, of course. . . and the party will be. . . where?"

"Well the only place it could be - at the tree herself. It's no good inviting trees anywhere other than where they already are, you see." Owl waddled toward the door, to show Pooh out.

"Well good day," said Pooh cheerily. "Oh bother! Owl, if nobody else can read, how will they find out about the party?!"

"Well you will have to tell them of course." said Owl as he pushed Pooh out the door. "Very busy, you see. Much to think about. Good day too you."

"How am I meant to tell everyone?" Pooh wondered, "Everyone is an awful whole lot of people to tell a thing too."

Winnie-the-Pooh has tricks to help him out when thinking is required. One of his very best tricks is to ask for help from his friends and so he went to his very best friend, Piglet.

"Hallo Piglet!" said Pooh.

"Well hello P-Pooh!" said Piglet, who was just on his way to his own mailbox.

"Piglet, I'm in a sort of a pickle."

"Oh dear, what sort of a sort of a p-pickle?"

"The sort where I don't know how to sort it."

"Oh my, have you tried to start at the beginning?" offered Piglet in his most helpful helping voice.

"Well I don't know where that is. . . you see, I need to invite everyone to a birthday party."

"That's a wonderful sort of a pickle to be in!" said Piglet, delighted at the news.

"Whose birthday is it?!"

"It's the Oldest Long Leaf Pine Tree in the whole wide world's birthday," Pooh declared, "and she is four hundred and seventy—she is very, very old."

"O my! That's wonderful! You know what else? You've begun to sort your pickle. You've just invited me." Piglet took Pooh by the hand and smiled from floppy ear to floppy ear, his beady eyes gleaming, "Now let's go and invite everyone else."

Pooh's tummy felt warm because he'd had a delicious breakfast and also because his problem had just turned into an adventure. Turning problems into adventures is a thing that good friends tend to do.

"We'll need to think of presents," said Piglet.

"Well now. . . !" Pooh wasn't very good at thinking of things. "What sorts of things do Pine Trees like for their birthdays?"

" Well... .I-I don't know. They've never told me. But when I don't know what someone likes I find it best to assume that *they* like the kinds of things that *I* like," a good rule of thumb, "so why don't we bring her what *we* like best on *our* birthdays?"

"That's a very good idea, Piglet! At least it sounds good. I'm not terribly good at telling good ideas from bad ones." Pooh scratched his ear. "What was the idea?"

"That we could bring her our favorite things. What is my favorite thing?"

"What about a balloon?", asked Pooh. "Nobody can be uncheered by a balloon."

"Wonderful! Balloons *are* my favorite!" Piglet blushed at the thought of balloons. "What would you like as a present, Pooh?"

"That's easy, Piglet. What I love is eating, and the best thing to eat is honey!"

"It's decided then. We need honey and a balloon!"

"And a honey pot." added Pooh. "Because honey is not easy to carry in your hands because it always winds up in your tummy."

So they got a balloon from Piglet's pantry, because he always kept at least one good balloon in case of emergencies. Then they set off for Kanga's House, because whenever the Hundred Acre Woods is in the Sandhills, Kanga's house is in the Sea of Groves, where pots are made. While they walked they sang, because walking and singing go so well together.

Pooh sang:

*On an adventure with my best friend, what could be better,
Isn't this Grand?*

And Piglet sang:

*On a walk with Winnie the Pooh
With my favorite Red Balloon!*

It's worth pointing out that it was just a normal Red Balloon, but Piglet decided as he sang that it would be his favorite. And it *was* his favorite, just like that.

Kanga and Roo lived in a lovely little shack where they made pots called "a pottery". It wasn't very tidy. There were spackles and daubs and flecks of dried mud everywhere. It wasn't tidy, but every part was well loved and well used.

"Hallo Kanga!" cried Pooh, "and hullo Roo, too!"

Roo bounded out and invited them inside. Kanga was sitting at a wheel turned on its side, like a small table. The wheel was spinning very fast, propelled by a pedal below her powerful jumping paw. Upon the wheel was a spinning lump of mud.

"What are you spinning that mud for?" asked Pooh.

"It's special mud, called clay," said Kanga. " I'm turning it into a pot."

"Oh, I see," said Pooh, even though he didn't.

Then Kanga put her paw into the middle of the mud and, like magic, a pot began to appear.

"Oh m-m-my! It's spinning ever so fast," said Piglet.

"It's fun to ride!," said Roo happily. Piglet turned white.

"And when are you going to ride the wheel again?" Kanga asked Roo.

"Never", he grumbled.

"That's right." She went back to finishing her pot.

"Why do you make pots?" Pooh asked, since it all seemed quite a bother.

"Pots are vessels," explained Kanga, as the spinning clay grew more pot-like. "We're all vessels of one sort or another. It makes me happy to fill the world with good ones."

"I see," said Pooh, even though he didn't. " Do you have any vessels that can be filled with honey?"

"Why, of course dear! Roo, fetch Pooh a honey pot, won't you?" Roo left and came back with the most lovely honey pot you've ever seen.

"Thank you!" said Pooh, because he is a polite bear.

"Oh dear! I nearly forgot!" burst Piglet, " you are both invited to a very special party!" And he told them all about the party and the tree and they agreed to go. Then they said goodbye because they all had much to do.

Next Pooh and Piglet decided to go to the Bee Tree, because that's where honey is gotten and what they needed was honey.

They had been to the Bee Tree before. To say that getting honey could be a chore would be an understatement, which means that you could say it was very difficult, indeed. But Pooh had an idea. He didn't have ideas often except when it came to acquiring honey.

"Let's just ask them for it," he said.

"W- w- why would that ever work?" Piglet worried. He didn't like getting stung by bees, it was among his least favorite things to do.

"Because I'll ask politely." Then, as though that settled the matter, Pooh put his plan into action by shouting up into the tree, "Hullo bees! We have come to invite you to a very special birthday party, for a very special tree. The Oldest Long Leaf Pine Tree in the whole wide world!" The bees buzzed excitedly. They don't often get invited to things. Least of all parties.

"And also," he continued politely, "to see if we might please borrow some honey as a present for the tree—from me and, I suppose, from you too!" At this the bees hesitated, for making honey is an awful lot of work. After thinking about it, they decided that since it was for a most admirable tree, and since trees are very important to bees, they would share their honey, just as the dim little bear had so politely asked. So they chewed a hole in their nest and a stream of honey flowed down.

"Hooray!" cried Pooh and held his pot aloft to be filled. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!" He briefly considered that he could get honey this way again by lying but then quickly remembered that he wasn't a bear who lied. Except when he pretended momentarily to understand things which he did not actually understand not because he wished to deceive people but because he didn't want his not understanding to make them feel bad when they were clearly trying to help him to understand.

"T - th - hank you very much!" said Piglet, who was very relieved to not be stung. "See you at the party!"

"Hallo Rabbit!" cried Pooh.

Rabbit didn't respond, he was deep in a thing called concentration.

"Rabbit!", Pooh said it again, louder this time because he didn't know about concentration.

Rabbit was holding a funny stick and squinting very hard and pretending his very best that a loud bear hadn't just trundled out of the woods to pester him.

"Raaaaaabbit! We are heeere", announced Pooh proudly, "To invite you to a party!" Rabbit closed his eyes and swung his stick at a tiny ball at his feet. The ball skittered and rolled and just missed rolling straight into a lovely hole a short distance away.

"Tarnation!," Rabbit moaned, "Can't you see I'm deep in concentration?!"

"But you're here," Pooh was confused.

"Concentration isn't a place Pooh, it's a state of mind that one needs to be in in order to play. . .," here Rabbit paused dramatically with his arms outspread toward the field, hole and ball, " Golf! "

"Oh I see ;", said Pooh even though he didn't, "What's Goolf?", asked Pooh.

"Golf is a serious game," said Rabbit somberly, which is another word for seriously, "for serious people with lots of time on their hands."

"How much time does it take?" Piglet asked, wringing his tiny hands.

"All day, naturally, as befits a serious person." declared Rabbit proudly.

"I'm afraid we haven't got all day," said Piglet sadly, "we're heading to a birthday party for the oldest tree in the forest."

"But Perhaps golf could be your gift to the tree," offered Pooh, " it seems like a slow sort of sport and trees are the slow sort."

"Well Trees don't really play golf so much as get in the way of it," said Rabbit. " But I have a golfy idea, I'll see you there. Cheerio!"

Whenever the Hundred Acre Wood is in the Sandhills, Eeyore can be found at the Harness Track. It is where horses go to prance and where Eeyore goes to feel sorry for himself.

"Hallo Eeyore!" cried Pooh.

"H-h-hi there!", said Piglet, "wonderful day today isn't it?"

"It is?", sighed Eeyore, "It is impressive how different things can seem to different animals. Why just now I was thinking about how today could hardly get worse."

"Oh no," Piglet wrung his hands, "Are you in a pickle?"

"Sort of. It's my legs. They're too floppity. They can't do that," Eeyore slowly motioned through the fence to the track where horses were galloping merrily round.

"O-oh I s-s-see," piglet offered, "you're jealous."

"No, only sad."

"I sometimes get sad that I'm not clever. . . er" offered Pooh. "but then I remember that if I were then I wouldn't be me. And then . . . well anything could happen. "

"Quite. . ." moaned Eeyore.

"Well, do you want to gallop like them?" asked Piglet impatiently.

"Heavens no! Whatever for?"

"There you are, you needn't gallopy legs."

"Oh I suppose you're right, and I'm wrong - which is usually the case with things."

And then Piglet told Eeyore all about the party as fast as he could since it was drawing quite near and they would need to arrive very soon. Eeyore had many misgivings since parties involve mainly being cheery, all of which Piglet addressed one by painstaking one.

While Piglet talked, Winnie the Pooh got bored, and when he gets bored he thinks of things to do, and when he thinks of things to do he thinks of eating and when he thinks of eating he thinks of honey and it was then that he realized that he was holding a whole pot of honey in the most lovely pot you've ever seen. Pooh began to eat the honey and found to his pleasure that he wasn't bored any more. Not at all.

“Oh no!” Piglet squealed. “ You’ve spoiled the tree’s birthday present!”

“Oh my. Do you suppose more honey is in order?”

“We haven’t the time.” Piglet shivered and waived his tiny hands about like we was trying to swim, or fly, “ the party is due to begin in only a few moments, we don’t have time for any distractions at all.”

“Hallo Tigger! However did you get there?” asked Pooh, quite distracted.

Tigger had suddenly appeared on top of Winnie the Pooh’s head. It was startling and very distracting.

“I bounced a great pounce!” declared Tigger, leaning over and looking into Pooh's eyes with his upside down ones. “Say, it’s sticky up here.”

“Tigger, there’s a party happening for the Oldest Longleaf Pine Tree in the Whole Wide World!” Piglet wanted to invite him quickly before he disappeared or did anything else startling.

“That’s where I’m headed! Where are you two hooligans off too?”

“To the party.” said Pooh

Tigger leaned forward and looked surprised upside down at Pooh, who’s head he was still very much upon. “How did you know about the party!?”

“W - we just invited you! D-d-idn’t we?” squealed Piglet.

“You most certainly did not” Tigger stated flatly, while Pooh and Piglet tried to remember whether they had he added, “Well I’d like to extend a formal invitation to you both to the Birthday Party for the Oldest . . . thingy lady in the whole wide forest. “

“Oh thank you very much,” said Pooh, “it would be an honor.”

“Woohoo!” shouted Tigger, and promptly bounced into the woods, “ see you two hooligans there! “

“Wait Tigger!” shouted Piglet, “ What present are you taking!?”

“Why myself, naturally!” Came the distant reply.

Things like Birthday parties seldom happen all at once in exactly the way we imagine they are going to happen and this one was no different. Everyone arrived in a confused jumble, not knowing quite what to do when they got there. There were hellos and excuse me's and "oh how lovely"s exchanged as well as a few "well then"s.

Over the whole messy affair, the tree stood quietly watching and patiently waiting. She was a marvelous old tree (and still is if you care to know). She wasn't the widest in the forest, nor the tallest, the stateliest nor the greenest. She was humble, frank and full of peace that only a lot of love: born, grown and lost, can bring.

Winnie the Pooh had an empty pot for the tree and Piglet brought a balloon. Owl brought a book. Eeyor brought a ribbon. Rabbit brought a sign that said "keep off the grass except for the giving of hugs". Kanga and Roo brought water in clay water pitchers they made themselves. Kangas was much smoother than Roos, but you could tell that Roo had tried just as hard to make his look as best he could and the tree liked it just as much. The bees brought flowers. Tigger brought himself, naturally. Other animals came as well. In attendance were: Rabbit's friends and relations, an old beaver who was there before anyone, a gallopy horse from the track who seemed fond of Eeyore, and a fox whom nobody could remember inviting.

"Piglet, what's that?" Pooh was peering down at the ground.

"I've heard it called a pine's cone."

"What does a pine do with a cone?"

"I think a cone is a baby pine, Pooh." They both looked out across the forest floor, which was littered with pine's cones.

"Oh my, piglet, there are ever so many. "

"I had only seven brothers and sisters," said Piglet, " and that was an awful whole lot."

"Why ever does she drop her babies on the ground?"

"Propagation!" declared Owl somberly.

"Propagation!" agreed Rabbit cheerily.

"They need to be on the ground to grow up." explained Kanga.

"B - But. . .," Piglet was worried, " there are too many to all grow up. Doesn't she care?"

"She cares about each one, Piglet." said Kanga, "That is what makes her so strong."

While everyone was carrying on about the baby Long Leaf Pine Trees, Eeyore got to feeling left out. He noticed that the pine tree was also left out and so he went and gave her his present, a ribbon, which he tied to one of her branches. As he tied it he told her the story of how he got his ribbon and how he'd grown to like it so. He finished with, "You are a very good listener."

Rabbit noticed that Eeyore had begun the gift giving and brought the pine tree his present next. Everyone took turns giving the Pine Tree their presents. She accepted them all graciously, even though she didn't know quite what to do with some of them, especially Tigger, who hugged her for a very long time. Finally Pooh approached with his empty pot.

"I'm sorry," said Winnie-the-Pooh, "I meant to bring you honey, the bees were kind enough to share it and Piglet and I got the most lovely honey pot from Kanga and Roo. And by the time we'd visited Rabbit and - I also walked to Owl's by the way, and I say - you are a very good listener. . . and anyhow I'm sorry because I got hungry and ate it."

He looked down into his empty pot. The Pine Tree whispered something but Pooh couldn't quite make it out, "Excuse me, what was that? I had some lint in my ear."

Kanga stepped forward, "I believe she said you brought the best present of all."

"I see", said Pooh, even though he didn't.

Roo took Pooh by the hand and said, "you've brought her all of us."

"Woohoo! Three Cheers for Pooh!" cheered Tigger. Everyone clapped a great applause. The Pinetree and all her friends began whispering excitedly.

A single pine's cone dropped to the ground near Pooh's feet. He picked it up and put it gently in the empty honey pot. "Thank you", said Winnie-the-Pooh, because he is a polite bear.

"Let's all sing the Happy Birthday song together, as loud as we can," said Kanga.

"Yay!" Roo loves singing happy birthday, especially as loud as he can.

They all joined hands around the Tree and sang the Happy Birthday Song as loud as they could.

*Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday to you,
Happy Birthday dear Pine Tree,
Happy Birthday to you!*

Later that day, when he got back to his little house, Winnie-the-Pooh planted the pine's cone right outside in a little clearing by his mailbox.

That pine's cone is now growing into a lovely baby Long Leaf Pine Tree. Pooh waters him every morning before breakfast. His name is Sandy Sanders. Sometimes, while he's watering, Pooh sings a song he made for Sandy.

*Isn't it lovely to have a good friend
Who's always around when you need them?
Who isn't too loud and isn't too rude
Who isn't too prickly and who's leaves never droop?
Who grows up with you, sees hard times through
Whether it's rainy or the skies are blue.
Who's an eloquent whisperer
And a great listener
An afternoon shader
and morning dew glistener?
Isn't it lovely to have a good friend
Who's always around when you need them?
Who gets a bit sappy but never's a bore?
And is waiting just outside your front door?*

Sandy thinks the song is about Pooh, but Pooh knows it is really about Sandy. He is just as good a listener as his mother.

If you brought a ribbon you may give it to the tree like Eeyore, and plant a pine's cone to honor her. Don't plant it too close to your front door though, that would make your mother cross, which means angry while still loving you.

Afterward

The Sandhills Story Trails Adventures are a presentation of the Pinehurst Southern Pines Aberdeen Area Convention and Visitors Bureau in association with the 2023 North Carolina Year of the Trail Initiative. “Pooh Invites Everyone” was written and illustrated by Daniel Dreyer. Voice performances for the accompanying audio presentation were provided by Daniel Dreyer and Melissa Holt. Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends were created by A.A.Milne who bequeathed his work to public domain in 2022, 95 years after it's original publication in 1926.

The oldest living long leaf pine tree is still living in the Sandhills and can be visited at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve. This story has made several references to real places and artisans that you can and should visit. They're linked on the website. We hope you have enjoyed this production, which was made possible by our hotel and hospitality partners and by the tourists who visit Moore County. If you are a visitor, thank you. If you are a resident, thanks for being the wonderful kind of person folks love to visit.

“You can’t stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.” –Winnie-the-Pooh