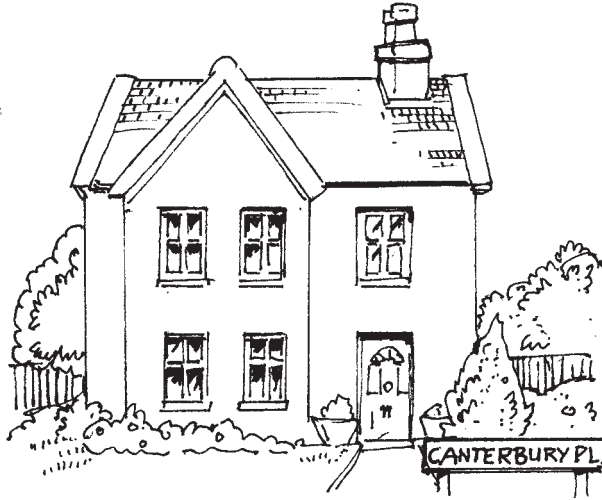




## The Garden at Number Eleven



The MacDonalds lived at Number Eleven, Canterbury Place in a lovely house, with a big back garden. Mr and Mrs MacDonald had two children, Jake and Tammy. Jake was the oldest. He was eight years old, with toffee-brown hair and eyes to match. Jake quite liked school except for spelling which he wasn't very good at. Maths was



his best subject. He always got top marks.

But now it was the holidays. The sun was in the sky, there was no classes to go to and Jake was quite pleased he could do what he liked for a while.

Tammy, Jake's little sister, had pale blue eyes and soft golden hair but she wasn't quite five years old, she was only four.

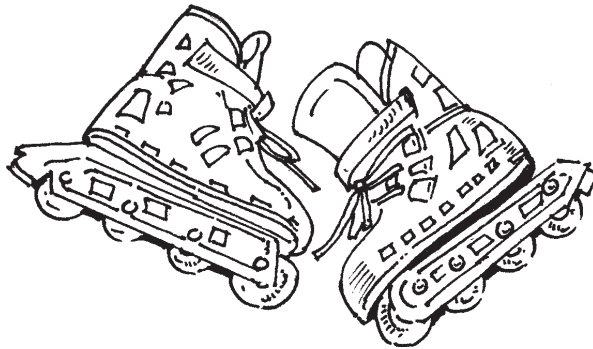
However Mum kept reminding Tammy that it wouldn't be long before she was five years old and then she would have a birthday party.

Tammy couldn't wait. She was longing to be five years old.





Jake was longing to be nine years old.  
He wanted to be old enough to hang  
around with the big boys like Dave  
Johnson who lived at number twelve.



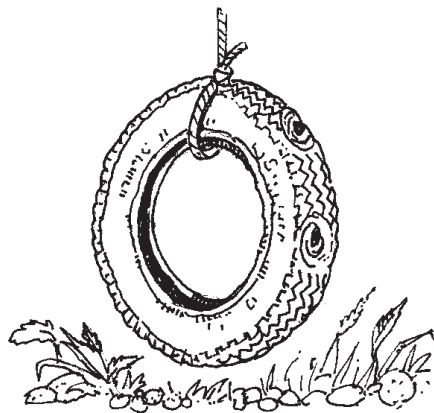
Dave Johnson had roller blades and  
sped off down the road at a great speed.  
Jake longed to be able to do this. Jake  
longed to be nine years old. Dad kept  
reminding Jake that he would have to be  
patient.





Jake didn't like being patient. He always wanted things to happen immediately.

One morning Tammy and Jake were playing in the garden. The sun was shining above them and glinting at them through the leaves of the big green tree that grew in the back garden.



An old tyre had been attached to some rope and then tied onto one of the big,





strong branches of the big, green tree. Jake loved to sit in the middle of the tyre and swing out from the tree. If he was feeling very brave he would ask his dad to twist the rope, round and round and then let go. Jake would go spinning in circles. He would go so fast that his eyes went squint and his tummy squirmy.



Jake thought that it was great to have such a big green tree in their garden. No other garden in Canterbury place had a tree as big as theirs.



Jake and Tammy looked at their big green tree. It was towering above them. It had lots of leaves, hundreds and thousands of them. It was a special tree.





Dogger, Tammy and Jake's dog, was sniffing around at the roots of the tree. There were lots of interesting smells in the garden and Dogger was having a great time.



"What are you smelling Dogger? Is it a cat? Where is it then?"

Dogger, who still behaved like a great big puppy, started running around barking. "Silly, scruffy, dog," Jake laughed.





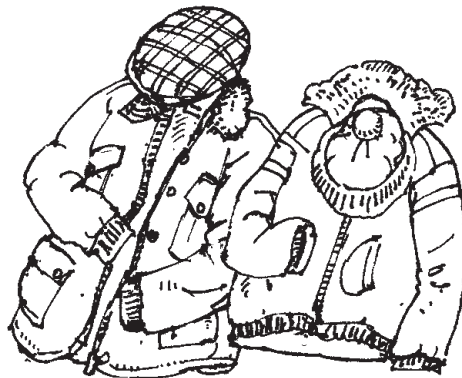
Jake reached out and tickled Dogger behind the ears, just where he liked it. Dogger smiled and closed his eyes, his pink tongue hanging out from his mouth.

Tammy stared up at the branches and leaves of the big green tree and looked to see if she could spot the bird's nest her dad had told her about. Tammy loved the big green tree. She loved the shiny leaves, she loved the way the birds sat on the branches and sang. Tammy loved the big green tree.

Jake liked it too, it had a swing, it had huge branches and it was the biggest tree by far in the whole area - but he liked it better when it was autumn.



Jake loved autumn. He loved the way the great big tree let its leaves fall down, down, down onto the grass. Hundreds of leaves fluttered in the breeze and then on a Saturday afternoon Jake's dad would say, "Right, Autumn's here. It's time to brush up those dead leaves."



Jake and his dad would then put on their hats and coats and pull on their gloves and go into the garden to brush up the dead leaves.







But now that spring was here all the crunchy dead leaves had gone and the great big tree was all green again.

When the spring time came the great big tree grew hundreds of brand new little leaves. Tammy thought the green leaves looked like a lovely new dress. She was sure that the tree must like it's new leaves.

"I like the green tree best," she said.

Jake thought a little. He liked the green tree, but he still preferred autumn.

"I love the crunchy sound you make when you jump in the middle of all the leaves. I love the swish, swish noise you make when you kick your feet into a great





big pile of leaves. I especially like the leaves and their bright golden red colours."

Tammy thought a little, she was sure she liked the green leaves best. They looked so fresh and clean. They reminded her of minty chews because they were so green. But they didn't taste minty. She had tried tasting a leaf last week - and had spat it out on the grass with a "Yuck!"

Tammy then remembered something. "The green leaves are alive. The brown leaves are dead. Why do things die Jake?" asked Tammy, puzzled.

Jake thought long and hard.

It was a hard question. Jake had to





think really long and really hard. He thought so long and so hard that his head hurt. This was a really difficult question.

He looked at the big green tree. He wasn't sure if that was really alive. It didn't do much in the garden except stand there, still and quiet.



Jake then spotted a bird singing in the branches.

Tammy asked, "Will that bird die one day?"

Jake nodded his head, "I'm sure it will," he said sadly. "If that bird was dead, it wouldn't move, sing or eat. It wouldn't do anything. It would just fall out of its tree."



Tammy frowned a little. She didn't like thinking about it. But she was still puzzled about death.

"What happens then?" she asked

Jake didn't know how to answer any of Tammy's questions so he ran inside to speak to his mum and Tammy followed him.

