

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf

Spring came. Freddie, the leaf, was born on a branch of a tall tree along with hundreds of other leaves. Together they danced in the breeze and played in the sun.

Daniel was the largest leaf and Freddie's best friend. He explained to Freddie that they were part of a tree in a park and about birds, the sun, and the moon.

Freddie loved being a leaf. In summer many people came to the park.

"Let's all give them some shade," said Daniel. "Making people happy is part of our purpose in life."

Old people sat under the tree and talked. Children ran around and laughed. It was fun to watch them.

Summer passed and fall came. The leaves turned red and yellow. They were all very beautiful.

One day some of the leaves were blown off by a strong cold wind. The leaves became frightened. "What's happening?" they said.

"It's the time for leaves to change their home," Daniel said. "Some people call it dying."

"Will we all die?" Freddie asked.

"Yes," Daniel answered. "Everything dies."

"I won't die!" said Freddie.

But his friends started to fall one after another. Soon the tree was almost bare.

"I'm afraid of dying," Freddie told Daniel.

"We're all afraid of things we don't know," Daniel said. "But you were not afraid when spring became summer, or when summer became fall. Changes are natural."

"Will we return in spring?" Freddie asked.

"I don't know, but Life will. Life lasts forever and we're part of it," answered Daniel.

"We only fall and die. Why are we here?" Freddie asked again.

Daniel said, "For the friends, the sun and the shade. Remember the breeze, the people, and the colors in fall. Isn't that enough?"

That afternoon, Daniel fell with a smile. Freddie was the only leaf left.

The first snow fell the next morning.

The wind came and took Freddie from his branch. It didn't hurt at all.

As he fell, he saw the whole tree for the first time. He remembered Daniel's words, "Life lasts forever."

Freddie landed on the soft snow. He closed his eyes and went to sleep.

In the tree and the ground, there were already plans for new leaves in spring.

Adapted from the novel by Leo Buscaglia ,PhD

