**BRANCH Three**

Starmer had just sat down to read Scribbler’s write up of the little tree when -

*Kdunk, kdunk, kdunk, tap, tap, tap.*

It was a noise Starmer had never heard before.

*Kdunk, kdunk, kdunk, tap, tap, tap.*

There it was again, this time from a different place.

*Kdunk, kdunk, kdunk, tap, tap, tap.*

And again. This time it sounded like it was outside his window. Starmer turned around just in time to see a pair of twinkling eyes gazing at him through the window. And then watched as the little tree lifted one of its branches to tap on the window.

*Tap, tap, tap.*

Starmer ran outside. The little tree had left its place by the front door and was now in the back garden. The little tree’s leaves rustled with excitement when it saw Starmer and it bounced over to meet him.

*Kdunk, kdunk, kdunk.*

“Well you are full of surprises, aren’t you,” said Starmer laughing. “I supposed you’ll be talking next…” Starmer paused, half hoping the little tree might answer.

“Well oi will if you loik,” came a voice.

“That’s amazing!” said Starmer, running to the little tree and looking it up and down. “How do you talk? Where does the noise come from? What are you? Where have you come from? I have so much to ask you!”

The little tree rustled its little branches in excitement.

“Oi just coind’a open me mouth and out comes all these words. It’s all pretty easy. An oi’m definitely jus’ loik you, jus’ one o’ the gang,” replied the voice.

Starmer couldn’t believe his ears and began to gush, “You are without doubt the most incredible and beautiful thing I have ever seen. I feel so lucky to be the one to find and look after you.” Starmer gazed with a look of wonder that turned to dismay as he watched Great Green Eye step out from behind the little tree.

“That’s all very koind’o you. Oi guess oi feel the same,” said Great Green Eye looking a little embarrassed.

“It was you? I thought it was the little tree,” said Starmer.

“Trees can’t talk, Starmer me ol’ mate” said Great Green Eye watching Starmer. “Are you feeling all roight? Lylee and James sent me ‘ere to check you was all roight, all ‘appy loik. I wasn’t sure whoi but now oi think oi understands.”

Starmer laughed and said, “It’s been a long couple of days. Let me explain.”

Starmer explained all about the little tree and its amazing growth and how much it had changed in just a couple of days.

“Oi’ve never ‘eard anything loik that,” said Great Green Eye. “What do you think it means?”

“I’ve no idea,” said Starmer, turning to the little tree and stroking its little branches, “But I think it’s time to take you to the Stardom to meet everyone. Maybe someone there will know what you are and how we can help you. We are having a meeting to discuss Astaroidia’s first Christmas tree. MJ wants to find somewhere perfect to put it where everyone will be able to see it shine.”

The little tree shivered with excitement and burst into three new flowers.