

Desmond's New Trees

It was a bad time for trees.

Climate change, pollution and wildfires challenged them—but they endured. Their suffering caused by people. Desmond knew he must act—he believed the world needed to treat trees better, and so he literally created new branches. An experienced agriphysicbiotheorist, he developed unique seeds and started an orchard. The seeds sprouted, growing in long neat rows. It took only one year before they were fully formed and bearing fruit—thick trunks and branches and glorious pink leaves. (Desmond liked pink.)

The fruit was also pink. Some trees produced fruit with a peelable skin like an orange. Some resembled pink apples. Another bore fruit resembling broccoli. (Desmond knew he was a bit eccentric.) All pink.

Looking for people who needed to change, he first gifted samples to colleagues (they were so aggressive and argumentative.) The pink oranges made them happy, the pink apples sad, the pink broccoli a full, solid feeling. All who ate them became less aggressive—Desmond's plan all along. He developed new strains to deal with obsession with work, expanded his orchard by selling seeds and cuttings. Many orchards sprung up. Within two years the nation's health improved and it stopped its overseas wars.

Desmond was proud. It was a good time for trees.

Ending One: The passiveness the fruit created resulted in far less effort in farming, tending orchards, work in general. Crops failed but people did not care about starving. It was a bad time for trees.

Ending Two: Other countries, wanting the new trees only for themselves, secretly planted diseases into the orchards, sickening the new trees—along with the old. Desmond's nation retaliated with diseases of its own. The tree wars spread until eventually all the new trees and many of the normal ones withered and died. The climate and atmosphere suffered, causing worldwide crop damage. Wildfires destroyed what was left. People starved. It was a bad time for trees.

Ending Three:

Increasing numbers of the new trees were planted throughout the world. The

climate crisis improved, peace and prosperity spread, people took diabetes medications but appreciated trees more than ever. It was a good time for trees. (Not for realism, perhaps.)