



Kara the Climbing Koala

Kara the koala was not an ordinary tree-dweller. While most koalas snoozed for nearly twenty hours a day, Kara had a bold curiosity. She liked to climb to the very tips of the tallest eucalyptus trees, where the branches shook in the wind like wobbly tightropes. Other koalas muttered that Kara was “too daring,” but she just smiled sleepily and kept climbing.

Sometimes, when the hot sun pressed down, Kara spread her arms wide and let the breeze cool her fur. The younger koalas watched, wide-eyed, as she balanced high above them. They whispered that Kara looked like the queen of the forest, ruling from her leafy throne.

One stormy night, heavy winds rattled the branches. Many koalas clung tightly to the middle of the trees, afraid to move. But Kara crept upward, inch by inch, until she reached a steady branch near the top. From there, she called softly, showing the others that the safest place was not below but higher up, where the tree swayed less. Slowly, the others followed her lead, and soon they were safe.

After that night, the colony looked at Kara with new respect. She wasn't just the koala who climbed too high. She had taught them something important: sometimes the bravest path is also the wisest. Kara, the sleepy daredevil, became the quiet leader of the treetops.

Close Reading Questions

1. The passage says the branches were “like wobbly tightropes.” What type of figurative language is this, and what does it tell you about Kara’s climbing?
2. Why did the younger koalas whisper that Kara looked like a queen? What were they noticing about her behavior?
3. How does Kara change the other koalas’ opinion of her by the end of the story? Use details from the text.
4. In paragraph 3, why does Kara climb higher during the storm, even though it seems dangerous?
5. What is the central theme of the passage? Choose the best one and explain your choice:
 - A) Curiosity is a weakness
 - B) True leaders show courage and guide others
 - C) Koalas sleep most of the day