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DIVIDING THE AXE TREES

KATHRYN CONEYBEAR
A boy lived with his family in a house near the woods, amongst the trees...

He liked nothing more than to be outside, the scent of the trees floating to his nose, the taste of fresh air touching his tongue, the sounds of the birds drifting into his ears, and the brown, green, and blue light reflecting into his eyes.
Why do we live inside the house, away from what’s outside?

I want to live in the trees.

Don’t be unreasonable. Civilized people live in houses. Animals live in trees.

Still, the boy imagined what it would be like to be one of the trees...
As he grew older, the boy spent more time on chores and less time just being. Slowly, his imaginations were replaced by thoughts of work.

I don’t wanna do chores, but I don’t wanna be lazy either.

In time, his parents passed away. The boy needed to find work if he wanted to eat.

How will I survive without them?
THE BOY, NOW A YOUNG MAN, HAD AN IDEA...
He chopped down a tree,

Separating its trunk into logs,

Splitting the logs into smaller pieces of lumber.
He fashioned the lumber into a handle for an axe and formed a head out of metal.

Now I can have a decent meal.

But if I want to keep eating, I'll have to make more than just one axe.

The young man sold the axe to a local woodsman.
The young man divided the work so that more could be done, showing his sister how to fashion the sharp metal heads while he masterfully carved the wooden handles.

Local woodsmen began to take notice of the quality of his work, and soon woodsmen from all over wanted the young man’s axes.
He gathered neighbors from all around to help meet the demand, further dividing the work into smaller tasks to get it done more quickly.

The workers used the axes they’d made to fell more and more trees to make more and more axes.
"I hardly even have time to eat anymore..."

With his business a success, the man now worked inside his shop for most of the day, processing orders and doing paperwork.

So the trees had been divided into logs that were divided into handles. The work was divided so that each day, more and more axes were made.

Meanwhile, divisions were happening inside the man.
He slowly became sick and weak. The man was no longer able to work, but the rest of the Axe Makers kept his business alive.

But the axe business slowly fell apart as well. The woodsmen and the axe makers had cut down almost all the trees with and for the axes.
ON THE DAY THE LAST TREE WAS FELL, THE MAN DIED. HE WENT BACK INTO THE EARTH WHERE THE TREE’S REMAINING SHALLOW ROOTS GREW INTO HIS BODY.