

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Giving vs. Wanting

In *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, the tree and the boy have very different ideas about happiness. The tree is happy when she gives, while the boy believes happiness comes from getting what he wants. This contrast raises an important question: Can true happiness come from taking without giving back?

At the beginning of the story, the boy and the tree enjoy a balanced friendship. The boy

plays in her branches, eats her apples, and rests under her shade. The tree feels joy just by being with him. She does not ask for anything in return—she is happy simply by giving love and care.

As the boy grows older, his desires change. He stops playing and begins asking for things. First, he takes apples to sell for money. Then, he cuts off the tree's branches to build a house. Later, he takes her entire trunk to make a boat so he can sail away. With each request, the tree gives without hesitation. Each time, she says, "And the tree was happy."

But was she truly happy? Some readers believe the tree's happiness is real because she loves the boy and finds joy in giving. Others see her happiness as a form of sadness—she gives so much that she is left with almost nothing. Meanwhile, the boy, who keeps taking, never seems fully satisfied. He always believes he needs something more to be happy.

At the end of the story, the boy—now an old man—returns. He has taken everything from the tree, and now he only needs a place to sit. The tree, now just a stump, is still willing to give. She lets him rest, and once again, she says she is happy.

The story makes readers think about what happiness really means. Is it about always getting more, like the boy believes? Or is it about finding joy in giving, like the tree does? Or perhaps, true happiness is about balance—giving and receiving in equal measure, so no one is left empty.