Name _____

Growing Apart

A tall, strong tree stood in a peaceful forest, her branches full of leaves and fruit. She loved a little boy who came to play with her every day. He would climb her trunk, swing from her branches, and rest against her roots. When he was with her, the tree felt happy.

But as time passed, the boy changed. He grew older and stopped visiting as often. When he did come back, he no longer climbed or played. Instead, he asked for things. “I need money,” he said. The tree, wanting to make him happy, told him to take her apples and sell them. The boy took the apples and left without looking back. The tree was happy, but something felt different.

Years later, the boy returned, now a young man. “I need a house,” he said. The tree, eager to help, told him to take her branches to build one. He did, leaving the tree smaller than before. Again, the tree was happy. But deep inside, she missed the boy she once knew.

More time passed, and the boy, now a tired man, returned. “I need a boat to sail far away,” he said. The tree, now only a trunk, told him to cut her down and use the wood. The boy did, and the tree was happy—but there was almost nothing left of her.

Many years later, the boy, now an old man, came back one last time. “I am tired,” he said. The tree, now only a stump, whispered, “I have nothing left to give, but you may sit and rest.” The boy sat down, and the tree was happy.

Over time, their relationship had changed. When the boy was young, he found joy in spending time with the tree. As he grew older, he became focused on his own needs and only returned when he wanted something. The tree gave everything she had, hoping to make him happy. But in the end, the boy only found peace when he had nothing left to take. This story reminds us that time changes relationships, and true happiness comes not from taking but from appreciating what we already have.

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