

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## True Happiness

A tree stood tall in the forest, its branches wide and strong, and its leaves full and green. It loved a little boy who played beneath its shade. The boy climbed its trunk, swung from its branches, and rested against its roots. The tree felt happiest when the boy was near.

As the boy grew older, he visited the tree less often. When he did return, he no longer came to play. Instead, he asked for things. "I need money," he said. The tree, eager to make him happy, gave him its apples to sell. The boy took them and left. The tree was happy, but something felt different.

Years passed, and the boy returned. "I need a house," he said. The tree, still wanting to see him happy, told him to take its branches to build one. He did, and again, the tree was happy. But each time the boy left, the forest felt a little quieter.

When the boy returned once more, he was older and weary. "I need a boat to sail far away," he said. The tree, now just a trunk, told him to take what was left of it. The boy built his boat and disappeared. The tree was happy—or so it thought.

Many years later, the boy, now an old man, came back. "I am tired," he said. The tree, now only a stump, whispered, "I have nothing left to give, but you may rest on me." And the boy sat down. The tree was happy.

But was it really? The boy had taken all that the tree had to offer, but in the end, had he found true happiness? He had spent his life searching for fulfillment—money, a home, adventure—but only in his old age did he return for something simple: a place to rest. The tree had given everything, believing happiness came from giving, but it had lost itself in the process. The story challenges the idea that happiness comes from always giving or always taking. Instead, it suggests that true fulfillment may lie in appreciation, balance, and mutual care.