

# The Woodsman's Ax

An Adaptation of an Aesop Fable

One day, a woodsman was cutting some trees by the riverbank when his ax slipped from his hands and sank into the river. The man sat down and wept, for without his ax, he could not do his job. The river heard the man and asked him what was wrong. The man explained. The river agreed to help him. He dove and returned with a golden ax, asking if it belonged to the man.

"No," the woodsman replied. "My ax is not that nice." Down went the river again, and, this time, it returned with a silver ax. Again the man replied, "No, mine is not that nice."

A third time the river brought him an ax, and this time, it was the plain old ax the woodsman had dropped. The man took it and thanked the river for his help. The river was so pleased by the man's honesty that he gave him the golden and silver axes as a reward. The woodsman went home and told his friends the story.

The next day, a neighbor who had heard the tale went to the river to try his luck. He tossed his ax into the river, sat down, and began crying. Soon, the river asked why the man wept. He explained that he had lost his ax in the water, so the river looked for it. He returned with a golden ax. The man greedily claimed it as his own. The river was angered by the man's lie. He wouldn't give the man the golden ax. And so the man sat down and shed real tears, because now he had no way to make a living.

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