

# *The Woods and the Woodman*

La Fontaine

French

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*Easy*  
*1 min read*

A certain wood-chopper lost or broke  
From his axe's eye a bit of oak.  
The forest must needs be somewhat spared  
While such a loss was being repair'd.  
Came the man at last, and humbly pray'd  
That the woods would kindly lend to him—  
A moderate loan—a single limb,  
Whereof might another helve be made,  
And his axe should elsewhere drive its trade.  
O, the oaks and firs that then might stand,  
A pride and a joy throughout the land,  
For their ancientness and glorious charms!  
The innocent Forest lent him arms;  
But bitter indeed was her regret;  
For the wretch, his axe new-helved and whet,  
Did nought but his benefactress spoil  
Of the finest trees that graced her soil;  
And ceaselessly was she made to groan,

Doing penance for that fatal loan.  
Behold the world-stage and its actors,  
Where benefits hurt benefactors!—  
A weary theme, and full of pain;  
For where's the shade so cool and sweet,  
Protecting strangers from the heat,  
But might of such a wrong complain?  
Alas! I vex myself in vain;  
Ingratitude, do what I will,  
Is sure to be the fashion still.

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