

Samuel and the Elf

“Samuel!” called his mother. “Go fetch some wood.”

The boy grabbed his thin jacket and took the axe from the shed. “They know my jacket isn’t warm and I don’t have boots. And it’s so hard to cut branches with a dull axe. I think they keep it dull so I have to work extra hard.”

Although the axe was dull and he was cold, everyday Samuel brought back enough wood for fireplace and the stove.

“Samuel,” called his older sister. “Get some wood and make me a new dresser for my room.”

The boy grabbed his jacket and got the axe. “She knows it’s freezing out. She knows too that the tools to make furniture are old and worn. No one cares how hard I work or how cold I get.”

Samuel got the wood for his sister and built her a dresser.

In the evening, Samuel’s father told him to get more wood. It was to be a very cold night.

Samuel went and chopped more wood.

On his way home, an elf stopped him. “You’re shivering, Samuel. Put this coat and these boots on.”

The boy took the coat and boots and did as the elf asked. Instantly, he was warmed. “How do you know my name?”

“Every day, I watch and see how hard you work. I see the dull axe you use and that you aren’t dressed properly for the cold and snow. I see that the rest of your family has fine things.”

Samuel threw the axe over his shoulder. “Thank you, sir. I don’t think I’ll ever be cold again.”

“There’s more,” said the elf. He touched the axe and its blade became razor sharp. “Cut that thick branch.”

Samuel went to the branch and with one chop the branch split into many pieces. “It’s got to be magic! I can cut all day with this. Thank you, sir.”

“You’re welcome,” said the elf. “With your new winter clothes and sharp axe that will never get dull, you can go anywhere and earn lots of money cutting wood. Go seek a new life.”

Samuel grabbed the elf’s hand and shook it hard. “Thank you!” He left the wood he chopped for his family and raced off.

Questions

1. Why did Samuel have a hard time cutting wood?
2. Do you think it was fair how Samuel's family treated him? Why or why not?
3. Why did the elf help Samuel?
4. Do you think Samuel had a better life after he left?