

SHARPEN YOUR AXE

Once upon a time there were two lumberjacks, Lars and Sven. Each of them were the best lumberjacks in their camps and every year, the two camps would meet and challenge one another to determine the best lumberjack of all.

For the past several years, the contest came down to the two finalists, Lars and Sven. As in past contests, this year, their score was tied after the tree-climbing and log-rolling. All that was left was the wood-chopping contest. Lars was young and strong. His blond hair flowed past his shoulders and his muscles bulged from his flannel shirt. Sven, the 10-year undefeated champion, was in stark contrast to Lars. His hair was gray now and his flannel shirt hung loosely over his once-proud physique. Lars was certain it was his time to win. “The champion has grown old and weak,” he said to himself, “and I have trained all year. I am younger, much stronger and I can chop for hours.”

And so the chopping began. Sure enough, Lars chopped and chopped and chopped. Sven was chopping, too, but every half hour or so he would go and sit on a tree stump with his axe across his lap, sweating profusely and breathing heavily. “Ah-hah!!” Lars exclaimed, “I was right. He is old and tired and weak.” His excitement gave him even more energy and he chopped even faster. Finally, the time elapsed and Lars gleefully threw his arms up into the air in victory. The announcer then said, “And the winner is SVEN, our still-undefeated champion!”

Lars was stunned and looked in disbelief at the pile of wood Sven had chopped. Sure enough, Sven’s woodpile was much higher.

“But how did you do it?” Lars asked Sven, “Every time I looked over, you were sitting on the stump, resting.”

“I wasn’t resting,” replied Sven.

“What, then, were you doing?” asked Lars.

“I was sharpening my axe.”