In a quiet village nestled near a dense forest, there lived a mischievous boy named Tom. He thrived on playing tricks and often spun tales to amuse himself. One sunny afternoon, Tom decided to frighten the local lumberjacks working near the woods. He climbed a hill and shouted, “Bear! Bear! A bear is on the loose!” The kind-hearted lumberjacks, axes in hand, rushed to his aid, concerned for his safety. But when they reached him, Tom doubled over in laughter, gasping, “No bear here! Just a joke!” The lumberjacks, annoyed, returned to their work, muttering under their breath.

A few hours later, Tom’s voice echoed again: “Bear! Bear! It’s after me!” The lumberjacks sighed, exchanged weary glances, and hurried up the hill once more. This time, Tom met them with a mocking grin. “Fooled you again!” he crowed. The men’s patience snapped. “No more tricks,” they warned, storming back to camp. “We won’t fall for your lies a third time.”

That evening, as shadows lengthened, a real bear emerged from the forest. Tom, alone and terrified, screamed for help: “Bear! Bear! Please help!” His cries grew desperate, but the lumberjacks, still stinging from his deceit, stayed silent. The bear, undeterred, closed in. Tom’s final plea was drowned out by the rustle of leaves—and the forest fell quiet once more.

The next morning, the lumberjacks found only scattered clothing and a haunting stillness where Tom had stood. They shook their heads in sorrow, realizing too late that their distrust had sealed his fate. The lesson lingered in the village: trust, once broken, can cost more than words.