

Take Your Place in the Forest

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By Mere Caesar

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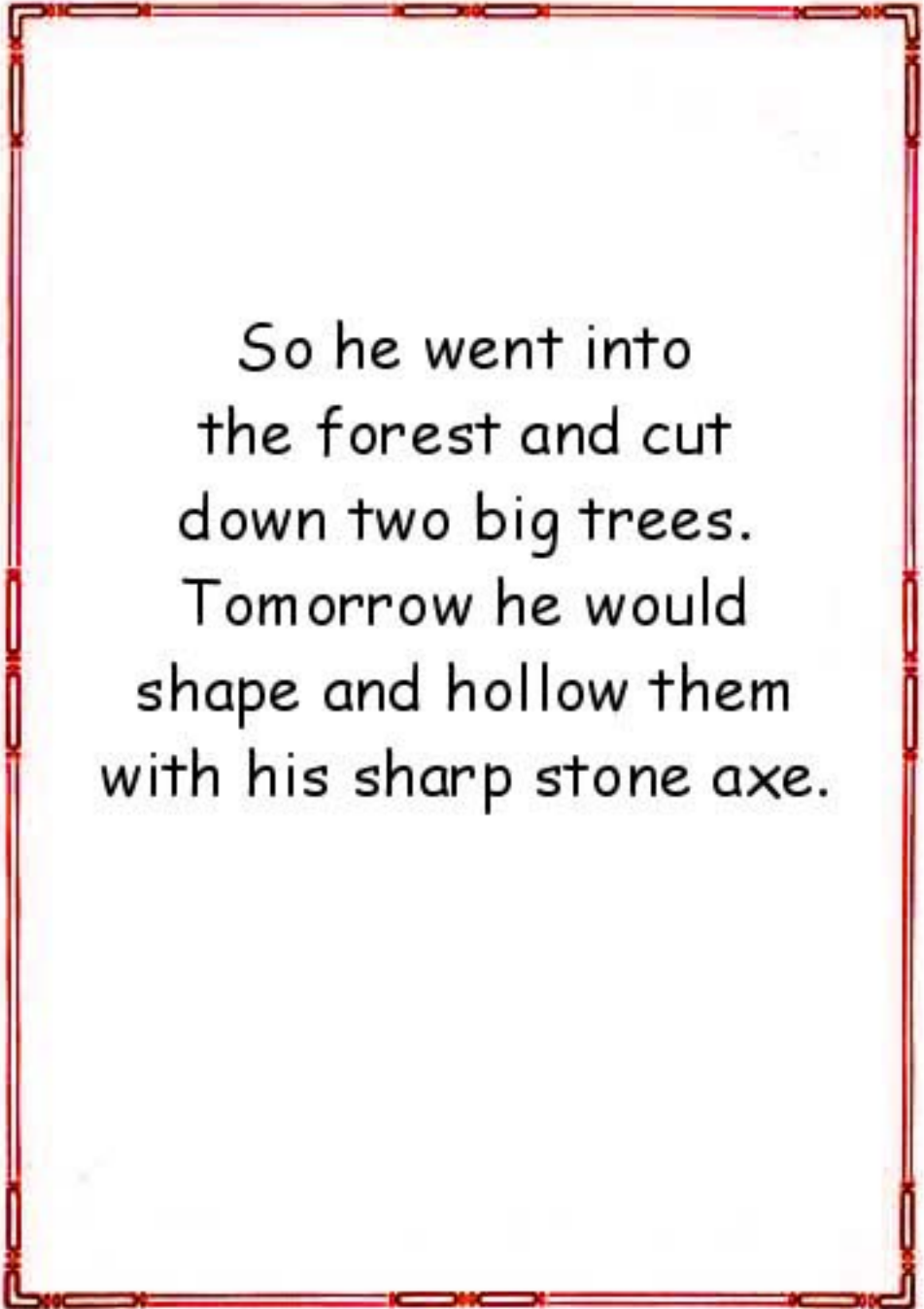
Take Your Place
in the Forest

by Mere Caesar

Kahu had a large family
and they lived in the South
Island of Aotearoa.

The family ate a lot of fish,
more than Kahu could catch
in his little canoe.

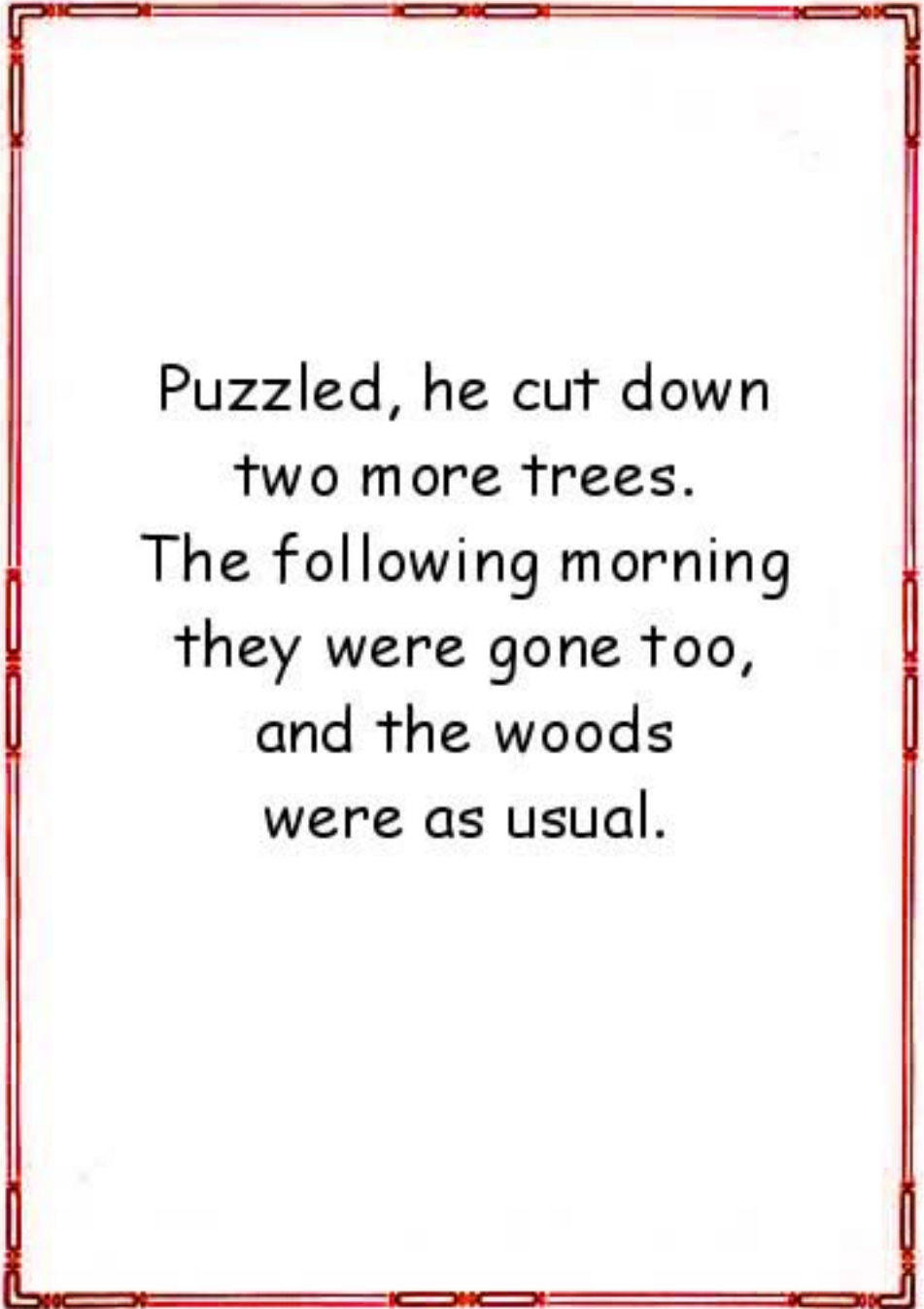
However, each day Kahu
ventured out to catch
as much fish as he could
for his family, he really
needed a big sailing
boat with two hulls.



So he went into
the forest and cut
down two big trees.
Tomorrow he would
shape and hollow them
with his sharp stone axe.

Early the next morning
Kahu was in the forest
to begin his work.

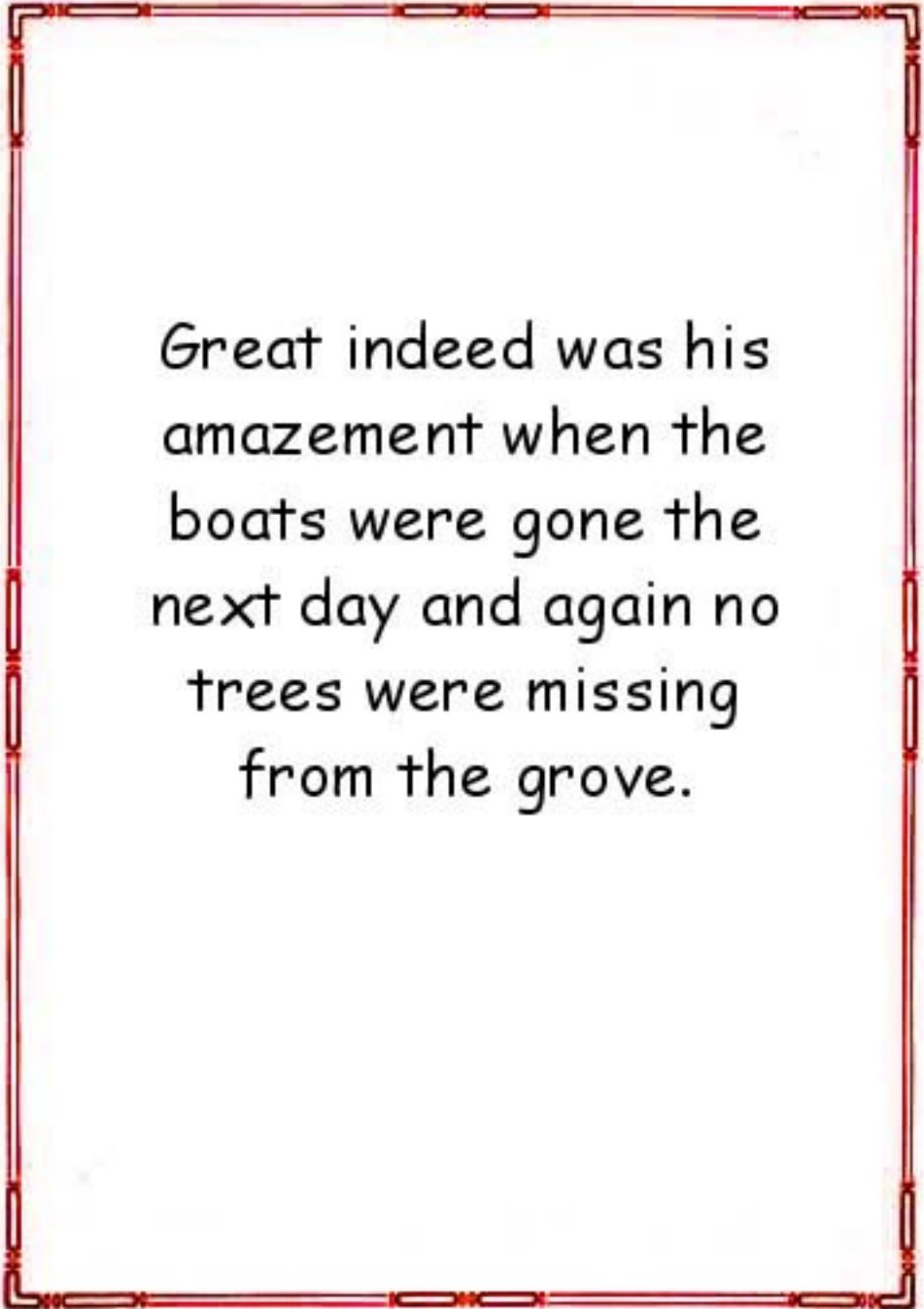
But to his amazement
the two trees he had
felled the night before
were gone. The woods
were as before.



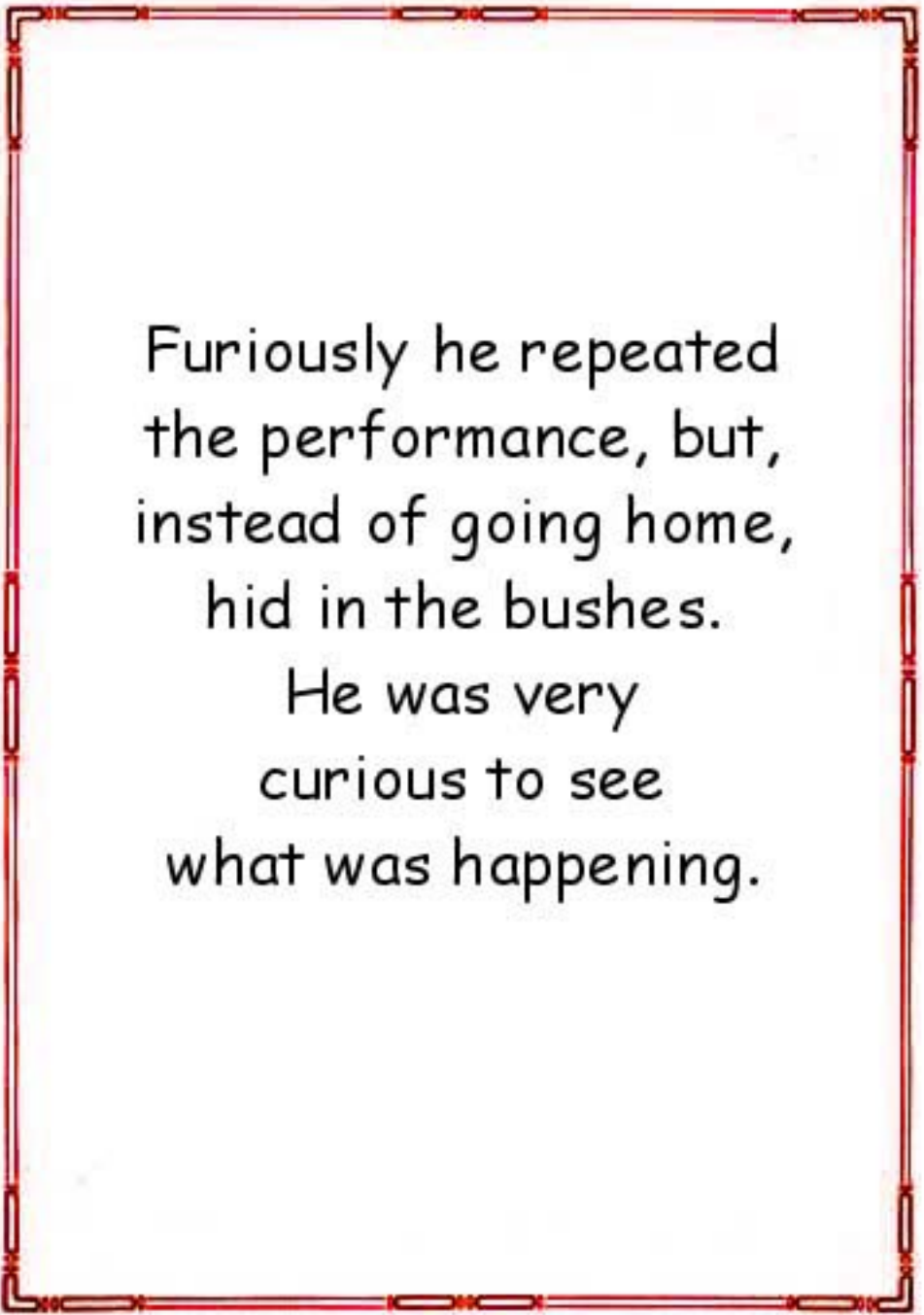
Puzzled, he cut down
two more trees.
The following morning
they were gone too,
and the woods
were as usual.



Angry this time,
he downed two
trees and working
extra hard, made
two big canoes.
They were finished
before sundown.

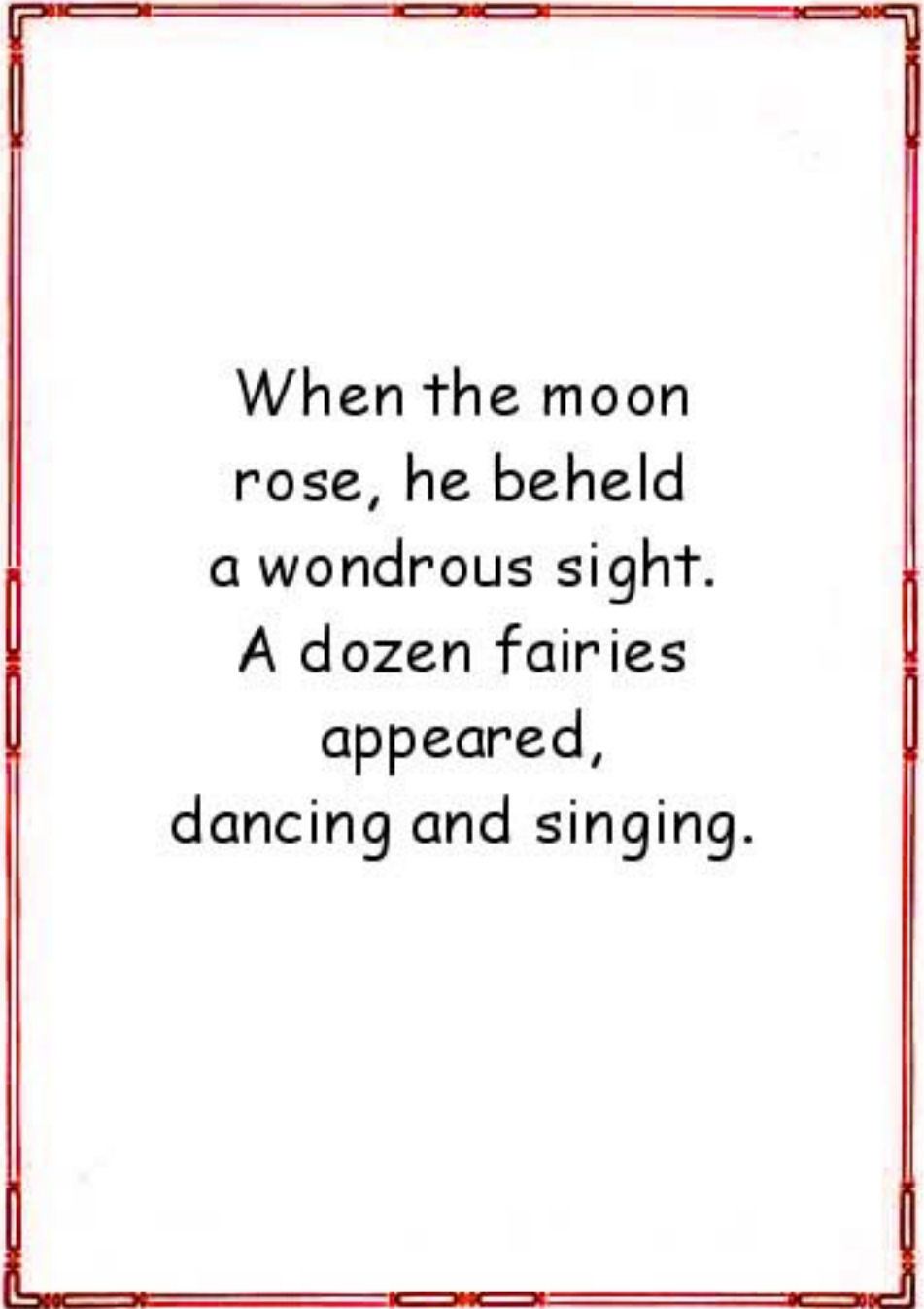


Great indeed was his
amazement when the
boats were gone the
next day and again no
trees were missing
from the grove.



Furiously he repeated
the performance, but,
instead of going home,
hid in the bushes.

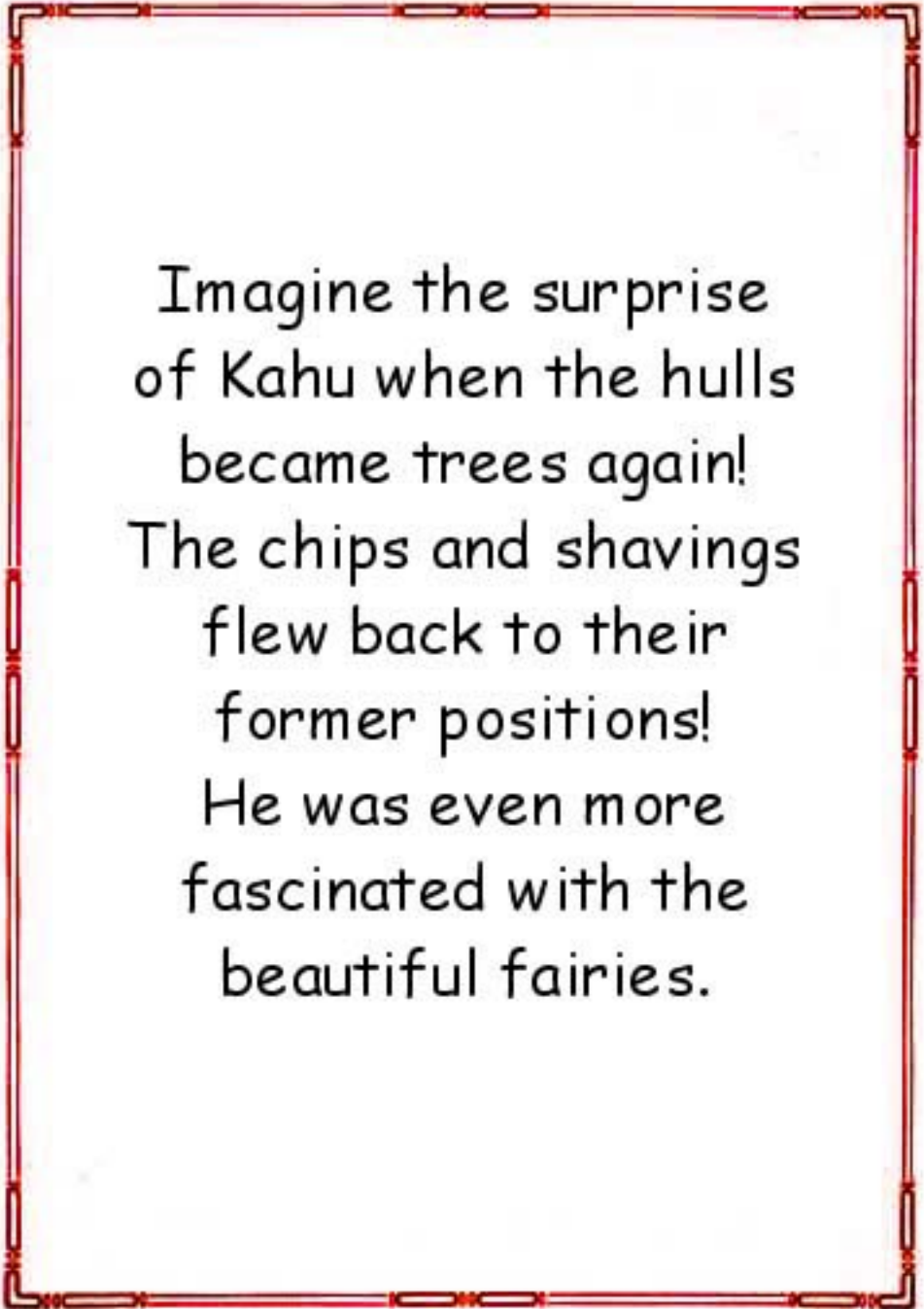
He was very
curious to see
what was happening.



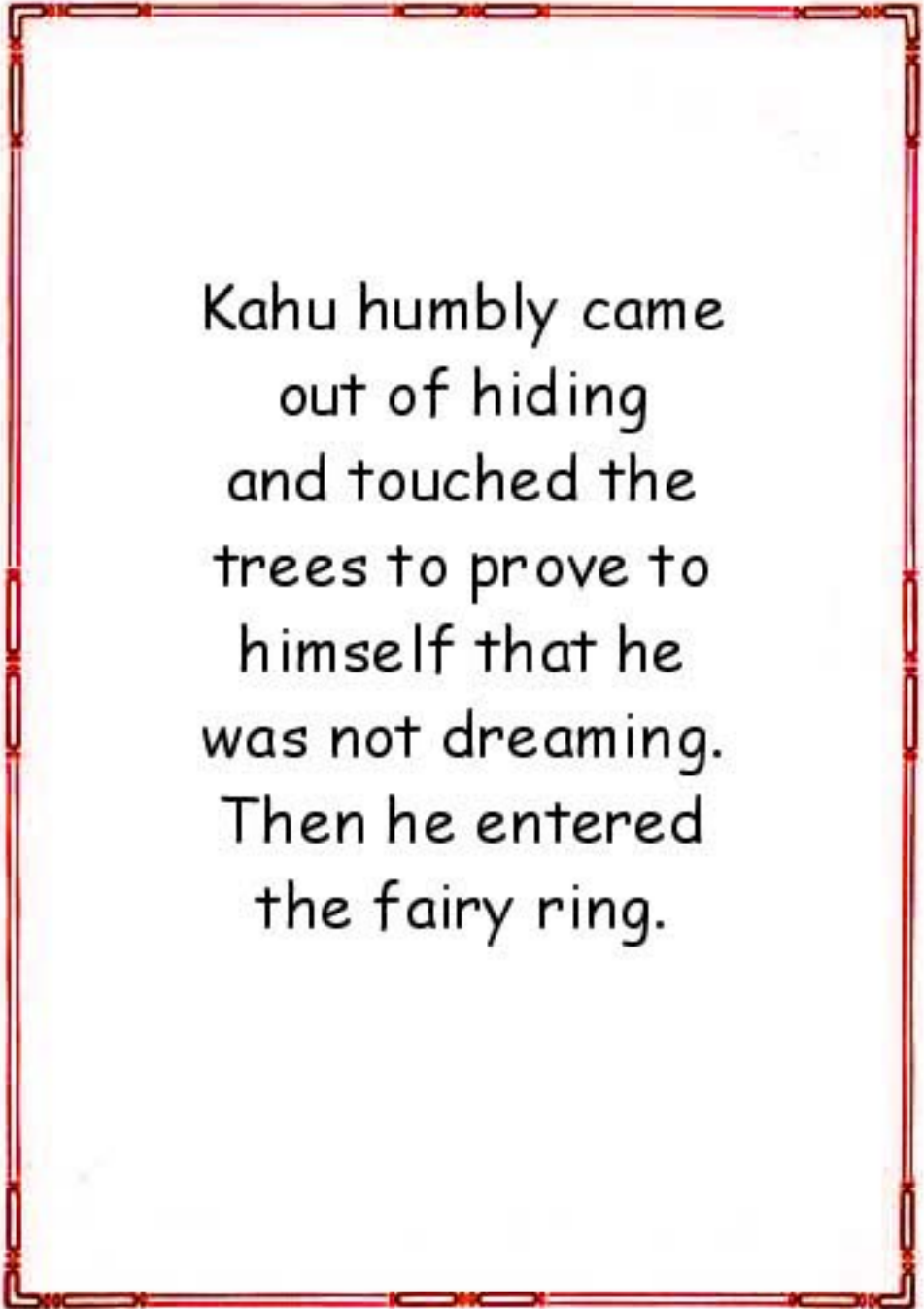
When the moon
rose, he beheld
a wondrous sight.
A dozen fairies
appeared,
dancing and singing.



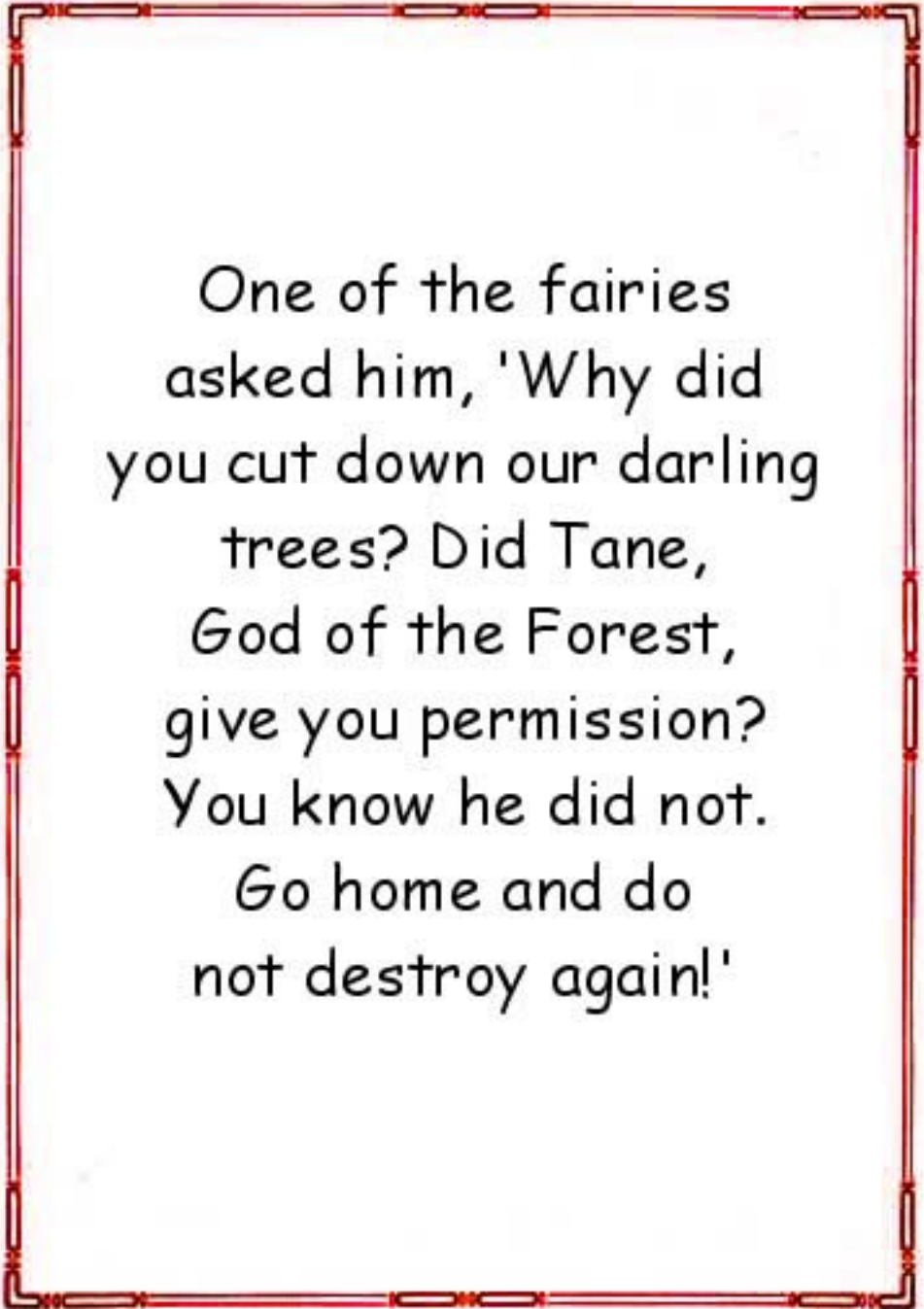
'Fly together,
chips and shavings,
Then stand up,
you two, our darlings,
Stick ye, stick ye,
fast together,
Take your places
in the forest!'



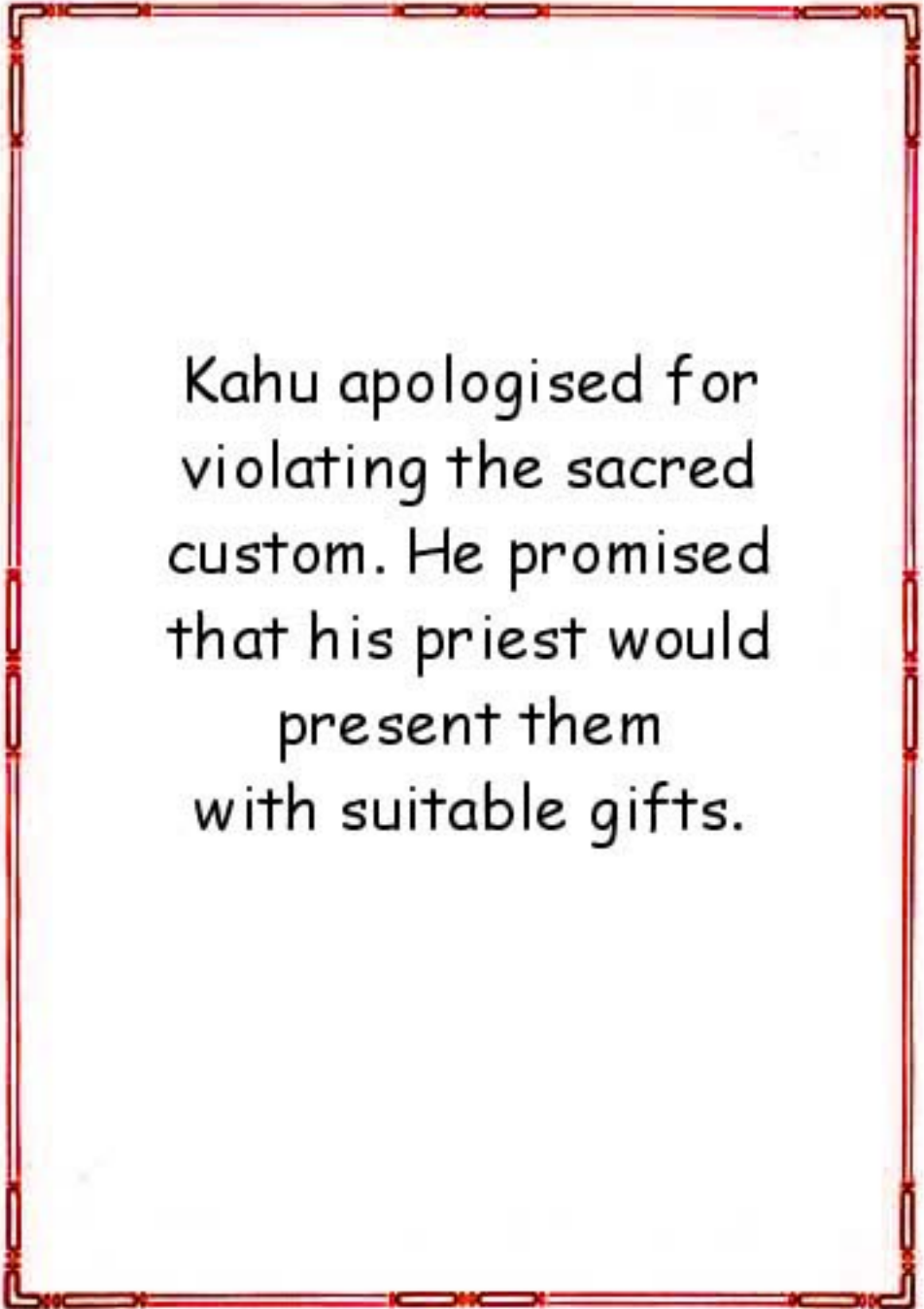
Imagine the surprise
of Kahu when the hulls
became trees again!
The chips and shavings
flew back to their
former positions!
He was even more
fascinated with the
beautiful fairies.



Kahu humbly came
out of hiding
and touched the
trees to prove to
himself that he
was not dreaming.
Then he entered
the fairy ring.



One of the fairies
asked him, 'Why did
you cut down our darling
trees? Did Tane,
God of the Forest,
give you permission?
You know he did not.
Go home and do
not destroy again!'



Kahu apologised for violating the sacred custom. He promised that his priest would present them with suitable gifts.

Then the fairies
forgave him.

They knew he
was a good man,
and a good provider
for his family and
they felt that Kahu
was really sorry for
his mistake and really
needed a boat.

They promised to
make one for him.

Great was his joy
next morning to find
a beautiful double hulled
sailing ship in the forest.
Kahu quickly called out to
Tane, God of the Forest,
thank you o great one,
now I will be able to
feed my family.
I will always respect
you and your Forest.

For many years
Kahu sailed their
boat all over the
South Seas, feeling
very protected and
watched over. He also
taught his family about
the sacredness of the
forest and on no
condition is anyone
allowed to just cut down
trees, permission must be
sought out first from
Tane, the God of the Forest.

The End.

