



The Forest That Chooses

“Forest never forgets the footprint that wound it.”

The elders of Devavann - (Divine Forest) had repeated those words for centuries. To outsiders, they were just another village surrounded by ordinary forest. But to the people who lived there, the forest was not just a collection of trees to them. It was their protector, their home, their connection to earth. The villagers believed that every river had a spirit, every tree carried a story, and every creature had a purpose in the balance of nature.

At the heart of the forest stood an ancient banyan tree known as Vrisksha Raja-the king of trees. No one knew who had planted it or how old truly it was. The oldest villagers claimed, it had stood there before the first temple was built. Legends said its roots reached the underworld, its branches touched the heavens, and every leaf carried them memory of a life the forest had witnessed.

On Every full moon, the villagers placed fruits, flowers, and water beneath its roots.

Not because they feared it.

Because they respected it.

There was only one rule.

No one was allowed to enter the forest after sunset.

No one questioned why.

Until the disappearances began.

The first person to vanish was a wealthy Timber Merchant was named Yadav Singh.

He had ignored every warning and secretly cut down dozens of ancient trees to sell their wood.

The next morning, his truck was found abandoned near the forest entrance.

The freshly cut logs had vanished.

So had Yadav Singh.

There were no footprints.

No blood.

Only three deep claw marks carved into the earth.

Months later, another man disappeared.



He had poisoned a nearby stream with factory waste.
Then a hunter vanished.
Then a land broker who had forged documents to clear protected land.
Each disappearance happened on the night of a full moon.
Each person had one thing in common.
They had harmed the forest.
Fear spread through Devavann.
The villagers stopped going near the trees after dusk.
Children were told to avoid the place when darkness fell.
Soon, people stopped calling it Devavann.
They called it.....

The Forest That Chooses.

Years later, Thara, a young environmental science student returned to her village after completing college.
Unlike the others, she didn't believe the stories.
"There must be an explanation," she insisted,
"I can believe in wild animals, criminals anything But not spirits.
Her grandfather smiled and said," The forest doesn't need people to believe in it child".
Thara decided to investigate.
On the next full moon, carrying only a torch, a notebook, and a camera, she stepped into the forbidden forest.
The air changed immediately.
The deeper she walked, the quieter everything became.
No insects.
No birds.



Even the wind seemed to hold its breath.
Her torch flicked.

Then died.

The moonlight barely reached the ground through the thick canopy.

Suddenly...

She heard whispers.

Not one voice.

Thousands.

Soft.

Ancient.

Like leaves speaking in a forgotten language.

She turned quickly.

No one.

Only trees.

Yet she felt being watched.

Not by something hunting her...

But by something judging her.

Hours passed.

Nothing happened.

Then she reached the giant banyan.

Its roots rose from the earth like enormous serpents.

Its trunk was scarred with symbols older than any language she had ever seen.

At its base lay dozens of rusted axes, broken chainsaws, and cracked machines, all half-swallowed by roots.

As If the forest itself had buried them.

Thara raised her camera.



The screen suddenly filled with static.
Behind the tree...

Someone stood.

A woman dressed in green leaves.

Her long hair flowed like hanging vines.

Flowers bloomed where her feet touched the ground.

Her eyes were neither human nor frightening.

They looked as deep as the forest itself.

“WHO ARE YOU?” Thara whispered.

The woman smiled.

“I HAVE BEEN CALLED MANY NAMES.”

“THE TRIBES CALLED ME VANADEVI.”

“THE SAGES CALLED ME GUARDIAN.”

“THE GREEDY CALLED ME CURSE.”

The earth trembled gently beneath Thara’s feet.

“YOU THINK I TAKE LIVES.”

“I DO NOT.”

“I ONLY CHOOSE.”

Thara frowned.

“CHOOSE WHOM?”

The woman stretched out her hand.

The forest came alive.

Roots shifted beneath the soil.

Branches bent as if bowing.

Animals emerged silently from the darkness.



“THEY CHOOSE”

“THE TREES REMEMBER EVERY CUT”

“THE RIVERS REMEMBER EVERY POISON”

“THE SOIL REMEMBERS EVERY DROP OF BLOOD”

“AND WHEN THE BALANCE IS BROKEN.....”

“THEY ASK FOR JUSTICE.”

Thara’s heart raced.

“THEN THE MISSING PEOPLE”

“THEY ARE NO LONGER HUMANS.”

The Guardian pointed toward the trees.

Thara looked closer.

Every enormous tree around her bore strange patterns in its bark.

They looked almost...

Like human faces.

Some crying.

Some screaming.

Some frozen in fear.

The Guardian spoke softly.

“THEY WISHED TO OWN THE FOREST”

“NOW THEY BELONG TO IT”

A cold breeze swept through her.

Thara stepped back.

She uttered in a trembling voice, **“THIS IS PUNISHMENT.”**

“NO”, the Guardian replied.

“It is balance”.



At that moment, the roar of chainsaws shattered the silence.

A group of illegal loggers burst into the clearing.

They had tracked Thara's footprints.

Their leader laughed.

"SO, THIS IS THE FAMOUS SACRED TREE."

He lifted his axe.

The first strike never landed.

The ground split beneath him.

Roots burst upward like giant snakes, wrapping around the machines.

Thousand of leaves rose into the air, swirling like a living storm.

The forest had awakened.

One by one, the men disappeared into the darkness.

Their screams echoed through the valley.

Then...silence.

When dawn arrived, there was no sign of loggers.

Only their abandoned helmets lay scattered beneath the banyan tree.

Fresh samplings had grown where had stood.

Thara returned to the village before sunrise.

No one questioned what she has seen.

One look into her eyes was enough.

She never revealed the Guardian's secret.

Instead, she dedicated her life to protecting forest across the country.

Years later, Devavan become one of India's most protected forests.

Visitors often asked why no one cut even a single ancient tree.



The villagers would simply smile and point toward the forest.

On every full moon, they still placed fruits and flowers beneath the old banyan tree.

Not out of fear.

But out of gratitude.

Because they understood something the rest of the world had forgotten.

NATURE DOES NOT BELONG US.

WE BELONG TO NATURE.

“RESPECT THE NATURE, BEFORE NATURE TEACHES YOU WHY YOU SHOULD.”

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