

Save our forest!



Deep in the Amazon Rainforest, an enormous tree towered, stretching its web of twisted branches widely. It had stood for generations and was home to magnificent creatures of all shapes and sizes. Birds nested. Monkeys swung. Sloths snoozed.

At the base of the thick, knotted trunk, a man slept with his arms wrapped loosely around an axe. Curled chips of bark lay in the soil and the tree had ugly wounds. Catching the light of the midday sun, the axe glimmered. The diamond beads of light reflected through the understorey, warning the tree's inhabitants. Leaves shivered nervously and anxious eyes peeked from branches. The animals had seen men with this weapon before and they knew it was dangerous. They formed a plan for when he awoke.

Sensing that he wasn't alone, the man's eyes blinked open sleepily...

"Senhor, you're awake!" the snake hissed softly.

Stunned, the man stared at the animals circled around him.

"Wh...what do you want from me? P-please don't eat me!" he stuttered, raising his trembling hands to protect himself.

Thump! A monkey with eyes as wide as saucers slipped off his branch to join the group. Meanwhile, a smiling sloth slowly... steadily made his way down from the canopy.

"My dear man," the sloth soothed, "we're not here to eat you. We just want you to listen." With its hooked claws, the sloth gestured to a jaguar beside him.

"This is our home. Our haven," purred the jaguar. "All the animals, birds and tiny creatures before you depend on this tree and have done for centuries. In fact, so do people."

"I...I d-don't know what you mean," the man stammered, visibly confused. "Please let me go," he begged. "I'm just doing my..."

Interrupting the man, a bee buzzed onto his nose. "Let us explain," it hummed. "Trees produce

oxygen. That's the air we all breathe! If these trees are cut down, how will we survive?"

Like a music teacher leading a song, the bee flew from one creature to the next, asking each to add a line to their sad song. The man learnt that if the forest fell, the air would change and the weather would grow wilder and too hot. He was told that many rainforest plants provide food and important ingredients for medicines.

"You see, this forest keeps animals, plants and you alive!" concluded the bee. "It is precious!"

Lost in thought, the man frowned and bowed his head. As if the entire forest was holding its breath, there was complete silence. Eventually, he lifted his head and nodded. "I understand," he smiled, gazing about him with fresh eyes. Standing up, he added, "We all need the forest, but only humans have the ability... the power to protect it."

Like a rainbow painted across a gloomy sky, his words spread joy. Gratitude. Hope. As the man calmly strode away, the animals returned to life in their special tree. Their spirits were lighter. He was just one man, but change happens one small step at a time.

