

Writing competition

Book an adventure and whisk us away to new lands and unforgettable characters.

Write a short story about an amazing and unforgettable adventure.

The Grove of Forgotten Whispers

The ancient forest stood in the heart of the Whispering Grove. It was a sacred place where the spirits known as Zephyra would guide the people of the village with rustling leaves and whispered dreams. For many generations, the villagers honoured the spirits with offerings and their song. The forest thrived and all was harmonious.

But sadly, now the Grove was dying. Its once vibrant crown of leaves had faded, and the trees groaned under an invisible weight. The wind – which was once the voice of the spirits – was now silenced. The people of the village fell ill, crops were failing, and strange creatures lurked near the edge of the forest.

Elder Aeon, the village's spiritual guide, had dismissed the warnings of old. However, looking at the suffering forest, guilt gnawed away at her. She stood before the Grove, with her wooden, twisted staff in her trembling hand. Suddenly she whispered, "Could the Zephyra be turning against us?".

That very evening a voice came to her in her dream. It sounded like wind rustling dried leaves. "You have forgotten the Trial. The balance is broken. Come to the Hollow Stone." When Aeon awoke, she found an untamed sapling sprouting through the stone floor of her hut. Was it an omen?

Aeon gathered her staff, a satchel of food and healing herbs, and an ancient talisman passed down to her from her ancestors. She ventured into the forest, walking deeper than she ever had before. The air grew cold as seen by her frosted breath. Tree roots twisted unnaturally making her path difficult. She felt the forest no longer welcomed her; it was watching her.

As Aeon made her way to the edge of a deep chasm, she found a vine bridge that showed signs of decay. Nervously she attempted to cross the bridge, but shrieking wind spirits attacked her. She remembered that they were once the gentle guardians of the

forest, but now their forms were twisted. Aeon used the old chants she had been taught by her ancestors and her staff glowed faintly as she forced the spirits back with a burst of pure light. As they retreated, they spoke a warning, “The Hollow Stone is sealed, only the heart that remembers will open the path!”

After days of trudging and surviving the haunted Grove, Aeon reached the Hollow Stone. It was a towering monument, overgrown with moss and split in two. As she approached, visions overtook her mind. She could see a ceremony from long ago, where the villagers and Zephyra held hands in a pact.

Sadly, in recent years greed had crept into village life. Trees were taken down without blessings and offerings were no longer made to the Zephyra. Aeon realised that they had neglected performing the Trial of Renewal. It was a ceremony used to renew the pact between each new generation and Zephyra.

Holding her talisman in hand, she knelt and recited the ancient words her mother had taught her but were almost forgotten. The stone glowed, and a passage opened beneath it, descending into the heart of the Grove. In the underground chamber, she saw the Heart Tree pulsing weakly—its roots blackened and light fading. There, Aeon was confronted by the twisted echo of a Zephyra spirit seeking vengeance. It demanded sacrifice. “We have been forgotten” it hissed at Aeon. “What can you give to restore us?” Aeon offered a lifetime of devotion and a portion of her life energy to the tree. With her vow, the darkness retreated, the tree’s bark glowed with starlight and the Zephyra were free. “The balance will return,” the Heart Tree said, brushing Aeon’s forehead with a whisper.

Aeon emerged from her difficult journey within the forest, weakened, but radiant with starlight. The lush green trees whispered again. Birds sang. Rain fell gently over the crops. Strange creatures were no longer present. She gathered the villagers and told them the truths behind their difficult times and explained the vow to restore harmony. Together, they remembered old traditions and they heard the once forgotten spirits of the Grove whispered again, their voices forever dancing in the wind.

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