

When the Trees Fought Back

By Chidera Udochukwu-Nduka

In 2050, Nigeria, the rains forgot to fall and the sun stumbled closer to earth; the North East winds blew hot sands from the Sahara and dumped into the Atlantic Ocean and the forests became graveyards of stumps. Chidera, an activist with lungs full of dust and dreams, wandered into the last patch of green in Mbari, an ancient forest threatened by chainsaws and greed.

There, she met a spirit cloaked in leaves and grief, Ani, guardian of the trees, long silenced by bulldozers and policy memos. Together, they reawakened the roots from the depths of the soil.

First, the wind howled warnings. Then the trees began to move with rage. Roots uncurled like fists. Branches lashed pipelines, pulled down oil rigs and plugged vehicle exhausts. After rebellion and action, the rains finally fell, devoid of methane.

The villagers like saplings took back abandoned oil fields. The rivers tossed out the plastics that had once choked them. Children planted dreams in composted history. Chidera became a bridge between the world that was and the new one.

She took the world back to Eden. The earth was healing.