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# Maya fights for a cause

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Level 3

Madhavpur was a village adjoining a wild life sanctuary. The villagers deeply cared for the environment and the forest surrounding their village . The forest adjoining the village boasted of varieties of foxes, bats, snakes, wild boars , elephants and birds.

The forest also boasted of a special species called the elephant bird. It was a huge bird with a long strong neck, huge legs with  sharp claws and long talons . Their numbers had dwindled over the years and very few  survived the harsh weather conditions and there was just one left in the jungles of Madhavpur.

The villagers tended their farms and led a happy life, living in perfect harmony with nature.

Although there was a huge inflow of tourists during the holiday season, the village continued to remain hidden from land sharks who lost no opportunity to cut down trees and turn green pastures into concrete jungles.

One day the village Mukhiya ( headman) called for an emergency meeting. Part of the village and some parts of the jungle was soon to be turned into a private wildlife resort to be run by a rich businessman. Some of the villagers would lose their farms and their livelihood. What was once a very cheerful and happy village, now went about their daily lives with gloom and uncertainty. Not many in the village were educated and they didn't know whom to ask for help.

Maya was a smart ten year old in the village. She attended the village school and was one of the brightest girls in the village."How can we let go of our farms and our livelihood just like that? ". Our cattle will die, the forest animals will leave and the elephant bird that we proudly boasted about might just go extinct !", cried Maya.

"There must be some way we can reach out to the higher authorities ", she fumed.

Maya spent the entire day wondering whom to approach for help.

Only the village English teacher was educated . She had come down from the city as a volunteer and had stayed on. Maybe the teacher knew someone in the city who could help .

So Maya set out to the neighbouring village to meet the teacher, taking the jungle path.It was pitch dark .The trees threw monstrous shadows , a jackal howled from a distance and it all seemed scary .

But Maya had no time to waste.She had to find a way to mobilise the villagers and she needed someone who was educated to support their cause.

"We should write a letter to the forest department, and send a copy to the Prime Minister's office, and we should also inform the media. I have friends in the city who can help me do all this " said Smitha ma'am, the village teacher. The teacher lost no time in creating the necessary documents. She was the only one that could write in English.

Meanwhile, Maya went door to door campaigning for the cause. She even mobilized the villagers from neighboring towns to support the cause. Soon, they were a thousand strong force that was fighting to preserve Madhavpur and the wildlife sanctuary.

Many weeks passed, and one day Salim Chacha, the village postman handed over a letter to the village headman. The letter from the forest department congratulated the villagers for fighting for their cause. There will be no illegal construction happening in Madhavpur or its surrounding villages, read the letter. Anyone deviating forest rules would be severely dealt with, said the forest department.

Madhavpur and its villagers had won their case through honesty and sincerity .

The Prime Minister's office invited the village school teacher and Maya to New Delhi.

They were to be decorated on Children's day for their bravery and concern for the environment. The entire village erupted with joy.

Not only had the elephant bird put their village on the map, but now brave Maya and her teacher were now a national sensation from Madhavpur!

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