

Our Precious Earth by Dylan Patel

Prithvi was restless all night he couldn't wait for the first rays of the morning sun to pierce through into his bedroom. Of course, dawn would have heralded the first day of spring and he was awash with anticipation to finally see what fruits and vegetables had flourished after his hard labors in the field. Prithvi was very different than the other teenage boys in his village he didn't care too much about games and sports. Any spare moment he had, he was happiest to be in his fields or outside... growing his crops, playing with his farm animals, or simply sitting at the edge of the lake. To him nature was the most beautiful thing.

Hearing the rooster call was Prithvi's sign to get up, so he threw off his blanket and rushed to the balcony. Afar he could see his fields were burdening with color signaling that he had another successful year growing his crops. He took a deep sigh of relief but felt something was not quite right. Usually, on the first day of spring all the village elders would have gathered around his fields with excitement. Even though most of the villagers were farmers nobody's crops were ever as abundant or tasty as Prithvi's harvest. He was called the *Green Fingers Boy*... for they believed he had magical luck that helped him. In reality Prithvi knew it was nothing to do with luck. For him it was all about treating nature with respect, he made sure to diligently water his fields, provide the healthiest natural fertilizer to nourish his growing crops, to treat his animals as equals and admire the natural beauty of his surroundings. Prithvi wondered why the villagers hadn't gathered

around his fields and then in the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse and heard excited rumblings of the villagers crowded near the village entrance. Prithvi asked himself, “I wonder what’s going on?”

The puzzled Prithvi put on his shoes and rushed to the congregation to find out what was going on. The villagers were all amassed around a big white board but Prithvi couldn’t get to the front and see what it was all about. Luckily he saw his dad, “Dad, what’s going on?”

“Oh! Hi son, let me show you,” his dad replied.

He put Prithvi on his shoulders, so he could tower over the crowd and glance directly at the object of their curiosity and more importantly what had diverted their attention away from their harvests. The white board was covered with many fancy pictures of high rise buildings and had *Lion Holiday Resort Developers* embossed at the bottom.

“Isn’t it amazing, how they have changed our neighboring village into this beautiful resort?” His dad continued.

“But what happened to all the locals that called it home?” Prithvi asked with concern.

“No need to worry son, the developers were nice and gave them all apartments and jobs at the resort,” his dad replied compassionately, “We are going to visit there later today, if you would like to join us?”

Prithvi felt a little disillusioned, “No, you can put me down. I want to spend the rest of the day in the fields gathering up the crops.”

Prithvi rushed straight to his fields, his “comfort zone” and sat there to pound. He attempted to be optimistic and he tried to convince his mind *I hope the neighboring villagers are happy with their new way of life*. He then had a long stare at his fields and a big diverting smile came across his face as he saw that this year was his best harvest ever. He got up with rejuvenated energy and collected his animals to help him gather the fruits of his labor. He worked long and hard with no sense of time and his focus was only distracted at dusk when the elders returned from their trip. As the group walked by he overheard their mumblings and their envious excitement about the new resort. He was taken aback when he caught the chief of his village chatting about contacting the developer as well. Prithvi took a deep breath and hoped the rest of the villagers didn't share the chief's ideas. It played on Prithvi's mind and thought it best to raise the issue whilst having dinner with his father. “Dad, our village is just perfect the way it is and so why does the chief want to talk to the developers?”

“Don't concern yourself about such matters, you know the chief is all talk and anyway changes never happen overnight.” His dad replied supportively. That evening, Prithvi went to bed feeling at peace and was looking forward to trying out his fresh harvest the following morning.

However, his peacefulness was abruptly shattered during the middle of the night by the distance sounds of howling winds and thunderous rains. His dad bursts into his room, “Prithvi come with me now we must go to the village bunker and shelter from these terrible storms which are heading our way!” Before Prithvi could gather his thoughts, he was being pulled across the courtyard by his dad and could see the night sky being lit up by the thunder bolts over the neighboring village. But then his mind drifted towards his beloved animals, “But dad, what about my animals?”

“Son, your animals are used to the outside and nature will find a way to protect them,” his dad replied with haste.

Prithvi always sensed nature was his greatest friend and so felt comforted by these words of reassurance. Prithvi and his dad were the last villagers to enter the bunker and once the doors were sealed shut there was pin drop silence as each person wondered what fate would be bestowed upon them in the morning.

No one slept that night and the silence was only broken by the dawn chorus of the singing birds outside. Prithvi felt pleased as he knew that the birds would only be singing so harmoniously if they were blissful. “Dad, dad let’s go outside. The storm must have passed if we can hear the birds!” Prithvi said with excitement. All the villagers agreed and Prithvi ran to the doors and pushed them wide open. He was greeted by all his animals and as the villagers stepped out there was a big sigh of relief from all, as destiny had appeared to save their village from any damage. Everyone broke into a big rapture of hoorays and started dancing... but this happiness was quickly suppressed. Over the

horizon they could see sad and injured folks walking towards them from the neighboring village. Their village chief said with deep sadness, "Our new town has been destroyed by the storms and we have nowhere else to go, can you please help us?" Prithvi was surprised but pleased to hear his village chief reply, "No need to ask, our village is your village."

Prithvi wondered what he could do to help them overcome their torment and he knew there was only one way... to share the wonders of nature. Over the next few weeks he took it upon himself to teach the teenage boys from the other village how to farm, tender animals, and find hidden hiking trails to discover the untouched scenic beauty of the land. This brought so much infectious joy that Prithvi became the talk of the village and others, both kids and adults, wanted to be a part of his inspirational world.

Transition into summer, not only brought brighter weather but unique warmth of happiness and joy in the united village. One day, Prithvi and his dad were sitting on their balcony looking at the village and his dad said with pride, "I'm so proud of you my son."

"I have done nothing special other than respect our planet," humbly replied Prithvi.

His dad was baffled, "What do you mean?"

"This planet we call *Earth*, has been around a lot longer than the human race and it has been courteous to allow us to live in its home, and as tenants we have to treat this

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extraordinary land with respect and love. But a lot of people have taken this hospitality for granted... they have not cherished all the goodness and richness it has provided in our lives. Dad, it is amazing what *Earth* has given us and we should be thankful everyday”

His dad welled up with emotion and started to cry.

“Why are you crying dad?” Prithvi said with sorrow.

“These are tears of happiness, my son ...and now it makes sense why your mom was so adamant to name you Prithvi when you were born.”

“I don’t understand,” Prithvi replied, still confused.

“Because son your name means *Earth* in Sanskrit.”

THE END