

# Mango Tree Delight

Born some 50 years ago in the forest near the plains. I have watched the creatures below.

When I was a sprout, I saw a great storm take place. The sky split open. Oceans rose. Landscapes were dismantled. It felt as if Thor had a vexation at us. When it finally passed, it felt like a blessing to not have been taken.

I was immature.

You see, I was accustomed to creatures wandering about the area. The natural cycle among them felt just. A bear may seem mightiest, but a minuscule ant could thrive. But these humans were nothing like the rest. They didn't hunt what they needed, they hunted everything.

Day by day their tools ripped through our land, chopping down every wooden companion I had known. Trees became logs. Some became towering fences to protect *their* stolen land from invaders. Others were reduced to charcoal to fuel their endeavors further. When will it be my time? Why was I saved?

Then I experienced a peculiar change.

At thirty, my branches began to fruit. Lush, tangy, luscious mangos.

Then came a man named Grant. He purchased the acre near me, cleared it carefully. When he would visit me, he would always appear in a pressed suit, and he would look at my branches with interest, not for their form or beauty, but for their monetary value.

"You're thriving," he said to himself.

He had workers who cared for me along with a plethora of other trees which had begun to sprout by my side. Every fruit was plucked and taken away.

It frustrated me until one day I overheard an argument between Grant and a worker asking for a raise. Grant responded, "I can't give you more than this. I don't want the money for myself. I use it for hospitals, schools, and orphanages."

I pondered this. What was the cost of this "goodness"? Years passed, I still bore fruit, but my leaves grew thinner, my bark weaker, and my mangos smaller.

But the schools were built. The orphanages were real.

I realized that I was not fortunate to have survived this long. A curse was upon me.

A storm came by one October, the worst in decades. The wind shredded my outer branches, and split the thickest tree beside me. For a moment I thought, "This is it."

Then the workers came with rope and anchors, staking me down. The storm would pass and come spring I would fruit again. I saw Grant less and his workers more. One day a woman with a clipboard came around. She didn't touch my branches or pay much attention to me. All she said was "Still performing well" and moved onto the next tree. I was the first wave in an endless sea. I was Prometheus, but without a name.

I longed to be with the rest of the other logs.

Word Count: 480