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The Prey Lang Forest, a last bastion of biodiversity and home of the indigenous Kuy people.

Illegal logging threatens the forest and the Kuy.

Hey! Let's go...before we're caught!

Not until our cowtruck is full.

They'll pay us for every tree we haul in.

But I've heard the Neak Ta spirits are angry with tree cutters and won't protect us.

Krikk-krikk...

Is that...

...the Neak Ta?
RUN!!

WE GOT YOU!

I'M RITH,
WE'VE BEEN
TRACKING YOU
FOR WEEKS.

THE ONLY PEOPLE
PROTECTING THE PREY
LANG, ARE US. ITS
RESIDENTS.

WE'RE DOCUMENTING
YOUR ILLEGAL
LOGGING

WE'RE TAGGING
AND RECORDING THIS
STOLEN LUMBER.

YOU'RE CLEARLY NOT
FROM HERE.

WE'RE A
COMMUNITY
PATROL...

I'M CHENDA.

MY NAME IS
BORAN.

WHO ARE
YOU WORKING
FOR? ANKOR
PLYWOOD?

GREEN TECH?

SUSADAH.

“KMHER SLANG
FOR “HELLO”.

CHENDA'S
FAMILY WERE RESIN
HARVESTERS FOR
CENTURIES.

YOU'RE NOT
CLEARLY NOT
FROM HERE.

YOURS?!

NO!!
THOSE LOGS
ARE MINE!

UNTIL
YOU LOGGERS
CUT DOWN OUR
LIFELOOD. NOW,
WE'VE NOTHING.
PSHHHHH! THERE’S PLENTY OF WOOD AND I NEED THE MONEY.

TELL THAT TO THE FOREST AND ALL THOSE WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN RUINED BY ILLEGAL LOGGING!

MY OWN FAMILY’S POTATO FIELDS WERE RIPPED OUT BY LOGGERS LIKE YOU.

LOOK, BONG*--

-- WHY DON’T YOU START YOUR OWN COMMUNITY-RUN PLANTATION?

*COMMON SLANG TERM MEANING “BROTHER”

...YOU COULD MAKE A LIVING AND PROTECT THE FOREST.

NO.

THE LOGGING COMPANIES CONTROL EVERYTHING.

YOU CAN START BY CHOOSING NEW LEADERS, PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT THE PREY LANG.

CHENDA, WAS JUST ELECTED AS A COMMUNITY LEADER HERE IN KAMPONG THOM AND SHE’S ONLY 21.

DON’T YOU SEE? WHEN OUR FOREST IS CUT DOWN, IT’S GONE! THE COMPANY WILL MOVE ON TO THE NEXT FOREST.

LEAVING YOU BEHIND.

YOUR NAME.

NIMITH.

IT MEANS “TRANSFORMATION.”

NIMITH, OUR UNION WITH THE FOREST...

... IT’S MORE THAN MERE INCOME.
AND WE HAVE THE POWER TO CALL UPON THE NEAK TA SPIRIT DIRECTLY.

A SBOT?

A PROMISE... TO NEVER COME BACK AGAIN.

YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE A SBOT.

I SWEAR BY ALL THE SPIRITS OF THE FOREST, THE SPIRITS OF OUR ANCESTORS, THE SPIRITS OF WATER AND LANE. I SWORE BY YOUR NAMES. I'LL NOT COME BACK.

SWIRL THE WATER AND REPEAT AFTER US.

AND, DRINK.

I WILL NOT LOG DOWN TREES OR BEHAVE WRONG IN THIS FOREST AGAIN. IF I BREAK THIS PROMISE I MAY BE KILLED BY DISEASE OR SICKNESS OR STRUCK DOWN BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRITS OF THE FOREST, WATER, AND LANE.

YOU'VE JUST SWORN TO THE NEAK TA.

IF YOU EVER CUT DOWN ANOTHER TREE, THE WATER YOU DRANK WILL MAKE YOU SICK.

YOU MIGHT EVEN DIE.

AA PA KACH!* I DRANK THE WATER!

READ THIS AND PLACE YOUR THUMBPRINT ON IT.

*COMMON INSULT "YOU IDIOT!"

THAT WAS TO THE SPIRITS...

...THIS IS FOR THE LAW.

SIGN IT.
Community forest patrols protect the Prey Lang from illegal logging. These forest defenders suffer violence from illegal loggers and their allies.

Between 2001 and 2020, Cambodia lost 2.5 million hectares of protected forest to illegal logging.

In 2020, Cambodia banned the Prey Lang forest patrols and since then, destruction & deforestation rates have skyrocketed.

Without the forest protectors, the Prey Lang will be gone.
EARTH DEFENDERS
THE UNTOLD STORIES OF ACTIVISTS
AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

SIX ORIGINAL STORIES THAT SHINE A
SPOTLIGHT ON ENVIRONMENTAL
DEFENDERS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THE
URGENT NEED TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT.

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