

Gathering at the Roots

Story by: Heidi Dixon

Deep in the heart of the forest lay a clearing, where the creatures gathered to find guidance, share wisdom, and plan for the seasons to come. At its centre stood a great cedar - branches stretching high in the sky, roots weaving unseen paths beneath the soil.

When the creatures first began to gather, they formed a circle under the cedar, where every voice could be heard and the roots of the forest held them together. In the circle, there was a constant hum of connection, and the wisdom of the cedar nurtured all who joined.

Over time, the creatures invited others to join them—those who lived on the edges of the forest and even allies and visitors from faraway places. Together, they worked to shape a vision for the forest's future, a plan rooted in the land itself.

But as the circle grew, it began to shift. Eager to make space for everyone, some voices pulled the circle toward the edges of the clearing, where the sunlight was brighter and the ground seemed easier to walk on. At first, this seemed to bring the creatures closer together, their ideas stretching outward like sunlight through the trees.

Yet as the seasons passed, the circle drifted so far that it no longer touched the cedar's roots. The creatures near the edges didn't notice at first—they were caught up in their conversations and ideas for the future. In their eagerness to expand and include more, they lost sight of how vital the unseen connections had always been.

Those closest to the cedar, who had always drawn strength from its shade, felt something was missing. Though the circle had widened to welcome more, the voices seemed distant, like whispers carried away by the wind.

One evening, Hare, who's sharp eyes missed nothing, spoke up. "Do you think we've wandered too far from the roots?" he asked. "There's now space for so many of us, but it feels like we're less connected to the clearing we once knew."

The creatures paused, thoughts swirling like leaves in the wind. Heron, who had traveled far and seen many places, tilted her head thoughtfully. "Maybe Hare is right," she said. "We wanted to bring everyone closer, but instead, we've pulled ourselves further from the cedar's roots."

Fox, always attuned to the whispers of the forest, stepped forward. "The cedar stands tall, not because of what it has gathered around it, but because of the care its roots have received," she said. "It thrives because its roots are cared for, and in return, it provides us shade, shelter, and strength."

Like the cedar, we must remember that the connections we tend with patience and purpose are what give us strength. If we want to thrive, we must return to the roots and care for them together so they can hold us steady."

The creatures agreed. With care, they began to unravel the patterns they had created—ways of gathering that had stretched too far from the roots. They used what they had learned to weave new paths, ones that wound back to the cedar's base and connected more deeply to the clearing. They gathered once more in the open, sitting together in a circle as they had in the past. No one sat higher or lower than another, and all could see the cedar standing strong at the centre.

The visitors and allies who had come to the clearing were not turned away. Instead, they were invited to sit quietly and listen, to learn the ways of the forest and walk alongside its creatures. Over time, the hum of connection returned, resonating through the clearing and into the soil.

The gathering became what it had always been meant to be—a place where all could come together, rooted in the wisdom of the cedar and open to the sky above. And the forest grew stronger, its paths winding outward but always connected to the centre, carrying the stories of the clearing to places far beyond its edge.

