TREE'S BLOOD

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

Tight on:

A TREE TRUNK deep in an ancient forest as a chainsaw cuts into the centuries-old bark. From the shadows, a set of GREEN EYES (obscured by leaves and not quite human) look on.

EYES POV: Observing the logging site as the tree falls.

TIGHT ON: VINES quietly snake closer to the legs' of a logger.

TIGHT CLOSE-UP: The green eyes go wide as we hear the loggers scream.

EXT. FOREST - DAYS LATER

We FIND **ELVERIA** (18, long locks), slinking through the forest. An eco-influencer of note with an aura of unearned confidence. She has a phone in one hand and a plastic cup of cold brew in the other. She starts LIVE STREAMING:

POV: Elveria's Camera

ELVERIA
Guys, it's Elveria here. Last week I exposed Happy Seafood for using dolphin, and now-

She sips her cold brew and points her phone at the forest.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
-I'm coming for Mononoke Logging. The blood of these trees is on their hands!
(deadly serious)
If you want to change the world, like and share with #treesblood
(sips)
And thank you, Coffee Shoppe Cold Brew, for fueling this change.

Ending her LIVE Stream, Elveria tosses the plastic cup aside. She hears rustling.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
Hello?!

She’s ripped off her feet by some unseen force! A VINE wrapped around her ankle drags her screaming into blackness.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

ELVERIA'S POV: In an upside down, swinging DUTCH ANGLE, we see she's in a strangely beautiful CAVE. Low light from bioluminescent plants. Nature all around. Suddenly, a small childlike figure crosses by camera.

ELVERIA
(frightened)
Is someone there?!

At last, she notices a SHADOWY FIGURE watching her. Elveria realizes she's BOUND by thick green VINES. She struggles, and the vines react back, tightening their hold.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
Do you know who I am?!

Suddenly -- the shadowy figure lunges forward with astonishing speed and gets in Elveria's face! Sharp, soulful green eyes, green skin. Something WISE and maybe bitter about her demeanor. This is ZAMORA.

ZAMORA
You! You're another one of those loggers, aren't you?

ELVERIA
Do I look like a logger? I'm the total opposite! I'm an eco-streamer!

Zamora does not respond. The vines holding Elveria turn her around and pull her towards a wordless CLUSTER OF WRITHING PLANT MATTER with branches and vines reaching out in every direction.

ZAMORA
Mama, I found another logger.

The mass of plant matter, aka MAMA, communicates through an empathic bond alongside her pulsing branches, glowing leaves, and creaking wood. Elveria notices that Mama's parts are dotted with some sort of rotting blight/infection.

ELVERIA
Not a logger, **a <u>vlogger</u>** ...

Elveria can't help but chuckle at this. Zamora is not amused.

ZAMORA
Eat her like the others, Mama!

Zamora points to what looks like the horrified BODIES OF LOGGERS, frozen inside a green, mud-like substance.

ELVERIA
No, no, I'm here to stop them!

ZAMORA
Don't listen to her -

ELVERIA
Please! Please don't eat me! I can... I can help you!
(desperate)
I'm like a totally big deal on this human thing called the internet.
(points to her phone)
I can get people's attention.

ZAMORA
Attention?! We want to be left alone.

ELVERIA
I can connect you with an army of followers who'll be ready to help.

Mama pulses considering. After a beat, the vines release her.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
That's better; now watch this.

Going live, Elveria turns the camera on herself and Zamora.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
Hey, ELVS, I'm here with...
(whispers)
Tell them your name.

ZAMORA
(confused)
Zamora.

ELVERIA
Zamora is a living tree person, and she needs our help...

Elveria's eyes go wide as she sees her numbers of followers/ likes immediately rocket upwards. She smiles.

EXT. FOREST - ONE LONG LIVE STREAM LATER

Elveria's followers (all ages) descend on the FOREST. They are noticeably image obsessed. Signs made of wood and plastic saying “protect forests.”

Series of shots of boots mashing plants and the trash being dropped on the ground. *They even carve #treeblood* into trees (which seem to be BLEED). They are here to be seen, not help.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Zamora is trying to comfort Mama as the blight covering her body spreads. Elveria enters, staring at her phone, elated.

ELVERIA
It's working. Greta frickin' Thunberg just reposted me!

ZAMORA
<u>You</u> think this is working?

ELVERIA
I mean, we're trending, so, uh, yeah. I'd say it's working.

Zamora places a hand on Elveria's arm, allowing Elveria to feel the empathic bond with Mama. Elveria's eyes turn the same shade of green as Zamoras. Images of nature flash as Elveria experiences the pain inflicted on Mama and her children. Zamora releases her grip. Elveria is overwhelmed by her new awareness.

ELVERIA (cont'd)
I'm sorry... I... I-

Mama starts changing/writhing with ANGER.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

The forest begins its attack Elveria's followers. They scream and try to run, but the vines catch them.

One of the followers makes it a car. As they try to start the engine, a tree trunk skewers the vehicle. Raising it dangerously high in the air.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

The attack is clearly taking a lot out of Mama, and Zamora too. Her green skin begins to grey. Zamora looks at Mama, terrified.

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

The chaos spreads out from the forest, moving towards the city like a tidal wave of green and crashing through buildings and over the street. Terrorizing anyone in its way! It’s scary and action-packed -- vines throwing people around, stringing people up, etc.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

Elveria watches the chaos on her phone. Instinctively, she begins to stream.

ELVERIA
Hey it's... it's me... I...

Words fail her. Powerless, Elveria throws her phone against the cave wall.

A visibly weakened Zamora picks up the broken phone and stares at it. Such a small thing. So much wrought from it. She stares at a weeping Elveria, and suddenly a thought occurs to her. Cautiously she lays her hands on Mama, trying to calm her and connect.

ZAMORA
Mama, you need to let all of them feel what you feel. It's the only way they can understand.

Mama throbs and moves, and a virulent burst of strength fills her.

Across the city, eyes go wide and green. Nature and humanity connect. Humanity weeps with empathy. The forest begins to withdraw.

Zamora and Elveria share a moment of connected eye contact. Both their eyes have a twinkle of hope.

The End!