

## A WALK THROUGH NATURE FINDING CALM IN CHAOS

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Riya stared blankly at her laptop screen, the endless sea of emails blurring before her eyes. Deadlines loomed like dark clouds, and the ceaseless hum of her phone vibrated on the desk, each notification another sharp jab at her fragile nerves. She felt trapped, suffocated by a life that had become a whirlwind of demands and expectations. For weeks, she had been running on autopilot, barely breathing, barely living.

From her window, the towering hills of Shimla stood in stark contrast to her inner turmoil. Their quiet, unwavering presence stirred something within her—a longing for peace. On impulse, she shut her laptop, grabbed her jacket, and stepped outside. The chilly November air hit her face as she walked toward the forest trail near her home. The familiar path welcomed her, its uneven stones and winding curves a quiet reminder of simpler times. The world she left behind began to fade, replaced by the rhythmic crunch of leaves beneath her boots and the gentle rustle of wind through the towering deodars.

As she walked deeper into the forest, the noise in her mind started to unravel, like threads being carefully pulled loose. The forest was alive but not chaotic—its rhythm was a soothing balm to her overburdened soul.

She paused by a small stream, watching the water dance over rocks, its gurgling sound steady and comforting. Kneeling, she dipped her hands into the icy flow, letting the chill anchor her in the present. The stream, unhurried and unapologetic, seemed to carry with it an ageless wisdom: to keep moving forward, no matter the obstacles.

Sitting on a moss-covered log nearby, Riya let herself sink into the moment. The sunlight filtered through the dense canopy above, casting shifting patterns of light and shadow on the forest floor. She closed her eyes and took a deep breath, filling her lungs with the earthy aroma of damp soil and pine. It was as if nature itself was breathing life back into her. For the first time in weeks, Riya truly observed her surroundings—the delicate petals of a wildflower swaying gently in the breeze, the rhythmic tapping of a woodpecker high above, and the industrious scurry of ants navigating the forest floor.



These small, quiet moments felt profound, reminding her of the intricate balance within nature's seeming chaos.

Her thoughts drifted to her own life. She had been fighting her imperfections, striving for unattainable perfection. But here, in this forest, everything was imperfect—yet it flourished. Fallen leaves became nourishment for new growth, jagged rocks guided the stream's flow, and even broken branches found a purpose. Nature didn't resist change; it embraced it.

Riya stood up, her heart lighter, her mind clearer. As she made her way home, she realized she couldn't eliminate chaos from her life, but she could change how she navigated it.

That evening, she returned to her desk. The deadlines were still there, but her perspective had shifted. Like the forest, she would move forward—imperfect but resilient, finding calm within the chaos.