

VENUS OF THE TREES

ID: 2019-01354

Every tree has a Queen, and every forest has a Protector - someone who works with the Queens to ensure that their trees are well kept, and that the ecological balance of the forest is maintained. Venus is one such Protector whose forest is threatened when an inconspicuous trickle of water widens into a river. The water is brackish (a mix of salt and freshwater), and seems to be communicating with Venus, bringing more questions than answers. Included is the first half of the 2 part pilot episode; the show would continue to follow Venus as she ventures downstream to find the source of the leak, encountering different ecosystems and building new relationships along the way.

A SMALL ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF SEATTLE - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT FLOATS DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS, INTO A DENSE FOREST AT THE BASE OF THE ISLANDS TALLEST MOUNTAIN.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR

A HARMONICA MELODY PLAYS sweet and distant, CAMERA follows the sound. It stops beneath a tree larger than the rest. HARMONICA MELODY stops abruptly.

VENUS, bear-like and happiest when she's dirty (which she is), jumps down from the tree, landing hard but on her feet. She tucks her harmonica into one of many pockets lining her pantleg and looks around. She was certain she felt someone nearby.

VENUS

I am Venus, protector of this forest. Name yourself.

A quiet moment. VENUS opens her mouth to say something else but then a rustle behind her commands her attention. MOSS, a usually empathetic but always nervous nymph, scrambles into frame, hyperventilating slightly.

VENUS (CONT'D)

Moss?

MOSS

(trying to catch his breath)

Oh Venus I--I've been looking all-- all over--

VENUS

S'okay Moss. Deep breaths.
(cutting him off)
Breathe first.

VENUS is patient. She does this with Moss all the time.

VENUS (CONT'D)

Is someone with you? I thought I felt --

MOSS

No, no, I came alone. It's Queen Maple. She's sapping again.

VENUS

Damn, again? It's late in the season for that. Is she alone now?

MOSS

Yes! She told me to come get you. Do you think I shouldn't have left her alone?

VENUS stops listening after his confirmation. She pats her pockets looking for something, then reaches into the roots of the tree pulling out her CLOAK and a pocket knife. The CLOAK is dark brown and cropped. Shadows cast by the leaves dance across the exterior fabric. Flannel peeks out from the reverse side as she throws the cloak over her shoulders and fastens the clip at the neck.

MOSS (CONT'D)

Oh no I knew I shouldn't have left her, what have I--

VENUS

Just lead the way Moss.

They run off. The Protector crest on the back of VENUS' cloak can be seen clearly as she runs through the forest. Surrounding it, white letters spell out "Venus of the Trees"

CAMERA TRACKS FROM OVERHEAD.

EXT. MAPLE TREE - LATER

MOANING emits from a sap coated maple tree. VENUS and MOSS run up. VENUS inspects the tree, and MOSS watches reverently.

VENUS

Sokay now Queen, I'm just gonna pump you real quick and the pressure will stop.

With a nurse's calm expertise and murmurs of reassurance, VENUS flips open a spicket on the pocketknife, inserting it gently between the fibers of the maple tree. MAPLE SIGHS with relief. Slowly, then all at once, sap begins to drip from the spicket onto the ground.

MOSS

(pointing to syrupy puddle)
Don't you usually collect that stuff?

VENUS

I don't have any buckets made right now.

(to herself, confused)

This is way out of season.

MAPLE, long and strong but looking sweaty, walks out of the tree. VENUS and MOSS are a welcome sight. She greets them with hugs.

MAPLE

Much better V, thank you. What's going on this season, right?

VENUS

I'm not sure beloved. Changing climates maybe?

MOSS

But the protectors know about the changes right? And shouldn't islands be safer than the mainland forests? And--

VENUS

We know its changing but had no idea it would happen this fast. And islands are more vulnerable than the mainland, so we'll see the impacts here earliest.

A somber silence.

MAPLE

But at least we have you!

VENUS

With what we're facing, I'm not sure that's enough.

(a beat. Then to MAPLE)

Are people sapping throughout Maple kingdom?

MAPLE nods. VENUS curses.

MOSS

You're doing everything you can Venus. You just need more support from the Protectors.

VENUS

I need a bigger team, or any team at all, but we're tight on staff.

(MORE)

VENUS (CONT'D)

And even if there were more of us,
no Protector wants to leave their
home forest at a time like this.

MOSS lays a hand on VENUS' shoulder gently.

MOSS

I'm on your team.

They smile at each other.

MAPLE

Me too! All the Queen's of the
forest can lend a branch or two.
I'll talk to Oak and Fern and see
if we can get you what you need.

VENUS

Thanks so much you guys. I really
appreciate it.

MAPLE laughs, waltzing back to her trunk.

MAPLE

Oh don't mention it. It is a
Queen's duty to address threats to
her kingdom is it not?

Not waiting for an answer, she enters the tree. VENUS turns
to MOSS, whispering to him as they walk away

VENUS

Okay I see what you were saying
kinda but I still don't think--

MOSS

V, stop, she was totally flirting
with you.

VENUS

(looking back)

Are you sure? She coulda just been
being nice--

MOSS

Maple? Maple tree? She's not
capable of being nice to anyone but
you, and that, my friend, is how
tree love works. Take it from
someone with a lil more
chlorophyll.

VENUS chuckles.

<p>VENUS</p> <p>Whatever, Moss. Don't you have some rock to grow on? (looking back at the tree)</p> <p>Shh Fuzz, chill.</p>	<p>MOSS (CONT'D)</p> <p>(mockingly)</p> <p>It is my duty to address <i>threats</i> to my kingdom. (laughing)</p> <p>Okay okay I'm done.</p>
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MOSS (CONT'D)

Anyway don't you have a stick
appointment with Dogwood at midday?

VENUS

(checking the sundial on
her watch)

Oof you're right.
(sternly)

And it's not a stick appointment,
its a woodpecker issue.

MOSS

(under his breath)

Same thing.

VENUS rolls her eyes.

VENUS

Catch you later, fuzz.

VENUS jogs off and MOSS continues to saunter through the forest. Whistling and jovial. He stops to greet trees he knows as he passes them, popularity increasing the closer he gets to his rock. Just before he gets there, a vine trips him.

MOSS

(annoyed)

Excuse me.
(listening to the vine)

Oh no! Sure I'll take a look, but
don't trip me next time, jeez.

The vine slithers off in the opposite direction of MOSS' ROCK. MOSS gives his home a longing glance before following the vine.

EXT. LARGE STONES

ANGLE ON A FAUCET SIZED STREAM OF WATER COMING OFF A ROCK.

MOSS

Well that doesn't look too bad.

The vine tells him to drink it, and he does. Immediately he spits it out, it's way too salty to drink.

MOSS (CONT'D)

I see what you mean. I'm sorry this is happening on your rock.

(listening to the vine)

Okay well if it gets worse again we can find Venus, but she's busy and I don't know--

(listening)

No yes, of course this is important, but the Protector is for emergencies. Not for a leak in your rock, however brackish.

(a beat)

Oh please don't cry I know it's hard. I'll go get her tomorrow okay?

(patting the vine)

There, there. I know. I'm sorry.

PAN OUT ABOVE FOREST. NIGHTFALLS AND THE SUNRISES. BIRDS CHIRP "GOOD MORNING" TO EACH OTHER OVER THE TREES.

THE NEXT DAY

ANGLE ON THE STREAM, SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER.

VENUS has her CLOAK in her pocket and is carrying a tall walking stick.

MOSS

That's gotta be twice as big as yesterday.

VENUS

And its moving.

VENUS kneels down to inspect the water closer.

VENUS (CONT'D)

East. That's inland. It's coming from the sea.

MOSS

Is this a climate change thing too?

VENUS

Yep. If it keeps growing at this rate we could lose miles of the forest. If this stuff gets into our lakes...everything there will die.

MOSS

Well let's get Maple, see if she's talked to Fern and Oak yet. If we get a team together --

VENUS

There's no time Moss. You and I both know how trees move, they won't have anyone ready for me until next week whether their lives depend on it or not.

MOSS

Well what are we gonna do?

VENUS thinks for a moment. She dons her CLOAK and pushes her walking stick a foot into the ground.

VENUS

When the water gets this high-

She cuts a notch a 4 inches from the ground.

VENUS (CONT'D)

It will be too late. Evacuate who you can up the mountain.

MOSS

Me? What -- where are you going?

VENUS dips her finger into the stream then the dirt, twice, forming a circle of light brown mud. With her eyes closed, she paints some in a line on her chin, then four dots above her brow. When she finishes, the mud shimmers then turns to gold. When her eyes open they are gold too.

VENUS

I've gotten the forests blessing to leave. I'll follow the stream and try to build a dam at the source.

MOSS is quiet for a moment as he realizes he's never gone a day without VENUS. In fact, most things in the forest haven't.

MOSS

Come back soon, Venus.

VENUS

I'll miss you too, Fuzz.

She smiles at him, sad. Not wanting to linger in a goodbye, she walks off. When resisting the urge to look back gets too hard, she runs.