ELOY THE ALUX

Episode 71

Small Town Spanish Teacher

In the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, there is a small man named Eloy. Eloy is not a normal person. First, he has very big eyes that shine like emeralds. Second, he has pointy ears. And lastly, he is very short: he is only 20 inches (50 centimeters) tall.

Eloy is not a normal person, he is an *alux*. *Aluxes* are small creatures similar to elves. They live in the jungle of the Yucatan peninsula, which is part of the countries of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. *Aluxes* are very elusive. They don't like residential areas; they prefer nature because it is their job to protect it. Very few people have seen an *alux*, so they are very mysterious. *Aluxes* are also mischievous. They like to cause problems for people.

Eloy is an *alux* in the state of Quintana Roo in Mexico. He has a very happy life. He lives in the jungle near a cenote. A *cenote* is a subterranean lake. There are at least 6,000 cenotes in the Yucatan peninsula. Eloy likes his cenote a lot. It is in a huge cave with a hole in the roof. Some pretty plants grow in the hole. When Eloy is very hot, he goes to the cenote to cool off. He floats in the water and looks at the light that filters through the plants and the hole. In those moments, Eloy thinks he is in paradise.

Tourists also like cenotes a lot. Tourists from all over the world visit the Yucatan peninsula to swim in cenotes. They like to swim and scuba dive in the cold, deep water. They like to take photos in the exotic caves.

But Eloy's cenote only exists for him. There aren't any tourists that visit his cenote, so Eloy is very happy with his life.

One day, Eloy is walking in his jungle when he hears some loud noises. He gets closer to investigate. He sees a big truck. Men leave the truck and cut trees to make a road. Eloy is angry. What are these men doing in his jungle?

The road that the men cut extends to the cenote. Eloy knows that he needs to do something. He can't allow them to destroy his cenote. He needs to protect his jungle and his cenote.

The men leave in the evening and return to their homes. While they are gone, Eloy gets to work. He moves the cut trees to block the new road. Now the truck can't pass and destroy more of his home!

In the morning, the truck with the men arrives to the road, but they can't get through because of the trees. Eloy watches from the trees and he laughs when he sees their angry faces. Unfortunately, the men don't leave. They get off the truck and move the trees to the side to get through. A new special truck arrives that moves the trees quickly. Eventually, they arrive near the cenote. They begin to cut more and more trees until there is a big, empty rectangle in the center of the jungle.

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In the evening, the men get in the truck and leave again, but this time they leave a truck behind. It is the special truck that moves the trees. Eloy decides to have fun with the truck. He uses the truck to move the cut trees in the shape of a pyramid in the center of the big rectangle. Then, he disconnects some cables from the truck so the men can't use it.

When the men arrive in the morning, they can't believe their eyes. They see the trees piled in a perfect pyramid. They need to move the trees, but when they get in the truck, it doesn't start, it doesn't make any noise.

Eloy sees the men's frustration from the jungle and laughs. But he stops laughing when the men change tactics and walk towards the cenote. The cenote is a sacred place for Eloy. It is the connection between the physical world and the spiritual world. What are they going to do to his cenote?

First, the men build a road to the entrance of the cenote. They cut plants and put down cement. Eloy decides to have fun with the cement. He throws sticks, leaves, and rocks in the wet cement. The men need to spend a lot of time fixing the cement.

Then the men enter the cenote. They make a lot of noise in the cave building a platform over the water. Eloy doesn't like the noise. There is not a lot of natural light in the cave and Eloy hides in the shadows.

One man leaves his tools on a platform and walks to the entrance for more wood. Eloy leaves the shadow and pushes the tools. They fall in the water with a splash. The cenote is deep and the tools sink, they don't float. Eloy returns to the shadows and laughs.

When the man returns for his tools, he can't find them. Eloy sees his frustrated face and laughs. The sound of his laughter echos in the cenote cave. "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" Now the man looks scared. Eloy sees the fear on his face and laughs again. The man looks around the cave and takes off running.

When Eloy is alone, he decides to undo the man's work. He cuts the wood on the platform, he disconnects cords and supports. He hides tools in the rocks.

After a few minutes, the man returns to the cave with other men. Eloy listens while the man talks about the evil laughter he heard in the cave. The man tells them that it was the voice of Xibalba, the god of the underworld.

Eloy thinks that it is very funny that the man believes he is Xibalba. Cenotes are portals to the underworld, but Eloy is not Xibalba, he is only a small *alux*! He laughs loudly. His laugh echos in the cave.

All the men are scared when they hear the echo of the laughter. They all think it is Xibalba! They move to leave the cenote, but the platform can't support them because of Eloy's mischief. The platform falls apart and all the men fall in the water.

Eloy can't control himself. He laughs and laughs! The men swim to the entrance and quickly leave the water. They run from the cave and Eloy is alone in his paradise once again.

After some time, Eloy leaves the cenote. On the way, he steps in the cement, which is still not cured. He leaves small footprints in the cement while he walks to his house in the jungle.

In the morning, the men return, but they are not alone. A special woman is with them. Eloy recognizes her spiritual power immediately. The woman is an *Ajq'ij*, a mayan spiritual leader.

The *Ajq'ij* walks around the area. She looks at the pyramid of trees and smiles. She looks at Eloy's footprints in the cement and smiles. She sees the anxious faces of the men and smiles.

"Friends, you shouldn't be afraid. Xibalba is not causing problems here. There is an *alux* that protects this cenote and you didn't ask for his permission to be here.

The *Ajq'ij* performs a ceremony near the tree pyramid that Eloy built. She burns copal, a sacred incense made by resin. The *Ajq'ij* speaks with Eloy in the mayan language. She asks for permission to use the cenote and the jungle. In return, she promises to build a *Kahtal Alux*, or small house, and leave him offerings.

Eloy is a little suspicious of the men, but when the ceremony ends, the men build a small, pretty house and they leave honey inside. Eloy likes honey a lot, and the house is very pretty. Eloy is happy and decides not to cause any more mischief that day. As a matter of fact, he takes the tools he had hidden in the cave and he leaves them next to his tree pyramid.

The next day, the men arrive and work. Eloy watches them, but he doesn't interfere with the work. They extend the platform in the cenote and they put in some cables for a zip line. Eloy is not very happy with the changes to his cenote, but at the end of the day, the men leave water, honey, and candles outside of his *Kahtal Alux*, so Eloy doesn't destroy their work. As a matter of fact, Eloy is so happy that he decides to help a little and he fixes the truck that moves trees.

After several months of work, Eloy's jungle has changed a lot. There is a store, a restaurant, a garden, and hammocks. In the cenote there are several platforms and cables for playing in the water.

Families from Mexico and from all over the world come and play in the cenote. Some people visit Eloy's *Kahtal Alux* and leave him offerings. Eloy needs the offerings to be happy. If one day there aren't offerings outside of his *Kahtal Alux*, Eloy will return to his mischievous ways. But for the moment, he is content to share his paradise in the jungle.



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