

The Log-Woman

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Somebody in that situation may have shattered and wept the minute after it happened. Maybe they didn't, and nobody would know differently for a while. But it folded them up slowly, as if they were a wet origami, but from the inside. An unrecognisable mess remaining. Sometimes these people would take all the old poisons that people do. Sometimes they bared it out and got better after a decade or so.

Not this woman. When the Lumberjack was done with her in the forest park, something different happened. She began collecting her splintered and sharded thoughts after the lumberjack had left her there. Splayed in the quagmire were her shameful legs. She stumbled up from the mud, quivering badly from the violence, and those thoughts hurled at her. Axes and knives and axes.

They cut her down from the inside and she fell. She was felled like a tree and collapsed. She looked up again, struggling. And she saw, behind her there was a pale white bench. A bench that wasn't in that spot before. Her eyes followed upward. On that bench was a small girl of only ten years old. The girl sat like a tight spring, tense. A sad but unsurprised look sunk into her little face. A disturbingly deep pattern wrinkled across her forehead and lips. What a thing for a girl to see. The little girl did not move her mouth, but her squeaky voice seemed like it came from behind the woman. "If you touch the tree, you will get what you want." The woman thought she was hallucinating. But she found that her hand was touching the bark of a tree. A little girl's hand gripped her arm forcing her palm into it. The earthy smell of it all hit the woman, like a final, blunt axe.

The woman wakes up to find a leaf up her nostril. Her nostril immediately spits it out. As she gropes around what was a leaf pile, that smell of earth and bark hammers at her again. A splintering rage. The night has a polluting mist in the sky, and the moon is a vengeful orange. That splintering rage. A slow rage begins splitting up into her stomach, into her chest, shredding into her spine, her arms, and down her legs. It is not a fast rage, no, and the woman barely notices it there, until she passes a lamppost on the way out the park. The lamppost seems unusually high tonight. She keeps walking. She comes up beside the park's military checkpoint on the way out. It's a poorly lit box with a burly man attached to a cigarette ember inside it. But the man does not notice. She stands, waiting for the man to come out, then ask for her internal passport.

Waiting, she notices something is itchy on her nose. It is rough! Her face is suddenly made out of bark. In fact, she has turned into a small, walking, talking, tree stump. There are many positives to being a tree stump. Being a tree stump, she does not feel anything at all. Her emotions are frozen in amber. The pregnancy from that incident did not happen. She does not need to eat. But she still needs a sunny day to feel active and a nice puddle to roll around in for water. There are always those in town. Once, she threw herself into the lake. But after the log-woman rolled back to shore again, she only felt bloated.

There was a boyfriend in her life. He didn't understand at all and screamed at her before she even told him about the Lumberjack. "Why would you change on me like that?" he wailed in a puddle of tears, after he found out his best pair of tits had just turned into a wooden monster-lady. He left and got her evicted.

Her best friend Liya Iz-levant took her into her home. She was also on good terms with Liya's husband, Volodi Iz-malenki, an older man with a calm, seal-like face. They gave her a nice plain bed, but she didn't really know what to do about sleep. The log-woman rests at night under the bed, pretending to be a wooden leg. That suited fine. Sleep doesn't happen as a log, she finds, but it is restful enough to see the night fly by.

The log woman has all the time and determination, and so one evening she follows the Lumberjack to his house. He is a short man, with a chocky build and a round innocent-looking face. His house is a regular white-brick corrugated cottage with a weedy garden. He closes the gate, shuts the door behind him and turns on the lights. The log-woman rolls up the path and sits herself on his doorstep. After she concentrates hard enough, a message engraves itself on the top of her head. She practiced so hard, that she even managed to get the fancy font right and make it look like it was written on paper.

The Lumberjack wakes up the next morning, does his routine and then walks out his door to find a strange tree-stump on his doorstep, with what seems to be a letter on it. The paper seems to be glued to the thing, and so he has to bend down to read it. After reading it, he laughs and tries to toss the letter away, but can't seem to get it off. So he then kicks the log, but fails again. "The bitch isn't getting my apology now!" He's in the Provisional Army and thinks he can do what he wants.

One day later, she saw the figure of that Lumberjack emerging up a hill. It was a sharp and fresh morning, and the sky was billowing, a blood-orange and pink. She is not looking for the man, but she's at the top of the hill, and he is at the bottom. She would take her opportunity.

His silhouette is on the left side of the road. The woman tipped herself side-on, positioning herself in his path and then hurled herself with full force.

The Lumberjack noticed only after it happened, but that splintering sound was deafening. A dark, wrathful log barely missed his legs and was then nowhere to be seen after he turned around. He brushes some of the gravel off his Lieutenant's uniform and quickly advances up to the hilltop, to see if he can spy the culprit. But there is nobody ahead, only the expansive forest park.

A month later, the log-woman rolls into the courtroom to try her rapist. She knows that the Lumberjack is in the provisional army but doesn't know his rank. She also doesn't know that the court has never tried a rapist before, much less the Lieutenant of an occupying army. The trial was excruciating, even though she is now a log and supposed to be immune to this sort of pain. The Lumberjack is not at court. But his defence lawyer is, and his defence lawyer is a Major General. The judge, a middle-aged man, reaches the verdict quickly, while thinking about his dinner. She is convicted guilty.

"Goodness, I cannot possibly see why the Lieutenant would want to do anything... to a bit of trashy bark. No, this is a crime, dragging around this patriot's name in the People's Court!" said the judge, spraying spit all over the two jurymen. The log-woman prevents her immediate arrest by pretending to be her defence lawyer's seat.

Of course, she also escaped the policemen who came to take her away from Liya's house. They were told she was a short, rough, flat to the chest, hideous woman. They saw what they thought was a felled tree in middle of Liya's bare yard and then thought nothing of it. After they upturned Liya and Volodi's cottage, some of them had sandwiches on the stump and then left.

It was after another night of thinking that she realised how to find justice. She collaborated with her friend Liya, who is quite extraordinary in her own way, without her husband knowing. Liya was a young, small woman, and so appeared quite vulnerable walking by the lamplight. Especially to a certain Lumberjack. He stalked Liya from a distance at first but kept even further back until her papers were verified by that burly man at the park checkpoint. He always crept around the checkpoint, lest some junior officer find some blackmail to spread, about his doings in the park. But this time his foot tripped on something wooden, something stumpy, not there before, and he fell flat. The burly man stared straight at his shadow. To make things worse a voice that seemed to come from right under him screamed "GOD PUNISHES YOU CRIMINAL PIG." Naturally, the burly guard dropped that cigarette and shot the shadow a dozen times.