

Trial Separation

by Larry Strattnr

He looked out the window at the grass. *A metaphor for life he wondered? Just grow up and then be cut down to grow up and be cut down again. It's no wonder we developed orgasm. At least we squeeze a small something out of our system and feel good quickly enough we can't instantaneously be cut down.*

"You're no good at sex, no good at drugs and, god knows, no good at rock and roll." She had said to him, sharply articulated, every syllable a thin bleeding line as it slid over his skin.

He was unable to look up at her. Said nothing in return. What was there to say? She had covered the waterfront.

He might have offered, "Still, you remain a bloodsucking ungrateful woman unwilling to reach out to me after all of these years and help me to be otherwise. I, as you, are only who I condone myself to be. I would be different but do not have the means. Did you think making me bleed would change who I am?" But he did not offer.

She construed his silence as capitulation and expelled the sniffing sound she made to roll up disgust, disdain and intolerance in a jacket of mucus. He always expected she would spit out the words at him when she made this noise. Thankfully she hadn't yet.

We have fallen so far, he thought sadly. If only I could leaf out and spread, pushing up every year like a tree. Larger and more satisfying to behold. Girth and roots of substance. Someone not quickly cut down. He was given to this kind of reverie. He supposed it was one of the things she hated about him.

Remarks she made about sex were gratuitous. He could tell she was ripe for it when she walked around in front of him in certain clothes. She certainly didn't seem to hate it when he screwed her. Her arms and legs flopped around and she pulled at her nipples and screamed as he resolutely pounded. For some reason she didn't seem able to find a satisfactory screw somewhere else. When he pushed her legs up and wider apart, finishing her off, she often cried after release. Sometimes these thankful tears lasted as many as ten minutes before she said, "Get off of me." The whole thing baffled him.

One night as she laid spread eagled on the bed and he labored over her the tenor of her cries changed. He looked up from her gyrating breasts into wide-open flaming eyes. Her arm came up and her hand clutched a knife. She swung the blade. He took it on the outside of his shoulder. After she cut him he wrestled the knife from her, never stopping his thrusting as he threw the blade to the floor and pounded her on to orgasm.

Finished with her, he went straight to the emergency room. The left sleeve of his shirt was bloody.

While tying off the fourth suture the Resident asked, "How did you receive the injury?"

Before he could stop himself he said, "I rolled onto something sharp during intercourse."

To which the Resident replied, "Got on top of your wife's tongue did you?" far too quickly for it to be a coincidence.

He spent the next six sutures looking at the doctor trying to remember if he had seen him anywhere. He also wondered again briefly why he was not a tree.

When he arrived back home she was not there. He packed a few clothes and some personal items. He dropped the car keys into his pocket and carried his suitcase to the garage.

