

He peered out into the wasteland. His home. His life. His family.

He saw fast, dangerous, loud devices being loaded with his trees, his life over before he knew it.

He felt an overwhelming rush of despair. He felt his heart thumping in his chest.

His sadness turned to anger. He had nowhere to go, no food, no shelter, all because of these alien hairless creatures stole all he had ever known. He wanted them dead. He wanted to watch them burn.

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“That’s the last of them boss, ready to roll.” Informed Jeff. He was a tree lopper for cleartheforests.inc. And he was ready to quit. “Where are they off to?” he questioned. His boss was old and grey, yet surprisingly fit. “These are off to factories to be toilet paper” came his response.

He recalls earlier that day one tree landed with a crash and a greater glider was thrown out. The glider seemed stressed. It should have been, it just lost its home. But instead of fleeing fearfully like most, it tried to get back in the tree. Jeff approached, sending the glider running off into open land. He looked in the tree and saw two baby gliders with what he assumed to be the other parent. He removed them from the tree and made a shelter with some leafy branches for them to hide in. He hoped they would survive. None of this seemed worth the money to Jeffrey.

“You know, Australians go through 3 rolls of toilet paper a week?” he recalled aloud.

“What, per household?” his boss asked absentmindedly. He was preoccupied with checking the trees were secure on all the trucks. He didn’t fully trust Jeff’s judgement.

“Nope! That per person! We’re wiping out our forests to wipe our asses”

His boss didn’t respond. Jeff theorised he was numb to the reality after being in the industry his whole life. He could not see himself ending up the same way.

“Hey boss?”

“Mmh.”

“I quit.”

And just like that, he was unemployed, but he didn't have to cause damage to earn a living.

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The greater glider was stressed with nowhere to hide, pacing anxiously. He needed his family, but he was sure those... creatures had hurt them. Just like they hurt the trees. Just like they hurt everything.

Just then, in the distance, he heard a distressed chirping noise. He recognised that voice. His babies.

He ran as fast as he could, scared at what he would find. He crossed the wasteland, jumping over tree trunks and branches, until he reached the source of the noise. The devices that stole his trees had all left now, and he could smell the overwhelming scent of... burning? Not like anything he had smelt before. It must have been the machines. He came to a stop in front of a pile of leafy branches. He could faintly smell his babies now. He clambered in and was relieved and overwhelmed to find his family, safe and unharmed, within the branches. He would never forgive the monsters for taking his home, but he was grateful they spared what mattered most to him.

## ***2 months later***

In a warm, tidy office in Montreal, Luna sat at her desk. She was collaborating with her team on a publication about the harmful effects of deforestation on Australian wildlife and biodiversity. Her newest team member, Jeff, was pushing for the text to talk about this issue, and on learning about its significance, she and her team agreed to it. Luna was the researcher for a significant company that focused on spreading awareness on a variety of significant issues in the world. The facts on this issue were jarring.

1.8 million acres of land, cleared annually in Australia alone.

24 million worldwide

Billions of trees, habitats, animals.

Gone.

Forever.

Luna wanted to make a change and she knew this was her chance. Pages and hours and searches and sadness. She was drained. She submitted her research to the writer and prayed it would have an impact.

### ***10 years later***

She heard that noise. The noise she had only heard once before. The noise of the aliens that stole her home. She was in her nest at the tree line. Her parents had made a new home for them after their old one was destroyed. She knew they were lucky to be alive. She watched in horror as a man got out of the vehicle. She watched as he pulled a shovel out of his car, as he dug, as he planted a baby tree, and another, and another. She could recognise him now, the way he moved. It was the guy who had spared her and her family all those years ago.

And he was saving the forest.