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Bear Trap

Laura Acosta

I'm sitting on a rock on the edge of a road with a bear trap stuck on my leg. I've been dragging it around for a long while now, and it's heavy and rusty and bloody. Sometimes I try to fiddle with it in an attempt to reduce the pain, but the effect is quite the contrary. I don't remember how I got it, nor where. This grassland is too vast to identify any of its landmarks. I mean, there comes a point where a single tree can be any tree, and when you walk a straight line it's like those old movies where cars pass by the same background over and over again. So let's say it just happened.

The greensward was never the same after its distant echoes became accompanied by the earthy rattle of the deadly device I'd caught around the juiciest point between my ankle and my knee. At first I thought I could live with it, convinced that it would soften in time, that numbness would take over until the iron jaws had mercy on my muscles and refrained—but every trip, every attempt to shake it off resulted in a harder bite. No matter where or how fast I tried to move, the trap made sure I stumbled and remembered its existence linked to mine. This eyeless face, all mouth and fangs, had forced its point of view on me.

Soon enough it ceased to be a mere bear trap gnawing at me. I got so used to it, reckoning that there was no other alternative to its presence, that it became us; an 'us' that begged for acceptance and longed for joyous perfection, as though evoking some impossible glorious future where teeth would learn to love my flesh, or rather, where this meat would become the kind of tissue that blade had always been looking for. When it stops hurting, I thought, I will finally take

pleasure in this beautiful sunset, for we will be enjoying it together. When the trap accepts my leg as it is, I thought again, life will be perfect, as in togetherness I will be complete. However, all I got in response was the same old clatter claiming my nerves, drawing my blood. And that's how I got where I am now.

I've often heard about people who are actually attracted to deadly devices and walk eagerly into them, much like mosquitoes to Venus flytraps. Little do they know that not all mouths are meant for kissing! If you ask me... That might be my case. Maybe I can't distinguish good traps from bad traps. Maybe I'm such an idiot that I deserved to be caught by this piece of tarnished junk. Maybe—I'm thinking way too much. And I'm not even focusing on the real problem.

The real problem, I believe, arises when you start to accept the pain as an intrinsic part of yourself. The bear trap has been there forever, so why bother getting rid of it? After all, there is a leg attached to it, and legs tend to be necessary, you know, for walking. However, that which you thought useful is nothing more than a broken bone lined with purple pieces of bloated flesh. And what would you want that for?

Maybe it's time to chew off this rotten limb once and for all. Something inside tells me a new one will eventually grow back.

About the author: *Laura Acosta was miraculously teletransported from Colombia to Japan a couple of years ago. After regaining consciousness she became a student at the University of Tsukuba.*

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