

SPLINTERED

Gracie Boyce

She was walking. Only walking, as the trees passed through her sight. The empty forest soothed her, lifting some of the weight from her soul.

She came to the place she had been looking for. She sat down with her back against the great tree, her jeans becoming plastered with moist soil.

She closed her eyes, wanted to escape the real world. But it didn't work. Her eyes blinked open after only a moment, as she had seen the haunting sights on the back of her eyelids.

She started at the sky. It was gray, casting dark shadows across the forest. The sun couldn't make its way through the clouds.

She looked down, away from the dreary sky. Her eyes found a destroyed tree a few feet away. It had been struck by lightning, probably on a day much like this.

She flinched, feeling as if she were that tree. Destroyed and unable to put herself together again, a split down the middle of her heart.

She stood, testing the ground with her feet, not wanting to trip over a root. The great tree's roots extended across the forest floor, causing most who walked through to lose their balance.

She walked over to the splintered tree, feeling her own pain encompass her. The tree was surrounded by scraps of wood. The bark looked scorched and looked like it would blow away with any bit of breeze. A little place on the back of the tree was flat, surrounded by sharp splinters.

She sat down on the flat part, making the tree useful again.

She sighed and whispered, "If only someone would do the same for me."