

After the Woodcutter

The wolf calls again, pretending to be Grandma. I'm tired of this game, but I go to her house anyway. I arrive to find the wolf in Grandma's bed in a nightgown and a cap hiding his ears. For some reason, they think I'll fall for this again. *Where is she, Wolf*, I say with a sigh. *Who, my Dear?* he squeaks. Just then I see a single hammer toe peeking out from under the bed. I don't understand why she lets him do this to her. I think she likes the attention. It's sad, really. She has so much going for her and tons of friends at the senior center. Ever since the woodcutter stopped tolerating this, they've been roping me in. I slide under the bed to talk to her. She holds her breath, waiting for permission to laugh. *No, Grandma, it's not funny. It wasn't funny last time, either. I am a very busy person, and I'd rather visit you without him.* I squeeze into my back pocket and extend a twenty dollar bill up to him. I hear him slither out of bed and nightclothes, and slink out the window. I help Grandma up from under the bed. I pat the dust bunnies from her hair, sit her down, and take her hands in mine. *Grandma, why? I don't understand.* Her yolky eyes bounce for a moment away from my gaze. *I like the way I feel when I'm with him. I can't help it.*

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Originally published in Main Channel Voices, Spring 2009