

Ahh. The sun feels so good on my face tonight. Sipping my merlot, I glance out at the back yard.

Beautiful. Serene. Roses burst into bloom. Iris, not so much.

I jump up, grabbing my always-present clippers and dash to the bed. One lower blossom is only half done. Too bad. Cut off its head. Destination: trashcan.

Sinking back down onto the hard chair, I make a note to buy a cushion. Maybe with an iris motif. I sip again.

The trees dance in such a way as to charge the lighting; evening sunrays filter and swirl in and out as branches billow and churn, birthing a storm.

I raise my glass to parted lips, just as dried leaves skitter across the freshly mowed lawn.

Glass down. I push myself up and give chase, crushing the ones I catch in my hands over the always-present trash.

I sit back down in a somewhat uncomfortable lawn chair on our old brick patio and pick up my wine glass, my peripheral vision eyeing the box of wine next to me. Just checking.

Sweet sounds of a new summer evening serenade me: crickets chirp, birds twitter in for the night ... and my neighbor is mowing in vengeance. I suppose he doesn't like it when I unleash my squirrels on his yard to dump walnut shells on his lawn. I can hear the bird's lullabies when he mows away from me, heading the other direction. Every time he turns toward me, the mower drowns out the birds.

The other side neighbors have their grandkids here. They are old enough to take care of themselves, so I don't need to watch them. A volleyball net is set up in the yard and these long-legged beauties are bashing the ball back and forth. If their ball comes over into my yard, I'll

kick it onto my roof. I have quite a nice stash of them by now. And the kids never come here, claiming their balls.

The trees. Oh, yes, the trees.

I jump. There's a volunteer tree in the flower bed. I begin to notice ... all the trees. I look at my feet and tiny trees are peeking between my toes. I raise my eyes and they are everywhere on the patio, managing to push up the old bricks. They are in the rain gutters, the cracks in the drive-way, in the bird bath. Hiding in my beautiful clematis.

Grrr.

I'll get those suckers. Well, that's what they're called — suckers. Technically they are suckers when they are growing out of the trunk of a tree and they suck the growth of the tree. That's why they're called suckers. Well, they are sucking the life out of me.

Every other week or so, I have to take a hike through my yard, the flower beds and the drive way, pulling them all out. Or mix up a batch of chemicals and drown those suckers.

Tonight, I will get a few, after a long drink of the wine. Nothing stressful or evil, just one or two.

There's one. It rained last night, so it's relatively easy to pull out by the roots. I mean really — by the roots. Tiny on the top and long on the taproot.

I straighten up checking the rest of the flower beds. Ugh.

This little thing in my hand was only about three inches above ground and the root? Let me go measure it.

I get the ruler out and it's a foot and a half long!

And some of the trees that planted themselves in among the flowers and bushes that I planted? Three feet tall. Four feet tall.

I hug the box of wine. Courage.

I'm gonna get those suckers. All of them. No matter what.

I shake my fist at them all! Die you suckers!

The neighbor waves back at me. He is going to see the revenge of the attack of the tree suckers.

I pull out a knife that I keep in my bucket of gardening supplies and tools. I better grab the clippers, too. Some of them might be tough.

Battle's on.

There's one beside my favorite flower — the dandelion.

Get it. I take the knife and slice at the root. I know I'm not getting it at the very end under ground, but I know it should take awhile for it to grow back up. There's another one. Got it. And another. There's one. Take that you sucker. I am able to pull up or slice off about five more.

At the end of the flower bed, beside a rare kind of hosta I see a whole gaggle of trees. A tiny forest. Not a good sign. I dig under them to find about ten suckers growing up from the woody stump.

I sit back on my heels and look ahead of me. There are a lot of those bushy bunches of trees. Are they all ... ones I sliced off last year? Or the year before?

Never mind. I forge ahead. Knife and clippers fly in my hands and a pile of young trees gather around my feet.

Oh, I'm getting tired and I can't go on. More wine.

There's another one I had to have missed about three years ago. It's ... I gage by how tall I am. It's about five feet tall. Maybe from ... ugh ... five years ago.

I'm going in — going after this one. I get to sawing and clipping, but all I manage to do is scar the bark and that's it. It springs back to stand strong, flipping me off with its leaves. I keep clipping and sawing but I can see I'm not making any headway.

I go to the garage for more weapons. There's a limb cutter. That thing's heavy — or it seems heavy to me.

I draw apart the handles and threaten the tree within five inches of its life as I position the blades to cut off its essence. I squeeze. Nothing happens. It maybe marks the trunk, but the tree doesn't sway. It doesn't even snap back or lean.

I saw with the knife to weaken it, but the only thing weakening is me and the blade.

More weapons.

The garage will save me. I have to take this tree down. Today.

The fading sunlight sparkled off a yellow contraption. I walked closer. Yellow. The sun glinted as if to say, here's the weapon for the job.

Chain saw.

I lifted it down off the shelf. Small enough for me to handle. Ready.

I ripped the cord out, letting the weight give the oomph that I needed. It roared to life!

Look out tree. Here we come! Me and the chain saw! You better run and hide, Tree. You better say your prayers, Tree. Mamma is mad and Mamma is gonna take you down.

I held down the throttle for sound effects. Made me feel tough.

My neighbor glanced up from his mowing and stopped the mower so fast, he lost control of the levers and plowed, or should I say, mowed through the entire patch of garden corn.

I noticed the neighbors on the other side were giving me strange looks, as they shoed their grandkids into the house. Slam! The door closed behind them, but I noticed they stretched up to see out the windows, shoving the curtains aside. Every window had people lined up, like this was some kind of parade.

I'm just cutting down a Tree. What's the big deal?

I revved the motor and walked toward the Tree. The flowers seemed to cower, parting so as to avoid the machine. I think I heard music as I placed one foot stealthily in front of the other. Marching.

Gonna make that Tree dance.

There you are, you little Sucker. Make your last wish and die.

I leaned over and pushed that chain saw into the side of the Tree. It dug into the bark and caught, taking me in circles around the tree, making a spiral cut all the way up the tree, scattering twigs and leaves.

I hung onto that chain saw. We kept cutting until I was hanging at the top of the tree. Staring me down was the MOTHER of all trees. It leaned over as if to shame me. It's branches bent at such angles — hands on hips. The top of this monster bent over, scolding me again and again.

I dropped the saw.

I grabbed hold of a branch on the sweet little tree and shimmied down, landing on the saw. It gave a shudder and died.

My neighbor jumped up and ran into his house.

I could see the other neighbors all staring out the windows. Grandma covered the little ones eyes. Grandpa was on the phone, his finger pointing my way.

Roar!

I jumped and the Mother tree moved closer and I tripped and fell on my backside.

The Tree moved closer.

I scooted away on my rear. Darn! Grass stains on my shorts.

Another scoot and I would be on my back porch.

This Mother Tree didn't give up.

Branches waved in anger, indignant. A finger branch barely missed my nose. The sound of branches and leaves swishing was explosively terrifying. I bumped up on the bottom step.

This Tree could crash my house.

I looked left and right, desperate to find something to stop it.

It stood in front of its baby Tree, guarding it. Mother Tree was totally uprooted and fierce, branches on its hip trunk, as it cussed me out.

I moved one step up. Surely it was supper time for trees.

About thirty robins flew to the Mother and chattered and chittered. Mother backed away.

Aww. The birds like me. They're standing up for me.

I tried to make birdie sounds, twittering. I pursed my lips imitating bird mouths, when the robins turned toward me.

Three dove for the empty concrete bird bath bowl and picked it up, flying it over the baby tree. They flew right above me and dropped it.

I jumped just in time. The bird bath bowl crashed through my kitchen window. I heard it bash into the table and chair inside. I looked in the window and screamed. My prize day lilies in my favorite vase, all smashed in pieces.

Before I could get turned around, every robin pooped on me as they flew over.

I struggled to get the door open and pushed inside and to this day, I can't stand robins.

The End.