

Jubilee Oak?

The storm came. An extreme weather event. It caught me unprepared. Rain washing down me, rain soaking the earth, winds careening through my canopy. Assaulted, I fell. Fell is a weak word. I smashed down. I crushed everything in my way. I am sorry for that destruction.

The storm passed. The girl-child came. She whose mother had died. Who needed me – I was solid, grounded, sympathetic, reliable, reassuring. She had scaled my vast height to sit in the lap of my branches, to spend time alone and be comforted by me; by my murmurings, my whisperings, my rockings. Her kinsfolk, spotting her skywards, would tell her father and beg her to come down.

The girl-child saw me downed. Her second mother loss. She wept. I lay, slowly sinking deep into the Fenland peat. I withdrew. My soul hibernated, not inert but fossilizing.

5000 years later earth movements woke my soul. I was lifted. My true-tree magnificence was diminished, almost unrecognisable - only blackened trunk remained. I was milled into planks, dried, planed, sanded, polished. I was recreated. I am table. I live on.

I am a sculptural object. I have practical functions: for dining, meetings, and display. I have symbolic value at summits, ceremonies, and state events. I give some insights into the scale and majesty of ancient high forests. Yet, I hold unlockable secrets. These people call me the Jubilee Oak. That is not what the girl-child called me. That is not my name.

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