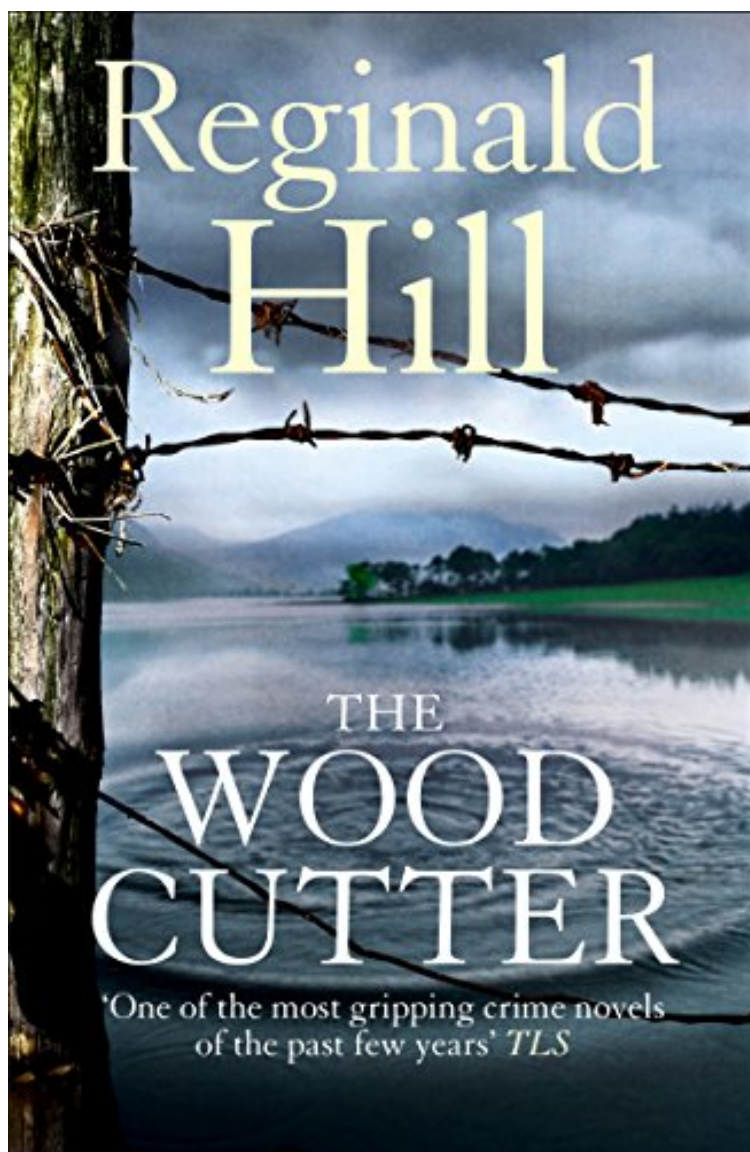


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# The Woodcutter



*Par Reginald Hill*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA fast-moving, stunning new standalone psychological thriller from the award-winning author of the Dalziel and Pascoe seriesWolf Hadda has lead a charmed life. From humble origins as a woodcutters son, he has risen to become a hugely successful entrepreneur, happily married to the girl of his dreams.A knock on the door one morning ends it all. Thrown into prison while protesting his innocence, Wolf retreats into silence. Seven years later prison psychiatrist Alva Ozigbo makes a breakthrough: Wolf begins to talk. Under her guidance he gets parole, returning to his rundown family home in rural Cumbria.But there is a mysterious period in Wolfs youth when he disappeared from home and was known to his employers as the Woodcutter. And now the Woodcutter is back, looking for the truth and

revenge. Extrait Wolf

Once upon a time I was living happily ever after. That's right. Like in a fairy tale. How else to describe my life up till that bright autumn morning back in 2008? I was the lowly woodcutter who fell in love with a beautiful princess glimpsed dancing on the castle lawn, knew she was so far above him that even his fantasies could get his head chopped off, nonetheless when three seemingly impossible tasks were set as the price of her hand in marriage threw his cap into the ring and after many perilous adventures returned triumphant to claim his hearts desire. Here began the happily ever after, the precise extent of which is nowhere defined in fairy literature. In my case it lasted fourteen years. During this time I acquired a fortune of several millions, a private jet, residences in Holland Park, Devon, New York, Barbados and Umbria, my lovely daughter, Ginny, and a knighthood for services to commerce. Over the same period my wife Imogen turned from a fragrant young princess into an elegant, sophisticated woman. She ran our social life with easy efficiency, made no demands on me that I could not afford, and always had an appropriate welcome waiting in whichever of our homes I returned to after my often extensive business trips. Sometimes I looked at her and found it hard to understand how I could deserve such beauty, such happiness. She was my piece of perfection, my hearts desire, and whenever the stresses and strains of my hugely active life began to make themselves felt, I just had to think of my princess to know that, whatever fate brought me, I was the most blessed of men. Then on that autumn day by one of those coincidences that only a wicked fairy can contrive, our wedding anniversary everything changed. At half past six in the morning we were woken in our Holland Park house by an extended ringing of the doorbell. I got up and went to the window. My first thought when I saw the police uniforms was that some joker had sent us an anniversary stripaubade. But they didnt look as if they were about to rip off their uniforms and burst into song, and suddenly my heart contracted at the thought that something could have happened to Ginny. She was away at school not by my choice, but when the lowly woodcutter marries the princess, there are some ancestral customs he meekly goes along with. Then it occurred to me theyd hardly need a whole posse of plods to convey such a message. Nor would they bring a bunch of press photographers and a TV crew. Imogen was sitting up in bed by this time. Even in these fraught circumstances I was distracted by sight of her perfect breasts. She said, Wolf, what is it? in her usual calm manner. I dont know, I said. Ill go and see. She said, Perhaps you should put some clothes on. I grabbed my dressing gown and was still pulling it round my shoulders as I started down the stairs. I could hear voices below. Among them I recognized the Cockney accent of Mrs Roper, our housekeeper. She was crying out in protest and I saw why as I reached the half landing. She must have opened the front door and policemen were thrusting past her without ceremony. Jogging up the stairs towards me was a short fleshy man in a creased blue suit flanked by two uniformed constables. He came to a halt a couple of steps below me and said breathlessly, Wolf Hadda? Sorry. Sir Wilfred Hadda. Detective Inspector Medler. I have a warrant to search these premises. He reached up to hand me a sheet of paper. Below I could hear people moving, doors opening and shutting, Mrs Roper still protesting. I said, What the hells going on? His gaze went down to my crotch. His lips twitched. Then his eyes ran up my body and focused beyond me. He said, Maybe you should make yourself decent, unless you fancy posing for Page Three. I turned to see what he was looking at. Through the half-landing window overlooking the garden, I could see the old rowan tree Id transplanted from Cumbria when I bought the house. It was incandescent with berries at this time of year, and I was incandescent with rage at the sight of a paparazzo clinging to its branches, pointing a camera at me. Even at this distance I could see the damage caused by his ascent. I turned back to Medler. How did he get there? What are the press doing here anyway? Did you bring them? Now why on earth should I do that, sir? he said. Maybe they just happened to be passing. He didnt even bother to try to sound convincing. He had an insinuating voice and one of those mouths which looks as if its holding back a knowing sneer. Ive always had a short fuse. At six thirty in the morning, confronted by a bunch of heavy-handed plods tearing my home to pieces and a paparazzo desecrating my lovely rowan, it was very short indeed. I punched the little bastard right in his smug mouth and he went backwards down the stairs, taking one of his constables with him. The other produced his baton and whacked me on the leg. The pain was excruciating and I collapsed in a heap on the landing. After that things got confused. As I was half dragged, half carried out of the house, I screamed at Imogen, whod appeared fully dressed on the stairs, Ring Toby! She looked very calm, very much in control. Princesses dont panic. The thought was a comfort to me. Cameras clicked and journalists yelled inanities as I was thrust into a car. As it sped away, I twisted round to look back. Cops were already coming down the steps carrying loaded bin bags that they tossed into the back of a van. The house, gleaming in the morning sunlight, seemed to look down on them with disdain. Then we turned a corner and it vanished from sight. I did not realize how could I? that I was never to enter it

again. Revue de presse Praise for Reginald Hill: "[Reginald Hill] shows no sign of descending from the high quality of his writing. . . . Beautifully plotted and intriguingly resolved. . . . Fresh and memorable. . . . It's a witty, wise and warm read, with rich characterisation and emotional depth." The Times "[Hill] is a brilliant and witty observer of whatever social order he happens to look at." The Globe and Mail