

Londoner 48

Chapter 48. Log Mover

Immediately, a servant summoned by Hudan, darted off into the crowd in search of Taniok, the village carpenter.

Kivamus told others to walk a little further away from the gates and the growing noise of the crowd, where they could talk more easily. He watched as the servant disappeared into the throng, his gaze lingering on the towering trees that ringed the village. Their heights, he estimated, easily surpassed thirty meters. At first glance, they looked similar to the tall redwood trees found on Earth, although they weren't nearly as big as those giant trees.

Nevertheless, these trees still seemed immense when compared to the single story houses found here, unlike watching such tall trees from a high-rise apartment on Earth, which would have made the same trees look much shorter in comparison.

"What kind of trees are these?" he asked Duvas. "I know we don't have an option to bring in timber from another place, but will these trees be good enough for making the longhouses?"

Duvas offered an immediate answer. "You don't need to worry about that at all, my Lord. They're fedarus trees," he explained. "Their wood is renowned for its durability and resistance to moisture. The manor house itself, and all of the outbuildings in the manor, were constructed from fedarus wood." He pointed towards the manor house. "As you can see, even after enduring countless rains over more than a decade, they show no signs of rot or decay."

Gorsazo added, "I have heard that fedarus timber is even preferred for use in shipbuilding in Dorastiz, after transporting it from the fedarus forests near the capital."

Relieved, Kivamus gave a nod. "That's good," he said. "At least we don't have to worry about the quality of the timber."

Soon, the servant returned along with Taniok. The carpenter, a wiry man with a face weathered by years of toil, bowed his head in a respectful greeting. "You asked for me, my Lord?" he inquired, his voice carrying a note of deference. "I heard my name being called before I had even reached the manor."

Kivamus said, "We have a problem in moving the fallen trees," he began, "and we need a better method than just dragging the whole tree on the ground. So I need you to build something."

He looked around and saw a small wooden stick lying nearby and picked it up. Then he squatted on the ground, and started to make a crude drawing on the ground itself with the pointed end of the stick. He remembered seeing something like what he was drawing on the internet in the past, though he didn't remember what it was called. He explained to others while drawing at the same time, "It's nothing complex. What I need is two large wheels with a radius of around three to four feet. Bigger would be better, but there's no need to make its radius more than five feet."

He continued while others watched the stick drawing on the ground, "And these two wheels should be fixed to a very strong wooden axle, so that the distance between the two wheels should also be around the same length as the radius of the wheel, or maybe just a little longer. This way, we can easily tie a log or a felled tree of around three feet diameter under the axle. Or we can tie many smaller logs as well, as needed." He added while finishing the crude stick drawing, "This will lift the logs on one end - the part under the axle, so they can be pulled by a pair of horses much more easily."

He stood up while looking at his handiwork, and couldn't prevent a small laugh from leaving his mouth when he compared this drawing to the high-tech blueprints he made on his computer, back in London. When others looked at him with surprise, he just shook his head and said it's nothing. He continued, "I think we can call it, uh... a log mover. Ideally, we would need another such log mover, to lift the log from the other end as well, particularly if we have to move the logs for a longer distance, but a single one will do for now. We can think about making another log mover once Taniok gets some free time." He looked at others' faces. "So, what do you all think about this?"

Gorsazo examined the drawing with a critical eye. "It makes sense," he said slowly. "Lifting the logs, even from one end, would significantly reduce the drag from the ground, making it much easier to move them." He added, "While it looks simple enough in concept, how did you even get the idea for this?"

Kivamus replied, "I think I read something like this in one of the books in the library of the Ulriga Palace."

Gorsazo stroked his chin. "I'm not sure if I saw something like this in the library."

Kivamus thought about it from his memories of the original Kivamus. "Gorsazo, you know you didn't have access to the whole library back there. It must have been a book kept in the section restricted for the Duke's family."

Gorsazo seemed to be gazing at a distance, while thinking about it. "Hmm... It very well could be. And it is not like I spent nearly as much time in the library there as you did."

Kivamus gave a nod, and seized the opportunity to lay the groundwork for explaining how he gets new ideas in the future. "I always kept thinking about making new things after reading books there. Even back in Ulriga, my mind was constantly churning with ideas, imagining new and creative ways of doing things, or pondering on designs for things that could make life easier."

Gorsazo looked at him for a moment, and said, "Your mind has always worked differently from your siblings, nobody can deny that. While your brothers were busy forging alliances in the Duke's court, or hunting deer in the reserved forests, you were lost in the pages of a book."

Kivamus nodded. "As you know well, mostly it was just to get away from my brothers' bullying," he admitted, "but slowly I began to like spending time reading those books more than any other thing. But I never had the chance to put those ideas into practice in Ulriga. But now that I have the freedom to build anything here, away from my brothers and the rest of my family, I already have many ideas in my mind which can help us a lot."

After seeing Gorsazo give a nod to that, Kivamus looked at the carpenter. "So can you make it?"

Taniok looked worried. "Most of it sounds simple enough, milord, and I can make the wheels and the axle for sure. But the most challenging part of this would be making a bearing for the axle, to hitch it to the horses, or even to tie the logs to the axle." He winced as he added, "That is not a simple thing to make, and I'm not sure if I can make it, milord." He looked at Kivamus' face for a moment before adding, "Mr Duvas did come to me to repair a wagon some time ago, but that is what I told him at that time as well, that a trained wainwright would be needed to make those bearings."

Duvas nodded in agreement. "That's why we needed to send the damaged wagon to Cinran for repairs," he explained. "The wainwrights there have the expertise and the equipment to create those bearings, as well as the other complex parts for a wagon."

Kivamus pondered this new challenge. "We don't have an option to buy bearings for this from Cinran," he said. "We need a solution which we can make easily from the things we already have at hand."

Hudan suggested, "What if we just use a thick rope, looped around the axle loosely, and use it to hitch the horses to the log mover? It is far from ideal, but this way we wouldn't need any bearings. We can do the same to tie the logs to the axle, or we can even use an iron chain if we have it here."

"The constant friction will wear down the ropes in the loop quickly," Gorsazo warned, "and we will have to keep making those loops again and again with new ropes. But it's a workaround by which we can easily manage to make the log mover right now, without needing to make any bearings."

Duvas, however, seemed more optimistic. "I don't think we have an iron chain strong enough for that here. But if we can find a thick enough rope," he said, "it might still hold up for a while."

Kivamus nodded, "It's a temporary fix," he said, "but it'll work until we can find a better solution." He continued, thinking about it, "We will need to make two loops to tie the logs to the axle though. One to tie securely around the logs, and the other - which would be at right angles to the first loop - to tie a loop loosely around the axle, which would also pass through the first loop. But the logic still stands."

He added, "And if we can find something smooth, maybe something like an animal skin, to tie around the axle before looping the rope around it, it will allow the ropes to last longer."

Hudan commented, "That's a good idea. In fact, we can even put some tallow on that loop of rope, as well as on the animal skin to make it even smoother."

"That's much better," Kivamus commended, and looked at Taniok. "Can you make it?"

Taniok, relief evident on his face, replied. "If I don't have to try to make the bearings," he said, "I can certainly make the rest of it easily enough."

"Good." Kivamus nodded, his attention focused on the task at hand. He also remembered Cedoron telling him about making elaborate carvings on the tools, so he decided to stop that here as well to prevent Taniok wasting valuable time on that. "Now the finishing doesn't need to be top notch, and I certainly don't need any carvings or anything. The log mover only needs to be sturdy enough to move the trees without breaking."

"We need it built as soon as possible," he added, his voice firm. "Even a single one will significantly speed up moving the logs. So, how long will it take for you to make such a log mover?"

Taniok's gaze was fixed at some distant point, while he seemed to be thinking about the process. Finally, he said, "Once I have finalized the details including the size of the wheel and the length of the axle, which will take around an hour, I can put my assistant to make the spokes. I think he can make all the spokes for the two wheels by evening, since I think I already have some wood in the right sizes. I will work on making the two naves - those are the hubs of the wheel - myself. Those are usually very time-consuming to make, but since you don't need a perfect finishing, I can skip the grinding and polishing of them. So I should be able to make both the naves by evening as well."

Kivamus gestured for him to carry on.

Taniok continued with a nod. "If you provide me with a few extra workers to help, I can give them a saw and put them to cut out a beam of the right size from a log, which I can make into an axle tomorrow. That will leave the felloes - that's the surface of the wheel, which I will put my assistant to work on tomorrow. Assuming we can get all the parts completed by noon tomorrow, I will only need to connect all the parts to make the wheels and then attach them to the axle, which will take a few more hours."

He seemed to grimace for a moment before he added, "So, I think we can complete this... log-mover by evening tomorrow. It might have been done earlier, milord, but what you are asking for is quite big - I've never made a wheel with a diameter nearing ten feet!" He pointed to a smaller cart kept nearby, "I made those carts in a single day, but those are much smaller!"

Kivamus saw his grimace, but couldn't immediately think of a reason for that. "This will take longer than I thought, but it will have to do." He added, "Don't worry about payment for your materials - you'll be compensated for everything that you use from your own stores, and you can take as many workers as you need from the waiting crowd. You don't have to worry about paying them either. Just let Duvas know who you've chosen, so he'll keep track of their hours."

"I will do that, milord. By your leave, I should get a start on this immediately," Taniok said. "I need to finish this so I can start cutting planks. We will need a lot of planks to make even a single longhouse, so I need to get to work now."

Kivamus nodded. "Go on then." And after a quick bow, Taniok walked away towards the crowd waiting for work.

Kivamus turned his attention back to Duvas. "What about Cedoron? Did he come here to get more workers?"