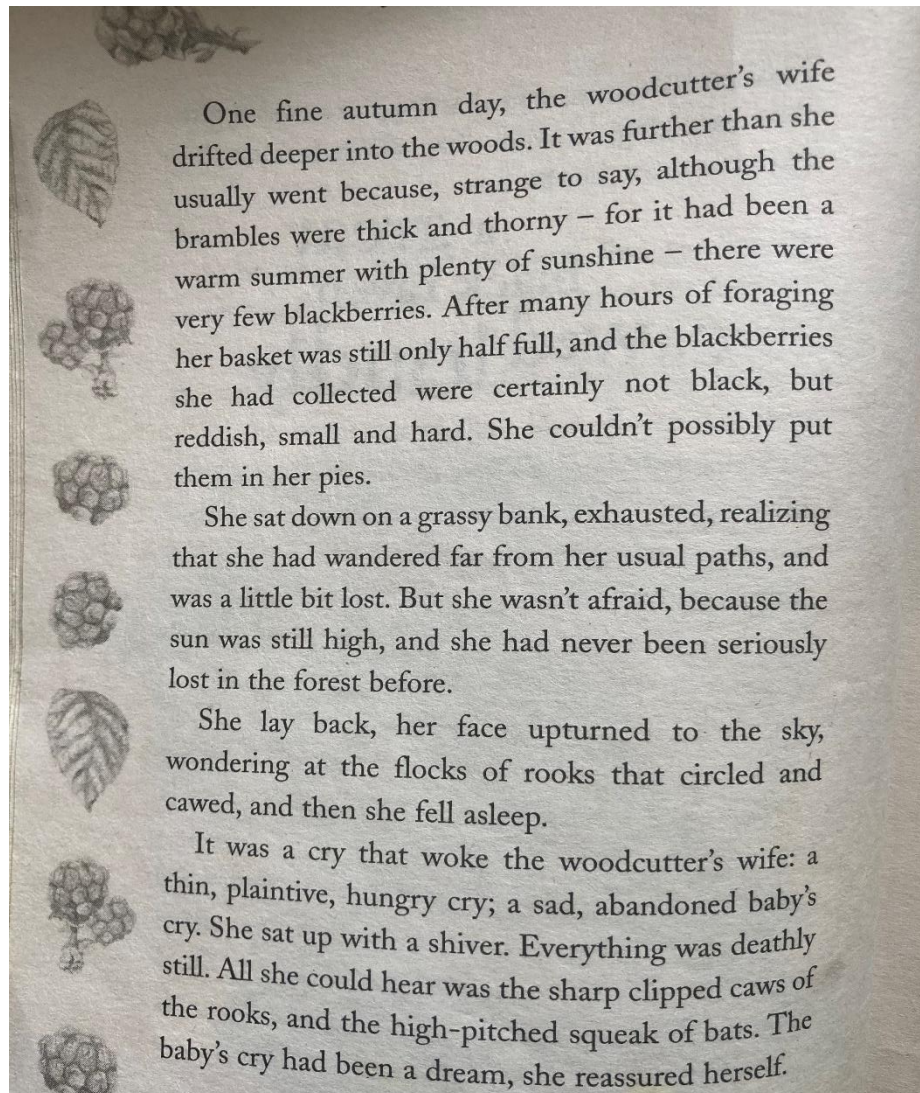


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- sets the mood of the writing
- introduces a little bit of the character
- hints at the nature of the rest of the story.



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'drifted' helps set an innocent scene to begin with

Fairy-tale features 'One fine autumn day'

'But she wasn't afraid, because the sun was still high, and she had never been seriously lost in the forest before'

Suggests she is naive in her content and happiness, and actually has reason to be afraid.

Hints that the author and we, the reader, know there's more to it. Something bad is going to happen.

One fine autumn day, the woodcutter's wife drifted deeper into the woods. It was further than she usually went because, strange to say, although the brambles were thick and thorny – for it had been a warm summer with plenty of sunshine – there were very few blackberries. After many hours of foraging her basket was still only half full, and the blackberries she had collected were certainly not black, but reddish, small and hard. She couldn't possibly put them in her pies.

She sat down on a grassy bank, exhausted, realizing that she had wandered far from her usual paths, and was a little bit lost. But she wasn't afraid, because the sun was still high, and she had never been seriously lost in the forest before.

She lay back, her face upturned to the sky, wondering at the flocks of rooks that circled and cawed, and then she fell asleep.

It was a cry that woke the woodcutter's wife: a thin, plaintive, hungry cry; a sad, abandoned baby's cry. She sat up with a shiver. Everything was deathly still. All she could hear was the sharp clipped caws of the rooks, and the high-pitched squeak of bats. The baby's cry had been a dream, she reassured herself.

Parenthesis sets a colloquial story-telling tone, such as that of fairy-tales.

'certainly' and 'She couldn't possibly put them in her pies' gives insight into how particular the character is – even stubborn.

The rooks are an ominous signal – something sinister is going to happen.

The woodcutter's wife 'wonders' about them – she is naïve to what we know.

Repetition in the description of the cry reinforces a sinister tone.

'deathly still'. Use of the word deathly suggests that the forest is a dangerous and deadly place now.