

Krag and the Beast

Krag looked out of the door at the pouring rain. Her mother was standing next to her with her arms crossed. Krag knew what she wanted. Their store of herbs had run out, and it was Krag's job to fetch more. The rain was definitely putting her off.

Her mother was growing impatient. She had that familiar look on her face that Krag recognised as trouble. She sighed and pulled her fur cloak around her shoulders. It wasn't too far to the forest where the plants grew. If she could make it the short distance, then hopefully the dense foliage would protect her from the worst of the rain.

Heavy drops of rain hammered against the thatched roof. Small drips started to leak through and fall onto Krag's nose. She'd need to bring back some clay to patch that up as well. Krag stepped out of the door with a sigh and a groan. She sprinted as fast as she could, but the forest seemed further away than before.

Krag was halfway to the trees when she slipped in the mud. Dirty water splashed up into her face. She wiped herself clean and groaned. The basket she had taken to collect the herbs had broken when she fell. Now she'd have to make the journey several times to collect enough food.

Her furs were muddy and soaked through by the time she made it to the forest. The trees provided a bit of a break from the downpour but drips still made it through and trickled down her back. The loud crash of thunder rumbled through the sky. A brief flash of bright white light temporarily blinded Krag. She dropped to the floor in a defensive crouch.

Suddenly, the hairs on the back of her neck stood up. Krag could sense that something was behind her. Fear crept over Krag and smothered her. Her feet didn't seem to want to move. She knew the type of beast that hunted in the forest. That's why she wasn't allowed in there unless it was to get food. It was supposed to be safe during the day. Whatever was hunting her had obviously confused the thick black clouds with night-time.

Krag tensed. Whatever was behind her rustled in the leaves. It was moving, slowly but purposefully, towards her. The muscles in her legs started to ache with the pressure of standing still. She knew she should run, but she was facing away from home.

Running now would just take her further into the dark forest. It would also carry her away from whatever was behind her. Unless it ran as well.

There was nothing else for it other than to turn around and try to run past the monster. Krag took a deep breath. She turned on her heels, dreading what she might see. A wave of relief washed over her, and she fell about laughing. The mighty beast wiggled its nose at her and ran away into the trees. Krag promised herself that she wouldn't be quite so scared of a squirrel next time.



RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. How did Krag feel about the rain? How do you know?
2. Why did the forest seem further away than normal?
3. Why did she groan when she wiped herself clean? What does this tell you about her mood?
4. How did Krag feel when the lightning struck? How do you know?
5. Why could Krag move? What emotion was she feeling?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Which word or phrase tells you that the trees had lots of leaves on them?

R

What did Krag need to fetch as well as the herbs?

S

What happened after Krag sprinted out of the house?

V

Which phrase lets you know that Krag was worried about what she might find behind her?

P

What do you think Krag did next? What about the story makes you think this?

Answers:

1. She didn't want to go out in it. It was putting her off fetching the herbs
2. Because it was raining and she was uncomfortable
3. Her basket had broken. She was frustrated and unhappy
4. She was scared. She dropped into a defensive crouch
5. She was too scared to move. She was terrified/scared/petrified

V: Dense foliage

R: Clay for the roof

S: She slipped and fell in the mud

V: Dreading what she might see

P: Predictions may include continuing to get the food because they need it, or running home to tell her mother what happened and get another basket. Any reasonable prediction should be accepted.