

The hours are lengthy; the days are longer now than the darknesses and I must be careful to avoid discovery. The deer have been feeding in small groups because the human's machine has not been noisily forking the fields. The woodlands have been scattered with bumbling humans accompanying their unwild animals who run, sniff and roll amongst the mosses and grasses. Occasionally when they come, one human meets another and they each nod a greeting, often having to pull apart their furry companions who have attached themselves to each other to become one goading, grumbling, growling beast.

Butterflies are sparse now but they'll come in time; their cocoons are quietly changing under leaf cover. Pond waters bubble in anticipation of new life. Milky clouds of spawn, suspended in the shallows, are heavy with new life. Roots and shoots have begun their growth below and above ground. I watch these changes from up high.

Now, night threatens and the birds screech out their final songs for the day. Animals that were safe in the daylight return to the protection of their burrows and nests, leaving the darkness for us. We wait, patient. Our bellies are empty and our senses are heightened. We are ready.

I watch, still as the breezeless branch beneath me. Any action will be detected. Any tiny being will be located, abducted and consumed. My babies will be fed.

I wait, listening for the rustle of life and watching for a movement in the grasses that will betray the inhabitant's presence. I will be ready to glide in silence and swoop.

[illegible]

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[illegible]

[illegible]

What is the human's machine?

a tractor

What season do you think it is? Find evidence in the text to prove your opinion.

It is spring. We are told the days are longer than the nights and that caterpillars are not yet butterflies. We are told there is spawn (e.g. frogspawn) in the pond and that there is evidence of new plant growth ('Roots and shoots have begun their growth...').

...attached themselves to each other to become one goading, grumbling, growling beast.

What is the narrator describing?
dogs fighting

In the final lines, the words 'will be' are repeated. What is the effect of this?

It shows that the owl is confident and determined that it will be successful in its hunt.

Who is the narrator in the extract? How do you know?

The narrator is an animal, most likely an owl. We know it is not human and it is perching somewhere like a tree as it talks about watching humans from 'up high' and says it sits as still 'as the breezeless branch beneath me'. It says it has to avoid discovery and comes out at night ('leaving the darkness for us'). It talks about catching prey ('Any tiny being will be located, abducted and consumed.'). It talks about the behaviours we associate with an owl when catching prey ('glide in silence and swoop').

Which word gives the impression that the narrator thinks humans are incompetent?

bumbling

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