

most exposed and obvious place of all.

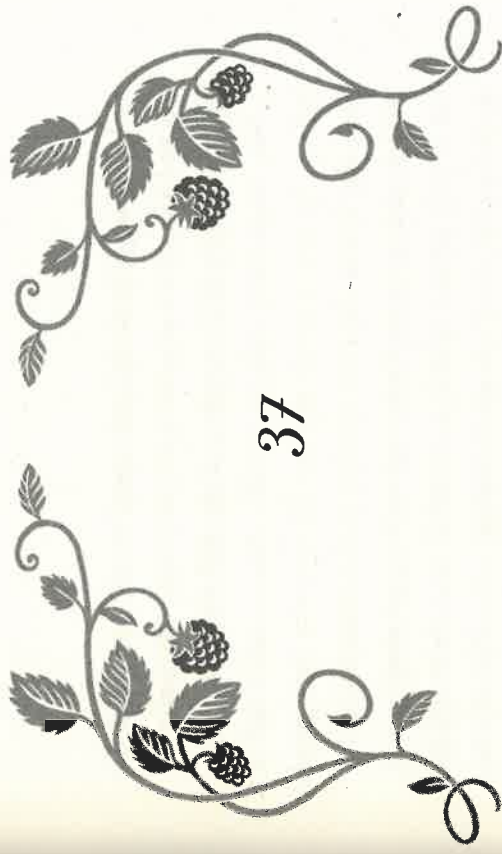
“Juniper!” he shouts with full fury.

“You want to hang around waiting for drones?”

“No, but—”

I don't let him finish. “We can't wait here. We need to fill the pans: Are you helping or not?”

Water gushes over the sides of the pans as we head away from the river, and Bear moans all the way about the fish, about how they were just there, waiting. How if he'd tried again he would have got one. Maybe he would, I don't know. When you're this tired and hungry it's hard to think anything very clearly.



Bear makes the fire. He collects the sticks and arranges them criss-cross in a pile, with dry leaves to fill in the gaps and more on top that should burn quickly. Kindling.

I let him strike the match too. He gets it first time. Bear's fingers don't tremble like mine did. Strike and there's the flame, and the leaves start to burn and we watch it spread to the wood below.

“You're good at this, Bear. You're a proper camper.”

He doesn't smile. He's still cross about the fish.

The pans sit on top of the logs precariously as we set about shelling the acorns. They come out of their cups easily but you have to break open the hard casing too, to get to the softer nut inside.

I try with the knife but the acorns slip in my fingers. I can't pierce the shells – they're oddly flexible – so we end up bashing them against a stone, which was Bear's idea in