

'Because of this, we walked more slowly than I had expected, and also Weena was tired. And I began to suffer from sleepiness too, so it was night before we reached the wood. On a bushy hill at the edge of it, Weena wanted to stop, afraid of the darkness in front of us. But a strong feeling of danger, that I failed to see as a warning, made me continue. I had been without sleep for a night and two days, and felt ill and bad-tempered. I felt sleep coming on me, and the Morlocks with it.

'Then, among the black bushes behind us, and dark against their blackness, I saw three figures close to the ground. There was long grass all around us and I didn't feel safe from them. The forest, I thought, was about a kilometre across. If we could get through it to the open hillside, that, it seemed to me, was a much safer resting-place.

'I thought that with my matches and my candles I could keep my way lit through the woods. But I knew that I wouldn't be able to hold my firewood too. So, rather unwillingly, I put it down. Then it came into my head that I would surprise the Morlocks behind us by lighting it. I soon discovered how stupid this was, but at the time it seemed a good way of protecting our backs.

'I don't know if you have ever thought what an unusual thing fire must be where there are no people and where the climate is cool. The sun's heat is not often strong enough to burn plants, even when it shines through a drop of water, as sometimes happens in hotter places. Lightning may start small fires, but they don't usually spread very far. In this future time, the way to make fire had been forgotten in the world. The red tongues climbing my pile of wood were completely new and strange to Weena.

'She wanted to run to them and play with them. She almost threw herself on the fire, but I held her back. Then I picked her up and, although she fought against me, I walked forwards into

the wood. For a short distance the light from my fire showed us the way. Looking back, I could see, through the many trees, that from my pile of sticks the fire had spread to some bushes. Now a curved red line was coming slowly up the grass of the hill.

'I laughed at that, and turned again to the dark trees in front of us. It was very black and Weena held on to me in fear, but there was still, as my eyes got used to the darkness, enough light for me to walk around the trees. Above us it was simply black, except where a piece of blue sky shone down on us here and there. I struck none of my matches because I had no hand free. With my left arm I carried my little friend; in my right hand I had my metal bar.

'For some time I heard nothing except the breaking of dry wood under my feet, the low sound of the wind above, my own breathing and the beat of my heart. Then I seemed to hear soft footsteps around me. I kept moving. The footsteps grew louder and then I heard the same strange sounds and voices I had heard in the Under-world. There seemed to be several of the Morlocks and they were getting closer. In fact, in another minute I felt one of them pull at my coat, then something on my arm. Weena shook violently and then stopped moving.

'It was time for a match. But to get one I had to put her down. I did so and, as I searched in my pocket, a fight began in the darkness around my knees, with no sounds from her and some strange bird-like noises from the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were moving over my coat and back, even touching my neck. Then the match caught fire and I saw the white backs of the Morlocks running away through the trees. I quickly took a candle from my pocket and prepared to light it.

'Then I looked at Weena. She was lying with her face to the ground, holding my feet and not moving. With a sudden feeling of fear I bent down to her. She seemed almost unable to breathe. I lit the candle and placed it on the ground, and as the flame