

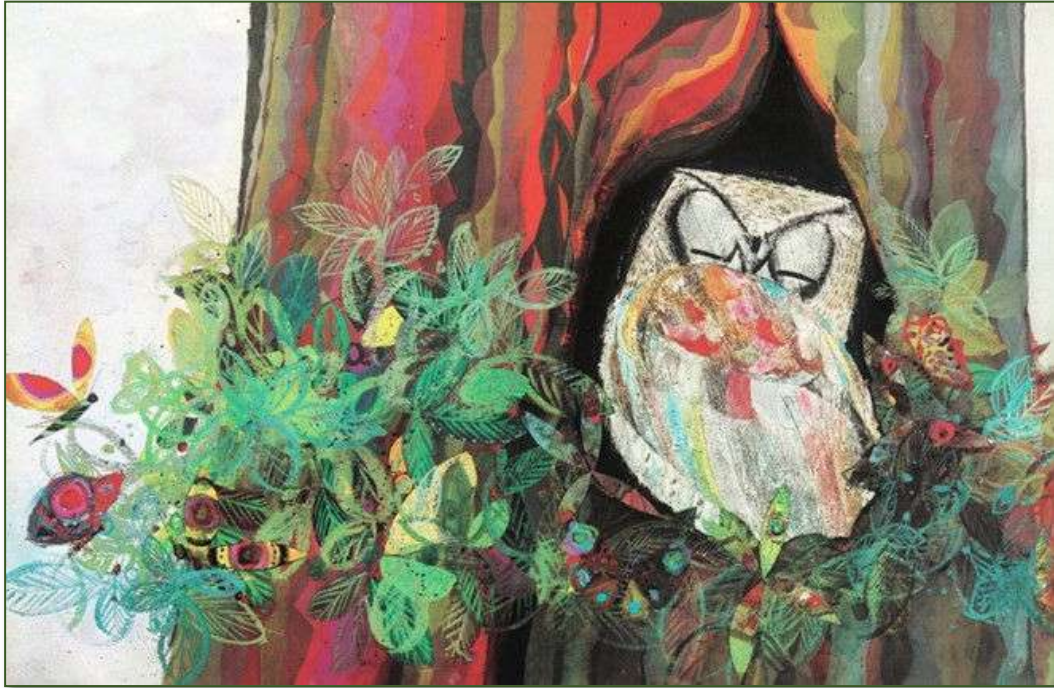


THE OWL AND THE WOODPECKER



Once upon a time, in a forest far away, there lived a Woodpecker.

The Woodpecker lived in a tree in which he slept all night and worked all day.



One day, an Owl moved into the tree next door. He liked to work all night and sleep all day.

Woodpecker pecked *so* hard and made *so* much noise that he woke the Owl.



"Hey, you!" screeched Owl. "How can I sleep with all that noise going on?"

"This is my tree," Woodpecker said, "and I can peck it as much as I want."

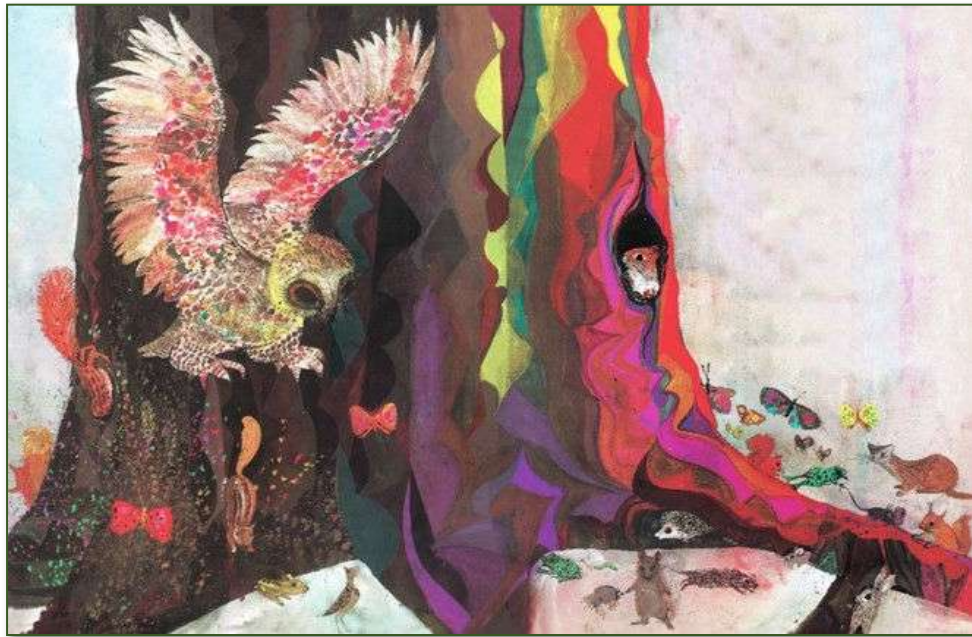


Owl got *very* angry. His screeches and hoots echoed through the forest. All the animals for miles around came running to see what the matter was.



"You carry on pecking, Mister Woodpecker," squeaked the mouse. "Owl is always bossing and chasing us around."

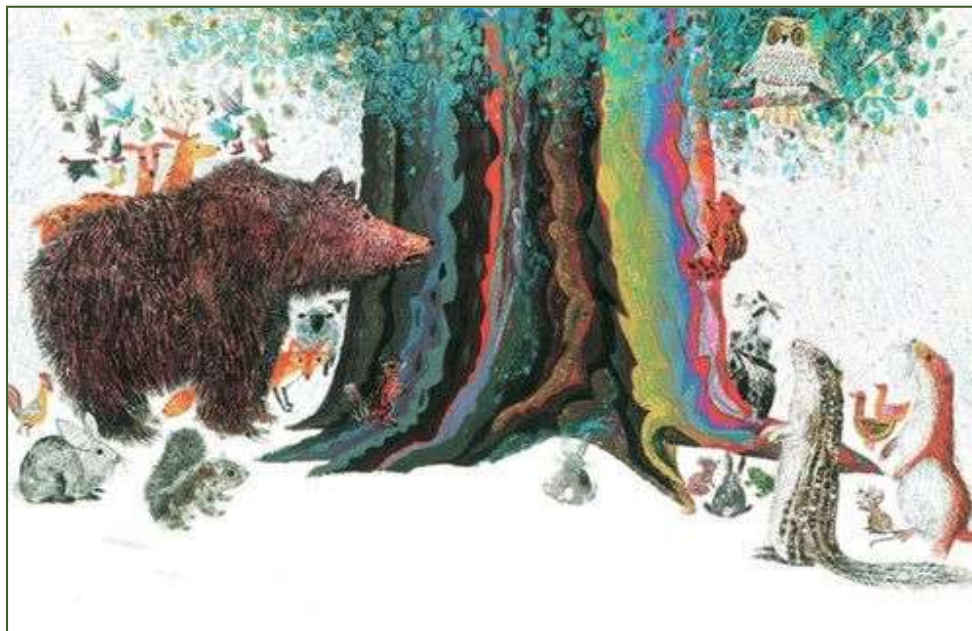
"Oh, be quiet," growled the bear. "Woodpecker, stop pecking, and let Owl sleep. We like a peaceful life around here."



Owl became angrier. He swooped down on the small animals, who quickly ran away.

They hid in all kinds of curious places.

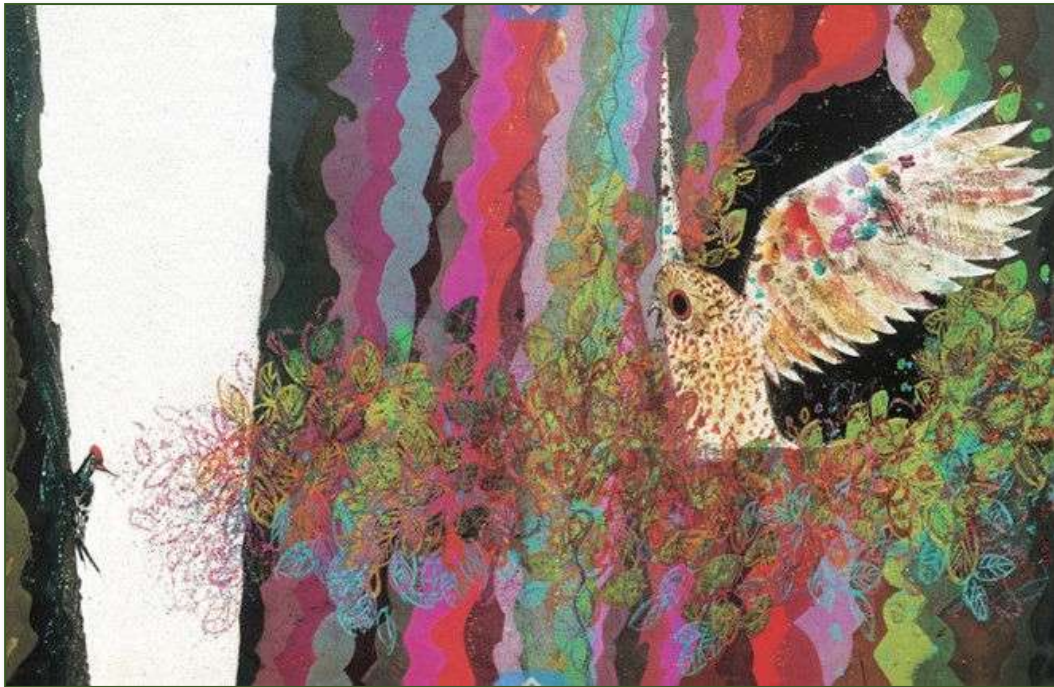
"You are a BULLY!" they shouted at him—when they were sure they were safe.



"What can I do to stop the noise?" Owl asked the big animals.

"We don't know," they said. "You are the wise and clever one. Perhaps you could move to another tree."

"WHY SHOULD I?" snapped the Owl. "I like living in this tree. That noisy Woodpecker must move."



But Woodpecker would not move. Day after day, his noisy pecking kept Owl awake.

And day after day, Owl became more and more tired and more and more bad-tempered. He began to be *so* grumpy and *so* rude that the forest animals decided they had to do something about it.

So they called a meeting.



"Something must be done," said the Badger. "Woodpecker was here first, so Owl must leave."

"But he says he will not leave his tree," replied Deer.

"We can push down the tree, and then he will have to leave," said the crafty Fox.



That night, while Owl was out hunting, the animals all tried to push down his tree.

But no matter how hard they pushed and puffed and panted, they could not move the tree.

So they gave up and went back home.



Some time later, two new animals came to the forest. They were a pair of beavers. They liked Owl's tree and started to gnaw at the trunk.

Every day the beavers gnawed a little more. It seemed as if they would gnaw right through the trunk!



One day, a great storm shook the forest. The wind roared so hard that Woodpecker gave up his pecking. At last, Owl slept in peace.

Then Owl's tree began to creak and crack and g-r-o-a-n.

The wind grew fiercer, but Owl slept soundly. Then Owl's tree began to sway.

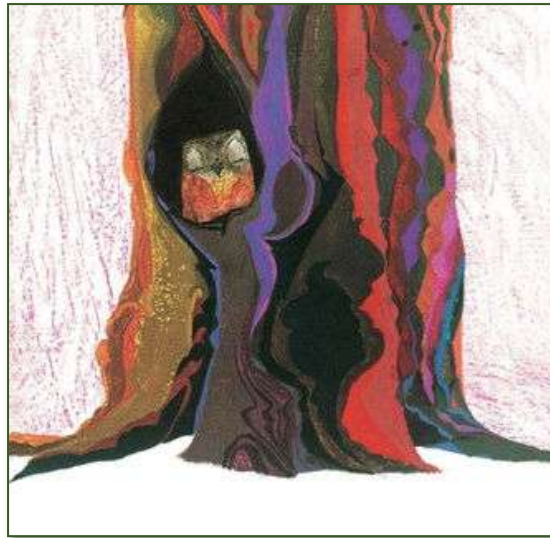
Woodpecker quickly struggled through the storm to Owl's tree. He pecked very loudly in Owl's ear.

Owl woke up. He was *very* angry, but then he realized why Woodpecker was pecking on his tree. Together, they flew to safety just as the tree crashed to the ground.



When the storm was over, Owl thanked Woodpecker for saving his life.

He was glad that Woodpecker had been his neighbor.



So Owl and Woodpecker became good friends. Woodpecker helped Owl find a tree in a quiet part of the forest, where he could sleep all day without hearing Woodpecker's noisy pecking.

Peace and quiet returned to the forest and Owl and Woodpecker remained good friends for the rest of their lives.

