

Rollo loved the wild. He liked places with no people. He did not hate people. They made him mad. He did not like cars or computers. He did not like buildings or cell phones.

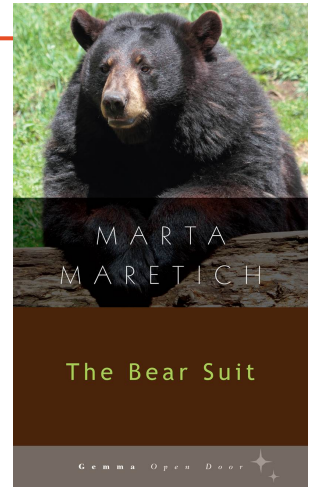
Rollo did not hate people. He did not like what they did to the planet. He stayed awake at night. He watched the news. The news reported climate change. Humans hurt the Earth. Animals died because humans destroyed their homes.

Rollo saw big changes. His town spread across the valley. It ate up the fields where farmers grew crops. The air was polluted by cars. Rollo's town had the worst air in the United States!

Some people marched in the streets. Some people signed petitions. Some people went to Washington, D.C. Rollo thought they wasted time. He wanted to hike in the mountains. He wished to go away. How could he stay away forever?

Rollo made a list of food to take. Food was Rollo's weakness. He could not carry enough food to last him long. The food ran out.

Then Rollo had a dream. He dreamed about a bearskin. He had an idea.



Adapted from
The Bear Suit
Copyright 2017
by Marta Maretich
SR.TBS.1.5

Rollo rented a bear suit. The man at the shop gave him funny looks. He stared at Rollo. He asked him questions. He checked his ID.

“Is there a problem?” Rollo asked.

“No, no,” the man said. He was old and bald. He went to the back of the shop. He carried a furry brown shape on a hanger. The man shrugged. He handed Rollo the costume.

Rollo tried it on. It was heavy. It was made out of fake dark brown hair. The bear suit had been used for many years. The seams were worn. Patches of fur were eaten by moths. The costume had a strange smell. Rollo put the hollow bear head over his own. He looked out through the bear’s open mouth. He looked in the mirror. He looked all right. “Raar,” he said, “I will take it.”

Before Rollo left, his mother said, “Son, I am moving to the beach. I will leave my address with the neighbors.”

This surprised Rollo. He thought his mother would try to make him stay in town. But no. She told him she was moving. His mother loved the beach. She talked about moving there. But Rollo never listened. Rollo hated the beach. It was too far from the mountains. It was too sandy. It was flat and wet.

“That’s okay,” Rollo said. “I am not coming back this time.”

His mother sighed.



Adapted from
The Bear Suit
Copyright 2017
by Marta Maretich
SR.TBS.2.5

SnapRead!

Rollo's heart beat fast. He went to the campsite. He was bold like a bear. He looked for food. Nothing. The picnic tables were clean. There was no trash. The campers were tidy. Rollo saw the bear locker. The bear locker was a big brown metal box. Campers stored their food to keep it away from bears. Rollo did not want to break the locker. It was too easy. But he was hungry. He was in a hurry.

The bear suit paws made his hands clumsy. It was hard to turn the handles. It was difficult to see. The bear head blocked some of his sight. Then he heard voices.

"Listen. I think it's a bear," a boy said.

"It's not a bear, Zack. It's a raccoon."

"It's too big for a raccoon, Dad."

Rollo was quick. We was stealing their food. The angry hikers would strip the bear suit off. Park rangers would put him in jail. He yanked the door open. He grabbed a bag of food. He was ready to run. Then, he was in a big light.

"It is a bear!" the boy said.

"Zack!" Get back in here! It's dangerous!"

Rollo dropped the sack of food. He charged the boy. He growled and snarled. The child ran into the tent. Rollo picked up the food. He went back to his camp. He ate cookies, ham, and three green apples. He ate cheese and a chocolate bar. He fell asleep under the stars of the Great Bear.



Adapted from
The Bear Suit
Copyright 2017
by Marta Maretich
SR.TBS.3.5

SnapRead!

Rollo was high up in the mountains. He went up a cool valley. He saw an old woman read a book. She was very thin. Rollo was not happy. The woman was in his secret spot. He saw her blue tent. She was going to stay! Rollo walked around her camp. He did not say a word.

“Have a nice day!” she laughed. Rollo would return and steal her food. But she was waiting when he came back. The moon was full. It was bright as day.

Rollo sat down. He took off the bear head. The woman made tea on a stove. An owl hooted in a tree. They did not talk for a long time.

“Have you come far?” Rollo finally said.

“Not as far as usual. I have no energy. That’s okay. I am here now.”

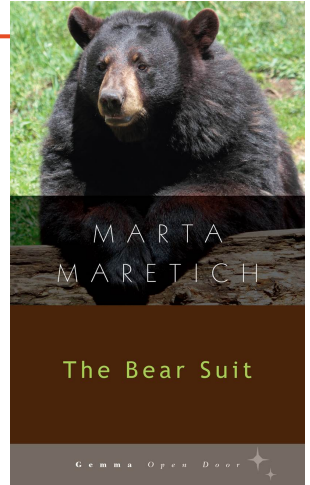
“I think you may be crazy,” Rollo said.

“That is a funny thing for you to say. You are wearing a bear costume.”

Rollo was mad. He got up to leave. She stopped him. “I’m sorry,” she said. “Please don’t go. I want to ask you something. How much farther do I need to go? To go all the way. I thought no one would ever find me here. Then you showed up. I’m glad it was you and no one else. But I don’t want the others here.”

“Just stay here,” he said. “People don’t come up here. No one else will find you. I am going. You won’t see me again.”

“And you never saw me at all.”



Adapted from
The Bear Suit
Copyright 2017
by Marta Maretich
SR.TBS.4.5

SnapRead!

Rollo had to go lower. Winter was close. The wind was cold. He left his tent. He left his backpack. He started down the trail with nothing. He wore the bear suit, head and all. The slope was steep. His feet slid on the new snow. He walked all day, but he was not tired.

He reached the campsite at sunset. It was near the entrance to the park. There were some tents and a few campers. Then, Rollo saw the bear locker. This was the first camp he raided. He was back where he started.

He hid in the forest. He tried to plan the raid. Now, his brain was not working. This happened more and more. When he tried to think ahead, he could not. He waited. He still knew what to do.

He stomped out of the forest when the moon rose. He was the perfect bear. He went to the bear locker. It was hard to open. He found cereal, bacon, and pears. Rollo loved pears. He ate the whole bag.

Then they shot him. He heard the noise before he felt anything.

“We have looked everywhere for you. Look at the belly on him!” a man said.

Rollo opened his mouth to complain. You people are very rude, he wanted to say. You think I am a clown. Before he could speak, he felt the shot. Something sharp hit his thigh. He touched the dart sticking into his skin. He shouted for help, but no words came out. Only roars. He fell to the ground.

“He’s out cold.”



Adapted from
The Bear Suit
Copyright 2017
by Marta Maretich
SR.TBS.5.5