

Picnic in the Woods

'Here we are, just here, look, amongst the moss...lovely.

'Mother get the picnic out, I'll do the tea.'

'Ben, stop hitting your sister with that cushion and do something useful, grab hold of the corner of this rug, just kick out the sticks from under it as you go, that's it, we don't want to sit on anything uncomfortable.'

'Ok, everyone settled? This is nice, isn't it? Have a walnut Patty, they are yummy.'

'You alright dear?'

'Sorry? You thought you saw a what amongst the trees?'

'No, surely not, I don't think so? they've been extinct for years, the last wild one went ages ago, I think there may be some in the sanctuary though. It's such a shame some of them were really sweet, with their little skinny legs and pink bodies. It was probably a deer out walking the trails or something, look let's relax and have a drink and let's just do a bit of what do they call it... oh yes, *forest bathing*?'

Sometime later...

'Honestly Patty, I don't know why you are so jumpy, why don't you go and run up and down a few trees with your brother while Mum and I pack up?'

'What do you mean *old fashioned*, it's good healthy exercise that's excellent for the body and mind, don't sulk at me, just because I won't buy into your delusions!'

A little later still...

'Have they gone?'

'Yeah, thought they never would.'

'Have they left anything nice?'

'Not bad, mainly nuts but that's red squirrels for you.'

'True but at least they didn't see us humans, although I thought for one moment the little one did, with the piercings and plaited tail-fur.'

'Shall we take it back to the others?'

'Sure, hey, extinct is bad isn't it? But I quite like pretending to be extinct if it means we can live peacefully in the wood without being stared at by all the other ex-woodland creatures now they've moved out to the cities.'

'Absolutely! Just got to preserve the illusion matey, just got to preserve the illusion, here let me help you with those biscuits, yum, nice, peanut butter...'

Gillian Rolfe