

GEMMA OPEN DOOR FOR LITERACY

Using *SnapReads!* in class

SnapRead!

Charlie's ranch was the last place to find cougars. The land is flat. There are no trees. There is no place to hide. Or is there?

Charlie is a rancher. He raises cattle near the Medicine Bow mountains. Lots of snow falls. It is very cold. Charlie grew up on this ranch. He takes life in stride. But Charlie got a big surprise.

An official truck parked on Charlie's land. It said "Game and Fish Department." A man stood on the porch. He was Billy Brown.

"What's up, Billy?" Charlie said. "Come on in. Have some coffee."

Billy said, "I brought friends from the university."

A young man and woman got out of the truck. They walked into the kitchen. They had worked all week in the forest. They checked animals with radio collars.

Charlie was curious. "What are you tracking?"

The man's name was Tom. Tom said, "Beers, mostly. But also something harder to find."

Cheryl, the woman said, "A mama mountain lion. She lives in your barn. I think she has kittens."

"What? That's not possible!" said Charlie. "I know my barn. There is no footprint. There is no sign."

Cheryl said, "Oh, she is there. Her radio collar sends a signal."

"Let's go see," Charlie said. "I can't believe it!"

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SnapRead!

Stella rode the Red Line in the morning. She sat beside mothers with strollers. She sat next to tall kids with big sneakers. Many people rode the train. They went to work. They went to school. The train took them away from their homes. The windows on the train were old and dirty. The town outside looked old, too.

Boston was Stella's new home. She was born in the Midwest. The towns in the Midwest looked the same. Boston looked different.

Stella remembered summer at home. She slept in a hammock. The bed was tied between two trees. She heard trains miles away. Cindy was her friend. Stella and Cindy wanted to ride the train to Chicago. Maybe they would go farther.

Stella's father went away. She was fifteen. She moved to her aunt's house. Her aunt lived near Boston. The ocean surprised her. She saw big fields of corn back home. Sometimes they had no end. Still, the sea was so wide and so deep.

Stella looked at boats in the harbor. How far could they go? Small boats could go to Cape Cod. Bigger ships with puffy sails could go to Canada. The biggest ships could go far. They could go out onto the deep blue sea for weeks.

People have many ways to travel. They have many places to go.

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SnapRead!

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.

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SnapReads! are serial, short excerpts adapted from three of our most popular titles: **American Lion**, **Yankee Doodle** and **The Bear Suit**. Written at roughly first-grade level, these quick reads introduce new readers to the underlying story in five simple installments.

Teachers can guide students through the text by reading aloud, then asking the class to read on their own, in pairs, or as a group. Practice the first **SnapRead!** for a book then move to the second and so on through the fifth. Each **SnapRead!** can take a class or two to master. Teachers can review new words and encourage fluency through practice.

Once readers have some familiarity with vocabulary, characters, and plot, they gain confidence and are ready for the full text. **SnapReads!** are roughly 250 words each and act as on-ramps to bigger books. It's all about encouragement!