

Zanna F.Mela-Florou

Inside the  
Bear's Lair



Ζ. Μελά-Φλώρου

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# Inside the Bear's Lair



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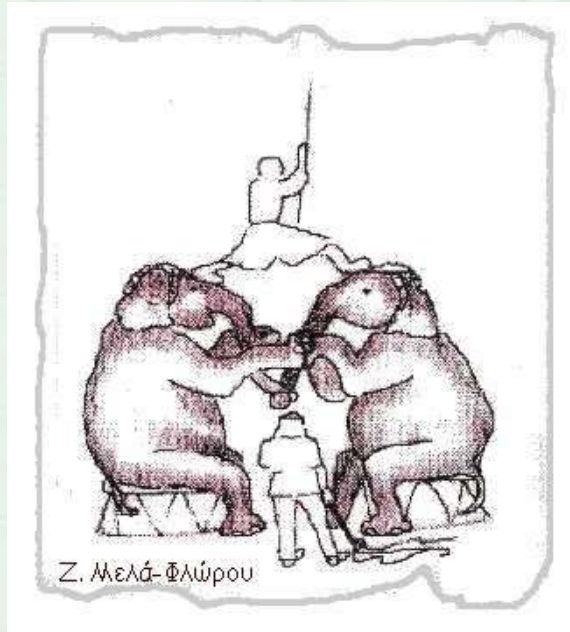
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Zanna Mela-Florou is a member of «ARKTOUROS»  
the Center for the Protection of Bears.

# Inside the Bear's Lair



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## **BOOK PRESENTATION**

A member of «ARKTOUROS» the Centre for the Protection of the Bear, the author has written a book with an especially personal style, in order to make children sensitive to the danger of extinction of the bear, an animal which they have only seen dancing in a circus.

The painting-her own- in every page with different illustrations... of the protagonist is very attractive.

In the lovely Bear story, the Protection Centre is mentioned as well as the need for the animals to live in their natural environment.

Angeliki Varella, author

'Diadromes' magazine, issue 47, autumn 1997

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The ecological fairy-tale by the author and painter is now in circulation.

The author is member of ARKTOUROS, the association for the protection of bears.

This book will make children aware of the inhumane and virulent behavior exhibited by people towards

animals, and will teach children the great necessity of living in harmony with these creatures.

It will also teach them that the torture of any animal is not fun, and that their abuse cannot be considered entertaining. At the same time, adults will learn that if children become cruel towards any life form, growing up they will exhibit the same attitude towards their fellow human beings.

In an effort to be precise at her work, the author renders the true anatomical analogies of the animals in her paintings. This is a rather hard task considering that one of the protagonists of the story, the lynx, is now extinct in Greece.

The dialogues between the animals are based on their behavioral patterns and instincts. This is not simply a fairy-tale. It is a book of education.



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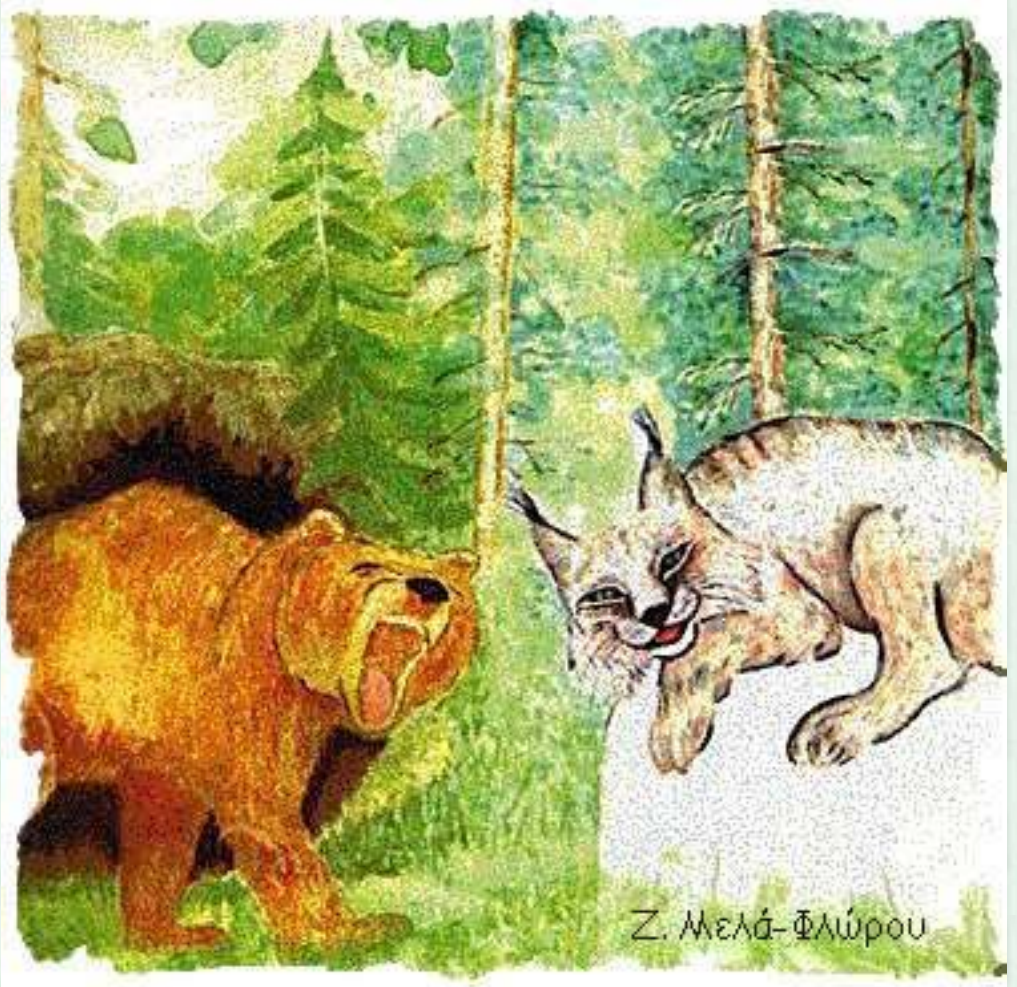
## **Chapter1 -Awakened after a long sleep**

Our story, children, begins in a forest. A lynx, the wild cat, is taking a rest on a rock. She's staring at the entrance of the cave right in front of her. But what do you think she is looking at?



She's watching a bear that is slowly coming out of the cave, stretching her legs and yawning, as if she'd been sleeping for months!





It seems that the two animals are chatting.  
But what would a wild cat and a brown bear  
have to talk about?  
Why don't we get closer to find out?

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-Hello, my dear bear! We've not seen you around for a long time! Where have you been?



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-Oh, I've been sleeping, my dear lynx.  
I've been hibernating!

-You don't say! Really! You've been hibernating... the bewildered cat replied.

-Cold weather makes me feel sleepy, my dear lynx, and the first snow sends me to my lair. Only this time I didn't pass the winter in sleep alone. I had my children with me - hidden in my belly!

-I see. But, tell me, my dear, why have your fat cheeks and your round belly grown so thin?

-Because I've not eaten for many months, my dear lynx. You see, I live in my fat... and in spite of that, my two young cubs live on my milk, in my furry bosom!



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-Μα! Mammy! ...



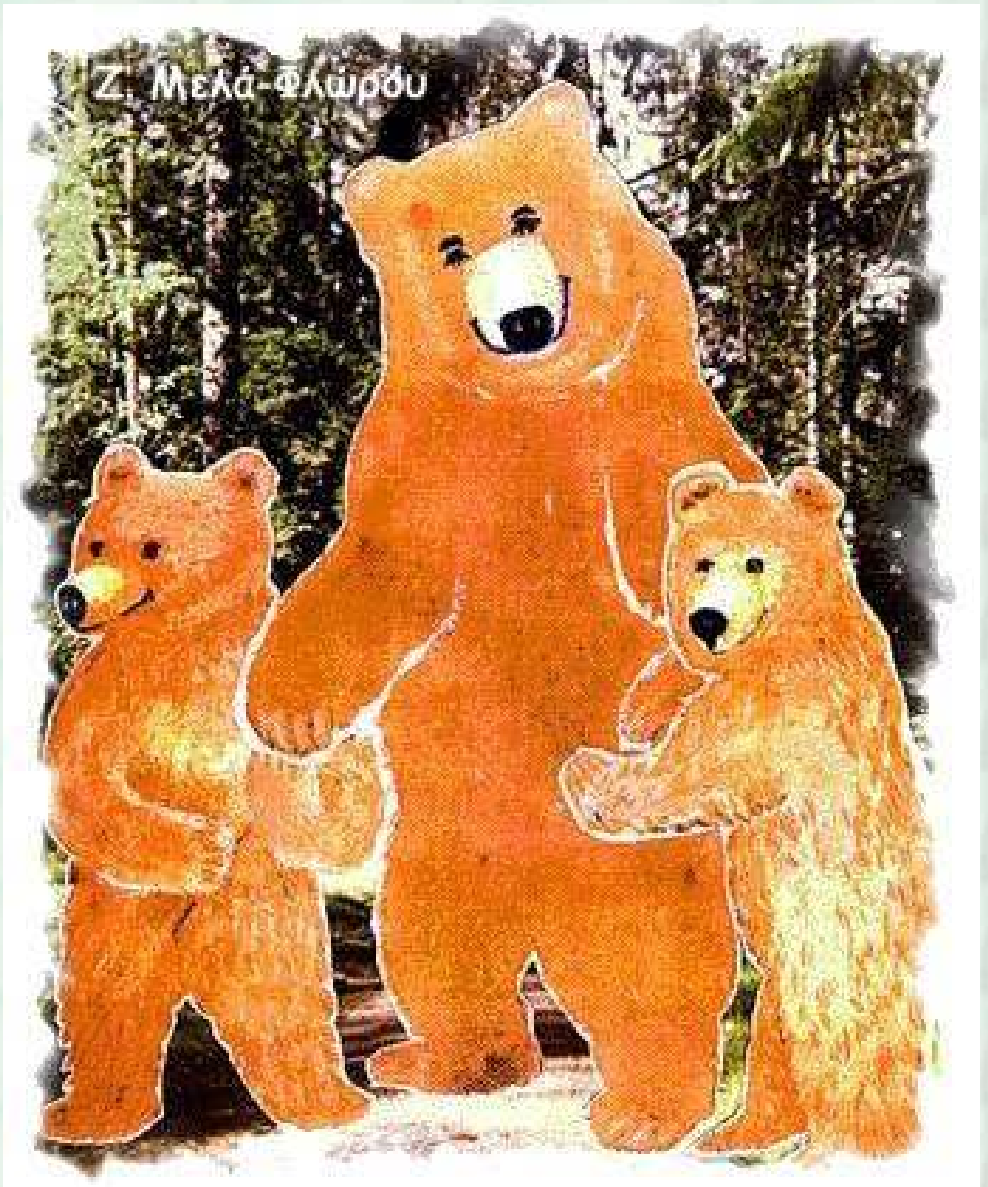
-Can you hear them, dear lynx? They're my sweet babies! My cubs are calling me to suckle them. Do you believe me now?

-Of course I believe you, the cat replied in an admiring way! You are a very diligent bear, since you've given birth to two cubs and you've been raising them while... hibernating and living on... absolutely nothing! Bravo!

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-And when I'm done, dear lynx, I lick and clean their fur...



The brown bear's eyes were gleaming with joy as she was talking about the precious treasure she was hiding inside her lair!



-Well, this is how I usually spend my time, my dear cat -loafing about. But sometimes, I fall asleep. What else is there to do? Though one day I decided to leave my cave and look for something to eat - but it was so cold outside... I could have frozen to death! Anyway, I couldn't care less! And you know why? Because I can feed on... dreams! In my last dream we quarreled over a small piece of land! We, who've been friends for so long, became enemies! No sooner had you gone than I changed my mind. I wished I had not driven you away. I started looking for you everywhere. I wanted to apologize - but I couldn't find you anywhere.



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## **Chapter 2 - The stolen babies**

Now listen to the important part of my dream, dear lynx:

When I got back... What did I see? The cave was empty! Someone had stolen my babies! Can you imagine my anxiety? I started to run and run... following the tracks left by the hunter.



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His footprints led me to a strange, beautifully lit place. All around it hundreds of colorful balloons were moving through the air. I looked carefully at Doll and Dolly who were dancing on the stage, and tried to identify my cubs.

Doll was a small elephant who had disguised himself by wearing orange trousers and rings in the lobes of his big ears.



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Dolly was a young bear whose lips and nose were made up in red lipstick, wearing all kinds of cheap jewelry. She looked so ridiculous!

Poor animals! So obedient, so submissive! A teardrop rolled on the mother-bear's breast.

-Ma! Mammy!

-Do you hear them, lynx? I have to go now. I got carried away chatting; I forgot to feed my babies. So, bye-bye my dear.

And so the bear said goodbye to her neighbor and hurried back to her dark cave.

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-Goodbye! Farewell, mewed the big cat. It's getting dark. It's high time I went hunting. I've got my cub to feed, too. But first of all I must move out of here!

There was no doubt about it -the bear's dream had a terrible impact on her.



These were the thoughts of the rare cat when she carefully seized her cub by the scruff of the nape and took it to her new hiding place. Her instinct urged her to change her whereabouts often. Then she leapt out of her lair and disappeared into the thick forest...

All her friends were back: the pelican, the cuckoo, the stork. The slow tortoise was even there too! She was up from her deep sleep, and like every animal in the forest, she was welcoming the spring.



I took it upon myself to paint the pictures of my short story one by one. But mother bear's repeated yawning made me feel sleepy. I must have taken a nap, child -how else can I explain this- because it seemed to me I was a kid. Then, suddenly, the picture came to life - the young bear's red mouth moved: Her voice reached my ear in a whisper:





-I can laugh, I can move,  
Zanna, even you, I can fool  
I can try - it's my task  
It's not that easy - I've got my mask!



The tamer's whip  
His horrid chain  
Changed my whim  
Into a lot of pain!  
She felt a lump in her throat and  
stopped - tears appeared in her eyes.





Then I noticed the heavy chain hanging from her pierced nose. I lost my head.



Look, my dear Dolly, I said to her. I'll paint a protest demonstration of animal lovers - I'll do it at once!



...Right outside the circus where you're working...

### **Chapter 3 - In a protection centre and back to freedom**



Here you are my little bear. You're as good as free now.

From now on you'll live in this natural reserve -the Center for the Protection of Bears. Here you'll enjoy plenty of food and free medical care. And I'll come and see you as often as possible. I'm a member of the center and a volunteer, too, I boasted.

Dolly's mouth moved again:

-What you're saying, Zanna, is very important. There's no doubt about it. But I want to have a family. I want to have children and live like a wild bear. Dolly's words made me hold my tongue.

-Listen to me, my little one. You can't live all alone, unaided, because you're a tame bear now. What I mean is: you don't know how to raise a cub. You're a dancer, a clown, an acrobat. You're anything but a wild bear!



From now on, you need the protection of the good people of this Center...

Instantly I realized I had put my foot in it. I had revealed the truth and was waiting for the reaction of this offended animal.

As if by magic, however, we heard mother-bear's voice:

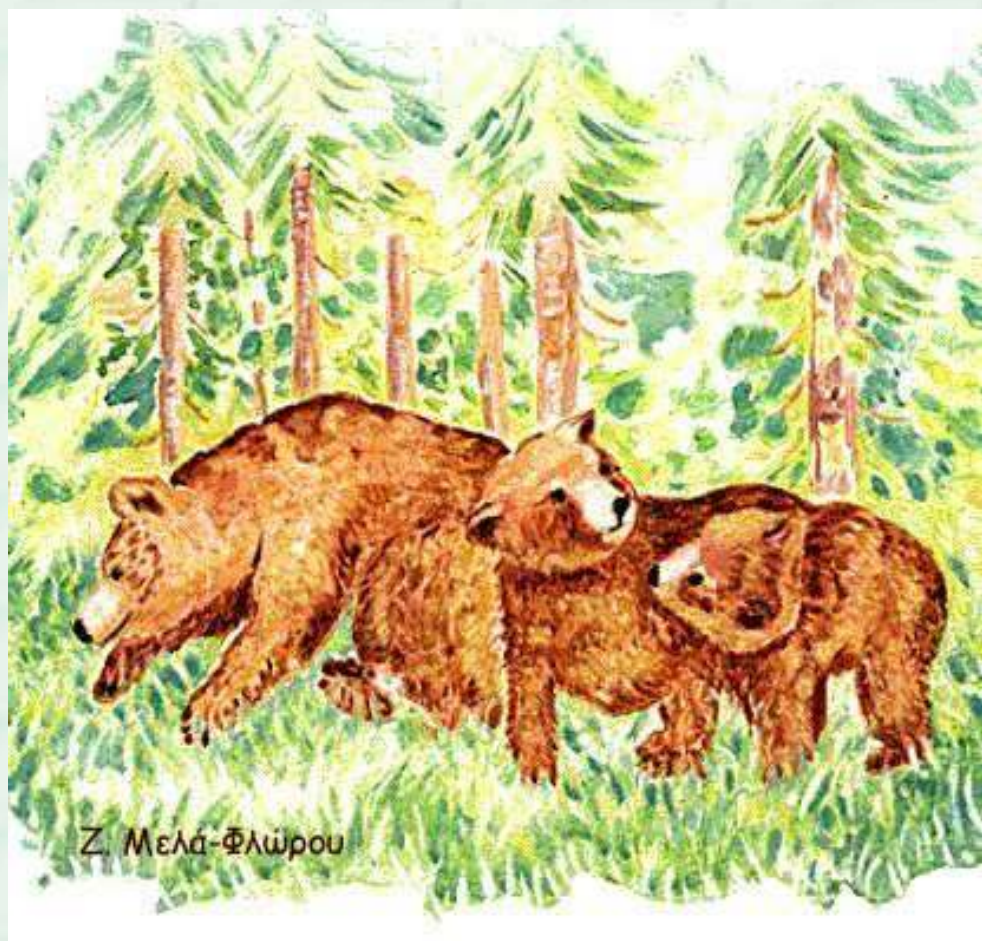
-Zanna, I'll adopt Dolly, she told me. I want the little bear to be my third child. We'll help her turn into a wild and independent bear again!





...We'll put her out of her pain. With us she'll forget her old sores and learn how to look for honey and nuts, how to dig the soil and find bulbs, how to look under the stones and discover tasty tidbits. And when the winter comes, she'll know how to get her lair ready and how to raise her cubs...

I jumped with joy! I was so excited the dancer bear would finally return to her natural habitat, that I thought I'd finish my story there - But just then I saw a trunk jutting out of the pages of the book! It was Doll, the little elephant!



Speechless he was looking at me. As if he wanted to ask me something. We'd forgotten all about him! Do you know why, children? Because the elephant was too chicken-hearted.

Poor, little elephant. Don't just stand there with your tail between your legs. Fight! Do something, and we'll think some way of helping you - we'll send you back to the forest - we'll try to set you free. After all it's our duty.

I had hardly roused from sleep when I sat at my computer to write down everything I had dreamt of or thought about!

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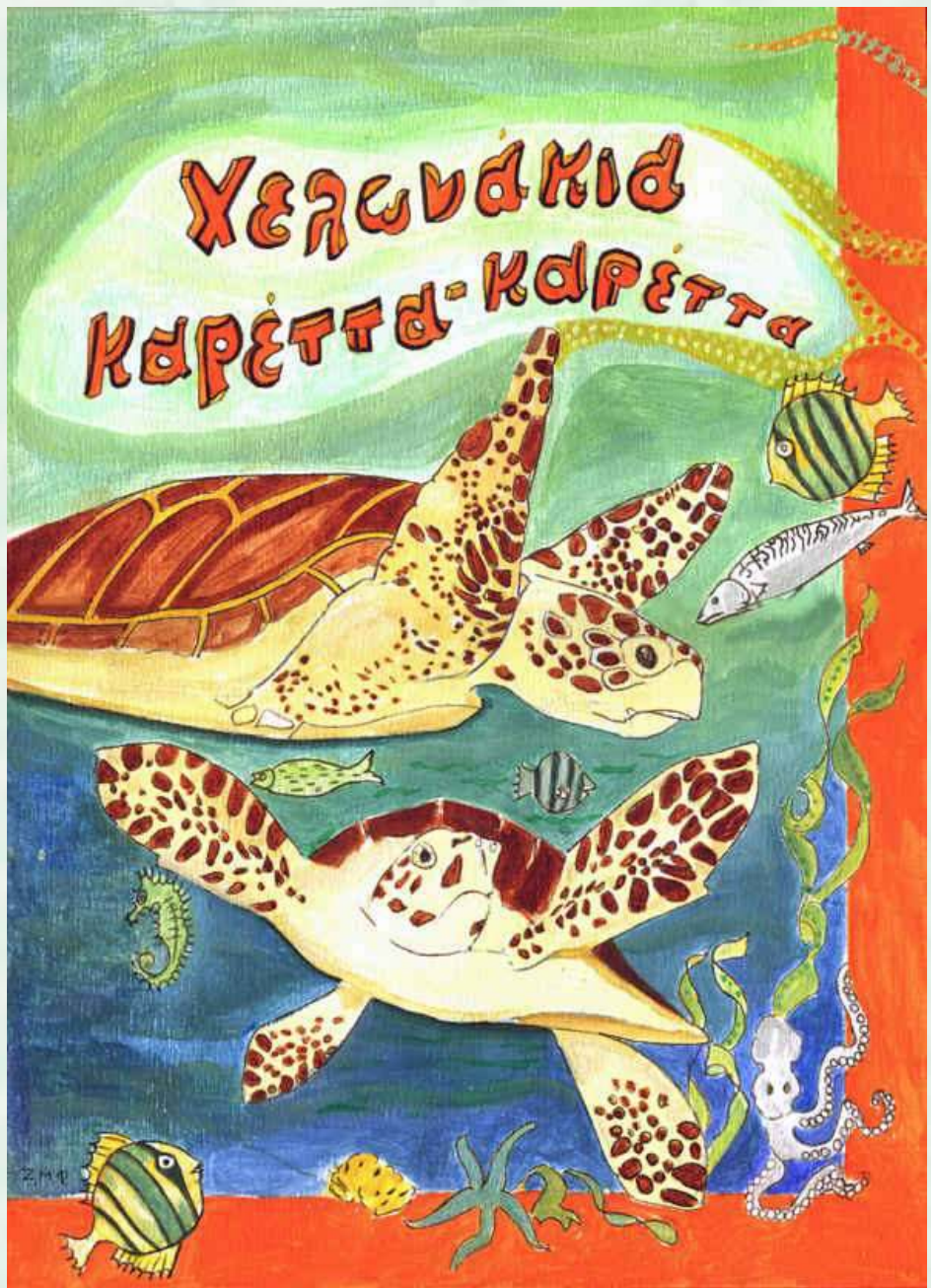


What can we do to help the little elephant, children?

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By the same author: «Karetta-Karetta Turtles»

## REVIEWS

1) The outstanding writer Zanna Mela-Florou, once again offers a fairy tale well written, with beautiful pictures, designs and illustrations, to us.

With all due respect to the difficult role of childhood discipline, as well as the one of ecology, the author writes a piquant story in order to teach the tender age of youth. A tasteful story full of humour, and why not, novel in its kind. Special care has been taken to assure the quality of the writing and pictures, both essential to the reader's enjoyment.

Christos Koulouris, author

'Nea Skepsi' magazine, issue 388, October 1997

2) A well-written tale, with beautiful pictures, designs and illustrations, gives us once again the outstanding writer and painter Zanna Mela-Florou. Respecting absolutely all difficult roles of pedagogy and ecology, writes a fairy story to delight and teach the tender age of youth. The text is lush, entertaining and why not, novel of its kind. Special care has been taken to assure the quality of the

writing and pictures, both essential to the reader's enjoyment.

'Other Flight' Magazine, Cultural Centre of Olympic Airways, issue 36, October-December 2003

3) With a special technique, the author and illustrator Zanna Mela-Florou, brings her readers closer to the animals (this time wild ones).

In this story, we have a bear protagonist and next to her, there exist other animals of the Greek forest.

The story is simple and its goal is to make the young readers not only stop fearing the bears, but also to make them sensitive to the efforts being done in order to prevent their extinction.

Thus, cleverly the narrative gives simple information about the bear's needs and makes widely known the existence of the Centre for the Protection of the Bear.

This is a literary work that addresses the ecological problems, a very important issue of our times.

Manos Kontoleon, author

'Unisef & World ' magazine, issue 32, winter 1997-98





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