

Paragraphing Key

Bathing in a Borrowed Suit

by Homer Croy (1883-1965)

The desire to be seen on the beach in a borrowed bathing suit is not so strong in me as it once was. An acquaintance lured me out to his beach one day, saying that he had full rights to the most popular ocean in the world. I had heard his ocean spoken highly of, and I accepted. Unfortunately, I forgot to take my bathing suit, but he said that that was nothing--that he had one that would fit me as the paper on the wall.

[Change in time and new topic - holes] A little while later, he found it in the basement, where it seems that the mice had helped themselves rather liberally to its none too strong fabric. From the **holes** in the suit, it was easy to see that the party had been a merry one and had not broken up till a late hour.

[Change in topic -description of size] Besides the **swiss-cheese effect**, the suit's size and cut had never been planned for a person of my general architecture. Roughly speaking, I am fashioned along the lines of the Woolworth Building, with a slight balcony effect about the thirty-third floor. The suit had been intended for a smallish person given to bathing principally by himself. The waist would have been tight on a doll.

[Change in topic/place/description of putting it on] I tried to find a **place** to get into the suit, but it stuck together like a wet paper bag. After ten minutes of struggle, I got part way in only to find that my arms were sticking through where a couple of mice had polished off a meal. I felt that I had the suit on and looked in the mirror. I drew back in startled surprise.

[Change in place -in the yard/people] My **friends** were waiting on the **lawn** for me to join them. Taking a firm grip on my courage, I walked out into the **yard**. The **ladies** were gaily chatting and smiling until they saw me, when suddenly they closed the conversation and turned to gaze far out over the blue horizon to a dim, distant sail. The ocean looked only a couple of blocks away, but we seemed to walk miles.

[Change of place -in the water/people] When some **rude boys** came up and began to make personal remarks in the tone that such remarks are usually made in, I abandoned the rest of the party

and hurried for the **water**. I plunged in, but I plunged too hard. My suit had got past the plunging stage. When I came up there was little on me besides the sea foam and a spirit of jollity. The latter was feigned. Something told me to keep to the deep. My friends called me and insisted that I come ashore to play in the sand with them, but I answered that I loved the ocean too well and wanted its sheltering arms around me. I had to have something around me. I must get back to the house and into my clothes.

[Change in place-out of sight/in the street/back to the yard/house] I walked **down the beach** until I was out of sight, and **made a break** for the solace of the basement from whence the suit had come. Many people were out walking but I did not join any of them, and as they stared at me, I began to walk faster and faster. I gained the **yard** and plunged against the door of the house, but some thoughtful person had closed it. I ran around to the rear, but the person had done his work well. So, I ran back with some vague hope that the door would be open, although I knew quite well it wouldn't be. My surmises were right.

[Change of place/time - into the basement] **At last**, I came upon a **basement** door that was open, dived in and shut the door after me. I took particular pains to do that. I continued to remain in the **basement**. Although the time hung heavily on my hands, I did not stroll out to chat with the townspeople.

[Change in time:now/after the incident/conclusion] **Of late** I get all the bathing I want with a sponge behind closed doors.

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