

Caterpillar Mack's Adventure

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The spring sky was as clear as the water above a coral reef and the wind was gently swaying the flowers in the field. In this field was one tall tree, and at the top of this tall tree, glued to one of the leaves were eggs, all of them glistening like pearls. And from one of these eggs came an abnormally energetic caterpillar whose brothers and sisters had nicknamed Mack. One day, Mack climbed to the top of the tree and watched his surroundings until they bent back into the horizon. On one side, near a small town, a great sapphire of sea lay glistening before him.

"I wonder what mysteries lie in that town or on the other side of the sea." One day, Mack had a plan, a plan to leave his childhood haven behind him and uncover those mysteries. Overjoyed, he rushed to his siblings to tell them about his plan, and maybe convince them to come.

"Here we have good food and we're safe. Why do you want to leave?" asked his brother Meesha through a mouthful of leaves. His other siblings were also apathetic to his cause.

So then Mack, all alone, climbed down to the base of the tree and started his journey. Having been in the canopy all his life, the ground was like another world, alien and mysterious. Mack climbed over fallen blades of grass and pebbles, and climbed under fallen twigs. After climbing for a while, he noticed that even though the wind had stopped, the grass directly in front of him kept on moving. Looking closely, Mack saw that it was a praying mantis, inching closer towards him. Mack was so scared that he couldn't move. And then, from behind the preying mantis came a

lizard of monstrous proportions, grabbing the praying mantis before it noticed and dragging it back into the undergrowth from whence it came.

That night, the stars were shining so brightly Mack was afraid they might fall out of the sky. Looking for a place to sleep, he crawled under a dead leaf only to find it occupied by a dung beetle. The beetle was very kind to Mack and gave him a lift to a nearby farm, where Mack spent the night inside a cabbage on that farm.

“When you get to the town, make sure you stay away from the humans, they don’t like our kind there. They like pretty bugs like butterflies and dragonflies but a caterpillar like you won’t last a second,” said the dung beetle as his parting words.

When Mack woke up the next morning, he found his cabbage on the back of a wagon on its way to town. And then the cabbage went onto a big sail ship headed toward the great blue ocean. Mack spent many days eating his shelter, but after a while, he decided to leave the safety of his food supply and go exploring. It was a dark cellar he was in, but the rats he ran into all said the same thing.

“A ship is no place for a hillbilly caterpillar like you!”

When Mack found his way to the deck, he was promptly washed overboard by a large wave. Mack sank like a stone, but he managed to get caught onto the shell of a giant sea turtle that was coming up to the surface.

Once the turtle heard Mack’s story, he called upon a seagull to carry Mack to somewhere safe. The seagull placed Mack on his back and flew to a white castle. That night at the castle was a great ball.

Peering in from the window, he tried to get a glimpse of the princess and slipped, landing on the shoulder of one of the ladies. And then, the lady gave a shrill scream

and fainted. As if Mack was a dirty little thing, her maid picked him up, crumpled him into a piece of paper and threw him back out the window and into the moat.

However, the moment before he hit the water, a strong wind spun him away from the water and towards the stars. The paper ball flew over mountains and valleys, rivers and lakes and landed at the shoes of a young girl called Pikkell. Pikkell unraveled the ball of paper and her eyes got very big.

“Oh my! What a pretty little bug there is.” Pikkell brought Mack back to her house and took care of him. However, when her uncle came by her house later on he scowled, “Get rid of that dirty little bug!” and a little boy came by and said to her, “That’s destined to become a poison moth, no question about it.”

“This little guy is my friend!” said Pikkell. “Leave him alone!” Mack kept on shedding skin and getting bigger and bigger. Later on, when the seasons started to change, Mack went up to the window and became a brown cocoon.

As the people went by, many of them thought, “*What is a dirty bug like that doing up there?*” When winter turned, and the wind howled, Mack didn’t budge a bit.

“*Oh no, I hope he didn’t die*” worried Pikkell. However, through the mysterious flow of time, a miracle was occurring inside the cocoon. One night, a crack ran through the shell of the cocoon. That next morning, outside on her window was a butterfly sparkling like the dew. Is this the very caterpillar Mack that was hated so much by her neighbors? The blue fairy, after gently flapping its wings, floated lazily into the air.

“Come in!” said Pikkell, flinging the window open. Mack fluttered around Pikkell, almost as if he was dancing, and landed on top of her head. And when he was perched, it looked as though Pikkell had on a blue ribbon in her hair.

And from there, Mack sprang off and soared into the horizon.