

The Girl and the Little Butterfly



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Mia loved her garden more than anything. Every sunny morning, she ran outside with her green watering can. She watered the flowers and watched the bees buzz. But her favorite visitor was a tiny butterfly with bright orange wings. It fluttered like a small leaf in the wind. Mia smiled her gap-toothed smile and whispered, "Hello, little butterfly!"



The butterfly danced over the flowers, its black-edged wings catching the light. Mia followed it from bloom to bloom. She noticed the small white dots on its wings. It seemed to be looking for something. Mia wondered, "What do you need, little friend?" She watched it land on a purple flower and rest. The butterfly seemed happy there, but it did not stay long.



One day, Mia's teacher, Ms. Lee, wore a butterfly pin on her green cardigan. Mia pointed at it and said, "I have a butterfly in my garden!" Ms. Lee smiled warmly. "Butterflies are wonderful," she said. "But they need special flowers to lay their eggs and find food." Mia's dark brown eyes grew wide. "Special flowers?" she asked. Ms. Lee nodded. "Native plants."



Ms. Lee explained that native plants are flowers that have grown in the area for a very long time. They give butterflies food and a place to raise their babies. "Without them, butterflies can't survive," she said. Mia thought about her little butterfly. She wanted to help. "How can I bring more native plants to my garden?" she asked. Ms. Lee said, "We can start a school garden together."



Mia was excited. She told her best friend, Sam, about the plan. Sam was tall for his age, with freckles across his nose. He wore his blue cap and carried a small shovel. "A butterfly garden? That sounds fun!" he said with a wide grin. "I can dig and plant. Let's do it!" Mia grabbed her green watering can. "We need native flowers," she said. "Let's ask Ms. Lee which ones."



Ms. Lee showed them pictures of native plants like purple coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, and milkweed. "These flowers feed butterflies and other insects," she said. "They also give them homes." Mia and Sam made a list. Sam put on his garden gloves. "I'll dig the holes," he said. Mia filled her watering can. "I'll water them," she said. They planned to start the garden behind the school.



The next day, Mia and Sam went to the school yard. Sam dug the soil with his small shovel. Mia carried her green watering can back and forth. Ms. Lee helped them place the little plants. "Native plants are tough," she said. "They don't need much water after they grow." Mia patted the soil around a milkweed plant. "This one will be for the butterflies' babies," she said. Sam wiped his forehead. "We need more helpers," he said.



Sam invited their classmates to join. Some kids brought trowels, and some brought watering cans. Everyone wanted to help. They planted coneflowers, asters, and butterfly weed. Mia showed them how to pat the soil gently. "These flowers will bring butterflies and bees," she said. "And birds, too!" added Ms. Lee. The children worked together, laughing and digging. The garden began to take shape.



Weeks passed, and tiny green shoots appeared. Mia visited every day with her watering can. She watched the plants grow taller and stronger. "When will the butterflies come?" she asked Ms. Lee. "Be patient," said Ms. Lee. "When the flowers bloom, they will find us." Mia looked at her little butterfly's favorite spot. She hoped it would return. She kept watering and waiting.



Then one morning, Mia saw a flash of orange. Her little butterfly was back! It fluttered over the new plants. "You came!" Mia cheered. The butterfly landed on a purple coneflower. Its black-edged wings opened and closed. Mia called Sam. "Look! It likes our garden!" Sam ran over with his shovel. "It's beautiful!" he said. They watched the butterfly sip nectar from the flower.



More butterflies appeared, and bees buzzed from bloom to bloom. The garden was full of color and fluttering wings. Ms. Lee came out and smiled. "You see?" she said. "Native plants support biodiversity. They give food and homes to butterflies and many other small creatures." Mia looked around. She saw ladybugs, bees, and even a tiny green frog. "Our garden is alive!" she said.



Mia wanted everyone to know about native plants. She made a poster with Sam. They drew butterflies and flowers and wrote: "Plant native flowers to help butterflies!" They hung it in the school hallway. Kids stopped to read it. Some asked, "Can we help in the garden?" Mia nodded. "Yes! We need lots of helpers." Soon, more classes wanted to plant their own native flower patches.



Ms. Lee helped Mia and Sam plan a garden day. Families came to plant and learn. Mia stood on a little stool and spoke. "Butterflies need native plants," she said. "And native plants need butterflies to help them make seeds. They help each other." Everyone clapped. Sam passed out seed packets. "Take some home!" he said. "Grow your own butterfly garden!" The children cheered.



By summer, the school garden was bursting with flowers. Butterflies floated like tiny orange kites. Mia's little butterfly had brought friends. They laid eggs on the milkweed. Soon, caterpillars munched on the leaves. Mia watched a caterpillar turn into a chrysalis. "It's like magic," she whispered. Sam said, "Our garden is a butterfly home!" Mia smiled her gap-toothed smile. "And we made it together."



Mia still carried her green watering can everywhere. She watered the garden every morning before school. Her two puffy buns bounced as she walked. She loved seeing the butterflies flutter around her. "Thank you, little butterfly," she said. "You showed me how to help." The butterfly landed on her finger for a moment, then flew off. Mia knew it would always come back to the garden.



The garden taught everyone that even small hands can make a big difference. Mia's class made a sign that said, "Native plants help biodiversity." Ms. Lee smiled at her students. "You started with one butterfly," she said. "Now look at all this life." Mia looked at her friends, the flowers, and the fluttering wings. She felt proud. "We can all help nature," she said. "One flower at a time."