

The Girl and the Little Butterfly



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In a small house with a big green garden lived a girl with warm light-brown skin and curly dark brown hair in two short puffs. Every morning she carried her little green watering can outside. She loved to watch the flowers wake up. One sunny day, something small and orange danced past her nose. "Oh!" she whispered. "What are you?"



The little butterfly had orange wings with black edges and tiny white spots. Its thin black body dipped and swayed, and its curled antennae looked like tiny springs. It floated over the red flowers, then the yellow ones, then back again. The girl sat very still on the grass. She did not want it to fly away.



Her teacher, tall and kind, wore a soft blue cardigan and thin round glasses. She knelt beside the girl in the garden. "That is a butterfly," she said gently. "But it was not always a butterfly. It changes in remarkable stages. Would you like to learn how?" The girl nodded so fast her puffs bounced. Her teacher opened a small notebook.



The teacher turned the first page. "It starts as a tiny egg," she said, "no bigger than a dot, stuck under a leaf." The girl leaned close and imagined a little egg, round and pale green. The teacher smiled. "Then a caterpillar hatches. It is small and hungry, and it eats and eats and eats." The girl giggled.



"The caterpillar grows and grows," the teacher said, "until it is big and round and ready." She drew a little caterpillar in her notebook. The girl traced it with her finger. "Then it makes a chrysalis," the teacher said. "It hangs very still, like a tiny green sleeping bag, and it waits. Inside, everything is changing."



"One day the chrysalis opens," the teacher said, "and out comes a butterfly with soft, wet wings. It rests, then dries its wings in the sun, and flies away." The girl's big brown eyes went wide. "It changes that much?" she asked. "It does," said her teacher. "Nature changes through remarkable stages. All it needs is time and care."



The next morning the girl ran to the garden with her watering can. She looked under every leaf. Then she saw it: a tiny pale egg, no bigger than a dot. "It is here!" she called. She watched and waited, patient as a stone. Days passed. The egg wobbled, and out crawled a small green caterpillar.



The caterpillar ate and ate. The girl brought fresh leaves and watched it grow round and plump. "You are getting so big!" she laughed. She told her friend at school about it. He had short black coils of hair, freckles across his nose, and a wide cheerful smile. "A caterpillar?" he said. "I want to see it!"



The caterpillar stopped eating and hung from a twig. Slowly it wrapped itself into a smooth green chrysalis. "It is sleeping now," the girl whispered. Her friend wore his orange shirt with the butterfly print and his small straw hat. "How long will it sleep?" he asked. "My teacher says we must be patient," she said. "Good things take time."



One bright morning the chrysalis cracked open. Out climbed a butterfly, its orange and black wings crumpled and wet. The girl held her breath. Slowly the butterfly spread its shimmering wings and let them dry in the warm sun. "It is beautiful!" her friend gasped. The butterfly rose up and circled the garden once, twice, then drifted away.



The girl had an idea. "Let us make a butterfly garden at school!" she said. Her teacher clapped her hands. "What a wonderful plan," she said. "We will need flowers, soil, and many helping hands." The whole class cheered. Her friend pumped his fist and laughed. "I will dig the soil!" he shouted. "I am very good at digging!"



The children planted bright flowers and seeds. The girl carried her green watering can and gave each little plant a drink. Her friend dug and dug, making everyone laugh with his funny songs. The teacher wrote their plans in her notebook. "Now we must be patient," she said. "Gardens grow with love and care, one small step at a time."



The children waited. Some days they saw nothing but green leaves. "Where are the butterflies?" her friend asked. "They will come," the girl said. "Nature changes through remarkable stages, and we must give it time." They watered and weeded and watched. Then one morning, a tiny orange shape fluttered over the new flowers. "Look!" she cried.



More butterflies came. They floated from flower to flower, orange wings with black edges and white spots, just like the first one. The girl stood very still, smiling her gap-toothed smile. "They found our garden," her friend whispered. The teacher folded her arms and beamed. "You did this," she said. "You shared what you learned, and look what grew."



Every day the butterflies visited the school garden. The girl watched them with her green watering can in her hand. She remembered the tiny egg under the leaf and how much had changed since then. "You see," she told her friend, "everything changes in stages, like our garden. It grew because we cared for it together."



The butterflies danced over the bright flowers as the children laughed and pointed. The girl knew something wonderful: nature changes through remarkable stages, and so do gardens, and so do we. She stood with her teacher and her friend in the warm sunshine. "Same time tomorrow?" her friend asked. "Yes," she said. "There is always more to see."