

## The Butterfly (Nature Story)

All winter long the Seed Children and the Bulb Children slept in the earth, their brown wrappers folded tight around the beautiful flowers that would blossom out in the springtime. And while they slept beneath the earth, up above a queer little grey silk cradle rocked in the cold winds. It hung from a little dry branch. In the autumn a little fuzzy caterpillar had spun a cradle around himself and fastened it to the branch. Inside his cradle the caterpillar dreamed of the sunlight he loved. One day as he was dreaming and rocking he began to feel warm again and he decided to peep out into the world. As he poked his nose out at the end of his cradle he saw all around him lovely shining sun fairies and they called to him softly:-

"Come out, sleepyhead! Come out!" So he crawled, very very slowly for something had happened to him in the wintertime. He had lost his warm furry coat and now he looked like a little white wet ghost. But the Sun Fairies quickly dried him with soft warm fingers and he began to unfold himself like a flower opening. And pretty soon he had four wings waving gently to and fro and growing brighter and prettier until at last he flew up into the air with the fairies, a beautiful butterfly.

"I want to find a friend to play with," he said to the Sun Fairies.

"You will find the spring full of friends," the Sun Fairies told him, so he flew happily away to look. He hadn't gone far when he saw what he thought was a beautiful red butterfly with white spots sitting on the ground. Down he flew all excited and said:-

"Happy springtime!" but the red butterfly answered never a word so he sat on the earth too, patiently waiting for an answer. And he might be sitting there yet if a little Gnome hadn't suddenly appeared and said in a grumpy voice:-

"Why don't you go about your business instead of sitting there fanning a draft on me with your great silly wings. Here I was peacefully napping under my red toadstool umbrella till you came along!"

The butterfly flew quickly away without saying a word. He fluttered along looking at each new bright color hoping it would be a butterfly to play with him. At last he was sure he saw a whole flock of butterflies, yellow and white, pink and violet. He flew down among them and said:-

"Happy springtime!" and they all nodded and swayed around in a friendly way. Then one spoke to him in a gentle voice and said:-

"Come and try my nectar," and the Butterfly saw that they were pretty flowers and not butterflies. He was a little disappointed but when they all gave him nectar he felt quite happy and flew from one to another sipping it up. They all had a fine dance together in the breeze, but when the Butterfly said:-

"Come, let us fly up nearer to the beautiful sun," all the flowers shook their heads softly and said:-

"No, no! We are fastened down upon earth and cannot fly."

So the Butterfly said good-bye and flew away still looking for a butterfly to play with. He flew until he was tired and then he sat down to rest on a dry branch with a grey lump on the end.

"Oh dear!" he sighed, "Won't I ever see another butterfly!" and he looked up and down but could see nothing like a butterfly. Then up in the air he heard the Sun Fairies laughing and singing, "You look too high!" so the Butterfly looked down to earth and there he heard the Gnomes laughing at him and saying:- "The stupid creature is looking too low!" So the Butterfly looked straight ahead, but all he could see was a pale sad thing creeping out of the grey lump on the end of the branch, and he heard a weak voice say:- "Here I am. I will play with you."

"Play with me!" exclaimed the Butterfly, "How can a poor thing like you play with me with my beautiful wings to carry me?"

"Just wait," said the other. Then the Sun Fairies came down and helped it unwrap itself and it began to grow stronger and bright color spread over it and before the Butterfly had recovered from his astonishment he saw the once pale ghost spread wings even more beautiful than his own. The new butterfly said:-

"Come fly with me in the sunlight!" And so the two new playmates flew happily away together.