

The Apple and the Butterfly

By

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Illustrated by Michelle Chaplin

Once upon a time, there was a squashy, brown, rotten apple with bugs in it. Of course it hadn't always been a rotten apple. In fact, before becoming an apple, he was a delicate white blossom on the branch of an apple tree.

One lovely autumn day, when he was in the fullness of his life, this round, red and shiny apple was swaying and bouncing merrily in the breeze. The sun was reflected in his skin and he thought he was the prettiest apple on the branch.

A little white butterfly came floating around the tree and landed right on top of the red apple for a little rest. She moved her wings up and down very gently and she just sat there for a while, enjoying the sunny morning.

Amazed by the beauty of this little winged creature, the red apple exclaimed, 'Oh most beautiful of all butterflies, why are you sitting on me?'

'I like your red skin; it is warm and shiny and, besides, I can see myself reflected and I look so pretty, just like a flower!' replied the butterfly.

The red apple felt very proud and told her, 'I have never seen another butterfly as lovely as you are, even though many others have come flitting by.'

The butterfly quivered with pleasure when she heard his kind words. 'I like being so pretty and I like you too but' she sighed, 'I will lay my eggs on a blade of grass one of these days and then I will take my leave of you.'

Fluttering her wings, she flew away but came back every day for a week to visit her new friend.

On one visit, she stamped her tiny foot on the apple's skin. 'You know, I don't understand why we are called butterflies! That's silly! We are not flies and we are not made of butter! We should be called flutter-bys because we are pretty and dainty and we flit and flutter by. We have nothing to do with butter!'

The apple was impressed. 'Oh little butterfly, er, little flutterby, indeed you are quite right and so dainty and clever.'

At the end of the week, there was a big storm and the wind and the hail knocked the beautiful apple off his twig and he lay all bruised in the mud under the apple tree. All around him, were hundreds of other apples who also had been blown down in the storm.

When the sun rose the next morning and the little 'flutterby' returned, she had a hard time finding her friend. She fluttered all around the tree until she saw him on the ground, still a bit shiny and red but just beginning to go all soft and mushy.

'Oh, you have fallen from the tree,' cried the butterfly to her friend.

The apple looked at her and smiled faintly, tired after the storm and then he shed a tear. 'I am OK but must you leave?' he called to his friend.

'Oh yes!' replied the butterfly. 'I am creating life and you are too. Don't you see? I will be back – and you will too. We will always return... through our children and though nature's seasons and cycles. And we will always be friends.'

Hearing this, the apple smiled with great happiness.

The butterfly flew onto a blade of grass just above her favourite apple, laid her eggs on it and called out to the apple as she flew away:

'Farewell dear friend, we will be together again'.

In a few days, one of the eggs fell off the blade of grass with a plop, right into the now squishy brown apple and sank into a mushy part.

It wasn't long before this tiny little egg turned into a fat wiggly, squirmy, green, caterpillar. The caterpillar ate some of the mushy squishy apple and, to him, it tasted better than the most delicious apple sauce. He ate and ate and became very fat and wiggled even more. Wasps and bees came buzzing around and sipped the rich sweet juices oozing out of the remains of the apple.

A cocoon began to form around the fat caterpillar and very soon he was closed up inside a fuzzy blanket where he fell into a deep sleep.

On a delightful spring morning, this fat fuzzy worm woke up and yawned and wriggled and stretched himself as much as he could until there was a cracking sound. To his amazement, his cocoon, his skin, his house, began to split open ---CRACK---POP---SNAP---CRAAAACK... What a noise!

The caterpillar found it very hard work stretching against this tight, itchy scratchy blanket that had suddenly become too small for him. He struggled very hard as he was desperate to get out somehow, or he would not be able to breathe.

Then with a final great push, his crumpled skin fell away completely and blew away like a piece of tissue paper.

'Oh my goodness!' he gasped, 'I can breathe! I am free! But, I feel so different; who am I?'

To his surprise, he was no longer a fat caterpillar in squeezed into a cocoon. Delicate wings had unfolded themselves on either side of this body and slowly but surely, the caterpillar was turning into a butterfly – a particularly lovely one.

Gently shaking his beautiful wings, he found that they lifted him up from the grass until he was floating in the breeze. He wafted about the remains of the squishy apple, which had been his home and his

breakfast and his dinner. Above him, there was a lovely tree covered with pretty red apples. Landing delicately on a bright red apple, he paused and peered all around him.

Under his tiny feet, he could see his reflection in the shiny red skin of the apple. He peeked through the green leaves trembling about him and could see the whole orchard where the other apple trees grew.

This butterfly had become a beautiful and very special butterfly because in the middle of each of his wings was the image of a tiny red apple.

The apple he was resting on swayed joyfully on his twig.

'Hullo, you are the prettiest thing that ever sat on me,' he chuckled. 'I see my red roundness reflected in your wings and now I know I can be with you wherever you go.'

'Yes,' whispered the little butterfly, admiring himself as he looked down at the shiny red apple and saw his own reflection.

'We will flutter and fly over fields and trees and smell the flowers and dance in the breeze and we will be together forever.'

If you are lucky one day
When the wind is at play,
You could hear what she sings in your ear.
She has secrets to tell
So you must listen well
To her stories of life far and near.
She has shaken the leaves
In the old apple trees
With a gale force or maybe no sound.
She has seen many things
So hark when she sings
Of great love that cannot be un-wound.