

*the
butterfly*

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The night seemed but a brief instant. As soon as the butterfly awoke in the coolness of dawn, he had a feeling he had slept since the beginning of the world.

“Why should the sun rise so late?” he asked suspiciously. Just then the sun poured forth and the garden was flooded with a wave of gold. The butterfly fluttered his wings, rising from the stem of the flower on which he had perched for the night. He felt like exploring.

Gently, he flew past the flowers nodding in the sun until he came to a garden filled with flowers of every hue. He stepped over the stile and slipped under the windows of the house. The blinds were still down. Could he peer inside?

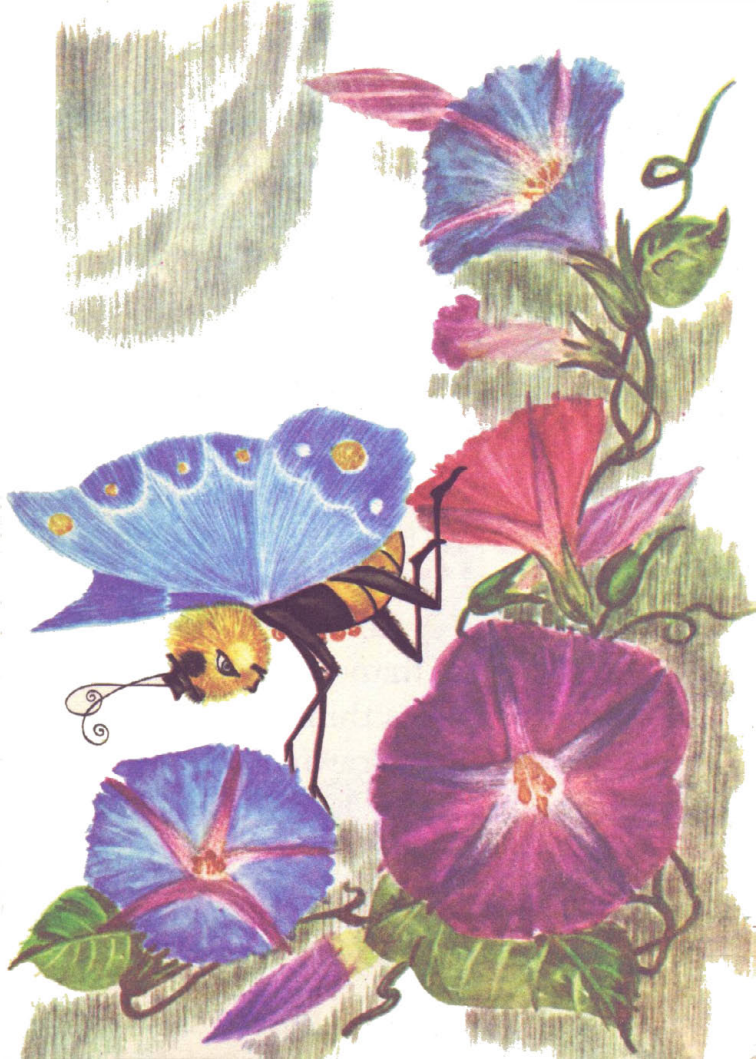
Morning glory bathed the window frames, the flowers were wide open, sweet smelling, their



petals dark blue with a rosy tint, the dewdrops on them making them gleam like diamonds.

“How tender they are,” thought the butterfly, and, beating his wings, he touched them one by one. “Here I shall stay while the sun is warm,” he thought and sat looking at them. But he soon found a weak spot in the glorious blooms. They changed face too often. They looked one way in the morning, a different way at noon and closed their petals altogether in the evenings. “Not reliable,” said the butterfly and flew off.

A fanning breeze from some lilies reached him. And without



hesitating, he soared down on the tall, slender stems of the lily. He seated himself in the fragrant snow-white chalice, loosened his wings and relaxed. At last, he noticed that the yellow dust from the flower was soiling his wings. He was very angry. "Thank you for nothing!" he said, "I am all soiled and, anyway, it's like living in a shell!" And up he flew into the air. It was very hot now. "It seems warmer here than in the fields," the butterfly was thinking.

The day was drawing to an end but the butterfly flew on and on restlessly. "There's a carpet of forget-me-nots," he said, "they are



blue, like me, so they might have a high opinion of themselves!"

He touched them disdainfully with his wings and left them behind. On he flew past beds of chrysanthemums. "So many of them, they must be common," he scoffed. "Such as you I can find in the fields in the country," he said spying a snapdragon. Quickly, he landed on the quiet gilly-flower, folding his wings together.

He was ready to flirt so he twisted his moustache and narrowed his eyes. But the flower took no notice! "Ho, ho," he said, "I haven't come to sleep." And off he flew, laughing.





The sun was setting now and the day turned cooler. He flew past more and more flowers, some stately on their tall stems, until he reached the roses. Seeing them, he came down slowly, courteously bowed before each one. "Flowers of Paradise, magical flowers," he was saying, but, as he bowed left and right, a thorn scratched his wing. "Well, really," he said crossly and flew off without looking back.





On and on he flew. On the wing he stole a kiss from a wild chicory and it reminded him of the fields. "The fields are best," he said and planned to fly back to the familiar fields, away from all the flowers he had seen today.

By now it was dark and he could not see his way. Unable to find his way, he dropped at random on a thistle and lay down to wait for the dawn. It has got dark quickly, he thought!





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