

Spread Your Wings

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“Ouch!” My head hit a low branch. I glanced back, annoyed. Then my eye caught sight of a small black object hanging from a branch. *What can it be?* I moved in for closer inspection. *A butterfly chrysalis!*

I was out, taking a walk. *Tha bump Tha bump*, I absorbed myself in the rhythmic beating of my feet hitting the concrete and soaked in the warmth from the sun rays. The weather was perfect: the sun was shining, the sky was idyllic with fluffy white clouds drifting lazily, and the wind was whistling through the tree leaves. I had paused under a group of cherry trees every day, but had never noticed this butterfly chrysalis.

For the next few days, I came back to check up on the chrysalis. Over time, it went from opaque grey to a translucent smoky color. If I looked closely, I could see some yellow strips. *I wonder if I'll be able to catch it hatching.*

I was very lucky. I was standing and listening to the birds chirping when suddenly, the chrysalis began to crack open! My eyes widened. The fragile shell crackled as the butterfly struggled to get out. A black foot poked out and wiggled around, searching for a foothold. Then another followed. The butterfly seemed to be using sheer willpower to pull itself free. *Go! Go! You can do it!* I found myself silently cheering. One wing was out. It was small and crumpled. Out came the other! *There you go! Almost there. Just the abdomen to go!* I held my breath as the butterfly made a tremendous final tug and popped out of the cocoon. It tasted the air with its proboscis, flicking it in and out. It seemed to say, “I’m finally out of that stuffy cocoon! Mm, the air is tasty!”

The butterfly pranced around on the empty chrysalis before settling in place upside down. *Why isn't it moving anymore?* I stared at it curiously. *Shouldn't it be getting going now? There are predators to watch for and scrumptious nectar to feed on!* The butterfly flexed its wings. Then I suddenly realized why. The wet, crumpled wings were larger than before. And they seemed to be getting bigger. I remembered that butterflies hung upside down to help the blood flow into the wings and to straighten them out. The vibrant yellow wings grew larger and more beautiful. As they dried off, the scales began to shimmer and shine like gold.

What were once wrinkled and crumpled, now were beautiful and delicate. Finally, the wings were opened to their fullest. The butterfly walked delicately up a branch and paused, as if to test its springiness. It flapped its wings twice to ensure they were ready to go. And then one...two...three and *whoosh*, the butterfly was airborne. I wished that I knew what the butterfly was feeling. Exhilaration as the wind buoyed the body up into the sky? It was headed off to a new life after its transformation from a crawling caterpillar to a soaring butterfly. The butterfly fluttered about enjoying its new freedom before gliding upwards toward the deep blue sky and shining sun. Only a whisper left my mouth, “Wow...”