




THE LITTLE CATERPILLAR




Written by
Flávio Colombini

Illustrated by
Monique Alencar

A vibrant, watercolor-style illustration of a garden. In the center, a small, blue and yellow caterpillar with a pink and orange horn-like protrusion on its head is eating a green leaf. The caterpillar has blue spots on its back and a yellowish-green body. The garden is filled with various green plants and leaves, some with prominent veins. The background is a soft, light green, suggesting a bright, sunny day.

Once upon a time, there was a little caterpillar named Betty. She was sad and lonely, eating a leaf...

When she heard a whisper:
"Stay where you are, don't move!"
Not knowing where that voice came from, Betty asked: "Why?"



Just then, a large bird landed close by,
looking for food.

The caterpillar remained motionless, hoping that the bird wouldn't realise she was there.



The big bird looked in her direction,



but fortunately didn't see her.



He kept going until he found a worm on the ground.



He picked it up and flew away.

Carl came out from under the leaf where he was hiding and went to talk to his friend.

“Wow, you barely escaped!”

“Thank you for warning me!”, said Betty.

“You’re looking a little sad. What happened?”

“Oh, I’m unhappy with my life!”

“Why?”

“For many reasons. One of them is that I walk too slowly.”




“Well, that’s normal, since we have small legs and a big body.”



“I wanted to have a small body and big legs. I wish I was faster!”

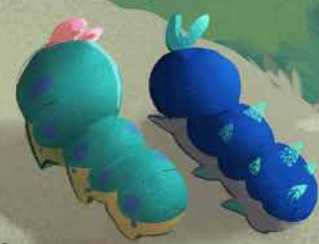


“Why hurry?
With patience, we can get anywhere!”

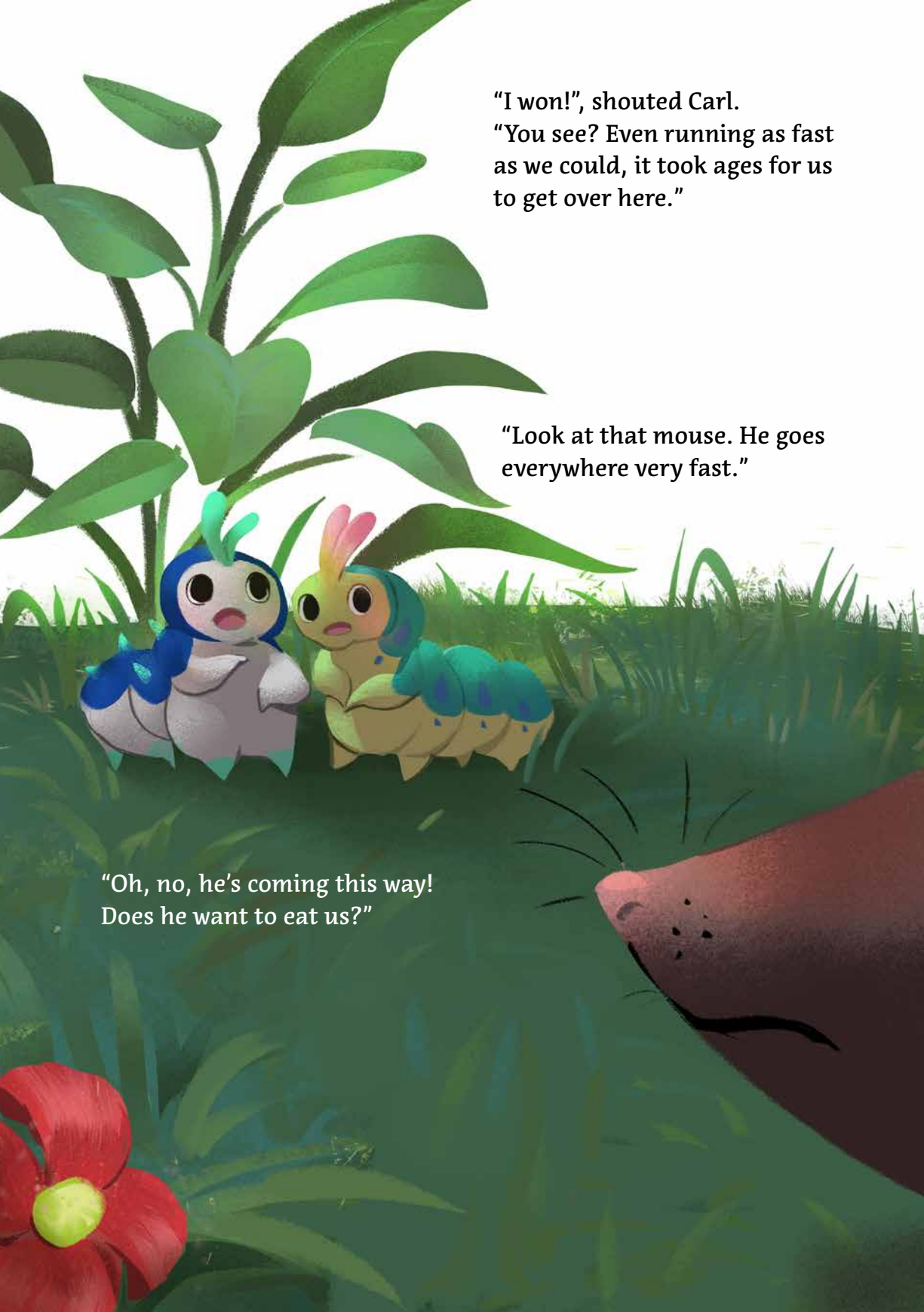


“What patience! If I want to get to that plant, with juicy leaves, it’s going to take me a long time! I wanted to get there quickly!”

“Well, why don’t we race to see who gets there first?”
“All right.”



**After racing for a few minutes...
the caterpillars finally reached the plant.**



"I won!", shouted Carl.
"You see? Even running as fast as we could, it took ages for us to get over here."

"Look at that mouse. He goes everywhere very fast."

"Oh, no, he's coming this way!
Does he want to eat us?"

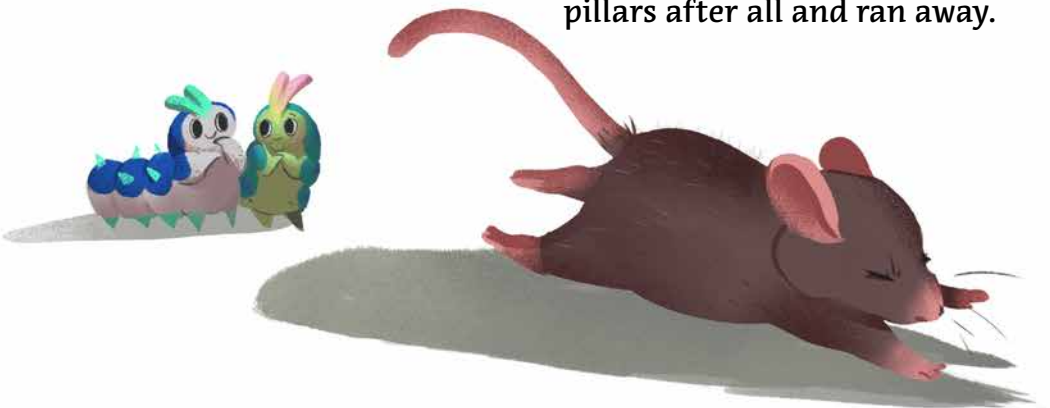
The mouse got close and sniffed the caterpillars.



When he touched them, they naturally released a stinging substance, which caused a burning sensation in the mouse's nose.



He decided not to eat the caterpillars after all and ran away.



"I'm so glad our bodies have defense mechanisms! Otherwise we would be in trouble!", commented Carl.



“We’re so little compared to other animals”, complained Betty.
“We’re bigger than the worms and the ants”, said Carl.
“But we’re so much smaller than humans. Oh, there are two of them coming in our direction. They’re about to step on us. Let’s get out of here!”





Two children, who looked like giants to the insects, passed very close by, but fortunately didn't step on the caterpillars.

A little while later, they saw a bird land nearby.
It was a huge Southern Lapwing. It spotted the
two caterpillars and came dangerously close.

“Oh, no!”

“What will become of us?”




When the big bird was going
to eat the caterpillars...

A cat, who was hiding, jumped on the bird, which flew away frightened. The cat chased after it and didn't even notice the caterpillars.



“Wow, that was a close one!” Betty breathed a sigh of relief. “We go through all kinds of trouble! It’s very dangerous to be a caterpillar!”, noticed Carl.

A large, brown tree trunk dominates the left side of the frame. Two caterpillars are climbing it: a blue one with white spots and a green one with pink antennae. The background is a bright, hazy landscape with green foliage and a path leading into the distance.


"I don't like seeing everything from down here either. I wish I could see things from above."
"Well, that's easy! Come with me."
Carl started climbing a tree, and Betty followed him.



After a long time...
the caterpillars reached a high branch.
“Look what a beautiful view we have from here!”
“Indeed. Thanks for bringing me up here.
You’re a great friend!”
They stayed there for a long time, admiring
the view.



Even with the help of her friend,
Betty did not feel completely happy.
She still wanted to be fast, she wanted to be free.



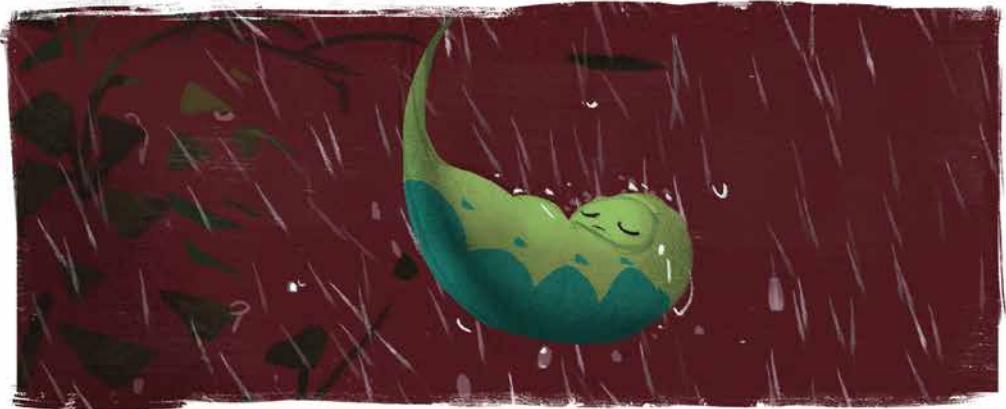
Then, one day, she climbed up the wall
of a house and found a safe, cozy place.

So she made a cocoon that
covered her entire body.
There, very comfortably,
she fell into a deep sleep.

While she was sleeping,
there was a strong wind, but the cocoon remained in place.



Then came a torrential rain, but the cocoon stayed firm.



A gecko came by and tried to eat the cocoon,
but thought it tasted bad and gave up.



One fine day, Betty
woke up and came
out of her cocoon.



She noticed she had colorful wings.

Betty had become a beautiful butterfly!



She began to flap her wings and float through the air.



Oh my!
She could fly!

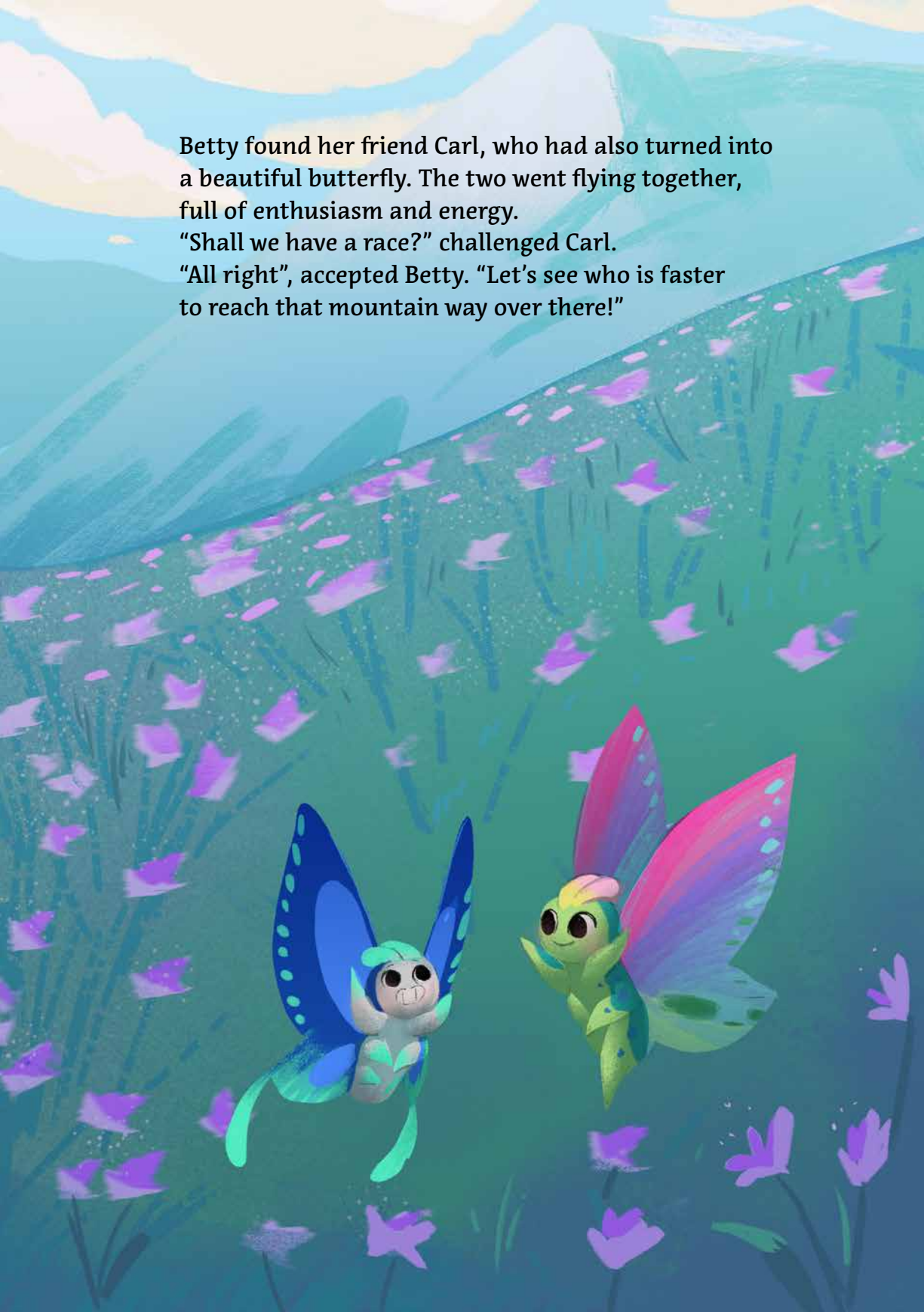


Betty flew away and contemplated all the beauty in the world. She was no longer stuck to the ground. She could go from one place to another very quickly. She could see everything from above. Many things that used to be big to her now looked small from a higher point of view.

Betty found her friend Carl, who had also turned into a beautiful butterfly. The two went flying together, full of enthusiasm and energy.

“Shall we have a race?” challenged Carl.

“All right”, accepted Betty. “Let’s see who is faster to reach that mountain way over there!”



In a few seconds...
the two butterflies reached the mountain.
"I won!", shouted Betty, full of joy.



That was how a sad caterpillar
turned into a happy butterfly!

Writer



Flávio Colombini

I love to imagine stories that help children see the world from other points of view, like that of a caterpillar or a butterfly, so they might feel more empathy for the animals and for nature as a whole.

It took me a long time to conceive this story. I had the initial idea, but whenever I tried to write it down, nothing much came of it. Until, after many attempts, the text finally came.

When the words met the illustrations, the book came out of its cocoon and is now flying into your hands, dear reader. Enjoy!

If you'd like to see the other books I've written, visit my website:

www.flaviocolombini.com/english

Illustrator



Monique Alencar

Ever since I can remember, I've always been passionate about telling stories through my drawings. I began my journey by producing my own projects, making independent comics.

Now I'm also helping to bring other authors' stories to life. It's an honor to be able to illustrate children's books and bring to life projects as cool as *The Little Caterpillar*.

My nickname on social media is Nickyzilla.

Want to see other illustrations I've done?

Click on this link: nickyzilla.carrd.co