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THE LIFE OF A BUTTERFLY

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NOT ENOUGH NETTLES

Hi! Here I am! You can call me Amanda. I won't introduce you to my brothers and sisters because I don't know all of their names. That there are so many of us makes our little nettle patch too small. That's a problem, because I'm so hungry my tummy is rumbling non-stop. So I'm going out into the big, wide world to find nettles. I wish I didn't have to leave my brothers and sisters behind, but I want to eat, so what else can I do?

Hi! I'm Amanda.

Call me
Clara.

I'm Victor.
Hello there!

I'm
Thaddaeus

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT BUTTERFLIES ...

The more I eat, the more I grow – and the hungrier I get. My tummy is rumbling again.

Munch, munch... and on I go. As I move through the country, I meet lots of different creatures. Some have super-long legs, others stiff elytra. What if I turn not into a butterfly but a little round bug? Look how many of those there are, of all different types!

CRICKET

We crickets are musical virtuosi. No one can perform a more thrilling serenade. Do you know where our hearing organs are? You don't? In our knees!

BEE

I'm aching all over! All day I've been gathering pollen so that there will be lots of honey this year, too.

BUMBLEBEE

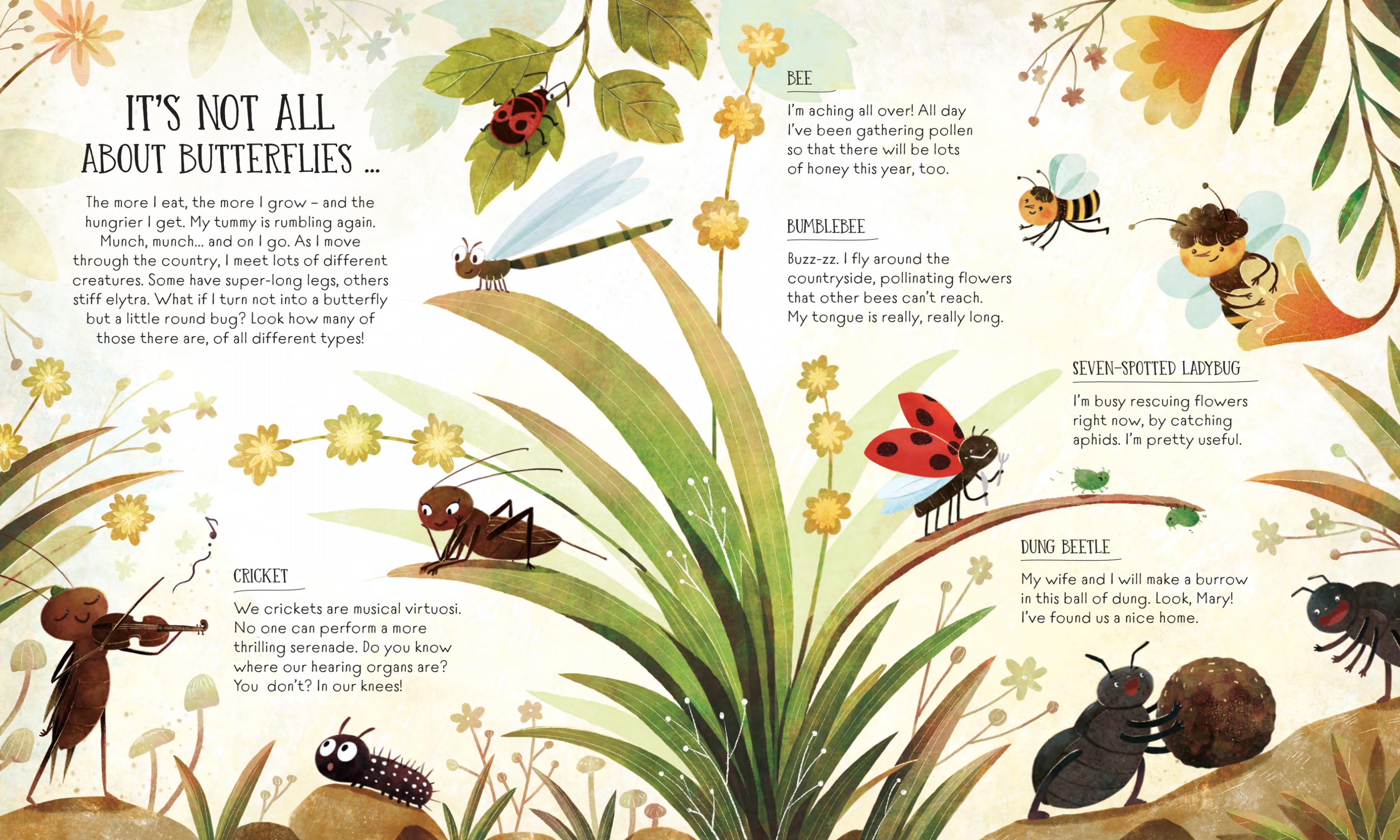
Buzz-zz. I fly around the countryside, pollinating flowers that other bees can't reach. My tongue is really, really long.

SEVEN-SPOTTED LADYBUG

I'm busy rescuing flowers right now, by catching aphids. I'm pretty useful.

DUNG BEETLE

My wife and I will make a burrow in this ball of dung. Look, Mary! I've found us a nice home.



I'M HUNGRY!!!

I know that I keep repeating myself, but my main task is to eat to grow. Since the beginning of this book, I have got much bigger and stronger! When I emerged from my egg, I was really tiny and skinny. Now I'm a big, sturdy caterpillar who feels in her non-existent bones that she's about to pupate.



Zzz



A LITTLE REST BEFORE THE ACTION

Before I undress, I need a little rest. I'll stop eating and simply lie here and wait for what's to come. You might want to go out and play, or read a book, because my waiting may take several days. See you later, then!

ABOUT TO UNDRRESS

When you grow, kids, your skin grows with you. This doesn't happen with caterpillars. To grow, we need to take off our old skin, which is getting tight. Today, my skin feels tight everywhere. I must be about to undress!



SELF-INFLATION

You change your T-shirts without bother. For us, getting changed is a real challenge. We must inflate ourselves. I take a deep breath to fill myself with air from head to toe, and my body rocks with great waves of inflation ...



IN THREE DAYS

See? The old skin has become sort of see-through and forms a veil around my body. It is time for me to change my coat.



I JUST GOT BIGGER

See how I've inflated myself like a balloon? Bang! Now the skin at the back of my head has cracked and split. To get out of my old skin, I perform a slow, twisting dance.

Hey! I'm undressing!

AND IT FEELS GREAT ...

Being in my new coat is a wonderful feeling, kids. My body can stretch in all directions. Yee-ee, aah-aah ... That's it! I'm hungry. Please excuse me - I'm off to eat the biggest nettle the world has ever seen.



I'M PUPATING

I'm about to stop being fun to be with, so let me apologize in advance. Right now, my main interest is in finding a place where I can pupate and come of age in peace and safety. I'm so looking forward to spreading my butterfly wings and flying over the meadow for the first time! Am I sure that a butterfly is what I'll become? I am. Now to find that hiding place!

ENGAGED?!

All the gaps, holes and places under stones are already engaged. I've been too slow! What am I to do? I'll just have to pupate on a plant.

I'll pupate on that plant up there.

This pupation is no joke! I'm spinning my cocoon of fluffy fibre while sitting on a branch.

Now I'm attaching myself to the fibre by my abdomen and dropping my head. After this I'll just wait.

This waiting is pretty boring, I must say. I'm wriggling about a bit to pass the time.

Oh, I'm almost done! The skin behind my neck has cracked. I'm undressing!

I'm a chrysalis. Hurray!



TIME TO SLEEP

Being a butterfly is amazing, and well worth the trouble, despite the occasional close shave when a bird goes for you with its beak. Now the heat of the sun is getting ever weaker. The leaves are turning golden; winter is approaching. I'm preparing to sleep. And I'm not alone: there are other peacock butterflies with me. We've found a place to sleep in an abandoned cellar. So, good night to you! See you again in spring.

My long winter
sleep awaits.

Zzz, zzz,
zzzz ...



FINDING A PARTNER

After the long winter, I feel really stiff. I need to warm up in the sun and build my strength for an important mission. Before I can lay a clutch of eggs with butterflies of the future, I must find a partner. Now my strength is back, I spread my wings and off I fly. The world is beautiful and filled with opportunity.

MAKING MY CHOICE

How many future suitors have swarmed out this spring! They sit by the path, wings outspread to show off their colourful eyespots. Dazzling beauty is what butterflies are all about. I have made my choice. The one on the end has a lovely smile, don't you think?

A BUTTERFLY'S VOICE

Did you know that butterflies make sounds? We do so when afraid, or to scare away others. This clicking is so quiet that humans hardly ever get to hear it. Right now, my intended is clicking at other butterfly males, to drive them away from me.

COURTSHIP

A butterfly courtship goes like this. The boys show off their wings to us girls. Each of us chooses her favourite. Then she displays her own beauty in return – girls, too, wish to impress. I'm so glad that my suitor likes me. I think he's the nicest, dearest and kindest of all!



Will you marry me, miss?



Imagine a big, black, hairy, chubby caterpillar. As it crawls across your path, you feel squeamish and a little afraid. Does it even occur to you that this big, black, hairy, chubby caterpillar may be far more afraid of you than you are of it? Perhaps it doesn't occur to you either that this big, black, hairy, chubby caterpillar will one day turn into a beautiful butterfly – if it manages to survive in a world filled with danger. How does a caterpillar like this live, and how does the miracle of metamorphosis come to be? If you have wondered about this, kids, then this is the book for you. Meet Amanda the caterpillar, who is sometimes hungry and sometimes afraid, is amazed by the world, and longs to fly!



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