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**Magda Grabowska**

# The Miraculous Change

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## FROM THE AUTHOR

From the very day we are born into this world, we try to find our own place in its reality.

We move within it, build relations with other people, consume, gather things, but subconsciously we feel that we have been created for something else, that there is a much greater reality for which our hearts yearn. Just like little Phil, we desire to experience something more than what seems ordinary. This yearning can be very intense. That is why all of us need to hear the Good News about the other reality, which does exist within our reach. It is the reality of eternal life in God's Kingdom. But how do we get hold of it?

God, who created us, uses many images to help us understand His work in this world and in us.

One of these images shows the metamorphosis which takes place in the life of a butterfly.

Little caterpillars won't become butterflies, won't take off, and won't fly over beautiful meadows, until they have experienced their "caterpillar life" and their apparent death in the cocoon. It is in that cocoon where their little bodies fall apart, change into a liquid substance only to reappear in a brand new form and in the right time. As humans, we have to live our earthly lives, then we have our "cocoon time" when we experience the physical death. But one day, as the Scripture says, we will experience resurrection and eternal life in our new, glorified bodies (1 Cor 15).

With caterpillars, this is a natural process which occurs outside of their will. Provided they don't get devoured by a larger animal, they will leave their cocoons as colorful butterflies. We, however, experience this new reality in glorified bodies having made a decision of the will.

God created this world and He created us. Through sin and disobedience we walked away from Him and fell under the rule of His enemy, whom the Bible calls Satan. It is something that both humanity as a whole and each of us individually experience. In this state, eternal separation from God is our only destiny. None of our own efforts can help us get out of this pitiful situation. But there is help. In the Gospel of John we read that God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16, NIV).

By coming to this world and dying on the cross, Jesus paid a huge price for us. He did it to save us from the power of darkness and to satisfy God's holy justice. He built a bridge to God and His Kingdom for us. But none of this happened automatically. If we want to experience life in God's Kingdom, we have to make a personal decision to accept God's plan of salvation acknowledging that Jesus Christ is the only true Savior. We need to let Him control our life through His Holy Spirit. Only then can we await the resurrection day with peace and trust in our hearts, and only then will we have the strength to defy God's enemy to whom we no longer belong, though he will not stop trying to sway us from doing God's will.

The most important thing in the lives of those caterpillars was asking White Pigeon to be their friend and take care of them. This saved their lives and protected them from Scary Bird.

What about us, parents? Have we asked Jesus Christ to be not only our Friend, but most of all, our Savior and Lord? Have we asked Him to open the gate to eternity with God for us? Or do we continue to "become butterflies" on our own? If we still have not done it, let's do it as soon as possible and let's encourage our children to do the same remembering that it should be their own personal decision made on their own, without outside pressure. Many children are ready to make that decision at an early age, others will do it when they're a little older. We can set a good example for them.

Maybe this will be a decision that the whole family can make together?

These words of a simple prayer can help you do just that:

God, Lord of heaven and earth, I know that none of my efforts and hard work can bring me to You and the reality of eternal life. I confess that Your Son, Jesus Christ is the only satisfactory price paid for me and my sins. I put all of my trust in the fact that He not only died for me, but also rose again to win for me a personal access to You. I submit to Him as my only Lord and Savior and want to live according to His will. I submit myself to His care. I ask that Your Holy Spirit take control of my daily life and bring me to see You face to face on the day of resurrection. Amen.

White Pigeon was hovering gently over the Bush. He watched diligently as tiny caterpillars were hatching from very little eggs laid on one of the Bush's leaves. White Pigeon knew that many of them would become beautiful butterflies someday. The caterpillars themselves, however, did not know it.

Phil was one of these tiny caterpillars. The little egg became too tight for him now, so he was glad to freely stretch his tiny little body and crawl along the leaf. Suddenly, he felt great hunger. He started looking around for something to eat. Other larvae nearby were crunching with gusto green leaves of the Bush, so Phil got to crunching, too. Yum-yum. The young leaves were fresh and tasted great. After a moment Phil, quite full, fell into a deep sleep.





Don't sleep, kid, other caterpillars are going to eat up all the leaves."

Someone gave Phil a nudge at the side. He opened his little eyes.

"Don't scare him, Jake," another voice sounded. "There are enough leaves on the Bush for everyone."

"Who are you?" Phil asked, seeing two figures nearby.

"We are caterpillars, just like you. Only you are small and we are big. I am Vera, and this is Jake."

"What do caterpillars do?" Phil asked.

"They crawl along twigs, crunch leaves, and do all not to get overtaken by other caterpillars." Jake was evidently proud that he knew the answer to the question of the little pal.

"Overtaken in what?"

"Well... in crunching leaves."

"Why do they crunch them?"

"In order to grow big. And not to be hungry," Jake was speaking with great conviction.

"Should I do it, too?"

"Of course you should. But stop all those questions. Start eating, or there will be nothing left for you."





Every morning Phil eagerly got to crunching leaves. He was delighted when finding fresh, light green ones, he enjoyed them most. He liked drinking small droplets of dew which would appear on the leaves at dawn. He liked the wind moving the Bush, making it swing gently. He did not like, though, the wind blowing so hard that it made the Bush bend. In such moments, he had to hold on really strong in order not to fall down. He did not like heavy rains, either, because at times a drop of rain would hit him painfully, which was very unpleasant. He liked watching other caterpillars. He enjoyed talking to them, but he did not like racing with them or bragging about who ate most or who found more new twigs on the Bush.

Time and again he would notice that although he wandered through the most beautiful nooks of the Bush, ate the most tasty leaves, drank delicious dew drops, he still felt hunger. This was not the kind of hunger rumbling in his tiny stomach, though. It was a strange kind of hunger, resounding in his little heart. He was clearly lacking something. And it began to trouble him.





Sometimes he would see rays of Sun beaming through the twigs and leaves of the Bush. He tried to catch if only one of them, but they eluded even his touch. He felt, though, they were warming his little body. A pleasant, blissful feeling of peace would overwhelm him in such moments.

“Where are these rays coming from?” he asked Vera, who was just crawling along the next twig.

“The great golden Sun sends them to us.”

“I would like to see that Sun,” Phil sighed.

“No one can see the Sun. Well, perhaps the butterflies can...”

“Butterflies? What are butterflies?”

“Butterflies are magnificent creatures. They have beautiful, delicate wings. They can soar high in the air toward the Sun, which we, caterpillars, can see only through the leaves of our Bush. They can hover in the breezes of the wind above the fragrant meadow. They can also sit down on lovely colorful flowers.”

“Oh! And where is this fragrant meadow with colorful flowers?”

“I don’t know, but it’s certainly not here.”

“And how did you find out about those butterflies and meadow, and flowers?”

“I heard older caterpillars talk about it. They said they couldn’t wait to become butterflies.”

“And how do you become a butterfly?”

“I don’t know,” Vera said and got to crunching a beautiful big leaf.



From this time on, Phil never stopped dreaming about becoming a butterfly. He felt that was what he lacked and what he desired most. *I want to fly above the colorful meadow. I don't want to just wander along the Bush's twigs, or eat on and on, or race who will eat more, or brag who has found a prettier leaf or a twig. But how can I become a butterfly?*

"Jake, do you perhaps know how to become a butterfly?" he asked having noticed Jake gliding along the neighboring twig.

"They say you have to do your very best to be a good caterpillar. But I'm not good at it. I like brawling too much."

"So I will try to be the best caterpillar on the whole Bush. Maybe it will work for me. And then I will become a beautiful butterfly."

Phil looked at himself in the huge dew drop lying on a leaf. He even got scared a bit. He did not know that the water drop slightly altered his reflection. He saw a big head, huge eyes, elongated body and legs, with which he held on strong to the twig.

"Do I look like that?" He shook his head with astonishment. "Well, I wonder where those wings are going to grow from, once I have become the best caterpillar."

"Perhaps from your head?" Jake quipped provocatively.

"You don't become a butterfly in such a way," Julie whispered softly.

But no one listened to her.





From this day on Phil did his best to be good and polite, or even better and more polite than before. But in spite of his efforts he still was the little caterpillar, though growing bigger and bigger.

One day he noticed he felt too tight and uncomfortable in the chitin sheath that covered his little body. It evidently was no longer good for him. He strained hard and suddenly felt the sheath bursting. The crack was growing and soon Phil, crawling, left his small clothes behind. He felt different, somehow changed. It was a light and pleasant feeling. *Wow, I guess I have just become a butterfly*, he thought.

He looked proudly at Vera, Jake and Julie, who were watching him attentively. As fast as he could, he crawled to a dew drop to take a look at himself. All he saw, however, was his old reflection, only in a new sheath, pale and soft. Not the least trace of wings.

“What was that?” he asked with disappointment.

“Molting. You went through molting. You outgrew your old sheath and had to shed it. Now you are a big caterpillar,” Vera said.

“Didn’t I become a butterfly?”

„No, Phil, you didn’t. We, caterpillars, grow and molt several times within our lifetime, staying caterpillars all the time,” said Vera thoughtfully.

“Perhaps you didn’t try strong enough,” Jake added sarcastically.

“You don’t become a butterfly in such a way,” Julie whispered.

But no one listened to her.





Maybe I really should try even harder? But what can I do?" Phil mused aloud.

"Yes, try harder. But beware of Scary Bird. Once he catches and devours you, you certainly won't become a butterfly."

"Jake, why do you scare him again?" Vera scolded her friend.

"I am not scaring him. This is the truth and you know it."

"What is this Scary Bird?" Phil asked.

"See, Vera? He hasn't even heard about the Scary Bird!" Jake was clearly astounded.

"Scary Bird is our enemy," said Vera eagerly. "He thinks he owns the Bush, so he gets bossy around here. And he hunts caterpillars. He tries to be invisible. He pretends he's not here at all. He wants us to think that way because it is much easier for him to catch us then. He pretends to be a friend, but this is a phony friendship. And it always ends badly for us. That is why we have to be very cautious. Once you see Scary Bird, curl up in a ball or hide under a leaf, and then perhaps he will not seize you," she warned Phil.





*B*ut I am not afraid of Scary Bird, because I am protected by White Pigeon,” ventured Julie, sitting on the next twig and listening to the conversation.

“What is this White Pigeon?” Phil asked.

“He is our true friend,” Julie answered with eagerness. “He always hovers around our Bush. He sees us all and know us all, even when we don’t know him. He knows our names and knows all about us. He is very wise. And he cares for us. He wants to help us. And Scary Bird is afraid of him.”

“You’re kidding, Julie! You’re making it all up. Don’t be silly! Get out of here! No one’s going to listen to you. Scary Bird is afraid of nothing,” Jake shouted.

“But he is! He’s afraid of White Pigeon!” Julie’s voice sounded firm and trustworthy. “Scary Bird flees as soon as White Pigeon appears. White Pigeon is gentle and kind, but he can also be very stern. Scary Bird is afraid of him and him only. And I am not making it up! And you should listen to me this once,” Julie shouted earnestly. “White Pigeon does not mind I am but a little caterpillar. He said I am important to him. That’s why I am not afraid either of you, Jake, or of Scary Bird.”

“Don’t tease her, Jake,” Vera had to rebuke him again. “And you, Julie, how do you know that?”

“The Big Caterpillar told me about it some time ago. She said it had been the White Pigeon who had planted the seed that our Bush had grown from, for little caterpillars to live on. But the Scary Bird wanted to have the Bush all for himself. He wanted to catch all the little caterpillars and eat them. But White Pigeon did not let him. He stood up for us. And then Scary Bird did him a dreadful harm. White Pigeon was suffering very much, so much that everybody thought he was dead. But White Pigeon lifted his head and spread his wings. And he became even stronger. Since that time Scary Bird has known he has lost and that he will never overcome White Pigeon.”

“So we are safe!” shouted Phil.





Not quite, because Scary Bird still circles around and tries to seize little caterpillars. But White Pigeon is watching. And every little caterpillar may ask him to become his or her friend and watch over him or her. And he will really take care of this caterpillar. He will protect him from Scary Bird. He will help him roam the Bush. He will show him the right twigs to crawl along and which leaves it is better not to eat. I know this because I have asked White Pigeon for his protection and he is my friend now. Once I got tangled up in a huge cobweb and he helped me get out of it. He takes a good care of me. And he told me he would see to it that I become a butterfly.”

“May I also ask him to be my friend and to take care of me, even though I don’t know how to be a good caterpillar?” asked Jake hesitantly.

“Yes, he will take care of all who want it.”

“Of me also?” Vera asked. She was bigger than Julie, nevertheless she was not ashamed to inquire when she did not know something.

“That’s right, Vera, of you, too. And of you, Phil, also. You can ask him to do it. Even quietly. He will hear you.”

“Well, I’ll ask him,” Vera said.

“I’ll ask him, too.” Jake seemed very excited by what he had just heard from Julie.

“How about you, Phil?”

“I will not. I’ll try to protect myself. I think I can manage. The Scary Bird can do me no harm, because I’m a good caterpillar,” Phil affirmed.

He turned around and crawled up the Bush.





*Y*ou were absolutely right, Phil,” Lolo said. He was one of the little caterpillars who hatched out together with Phil. “Julie tells everybody about this White Pigeon of hers. And she tries to frighten us with Scary Bird. Silly girl. Scary Bird is not evil at all. He is a friend of mine. He told me so! He is nice. Sometimes he brings me tasty grass which you cannot find here, on the Bush. And his feathers glitter so fine. Sometimes they even get colorful. And he can sing beautifully. I prefer Scary Bird to the boring White Pigeon.

“Julie says Scary Bird wants to devour us.”  
„He hasn’t devoured me, has he? It’s nothing to worry about,” Lolo tried to calm Phil down.

*Who is telling the truth?* Phil wondered.

He followed Lolo along a thick branch. They felt so cheerful.

Suddenly, a beautiful singing of a bird resounded.

“This is my friend, Scary Bird. Can you hear his wonderful voice? Could someone singing so nicely be evil?” Lolo laughed, clearly proud of his acquaintance with Scary Bird.





They stopped at a fork of the branch. One of the twigs was thicker, firmer, the other narrow and seemingly frail.

“Which one do we choose?” Phil asked.

“Certainly the thick one. My friend Scary Bird says we should always choose a more comfortable, easier and nicer way.”

“But if you walk a more comfortable, easier and nicer way, can you become a butterfly? Because I would really want to be a butterfly...”

“I guess so. My friend Scary Bird said that if I listened to him, I would get a surprise. Perhaps that’s the surprise he meant.”

The little caterpillars went boldly forward. They did not notice that through the leaves of the Bush Scary Bird was looking at them, attentively and greedily.

The twig they were crawling along suddenly cracked.

“What’s that?” Phil got scared. “The twig’s cracking!”

“Impossible! It looked so firm”. There was astonishment and anxiety in Lolo’s voice.

“But it is cracking, really! See? It’s breaking! It’s been dry and rotten inside,” Phil cried of terror. “It is hanging on just one little fibre... We won’t manage to return. We’ll perish!”

At that very moment the terrified little caterpillars spotted Scary Bird.





*H*e did not look beautiful at all! His feathers were completely black and were not glittering with colors. The pupils of his eyes, narrowed and ghastly, filled them with horrible terror. Scary Bird was not singing any more. He was watching the little caterpillars and was not going to help them, not a bit.

“Come, come here, my friend, too long have I been waiting for you,” he croaked scornfully – and Lolo was in his beak before you knew it.

“Now it’s your turn!” Scary Bird’s horrifying eyes looked at Phil. “It’s the end of your journey, you silly little caterpillar. I was sure you would listen to this know-it-all Julie and that I would lose you. Lucky for me, you turned out to be sillier than I thought. What a lovely, fat caterpillar you are! You surely taste great.”

Phil could hardly hold to the broken twig. He had nowhere to hide. He was unable to pull himself up or curl up into a ball. And Scary Bird’s huge beak was getting closer and closer.

“Vera, Jake, Julie! Help!” he cried.  
But no one heard him.





Suddenly he remembered Julie's words. *Maybe I can call White Pigeon to come to my rescue? But isn't it too late? Will White Pigeon hear me? Would he be willing to help?*

"White Pigeon, help me! Rescue me," he cried in despair.

He heard a rapid flutter of pigeon wings. With a nasty croak, Scary Bird dived down the Bush. Phil felt White Pigeon's gentle lift as he set him on the thin twig. The one that seemed too flabby to crawl along it. Now Phil noticed it was resting firmly on a thick bow of the Bush.



He was saved.

"Thank you, White Pigeon. Please, be my friend and from now on take care of me always."

He did not hear the answer, but he felt a refreshing breeze of wind. The branches of the Bush moved gently, and Phil's heart was filled with Great Joy.

*I will tell it all to Vera, Jake and Julie, he made up his mind. I will tell them White Pigeon saved my life and he is my friend now. And that it is true that Scary Bird is afraid of him.*





*B*ut where are they? Phil was looking for them diligently, still he could find them on any of the twigs he knew. *Where in the world did they disappear?*

“Who are you looking for?” asked Mikey, who had been watching him for some time.

“Do you perhaps know where Vera, Jake and Julie are?” Phil asked him.

“I do. Their cocoon time has come.”

“What?!”

“The cocoon time. Come with me and I’ll show you.”

Mikey took Phil to a part of the Bush he did not yet know. There Phil could see some unusual forms sticking to the Bush’s twigs. They looked sort of... strange. Some of them enveloped in dry leaves, others entwined with blades of grass or threads of cobweb.

“What is this?”

“These are cocoons. A caterpillar has to live in a cocoon a bit before he becomes a butterfly. This is sort of a waiting room,” Mikey explained.

“So Vera, Jake and Julie are there now?”

“Yes, Phil. Everyone in his or her own cocoon.”

“But those cocoons look so unpleasant. Should I be afraid of them?”

“No, you shouldn’t. It’s no use being afraid of a cocoon. It is really very useful. It looks a bit strange, but once you get inside, you don’t mind it at all.”

“Will I be in a cocoon, too?” Phil felt anxious.

“Yes, you will be there, too. But really there is no reason to be afraid,” smiled Mikey, seeing the worried face of his friend.

“Why is this cocoon useful? What unusual things happen inside it?”

“Mysterious Changes take place there. And when the Day of Bursting Cocoons arrives, beautiful Butterflies will fly out of them. White Pigeon will see to it”.

“Will I be the real me?”

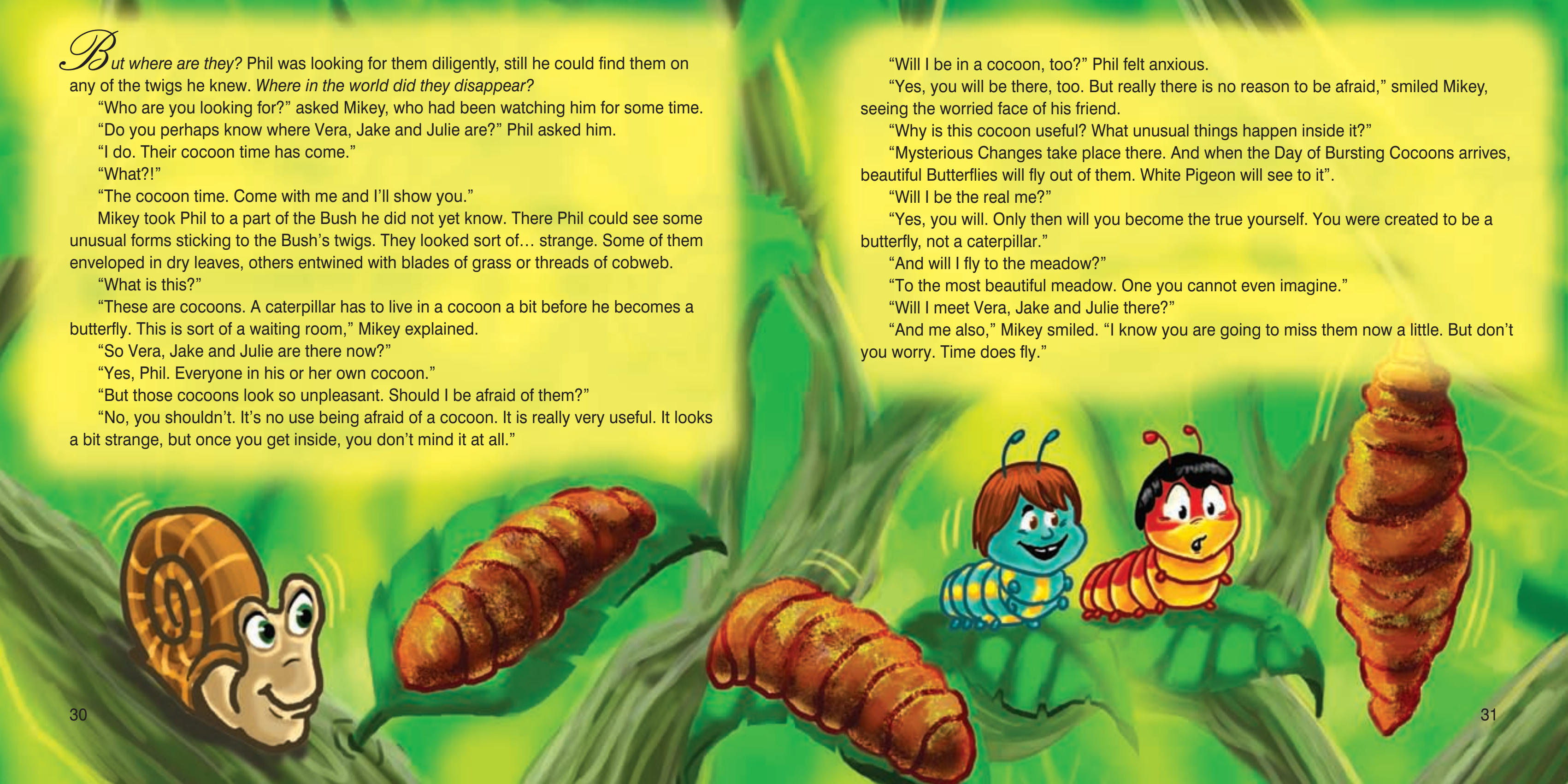
“Yes, you will. Only then will you become the true yourself. You were created to be a butterfly, not a caterpillar.”

“And will I fly to the meadow?”

“To the most beautiful meadow. One you cannot even imagine.”

“Will I meet Vera, Jake and Julie there?”

“And me also,” Mikey smiled. “I know you are going to miss them now a little. But don’t you worry. Time does fly.”





Above a lovely meadow colorful butterflies whirled. Sweet aroma of flowers and herbs filled the air. Vera, Jake, Julie, Phil, Mikey, Nicky, Timmy, Dave, Little One, Vicky, Adam any many others—once caterpillars, now butterflies—with little hearts filled with great joy and delight hovered on gentle breezes of wind. They glittered with colors of the rainbow, folding and unfolding delicate little wings. Sometimes they would sit on petals of flowers and drank the sweet nectar, other times they swang on high ears of grass. They would soar high toward the Sun and then gently descend on the meadow. Among them, protectively circling round, was the shining White Pigeon.

