

The Fly and the Butter

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A little tale I told my daughter when she was small.

Once upon a time there was a fly. He was mostly black and bristly. He had big bulbous eyes and buzzy wings as clear as glass. His name was Flyfly. This was a long time ago, so long ago that the only people in the world were a farmer and his farmerwife. They had one cow between them and the cow said moo when the farmer milked her every morning and evening. Then the farmerwife skimmed the rich cream from the top of the milk to make butter. The butter was sweet and golden yellow and very tasty. It was so tasty that Flyfly smelled it as he was buzzing past the open kitchen window.

“Sniff, sniff,” said Flyfly. “What’s that I smell?” and he buzzed into the kitchen.

There on the table sat a slab of butter and the golden sun was shining on the golden butter and Flyfly couldn’t resist. He landed on that butter and started licking.

“Oh, my goodness,” said Flyfly, licking his chops. “Never have I tasted such deliciousness!” and he licked and licked and licked that soft golden butter sitting warmly in the sunshine.

Flyfly couldn’t stop. He was in heaven. And as he licked the warm butter it flowed into his tummy. It flowed into his legs. It flowed into his wings. And the more it flowed into him the larger he grew. Soon his legs were long and deep golden brown. Soon his body was long and soft golden brown. Soon his wings, his shiny, clear-as-glass wings, turned buttery yellow and shone lovely in the sunlight.

That’s when the farmer came in. He stared in astonishment at the butter and the golden fly sitting upon it. Never had he seen such a fly. Never had he seen such a beautiful fly because never had there ever been such a fly.

Flyfly flitted into the air as light and silent as flower petals floating on a summer’s breeze. He didn’t buzz-buzz or buzz at all. He shimmered in the sunshine as he flew out the window and over the meadows.

The farmer raced outside and called his wife.

"Look, look, my farmerwife!" he shouted. "A butterfly! A butterfly!"

"A butter what?" she asked, amazed at the sight.

"A butterfly," cried the farmer as Flyfly flitted over the dandelions and daisies and away across the meadow.

And that was the first butterfly ever in the whole wide world. And that is what they were called after that, even unto today.