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The Peacock butterflies

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Plain little Miss Butterfly sat on a bush one day, when along came Mr. Peacock, with his tail full spread.

"Oh—oh!" sighed little Miss Butterfly. "How handsome he is! If only I could have a dress like the colors of Mr. Peacock's tail all the other butterflies in the world would envy me.

"But here am I, only a plain little creature, with no color to boast of, while all my cousins have gorgeously colored gowns. Oh, how I do wish he would give me two feathers from his tail that I might have them made into a gown!"

And then this plain little Butterfly, because she was so plain and had no beauty to speak about, began to think about handsome Mr. Peacock. "I wonder if he is vain?" she said out loud.

"Vain! Of course he is. There is no one in the world so vain as he," said a Bee, who was sipping honey near by. Miss Butterfly did not ask any questions, and Mr. Bee was too busy to say more. But when he flew away Miss Butterfly began to think, and the more she thought the stronger became her intention to fly over to the Peacock and speak to him.

Over she went. "Mr. Peacock," she said, "I wonder, have you never have wished to see yourself? You are so handsome."

"I have," replied Mr. Peacock; "I often gaze into the pond and look at my handsome self."

"Oh, that is not at all what I mean," said Miss Butterfly. "Suppose you were to see the very pattern of your beautiful tail flying all about you. Then you could look at your beauty as it really is."

"I do not see at all what you mean," said Mr. Peacock, who was not very quick at thinking.

"I mean if you would give me two tips from your beautiful tail I could have a handsomer gown than any other butterfly in the world," said the little flatterer, "and besides that, you would no longer hear the yellow-and-black and those brown-and-black butterflies say that they were the handsomest creatures in the garden. I should outshine them all."

Mr. Peacock stood up and strutted about, and all the time little Miss Butterfly flew close to him and flattered him.

"Oh, how jealous they would be if I had a dress like your beautiful tail, for there are no colors in the world so gorgeous, and they would call me the Peacock Butterfly! Think of that! You would have the most beautiful butterfly in the world named for you, Mr. Peacock!"

Mr. Peacock could not resist this flattery. He told her she could choose the two tips she best liked and have some one to pull them out. It did not take Miss Butterfly a minute to fly to the tree near by where Mr. Woodpecker was at work and ask his help, for she knew he did not bother butterflies. His work was to find small insects.

Before the end of the summer the garden folk saw Miss Butterfly, but not plain little Butterfly now, for she wore the most gorgeous gown in the garden, of blue and black, and the next year all the other butterflies were jealous of the Peacock Butterflies, who wore the handsomest gowns in the world.

Mr. Peacock struts more than ever every time he sees one of the handsome creatures he helped to dress, but no one knows that it was due to the flattery of plain little Miss Butterfly that the family name was created.



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