

The Butterfly Temple



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In the green heart of the jungle, an old stone temple slept under vines and trees. Every year, when the rains ended, thousands of butterflies came to visit. They covered the temple walls like a living rainbow. Maya, a curious girl with two puffs of curly hair, knew this secret place well. She had watched the butterflies since she was small.



Maya tiptoed along the path, her red sneakers soft on the moss. She wore her mustard-yellow shirt and carried a small woven backpack. Today she brought her best friend, Tom, a tall boy with a backwards blue cap and round glasses. "Shh," Maya whispered. "We must be very quiet. The butterflies are resting." Tom nodded and stepped carefully behind her.



Around the temple, butterflies floated in the air like colorful leaves. Some were bright orange, some blue, some yellow with tiny dots. They rested on the old stones, opening and closing their wings. Maya smiled her gap-toothed smile. "They come here every year," she said. "The temple is their safe place." Tom looked around with wide eyes. "It's like a butterfly temple!"



Suddenly, they heard voices. Two grown-ups came down the path. One was Dr. Lena, a researcher with a short bun of grey-streaked hair and a camera around her neck. The other was Professor Arjuna, an old historian with a white moustache and a straw hat. "We want to study this temple," said Dr. Lena. "But we didn't expect so many butterflies!"



Professor Arjuna leaned on his walking stick. "This temple is very old," he said. "I want to learn its secrets." He took a step forward, and a cloud of butterflies flew up in a flutter of wings. Maya gasped. "Please stop!" she said. "You're scaring them. They need to rest." The professor froze. "Oh dear," he said. "I didn't mean to."



Maya stepped forward bravely. "We can show you how to look without scaring them," she said. "You have to move slowly and quietly. Like this." She walked with soft, slow steps, and the butterflies stayed calm. Dr. Lena watched closely. "You're right," she said. "We should listen to you. Can you teach us?" Maya nodded, and Tom gave a wide grin.



Tom had an idea. "We can build a quiet path," he said. "With soft leaves and signs that say 'Please be still.'" Dr. Lena clapped her hands. "What a good plan!" she said. "We can work together." Professor Arjuna smiled. "I have some paper and string in my bag. Let's make signs." The children and researchers began to gather leaves and twigs.



They worked as a team. Maya placed leaves along the path to make it soft. Tom wrote signs with big letters: "Quiet, please—butterflies resting." Dr. Lena took photos from far away with her camera. Professor Arjuna sat on a stone and watched the butterflies with wonder. "I've never seen anything like this," he whispered. "I almost ruined it by rushing."



All afternoon, they worked carefully. The butterflies fluttered around them, landing on their shoulders and hats. One even sat on Tom's glasses! He laughed softly. "They like us now," he said. Dr. Lena showed Maya how to count butterflies without getting too close. "You're a natural scientist," she told Maya. Maya felt proud and happy.



As the sun began to set, the butterflies settled down to rest. The temple grew quiet and peaceful. Professor Arjuna looked at the old stones and the sleeping butterflies. "History and wildlife can be protected together," he said softly. "I see that now. We don't have to choose." Dr. Lena nodded. "Thanks to you two," she said to the children.



The next day, more researchers arrived. Maya and Tom taught them the quiet way. They showed how to walk softly and speak in whispers. Everyone worked together to keep the temple safe and calm. The butterflies rested peacefully, their wings glowing in the dappled light. The children felt proud of what they had done.



Professor Arjuna and Dr. Lena made a plan. They put up more signs and a small rope fence to keep visitors on the quiet path. They wrote a rule: "Look with your eyes, not with your hands." Tom added a drawing of a butterfly. "This temple is for everyone," said Maya. "For the butterflies and for people who want to learn."



The researchers thanked the children. "You taught us to be patient and gentle," said Dr. Lena. "We will study the temple without disturbing the butterflies." Professor Arjuna gave Maya a small notebook. "Write down what you see," he said. "You are a protector of this place." Maya hugged the notebook. Tom grinned and adjusted his cap.



That evening, Maya and Tom sat on a rock and watched the butterflies. "We did something good," said Tom. "We protected the temple and the butterflies." Maya nodded. "When we protect nature and old places together, everyone wins," she said. The butterflies danced around them like a colorful celebration. The temple stood strong and quiet, a home for history and wildlife.



Word spread through the village. People came to see the butterfly temple, but they walked softly and spoke in whispers. Maya and Tom became known as the butterfly guardians. They showed other children how to protect the temple. "It's easy," Maya said. "Just be kind and quiet." The butterflies returned every year, and the temple stayed safe.



And so, the butterfly temple remained a special place where the past and the present lived together in peace. Maya and Tom knew that teamwork and care could protect the things we love. They told everyone they met: "When we protect nature and old places together, everyone wins." And the butterflies, resting on the ancient stones, seemed to agree.