

Ch 1 Curiosity Killed Hunger

“Get a grip, Archy! Ya know the drill!” Chuckling at her silly pun, Archy gripped the wall as tightly as she could and counted, “Three, Two —” *RRRIINNNG!* Her skinny legs trembled as she held onto the painted blue wall for dear life. What seemed to be a never-ending, quaking ring, Archy’s delicate wings quivered with every vibrating sensation felt on her back. “Oh hur-rrr-rrr-rry uh uh uppp alre-eee-eea-ddd-ddy!” The bouncing made her lips quiver. “SSST-OOO-PPP PL-EEE-ZZZ!”

The school bell suddenly stopped, and she quickly caught herself from falling off the wall. Calmness and relief slowly embraced her tiny, prickly body. She picked up her hairy hind legs, one at a time, rubbing them to relieve the tension; sighs gradually leaked from her tracheal tubes. Her long-veined, transparent left wing tickled its neighboring, underdeveloped right wing to finish the delicious stretch.

Archy typically made her rounds on a yellow-flowered bush near the front of the school, but a bright, fuchsia-colored beauty caught her eye this time. “Well, well. What do we have here?” She rubbed her front, sticky feet with delight and headed toward the colorful Girard’s Fuchsia Azalea. *Ki*¹ displayed vibrant flower clusters shaped like small, petaled cones. Of course, it was no surprise that this shrub caught Archy’s attention. Her favorite nectar usually fancied the colors red and pink.

Aiming for these luscious-looking flowers, she flew down too fast. Instead of landing on one of those scrumptious clusters, she buzzed right past the shrub into a small crack above an open classroom window. Archy tried to change the pace of her wings to slow down her momentum, but she knew the inevitable would happen. She stretched her four back legs, two on each side, while her front sticky feet covered her bulging eyes. “This is it!” she screeched. “I’m going to die! Too young, man! I’m way too young!” Archy’s pearly white face forcefully met a child’s light, cream-colored sweater, which was swung around behind the desk chair. Archy’s speed shifted down a gear, allowing her to land clumsily but gently on her feet. She spat out the fibers from her tiny mouth, fluttered to the classroom’s wall, and, upon inspecting her face for cuts or bumps, she squealed with relief, “Oh, sweet nectar! My gorgeous face is in one piece!” Until...the bell rang.

Archy rubbed and straightened out her short and stubby antennae, decorating the center of her forehead. She quickly shifted her focus on her ocelli, a triangle shape consisting of three simple eyes

¹ *Ki*/*Kin* (singular/plural) are the pronouns of the natural world