



# The Coming-Out Party of Betty Butterfly



**O**H, HUM! it seems pretty quiet around here this morning," exclaimed Johnny Funny-Bunny, placing one of his fuzzy little paws over his mouth to suppress a yawn. "There's absolutely nothing stirring."

Then he slowly shifted his position into the shade of a friendly apple tree inside the garden and prepared to settle down for another nap. And very quiet it was; for, look as far as he could, there wasn't the sign of any living creature—nothing except a

broad expanse of nodding young leaves where the garden patch ran in long, straight rows to a distant farmhouse; for, as sometimes happens in mid-June, the day had grown very warm and all Nature seemed to be bent on a noonday nap.

The rays of the sun made the roof of the little farmhouse in the distance sparkle like silver and reflected themselves on the broad leaves of the vegetable plants in the garden. Even the playful June breezes had taken themselves away, and the tall slender grasses beside the winding stone wall gave no movement, while above in the sky the fleecy white clouds hung motionless.

The murmur of the insects was hushed in the drowse of noonday, and all the great world seemed asleep—all but little Johnny Funny-Bunny, and he, too, was commencing to nod again, when suddenly right over the top of a mullein leaf appeared a funny little black head surmounted by two large feelers, and there stepped into view a portly little bug with a shiny black shell who was puffing very hard and mopping his brow with a huge bandanna handkerchief.

"Whew! This is hot work," said he. "Hunting one's relations is not easy in this weather."

**JOHNNY FUNNY-BUNNY**, partially hidden by foliage, sat right up and stared very hard, while the little bug, unconscious of another's presence, commenced to look this way and that way as he busily examined the leaves about him. He turned them over and poked them aside with his walking stick. He examined their stalks and even unrolled their curled-up ends as he peered about.

Johnny's eyes were commencing to open very wide and he stared very hard as he said to himself: "Well, now, if it isn't little Mr. June Bug! I'll just sit quiet and see what's up."

For a very long time he sat and watched the little bug go looking about from one leaf to another, until finally he drew very close to Johnny and, seating himself on a swaying stalk, drew out a tiny book and buried his face in its pages.

Johnny craned his neck, first one way and then another, until finally he was able to see the name of the book; and what do you suppose it was? It was called *Your Family and How to Know It*.

Johnny became more curious than ever. "That's certainly a very queer proceeding for such a warm day," he mumbled. "Now I just wonder what that li'l rascal is hunting for all by himself. I'm just going to bob out and ask him."

Poking his funny pink ears over the grass tops, Johnny called as politely as possible: "Top-o-the-morning, Mr. June Bug; what brings you to this part of town?"

Li'l Mr. June Bug was so startled and jumped so high that he nearly fell off the leaf; but seeing that it was only Johnny, he replied very shortly indeed: "Morning, Johnny Funny-Bunny; you should be careful how you frighten folks. Why, I might have fallen and sprained a wing."

"I'm very sorry," replied Johnny meekly, "and



I apologize, sir; but I noticed that you seemed to be looking for something."

"Is that so?" retorted the June Bug. "I 'spect someone must have been spying on me."

"No-o-o, I wasn't spying," said Johnny; "only your actions were very peculiar and curious."

"Well, I guess they weren't any more curious than you are right now," replied Mr. June Bug.

"Oh, well; of course, if it's a secret," said Johnny, "I won't —"

"No secret at all," the bug broke in. "If you really want to know—I'm looking for a relative of mine on one of these lettuce leaves, and I'm using this book as a guide."

"A relative?" questioned Johnny, jumping right off his feet. "Aren't your relations large enough to be seen without your having to look so closely for them?"

"Can't see 'em at all," rejoined Mr. June Bug. "For they're tucked away in little houses called cocoons attached to leaves and twigs."

"Well, well! Isn't that curious!" exclaimed Johnny, his eyes popping almost out of his head. "All the coons I know live in hollow trees."

"Shucks! I don't mean that kind," explained Mr. Bug. "I mean the kind that lives in a little cell made of floss with a living creature inside."

"Oh, that's it!" said Johnny. "Your relative is locked up and not allowed to come out."

"Locked up nothing, young man!" replied Li'l Mr. June Bug, eying Johnny very hard. "It's their natural house until they get ready for their coming out."

"Huh! They must be pretty homely, living that way."

"Homely! Did I understand you to say homely?" exploded Mr. June Bug, greatly upset. "I wish you to understand that these relations of mine are the handsomest folks in all the Great Wide World."

"Cepting me," added Johnny.

**"EXCEPTING nobody!"** shouted Li'l Mr. June Bug, losing his temper again. "Now you just listen." And he seated himself on a near-by leaf and opened his book and commenced to read in a shrill little voice:

We now come to the most beautiful of all insects, whose colors range from the most dingy to the brightest hues in the rainbow. This creature passes through four stages—the egg, the caterpillar, the cocoon and, finally, the butterfly. When the butterfly is ready to come out, the cocoon, made of silk fiber, splits, and the insect inside works itself to the open air.

"Whew! How curious," said Johnny as Mr. June Bug finished reading. "I'm just going to help you hunt. I want to see these relations of yours."

"Good," replied Mr. Bug. "We'll start right in."

Together they went from one clump of leaves to

another and examined each closely until Johnny with a shout announced: "Hurrah! I've found one. Here it is."

And he pointed to a tiny gray object on the underside of a leaf.

"Not yet," answered Mr. June Bug after he had given it a close inspection. "But unless you studied hard you could barely know the difference. That's only a moth."

"Moth?" queried Johnny. "Do you mean one of those pesky fellows who eat holes in my best Sunday clothes?"

"No, I mean the kind of a moth that is so close to a butterfly that you can hardly tell them apart; the kind whose cocoon is made of the finest silk."

"Oh! So your relative is a butterfly," questioned Johnny, guessing the secret at last.

"You have it," said Mr. June Bug. "Of course she is a very distant relative, if a relative at all. But I claim her, anyway, because she is so very beautiful. Please excuse me, for if I can believe my eyes, I see a butterfly cocoon now." And Mr. June Bug hurried right over to a tree stump and pointed excitedly to a tiny cocoon.

"Yes, I'm right. It's one at last," he shouted, turning somersaults with joy. "We'll just bend back a few of these twigs and let the sun in. Now all we have to do is simply to keep watch and be on hand to receive her when she comes out."

"Why not hold a grand coming-out party?" suggested Johnny. "I'll bring my entire family and invite all the other little forest folk and ask all the flowers and birds too."

"And also the Buglets," added Mr. June Bug slyly.

For the whole week following, Johnny and Mr. Bug met daily beside the little cocoon, until one day Mr. June Bug said that he was sure his relative was about to step forth. And then what a commotion there was! For Johnny scampered about with the invitations for all, while Mrs. Funny-Bunny and all the little Bunnies prepared the finest of feasts.

**THE** little folks came from far and near; and my, how their eyes opened in astonishment when that little cocoon cracked right open and out stepped a gorgeous creature, who smiled and curtsied!

"I'm little Betty Butterfly," she said. All the little flowers smiled in return, while funny Mr. Jack-in-the-Pulpit made a grand speech of welcome.

When the presentations were over, the famous Beetle-String Orchestra took their places on the top of a mossy stump. They were assisted by the Trumpet Vines and the chiming of the Bluebells, while Johnny Funny-Bunny danced with every blossom present.

Old Mr. Possum escorted Black-Eyed Susan to the refreshment table, where he remained during the entire party. The gallant Swallow-Tailed Butterflies balanced and swung their partners, while the little Tumble Bugs looked in awe at the ferocious Tiger Lilies. Snap Dragons snapped, and the Pitcher Plants treated all to cooling drinks of Honey Dew.

Daisies and Buttercups vied with each other as they tried to dance slow enough for Ol' Mr. Turtle, and Mr. Meadow Mouse got right up again when he tried to sit down on a little thistle. As for Mr. Squirrel, he was so tickled he stepped on the tail of little Mr. Woodchuck. Willy Porcupine found a good friend in Miss Wild Rose; their thorns were so much alike, said she. And as for Mr. June Bug, he danced every dance with Betty Butterfly, and only stopped when the sun sank below the distant hills and called an end to the coming-out party of Betty Butterfly.



If you wish to see Betty Butterfly and the guests at her party, print the color pictures on cardstock. Or print out the pictures on regular paper and mount the cut-outs on some lightweight cardboard using paste or glue. Cut carefully around the tabs at the dotted lines and bend them back so the pictures will stand upright. Line up the pictures as shown above.