

The ant almost protested but realized he had to trust his friend. He nodded and carefully climbed onto the bird's foot.

"How are you going to convince her to set me free?" the caterpillar asked.

"You must trust me as well," the ant responded, with a smile.

They were getting closer and closer to the cliff, where it seemed Ms. Corvid had decided was a fine place to make a meal of the caterpillar. The ant knew he was running out of time. He climbed up the bird's back and made his way to her head, holding on tight as his little body blew this way and that by the strong winds. Finally, he climbed right onto her black beak, squarely between her eyes.

She gasped. "Just who do you think you are, climbing onto me?"

The ant answered boldly. "I am a fire ant, and if you don't let my friend free, I will bite you right between the eyes."

Ms. Corvid laughed, her beak rattling with glee. "If you bite me, I will tumble from the sky, and what will you do then, you frightened little speck?"

The ant clacked his pinchers and replied, "Well, it's just as you told me, Ms. Corvid. I'll sting and pinch the whole way down."

And with that, the ant bit the bird right between her eyes. She howled and shook her head, throwing ant into the sky as she dropped the caterpillar from her clutches.

They tumbled back down toward the glade. For the first time, the ant saw the beauty of a brave view such as his. He regretted little, only that he hadn't lived a courageous life and allowed his friend to do the same.

Just as he was about to smash into the ground below, something caught him and lifted him back up into the sky. But it wasn't the hungry bird who'd caught the little ant; it was his best friend, the caterpillar, who now had great big, beautiful wings, their many colors shining brightly in the sun.

The caterpillar set the ant down in a thicket of grass and they hugged tightly with all their little legs. Then they stepped back and each took a long look at the other. The caterpillar was tall now, lanky like a string bean, but with that same sweet, puffy face. And now he had enormous wings on either side of him. The ant was standing upright, four hands on his hips, his chest puffed out boldly, exhilarated by all the adventure. He smiled at the caterpillar and said, "You look so wonderfully different."

The caterpillar looked back at the ant, and with a proud smile replied, "And so do you, my brave friend. So do you."