

The Scruffiest Angel tm

Once upon a time but not too far away, possibly closer than you would have expected, there lived an angel.

Some people say angels live on clouds, some say they don't. This one did!

One day, she was skipping through the clouds, playing hide and seek with her friend White Bird, when a sound like the sighing of the wind in the tree-tops floated by.

"Cherub. Cherub." She looked up in delight to hear her name whispered by her Guardian "Don't go too far." She smiled while straightening Cherub's halo and absent-mindedly healing the larger holes in her angelic robe.

"The clouds get thin over there and you might fall through." She looked despairingly at her little charge, knowing how forgetful she could be, especially when she got lost in an exciting game with her friend.

"I have told you before what happens if you fall down to earth especially as you have forgotten to preen your wings again." She lovingly straightened out the feathers.

"You will tumble down and in that falling you will forget yourself. Who you are and where you have come from will be like a dream that flickers in and out of your memory. Now don't forget little one." and with that the Guardian faded away melting in the sunlight.

Cherub waved and danced off to continue her game. It was her turn to hide and there was a particularly interesting patch of cloud up ahead. It seemed to tower over her and split into two like some colossal gateway. A rainbow appeared stretching between like a great bridge, she'd been around long enough to know this was a sign, but not long enough to know what it was a sign of, and as we learn, signs from the heavens invariably carry an interesting price tag if not a misleading one in the endless cosmic comedy. The end result is usually that we grow a little, any excuse for a spending spree! But I digress.

Cherub flew under the bridge and into an especially fluffy cloud and snuggled down, just as White Bird flew past. Deeper and deeper she burrowed, then suddenly she was out of the other side tumbling down and down and round and round. Fortunately her recently darned robe served as a kind of parachute, which cushioned her fall.

At last she landed with a bump on a rather soft, smelly heap of rotting grass from which she rolled over and over until she was brought to a halt by the stem of a flower. "Oh dear and possibly oops." she said and promptly fell asleep.

After a while the sun's warm fingers tickled her awake. She sat up and looked around wondering not only where she was but what had happened. A tapping noise drew her attention away from her plight and she looked up. Close to the top of her head hung a round ball from which emanated the sound.

She stood on her tiptoes and reached up to touch it. Suddenly a crack appeared and a muffled voice whispered "HMMMMMP mmmmmm. HMMMMMP mmmmmm."

"Who are you? What are you saying, I can't understand you"

Hmmmmmp mmmm” cried the voice even more frantically, and an eye peered out of the widening hole.

“You are stuck, aren’t you?” she said as she put her fingers into the crack and started to break bits off. At last there was enough space and out crawled a rather bedraggled creature who fell to the floor and lay there puffing.

“Thank-you,” he said “Thank you very much, I thought I would never get out.”

He grinned a lopsided sort of grin and said, “I really thought that I would never get out, that cocoon was so hard. And with that, he promptly closed his eyes and fell asleep in the sunshine.

Fascinated by the spectacle of the wings drying in the sun and amused by the extraordinary sound of such loud snores emanating from such a tiny creature, she reached out and gently touched a wing.

He sat up with a start and looked around, rubbing his eyes.

“Hello” said Cherub” It’s only me, don’t be frightened”

“I’m not frightened, you just made me jump. “he said” Thank you for helping me out my mother must have been eating some very unusual things for it to have been quite so hard, mind you our family has bit of a reputation for being well able to look after ourselves. Look at my boots!” he was wearing some very well hard boots made obviously from the same ‘stuff as the cocoon.

“I am glad you’re free anyway. What’s your name?”

“My name is Ulos so, what are u called?”

“I can’t remember, I think I had a fall and I must have banged my head. What are those beautiful things?” She asked pointing to his wings.

“They are my wings silly, you’ve got some too, when they dry we’ll be able to fly together.” he said.

Cherub looked in surprise at her own wings and a great smile of delight illuminated her face.” Ah yes, I’m beginning to remember now. My name is Cherub and I am an angel and I can fly.”

As she spoke the words she spread her lovely wings pirouetted with an ecstatic smile on her face. Laughing with delight she landed next to him. “And I’ve found a friend as well. “She flung her arms around him with such enthusiasm that she nearly crushed his newly dried wings.

He disentangled himself, slightly embarrassed at the unexpected hug, and quickly regained his composure. “Just a few more minutes and I’ll be ready to go. “He began to fan his wings gently in the sunlight to finally dry them out properly. “What’s an angel anyway?” he asked, “I can’t remember really, but I think it’s got something to do with messages.”

Have you got one for me then?” he asked wiggling his two antennae as if to check out the truth in the wind.

“Oh dear, I feel sure I must have but I can’t remember just now. “She sank down and started to cry.

“Don’t cry,” he said putting his lovely wings around her shoulder. He flapped his wings turned a somersault and landed on top of her head. She began to laugh and they both laughed until their sides hurt. They had found a friend.

FOOD

“What are you doing with that leaf?” asked Cherub.

“I am eating it, what do you think I’m doing silly?” replied Ulos.

“What’s eating?” asked Cherub.

Ulos looked at her as if she were mad. “You eat, I eat, everyone eats so we can stay alive.”

“I don’t eat. Sunshine keeps me alive and gives me energy, it soaks through me and makes me feel all tingly.”

“Goodness me, isn’t that strange, it’s a bit like plants really. In a way that is all we are doing, flowers are a little like refined sunshine,” said Ulos. They both started to giggle, flower factories, sunshine petals of different colours and flavours. Ulos looked at her and said, “Are you sure that’s good for you, you look a little thin and your dress is hanging off you.”

“I’ve not been feeling quite myself lately. Perhaps it’s not the right thing for me to do here. Perhaps I should try your way.” And so she stretched up to petal. It felt soft and velvety and smelt quite delicious. She nibbled a corner.

“Mmmmmmm...” she said pulling a very funny face. “That feels really strange.” She sat down with a bump as the cocktail of taste and fragrance combined to explode like fireworks in her mind. She was lost in her inner world where elusive memories and longings mingled together in a rainbow soup and forgotten whisperings wrapped themselves around her like a blanket. Such a mixture of feelings quite naturally began to ooze out of her eyes in great teardrops.

“Whatever is the matter?” asked Ulos. He reached a wing over to comfort her.

“I don’t know,” she sobbed, “what’s this water coming from my eyes? Oh no I don’t know what is happening to me” and she started to sob inconsolably, for what she didn’t know.

Ulos rested his wing lightly on her shoulders and started to stroke her gently. Finally she stopped crying and lent against him glad of his quiet presence.

“I’m so happy and sad all at the same time, is that what food does to you?”

“Not as a rule” he smiled, thinking of stories that he had heard after some of his friends had nibbled a mushroom once. “I know some creatures who live to eat and spend all their time discussing in great and tedious detail the different tastes and textures of this flower as compared with that one. And how if you pick this herb at a certain time of the moon and take it with that petal it tastes like the nectar of the gods. As for me I really can’t get that excited about food. There’s too many adventures to have, meeting with other creatures or just simply watching the clouds go by. I just nibble whatever I’m passing when the fancy takes me’

Cherub looked at him, her eyes huge with questions.

“You seem to have had an experience with food that I cannot understand. “He went on” Now I come to think about it I seem to remember a story about some butterflies who ate a flower that made them think they were gigantic and they flew so high that the hawks who hadn’t got the same perception of the world, a rather over inflated though brief on, delighted at the unexpected feast. I wonder if the hawks had that same delusion after they had eaten the butterflies. I’m rambling”

“Excuse me” said Cherub, politely bringing him back from his comic conundrums

“coming back to the subject of food, I feel ready to try something else now if you will stay with me that is.” So wing in wing they fluttered off trying first this and then that, each colour tasted different and made its own unique pattern in her head.

anymore. Even an angel can get used to paradise. But with each mouthful her forgetting became more and more, though she became a little less thin, but not at all fat. And for a time she and her friend played in the sunshine.

Knowledge or 'g'nowing'?

One day Cherub and Ulos were snoring gently and harmoniously together under a butterfly tree. It was a lovely tree with a wealth of purple blooms hanging down almost to the soil. It was a great meeting place for many other butterfly friends. They were wakened by the sound of a distressed bee, a hiccupping buzz is such a distinctive sound that they both sat up together and said, "Whatever is that strange noise?"

A round ball of yellow and black hovered close to her face.

"What are you?" asked Cherub.

"It's a bee," said Ulos "I told you about bees and flowers and things. Remember?"

He nodded to her encouraging her.

"I'm a bee, a sad bee," gasped the Bee. "What are you?"

"I'm an angel" she replied.

"Never heard of an angel, what kind of animal is that, you look like a human and a butterfly mixed together"

"I suppose that's about right. I carry message and things"

"Have you got one for me then?" asked Bee.

This inevitable response caused her to decide in a moment that she would no longer explain what her purpose was until her memory returned a little better. "Sometimes when I play with people for a while I remember. "She explained to bee.

"That's O.K.," said Bee "will you play with me, I can show you both some good places for nectar."

Ulos, who had been silent for a while, hoping for this outcome for it was well known in the butterfly kingdom that bees had a connoisseur's nose for top quality nectar. So they played together and very soon became firm friends, and had many adventures.

One day their play led them deeper into the forest to an area they had not been to before.

"I think we might be lost. " said Bee "I don't recognise any smells, my mother warned me about parts of the woods where strange and dangerous creatures live and I can hear a funny noise."

The three friends looked at each other. They all felt a little bit scared but they knew they were all-together and would help each other through any danger.

As they came to the edge of the woods the noise became louder and louder. An extraordinary sight met their eyes, many, many many small human beings running round and round making a most terrible din. The three hid behind a tree, peeping out now and again to try and make some sense of what they were seeing.

"Why are those little people running round, and so many all together?" asked Ulos, not really expecting a reply.

"Look " said Bee, There are some who look exactly like you Cherub and their wings seem to be rather thin and transparent. I wonder if that is why they aren't flying"

Cherub was speechless.

“Ahemmmmm. Ahummmmm.”

The three friends looked at each other to see who had made the sound. “Hello I branch close by. They looked down and saw another bee, not much older than Bee, but somehow different. Its head was broader and heavier somehow, as if it stood up it would over balance and fall flat on its face.

It took something out of its mouth that it had been puffing and lay the book that it had been reading on the floor. The three were so surprised at this sight that they began to giggle and whenever they laughed they forgot themselves and started to float up.

“You can come down here at once” boomed a very strict voice. “NOW” the three, amazed to be spoken to like this, alighted close by.

Before they could gather their individual or collective wits the voice spoke again.

“You there, you’re a bee too, you should know better.”

“Know better about what?” asked Bee.

“I couldn’t help but overhear your conversation just now., “ he replied in a rather conspiratorial way. “I can see that you are a nice enough chap. It’s plain to see that you haven’t deliberately set out to do anything wrong. You just don’t realise what you’re doing. “ He beckoned Bee over and picked up the book. “Let me explain”

It is obvious that the others weren’t invited to partake of this knowledge. So they stood together waiting for their friend to return.

The book was closely written in very fine print. Professor, Sir Bee, for that is whom it turned out to be, was pointing at very complicated diagrams and statistics and telling Bee in words of many syllables the facts of the matter.

“And so you now understand,” concluded Prof.” It is here in black and white measured, tested and weighed repeatedly by the most learned men. “He patted Bee on the wing. “Now, now, I know how you feel; it’s not that long since I was ignorant like you. It takes a while to adjust, but then like those children things begin to fade, “ as he spoke he stroked bees wings. “ There’s so much more to the world than flying about collecting nectar and playing with friends in the sunshine. That kind of exploration and adventure is not for us. Being happy, enjoying life is simply a distraction from the serious matters that we theorists like to come up with.”

Bee looked shocked as he turned to walk back to his friends, his face was filled with despair and his wings trailed by his side.

“Whatever is the matter with you?” cried Cherub and Ulos together.

Bee just sat down and wept and wept. Cherub was horrified.” Water is coming from your eyes like it did with me, what is it?”

The two friends sat and hugged bee, holding him until all his tears had dried.

Ulos said to Cherub,” It’s called crying and the water is tears. It happens on Earth when we feel anything very strongly and it helps us to feel better. Some beings can’t cry and their feelings stay inside and freeze like ice making them cold inside and sometimes great volcanoes of frozen ice burst out of them like glacial fire. People around as well as themselves can get very badly hurt when that happens.”

At least Bee’s sobs had calmed down and he was able to speak and share his grievous news with his two friends. “I can’t fly and it’s just too awful to think about. “ and he started to sob again.

“Have you hurt your wings, you were flying perfectly well a few minutes ago. Has that bee hit you?” asked Ulos hovering with the mere thought that someone would try and harm his friend and twitching his well hard boots.

“No, no it’s nothing like that at all. My wings are too small for me to fly, in order to lift a body shape like mine from the ground my wings would have to be much bigger, and hang from a different part of my body all together. I can’t fly, apparently it is a scientific fact and therefore must be true!” “ And he immediately started to weep again. Cherub and Ulos looked at each other in dismay, their friend had quite plainly gone completely out of his mind. They flew straight over to the strange looking bee. “What have you been saying to our friend to upset him so.?”

The bee took off his spectacles and smiled gently,” I’m sorry if I was a bit rough on your friend but sometimes it’s the best way. Come and let me explain to you for I am afraid it might be relevant in your case too.”

He seemed very reasonable and kindly so they sat down on either side of him. He opened the book, showing them graphs, diagrams and proof after proof after proof. So impressive and learned were the papers that for a moment they began to believe him. “You see all those children playing in that building, that is called a school and it was there I first learned about science. I’ll measure your wings if you like. “ And so did.” As I feared butterflies can just about fly but angels most definitely cannot. I am very sorry to disappoint you”

There was one hope, he explained if he could get anyone to get back to listen to him. He was working on a small bee size plane, which could probably be adapted for angels. He droned quietly on with his invention plans for a while and then became engrossed in his books.

Cherub and Ulos were both astonished and appalled, they turned away to find Bee standing sadly behind them. “ I told you,” he said quietly, and the three of them wandered back into the woods. Sadness hung so heavily that they could barely lift their heads never mind their wings.

They curled up closely that night and cried themselves to sleep. No more playing hide and seek amongst the flowers. No more floating on warm breaths of wind, it was hardly to be born. And so many sad days passed and after a little while even the memory of flying began to fade.

But magic never dies its reality waits quietly and patiently until the time is right to remember again. And so the time came and the three friends curled sadly together and fell asleep. The next day Ulos woke first and stretched his wings, it was almost as if the terrible news of the previous day had been nothing but a bad dream.

The soft breeze made by his wings touched Cherub’s face and woke her up, as she opened her eyes she became aware of the sound of Bee’s snoring then the clouds drifting by in the blue sky. One cloud stretched out across the sky like the wing of a great white bird, by a trick of the light, a rainbow spread across the sky and it seemed to light up somewhere deep inside Cherub. Once again she heard the sigh of the wind whispering her name—a song whose words she had forgotten whilst only the tune remained humming deep inside her mind. It was as if a weight had lifted from her mind and a feeling of peace descended upon her. She began to float higher and higher no longer aware of her surroundings. Lost in her inner world gently spiralling higher up and deeper in. White bird was waiting and her guardians sweet voice whispered “ not time yet dear child, there’s work to be done. Remind them they can fly too.”

Her eyes opened and she looked down to see her friends, little specks far below. They smiled at her as she drifted slowly down.

“I can fly and so can you my lovely Bee. “She held him in her arms and spread her wings and she flew with him up past the trees until she felt the wind under his wings.

“Now dear old friends forget what you think and remember your great and wonderful; Self.” and without further ado she held out her hands and let him go. ‘I can fly. I can fly, Wheeeeeeeee.’ And once again the three friends laughed and danced in delight. As for the Prof, when he occasionally looked up from his books he And when the wind whispered “ Take off your spectacles and let yourself seeeeeeee”he just rubbed his ears and the statistics and facts that rattled constantly round the top of his head deafened him to those secret messages, and he took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes”Ah well” he said and went back to his books.

