

## Ernesto the Caterpillar and Molly

By Amberlight

"I refuse to eat any more Mullberry leaves!" Ernesto the Caterpillar said defiantly. Perched high in the canopy his stomach felt close to exploding. "Perhaps you need to talk to Molly about that," chirped Squirrel who peaked over a branch catching Ernesto's gripe. "Who's Molly?" Ernesto said masticating on another leaf. "Molly is the wisest of all creatures," said Squirrel. "She understands all things, even why you eat Mulberry leaves." Earnesto swallowed hard, it would be a relief to know why he felt a terrible urge to eat leaves for hours every day. "How do I find her?" Squirrel let out a squeak and said, "I'll send word for her to seek you out." And with that, Squirrel disappeared, scampering quickly down the trunk of the tree.

Hours passed and Ernesto was certain that something terrible had happened, why hadn't Molly come? It was getting dark and after waiting until the lights twinkled brightly in the sky Ernesto found himself unable to stay awake and fell into deep slumber.

"Ernesto, wake up," a female soothing voice called. Ernesto stirred to find a huge Barn Owl staring down at him. "Are, are you Molly?" Earnesto said feeling suddenly small and a bit frightened. Molly shook her magnificent head, her black round eyes peered deep into him. "I am, and I know the reason why you have called upon me." Earnesto wasn't sure what to say next, the great Barn Owl's feathers shimmered in the dull light, her face expressionless and alert. "I can answer your question, but first you must do something for me."

Earnesto wasn't about to refuse and fought off the trembling he sensed within him. "Yes, I will do as you say." Molly at last appeared pleased, then opened her beak and made a noise Ernesto never wanted to hear again. Out of her gutt a grey fuzzy peanut shaped object appeared. "This is a hork pellet," Molly explained. "The next time you see Squirrel I want you to drop this on his head." Earnesto was so stunned at the object that he almost didn't hear the command of Molly. "Drop this on Squirrel's head?" Ernesto said confused. "Yes," Molly replied, "Once you have done this task, I will answer your question." Earnesto shook his head in compliance and studied the pellet after Molly flew away. It was filled with the bones of many small creatures – it gave Ernesto a terrible chill.

The next day Ernesto found Squirrel quickly bobbing from branch to branch. When he was within range, Ernesto dropped the hork pellet on his head. Squirrel let out a terrible cry and ran off. Ernesto hoped Squirrel wasn't badly hurt.

Squirrel found Molly at her nesting sight and yelled, "Look at my head! You are responsible for his bump, why did you drop a pellet on me?" Molly sighed, "That was for letting creatures ask me stupid questions." With that, Molly flew away leaving Squirrel to rub his sore head.

Meanwhile, Ernesto was stuffing his guts with more Mullberry leaves when he suddenly realized he was not alone. "I have come to answer your question," Molly said. "Soon you will spin a cocoon and transform into a butterfly, which is why you need to eat the leaves now. "

"Oh no," Ernesto said, "That seems terribly scary!" Molly seemed unconcerned, "You cannot stop your fate, that is what your kind must do to live, just as it is Squirrel's fate to annoy me." Molly then flew off without another word spoken.

Ernesto ate and ate, and eventually he spun his web and over time emerged a beautiful butterfly. As he flew around one day he heard Squirrel make a terrible squeak – some creature had dropped a hork pellet on his head.

The end.