

## Costume Change

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It was a beautiful, summer day.
Ricky Raccoon was watering his
flower garden. He loved his flowers.
"They're all so pretty," he said happily
to himself.

Suddenly he saw something that made him gasp. A leaf on one of his flowers had tiny bites taken out of it! He looked at another leaf. More bite marks! "Hey!" Ricky exclaimed. "Someone's been eating my flowers!"

"Gosh, someone sure was hungry,"
Ricky said. Then he saw something
moving near another leaf. "And
now I know who that someone is!"
he exclaimed. A beautiful striped
caterpillar was munching away on the
leaf. Ricky watched in amazement as
the leaf became smaller and smaller
right before his eyes. He was so busy
watching that he didn't hear his
friends come up behind him.





"What are you doing, Ricky?" asked Flora Skunk. Ricky jumped in surprise. Then he turned to see Flora, Bizzie Beaver, and Mitzi Mink.

"Hi, guys," he said. "Meet my new little friend. My hungry little friend, that is!" He pointed to the caterpillar.

"Oh, he's so pretty!" Mitzi said.

"He sure is," agreed Bizzie. "But, Ricky, he's eating up your flowers!"

"I know," said Ricky. "But I don't mind. The little fellow has to eat, after all."

As the caterpillar ate, Ricky said, "I think I'll name him Munchie because he eats so much."

Ricky and his pals watched as Munchie gobbled up a leaf. Then suddenly Flora asked, "Hey, have any of you figured out what to be for the costume party?"

"I'm still deciding," said Mitzi.

"Me, too," said Flora. "What about you, Ricky?"

Ricky was watching Munchie. "I just got an idea," he said with a grin.

Soon the others went home to work on their costumes. Ricky went into his house. He searched through his closet. Then he pulled out a blanket with black, yellow, and white stripes. "Perfect!" he said.



The next day, Ricky went out to his garden. He looked for Munchie. But he didn't see him anywhere. Then he saw something strange. A small green thing was hanging from one of the tree branches. "I wonder what that is," Ricky said.

Suddenly he heard a chirp from a branch above him. It was Mrs. Cardinal. "Hi, Mrs. C," said Ricky.

"Hello, Ricky," said Mrs. Cardinal. "What's new with you?"

"Well," said Ricky, "I had a new caterpillar friend, but now I can't find him. And I just found this funny-looking thing," he said, pointing.

"That's called a chrysalis (KRIS-uh-lis)," Mrs. C explained. "And when you found that, you found your caterpillar friend."

"It doesn't look like Munchie," said Ricky.

"Munchie is inside the chrysalis," said Mrs. C. "He's turning into a butterfly!"

"Wow!" Ricky exclaimed.

Every day, Ricky checked the chrysalis. He kept hoping he would see Munchie, but Munchie never came out.

Finally, it was the day of the costume party. Everyone had gathered in the clearing near Ricky's tree house.

"All these costumes are great!" Flora exclaimed. She was dressed as a daisy. Mitzi was a cookie, and Bizzie was a firefighter. Ricky wrapped his blanket around himself and came as Munchie. They were all enjoying the treats and having a good time.

Suddenly, Ricky saw a flash of color above his head. It was a beautiful butterfly. Ricky gasped. "I wonder...," he said. Then, as his puzzled friends watched, Ricky dashed off.

Ricky ran as fast as he could to his garden. He looked for the chrysalis. There it was, hanging open and empty. "I knew it!" Ricky cried. He ran back to his friends. The butterfly came fluttering over to him.

"Guess what, guys!" Ricky said.
"It's Munchie! He's changed into a butterfly!"

The butterfly landed on Ricky's shoulder. "You know what, Munchie?" Ricky said to the butterfly with a grin, "I think you have the best costume of all!"

