

HALF-WING BUTTERFLY

NUMI'S ADVENTURE



Numi: The Half-Winged Butterfly

Numi the caterpillar just came out of her egg.

"Hello, I'm baby caterpillar Numi!"

But the other caterpillars who came out earlier didn't look happy.

"Another one? How many eggs were there?"

There's not enough food already."

Numi was surprised.

She rolled her big eyes and thought,

"What should I do?"

Then a caterpillar with red cheeks spoke.

"Hi Numi! I'm Bomi. That one is Mani."

"Hey! Don't tell her my name!"

Mani was grumpy.

"Numi, please understand. People cut down all the trees in this village, so we don't have much to eat. That's why he's mad.

We need to eat a lot to become butterflies, right?"

Numi said in surprise.

"They cut... down the trees? How could they do such a thing...?"

Bomi said with a sigh in her voice

"Yeah... they said something like 're-de-lo-ment' or something.

So all the trees are gone.

You'll be hungry too, so eat whenever you find a leaf."

"Oh... Thank you for telling me, Bomi."

The caterpillars went out every day to look for leaves and grass.

Numi also walked with them to find food.

"Oh! A leaf! I must eat it before anyone else!"

Chomp chomp chomp chomp! Yum yum yum!

All the caterpillars ate by themselves.

But Numi shared her leaves with younger caterpillars.

"Oh! A leaf! That baby caterpillar didn't get to eat yesterday...

Let's eat together! Yum yum~ Yum yum~ Come here, let's share!"

Numi's tummy stayed hungry, but her heart felt happy.

One day, Bomi said,

"Numi, I think you should stop sharing now."

Numi's eyes popped open like big round marbles.

"Why??"

"You're still so small. You're the same size as the baby ones.

When we become cocoons, we can't eat at all.

You need to eat a lot now, or you won't make it!"

"Ah... Thank you, Bomi. But I'll be okay!

I'm strong, so I can go without food for a few days!"

Numi smiled.

Bomi sighed.

"Okay... if you say so. But please eat more, okay?

I'm really worried."

"Thank you, Bomi. I'll remember that!"

But Numi still shared her leaves with the hungry babies.

Then came the time to become cocoons.

The full caterpillars with big bellies felt ready.

Numi was small and thin,

but she believed she could do it inside the cocoon.

"It's my turn now! Where should I go?

Oh! Under that bench looks safe!"

Numi walked under the bench and closed her eyes.

Crack crack crinkle crinkle– stop right there!

The cocoon wrapped all around Numi's body and sang a song.

Then Numi became a cocoon.

One day, two days...

one week, two weeks...

The caterpillars came out of their cocoons as butterflies.

"Wow! Look! I'm a red butterfly!"

Flap flap flap!

"Look at my long straw! It looks like a candy stick!"

Sloop sloop sloop!

"Look at my yellow wings! Aren't they pretty?"

Fwoosh fwoosh fwoosh!

Everyone was busy showing off their wings and feelers.

But what about Numi?

Numi also came out of her cocoon.

"Here I go! Phew... I was a little hungry inside,
but I did okay! Hehe, I look so cool!"

She flew to the other butterflies.

"Hey, everyone~ I became a butterfly too! I'm a blue butterfly now!"

The others were surprised.

"Uh... Numi... your wing..."

"Huh? My wing? What about it?"

Mani said with a giggle.

"Hey! You only have one wing! Hahaha!

What is this? One-wing butterfly! One-wing butterfly!"

"That can't be!"

Numi's eyes got big as she looked at her wings.

"Left side-yes. Right side-right side... Where is it?"

Oh...Her right wing didn't grow.

Bomi looked very sad.

"I told you to eat more..."

You shared too much. Oh no, what will you do now?"

Numi forced a big smile.

"It's... it's okay! I still have one wing!

I can fly with just this one!"

The others lifted their shoulders.

"Hmm. Fly with one wing? Well... good luck!

We're going to get some sweet juice."

They all flew away, leaving Numi behind.

Numi looked at her left wing.

"Only one wing... Should I have listened to Bomi?

Was it wrong to share my leaves?"

Then she shook her head.

"No! The baby caterpillars became strong cocoons
because I helped them.

This wing saved them.

I'm a cool butterfly! I can fly with one wing!"

Numi flapped her left wing hard.

Flap flap flap flap—

But she didn't go up. She lost her balance and fell.

"I can do it! Let me try again!"

Numi practiced all day, even after dark.

She fell, got bruises, and even bled.

Just then, a bee flew by and asked,

"Why are you so hurt?"

"Hello, Mr. Bee. I was born with only one wing,

so I'm trying to fly with it."

The bee said with a sorry look on his face.

"Oh no, little butterfly... You can't fly with just one wing.

You'll keep falling. You need two wings."

"Then... what should I do? I have to fly!"

"Hmm... try to think of a different way.

Butterflies need two wings."

"...Then maybe... I can make one?"

"What? Hahaha! You can't make a wing!"

"But I'll try! I can do it!"

"Wow... I've never seen such a silly butterfly before."

And the bee buzzed away.

Numi sat and thought hard.

"Yes! I'll make a wing! Now... what can I use?"

She looked around.

"A leaf? No, too big. Grass? Too thin...

Hmm... Ah! That's it!"

The next day, Numi went to see Mr. Thistle,
who was cleaning up some twisty vines.

He was collecting juice from the stem into a little bottle.

"Hello, Mr. Thistle. I'm baby butterfly Numi."

"Ah, hello Numi. So, you're the one with only one wing?"

"What? How did you know?"

"Well, I have a lot of vines. So I hear everything! Ha ha ha!

Now, what brings you here? I don't have any sweet juice yet."

"Oh, I don't want sweet juice. Can you give me something else?"

"Something else? Like what?"

"That juice you're holding."

"This juice? It's too bitter to drink."

"I don't want to drink it... Can I please have some?"

“Of course! I have way too much.

If you need more, come anytime!”

“Yay! Thank you so much!”

Numi said goodbye and walked on.

She found a long piece of grass lying on the ground.

“Yes! One more thing left!”

Then she walked up to a pretty rose with piky parts on her stem.

“Hello, beautiful Rose. I’m baby butterfly Numi.”

The Rose spoke in a sweet voice.

“Hello there, Numi. Oh my… why do you only have one wing?

Are you hurt?”

“No, I was born like this. Hehe.”

The Rose looked at her kindly.

“Oh… That’s very sad. So why did you come see me?

Do you want some honey dew?”

honey dew? The sweet rose honey dew?

Numi’s mouth filled with drool.

She hadn’t eaten anything all day!

“I heard that Rose only gives honey dew to special butterflies…
but that’s not true at all! Thank you! I’d love some!”

“Haha, yes, that rumor is true. I don’t give it to just anyone.
But you’re so sweet, I’ll make an exception for you!”

“hehehe, thank you, Rose!

But you’re so tall… I can’t reach the honey dew.”

“Oh! Let me help you.”

The Rose bent down to Numi’s height.

“Wow! Rose honey dew!”

Numi put her straw in and drank it all up.

Sip sip slurp gulp! Slurp glug gulp!

The Rose smiled while watching her drink.

“Come again tomorrow, Numi.

You can always have honey dew from me.”

“Really? Thank you so much!”

And then she paused for a moment… and kept talking.

“Um… but I also have something to ask…”

“Ask anything, my dear.”

“Can I… can I please have one of your petals?”

“A petal? Hmm… That’s tricky. Honey dew keeps coming, but petals don’t grow back.”

“Yes, I know… but I really need it. If you give me just one, I’ll clean your poky parts, dust your leaves, I’ll do every chore you need! Please!”

Numi’s eyes looked so serious.

The Rose was quiet.

“You’re not trying to eat it, are you?”

“No…”

“Then what do you want it for?”

“Um… I want to make my right wing.

I know it sounds silly…”

Numi shut her eyes tight and said,

“I know it sounds crazy!

But I’m not joking. I really mean it.

If I have your petal, I’ll make a wing. I’ll fly!”

She waited quietly.

But the Rose didn’t say anything.

Numi peeked one eye open.

The Rose had a tear in her eye.

‘Oh no! Did I say something wrong?’

The Rose wiped her tear and said,

“Numi... that’s not silly at all.

I know you’re not joking. And yes, you will fly.”

“Huh? Really, Rose..?”

Numi’s cute little voice was shaking.

“Yes. Wait here a second.”

The Rose used her poky part to carefully cut one petal.

“Here. Take this.”

“Thank you! I’ll fly, I promise!”

“And my petal will fly with you. That makes me proud.

Thank you, Numi.”

Numi hugged the rose petal close to her chest,

like it was her most precious treasure.

Now she had everything she needed.

Numi began to build her wing.

"First, I’ll put the sticky juice on the edge of the petal..."

“Now let’s stick it where my right wing should be.

Careful... focus..."

Numi carefully stuck the petal onto her side.

She had to turn her head far back, and her neck hurt.

But she stayed focused.

"Almost done... just one more spot. Press, press, press..."

"Wow! It's finished!"

Numi now had a right wing. She said proudly.

"One blue wing and one red petal wing!

No butterfly looks like me. I'm super cool!"

"Now, let's move the wing!"

She used the long grass straw to connect her red petal wing to her straw.

"Okay... almost done... and... done!"

"Let's try moving it!"

She stretched out her straw.

The petal wing moved down.

"Whoa! It went down! Now let's make it go up!"

She rolled up her straw.

Swirrrl~

The wing flew up!

“It moves! It really moves!”

Numi was so happy she jumped.

“Okay! Let’s flap both wings!”

Left wing down–straw out!

Left wing up–straw roll!

“Hmm… not working.

Maybe I need to start with the straw first.”

Straw out–left wing down!

Straw roll–left wing up!

Numi’s feet lifted a little.

“Whoa! I’m flying! I’m flying! Slow and steady… don’t rush…”

Straw out–left down.

Straw roll–left up.

She flew higher and higher.

Flap flap flap!

Numi’s blue and red wings danced in the sky.

She didn’t stop flapping.

“Let’s go! Let’s go somewhere!

What kind of world is waiting for me?”

“Fly! Fly! Fly away!”

Numi flew and flew, heading to somewhere far away.

She wobbled a little, and she was slow,
but just flying made her heart so happy.

“Hmm... I’ll stay here today!”

She saw a big green field with soft grass and pretty flowers.

The red petal wing reminded her of the Rose.

“Kind Rose... you believed in me.

You were the only one who did. I miss you...”

A tear fell from Numi’s eye.

But then—FLASH!

A big net came down from the sky!

“Oh no!!”

Someone had caught Numi in a net.

“A butterfly with red and blue wings? What a lucky catch today!”

It was a bug catcher. A very mean one.

He brought Numi to his house and put her inside a small box.

There were other bugs in there too.

Shiny gold mantis. Pink grasshopper.

A dragonfly with wings on its tail.

They looked at Numi and sighed.

"Another silly bug got caught."

"Should've been more careful," said the dragonfly.

The gold mantis was lying down, not talking at all.

The pink grasshopper said,

"Well... nice to meet you. I guess. I'm Pinktu."

The dragonfly said,

"I'm Longlong. That gold guy over there won't tell us his name, so I just call him Sleepy."

Numi said,

"Hi, I'm Numi. I didn't mean to come here..."

How long have you guys been here?"

Longlong counted with his wings.

"Let's see... I got caught in fall, and now there's snow outside, so... one, two—"

Numi laughed.

"Okay, I get it. A looong time."

"But haven't you ever thought about escaping?"

"Escape? No way,"

said Longlong.

"This box is super strong. Once you're caught, you're stuck.

There was a rainbow grasshopper who tried to run away.

But... he didn't make it."

Numi looked around.

Gray walls. Cold bars.

"I don't want to stay here forever. I'll find a way. A safe way.

If I do, will you come with me?"

"You?" Longlong looked her up and down.

"You've got one wing, and that weird string stuck to your mouth.

You think we'll follow you? What a joke."

Sleepy raised his head and said,

"Don't even try it. You'll just get us in trouble."

Numi bit her lip.

But then Pinktu said in a quiet voice,

"I'll help you.

Take me with you. I believe in you."

Numi smiled so big, it almost reached her antennae.

"Okay! I'll find a way.

There has to be one. I know it!"

“Okay!” Pinktu nodded.

That night, when everyone was fast asleep,
the pink grasshopper and Numi started their escape.

“Hey... is that the key to this cage?”

A plastic key was lying right next to the bug box.

“Yes, that’s it. It looks close, but I can’t reach it.

I’ve tried many times... even with my long back legs.”

Numi stopped to think.

Then she pulled out the sticky juice

she always carried—just in case her rose petal wing got ripped.

She dabbed some juice onto the end of her straw,

and stretched her straw out as far as she could.

It got close to the key.

Numi pressed her body against the bars and pushed the straw
even further.

Almost... almost...

But no. It wasn’t long enough.

“So close... If only it were a bit longer.

Maybe we can’t escape after all...”

Numi paused again.

“Something long... something long...”

Then—ding! She had an idea.

The grass string!

The one that connected her wing and her straw!

That string would definitely reach!

But... if she used it, her wing would come off.

And she wouldn’t be able to fly anymore.

Numi looked around.

“This place is so small...

What’s the use of flying if I can’t even move here?”

Without hesitation, Numi pulled off her red petal wing.

“Ah! W-what are you doing?! You’re tearing off your wing!”

the grasshopper shouted.

“It’s okay,” Numi said calmly.

“Just watch.”

Numi took the grass string that used to hold her wing.
She added sticky juice to the tip. It was super sticky now.
She crawled back to the bars, held her breath,
and stretched the grass string out toward the key.
Reeeeach...
Click!
“It’s stuck!” Pinktu whispered loudly.
“Shhh!” Numi said.
Slowly... carefully...
She pulled the grass string back.
The key came with it!
The key was in Numi’s hands now.
She hurried and turned the lock.

Click!
The door opened.
They looked behind them.
The dragonfly and the mantis were still asleep.
Numi looked at Pinktu. He shook his head.

“They’re not coming with us.

Let’s go. Before we get caught.”

“Okay.”

But Numi couldn’t fly anymore.

She had no right wing.

She couldn’t keep up with Pinktu’s fast grasshopper jumps.

Pinktu ran back to her.

“Numi, climb on my back.”

“Huh?”

“Hurry! We don’t have time!”

“O-okay!”

Numi climbed up.

“Hold on tight to my wings!”

“Got it!”

Pinktu bent his knees… and jumped!

Boing! Boing!

They reached the top of the cage.

Beyond it was a big wall.

“That’s it! One more jump and we’re free!”

Pinktu backed up ten steps.

Then–

Ruuuuuun!

BOING!

Over the wall!

They were free.

Numi and Pinktu landed on the other side of the wall.

They were free.

But outside… everything was white.

Snow.

It was freezing cold. Numi’s legs shook.

Pinktu’s pink body started to turn pale.

Especially Pinktu, who had been inside the warm house for so long– his legs were freezing.

Numi looked at him and felt so sad.

“Pinktu… I’m sorry.

If we had stayed, you could be warm and full.

Now you’re cold… all because of me…”

But Pinktu, even though he was shivering, said,

“Don’t say that. Never say that.”

He looked at her with bright eyes.

“Do you know who I am? I’m a high-jump champion!

In Grasshopper Land, I won three gold medals!”

Pinktu kept talking, this time with a strong voice.

“When I was stuck in that cage, I used to pray every day:

‘Please, just one more jump.

Let me jump high one more time, even if I die.’”

While speaking, he bent and stretched his back legs.

“And tonight, I jumped… more than a hundred times.

I even broke my own record. All thanks to you.”

He looked at Numi with tears in his eyes.

“So don’t ever say sorry.

I’m the happiest grasshopper in the world.”

Numi’s eyes filled with tears.

She cried and cried.

“Thank you, Pinktu… thank you…”

“Don’t cry. If your tears freeze, it’ll feel even colder,”

Pinktu said with a smile.

That night, Numi had a fever.

Her body was burning up.

Pinktu saw her shaking, and said nothing.

He just pulled off his own wings

and gently laid them over Numi like a blanket.

Together, under the stars and snow, they fell asleep.

Scratch, scratch... swish, swish...

Numi opened her eyes. She heard a strange sound.

A man with a broom was cleaning the snow.

His face had deep lines like folded paper.

The snow had stopped. Sunlight was shining down.

“Pinktu! Wake up!”

Numi shook him.

“The snow is gone. We have to go!

If not, that broom will sweep us away!”

But Pinktu didn’t open his eyes. He didn’t move.

“No... please...”

Numi put her ear to his chest.

Thump... thump...

“Whew… he’s still breathing.”

Then she noticed something.

Pinktu’s wings were covering her.

He had taken them off to keep her warm.

And now… he was frozen.

Numi cried.

“Pinktu… no… please…”

She carefully picked him up and moved him into the sunlight.

“You’ll be okay. **The sun is always on our side.**”

Pinktu’s pink body glowed in the light.

Then the man said,

“Huh? What’s that shiny thing over there?”

He walked toward them.

Numi got scared. But she didn’t run.

“No… I can’t leave him.

Even if this person is bad, I’ll protect Pinktu.”

She stood tall and looked right at the man.

“Please… help us…”

The man bent down and looked closely.

“What is this? A toy?”

“No, I’m not a toy.”

Numi flapped her one wing as hard as she could.

She opened and closed her straw to show she was alive.

The man chuckled.

“Well, well… A butterfly with one wing and a pink grasshopper?

How did you two get here in the cold?”

“Today’s my daughter’s birthday.

Maybe this is a gift from the sky.”

He gently picked them up and placed them in his warm pocket.

The man came home and opened the door.

“Daddy’s back!” said a little girl.

It was his daughter.

“Happy birthday, my sweet girl.

Look what the sky sent you today.”

He gently took Numi and Pinktu out of his pocket.

The girl’s eyes got big.

“Wow… a blue-winged butterfly and a pink grasshopper…

I’ve never seen anything like this. Thank you, Daddy!”

She looked closer.

“This butterfly… only has one wing…”

She whispered,

“Just like me…”

She gently placed them on her desk.

Numi wanted to make her smile.

She flapped her one wing and wiggled her feelers like a dance.

Then she rolled her straw in and out for a funny little show.

“Heehee, are you dancing for me?

What a funny little butterfly. You’re so bright…”

Then the girl looked down.

“That’s different from me.”

She turned to Pinktu.

“Pink grasshopper… are you sleeping?

Wake up. You have a new friend now. Her name is Dream.”

Pinktu didn’t move.

“Is he… gone?”

She carefully picked him up and put her ear to his face.

Then she said,

“Oh! He’s still breathing. He’s alive! ...You must’ve been too cold outside...”

She moved him to the warmest spot in the room.

She laid a soft blanket over him.

And placed a tiny bowl of water next to him, just in case.

“Hmm... butterfly, you must be hungry.

What do butterflies like to eat?”

She flipped through a book.

“Ah-ha! Honey water! Let me get some.

Daddy always drinks it when he’s tired.”

She brought a spoonful of warm honey water.

“Here, little butterfly. Drink up!”

Numi was so hungry.

She slurped it down in big gulps.

Slurp slurp gulpgulp sluuuurp!

The girl laughed.

“You’re so good at drinking with that tiny straw!

From now on, your name is Sweetie.

You're my sweet honey—my Sweetie!”

Numi —now Sweetie— loved her new name.

That night, the girl placed Sweetie and Pinktu beside her pillow.

She talked to them and laughed and laughed until she fell asleep.

Sweetie walked to her face, touched her cheek with her wing,

and patted her hair with her tiny straw.

“I hope you'll always be happy,”

Sweetie whispered.

And then, she fell asleep too.

Then, a voice was heard.

“Where... where am I? Numi? Numi?”

It was Pinktu.

“Pinktu! I'm here!”

They hugged tightly. Tears filled their eyes.

“What is this warm place? Who's this girl?”

Numi told him everything. Pinktu listened and cried again.

“Numi... you didn’t give up on me.

You brought me all the way here. Thank you...”

Pinktu’s voice dropped with tears.

“No, Pinktu. If you hadn’t covered me with your wings,

I wouldn’t be here now. I’m the one who’s thankful.”

Numi looked at Pinktu with warm eyes and said.

They smiled and held each other’s hands.

Then they heard a voice.

“Yaaawn~ What’s all this noise in the morning?”

It was the girl. She sat up and rubbed her eyes.

“Whoa! Pink grasshopper! You’re awake!

Yay! I’m so happy!”

She was really, really happy.

Sweetie and Pinktu were moved by her joy.

“You’re going to live with me now, okay?”

The girl looked at Pinktu and said.

“Pink grasshopper, your name is... Lazie!”

Pinktu’s head tilted to the side.

“Lazie? Huh?”

Dream said excitedly.

“Yeah! Because you came back to life!

There’s a story in the Bible where someone did that.

His name was Lazarus! You’re like him, but cuter! So you’re Lazie!”

Sweetie looked at Pinktu.

“I mean… Lazie. How’s the name?”

He made a face.

“Hmph. Lazie? Sounds like I’m always sleepy!

But… if she likes it, I’ll take it. Hehe.”

“I’m Sweetie, and you’re Lazie!”

They laughed together.

Lazie and Sweetie did their best every day to make Dream smile.

Lazie jumped super high and bumped into the ceiling.

Sweetie flapped her one wing and spun around like she was dancing.

Dream laughed so hard her cheeks turned pink.

Every day was filled with giggles and joy.

Then spring came.

One sunny day, Dream went to the park.

When she came back, she had something in her hand.

“Sweetie! Look what I found!

Doesn’t this look just like your petal wing?”

In her palm was a soft red rose petal.

Just like the one Sweetie once used for her wing.

Sweetie’s eyes got big like shiny buttons.

Her heart skipped a beat.

The Rose. That kind, gentle flower.

She missed her so much. But Dream didn’t know.

She was just excited and happy.

“Hold still! I’m going to give you a new wing!”

Dream took a little bit of honey water and gently brushed it
on the edge of the petal.

Then, very slowly, very carefully,

she pressed it right where Sweetie’s missing wing should be.

“All done!”

She clapped her hands.

“One blue wing and one red petal wing!

You’re the only butterfly in the world like this!”

Sweetie smiled wide.

She couldn’t fly like before, but just having the rose petal again made her heart full.

Dream stared at Sweetie for a moment, quietly.

Then she said,

“A butterfly with a blue wing and a red petal wing…

There’s only one like that.”

She turned her wheelchair and rolled over to the old closet.

Inside was something wrapped in a soft cloth.

It was the wooden leg her dad had made her last year.

She gently brushed off the dust.

Then, she picked up her phone.

Hi, Daddy... it’s me. Umm... do you remember that thing you gave me last year?...I think....”

She hung up the phone and looked over at Sweetie and Lazie.

“A girl with one real leg and one wooden leg...

There’s only one like that too.”

From that day on,

Sweetie, Lazie, and Dream were always together.

Lazie made Dream laugh with his silly jumps.

Sweetie spun with her one wing and red petal.

And Dream took one step, then another, getting braver every day.

They cheered for each other.

They smiled at each other. And they stayed close—always.

One morning, Dream opened the window.

The sun poured in.

Sweetie fluttered her wing.

Lazie hopped up high.

Dream stood in the light,

and her wooden leg shined like gold.

Their wings were small.

Their steps were wobbly.

But their hearts flew free—
higher than the sky.