

The Ladybug’s Springtime

When spring arrived, the forest awoke as if someone had shaken a colorful pillow: new flowers, tender grass, and sunshine that tickled cheeks. In a corner of a garden, inside a leaf folded like a small green umbrella, lived Marieta Mira-bé, a tiny ladybug with seven black spots and an idea in her head: to help others take care of themselves with good habits, but always through play, without scolding or ordering.

That morning, just as she was combing her antennae with her little legs, she heard a loud “Aaaatxú!” so loud it made a drop of dew tremble. Marieta opened her wings and flew quickly toward the path. There was Pol, looking sleepy and with slightly sticky hands.

“I found jam on my toast…” he said, wrinkling his nose, “but now it itches and I’m sneezing.”

Marieta twirled in the air, as if drawing a magic circle.

“Today is the first day of spring!” she announced. “And spring is the best time to start an adventure. Do you like going on missions?”

Pol’s eyes widened.

“Missions? With a surprise?”

“With a surprise ending, an invisible map, and ladybug tricks,” she said, pointing to a small fountain in the garden. “The first mission is to turn your hands into magic hands. If they’re clean, everything you touch will be more pleasant: flowers, books, games… and even your nose, which won’t get so angry.”

Pol went over to the water, put on soap, and started rubbing his hands together for at least twenty seconds. Marieta acted as his conductor, keeping the rhythm with her wings.

“Like painting a rainbow: palm, back of hand, between the fingers, and especially the nails, which are like little caves where dirt hides.”

When Pol finished, he looked at his hands, which seemed brand new.

“Now they really do look like magic!” he said.

“They are,” Marieta replied. “And since you’ve started so well, let’s move on to the next part of the adventure.”

At that very moment, a gust of spring wind whistled by, rolling a ball, moving an open book… and sending a sock flying off the porch like a flag.

“Oh…” said Pol, a little red-faced. “This is mine.”

Marieta landed on the sock, very serious, but with smiling eyes.

“Spring brings fresh air, and fresh air needs space to circulate. If your nest is tidy, there’s more play, more calm, and you find things faster. How about we let the porch breathe?”

Pol started tidying up. First the sock, then the ball, and then the book. He made a neat little pile and put everything in its place, as if he

were building an invisible little house.

When he finished, he stood looking at everything.

“It looks… different. Like the garden is going ‘ah,'” he said.

“Exactly,” Marieta agreed. “When we tidy up a bit, we also have more space inside to think and laugh.”

Then, Pol saw a huge strawberry in a basket and his face lit up with joy.

“Spring tastes like strawberries!” he exclaimed, and ate it in one bite.

Marieta, who had already anticipated this, flew to a toothbrush near the garden sink, because that garden was so special that it even had a little corner for washing and grooming.

“Strawberries are a party,” she said, “and when it’s time to brush your teeth, they need a little train that goes through all the stations.”

Pol made a funny face.

“Every day?”

“About two minutes, twice a day. Think of the toothbrush as a train: it goes in front, behind, up, down… and it doesn’t miss a single station.”

Later, when it was time, Pol took the toothbrush with fluoridated toothpaste and, with the help of an adult, carefully brushed his teeth. When he finished, he showed off his smile like a trophy.

“They shine like little dewdrops!” Marieta exclaimed. “That’s what I like to see.”

They went back to the garden, and just as they passed under a tree, an apple rustled its leaves as if it were applauding. It was Pometes Apple, who was always eager to chat with everyone.

“Good morning! Good morning!” she chirped. “Who wants to eat colors?”

Pol shrugged.

“Colors?” I’ve only ever seen one red strawberry…

Marieta smiled.

“The colors on your plate are like a team. If you put a few on it, your body has more energy to run, think, play, and rest. Green, orange, yellow, red… Each color carries a different kind of strength.”

Pol looked around and imagined a plate as a little garden.

“Then I want green… like peas. And orange… like carrots. And red… like strawberries!”

The Pometes Apple said a happy “oh!” and dropped a leaf as if it were a medal.

“It’s a plate that makes spring,” she said.

Marieta flapped her wings gently, as if counting to five.

“You’re doing great, Pol. But there’s still something missing, and perhaps it’s the most important thing.”

Pol, who was already running up and down like a battery-powered bunny, stopped when the ladybug led him to the ground beneath a flowering tree. There was shade there, and the air smelled of new

grass.

“Let’s take a moment of calm here,” said Marieta. “Spring grows slowly. And so do we. Let’s close our eyes for a moment and listen.”

Pol closed his eyes. He felt the wind, a bird singing in the distance, a bee buzzing by, and above all, his heart, calm and warm.

He breathed once… twice… three times…

When he opened his eyes, he did so slowly, as if returning from a journey.

“I feel… like someone has put a soft blanket on my chest,” he said, surprised.

“That’s what calmness is,” Marieta replied. “And when we’re calm, everything is easier: washing up, eating well, taking care of ourselves, and playing without getting so angry.”

Pol smiled, thinking that this adventure was very different from the ones he had imagined, but he liked it.

Then, Marieta Mira-bé took out something so small it was barely visible: a seed.

“That’s the final surprise,” she said. “For every thing you’ve done today to take care of yourself, that seed will grow a little stronger. Do you want to plant it?”

Pol carefully made a small hole in the soil with his finger, as if he were preparing a bed for something important. He placed the seed in it and gently covered it.

“What will it be called?” Marieta asked.

Pol looked at the little patch of soil as if he could already see a flower.

“The Good Habits Plant,” he decided.

Marieta nodded, pleased.

“Every day you wash your hands, tidy up a bit, brush your teeth, eat a variety of colorful foods, and take a minute of peace… the plant will grow. And if you forget one day, it’s okay. Spring always returns. And you can always start again.”

Pol remained silent for a few seconds, listening to the garden, the wind, and that “aaah” sound things make when they’re in their place. Then he raised his head and said, with quiet joy:

“Tomorrow… I want to go back to doing missions.”

And Marieta Mira-bé laughed, because she knew that when habits become play, they grow like flowers: slowly, but a little more each day.

Color the story





