**The Rain**

By Jazmin Nunez

Max was looking for food to feed the family even though they made him feel unloved. He was a stink bug that liked to live on fruit plants and liked the warmth of the sun. Max always tried to be very positive; his philosophy was that those who were negative would never see the wonderful things in life. Although he saw things positively he did have days where he would feel upset just like any other insect. His family would reproach him because he was very clumsy and different from the other beetles. He would always be alone because the other beetles were scared that he might hurt them considering he was a big and tough-looking beetle. But that didn’t bother him because when he was alone he would go on long adventures on the trails of the park. One day while he was crawling through the trails, he met another stinkbug named Emmy. Emmy was a bit smaller than him and was also black, making it easy for her to blend in with the soil. She was a strange beetle, but very kind and she wasn’t frightened by Max. In fact from that day on they became friends and went on adventures together making their friendship stronger.

On one occasion Emmy and Max were going to go on a walk like they usually do, but Max did not show up at the trail. She waited for a couple of hours and thought something happened to him when he didn’t show up. Unfortunately she didn’t know where he lived so she couldn’t go check if he was okay. Instead she went back home and hoped that the next day she would see him. But days passed and Max was nowhere to be found.

After eight days without seeing Max, Emmy went back to the trail once more hoping that Max would be there. When she got there she found a black, tough and bulky looking beetle who was quite intimidating. When Emmy and this beetle had locked eyes, she quickly started to head back to her home until she was called by this mysterious beetle. She froze dead in her tracks as the beetle approached her cautiously. Once the beetle was in front of her, she realized it was actually Max who had changed from his nymph form to an adult.

As Emmy and Max spent most of their days together exploring farther distances from the park, Emmy was starting to feel an attraction for Max. She tried to act a little differently around him by releasing phermones. Sometimes it would attract other males and sometimes it would get Max’s attention. Emmy managed to finally attract Max one day when they went to go look for some food by the daisies. After a couple months Emmy went out in search of a secure place to lay her eggs.

Being a parent was one of the greatest things Max had experienced, but he still didn’t manage to understand why his family would always be so brutally harsh with him even after he had transformed and wasn’t so clumsy as before. Once in awhile he would visit his old family with his new family and they were not very accepting that Max had left them to live with Emmy. They were upset that Max no longer brought them food, causing them to have to get their own; this was a task they did not enjoy. On the days he would visit his parents they would make him look for food and treat his family bad. It was because of this that he no longer visited his parents and siblings and distanced himself from them.

Despite the fact that he was losing connection with his parents, he had to move on and deal with the situation over time. He had a lovely family now and needed to take care of them. It was his obligation to find food and protect them from predators such as birds, praying mantis, assassin bugs and others. Of course Emmy could always take over, but she was just the backup in case something happened to Max. Max couldn’t complain much about having to go search for food because he had been doing that most of his life, but sometimes he wanted to spend time with his three larvae.

As time was passing and his children were getting closer to becoming nymphs, the rations of food started to decrease. All the other insects were starting to get worried and some speculated that the praying mantis and the assassin bugs gained forces to try and make everyone starve so they could eat their corpses. Even though that could have been possible, Max knew that they didn’t have enough power to do that.  So Max decided to go farther away into the park. When he was deep into the trails of the park, he found a little more vegetation and later realized that he was entering a human being’s home. Max knew that he should be very cautious with these species the most because he had heard stories about how one of his great great uncles had encountered a human before and was savagely sprayed with a dark, virulent cloud that killed him in seconds. When he was remembering this story as he was crawling through this human territory, he started to load himself with a repulsive smell that came from his thorax. He had only used this a couple of times in his life and it usually made his predators runaway.

During the process of being careful not to get killed by a human, Max found a basket full of fruits and a fresh bunch of flowers where surely there would be some worms or caterpillars that his family and himself would enjoy a lot. The flowers were in a vase on top of a dark brown, wooden table. It was going to be hard for Max to get to the top especially because he probably wouldn’t get a good grip on the leg of the table. He was capable of using his wings, but on this occasion, he decided not to. Instead, Max decided to look around for food that perhaps was on the ground. All Max saw were crumbs of food, but he knew that that wouldn’t be enough for his family to eat. He started to get desperate because he couldn’t find anything and he didn’t want his children to starve until the next time he found food. He knew that Emmy and himself would be able to survive without food for a day or even for two years, but not his children. He went outside and hoped that he would find something to eat.

As he frantically searched for food, he heard a shriek coming from the sky. It was a hungry vicious crow in search of a frail prey. Max quickly started to rush back home trying not to be seen by the crow. He took caution by preparing to spray the crow with his sickening smell. He tried blending in with the fresh dug out soil that was made by a rabbit, and then he tried blending in with the leaves, but it wasn’t enough. The crow had seen him transfer over to a log and quickly swooped down and managed to get a grip of Max. They were about 30 ft in the air when Max was able to release his repulsive smell. The crow let go and Max plunged him down to the ground leaving him unconscious and a bit squashed by the impact.

When Max started to regain conscience, he realized he couldn’t move that well. He saw that he had been badly injured. He thought that he was lucky that the crow didn’t come back down to get the rest of him. Yet he became aware that he was not so lucky because he felt that he was going to die very soon. With the little time he felt he had, he headed back home with a small little worm he had found on his way ready to say his last good byes.

As the sun started to settle in the horizon as Max crept slowly back home thinking about all his loved ones. He was thinking about how life would be like after he departed from this world and how he wished he could talk to his parents and siblings one last time. He was nearly home when he found Emmy outside looking for him. She tried helping him get home, but he insisted to leave him there and take the food before a predator showed up. He did not want his children to witness his death. Emmy decided to wait a little while by his side until he finally had his last breath and became the rain. She took the food, and made her way back home.