

An Adventure In Space

I stared at the empty space on the piece of paper. It stared back at me. Miss Happ had told us to draw something about the environment. I had no clue what to draw. But to me, environment meant animals, so I drew an inchworm. The inchworm wiggled and squirmed until it was in the centre of the paper. Then it cleared its throat.

“Good morning,” it said.

“Good morning,” I said back. I asked the inchworm what it knew about the environment. The word “environment” seemed to jolt the inchworm. It hissed, “Follow me!” before squirming away. I immediately stepped into the empty space in the paper.

I found myself in an open field. The lush, green grass brushed my feet with its soft blades. Flowers splashed myriad colours on the field painting an endless kaleidoscopic blanket. Trees towered over me; butterflies, bees and other critters were happily fluttering about. The field was paradise for a nature-lover: alive with plants and animals; a vast open space to run and gambol in. A small river gurgled clear, blue water next to the field. Silver, shimmering fish frolicked in it.

I then realised the inchworm was on my shoulder.

“This was the field a year ago,” it whispered.

“Was? What happened to it?” I asked.

The inchworm wiggled down my arm and towards a tree. That tickled. It then disappeared into a hole in the tree trunk. I followed it. The inside of the trunk expanded into a tunnel. We climbed out at the end of it.

I was shocked by what I saw. Now I knew what the inchworm meant.

The field was not a field anymore. It was a toxic wasteland! The colour of the grass reminded me of my mother’s awful lamb stew. The flowers were withered and shrivelled. Not a tree was in sight, except for a sorry-looking branch sticking out from the ground. I saw cockroaches, flies and maggots, but no other animals. They were buzzing around animal carcasses. Black and green putrid slime carried dead fish along the river.

“What happened? Who did this?” Tears formed a waterfall down my eyes. No scream in the world could release my anger or express my sorrow for the poor animal and plant life.

“You humans dumped your rubbish here,” the inchworm sighed. “You thought that just because there is an open space, you had an open garbage bin. You built factories nearby; the smoke has suffocated the air. Now, all the chemical waste is flowing into the river, which leads to the sea.”

I shook my head in disbelief. If this continued, even our homes would be engulfed in garbage and filth! But what could I do? I was only an eleven-year-old girl.

“Round up as many people as you can! Tell your parents! Use *Facebook*! Send emails!” the inchworm exhorted, its eyes now shining. An aura seemed to emanate from it. My face crumpled into a smile as brilliant ideas invaded my mind. I saw the inchworm glowing grandly on the ground, and I could feel this connection between us. More and more ideas popped up in my head.

Suddenly, I was back to staring at my piece of paper with an inchworm on it. Miss Happ snatched it.

“I give you one hour, and all you can give me is. . . this? This kind of sloppy work belongs in the garbage bin!” Miss Happ sneered.

I stood up, slowly, and faced her.

“Sorry, Miss Happ, but we already live in one. And it’s time we did something about it,” I retorted.

The inchworm winked.

by

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