

Caught!

Bruce tried to keep a cheerful countenance, but inside he despaired of ever finding his family. The building seemed impenetrable. The gray rock walls had no chinks or cracks that he could see. Bruce remembered the quarry where he battled Stang, and he knew these rocks came from quarries like that. His hope that they might find a space somewhere in the wall that they could fit through dimmed with each wing beat.

Sam flew a little bit ahead to examine a portion of the building that wasn't rock. She landed on it and quickly pulled away.

"Ow, that's hot! It's made of metal!" Sam turned in time to see a human creeping up behind Bruce, waving a net. "Bruce, dive!"

Bruce dipped his head and flew as fast as he could toward the ground, but his motion ended when he found himself caught in a soft white mesh material. He flapped his wings madly, but he couldn't get free.

"Fly away, Sam!" he called, hoping she'd do as he said, but he knew the human was after her, too. Suddenly, he was swirling in the air, and then Sam was beside him, inside the net. They'd been caught.

Bruce's crazy first thought was that perhaps it would be easier to find a way out of the building than to get in, but he discounted that as one of the idiotic ideas that came to his mind when he couldn't think of anything else. He remembered what Sam and Milton had said earlier about not worrying until he had the facts. The fact was that he and Sam were prisoners now, too, and Bruce was worried again.

Neither spoke as the human carried them in the butterfly net. The man pressed a button beside the metal portion of the building that Sam had learned was hot. Suddenly, the metal opened. It was a door!

The man brought them inside and the door closed behind him. The room was dark, but suddenly lights shone overhead from many small openings in the ceiling. Through the net, Bruce saw tables, some with cages on them, a few of which held butterflies. Along the walls of the room were shelves with containers, books,

and other things Bruce didn't recognize.

Bruce wanted to say something that would help Sam feel better, but he couldn't think of anything. He was scared, and he was sure Sam was, too.

The human opened the net, reached inside, and grasped Sam's body between two of his fingers. She struggled to get free as he pulled her out.

"Ow! Let me go!" Sam cried, even though she knew the human wouldn't understand her words.

The man held Sam in front of his face, turning her body this way and that.

"Ahh," the man said, his eyes growing wider. "We haven't had a butterfly of your species around here in a long time." He opened one of the small cages on the table with his free hand and placed Sam inside, quickly closing the lid, trapping her.

He returned to Bruce, who had stopped struggling. Bruce held still as the man reached inside and grasped his body. The man looked him over, too.

"Hmm. Someone mended your wing, I see. Quite surprising, but the repair seems to have worked well enough." The man stood and carried Bruce to the door where they'd come in. He pushed a button, stepped through after the door opened, and released Bruce into the air.

Bruce flew back, trying to get to Sam, but the man waved his arms, keeping Bruce outside.

"I'll find a way in and set you free, Sam—I will!" Bruce called, before the man backed through the door into the building.

"I know," Sam called, as the door shut.



Bruce flew fast and hard. He didn't stop to look at the building—his only goal was to find his friends and tell them Sam had been captured. He wondered if Henry and Sophie had found his family. He turned a corner and saw Carly, Agatha, and Milton up ahead.

"Sam's been caught!" Bruce cried, as he neared his friends. "A human took her into the building!" Even as he said this, Bruce knew there was nothing his friends could do, any more than he could. Still, he felt better knowing they knew.

"Aw, mate, I'm so sorry," Milton said, and he stood still,

waiting for Bruce to land. "What happened?"

"Do you remember that part of the wall that we told you was hot? It's a door. A man caught Sam and me in a net and took us inside through that door. He put Sam in a little cage, but he let me go."

"That's strange," Agatha said. "I wonder why."

Carly said, "Maybe we'll find out later, but for now, we ought to start figuring out how to get inside. It doesn't matter whether your relatives are in there or not. Now we have to get Sam out anyway."

As always, Carly was a voice of clarity, Bruce thought. "Did you find anything? Any way in?" he asked.

His friends shook their heads. Milton swayed from side to side. "I'm sorry, Bruce. We didn't find anything."

"Then we'll have to make a hole somewhere."

Carly's tail twitched a little in the air over her back. "Bruce, I don't think we can do that. The butterflies inside have already tried that and failed. We've looked around the building twice now, and none of us found anything that might give way or allow us to dig, chew, or scrape through to get inside. I think our only hope of getting into the building is to go through one of the doors."

Milton nodded. "Carly's right."

"I'm always right," the scorpion said, flicking her tail over her back.

Ignoring her comment, Milton continued. "When we went near the large doors, many humans were going inside. I think we could get in with them."

"But what about Sam? She's in the little cage in that other room. We have to get in there, too."

"Bruce, do you remember the building where they held the cooking competition?" Agatha said. "Once you went inside the outer door, you could go to all the different rooms inside through passageways. Buildings are like hives or nests. We should be able to get to Sam and to the other butterflies once we're inside."

Bruce hoped Agatha was right. "Could we take a look at the other metal door first, though? If we could get back in there, we know that's where Sam is. Once we set her free, she can come along to help find the others."

Milton moved closer to Bruce and put a foreleg on Bruce's shoulder. "We'll get Sam out. Don't worry. Remember, worry

doesn't—"

"I know, I know. Worry doesn't get you anywhere."

"Come on. Standing here talking about not worrying doesn't get us anywhere either," Carly said, and she started walking toward the back of the building. Milton and Agatha followed her, while Bruce flew overhead. Bruce tried to fight his fears, which were stronger than ever, now that Sam wasn't by his side.