

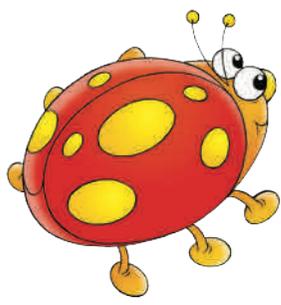
The Snail-Carpenter

Ognjen Livada

With a big enough heart, and a strong will, even the smallest of snails can become a great carpenter.

In this story, The Snail-Carpenter will teach you how you can succeed at everything you do.





The Beginning

Whenever somebody says “that’s impossible”, I remember a story that my Grandpa loved to tell me. Grandpa was a carpenter, and the story was about a snail, the smallest and most fascinating carpenter in the world

My Grandpa’s story went like this...

In the green meadow under the old branches lived a tiny snail. Curled up in his grubby little home he thought about all kinds of things. Most of them were very unusual things for a snail to think about. He thought about how much he wanted to carve the old worn-out looking tree stump and make its surface gentle and nice. He thought of it during the days and dreamed of it at night, how he could carve the wood. Oh, the snail had such a great wish to be a carpenter.



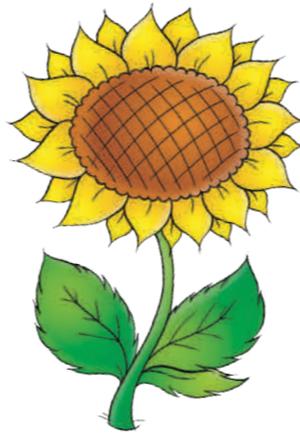
First Attempt



One sunny morning as he cleaned his little home with the morning dew, the snail decided to try to work as a carpenter. He didn't know how to start. He was afraid of ruining a beautiful piece of wood with his clumsiness, so he decided to decorate his own home first of all. If he could decorate the house he carried on his back beautifully, it would prove to his friends and to himself that he could be a successful carpenter. Slowly but surely the tiny snail crawled to the old tree stump. He decided to start work. He began to rub his shell against the tree stump to shape it just as he wanted. The other animals of the forest gathered to watch the snail who was rubbing up and down against the old wooden stump. What a very unusual sight for them! In the beginning, the other animals watched with interest to see what he was doing, but they turned to sneering - a snail couldn't ever be a carpenter. The tiny snail paid no attention to the reactions of the other animals. Instead, with a great deal of dedication, he carried on working and rubbing and scrubbing, decorating his little home.



A Great Effort

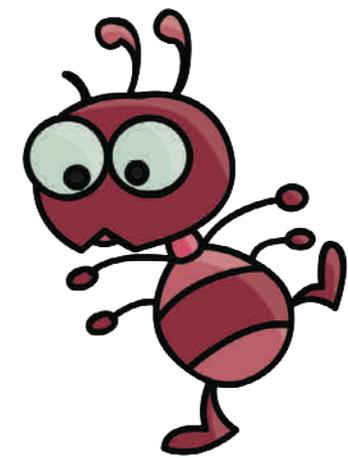


The snail made slow progress with his work. He realised that the wood wasn't sharp enough to engrave his little home. The tree helped him to get soft and gentle lines but he needed something harder. He made his way over to a rock and started to rub his shell against it. The hard and sharp rock was just the right tool for a carpenter to make precise cuts. Now the snail had to be twice as careful not to damage his home. Time passed and the snail gained experience. He learned how and when he needed to rub the shell against the rock, on the ground or the wood. He used differing levels of pressure depending on what he wanted to achieve. Time continued to pass and the snail's little home gradually became more beautiful. Little by little the animals of the forest came to admire the slow but self-confident handy-man at work. The snail carried on, working tirelessly.

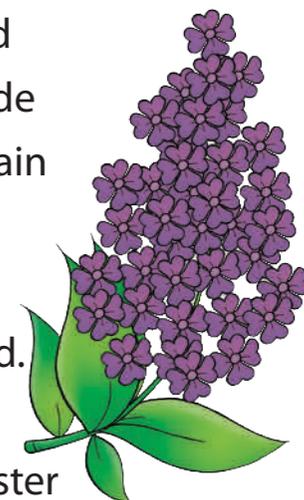




Success



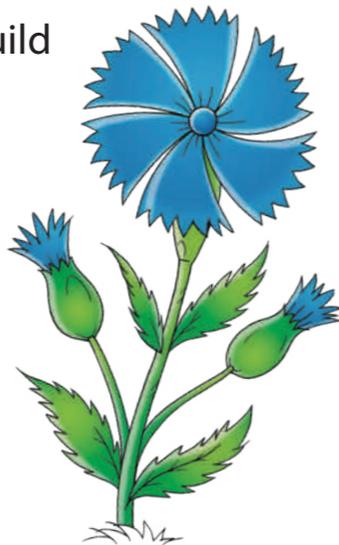
Winter came and went. One morning the tiny snail was bathing in the drops of dew. Sitting in the sun, he was admiring the nature all around. He was happy. He had decorated his house in the best way that he could and he was pleased with his work. Suddenly, out of the clear blue sky, a woodpecker swooped down beside him. Woodpeckers are known as the best carpenters in the forest. The bird had heard the story about the snail-carpenter and he wanted to be see the snail's craftsmanship with his own eyes. The woodpecker inspected the snail's little home from all sides and then flew into the air. He circled the house a few times, examining each side thoroughly. When he had finished, he again landed down beside the tiny snail. The woodpecker looked the snail in the eyes, paused for a moment and bowed his head. This was a great honour for the tiny snail because woodpeckers only bowed to master carpenters.





Glory

Full of happiness and joy that the recognition of his work had brought him, the little snail went over to the old wooden stump and asked its permission to decorate it. He worked on it with unbroken dedication. After a long time of non-stop work, he had made the stump the most beautiful piece of wood in the whole forest. From that time onwards, there was always plenty of work for the little snail-carpenter. He was asked to decorate the shells of the other snails and the homes of many different animals. He was even asked to build bridges and dams.



Teacher



The tiny snail-carpenter decided to share his knowledge with his friends. With a thirst for knowledge, the other snails gathered around him. The snail-carpenter addressed them “Dear Friends, you want to become carpenters. If you want to fulfil your dreams, you should bear the following in mind: you can achieve whatever

you want. Try hard, be dedicated and seek knowledge. Through your efforts everything is possible.” The snail-carpenter continued to speak and the group of snails swallowed his words with interest. Those snails became master carpenters too.





These days it is rare to see any snail decorating wood, because today, as a rule, every snail decorates its shell in the best way it can. Indeed, whenever you walk through the woods or meadow, try to find a snail. Look at it carefully. You'll see what a pretty and unusual little home it has on its back.

Even little creatures like snails can do so much if they try hard with enough effort. Just think what humans could achieve!

Did you know...

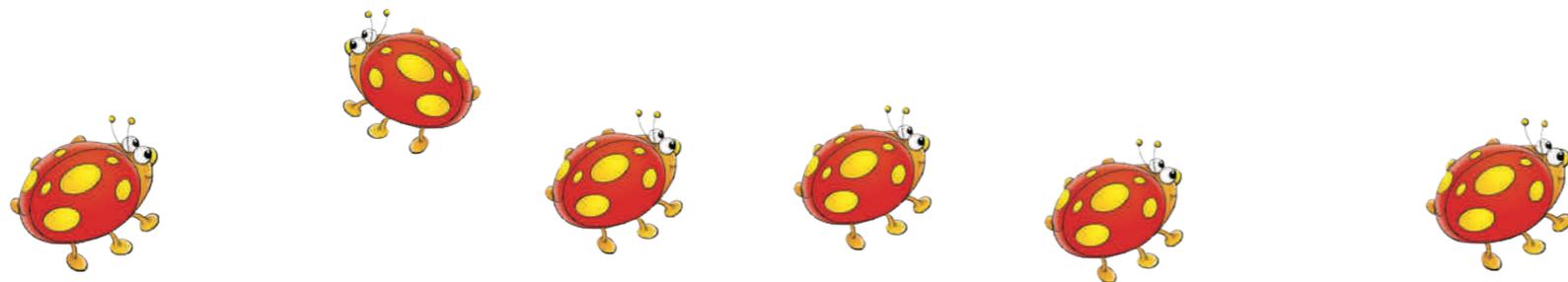
There are many different kinds of snails. Some of them live in the soil, some in rivers and lakes and some in the sea.

All land snails carry their own little homes. It is well-known that even the slug has one. It is too small for the slug to go inside, but it is still a home!

Some sea snails breathe through their lungs, just like people, and have to come up from the water for air, while others breathe through gills like fish.

Did you know that Peter's Ear and clams on the rocks are not shells but are in fact snails?

Interesting, isn't it? Nature really is miraculous.

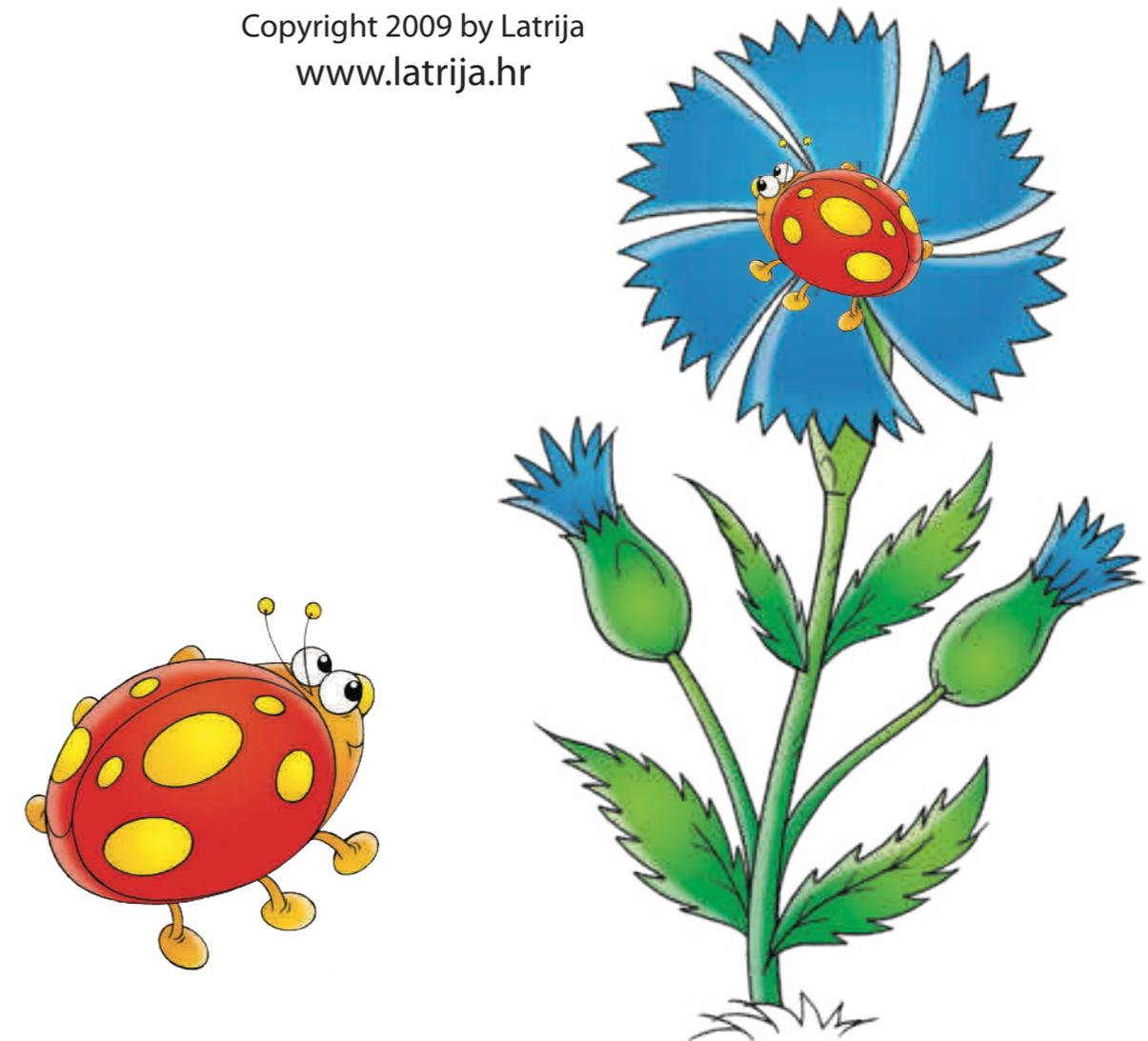


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