

## Bugs in a New Perspective

I woke up at 9:00 am, got dressed, and waited for my mother to call my name to come down for breakfast, as she does almost every day. “Blossom, come get your breakfast!” my mother called out. This was the start of my daily routine as a normal 11-year-old girl with a not-so-normal challenge: I’m allergic to bees, wasps, hornets, and fire ants.

While I enjoy my routine, I’ve always dreamed of going camping with my family or friends. Unfortunately, my mom is hesitant because I’m allergic to almost every bug related to nature. But today, I’ve decided to try and convince her to let us go camping this weekend.

I trudged down the stairs into the kitchen, sat down, and began eating. Gathering confidence, I said, “So, Mom..” I hesitated for a moment before continuing, “Can we go camping this weekend?”

Her mother looked at her with gentle eyes, “Honey, you know you’re allergic to lots of bugs related to nature.”

“I know, but it's not fair!” Blossom exclaimed, frustration creeping into her voice. “You never let me go anywhere because of my allergies. You never let me do anything fun, I just want to live a little sometimes!”

Her mother sighed, her voice calm but firm. “Blossom, it’s not about stopping you from having fun. It’s about keeping you safe. Nature isn’t just beautiful; it can be dangerous for someone with your allergies.”

Blossom didn’t want to hear it. Her mother’s words felt like yet another excuse to keep her trapped in her routine. While her family slept, Blossom packed a small backpack with all her essentials—a flashlight, snacks, water, and her favorite blanket and snuck out of the house to find a nearby campsite she’d overheard kids talking about. The cool night air filled her lungs as she walked briskly toward the woods. At first, the thrill of adventure made her heart race with excitement. The moonlight illuminated her

path, and the chirping crickets seemed to cheer her on. She imagined herself sitting by a campfire, telling stories, and finally experiencing the freedom she had always dreamed of.

As Blossom ventured deeper into the woods, reality began to set in. The ground was uneven, and she stumbled several times. The trees loomed tall and unfamiliar, casting eerie shadows that made her feel small and vulnerable. Suddenly, a bee buzzed past her ear, causing her to flinch. Almost immediately, her allergies intensified-her nose itched fiercely, her eyes became red and swollen, and she began sneezing uncontrollably.

Within moments, her throat started to tighten, making it difficult to breathe. She realized with growing panic that she was experiencing a severe allergic reaction. Without her allergy medicine, which she had forgotten to bring, the situation felt dire.

To make matters worse, she heard rustling in the bushes nearby. Her imagination ran wild, conjuring images of wild animals lurking in the shadows. Blossom clutched her flashlight tightly, her hands trembling. She realized she was completely alone, far from home, and utterly unprepared for the challenges of camping.

Blossom sat on a log, tears in her eyes. "This was a terrible idea," she whispered. She missed home and understood her mom's protectiveness was love. Gathering courage, she headed back. The journey felt long, and reminded her of her reckless choice. Once home, she climbed through her window and collapsed into bed.

The next morning, her mother found her looking pale. "Blossom, you okay?" she asked

Blossom hesitated, then said, "Mom, I went to the woods last night to prove I could camp, but it was scary, and I wasn't ready."

Her mother's face softened. "Oh, sweetheart," she said, pulling Blossom into a hug. "We'll find safer ways for you to experience new things. But trust me when I say I'm just trying to protect you."

Blossom nodded. "I understand, I just wanted to feel like everybody else for once."

Her mother smiled gently, brushing a stray hair from Blossom's forehead. "And you will, my love. We can plan a trip together, one where we can pack all the necessary precautions. Maybe we can even invite some friends."

Blossom's eyes lit up at the idea. "Really?"

"Of course," her mother replied. "We'll find a place and ensure you're comfortable. Though it's important to explore and enjoy life, it's also important to do it safely."

Blossom hugged her mother tighter, excitement sparking inside her. "You mean it? A real camping trip with tents, marshmallows, and stargazing?" Her voice bubbled with enthusiasm as she imagined herself sitting by the campfire, wrapped up in a cozy blanket, pointing out constellations under the vast night sky. For the first time, her dream felt within reach, not as something reckless, but as an adventure waiting to unfold with her mom right by her side.