

HOW THE BEETLE GOT HER COLORS

A Brazilian Tale

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The forest

Characters:

Narrator

Bella Beetle

Ricky Rat

Patty Parrot

Narrator: Once upon a time, all beetles were a very plain grey color. They were always teased by other animals about being colored so dull. One day, Bella Beetle was crawling down a dusty forest path when she met the eyes of Ricky Rat staring at her.

Ricky: (chewing on a leaf) Munch, munch, munch. Slurp, slurp, slurp. Well, what have we here? A tasty beetle to eat?

Bella: Oh, please don't eat me.

Ricky: (putting his paw on Bella's head) Ew! How did I ever think of eating *you*? What an ugly little critter you are. You don't even have any fur – no *beautiful brown* fur like me!

Bella: Ow! Please remove your paw. I *know* I'm not very pretty.

Ricky: Look way up there in that tree. See gorgeous Patty Parrot. Her feathers are sparkling gold and minty green and sky blue and fiery red. Now look at yourself. You are – just – plain - ugly!

Narrator: Bella Beetle turned and crawled under a large rock with tears in her eyes. Patty Parrot didn't like what Ricky Rat said to Bella Beetle and so she called down to them with a big announcement.

Patty: Squawk, squawk, squawk! A-hem! I declare there shall be a race between Ricky Rat and Bella Beetle. AND, I declare the prize will be a coat of the colors that the winner wishes.

Ricky: Tee, hee, hee! Munch, munch, munch. Slurp, slurp, slurp. What an easy race for me because I have *four fast* legs! I can beat that ugly beetle even though she has *six skinny* legs. She can only creep along no faster than a snail. This is MY DAY for an easy win! Wahoo!

Narrator: As the race began, Ricky Rat started talking to himself about the colors of the coat he was sure to win.

Ricky: My brown coat is okay, but now I can *really* have a coat that will be more beautiful than Patty Parrot's. Let's see, I think I'll have a gold stripe down the back. Yeah, and some green polka dots on my head. Tee, hee, hee. This sure is fun! Oh, I know, I'll ask for some *big blue* stripes and *huge red* spots.

Narrator: Ricky Rat kept changing his mind about the colors of his coat, when suddenly, he stopped and looked around. Bella Beetle was no where to be found.

Ricky: Tee, hee, hee. I bet Bella Beetle is about an inch away from the starting line. She can't possibly win. How could she possibly think of beating me? Wait until she sees me in my new *multi-colored* coat! Oh, this is so much fun!

Narrator: Ricky Rat started dancing, then tiptoeing, then hopping, then skipping down the dusty forest path.

Ricky: I'm going to win! I'm going to win! ! *I'm going to win!*

Narrator: Just as Ricky reached the finish line, he saw Bella Beetle lying in the sun waiting for him. Patty Parrot was flying overhead.

Bella: (sweetly) Hello, Ricky Rat. I hope you're not too tired from all of your running.

Patty: Squawk, squawk, squawk! A-hem! I shall announce the winner. **THE WINNER IS BELLA BEETLE!**

Ricky: Wha....wha... what is going on? How can this be? How could *you* win? You can barely crawl!

Bella: I spread my wings and flew.

Ricky: You *flew*? I didn't know you could fly? (whining) That's – not - fair!

Patty: Squawk, squawk, squawk! Learn your lesson Ricky Rat: Don't judge others by their appearance. Even the plainest-looking creatures may have powers you don't have.

Narrator: Ricky Rat lowered his head and slowly walked into the forest. Bella Beetle chose new colors for her coat. She chose the deep green of forest trees and the brilliant gold of sunlight. Even to this day, those are the colors she wears.