

Odyssey and the Poop-Shooting Butterfly

A story about the Silver Spotted Skipper & unique defense mechanism.



Odyssey, the blue-furred otter with his cool sunglasses, was leading a group of 3rd graders on a nature walk around Lake Jocassee. As they strolled along a sunny path, Odyssey spotted something exciting.

"Look, everyone!" he chirped. "There's a caterpillar spinning its cocoon!" The children gathered around, watching in awe as the caterpillar wrapped itself up. "That's a Silver Spotted Skipper caterpillar," Odyssey explained. "It's going to turn into a butterfly, but it has a super silly secret. Who wants to know what it is?"

"We do! We do!" the children chorused.

Odyssey grinned. "Well, this butterfly has a very special way to protect itself. It's so funny, you might not believe it!"

He paused for dramatic effect. "This butterfly... shoots poop at its enemies!" The kids erupted in giggles. "No way!" "That's gross!" "Cool!" "It's true!" Odyssey laughed. "That's why some people call it the Poop Shooter."

"But why does it do that?" asked Sarah, a curious student. "Great question!" Odyssey replied. "When the butterfly is in its cocoon, it can't fly away from danger. So, it came up with a clever trick. If a hungry bird or other predator tries to eat it, the butterfly uses a special part on its bottom to shoot out a piece of poop!"

"Ewww!" the children squealed in delight.

"The poop flies out and lands away from the cocoon," Odyssey continued. "This confuses the predator. The predator thinks, 'Hey, what's that over there?' and goes to investigate the poop instead of eating the butterfly!"

Tommy raised his hand. "So the poop saves its life?"

"That's right, Tommy!" Odyssey nodded. "It's a stinky but smart way to stay safe." "Can we watch it happen?" Emma asked excitedly.

Odyssey chuckled. "Well, we'd have to wait a long time and be very quiet. But how about we play a game instead? Let's pretend we're Silver Spotted Skippers protecting ourselves!" The children cheered as Odyssey handed out small, soft balls to represent the "poop". They spent the next hour playing a hilarious game of dodge ball, giggling as they pretended to be poop-shooting butterflies.

As the day ended, the children couldn't stop talking about their new favorite insect. "Remember," Odyssey said as they prepared to leave, "every creature, no matter how small or silly its defense might seem, has its own special way of surviving in nature. Even a little poop can make a big difference!"

The children nodded, still giggling. They had learned an important lesson about nature's creativity, and they'd never look at butterflies the same way again.

Odyssey waved goodbye with his webbed paw, happy to have shared this amusing but educational tale from the wonderful world of nature around Lake Jocassee.