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# LADYBUG BUDDIES

Incredible Motorcycle

Adventure



Written by **Jason Graham**

Illustrations by Brian Beausoleil

The  
**LADYBUG BUDDIES**

Incredible Motorcycle Adventure

written by **Jason Graham**

with illustrations by **Brian Beausoleil**



**Summers Island Press**

Thorne Bay, Alaska



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Thorne Bay, Alaska

*For Kimarie and the kids.*

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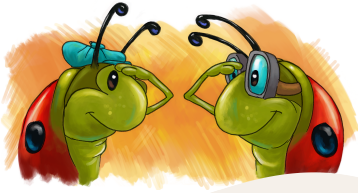
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## How the LADYBUG BUDDIES got their start

Once upon a time, there were two Ladybug Buddies who hung out in a pop shop. The root beer in the pop shop was known far and wide as the best stuff you could get. That didn't matter much to the ladybugs since they had only drank root beer out of bottle caps under the tables of this particular shop. It was called *Buddy's Pop Shop*.

There were also tables made out of big root beer barrels where customers could sit and drink from frosty mugs. A lot of people stopped by on their way to different adventures because *Buddy's Pop Shop* was famous and stood at the intersection of two major highways in the area. The ladybugs liked to listen to

their stories as they slurped up splashes of root beer the customers left behind. The shop had a big stone fireplace, wooden walls, and two swinging doors that led to a very mysterious bottling room.

It was mysterious because any ladybugs that went in there almost never came out, again. But one of the Ladybug Buddies had actually gone in—one time—and lived to tell about it. In fact, he talked about it all the time.

He said people were learning to be good buddies in there. That's how the ladybugs came up with the idea of being buddies, too. There was a sign on the bottling room wall that told just how it was done. A sign that said: "How To Make Buddy's."

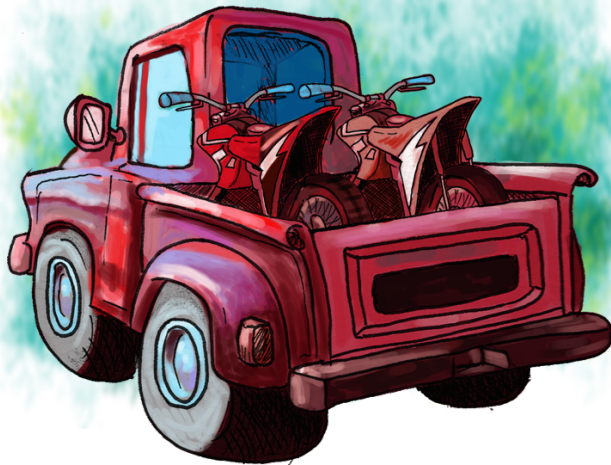
It was really rules for making *Buddy's Root Beer*. But the root beer part was faded, and the ladybug mistook it for rules about how make buddies.

That's how the Ladybug Buddies got their start.

At first, they just called each other

“Buddy,” like human buddies did. Then they went on a real adventure together. It was a skydiving adventure, and they were very happy they had survived.

Now they were back at the pop shop, sitting under one of the tables, slurping root beer and listening to some motorcycle dudes talk about an adventure they were about to take on their motorcycles...





## CHAPTER ONE

### **Buddies Stick Together**

An adventure on motorcycles! Buddy One started to get excited. He flew up onto the sill of the big window that looked out at the parking lot and saw a truck with two motorcycles in back.

“Hey , Buddy ,” he said when Buddy Two flew up to join him. “We should go

check out those motorcycles. They look cool. Really cool!”

“But we just got here, Buddy. Don't you think we had enough adventure for one day?”

“What if we never get another chance like this?” insisted Buddy One. “We could miss out on the biggest adventure of our lives!”

“Right now, I wouldn't care so much.” Buddy Two was being honest. “I'm just glad to be back in the pop shop. Maybe these guys will come again another day, and—”

He stopped talking because when he looked over at his buddy, he wasn't there anymore.

He was already flying out the door when a customer went out.

For a minute, Buddy Two just sat there because it had been a long day, and he was tired of being a good buddy. He was even thinking of looking for a nice crack in the wall to take a nap in. But he had taken the *Oath of the Buddy*,



and everything, and believed in sticking by his buddy.

Maybe if he just watched out the window while Buddy One looked over the motorcycles, that would be good enough. Yep, there he was. Already jumping up and down on the buttons and running across the handlebars.

Uh-oh, this did not look good.

Buddy Two was trying to make a decision he did not want to make. But



just then, one of the motorcycle dudes got to his feet and drank down the last of

his root beer. "Get a move on, bud!"

He slammed the empty mug back onto the table. "Or are you too much of a wimp to take on the Big Woody?" Then he gave his buddy a punch on the shoulder that made him spill some of his own root beer.

"Who are you calling a wimp?" The other motorcycle dude got to his feet, too. "I'm not afraid of the Big Woody, no matter how big and wild it is. Let's go!"

They were leaving!

What if they took off before Buddy



One noticed, and he went tearing away with those motorcycle dudes to the Big Woody all by himself? There was no more time to decide.

If the door to the pop shop closed behind the motorcycle dudes, Buddy Two would have to wait until someone else left just to get outside. So—without another thought—he dropped his bottle cap of root beer and launched himself

onto the black leather jacket one of the dudes was wearing.

Rrrring!!! The bell on the door sounded loud as the two motorcycle dudes busted through. Almost everybody in the pop shop looked at them.

The first dude yelled, “Big Woody, here we come!” and punched the other one in the shoulder again.

If Buddy Two hadn't flown out of the way, he might have been squashed! But he was outside now and went racing toward the truck as fast as he could. He had to warn Buddy One about where these dudes were going before they took off! Even the ladybugs had heard about the Big Woody before.

It was the biggest, wildest piece of wilderness around.



## CHAPTER TWO

### **Buddies Talk Things Over**

Buddy Two got to the truck ahead of the motorcycle dudes. The truth is, even though ladybugs are little, they can fly fast. Sometimes as fast a racehorse can run. It depends on the situation. Before he landed, he could see Buddy One pretending he was driving one of those huge machines all by himself, and he was making engine noises, too.

“Hey, Buddy!” He had to rest for a moment on one of the handlebars and catch his breath. “You’ll never guess where these dudes are headed. The Big Woody! So, unless you want to get lost—and maybe turned into a food bug for some bird, or snake, or lizard—we better get out of here. Because here they come!”

“I’m not afraid of the Big Woody!”

Buddy One didn't even stop bouncing from handlebar to handlebar.

“Have you forgotten how many times we watched motorcycle dudes tear out of the parking lot before? They go way too fast. We could fall off these things!”

“We can hide behind something, just like last time.” Buddy One flew off the handlebars, and for a minute Buddy Two thought he was coming to his senses. But instead, he started poking around in the corner of the truck where an extra gas can and a couple of helmets were stashed.

“Hey, look at this—see?” He tucked into a small slot behind a bracket on the top of one of the helmets until only his antennae were sticking up. “A perfect place to hide!”

Right then there was a loud squeak of a door opening, and then two loud crashes as the dudes climbed inside and slammed their doors shut.

“What if they go faster than the speed of light? Our antennae could bust off!” Buddy Two shivered just thinking about that. Without their antennae, ladybugs

would lose the most important part of their navigational system. Then what?

“Listen, Buddy, you know motorcycles do not go faster than the speed of light. Remember that science dude who came into the pop shop last week? He said nobody has figured out how to do that, yet. Not unless you turn into a piece of light yourself. Even rockets can't go that fast!”

He bounced back up to the handlebars and then tried to squeeze into the tight space between the hand grips and the chrome. Not happening. Even he was too big for that. So he just settled down onto a red grease-rag laying next to an old toolbox under the back truck window. “This is a good enough place—come on!”

Buddy Two flew off the handlebars to sit down next to his buddy. He didn't agree about going on a motorcycle adventure. He thought it would be too dangerous for ladybugs. Even very brave ones. But he did want to try and talk his buddy out of going to the Big

Woody all by himself, and maybe never coming back again. He was pretty sure Buddy One would come to his senses when he heard all the facts.

Even though the truck engine started up just then, and the motorcycle dudes made so much noise gunning it and laughing out loud, he wasn't too worried about driving away before he convinced his buddy not to go. That's because everyone who left *Buddy's Pop Shop* had to stop at the stop-sign on the corner in order to get back on the highway.

From there, it would be easy to fly back to the pop shop on their own. Even if they missed the stop sign, he figured they could find their way back if they watched what direction they turned. He knew this because some of their ladybug cousins had flown as far as ten miles away looking for tasty flowers, and still found their way back again.

He had to change his buddy's mind!

Now, the motorcycle dudes were whooping and hollering as they drove

along. They were shouting things like, "Last one up the mountain's a wimp!" and "Keep up, or you'll be eating dirt!" and punching each other's shoulder every time they thought of something new to say. It wasn't long before the truck started swerving a bit from side to side, and the ladybugs began bouncing up and down on the grease rag almost as if it were a trampoline.



Buddy Two's hat flew up without his head in it, and he had to grab quick to put it back on again. Because that's where he kept a few important things he might need. "See that?" he hollered. "They're driving crazy, already! We haven't even got on the motorcycles yet! I say we get out right now, and—"

He didn't get to finish his sentence. Just then Buddy One hauled off, gave him a punch on the shoulder, and yelled, "First one out's a wimp!" And then he laughed.



Just like one of the motorcycle dudes!  
Buddy Two couldn't believe it. His



own buddy had punched him! He didn't  
know if there was a rule about punching  
in the Bottling Room because he hadn't

been the one to go in there and see the actual sign. But he was pretty sure the Head Bottler wouldn't allow things like that in there. Not where they were learning to be good buddies. He knew for sure there was a rule about always saying nice things about buddies. They had been practicing that one for a long time, now.

Getting punched, and talking mean, made Buddy Two feel like they were not really buddies. He did not like it at all. So, he decided to go home. There was no rule saying you had to stay buddies with a crazy ladybug anyway. Except when he crawled up to look for the pop shop to see which direction he should fly... it was gone already.

He had no idea where it was anymore!



## CHAPTER THREE

### **Buddies Work Things Out**

It was going to take some serious thinking to get out of this mess. It was a big mess, too, even if Buddy One didn't realize it yet. Their danger-factor just got real.

Now they were farther away than even their flower-hunting cousins had gone. The red truck was still speeding along, starting to climb up into the foothills of the Big Woody Mountains. It was a place where there were no pop shops, and every living thing they might bump into was a wild thing.

The terrible truth was most of the creatures that lived in the Big Woody survived by eating someone else. They

did not have a kind Head Bottler who made and passed out delicious root beer to anyone who was thirsty. One that would hear a call for help and get you out of trouble wherever in the pop shop you happened to be. Why, he had even heard the buddies call for help when they were falling out of the sky with a parachute this morning. But that was only a field or two over from the pop shop. The Big Woody was way farther than that.

Buddy Two had heard a lot of rumors from bugs that escaped from it. They said the only way to survive the Big Woody was to become expert at running and hiding. Two of the hardest things for ladybugs to do. Because even though they could fly fast, they could not run fast. And as for hiding? That wasn't easy, either. Their shells (that protected their wings) were red. The brightest color in the animal kingdom.

He was thinking (and worrying) about all these things when Buddy One suddenly hollered, "Dibs on the red motorcycle!" and punched him on the



shoulder again.

“Will you quit that?”  
Buddy Two was getting  
tired of being punched.

“What—are you a  
wimp?” Buddy One  
challenged.

“I am not a wimp! I am one of the only  
two ladybugs that ever went skydiving.  
I'm not a motorcycle dude, either. I'm an  
itty-bitty bug heading to a place where  
over half the population are bug-eaters!  
What do you think about that?”

Buddy One suddenly got a serious  
look on his face. He made a big gulp, like  
he had just swallowed a mouthful of root  
beer, but he hadn't. “I think we better  
stick with these dudes, even if we have to  
hide under their collars. Being a food bug  
is not—repeat, NOT—my idea of  
adventure!”

“Then let's just hide out here in the  
truck until they come back from their  
ride. We could get squashed if they feel  
an itch! Or fall off if we're just hanging  
onto their clothes!”

Buddy One thought quietly about that for a minute, which made Buddy Two think he was actually— finally—coming to his senses. But then he said, “Our only hope is that slot behind the brackets on the helmets. We can hunker down and be out of the way of everything up there.”

“Why can't we just hide under the red rag until they get back?” argued Buddy Two. “At least we would be—” He didn't get to finish. Because right at that minute—that very minute—a giant shadow passed over the top of their heads. So big it was like a storm cloud coming. Then there was a loud, horrible screech that nearly busted all the navigational circuits in their antennae. It made their ears ring and their heads throb.

Next, the biggest blackest bird they ever saw in their lives swooped down and landed on the handlebars of the red motorcycle. Without saying a word, the buddies dove for the deeper folds of the grease-rag and stayed very still and quiet. They didn't dare move!

The bird grabbed a corner of the rag in

its beak and tossed it, trying to make them fall out. But they held onto the cloth for dear life. Once—twice more—the bird tried that but it didn't work. The Ladybug Buddies held on with all six of their legs (which were really twelve because there were two of them).



Finally the bird got tired of trying. He gave another loud screech and flew away.

The buddies stayed hidden until they couldn't hear the flap of bird wings anymore. Then they poked out their antennae.

"That was a crow!" whispered Buddy

One. "They'll eat anything! We better stick with the motorcycle dudes, even if it's a tight squeeze."

Buddy Two didn't answer right away because he had to admit Buddy One was right, this time. Even the back of a truck was dangerous when it was parked smack in the middle of the Big Woody. They would have to hide out in the slots on top of the helmets, after all.

They might have been able to think of a better place—maybe under the toolbox—except they didn't have time. Just then the truck slid to a stop in a cloud of dust. The dudes jumped out so fast you would have thought they were racing for a prize.

"Got the camera?" one of them said as he picked up the helmet Buddy Two was hiding on.

"Snapping it in, right now." The other dude shoved a little box thing onto his helmet slot so hard it knocked Buddy One practically off the top. It was all he could do to hang on while the dude put



on his helmet.

He crawled around on the camera, looking for a good place to tuck into while the motorcycles were being unloaded. There really wasn't a good place. So he ended up having to hold onto the top edge of a little round window in the front of it. If only he could crawl inside there!

But just as he was hanging his head over to look, the motorcycles ROARRRRRED to life. He felt his whole body jiggle even from way up here. Then there was a click and a ZOOOMMMMM!!!! as they took off over the bumpy dirt trail.

Oh, no! His feet were slipping! First the back two flew up behind him, then the next two bumped into them. Now he was hanging onto the round smooth edge of the window with only his last pair of legs. As they flew around the next steep curve, he hollered out a loud long: "AAAAAAHHHHHHH!"

He couldn't hold on anymore!





He tried with all of his ladybug strength, but it didn't help. Next thing he knew, Buddy One was tumbling legs over antennae. Headed straight into the heart of the Big Woody!







## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Buddies Protect Each Other**

Buddy Two was hiding in the slot of his motorcycle dude's helmet with only his antennae sticking up, waving wildly in the wind. They were zipping and skidding around corners so fast there were rocks and dirt flying up everywhere behind them. He wanted to see what was happening to Buddy One, but every time he raised up, another cloud of dust and dirt rolled over him. If only he knew if his buddy found a safe place!

Hidden in the slot on top of the helmet was rough, but he knew he would make it if he hung on and kept his head down low. Except his buddy didn't have a slot to hide in anymore. His own antennae were thrashing too wild in the wind and

dirt to pick up any kind of signal at all.

"HELP!" He called out to the Head Bottler without even thinking twice. "Sir! We're in terrible trouble here!"

Then a strange thing happened.

He was looking up at the tree branches whizzing by overhead, when all of a sudden he saw Buddy One! He was tumbling through the air, legs over antennae, headed into



the dark forest of the Big Woody!

Buddy Two knew his buddy was in trouble because he wasn't hanging onto anything. Not only that, his own antennae picked up the faint sound of "AAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!!!!" fading off into the distance as he flew by.

Buddy Two didn't have to think what to do because there was only one choice. If he ever wanted to see his best buddy again, he had to jump out of his own safe place. Right now! Or there would be too much Big Woody between them ever to find each other again. So he jumped.

First all he felt was a lot of choking dust and dirt pelting into him. But he resisted with all his might so he wouldn't get blown too far from where he had lost sight of Buddy One. It didn't take long for everything to get still and quiet, again, after the motorcycles got far enough away.

In fact, it got so quiet, his rumped antennae started picking up sounds. First there were the engines fading off into the distance. Then he could hear tree

branches waving in the breeze somewhere at the very top of the forest. He heard bird calls, too. But they were too far off to see any.

Then... Very faint...

But very clear...

He heard his buddy's voice below him. It was him, all right. He would know that voice anywhere. It was saying, "Oooo—ahhh—oowww!" And, "Oh, no! Yikes! Aaaahhhhh!!!!!"

Yep. That was him. But he couldn't see him anywhere because the thick carpet of grass and bushes on the floor of the Big Woody was very deep.

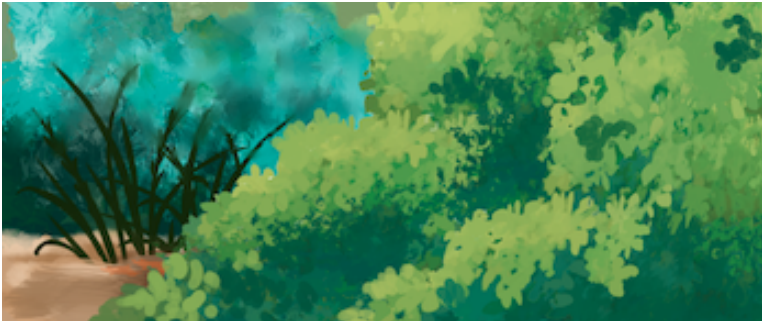
Buddy Two had to follow the sounds. He flew down and down until he landed at the bottom of a grassy place that was so much taller than he was, it could only be one thing. It was the place he had heard so many legends and stories about. The Big Woody Bug Jungle. Where hardly anyone ever came out of, again.

"I'm coming, Buddy!" He hollered out some encouragement as he ducked in and out between big blades of grass,



heading for his friend. "I'm on my way!"

"Over here!" Buddy One called back just as he burst through into a little clearing that had been made when Buddy One crashed down. "Boy, am I



glad to see you!"

"Well, I sure couldn't let you tumble down into the Big Woody all by yourself!" He helped his buddy up from the pile of dirt he had plowed up on his landing. "Buddies have to stick together!"

"Yeah, and now I know why. It's because surviving all by yourself is almost impossible!"

"Are you all right?"

"I busted off the end of an antenna. You think it'll grow back?"

"Beats me. We'll have to wait and see."

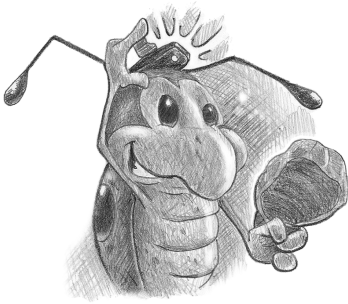
Sure is cold in here.” Buddy Two looked around in every direction. “I’ve never been in such a cold place before!”

“Me, either. What I wouldn’t give to scoot up next to a warm piece of coal in the fireplace back at the pop shop. This is the coldest I’ve been in my life!”

“Maybe we can make a fire of our own.”

“How? There’s no warm coals, and no piece of straw paper or napkins from under the tables to start one with. Ladybugs can’t make fire.”

“Not all by themselves, they can’t.” Buddy Two took off his hat and felt



around for something he had stashed inside the band. “But you can learn a lot by watching the human dudes do it. Look at this.”

He took out two little chunks of something that looked like sand.

“One’s a piece of metal, and one’s a piece of rock. It’s called flint and steel. All

you have to do is bang them together, and—” He crashed the two pieces against each other and a spark flew out.

To the ladybugs it was so big it looked like a fireball whooshing by. Buddy One had to duck just to get out of its way. By the time he turned around to watch what happened next, it had already plunged into the dirt and fizzled out.

“Wow—that's fire, all right,” said Buddy One. “Too bad we don't have any straw wrappers or napkins to keep it going.”

“Maybe some of this dry grass and leaves will burn.”

The buddies gathered up some stuff that was scattered all around them, made a little pile, then banged the two chunks together again. Before long, they had a nice blaze hemmed in by a ring of tiny rocks they set around to keep it inside.

There were no fireplaces out here, so they had to be responsible and make their own. That way, no forest fires would start. After that, they just sat there







for a while, warming their feet and munching on little toasted things that popped off from the underside of leaves, like popcorn.

"I'm sorry I called you a wimp and punched you, Buddy," said Buddy One. "You're sure not one of those. If it hadn't been for you, I wouldn't have lasted long out here. I wish I hadn't got us into this!" He shook his head, sadly. "Now it looks like we'll have to live here for the rest of our lives! Those motorcycle dudes might never come back this way. Even if they did, how would we hang on?"

"Hmm..." Buddy Two was chewing on a blade of sweet grass for dessert. "First, we'd have to find some way to protect our antennae. I busted a piece off one of mine, too."

"That's for sure. No good going on an adventure if you can't survive it. We have to be prepared!"

Buddy Two gave a big sigh. "It's a little late for that now. I heard bugs don't

last very long out here in the Big Woody. Too many bug-eaters around.”

“Maybe we could find something for protection right around here. Armor, or something.”

The two of them sat quietly for a long time. Thinking. Buddy One was holding onto a piece of thick bark with curly-looking bumps all over it, waiting to toss it into the fire. “Hey,” he said after looking it over for a while. “Hey—I think I just came up with a brilliant idea!”



## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Buddies Never Give Up On Each Other**

“This stuff is all over the place. It looks like it's the shell off some kind of a nut or something. They are all over the ground around here.” Buddy One turned it over and saw that the inside was hollow and smooth, with some broken parts of a thinner kind of wood hanging down on the sides . It was almost like a helmet!

He clapped it over his antennae, with the smooth ends hanging down over his head. It was a tight squeeze, but there was just enough room for his antennae to curl over and fit inside.

“Hey!” Buddy Two jumped up and started looking around for one of those



for himself. "An acorn shell--I've heard about them. They will make a perfect antennae helmet! Think it will blow off in the wind?"

"Not with these broken sides hanging down. It feels just right."

"Here's another good one." Buddy Two picked it up and put it on over the top of his hat. "Ladybugs can't get far with their antennae busted off, so we better go for it. Good idea, Buddy!"

"There's danger everywhere around here. These could protect us from a lot of other things, too."

Just then, Buddy Two noticed a beautiful blue flower a short distance away and crawled over to eat some of the golden pollen out of it. He loved pollen. "I wonder if we can still fly with these on."

Buddy One was hungry for some pollen, too. He looked around for a minute, then busted a thorn out of his way to crawl up into a wild pink rose. He liked eating pollen, almost as much as drinking root beer.

He was about to drop the thorn and climb into the flower, when a big shiny head popped out and snapped at him.

"ANTS!!!" He hollered and shoved the thorn into the snapping, pincer-like jaws just before they grabbed hold of his helmet. Those things were used for cutting, holding, fighting, and digging. Ants and ladybugs were mortal



enemies!

Buddy Two looked down from his blue flower and saw a long line of them marching up the stem. "Look out!" he yelled. "There's more crawling up behind you! A whole army! Fly , Buddy —fly for your life!"

Buddy One took off a little wobbly because he wasn't used to flying with a helmet over his antennae. But he managed to tumble into the soft blue flower next to his buddy. For a while they just sat there, watching the line of ants crawling into the rose bushes a few feet away.

"I'll bet there's a million ants in this Big Woody Bug Forest!" said Buddy Two. "Let's get out of here!"

"We can't go without putting out our fire. That thing could burn down the whole Big Woody."

"That little thing?"

"I heard it only takes a spark."

Buddy Two looked over at the ants again. "We'll have to wait until the army goes by."







“We better wait, then. A lot of animals live here, even if they are mostly bug eaters.”

After what seemed like forever (but wasn't), the last of the ant army disappeared into the rose bushes. Then the buddies flew down off the blue flower and began kicking dirt onto their little blaze.

“This could take all day!” Buddy One flew back to the nearest end of the rose bushes—after making sure no more ants were around—and popped off another thorn. In a few seconds he was back, holding onto the narrow end and shoveling dirt with the wide one. “Hey, this is pretty handy. Sort of like a sword on one end and a tool on the other.”

Buddy Two (who liked to collect useful things) stopped kicking dirt and flew over to get one, too. After that, their fire was out in no time.

Then they spent a while twisting a few strands of dry grass together, so they could hang their thorns over a shoulder when they had to fly. Who could tell

when they might need one, again? Out here in the Big Woody, a smart bug had to stay ready for anything.

“We better go back to the road and try to find the truck,” Buddy Two suggested. “It couldn't be any worse there than out here. If we miss the motorcycle dudes, we might never get back to the pop shop. You want to live out here for the rest of our lives?”

“Are you kidding? I can't wait to get back to the pop shop. A ladybug can live their whole life there, as long as they follow the rules. The Head Bottler doesn't allow any wild things in, either. He even has the pop shop dog to guard the yard.”

“It is a perfect place for ladybugs,” Buddy Two had to agree.

“What if the motorcycle dudes go back another way and leave without us? We might never get home again! We'd have to fly halfway to the moon just to see the road over all these trees!”

“Buddy—don't exaggerate!”

“I'm not. Getting pitched off that

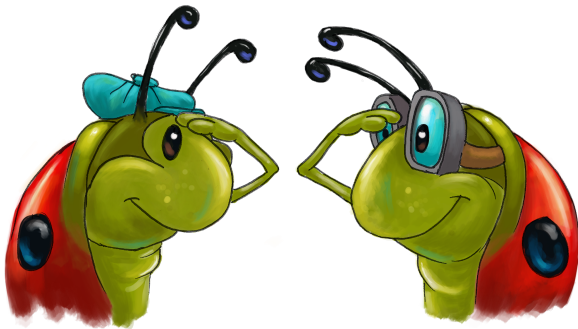
motorcycle caught me off-guard. Next thing I knew I was tumbling feet over antennae. I couldn't get a fix on any direction. Not with one antenna busted."

"You just follow me then. I know exactly where it is. Since we know the motorcycle dudes were heading up the mountain, we should be able to find the truck again by hiking down."

"It would take all our lives to hike down," Buddy One complained.

"I meant flying down. Who would settle for hiking if they can fly?"

"I always thought we were pretty lucky to be flying bugs, but being Ladybug Buddies is even better. You have more than just yourself watching out for you. Thanks for not giving up on me, Buddy!" He gave Buddy Two a





salute. "You're the best kind of buddy there is!"

His friend returned the salute. "It takes two of us to be buddies," he reminded him. "Nobody can be a buddy all by themselves. Now, let's see if we can find that road. Helmet back on?"

"Check!"

"Sword secure?"

"Check!"

"Then let's do this thing!"

The Ladybug Buddies took off (a little wobbly because they still weren't used to flying with all that extra equipment) and headed for the nearest tree so they could have a look around. It also gave them time to tighten up their slings and double-check their helmets before making their long flight.

They weren't too worried anymore. Because standing out on the end of a low-hanging branch, they could see a piece of the dirt road from there.

They were not as far away as they thought they were!

That made them totally happy for about three seconds. After that, they were interrupted by a strange buzzing noise that got louder the closer it came to them.

“Quick! Find a place to hide!” hollered Buddy Two, who didn't feel so brave now that something bigger was coming.

Buddy One took a dive into a knothole, and hoped no one else was living there as he tumbled in. “I never heard such a big bee in my life!” he said as his friend tumbled in almost on top of him. “Should we make a run for it, or



stay here and hope it doesn't see us?"

"Fix bayonets!" Buddy Two shouted as he reached for his thorn. "We might have to fight our way out!"



## CHAPTER SIX

### **Buddies Are Brave**

The Ladybug Buddies untied their thorns as fast as they could, then stood shoulder-to-shoulder in front of the knot-hole, ready to fight off intruders. It worked with the ant in the flower, but would it work with a giant bee? Except there was something about the sound of this bee that wasn't quite the same as others they had heard.

“Maybe it's a wasp,” whispered Buddy One. “That would be bad!”

Then, just as they were looking in the direction of the noise and waiting for it to come into view, a big cloud of dust poofed up from behind a curve in the

road, and they heard a loud long, “Woohooo!” from a voice they recognized.

“It's the motorcycle dudes!” shouted Buddy Two. “They're coming back!”

“Sling arms!” Buddy One tied his thorn out of the way and jumped out into the mid-air. “Head for the road, Buddy! Before they pass us!”

The ladybugs flew as fast as they could, which turned out to be faster than motorcycle dudes sliding around steep curves down a mountain. In fact, they slowed down at just the right moment, made a perfect landing onto the second helmet, and grabbed hold of the camera bracket. Without even a wobble because they were finally getting used to their equipment.

With curly wood helmets to protect their antennae, they could pop their heads up to look over the bracket. They even had fun letting a couple of their legs drag behind. The Ladybug Buddies were riding motorcycles!



When they finally got back to the truck and tumbled into the red grease-rag again, they laughed and gave each other a high-five. They had done it! The motorcycle dudes were laughing, too, and punching each other in the shoulder

every once in a while as they loaded the motorcycles back into the truck.

“They’ll be calling us new names, now, bud!” one of them said as he slammed his door and started the engine. “We’ve conquered the Big Woody!”

The Ladybug Buddies looked at each other.

“We conquered the Big Woody, too,” said Buddy One. “Maybe we should pick new names.”

“Like what, for instance?”

“Something that reminds us of our adventures.” He pulled off his helmet and looked it over. “I discovered this strong curly wood out there, right? From now on, you can call me Curly.”

“That’s a good one, Buddy! I mean, Curly.” Buddy Two thought hard for a moment. “I flew straight into the heart of the Big Woody, looking for you, and then remembered how to get out again.”

“You sure did—you took on the whole Big Woody to save me! How about I call you, Woody?”



“We're probably the only ladybugs in the world with names like that.”

“Because we're the only ladybugs in the world to go on such incredible adventures!”

“OK. But listen up.” Buddy Woody took his helmet off and gave a big yawn. “Let's agree to hang our helmets and swords up on the fireplace when we get back to the pop shop, slurp some root beer, then kick back and rest for about two days before we take on any more adventures.”

“It's a deal,” said Buddy Curly. “I can't think of anything more exciting than what we already did, anyway.”

They were quiet for a few minutes. It had been a long day, and they were both tired. Just then, one of the motorcycle



dudes laughed, punched the other dude in the shoulder and said, "We conquered the Big Woody!"

"Yep, we conquered the Big Woody, all right. But I'll bet it's nothing compared to the Deep Salt Lagoon. Man, that's a whole different kind of adventure!"

"You mean go scuba diving for that old pirate treasure we heard about?"

"That's the one. Going underwater would be the biggest adventure there is!" He punched the other dude in the shoulder again. "Or are you too much of a wimp to try it!"

The Ladybug Buddies looked at each other.

"Don't even think about it," said Buddy Woody. "Ladybugs can't breathe underwater."

"I'd try it if I had enough air," said the dude to his friend. "You can do anything with the right equipment."

"OK. Let's stop off at *Buddy's Pop Shop* and talk it over."

"Did you hear that?" Buddy Curly got that look in his eyes again. "They're

going to stop at the pop shop and talk it over! We at least have to listen! Doesn't mean we're going to do it."

"That's what you said about the Big Woody. Remember? You were just going to look at the motorcycles, not go anywhere."

"Then there's nothing to worry about. Because there's nothing to look at. Right?"

"I guess so." Buddy Woody tried to straighten out a kink in one of his antennae. There would be plenty of time to talk Buddy Curly out of it if they weren't actually going anywhere right now. Especially if he heard all the facts.

Nothing to worry about.

They pulled into the pop shop parking lot a while later and the dude who was driving said, "Grab that map of the Deep Salt Lagoon so we can look it over."

A map?

Buddy Curly flew up and peeked into the back window as the passenger dude reached into the glove compartment.

"Buddy Woody!" He sounded like he

already slept for three hours, drank two caps of root beer, and was ready to go again. "Look at this--it's a treasure map!"

The End



Next up...

**The LADYBUG BUDDIES**

Incredible Scuba Diving Adventure

Don't miss it!



## The Oath of the Buddy



### HOW TO MAKE **BUDDY'S** ROOT BEER

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Never leave *Buddy's Root Beer* unattended  
Say good things about *Buddy's Root Beer*  
Keep cool *Root Beer* needs to be chilled at all times  
Yell for the head bottler if you need help, his office is upstairs  
Many sacrifices are made for *Buddy's Root Beer* so it will  
be the best!

**Anybody can be a buddy.**

## About the Author



After a career in the Coast Guard, and many years working with youth programs, **Jason Graham** knows a lot about being a buddy. *The Ladybug Buddies Adventures* had their beginnings as bedtime stories which he told to his own children. He is also a Wilderness Expert at the Wilderness School Institute, and a contributor to their popular *Backpack Survival Guides*. He enjoys hearing from readers, and you can get in touch with him by sending an email to:

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## About the Illustrator



Work that is colorful and vibrant, with a certain storybook pleasure, **Brian Beausoleil** paints from the heart no matter what the subject is. With a master's level in fine art and illustration, two years of study with a former Disney animator, he brings a great sense of joy and satisfaction to his work. He has been painting professionally for over thirty years, and you can see more of his art over at:

<http://beausoleilart.blogspot.com>

*Jason Graham*

It isn't always easy to be a buddy.



But it's worth it.