



Synopsis

Meet Gully, a teenage ladybug yearning for adventure beyond her mundane life in the Amazon Rainforest town of Bugindon. Despite her family's concerns, Gully's determination leads her to pursue her dream of joining the revered Flutter-by Squadron. However, her small stature proves to be a challenge and after a failed attempt at acceptance, Gully finds herself plummeting into the depths of the forest floor, discovering a hidden world called Illumiput inhabited by glow worms.

Here, she befriends two glow worms, Snaggle and Tooth, and learns of a feud with the neighboring Arachnidingnag. United with her new friends, Gully embarks on a journey to rescue the kidnapped leader of Illumiput, only to realize that the supposed enemy, the Arachnidingnags, are not what they seem. Together, they bridge the gap between their nations, teaching acceptance and unity.

As Gully returns home, she inspires her town to overcome fear and prejudice, bringing Bugindon, Illumiput, and Arachnidingnag together. Through Gully's unexpected travels, the story imparts a powerful message of bravery, understanding, and the importance of embracing diversity.

A HUGE Adventure in a tiny world

Meet Gully: a young, eager and uncharacteristically small ladybug. Living in the modern Amazon Rainforest town, Bugindon; Gully knows every bug must play their part in maintaining the safety and sanctity of their beautiful Upper Canopy town.

This is all well and good, but it sure is boring. Gully dreams of a life of adventure. She would love to follow in the footsteps of her mother, a famed explorer, but after her mother was lost on an expedition Gully was taken into the care of her nervous Aunt and Uncle.

Gully refuses to accept the quiet life and dreams of joining the 'Flutter-by-Cadets' - a scout style initiative for young bugs who hope to one day become full-blown 'Flutter-by-Officers' in the much revered 'Flutter-by-Squadron'. These are romanticised, heroic, goggle wearing sepia-toned pilot bugs who patrol the skies, keeping the Canopy safe from dangers, including the dangerous predators who live below. Their worry for their tiny Niece is only matched by their impending fear of change, which makes life hard for their own son Sonny - a child who idolises Gully and her rebellious streak.

Gully's love of adventure is only thwarted by her small stature. Being much smaller than the average Bugindon bug even simple tasks are a challenge but Gully never gives up. Every Saturday morning she scoffs down her breakfast and rushes off to the Flutter-By-Academy. Gully's Aunt and Uncle believe she is out on a paper round but in reality their beloved niece sneaks through the gates of the Flutter-By academy, hides behind an old bleacher stand and watches in awe at the Flutter-by drills commence. Cadets climb walls and fly vast heights with the greatest of ease. Dreaming to one day join, Gully returns home to share great stories of adventure with Sonny her impressionable young cousin.

Weeks go by. Through school Gully is taught about the horrors that live down below on the ecosystem floor. Gully pays no mind to this as she stares out the window watching the Flutter-By squadron flybys.

A huge opportunity presents itself in the form of an actual 'Flutter-by' acceptance exam. Gully knows she needs to succeed and is rushing out of the house when she is stopped by her Aunt and Uncle. They have just been on the phone to the local newsagents where they discovered that Gully has been lying to them, there is no newspaper job. To make matters worse, Sonny accidentally lets it slip where Gully has been going.

Gully's Aunt and Uncle are distraught and refuse to let Gully leave the house. It's far too dangerous for a young bug like herself to go off and join the Flutter-By-Cadets. Gully

refuses to accept this and runs from the house leaving her Aunt, Uncle and cousin worried sick.

Gully makes it to the trial but the prospective candidates tower over her. She tries her hardest but to no avail The head Flutter-by Officer stamps denied across her form. Devastated, Gully begins to tear up. The head Flutter-by Officer kneels down and points out that Gully should wait until her wings come in - maybe next year. This is little solace for Gully as she believes she has not only ruined her chance for adventure but has also ruined her relationship with her family. She is utterly lost. Surely this moment couldn't get any lower?

That is when the town is alerted to the impending danger all bugs learn about from an early age - The Great Storm. This is a storm that all bugs are worried about even though none have seen with their own eyes. They are of course used to rain but this is something else, something all citizens share fearful stories about. As Gully trudges home she finds the accepted members of the 'Flutter-by-Squadron' commencing their duties - flying through the town to alert the townsfolk of the impending danger. It is a necessity for all citizens to get home immediately but Gully can't go home, she refuses to head home.

As the small bug battles through the storm the head Flutter-by Officer flutters in, flanked by the successful students. They request that Gully returns home but she refuses feeling utterly humiliated. The Officer reveals he knew Gully's mother & shares a few kind words. It is a beautiful moment but with the storm raging this is not the time for stories. The Officer undercuts the tension by demanding Gully return to her loving family. Gully is about to agree when one of the bolder students pipes up telling Gully that she's not her mother and adventure isn't for her.

This hits hard. Feeling worthless and without thought she turns into the storm - the tiny bug against the world.

Huge raindrops crash onto the leaves, revealing the danger below. The officer in panic shouts and chases after her. Gully refuses to stop - fluttering her tiny wings. With the great storm in full flow a huge crash of rain smashes into the trees almost sending her over the edge to the darkness beneath. Gully stumbles. Her tiny wings not capable of flight. That's when it happens. The officer charges to Gully's rescue but there's no way to help as another crashes and hits Gully directly throwing her to the depths below.

Crashing from leaf to branch to twig to bush, the world Gully has always known disappears from view. The tumble seems to last forever, falling past all kinds of weird and wonderful ecosystems, each of which gets darker as the foliage sets in.

She impacts the mulch of the forest floor but instead of stopping, she finds herself smashing through the leaves and into true darkness. Her fall finally comes to a halt.

There is deadly silence. It is almost impossible to make anything out in the cavernous system of tunnels where she now finds herself. With a whimper Gully calls out a hello, but to no response. It doesn't seem safe to stay still so she attempts to climb to her feet, but with a bump she bangs her head on the low ceiling of a tunnel. Mulch and leaves have fallen in, covering the hole she had crashed through. Again, she calls out, but nothing. She has no choice but to choose a direction and start exploring in the hope of finding a way out. That's when she gets her first sight.

In the distance pops up a small glowing object. It isn't clear what exactly is making this strange illumination, so Gully approaches hesitantly. Suddenly, a hundred small lights pop up. A shocked Gully turns and attempts to run, but being larger than the tunnels, she smashes her head into a low beam and blacks out.

On waking, Gully finds herself lying in a large chamber and, in true 'Gulliver's Travels' style, she is wrapped in rope-like glowing 'snares' (see research below). This is where the next step of our adventure begins. Gully, the smallest ladybug in her hometown but now finds herself surrounded by tiny Glow Worms - the inhabitants of this strange new world of Illumiput, a world beneath the forest floor. This world is far less modern than her own town. A strange nation with traditional environments supported by weird and wonderful glow worm technology.

The inhabitants are initially fearful of the giant visitor - hence the snares. They use her captivity as an opportunity to learn about all the strange gadgets in her possession. They are fascinated. During this time, Gully finds herself getting to know two of the smaller inhabitants - Snaggle and Tooth. This double act is made up of two uniquely small young glow worms.

Snaggle and Tooth inform Gully that their loving leader has been kidnapped by the neighboring nation of Arachnidnag (this is intentionally a reference to the original novel and will also be as hard to pronounce for everyone in the story as it was for you to read it). Through a variety of tall tales Snaggle and Tooth teach Gully about Arachnidnag's aggressive ways and how these vicious insects have also ruined the

Illumput harvest for the past several seasons. Gully although hesitant to go with them, has a sense of pride and memories of her own failings back in her hometown overcome her. Their adventure may even lead her to a way home so she agrees to join.

Their Journey begins. Gully is in a strange and perilous world, a wild at heart yet eerie setting. Somewhat like a 'Wizard Of Oz' road movie rather than the realist world of Bugington where Gully originates. Through the adventure we experience Illumput and the world below as a world of vivid colour and extraordinary design.

We also gain glimpses of Illumput's enemy, the inhabitants of Arachnidingnag. Spider-like creatures who at this point are still imagined as violent and dangerous. Being spider-like, the Arachnidingnags scurry the walls of the dark tunnels unable to light their own way so are only ever seen in shadow. We also learn more about the feud that has run between the two nations. That's when it happens. Gully is horrified in a dark moment when Snaggle and Tooth are lost on the adventure - seemingly kidnapped by Arachnidingnags.

Alone once more Gully has no choice but to continue the search for the Leader of Illumput and her two friends. The adventure eventually leads Gully to the seemingly dangerous nation of Arachnidingnag. She is ready to fight, ready to do anything to rescue her new friends Snaggle and Tooth but she isn't ready for what she finds - nothing but terrified inhabitants. The spider-like Arachnidingnags have made a beautiful home in a small clearing where light breaks through the tunnel ceiling. They're not the enemy, they are all as scared as the inhabitants of Illumput. She's been lied to. These aren't monsters. They're just like the glow worms; they're just like her own family of ladybugs back home.

Whilst Gully searches for her friends she is quietly followed by the amazed towns-folk of Arachnidingnag. It's then that she stumbles across a large statue with a clear family resemblance. This statue is in honour of her own mother.

Taking in this moment, Gully suddenly realises she is surrounded by a ragtag group of Arachnidingnag towns-folk. She is still dumbfounded by the statue and her mother's involvement with the people of Arachnidingnag. The chief Arachnidingnag steps forward.

Gully learns how her mother had worked with Arachnidingnag in the past and had been a huge support in bringing the hard to find resources to their nation. That was until she was lost in the great storm of '73. The Townsfolk all look up solemnly to the leafy trees

high over had then bow their heads sadly. The chief Arachnidingnag discusses how food is scarce. High up above food occasionally drops to the floor but this isn't nearly enough to feed their growing community. There is food in the dark tunnels but it's too dangerous with the aggressive neighbouring nation of Illumiput.

The chief requests that Gully work for them and carry on the good work of her mother. Gully wanting to learn more of her mother reluctantly refuses as she just wants to find her friends and get home. With this the townsfolk try to seize her, ignoring the chief's commands for calm. Gully has no choice but to run she just manages to escape into the darkness of the tunnels.

She is at her lowest point - again she is lost and very much alone - that is until she stumbles across a light in the dark. She's hesitant to approach but stumbles and finds herself in a small cavern. Gully stumbles across a small group in the dark. It's made up of Snaggle, Tooth, their leader and an Arachnidingnag called Duncan. She realises that they are working together. Illumiput and Arachnidingnag citizens united. The glow worms lighting the way whilst the spider scurries the wall collecting everything they need from the high up spaces. This is it. This is the key that can bring the two societies together.

Gully and her friends rush to tell the two sides about their discovery and to show them that they really aren't that different. The two sides of Illumiput & Arachnidingnag are able to see each other clearly for the first time and there is no reason to be scared of one another, when they could come together to help each other.

With the help of the spider's webs and the glow worm's illumination Gully is able to climb up the great trees to be reunited with her town. Gully clambers up and onto a great leaf where the flutter-by officer spots her. A rescue attempt begins. As the rescue commences it becomes clear another great storm is brewing - what are the chances?

The Flutter-by Squadron need to help now but are horrified to see the critters from below. There is panic as they assume danger and a standoff is about to begin. Gully refuses to let this happen - no one is going to be mean to her new friends whether they are Arachnidingnag, Illumiput or Bugindon bug. The storm is beginning to hit hard but the team pull together and against all the odds members of all nations find themselves in Bugindon - Gully has made it home!

Everyone finally learns the important lesson of overcoming the fear of the other and confronting their own persecution. Through her bravery and understanding, Gully has brought all the nations together.

Through 'Gully's Unexpected Travels', the audience should be left with an overwhelming sense of hope for the future. Gully's bravery and willing to explore leaves us open to all manner of potential adventures. The strong moral tale also provides an opportunity to look at our own world and work out who we want to be, whilst always assessing what it really means to be the bigger person.

CHARACTERS

The setting of the Amazon Rainforest provides the backdrop and setting for all manner of weird and wonderful creatures. No matter how surreal, we plan to base at least some sense of them in reality. We plan to use the following real creatures as the starting point for character design, but obviously humanising many aspects for easy identification.

<https://amp.theguardian.com/science/2018/dec/10/tread-softly-because-you-tread-on-23bn-tonnes-of-micro-organisms>

<https://www.wettropics.gov.au/fireflies>

GULLY

Despite her small size and being born with only one wing, Gully is the most ambitious of all the ladybugs. Her desperate sense of adventure is limited by her own physical limitations and her Aunt and Uncles fears for her safety.



7 - Spot Ladybird



2 - Spot Ladybird

SONNY and GULLY'S AUNT & UNCLE

Sonny is Gully's impressionable younger cousin. He absolutely idolises Gully and her spirit of adventure, but much like Gully's own spirit is restricted by his parents, Gully's Aunt and Uncle. A loving pair with not a bad invertebrate in their body, their only fault is they care and worry too much. This leads to not allowing Gully to follow her adventurous passions.



Cream Spot Ladybird



22 - Spot Ladybird

FLUTTER-BY-SQUADRON

Resembling romanticized 1940/50's RAF pilots – heroic, goggle-wearing sepia-toned pilot bugs. These bugs embody the spirit of adventure Gully longs for. Not only do they invoke the great spirit of Canopy life, but they strive to protect it from potential harm. such as the dangerous critters who live below.



10 Spot Ladybird
f. decempustulatus



Harlequin Ladybird
f. spectabilis



Pine Ladybird



10-spot Ladybird
f. bimaculata

GLOW WORMS - THE INHABITANTS OF ILLUMIPUT

Glow worms build 'snares' made of silk fibres, coated with mucus. The snares consist of tubes in which the glow worms are suspended, as well as long, hanging filaments, coated in sticky beads of mucous. The glow worms emit a pale light which attracts insects toward the sticky threads of their snare, which Gully could awake in when she finds herself at the bottom of the rainforest.



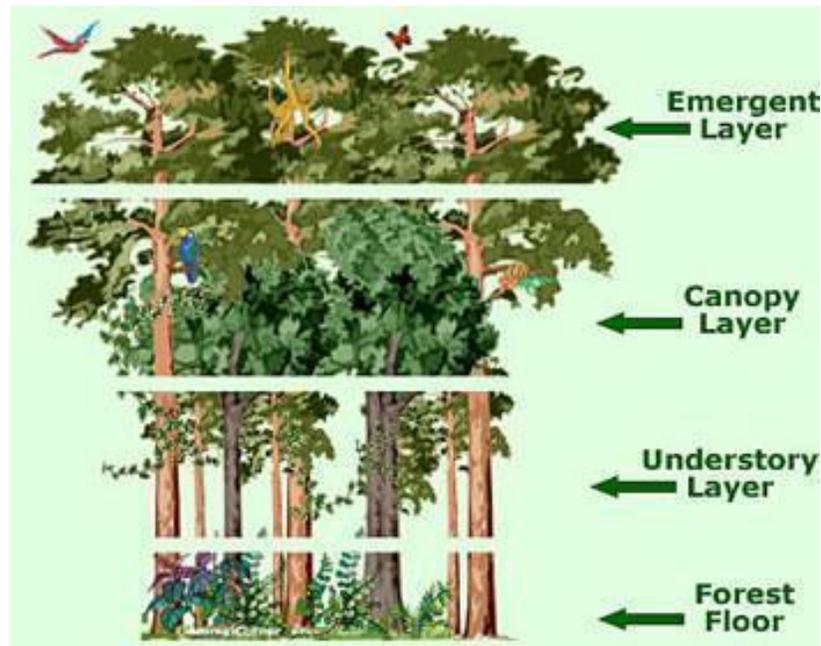
The residents of Illumiput are presented as tiny glow worms but very much in style of characters such as Minions from the 'Despicable Me' series. They speak and wear more tribal like clothing based around the colours found in the undergrowth. Somewhat silly but still lovable even with a sense of cluelessness to the outside world.

SPIDERS - THE INHABITANTS OF ARACHNIDINGNAG

Initially presented as terrifying and dangerous invaders, Gully eventually realises these creatures are as loveable and as misunderstood as all other rainforest critters.



THE WORLDS



Each of these layers is a very different environment and supports different life forms. The stratus differ in many ways, including temperature, the amount of sunlight that they receive, the wetness of the environment and the amount and types of living life forms.

BUGINDON



The upper parts of the trees house birds, reptiles, and mammals, but more importantly insects in its leafy environment. The trees in the Canopy entwine to make a very thick

cover which is generally 60 – 130 feet above the ground. At the top, rainfall is heavy, the winds are strong and humidity is fairly high. Many of the trees have their branches intertwined, which in turn can act as bridges for Gully and other residents. They are tied together by creepers and vines, making them beautiful living bridges.



Orchids, ferns and bird nests - this will act as nice imagery as Gully falls from the lofty lush light green and blue skies of the canopy to the forest floor and undergrowth.

FOREST FLOOR - ILLUMIPUT & ARACHNIDINGNAG



The forest floor is teeming with animal life, particularly insects. This is where our glow worm and spider tribes are found. It is also the most humid part of the Rainforest. There

is no grass here. The underlying soil is hidden by a thin layer of rapidly rotting leaves, twigs, and dead flowers. The work of decomposing this litter layer is carried out by plants like fungi and insects, which allows us to create all manner of interesting interweaved worlds.



Gully's
Unexpected Travels

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