

Ruby and the Three Swamps

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@GhgLab

You've heard about wetlands, of marshes and ponds,
And maybe of peatlands, the fens and the bogs.
Know which one you're missing, that's often sold short?
The magnificent swamp, such a versatile sort!

While stories may say that they're gloomy and scary
You're about to find out that it's quite the contrary.

Our story begins in a peatland, indeed,
In a great Sphagnum bog where no tree would succeed.

Its hummocks and hollows delighted the eye,
And the mosses were happy as the years drifted by.





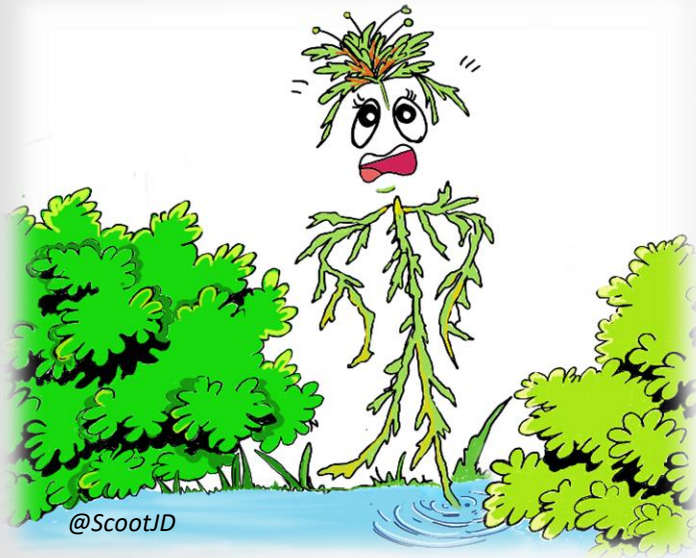
But Ruby was bored of her life in the bog,
Bored of feeling acidic and, of course, wet and
soggy.
She was tired of sitting all day on her bum
Packed in so tightly with the other Sphagnum.

"I don't want to spend my whole life with wet
feet,
Just waiting and waiting 'til I turn into peat.
I want to go out in the world for a tromp
I'm leaving the bog to go live in a swamp!"



So away Ruby went without quite knowing
where
The best swamp would be, or what might be
found there.
Would she live with the trees, with their heads
in the clouds?
Or somewhere a bit drier, with some much
firmer ground?

"Only way to find out", Ruby said to herself,
"Is to give them a try and see for myself!"
Up hummocks, down hollows, she made her way
through
Past the edge of the bog, to where the shrubs
grew.



The willows were lush here, the alder leaves
bobbed

It seemed quite ideal; this just might do the
job!

But then much to her dismay she began to sink;
shrub swamps, you know, are more wet than
you'd think!

Ruby looked for a hummock, but there seemed
to be few

And what ones she could see were quite
crowded, too.

It seemed really quite hopeless, as she looked
around;

"I'm not made for the water, if I stay I will
drown!"

Ruby had to keep moving, this wasn't the place;
Maybe the trees had a more welcoming space.

Off Ruby trudged, trying not to fall in
(you see, though a Sphagnum, she can't really
swim).

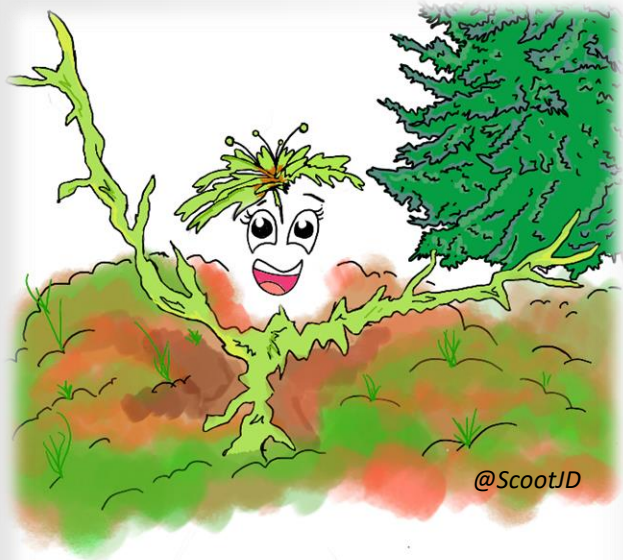


The next swamp she came to was quite a relief
As she sat for a moment on top of a leaf.
The trees here were tall, with lofty green
crowns
And a blanket of leaves covered the ground.

At last someplace drier, no more soggy feet!
And some shade from the sun would be quite a
treat.
So many tree species, oak, maple, and ash,
"But where are the mosses?!" poor Ruby then
asked.

As she looked all around at the wet forest floor
She realized what she hadn't noticed before.
All the leaves from the trees would build up in a
hurry
And before too long she'd be totally buried!

On she must go, but where else was left?
Ruby was tired, and felt quite bereft.
This swamp was too wet, that swamp was too
dry -
SURELY there must be one more swamp to try!



The last swamp she came to just seemed like a
goody,
The soil was mushy, but also quite woody.
A lush green canopy covered the sky
And the fresh smell of cedar was wafting on by.

Although there were puddles in all the low
places,
On the high spots she saw some familiar plant
faces.
So Ruby lay down on her tiny moss stomach
Atop a small hill, you might call it a hummock.

Then she looked at the soil and she suddenly
knew
That many swamps can actually be peatlands
too!
So Ruby got comfy, with nowhere left to roam;
She'd final found her perfect swamp home.

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