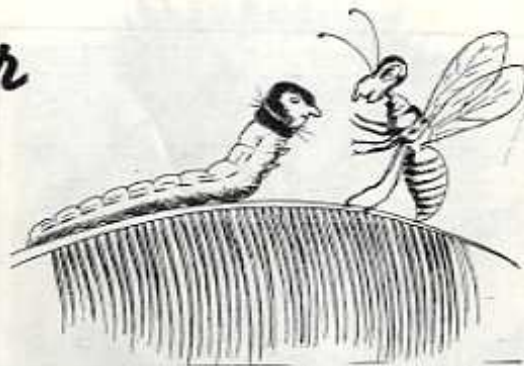


# Coconut Caterpillar in Conversation with a Parasite



The coconut caterpillar suddenly gets irritated as a parasite stings while the caterpillar is enjoying its meal of coconut leaf tissues. The excited caterpillar thunders thus

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Why did you prick me on sight? It is very painful.

**Parasite** : I not only pricked you but also deposited my eggs on your body.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Why? For what purpose.

**Parasite** : You have become the daily bread of our young ones. They take different meals from your body and grow up like us. In short we multiply.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** But we are not problematic to anyone. A few mouthfuls from a coconut leaf will not endanger plantations.

**Parasite** : What do you mean. You have already caused outbreaks in coconut plantations all over the island and are now really a threat. But you all cannot escape us as we follow you anywhere. We have

further deployed our efficient members in various regions, and they have the ability to attack you in your egg, larval and pupal stages.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Does it mean that we do not survive?

**Parasite** : Yes, Because our young ones develop by consuming your body fluid.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Then how do you all know our presence here? Furthermore we are now small in numbers. Many of our members went into oblivion as the owner burnt our sanctuaries.

**Parasite** : When you all form galleries and get established in coconut leaves, the land owners report on your activities to the Coconut Research Institute, Lunuwila. Those Officers, after inspections drive us down here. There we are provided with up to date breeding stations

well nourished and looked after.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** So do you all operate from the Coconut Research Institute Head Quarters to different destinations.

**Parasite :** No. No. We are provided with another breeding station at Mylambavely in Eastern Province.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Why do they employ you to give us this sort of attack?

**Parasite :** You can be got rid of by using Agro chemicals also. But they are very costly, and cause hazards to us as well as those who handle them. Surely this is why we have been given this entire contract.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** So how are you all despatched to various locations?

**Parasite :** Normally we are sent by post. But at times gentlemen of Coconut Research Institute bring us along with them and are let off.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Wonderful!

**Parasite :** There is no wonder in that. We are well placed in tubes, and these tubes are packed in wooden boxes and thus are sent by mail. On receipt of this parcel

the land owner has to pull the tubes to examine our emergence. If we are late he is advised to keep the tubes in a cool place so that we can come out conveniently afterwards. Thereafter we are released where you all are. On return of the empty tubes and boxes to Coconut Research Institute another combat force is despatched, and this process is continued till you all disappear.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Well, with all your combat forces, I am sure that you cannot even touch our adults.

**Parasite :** True, This is exactly why the owners are lighting night fires in their lands, where you all roost, and your adults fly into the fire and die, and the balance lot of you of course we kill.

**Coconut Caterpillar:** Oh, is that correct. I am trembling.

**Parasite :** This is just the result of my mission. In a short while you will get paralyzed and upon your body, my brood will develop. Without much waste of time I have to go now in search of another prey like you to continue my progeny, for the benefit of the coconut industry.