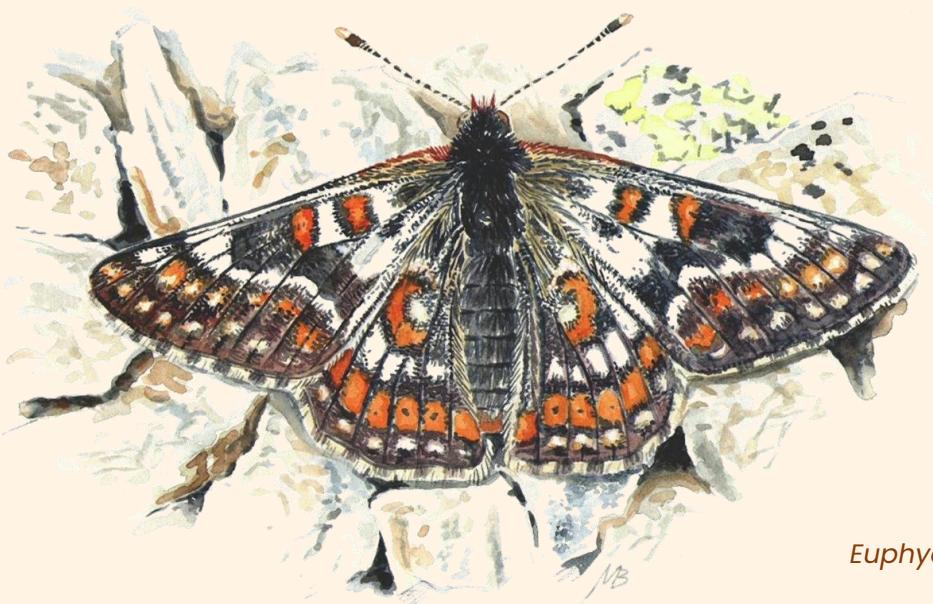


The Whimsical



Euphydryas cynthia

Striking, outgoing, colourful and with energy to spare! You're the nymphalid type, always in the front row and ready to be admired! Nymphalids are a family of butterflies including some of the most striking and spectacular species. One of the best-known and most admired nymphalids, for example, is the famous monarch butterfly, an American native with a beautiful orange plumage dotted with black veins and able to endure long migratory journeys across the American continent. In autumn, these butterflies winter in the south (from the northern United States to California or from Canada to Mexico), travelling thousands of kilometres on their fragile but extremely strong wings. They are a wonder of beauty, strength and energy, making them excellent representatives of the whole family. Among the European nymphalids, on the other hand, there is the Vanessa Atalanta (also an excellent traveller), the Vanessa Io, sporting a series of ocellars reminiscent of peacock eyes and so stunning as to be named after the priestess of Juno, famous for her unparalleled beauty (Io), and finally Antiopa, with a very elegant dark aubergine livery edged in yellow and bright blue eyes.

Our reading recommendation, for you creative, colourful, energetic people who love adventures just like nymphalids, is Barbara Kingsolver's beautiful novel, *The Hill of Butterflies* (Neri Pozza), set in the United States and in which monarch butterflies play a leading role. It's a novel about modernity and climate catastrophe, love and betrayal, the certainties of science and religious sentiment. The story begins when the main character, named Dellarobbia, comes across an extraordinary natural phenomenon by chance: the entire mountain not far from the modest farm where Dellarobbia lives one day suddenly appears completely orange, as if it were on fire. In reality it is the monarchs, who due to the sudden changes in climate and temperatures, have been mistakenly induced to change their flight behaviour and reach where they should not be, in the southern Appalachians (instead of Mexico). The novel's protagonist will see the fate of the butterflies as a metaphor for her own life: the life of a young woman who does not feel "in her place", who has lost her bearings and who, through the experience of being close to the butterflies, will find the strength to fly again.