

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Retold by Michelle Whitworth

Narrator: In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to his heart's content. An ant passed by, puffing and panting, loaded down with an ear of corn.

Grasshopper: Hello there, would you like to sit and chat? It's a beautiful day.

Ant: Sorry, I can't stop. I'm taking this corn to our nest. I'm helping to gather food for the winter.

Grasshopper: Why bother? We've got plenty of food at the moment and winter is months away.

Ant: I need to collect the corn while it's dry. I recommend you to do the same. Bye.

Narrator: And the ant went on her way, continuing to toil. Meanwhile, the grasshopper carried on enjoying himself in the summer sunshine. But when the winter came, there was nothing to eat. The grasshopper became very hungry. He remembered how much food the ants had collected, so he decided to appeal to them for help. He went up to the nest and spoke to the ant he'd met a few months before.

Grasshopper: Dearest ant, could you please let me have some of your corn. I haven't eaten for days and I'm starving.

Ant: Why haven't you got any food of your own? Surely you haven't used up all your stores already.

Grasshopper: Well, actually, I didn't quite get round to getting any stores. I'm afraid I was concentrating on my music. That's what we grasshoppers do best.

Ending one

Ant: Wasn't it you I warned to think ahead? If you were foolish enough to sing all summer, you can dance through the winter. Now, buzz off! We're not going to waste our precious supplies on a layabout like you.

Grasshopper: But I'll die without food.

Second Ant: Tough luck. That's not our problem.

Narrator: And sure enough, the grasshopper ended up starving to death.

Ending two

Ant: Wasn't it you I warned to think ahead? If you were foolish enough to sing all summer, you can dance through the winter. Now, buzz off! We're not going to waste our precious supplies on a layabout like you.

Grasshopper: But I'll die without food.

Second Ant: Tough luck. That's not our problem.

Grasshopper: Right. It seems that you leave me no choice.

Narrator: The grasshopper was much bigger than the ants so he had no difficulty breaking into the nest. He dragged away nearly all the ears of corn that the ants had spent all summer collecting. He even ate quite a few of the ants. They were full of protein – and not too bad once you got used to the rather prickly taste. So, the grasshopper managed to survive the winter after all. Unfortunately, the ants were not so lucky.

Ending three

Ant: Mmmm ... you've really only yourself to blame. I did warn you to think ahead.

Grasshopper: Yes, I know that now. Please help me – I'll die without food.

Ant: Well, I don't know whether we've got enough to feed you as well as ourselves. I'll have to go and ask the queen what she thinks. Wait here.

Narrator: The ant went off to see the Queen and ask her advice.

Queen Ant: Bring the grasshopper here to me.

Ant: Yes, Your Majesty.

Narrator: The ant took the grasshopper to the Queen.

Queen Ant: You realise that everyone in this nest has worked hard to save up food and that we have little to spare beyond what we need for ourselves and our children?

Grasshopper: Yes, Your Majesty.

Queen Ant: So, if we're going to feed you, what can you do in return? You can't have something for nothing. Can you cook or mend things?

Grasshopper: I'm sorry, I'm not a very practical sort of insect. But I'm very good at singing and dancing.

Narrator: Thus it was agreed that the grasshopper, who was an excellent musician, would be allowed to sing for his supper. Every meal time, for the rest of the winter, he played his fiddle, while the ants, who were only used to hard work, were able to dance and enjoy themselves to their hearts' content.

Ending four

Ant: You've really only yourself to blame. I did warn you.

Grasshopper: Yes, I know that now. Please help me – I'll die without food.

Ant: As it happens, you're in luck. A new scheme has just been set up to assist insects like you. Just go up that hill over there.

Narrator: The grasshopper went off up the hill and came to a small office with the words *Grasshopper Rescue Organisation* over it in bold letters. He went into the office.

Clerk: Hello, can I help you.

Grasshopper: I'm starving and I've been told that you can help me.

Clerk: Correct. Just sign here.

Narrator: The grasshopper did as instructed.

Clerk: Now take this paper, which we call a GIRO voucher (for Grasshopper Rescue Organisation) over to that warehouse. You can exchange it for enough food to last you a week. If you need to, come back and get another GIRO next week. But you'll have to prove to us that you've been trying to look for your own food in the meantime.

Grasshopper: Where am I going to find food? I haven't seen any since autumn. I mean - where's all this food come from?

Clerk: The Insect Parliament is in charge of the help scheme. All the ants' nests have to donate some of the supplies they've collected to help insects that haven't got their own.

Narrator: The grasshopper exchanged his voucher for a week's supplies. And so it was that the grasshopper had enough food to survive the winter.