

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Grasshopper George went out hopping one day. He was feeling quite jolly and wanted to play. He loved games like hopscotch, leapfrog, and such. In fact, he liked playing a little too much. He met **Albert Ant** by a crab apple tree. "Albert," said George, "play leapfrog with me."

"I've no time for playing," the busy ant said. "I'm storing up food for the winter ahead. And you, foolish grasshopper, ought to store too. Without food for winter, what will you do? You must think ahead, work on the double; or else you'll end up in a whole lot of trouble."

The grasshopper chortled, "Oh, heigh-de-ho. Phooey on winter the ice and the snow. It's a long time away, so why worry now? When the snow comes, I will find food somehow." But the ant went on filling his hole in the ground with stray bits and nibletts and crumbs that he found. And the grasshopper teased, with a smirk and a shrug, "All work and no play makes an ant a dull bug."

Then George looked around in the meadow and woods for someone to play with, but nobody could. The **squirrels** were storing their acorns and nuts. **Groundhogs** were 'making their underground huts. **Rabbits** were digging their wintertime holes, and so were the **field mice, chipmunks, and moles**. **Beavers** were building dams in the gorge. They were thinking ahead-all except George.

The grasshopper chanted, "Oh, heigh-de-ho. Who's afraid of winter? Let the wild winds blow. Why worry about something later to eat? Snowing or not, I'll find me a treat." So George hopped around like a scatterbrained elf, Singing and playing at games by himself or chatting with elderly **Grandfather Toad**, who blinked in the sun on Raspberry Road.

Then one day, alas, George felt a spatter. He peered at the sky to see what was the matter. 'Twas snow drifting down in chilly wet flakes. "It's winter!" he cried. "Oh, merciful sakes!" The snow pelted down for weeks without end. Wherever he looked, he could not find a friend. They were all warm and snug in homes they had made, dining on **meals** from the stores they had laid.

But George, sad to say, was in awful condition, Suffering from chilblains and food malnutrition. He thought, I could starve. But I won't and I can't. I'll swallow my pride and find Albert Ant. Perhaps he will help me. For I'm certain and sure that his house is loaded with groceries galore.

So George went to Albert and made his appeal. "Albert," he pleaded, "I need a square meal. I'm sorry I teased you. In fact I'm ashamed. And if you refuse me, you couldn't be blamed. It was foolish of me not to listen to you. You're right-storing food is the smart thing to do."

"Well now," said Albert, "since you have confessed that thinking ahead is the way that is best, I'll share my warm home, my nibletts and crumbs until it stops snowing and warm weather comes."

Now Grasshopper George was pleased and most grateful. And sorry, of course, he'd been lazy and hateful. Then the two shared a stew of cucumber seeds and a pudding of honey and dandelion weeds.

"I promise!" said George, with a nod of his head, "Starting next spring I will sure think ahead. I'll store lots of food, build a house nice and snug, for all play and no work can ruin a bug!"





















