
The Grasshopper and the Ants

One fine summer day, a host of tiny ants worked long and hard to gather food and store it in their tunnel underground. Along came a grasshopper and said:

“Work, work, work,” he said.
“That’s all you do. Come along with me, and I shall show you how to enjoy life.”

“Ah, said the tiniest ant. “But we must work now, or will have no food in winter.:

“Winter, schminter,” scoffed the grasshopper. “Look at me. I never work, and I fare just fine.”

And with that, he danced away singing this merry song:

“I never work or slave
away –
Just laugh and play the
livelong day.”



Summer days wore on, and still the little ants labored. Day in and day out, they toted seeds, grain, and crumbs sometimes as large as themselves into their underground domain. Meantime, the grasshopper continued his carefree routine.

As summer gave way to fall, days grew shorter and the weather cooler. Grain became scarce, seeds few and far between. But the little ants had no worries. For beneath the ground, they had stores enough to see them through to spring.

As for the grasshopper, he found himself with increasingly less time to play. No longer was food available for the taking whenever he felt the least bit hungry. Nowadays, he had to search for every morsel, and each day the search seemed to take longer than the days before.

Then came the first snows of winter – first a flake, then two, then suddenly millions, blanketing everything in a layer of white. The icy breeze made the grasshopper hungrier than usual, but search as he might, not a bite of food was to be found. Tired and hungry, he at last gave up his search.

"Perhaps tomorrow will be better," he reasoned. But the next day wasn't better. Nor was the next. Nor the next. By now, the grasshopper's happy song of summer was all but forgotten. He hadn't the energy to sing, much less play. Then one night, he remembered the ants.

"Why, they have food a-plenty," he reasoned. "They must have. After all, they gathered stock all summer. I'll simply go to them for sustenance."

With that, he put on his most charming smile and set out toward the ant hill.

"Hello, good friends," he called out in the most cheerful voice he could muster. "How goes it with you fine folk?"

"Very well, thank you," the sentinel assured him.

"Are you warm enough? Do you have enough to eat?" the grasshopper queried.

"But, of course," the ant replied. "We worked hard and prepared well for the winter."

"Ah, then, you've bounty enough to share with an old friend," declared the grasshopper.

"Oh, no," said the sentinel. "We've enough for ourselves, but hardly extra to feed such an appetite as yours."

"What?!?" exclaimed the grasshopper, his cheerful facade fading. "But you don't understand. There's no food to be had out here!"

Then, looking truly pitiful, he added, "I haven't had so much as a crumb of bread in days."

"Why, whatever were you doing all summer?" asked the sentinel. "Surely you stored away something for the winter!"

"But I didn't," the grasshopper whispered, hanging his head. "I was too busy singing and playing." And suddenly, the grasshopper realized 'twas the ants who'd chosen the wiser course of action:

**Laziness brings want.
To work today is to eat tomorrow.**