

## THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

From the Brothers Grimm - *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* -1812

Once upon a time... one hot summer, a cricket sang cheerfully on the branch of a tree, while down below, a long line of ants struggled under the weight of their load of grains; and between one song and the next, the cricket spoke to the ants. "Why are you working so hard? Come into the shade, away from the sun, and sing a song with me." But the tireless ants went on with the work... "We can't do that," they said, "We must store away food for the winter. When the weather's cold and the ground white with snow, there's nothing to eat, and we'll survive the winter only if the pantry is full."

"There's plenty of summer to come," replied the cricket, "and lots of time to fill the pantry before winter. I'd rather sing! How can anyone work in this heat and sun?"

And so all summer, the cricket sang while the ants laboured. But the days turned into weeks and the weeks into months. Autumn came, the leaves began to fall and the cricket left the bare tree. The grass too was turning thin and yellow. One morning, the cricket woke shivering with cold. An early frost tinged the fields with white and turned the last of the green leaves brown: winter had come at last. The cricket wandered, feeding on the few dry stalks left on the hard frozen ground. Then the snow fell and she could find nothing at all to eat. Trembling and famished, she thought sadly of the warmth and her summer songs. One

evening, she saw a speck of light in the distance, and trampling through the thick snow, made her way towards it.

"Open the door! Please open the door! I'm starving. Give me some food!" An ant leant out of the window.

"Who's there? Who is it?"

"It's me - the cricket. I'm cold and hungry, with no roof over my head."

"The cricket? Ah, yes! I remember you. And what were you doing all summer while we were getting ready for winter?"

"Me? I was singing and filling the whole earth and sky with my song!"

"Singing, eh?" said the ant. "Well, try dancing now!" .