Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: The Grasshopper and the Ants (Aesop's Awesome Rhymes, 7) by Lou Kuenzler , Jill Newton ", peer-reviewed by Susan Deacy and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/901. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Lou Kuenzler , Jill Newton

The Grasshopper and the Ants (Aesop's Awesome Rhymes, 7)

United Kingdom (2011)

TAGS: Aesop's Fables





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Grasshopper and the Ants (Aesop's Awesome Rhymes, 7)
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	United Kingdom, Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2011
First Edition Details	Lou Kuenzler & Jill Newton, *Aesop's Awesome Rhymes: The Grasshopper and the Ants*. London: Orchard Books, 2011, 48 pp.
ISBN	9781408309742
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
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Creators



Lou Kuenzler (Author)

Lou Kuenzler is a writer based in the United Kingdom. She was brought up on a sheep farm in Dartmoor, Devon. She studied theatre at the University of Ulster, and worked as a director and educator in London, teaching drama, and running writing workshops. She lives in London, and has written a wide variety of children's books, including picture books, early readers, chapter books, novels, mainly with an emphasis on humour and fantasy.

Sources:

Profile at Allen and Unwin Book Publishers (accessed: May 3, 2019).

Profile at bloomsbury.com (accessed: May 3, 2019).

The Author's website (accessed: May 3, 2019).

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au



Jill Newton (Illustrator)

Jill Newton is a British illustrator and artist. She was born in Newcastle, and now lives in West Somerset. She studied at Lincoln College of Art, and Anglia Ruskin University. She has worked as an editor, graphic designer, and more, and has written and illustrated over 150 books for children.

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Sources:

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Additional information

Summary

This story for young readers uses rhyme, illustration, and inset speeches to deliver a comic version of Aesop's fable, *The Grasshopper and the Ants*. It is told in iambic tetrameter, and opens with a brief explanation of who Aesop was, showing an image of him sitting on a log talking to a group of girls and boys, then explaining: "This fable warns you not to shirk/ while other people do the work!" (p. 5).

The fable begins, setting the scene, showing the ants working, and Jim, the grasshopper, idling. As the ants work, the grasshopper, described as a "dozing hippy", sings a song: "do-be-do-be-do-be-do/ why d'you find so much to do?" (p. 9). As the ants carry on working, the grasshopper notes other creatures working – a pair of snails (pp. 11–13), butterflies and bees (pp. 14–15), a dung-beetle (p. 17). The ants chant as they work: "We'll toil and work for all our clan/ following the Big Ant Plan./ We'll help each other to survive/ and gather food to stay alive!" (p. 19) An ant named Antonia strikes up conversation with Jim, the grasshopper, explaining again that autumn is coming (p. 25). And so autumn comes, the sun is less bright, the leaves disappear, the creatures who have been preparing are ready with their stocks. "Except for Jim, all alone./ He had no food – no winter home" (p. 29). Jim struggles through the seasons, the wind is cold, there is no food left, and when snow comes, he knows what he has to do, and throws himself on the mercy of the ants. Antonia asks the ants to help him. The Queen ant points out that "we worked hard while he was lazy,/ then he dared to call *us* crazy!" (p. 39). Antonia pleads with the Queen, and offers Jim's music as a trade. The ants eagerly agree, "although we've tons of food and rooms,/ it's dull down here without his tunes" (p. 41). Jim plays, and sings and apology, and the queen allows him to stay. The story finishes with Jim singing the mora: "Ants are really very wise/ to think ahead to store supplies." (p. 47).

Analysis

This straightforward retelling of Aesop's famous fable, uses comic techniques to drive home its morals. The use of iambic tetrameter provides a lively, forward-driving story. Each page intersperses plain text narrative with dialogue in speech-bubbles coming from the mouths of the illustrated figures, breaking up the text visually and allowing young readers to understand the difference between narrative and speech. The illustrations show cute, anthropomorphic

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	creatures, drawing the line between the working rhythms of nature, and ideas about human behaviour. Jim's characterisation as a 'dozing hippy' suggests a some what conservative take on the grasshopper, in contrast with the solid, bourgeois character of the ants, who have a rigid hierarchy as well as a strong work ethic. The story's didacticism is highlighted and reinforced, with the emphasis laid on hard work and foresight. No comment is made about the trade between Jim's musical talent and the ants' food, though young readers may well be able to glean that all work and no play is dull, even if it comes with food and shelter.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop's Fables
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Conflict Friendship Hierarchy Individuality Society

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