

## The Ants and the Grasshopper

One bright day in late autumn, a family of ants were bustling about in the warm sunshine, drying out the grain they had stored up during the summer, when a starving grasshopper, his fiddle under his arm, came up and humbly begged for a bite to eat. "What?" cried the ants in surprise. "Haven't you stored anything away for the winter? What in the world were you doing all summer?"

"I didn't have time to store up any food," whined the grasshopper. "I was so busy making music that before I knew it, the summer was gone."

The ants shrugged their shoulders in disgust. "Making music, were you?" they cried. "Very well; now dance!" And they turned their backs on the grasshopper and went on with their work.

**Moral:** Idleness brings want.

## The Oxen and the Wheels

A pair of oxen were drawing a heavily loaded wagon along a miry country road. They had to use all their strength to pull the wagon, but they did not complain. The wheels of the wagon were of a different sort. Though the task they had to do was very light compared with that of the oxen, they creaked and groaned at every turn. The poor oxen, pulling with all their might to draw the wagon through the deep mud, had their ears filled with the loud complaining of the wheels. And this, you may well know, made their work so much the harder to endure. "Silence!" the oxen cried at last, out of patience. "What have you wheels to complain about so loudly? We are drawing all the weight, not you, and we are keeping still about it besides."

**Moral:** Those who complain most often suffer least.

## The Farmer and His Sons

A certain farmer, lying at the point of death, called his sons around him and gave his fields and vineyards into their charge, telling them that a treasure lay hidden somewhere in them, within a foot from the ground. His sons thought he spoke of money which he had hidden, and after he was buried, they dug most industriously all over the estate but found nothing. The soil being so well loosened, however, meant that the succeeding crops were of unequalled richness and the sons then found out what their father meant in telling them to dig for hidden treasure.

**Moral:** Hard work has its own reward.

## The Blind Man and the Lame Man

A blind man, being stopped in a bad piece of road, met with a lame man and entreated him to guide him through the difficulty he had got into. "How can I do that," replied the lame man, "since I am barely able to drag myself along? But as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together. It will then be my interest to warn you of anything that may obstruct your way; your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes your eyes."

"With all my heart," returned the blind man, "let us render each other our mutual services." So taking his lame companion on his back, they, by means of their union, travelled on with safety and pleasure.

**Moral:** Wishes and vulnerabilities can lead to cooperation and triumph.

## The Horse and the Loaded Donkey

A horse and a donkey were travelling together, the horse prancing along in its fine trappings, the donkey carrying the heavy weight in its packs with difficulty. "I wish I were you," sighed the donkey. "Nothing to do and well fed, and all that fine harness upon you." The next day, however, there was a great battle, and the horse was wounded to death in the final charge of the day. His friend, the donkey, happened to pass by shortly afterward and found him on the point of death. "I was wrong," said the donkey.

**Moral:** Everybody carries a different kind of burden.