

## THE GRASSHOPPER'S TONIC

KEYWORD: Stability.

One day a pretty little ladybug was sitting on a rose bud that grew in a garden. It was a garden that had many lovely trees, beautiful flowers, and soft green leaves. The ladybug looked very smart in her cape of red, and as she nibbled daintily at her breakfast, whom should she spy near her but a big grasshopper.

“Good morning, Mr. Grasshopper,” she called out cheerily. And then she saw that the grasshopper was not making big jumps and flying through the air as he usually

did. Something must be the matter. What could it be? Why, he was hobbling along with a crutch, and making very slow work of it, too. He had his head tied up with a piece of red flannel, and he looked, oh, so pale and green! The ladybug knew that something terrible must have happened.

"Why, Mr. Grasshopper," said the ladybug in a tone of concern, "are you feeling ill?" The grasshopper looked at her, and there were big tears in his eyes as he told her how he had forgotten to put on his nightcap when he went to bed the evening before and so he had caught a dreadful cold when the fog blew in from the sea. Now he had a bad headache, and had to sneeze every few minutes, and altogether he felt very bad indeed.

"Why do you use a crutch, though?" asked the ladybug. "Have you broken your hopper?" She meant his leg, of course, but as it was not considered polite to say "leg," she said "hopper" instead. She was a very well bred little ladybug, having attended Mr. and Mrs. Beetle's Nursery School under the grape vine, where all the little ladybugs, the ants and beetles, and other small folk were taught good manners.

"I've got the rheumatism," snuffled the grasshopper, "and it is a pretty serious thing." And so it was indeed, for a grasshopper's leg is a pretty big part of him, which means of course that he would have a pretty big pain. So it was no wonder that the poor grasshopper groaned and felt so bad, and he had lost his appetite in the bargain.

"I'm so sorry for you," said the ladybug. "I think if you were to have a little *stability* though you would soon be all right." But the grasshopper didn't know what sort of a thing "stability" was and he was not at all sure that it would taste very nice, so he just sat down and cried.

The little ladybug felt sorrier than ever for him. She took off her little red cape and tucked it around him to keep him warm, and told him to cheer up. Then away she flew

to Dr. Busy Bee's home. The Doctor was eating his breakfast of honey, but as soon as he heard of the grasshopper's plight, he put on his hat, picked up his little black bag, and came at once.

He found the grasshopper leaning up against a rose tree for support. "Put out your tongue," said Dr. Busy Bee. The grasshopper opened his mouth just a little bit and showed the tip of his tongue. "Open your mouth wide," said the doctor, "and stick out your tongue as far as you can." The grasshopper did so, and my, what a big tongue it was! "Humph," said Dr. Busy Bee, "what you need is a big dose if stability."

"That's what the ladybug said," whimpered the grasshopper. "Will it taste very bad?"

"And now, what about your leg?" said Dr. Busy Bee, paying no attention to the grasshopper's question and catching hold of the leg to examine it.

"Ouch!" shrieked the grasshopper, "that hurts."

"Get a bit of stability," said the doctor, "and it will soon cure you."

"How can I get it?" asked the grasshopper faintly.

"I'll give you a prescription," replied Dr. Busy Bee, and he opened his little black bag, took out some paper, and wrote something on it with a pencil. Giving it to the grasshopper, the doctor told him he was to go with the ladybug to the Nursery School under the grape vine and hand the paper to either Mr. or Mrs. Beetle. Then he flew away home to finish his breakfast of honey.

"Come and I will show you the way," said the ladybug, and she helped the grasshopper to rise. When they reached the Nursery School and gave Mrs. Beetle the doctor's prescription, she read it and then gave it to Mr. Beetle, who looked very severe.

"Never too late to mend," said he. And he put the

grasshopper into a class along with a number of small bugs, ants, and other young insects to learn a song with these words: "Every day in every way, we must all love one another." My! what a big fellow the grasshopper was beside the others. But you see, he had not learned his lesson when he was a little boy grasshopper, and so he must learn it now. And do you know, that was the tonic that made him well—just learning to love people. That was what the ladybug and Dr. Busy Bee meant when they told him he needed stability, for when you love others, you can always be counted upon to do the right thing, and that is stability.

When the grasshopper learned to love people, he grew healthy, happy, and wise, and got over his rheumatism. Then he threw away his crutch, and he could hop ever so much farther than before, so high you could hardly see him.

And the best of it is that anyone who learns to love everybody can get over being sick and will become healthy, happy, and wise too.

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