

Preparing for the Future

Elli the Ant

David Machin



Although ants are small compared to other creatures, everyone knows how strong they are. When they all work together, they really can move mountains. They move obstacles out of their way with teamwork, sail across water on leaves, dig miles of tunnels to find food, and can even make a bridge across valleys just by using sticks!

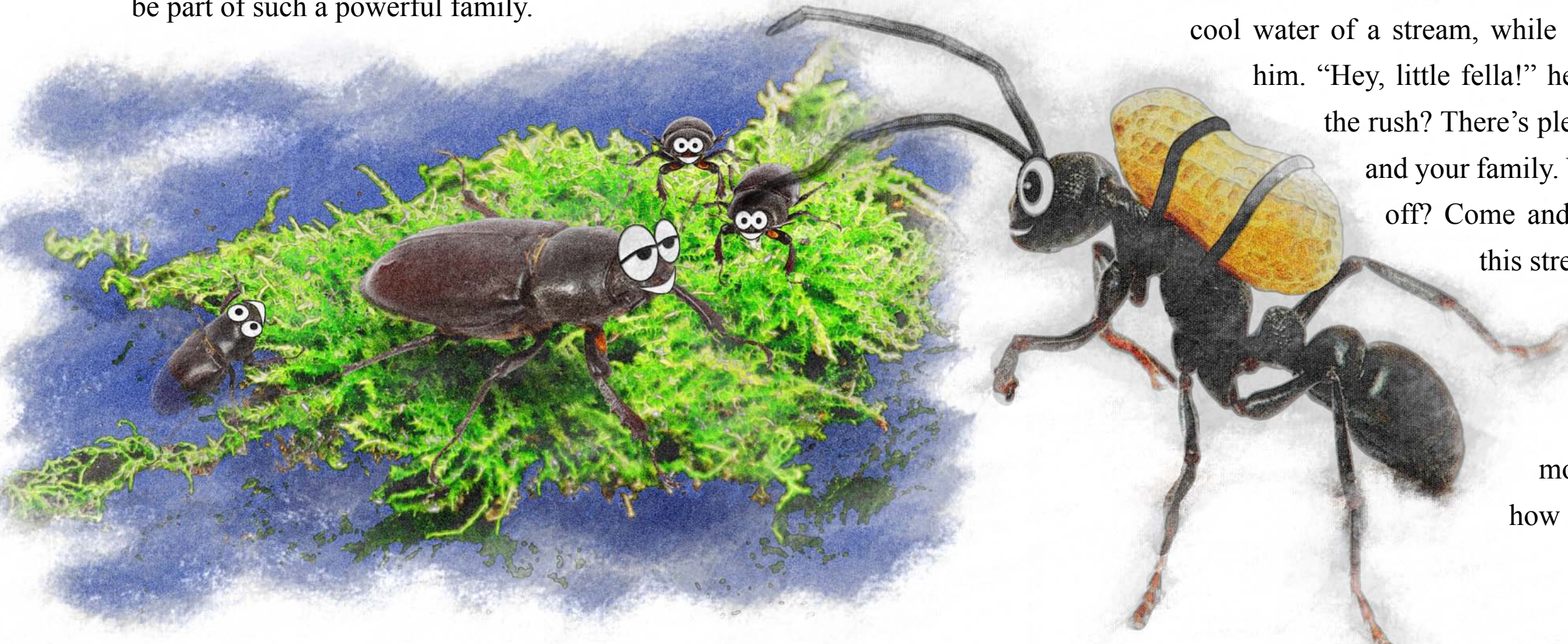
Nothing can stop them and they *never* give up.

What most people don't know about ants, though, is how very wise they are. In this little ant-sized story, you will discover just how clever they really can be.

Imagine that you are an ant called Elli. You live deep underground with a small family of only two or three thousand brothers and sisters.



Everyone knows that ants are very small, but you are very tiny - even compared to other ants. The other ants call you 'Elli Fant' (which, when you say it quickly, sounds like 'Elephant'), which they all think is a very funny name for such a small ant. You don't mind though. You are proud to be part of such a powerful family.



It is summertime, and the sun is high in the beautiful blue sky. There is no wind and the ground is baking hot. As usual, you and your family are rushing around, gathering all the food you can and storing it in your underground cellar.

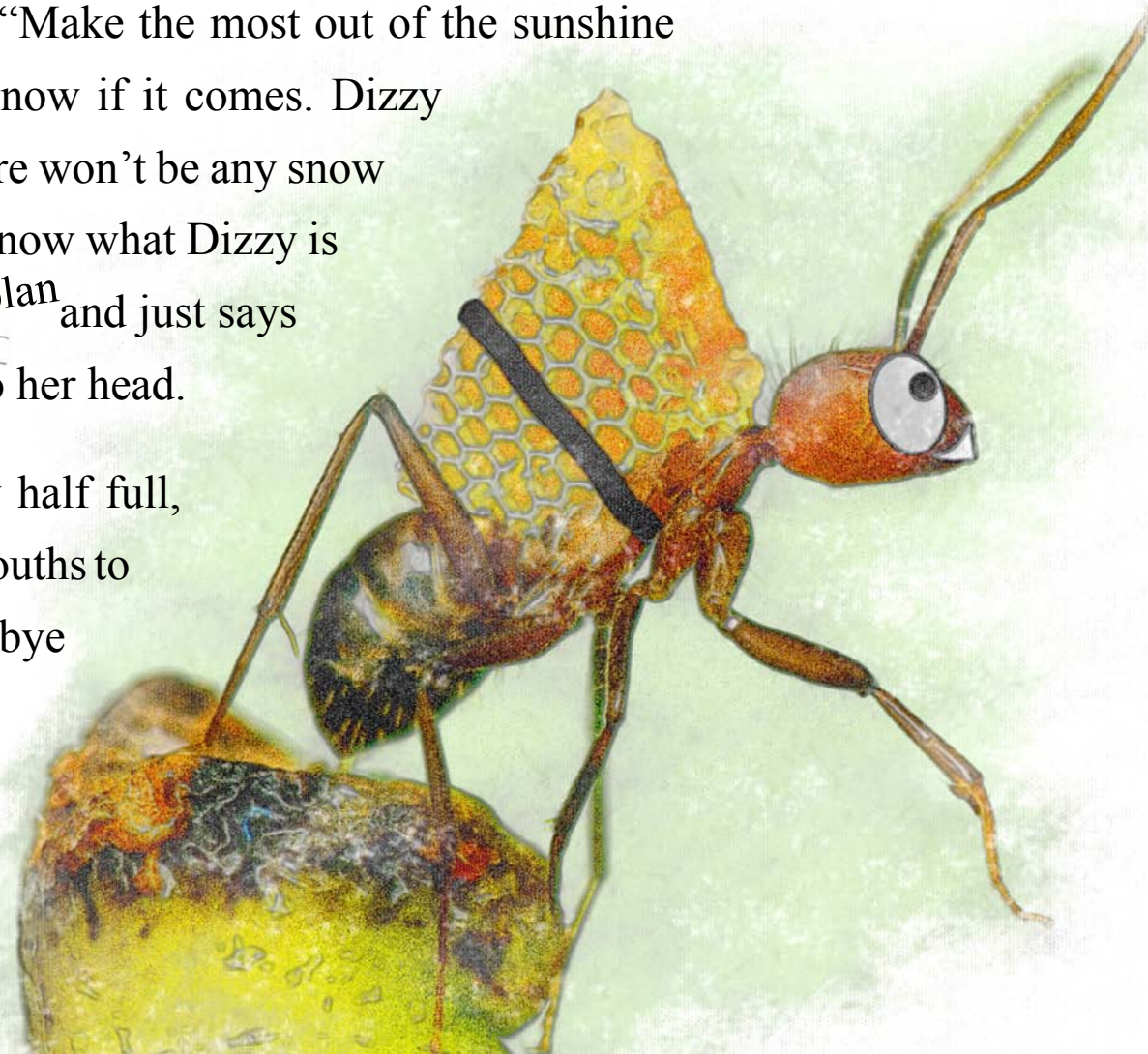
Big Billy Beetle is resting on a bed of moss floating in the cool water of a stream, while his children splash around him. "Hey, little fella!" he calls out to you. "What's the rush? There's plenty of food around for you and your family. Why don't you take the day off? Come and rest your feet with us by this stream."

You look at the cool blue water and Billy's soft, shady bed. Just for a moment you stop and think how easy it would be to flop

down out of the sun and relax. But then you remember what every ant knows. “Well, thank you for the kind offer Billy, but this weather won’t last forever, and when the snow comes, there will be no food to be found anywhere.”

“Phooey!” says Billy. “Make the most out of the sunshine and worry about the snow if it comes. Dizzy the Damsfly says there won’t be any snow this winter.” But you know what Dizzy is like; she never has a ^{plan} and just says anything that pops into her head.

The food store is only half full, and you have a lot of mouths to feed, so you say goodbye to Billy the Beetle and continue with collecting food.



Up ahead, you see and hear FiFi the fly, whizzing about. You are running back to the nest carrying a full load of sweet, golden honeycomb, but FiFi is fun to be with so you stop for a while.

FiFi loves to play with her brothers and sisters, zooming from plant to plant playing silly games. Suddenly, they all come together and shoot up into the air above you like a fountain. Then they spin around at the top and dive down towards the forest floor. It is a fantastic show. You admire their great flying skills and amazing acrobatics.

You could stay and watch them all day, but you must get this precious honey safely home.



Beautiful Belinda Butterfly is sunning herself on a flower. “Still rushing about, Elli?” she says. Belinda has no food stores for the winter. She eats when she’s hungry, and then finds a sunny spot where everyone can see her brightly colored wings.

“Certainly am,” you say. “This honey will feed my family for a week, at least.”



“Mmm, smells wonderful! Why don’t you just set it down here and we’ll have a picnic together here on this sunny day?” she says.

“What a great idea!” you think. “What could be nicer than relaxing in the warm sunshine with such a beautiful creature, eating such sweet honey?” But you are an ant, and you know that it would be nice for a short while, but you’d never be able to fill the cellar if you stop now. It’s difficult to say no, but you politely say goodbye to Beautiful Belinda and continue your hike back to the family nest.

The honey is your last load of the day. The whole family cheers as you bring the precious food home.

Weeks go by. The sky starts to darken earlier each day, leaves change from green to gold, and there is less food to be found now - but you're not worried. The cellar is packed to the roof with every kind of food a hungry ant could wish for.

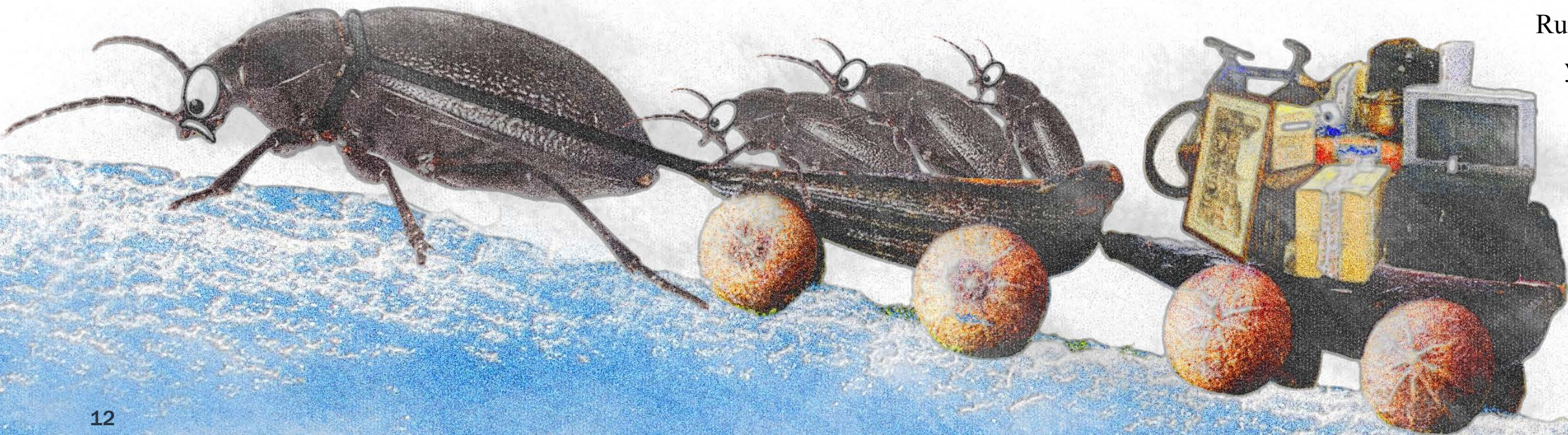
Leaving the nest early one morning, you find the whole world covered in fresh snow. Since no one can find food under the thick snow, you excitedly join the family in the main hall for a huge feast to celebrate.

Your family was very good at collecting food this summer, so everyone is happy and relaxed in your warm, underground home. You feel safe and secure, knowing that you *have* enough food to last through the winter.



The next day, you and 50 of your brothers and sisters set out to play in the snow. You grab a frozen leaf to use as a toboggan and climb to the top of a snowy mound.

On the other side you are surprised to see Billy Beetle and his family plodding sadly through the snow, pulling a small cart with all their possessions stacked up.

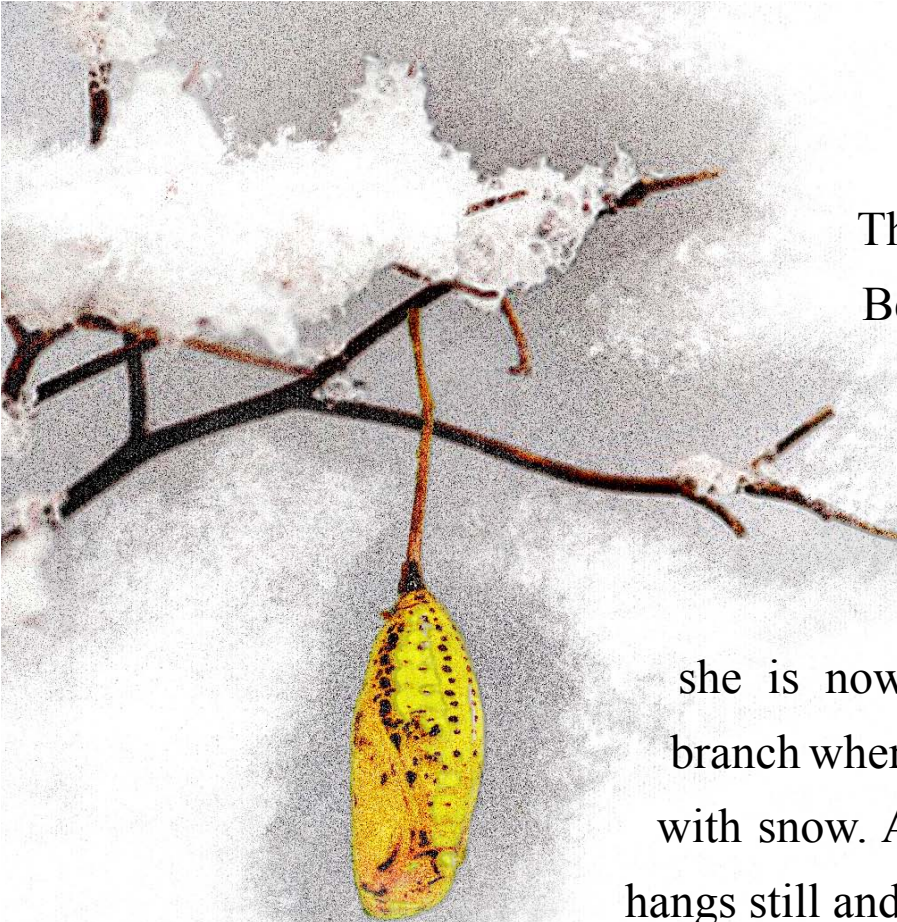


“Where are you going, Mr. Beetle?” you ask.

“We can’t find enough to eat, so we have to leave our lovely home and travel south in search of a meal,” he says, as they push their way through the heavy snow.

“Oh, dear. I am very sorry,” you say. “Maybe we’ll see you back here again next summer.” You feel sorry for Mr. Beetle and his family as they trudge miserably down the frozen track.

Running after him, you hand him a parcel of food from the cellar so he can feed his children on their long journey.



Then you remember Beautiful Belinda with her colorful wings outstretched in the sun. You find her favorite spot, but she is nowhere to be seen. The branch where she once sat is crusted with snow. A small, golden cocoon hangs still and silent in the cold air.

“Oh no, she’s going to sleep through the winter,” you say to yourself. “She’s going to miss the sledding, and the snowman competition, and skating on the puddles!” But Belinda had no choice. Flowers do not grow in winter, and she didn’t save any food. She would have starved for sure.

FiFi, the silly little fly, had nowhere to go when the first snow fell. A small cluster of white eggs are all that remains to show that a fly family once lived here. In the spring, they will hatch out a new fly family - but for now, the air is silent. You miss the happy buzzing of her wings as she would whiz overhead.



The sun begins to set and you run back down to your large, underground home. It is cozy, warm, and safe here with all your friends and family around you. You worked hard in the summer, but now you can relax in your own home with a large store of delicious food to eat - plenty for all.

You think of poor Mr. Beetle, plodding through the snow, looking for scraps to eat. You think of Belinda the Butterfly, asleep for months, she is going to miss all the ^{ant}fun! Fifi, the fly, did not survive at all. Perhaps the new fly family will change their ways and plan for the future?

When the snow melts and the first warm rays of the sun streak through the trees, you'll be the first one out,



racing through the fresh green forest, ready for any new adventures that come your way. But, before then, there will be sledding, snowball fights, skating, Ant Christmas... and lots of presents!

The End

Did you notice those little Ants sneaking off with some of the words in your story? Maybe they were trying to make a message for you. See if you can work out what they wanted to say by writing the words in the line below:

-----!



Answers: No peeking now! 1) Billy spent all summer playing in the sun, he had no food saved for winter time. 2) Belinda didn't save any food either, she was too busy trying to look pretty. 3) Food is everywhere in summertime and if Elli hadn't collected it when it was so easy, the whole family would have ended up like poor FiFi. 4) Ants probably would eat fish, if it was smelly enough!

Are **you** as smart as an Ant?

Find out if you could be the smartest ant in the forest:

- 1) Why did Billy Beetle and his family have to leave their home?
- 2) Why did Belinda have to sleep through winter?
- 3) If Elli had stopped to play with Billy, Belinda and FiFi, what would have happened?
- 4) Do you think ants really eat pineapple, onions and fish?

Onions? Well, ants only eat onions on Pizza.



And they'd like to try sweet pineapple if they could get it.



It was smelly enough!

Ants probably would eat fish, if it was smelly enough!

Elli the Ant

The goal of this story is to introduce young children to some of the principles which contribute to a successful and fulfilling life. These principles are tried and tested and taught to adults by life skills Guru's around the world.

At HumanBean we feel that if young children can start to understand these principles and behaviors at an early age, then they are more likely to adopt them as they grow up. With strong foundations, they will be better able to succeed in an increasingly challenging world.

Key Principle: Planning for future success:

In 'Elli the Ant' we show the benefits of planning for the future by setting aside some of your resources when times are easy.

The consequences of not planning ahead are clearly shown by the fate of your friends Billy, Belinda and FiFi who are all unprepared for winter when the first snow falls.

The ability to understand the importance of long term saving can mean the difference between a prosperous life or a future of hardship and uncertainty. We hope this story helps your child understand this concept.

If you like this story, you'll love The Star Dragon. A fully illustrated book which shows many of the key behaviors for success in life.

This book, like all the HumanBean stories, has been written with a specific purpose in mind - to introduce your child to the attitudes and behaviours which bring success in life. These 'success principles' have been available to adults in their work and business lives for many years. They are proven techniques for improving your life. But, until now, children have been more or less excluded from this valuable learning.

This story has been written to bring these attitudes and behaviours to children, aged 5-10, through an exciting and entertaining stories, where the reader is the hero.

Your child will learn about teamwork, goal setting, prioritisation and other important skills while enjoying these entertaining stories.

Storytelling is a great way to directly influence young readers and we hope your child enjoys 'Elli the Ant'.

Thank you,
David Machin



HumanBean
Preparing Children for Success



This book has been produced as a learning aid for children.
More tools and resources at: www.humanbean.com