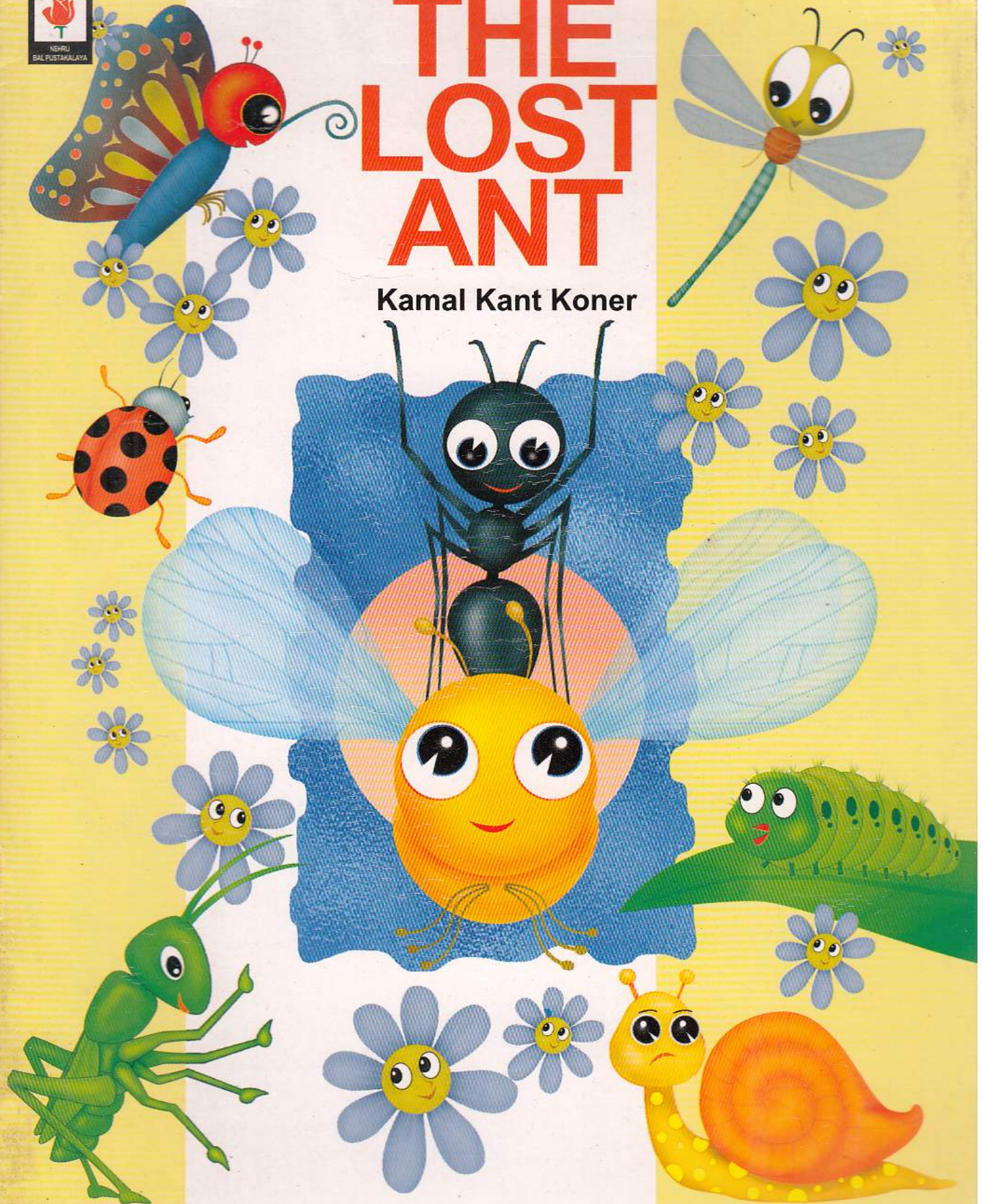




THE LOST ANT

Kamal Kant Koner



Nehru Bal Pustakalaya

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NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA



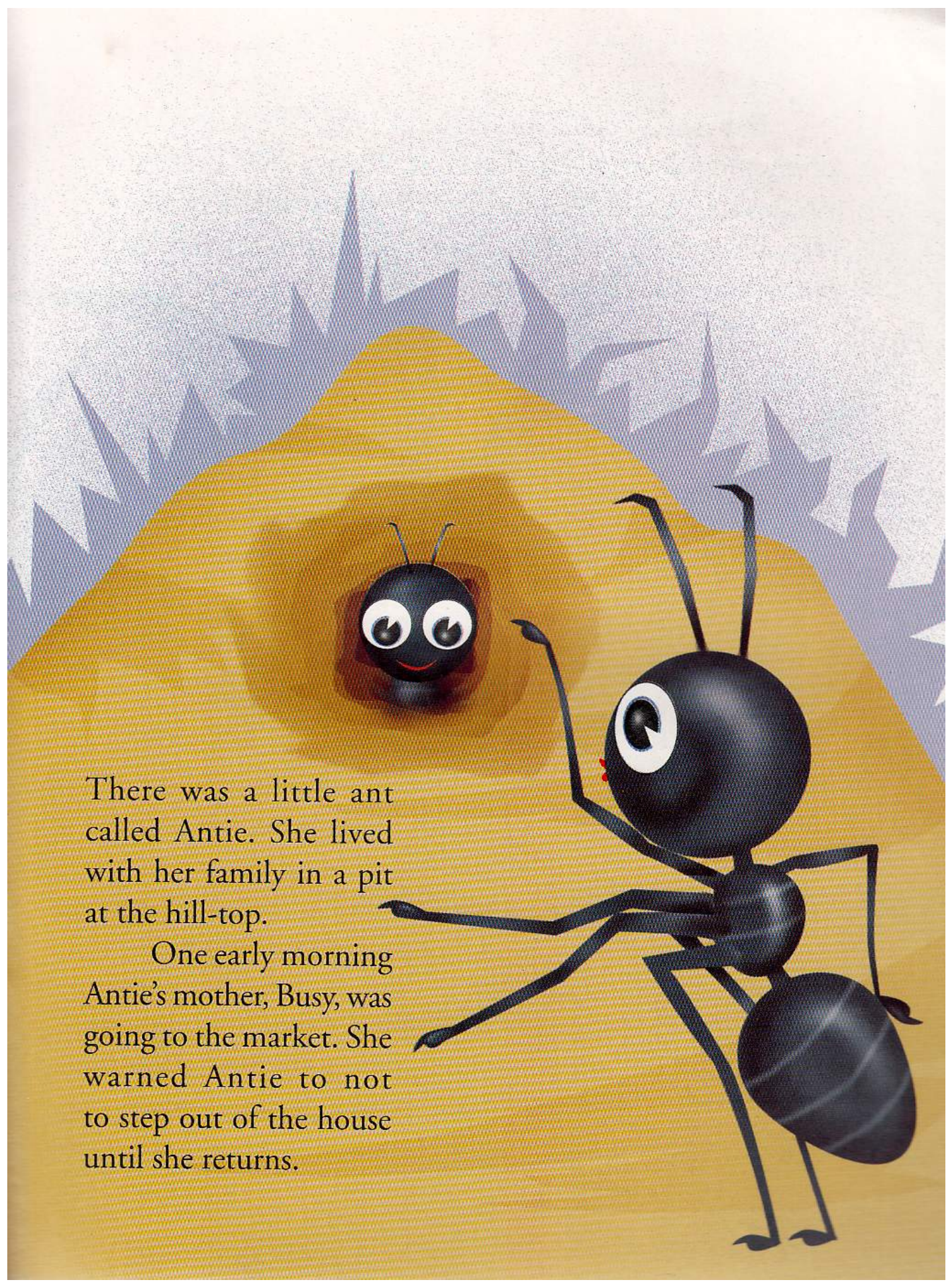
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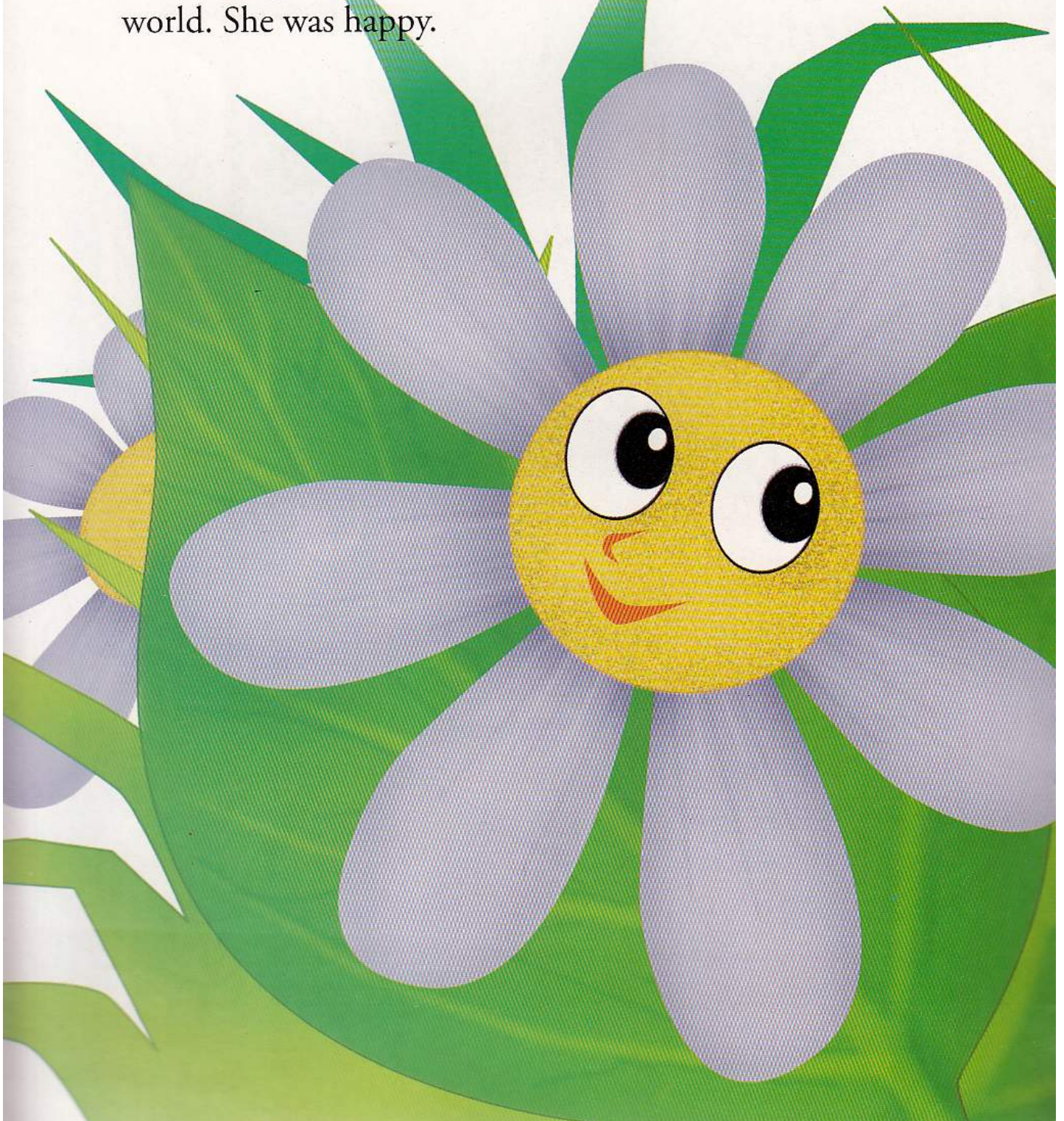
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A stylized illustration of two ants on a yellow hill. The hill is a large, rounded shape with a textured, woven appearance. In the background, there are several sharp, pointed shapes in a light blue-grey color, resembling stylized trees or bushes. A small, round ant with large white eyes and a red smile is peeking out from a hole in the hill. A larger, black ant with large white eyes and long antennae is standing on the right side of the hill, looking towards the smaller ant. The larger ant has a segmented body and six legs.

There was a little ant called Antie. She lived with her family in a pit at the hill-top.

One early morning Antie's mother, Busy, was going to the market. She warned Antie to not to step out of the house until she returns.

But Antie could not resist for long. She peeped out of her pit. Slowly, she stepped out. Then... then there was no looking back! She strolled for the whole day long. Wandering here and there. She was eager to see this new world. She was happy.

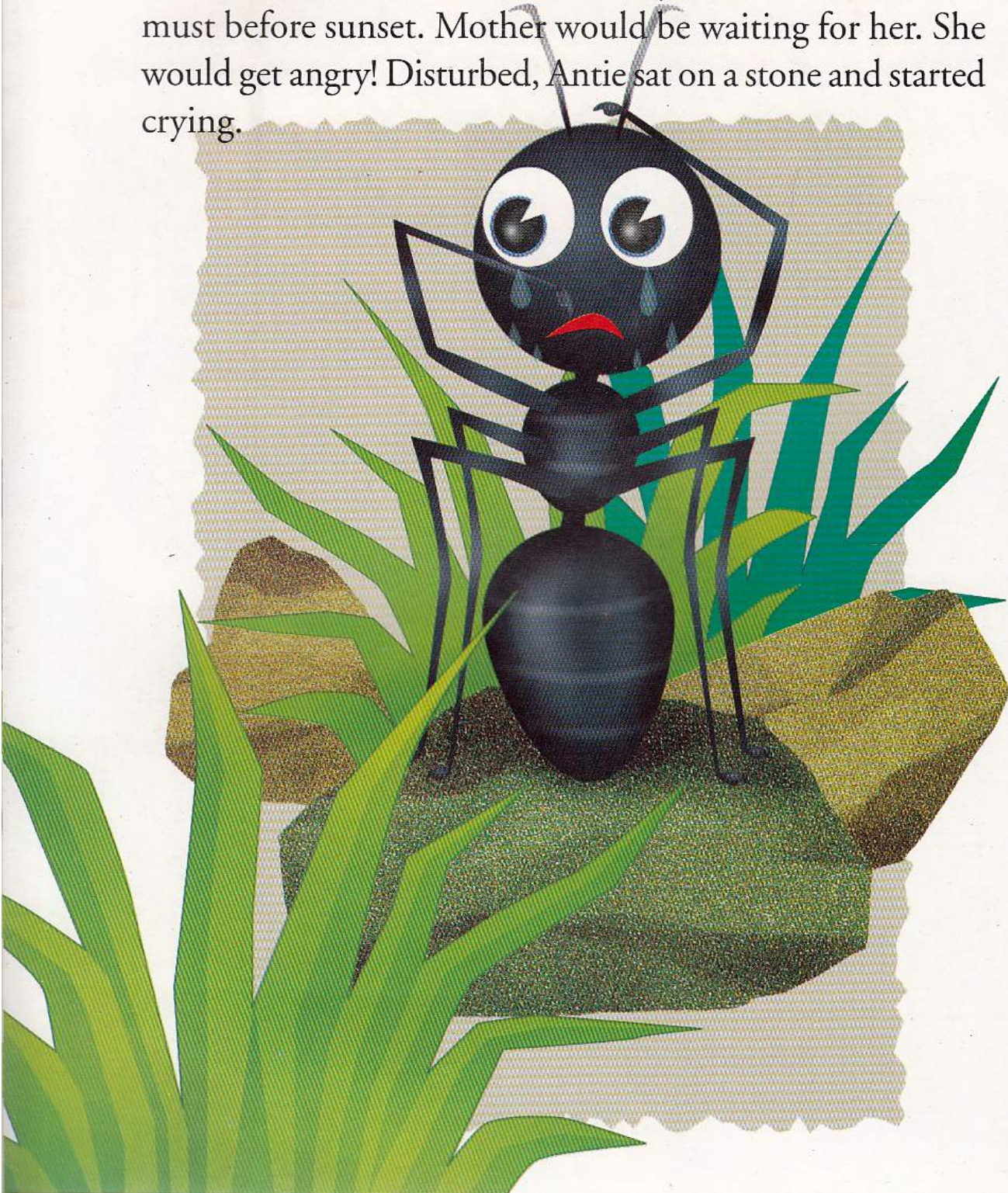


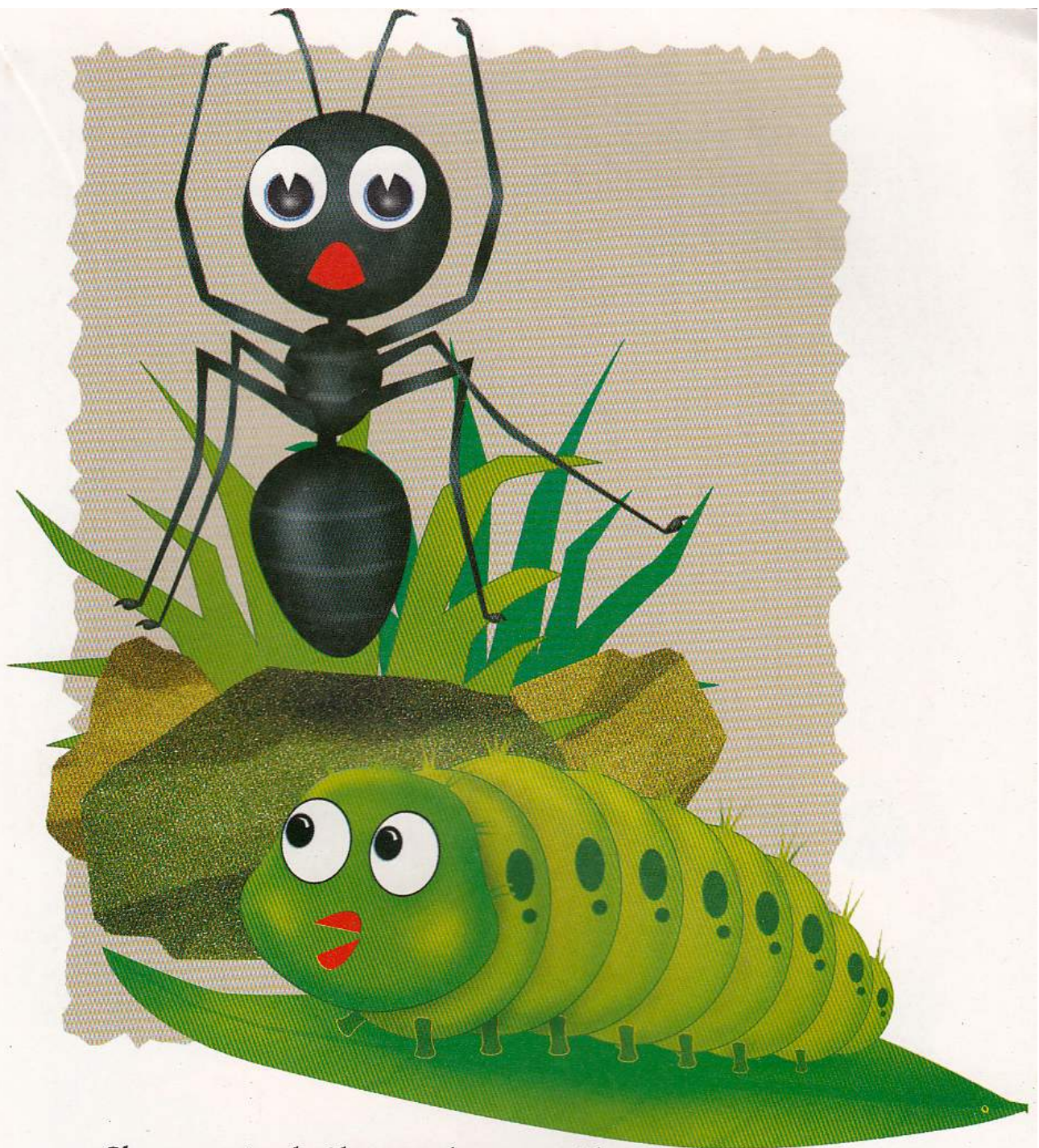
Until afternoon, she never knew that she had crossed the meadow, the orchard, the green pastures and reached the garden beyond.



Then Antie paused for a while. How will she return home now? The hill seemed far far away. It would take hours to reach home.

And she did not know her way back! But return she must before sunset. Mother would be waiting for her. She would get angry! Disturbed, Antie sat on a stone and started crying.



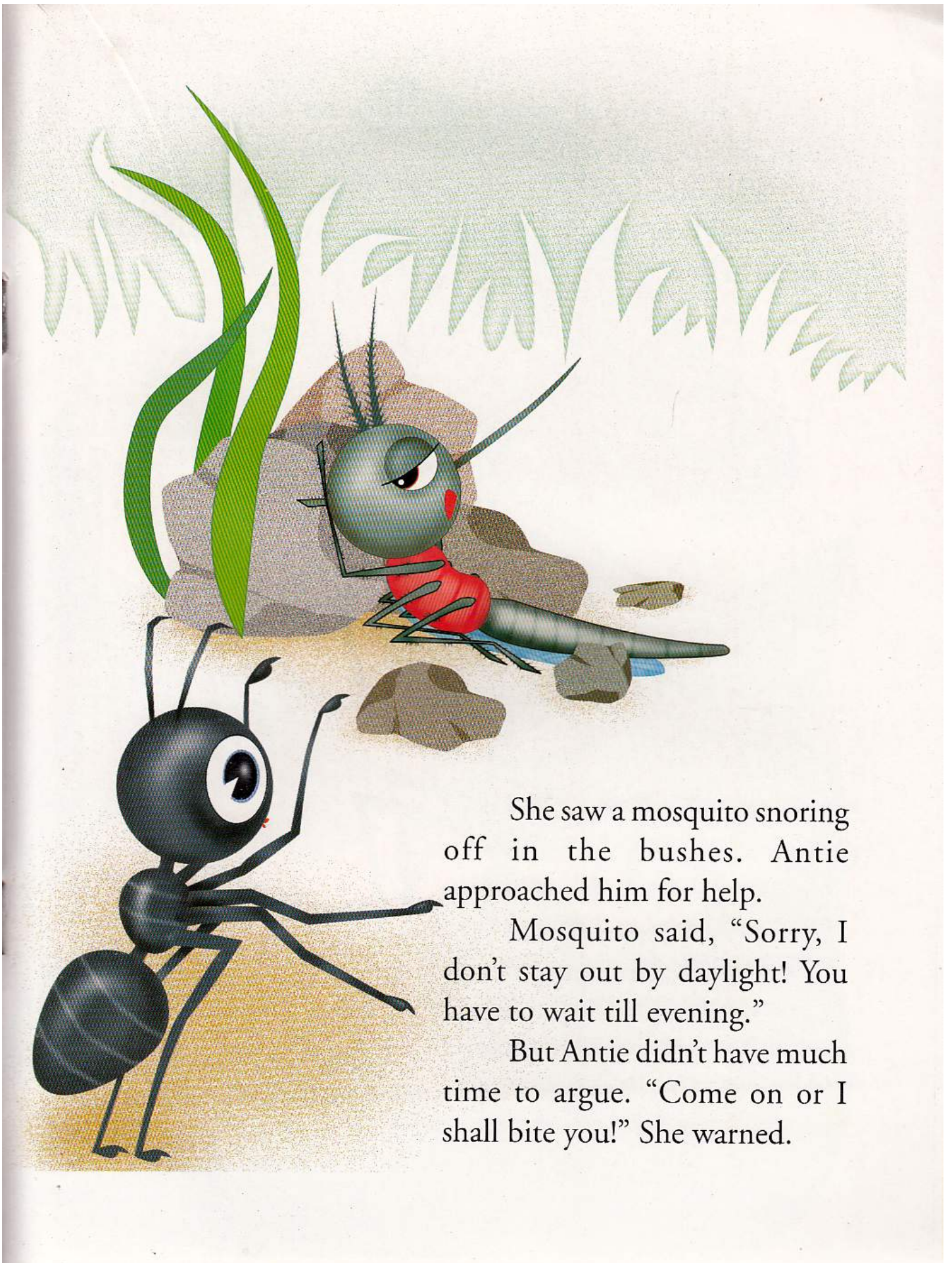


She was tired. She was hungry. She couldn't return in time either!

Hairy, the caterpillar was passing by. Hairy felt sorry for her. He came up for help but Antie was scared of his fiery hairs! Hairy said, "You needn't worry. My friend Shelly, the snail, will help you."

Antie mounted on Shelly. He of course moved at a snail's pace! So slowly that Antie became angry and shouted: "Stop! Stop! You are too lazy and slow. I can't reach home by sunset like this!"





She saw a mosquito snoring off in the bushes. Antie approached him for help.

Mosquito said, "Sorry, I don't stay out by daylight! You have to wait till evening."

But Antie didn't have much time to argue. "Come on or I shall bite you!" She warned.

At this critical moment, Titly the kind-hearted beautiful butterfly stepped forward to help Antie.

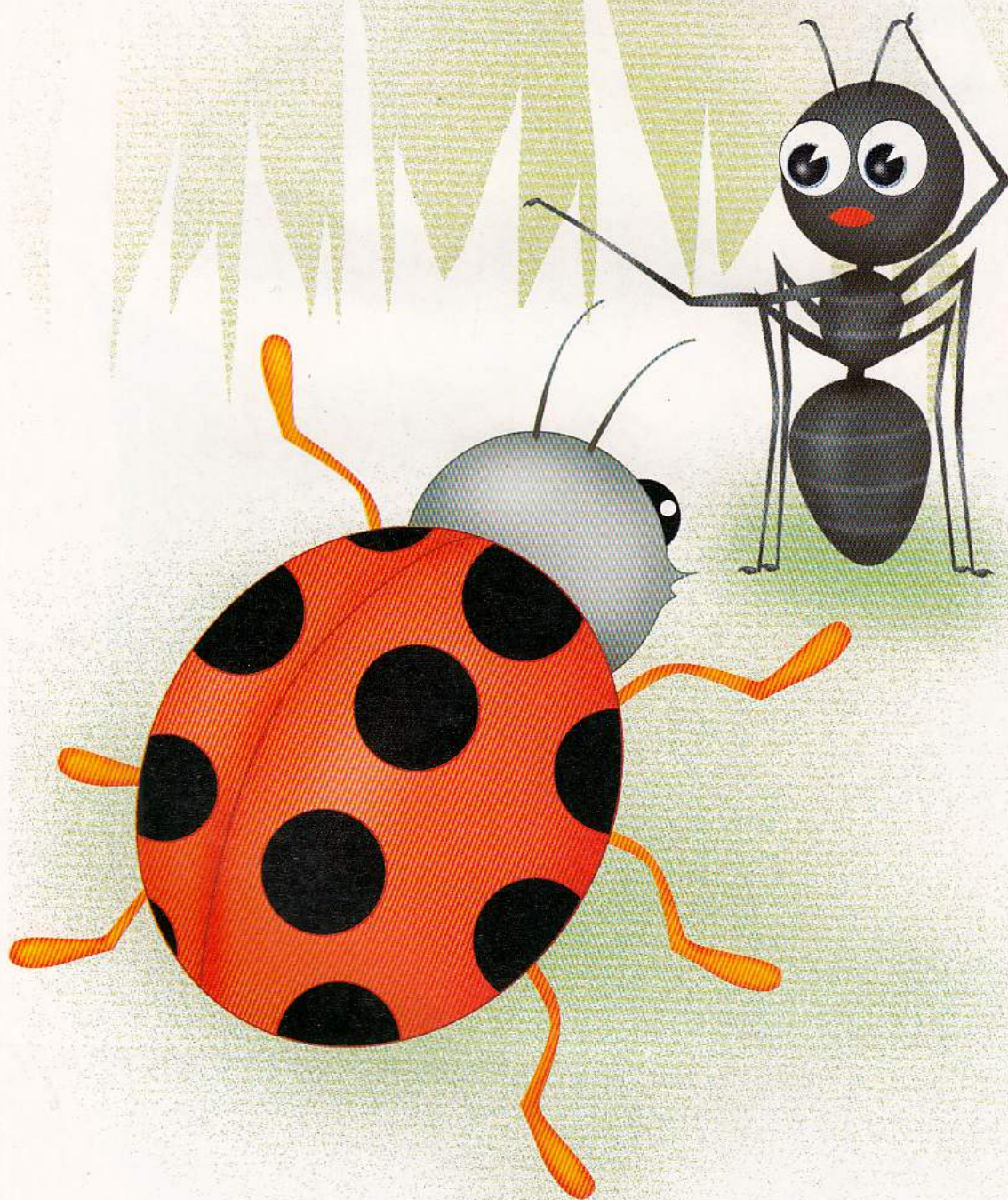
She consoled Antie and said, "There's no problem. My friend lady-bird is very nice and smart. She would of course help you."

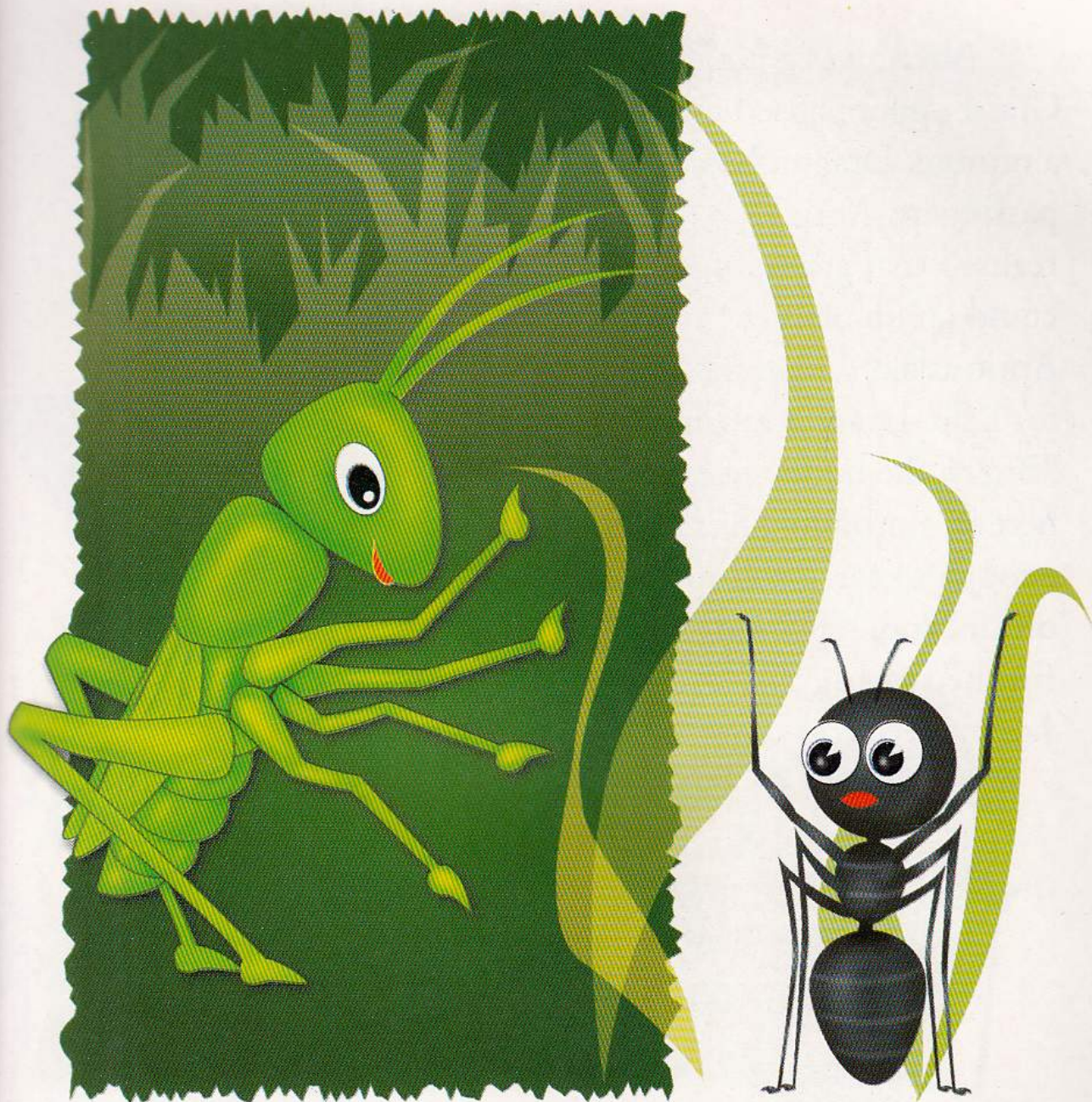




Lady-bird was indeed nice. She helped Antie cross the big garden and stopped. Ahead lay unending greenery. Wide pasture of green land!

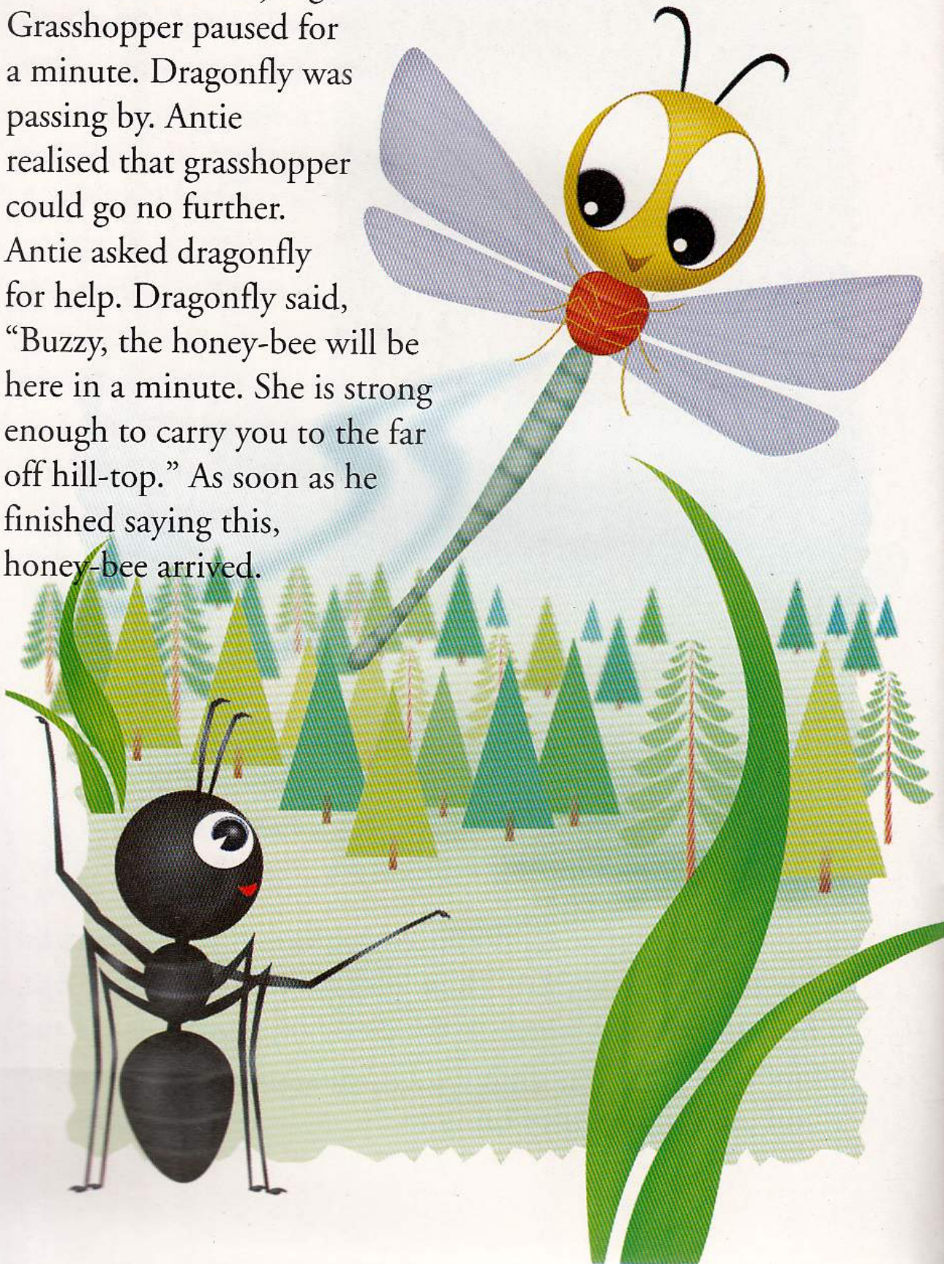
"I can't go ahead but the noddy-head grasshopper shall help you now," lady-bird bid her good-bye and moved away.

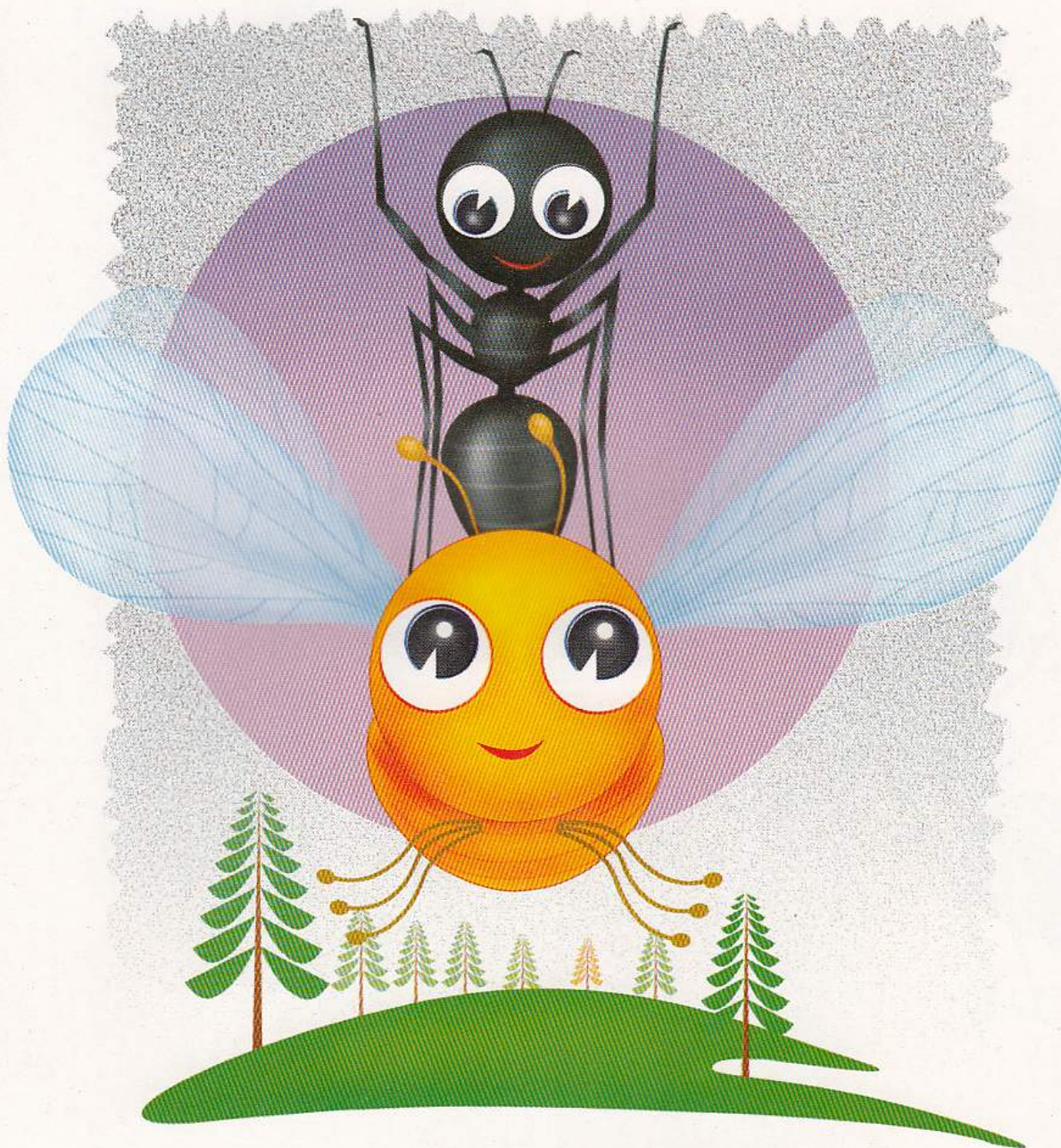




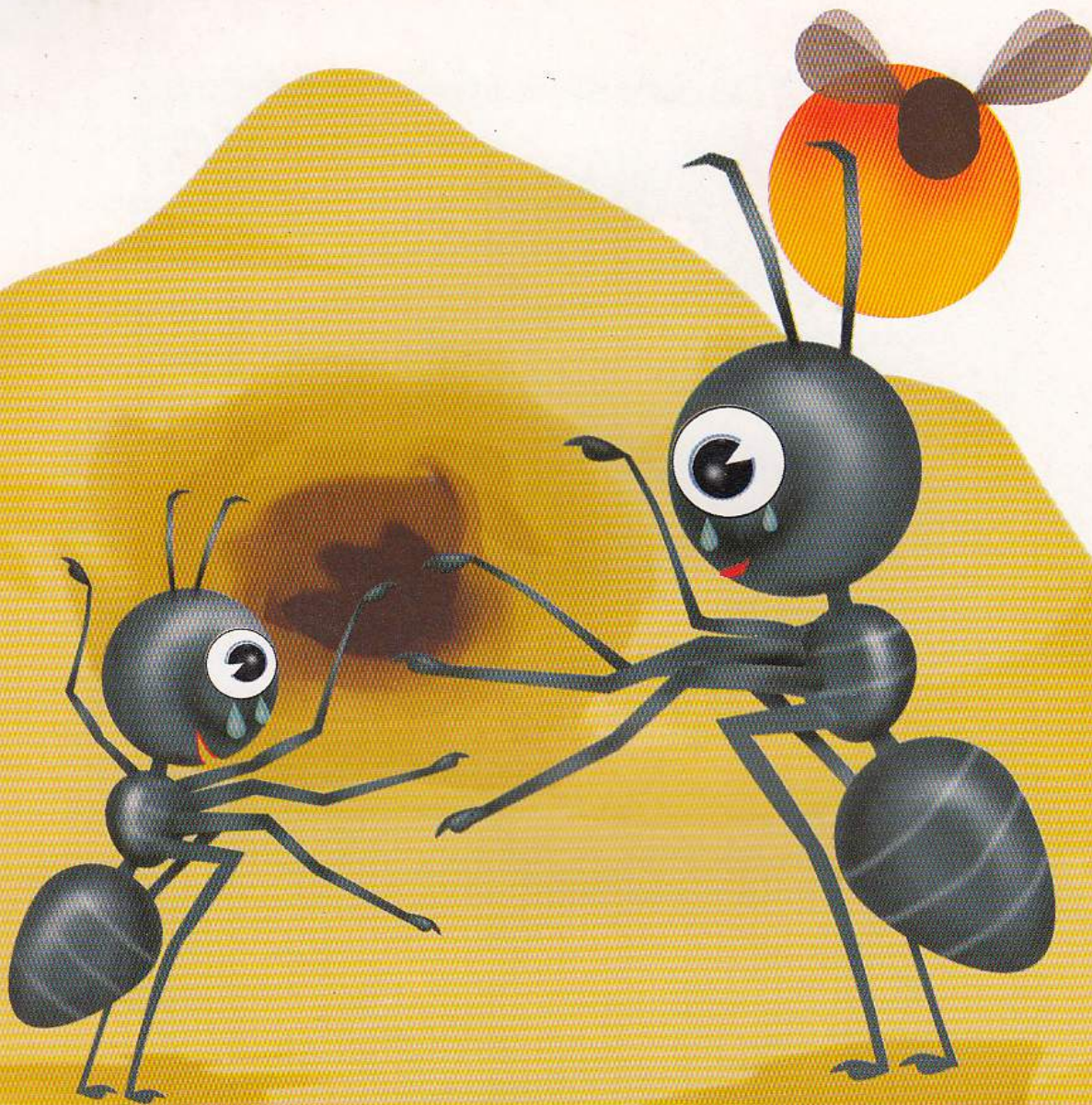
Grasshopper at once lifted Antie on his back and told her to hold on tightly. Then with his muscular hind legs, he gave a mighty jump. In the air he flipped his wings and landed at a far away distance. He repeated this process again and again. Soon they came to the end of the pastures.

Ahead was a jungle of thick trees. Grasshopper paused for a minute. Dragonfly was passing by. Antie realised that grasshopper could go no further. Antie asked dragonfly for help. Dragonfly said, "Buzzy, the honey-bee will be here in a minute. She is strong enough to carry you to the far off hill-top." As soon as he finished saying this, honey-bee arrived.



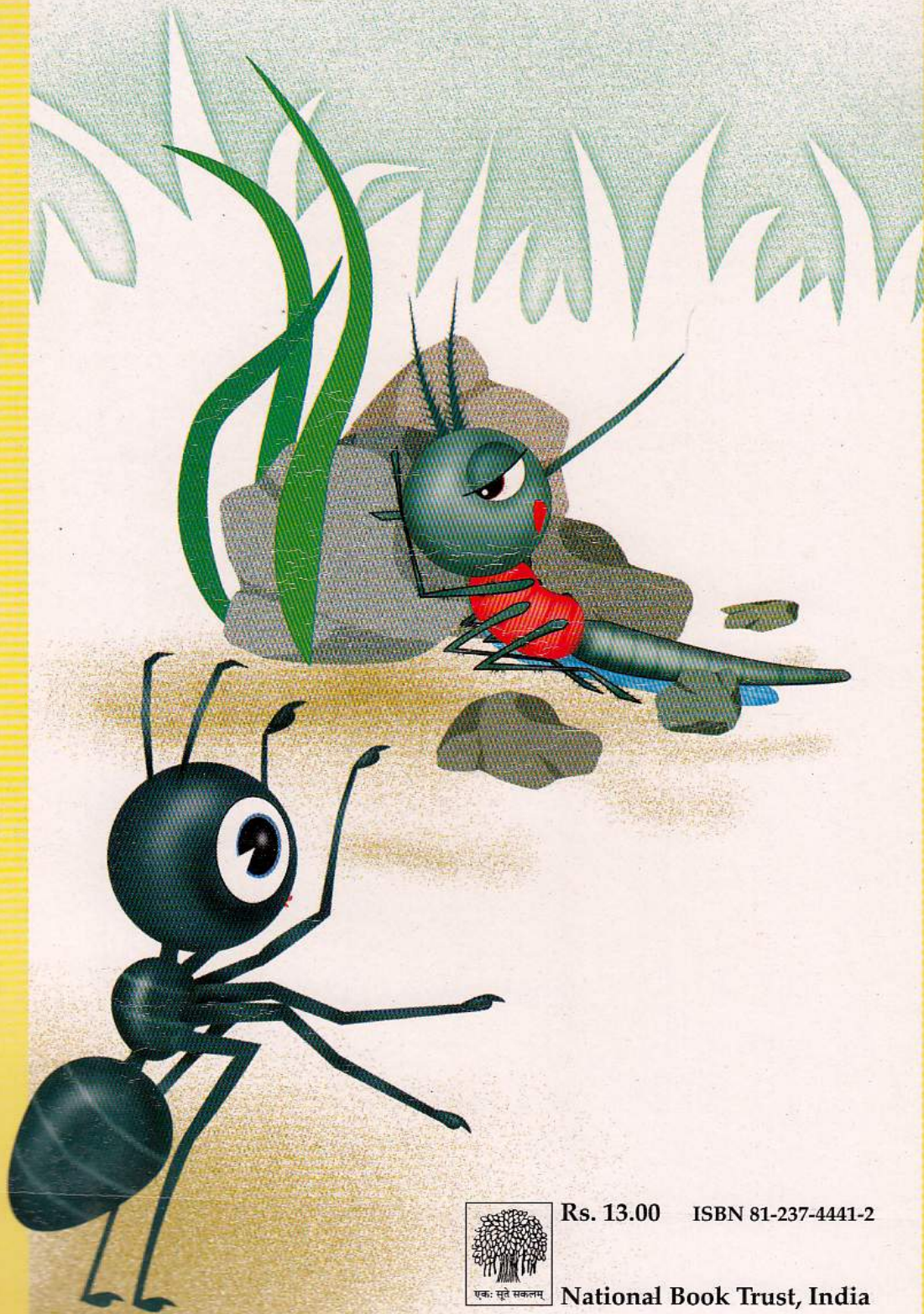


Antie mounted on the bee and it buzzed as it flew over trees and across meadows. Antie was overjoyed. She could see things from top as she had never seen before. She thought it was great fun to have wings... and finally they landed on the hill-top!



Mother Busy was waiting anxiously. She was very happy to see Antie. Both, Antie and her mother thanked the bee. Antie had lots to say to her mother. About her adventure, about the friends who helped her and the lesson she had learnt – TO OBEY WHAT PARENTS SAY!





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