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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Dame Cricket's Story

"Come on, children, it's time to get up," Mrs. Cricket said to her ten little crickets.

"Hurry up, take a bath and put on your black caps and brown suits. The sun is almost set behind the hill and the birds will soon fall asleep."

But the little crickets nestled under the bedding and pretended not to hear their mother's words.

"Come on, come on," she said a few minutes later, "you'll sleep all night if you don't hurry up. Some of our cousins are already singing, and it will soon be dark."

"Oh dear! Why do we have to get up?" said a little cricket, sticking his head out from under the bedding.

"Many insects sleep all night."

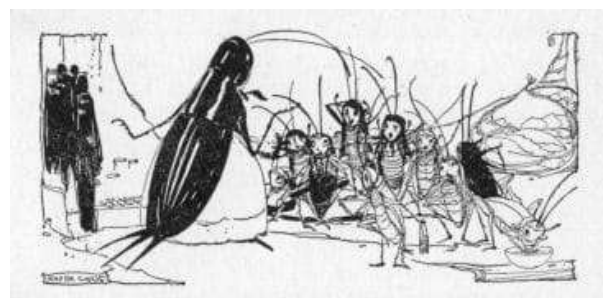
"Yes, but they are up all day," Mrs. Cricket replied, "and they run a great risk, I can assure you, my child. And they don't have a cricket family. There is a reason for our sleep days and our singing at night."

"Oh, mother, is it a story?"

asked all the little crickets,

jumping out of bed and gathering around their mother.

"Yes, there is a story about our family, and if you all hurry up and get dressed, I'll tell you," she said.



Very quietly, all the little crickets began to dress, and their mother began the story:

"Once, long, long ago," she said, "our family sang during the day and slept at night. But one day, great-grandfather Cricket noticed that our singing was not as loud as usual, so he called all the children, big and small, to him and looked at their throats.

"Strange, strange," he observed. "You all have a beautiful throat, just as fine as crickets always had, and yet our singing is very weak. There isn't as much volume as there used to be. I'll call on Doctor Frog today. Let's see what he thinks."

Doctor Frog thought for a moment and then asked, "How many do you have in your family now, Mr. Cricket?"

Great-grandfather called us all to him and began counting, and to his surprise he discovered that our family was only about half the size it should be.

"Exactly what I thought," said Doctor Frog, "the voices are just as good as ever, but there aren't as many of you, and of course, the singing isn't as loud as it used to be."

"Shall I tell you the reason for this?" asked Doctor Frog.

Great-grandfather said that was why he called on him. So Doctor Frog told him that the birds were eating our family and that if they continued, we would soon disappear altogether.

"How terrible, how terrible!" great-grandfather Cricket squeaked. "What can we do to preserve the family?"

"That's easy enough," said Doctor Frog. "Sleep during the day and sing at night like our family does. We would have little chance if we came out during the day and sang during the day too."

"So the reason we sleep during the day and sing at night is that the birds and chicken and insect-eating animals cannot catch us. Of course, they sometimes catch a cricket, but it's always someone who stayed out too late or got up too early. Usually a very young



cricket who thinks he knows more than his mother or father. But the good little crickets who get up when they are called will certainly have a good old age."

When Mrs. Cricket stopped talking, all the little crickets looked at her with very curious expressions on their faces.

"We are good little crickets, aren't we, mother?" they asked.

"Of course you are. You are now completely ready to go outside and sing. The sun has just set behind the hill," she said.

"Chirp, chirp, chirp," sang the little crickets as they ran after their mother into the night.