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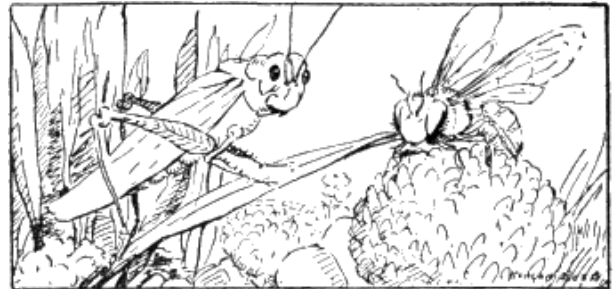
# Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

# Maya the Bee and the Acrobat (5/17)

Maya had made herself comfortable in a hole in a tree. It was safe and dry. To protect herself from all creatures with evil intentions, she had partially sealed the entrance of the tree hole with beeswax. She had also stored some honey there, so that she wouldn't have to go hungry on rainy days.



Today, it was dry and she could fly out again.

"Today, I will meet a human," she exclaimed cheerfully.

"On days like this, people must surely want to be outdoors to enjoy nature."

She had never seen so many insects in one day. They were coming and going. In the air, the cheerful buzzing of different insects could be heard. In the grass, she saw clovers and decided to take a sip of nectar from the flowers. On top of the flower that was leaning over Maya, she suddenly saw a skinny green creature sitting. She found the creature terrifying and was so afraid that she couldn't move. It had a strange bulging forehead and long, fine antennae growing from its eyebrows. Its body was slim and green all over. Even its

eyes were green. It had graceful forelegs and thin, inconspicuous wings that, according to Maya, wouldn't be of much use. The strangest thing about it was its hind legs, which protruded like two hinge-like stilts over its body.

"Are you done looking?" said the creature. "Have you never seen a grasshopper before? Or are you laying eggs at this moment?"

"What are you talking about?" Maya exclaimed in surprise. "Laying eggs? It wouldn't even cross my mind. Even if I could, I wouldn't do it. Then I would take over the queen's task. She is the only one who can and may do that!"

The grasshopper lowered its head and made such a funny face that Maya had to laugh at him.

"Madam," said the grasshopper. "You're quite a character!" Then the grasshopper had to laugh too.

"Why are you laughing?" Maya asked. "You can't seriously expect me to lay eggs here in the grass?"

Then the grasshopper said, "Hopla!" and with a leap, he was gone. Then he came back to Maya with another

"Hopla!" The grasshopper looked at Maya from top to bottom, from all sides, from front and back. "No," he

said. "You definitely can't lay eggs.

You're not equipped for it. You're a wasp, aren't you?" Being called a wasp! Maya found it a huge insult.

"How dare you call me a wasp?" she cried angrily.

"Hopla!" said the grasshopper, and he was gone again.



Maya flew away, offended. How dare he call her a wasp? She thought wasps were useless creatures. It made her very angry.

"Hopla!" there he was again.

"Madam," said the grasshopper. "I beg your pardon for occasionally interrupting our conversation. But it's just in me that I have to hop occasionally. I can't help it. Occasionally I have to jump, wherever. Can you jump too?"

He grinned from ear to ear and Maya couldn't be angry with him anymore and had to laugh.

"Who are you?" Maya asked. "I would like to know."

"Well, everyone knows who I am," said the grasshopper.

Maya could never tell if he was joking or serious.

"I am a stranger in these parts," she replied kindly, "otherwise I would certainly know you. But keep in mind that I belong to the Bee family and am absolutely not a wasp."

"My goodness," said the grasshopper. "You do look very much alike."

"You've obviously never been to school," she burst out.

"Take a good look at a wasp."

"Why should I?" replied the grasshopper. "What good would it do to perceive differences that exist only in the imagination of humans? You, a bee, fly around in the air, sting anything you encounter, and cannot jump. The same goes for a wasp. So where's the difference?"

"Hopla!" And he was gone.

"But now I'm going to fly away," Maya thought.

There he was again.

"Madam," said the grasshopper, "I would like to invite you to a jumping contest in which I myself will participate, in the forester's garden."

"I'm not interested in acrobatics," said Maya. "Someone who flies has higher interests."

The grasshopper grinned, a grin you could almost hear. "Don't think too highly of yourself, my dear young lady! Most creatures in this world can fly, but only a few can jump. I have known grasshoppers, members of my own family, who can jump up to three hundred times their own length. Three hundred times their own length! Imagine that. Even the elephant, the largest animal in the world, cannot jump that high."

"Hopla!" And he was gone again.

Maya found him to be a strange guy, that grasshopper who called himself Flip the grasshopper. But in the brief conversation she had with him, he taught her many new things. Although she didn't agree with his ideas about jumping, she found him very interesting. He knew the names of many different kinds of creatures. Would he understand their language as well? If he came back, she would ask him. And she would also ask him what he thought about coming near a human or going inside a human's house.

"Hopla!" There was the grasshopper again.

"My goodness! Where do you keep coming from?" Maya asked.

"From the surroundings," said the grasshopper.

"But tell me, do you just jump out into the world without knowing where you want to land?" Maya asked again.

"Of course. Why not? Can you read the future? Nobody can do that. Only the tree toad knows, but he never tells!" said the grasshopper.

"The things you know! Wonderful, simply wonderful!" exclaimed Maya. "Do you understand the language of humans as well?" Maya asked curiously.

"That's a difficult question to answer, Maya, because it hasn't been proven whether humans have a language. They make sounds and seem to understand each other. I once heard two boys blowing into a blade of grass. The result was a whistle that could be compared to the chirping of a cricket, although much less in tone quality. Apparently, humans make an honest attempt," replied the grasshopper.

And once again, the grasshopper took off. But this time, Maya waited in vain for him. She looked around in the grass and the flowers. He was nowhere to be seen.

