

The Ant and the Grasshopper: The updated versions

Posted By [Rob Nikolewski](#) On July 23, 2011 @ 5:52 pm In [Blog](#) | [No Comments](#)



^[1]We're familiar with Aesop's fable ^[2]of the the thrifty, hardworking ant and the foolhardy grasshopper.

Last year, the noted financial writer Martin Wolf ^[3]produced an updated version, with a global economic twist, where Germany, China and Japan are the ants and the US, the UK, Greece, Ireland and Spain are the grasshoppers. Here's an excerpt:

Fortunately, for the Asians, or so it seems, there happens to be a very big and exceptionally industrious grasshopper colony, called America. Indeed, the only way you would know it is a grasshopper colony is that its motto is: "In shopping we trust". Asian nests develop a relationship with America similar to Germany's with its neighbours. Asian ants build up piles of grasshopper debt and feel rich.

Yet there is a difference. When the crash comes to America and households stop borrowing and spending and the fiscal deficit explodes, the government does not say to itself: "This is dangerous; we must cut back spending." Instead, it says: "We must spend even more, to keep the economy humming." So the fiscal deficit becomes enormous.

This makes the Asians nervous. So the leader of China's nest tells America: "We, your creditors, insist you stop borrowing, just as European grasshoppers are now doing." The leader of the American colony laughs: "We did not ask you to lend us this money. In fact, we told you it was a folly. We are going to make sure American grasshoppers have jobs. If you do not want to lend us money, raise the price of your currency. Then we will make what we used to buy and you will no longer have to lend to us." So America teaches creditors a lesson from a dead sage: "If you owe your bank \$100, you have a problem; but if you owe \$100m, it does."

Brilliant. Click here ^[3]to read his entire story.

Well, I came across a different version from Dan Mitchell ^[4], a senior fellow at the Cato Institute in Washington, DC, and Lenore Hawkins ^[5]of Meritas Advisors ^[6]in California. There are no grasshoppers but lots of other pesky critters:

Want to know why we are still in a recession even though we have added over 200,000 new federal employees in the past two years?

Simple, it's not a good time to be an ant!



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[1] Image: <http://www.capitolreportnewmexico.com>



She produces a lot and she was happy.



*The Chief, a lion,
was surprised to see that
the ant was working
without supervision.*



*He thought if the ant can
produce so much without
supervision, wouldn't she
produce even more if she
had a supervisor!*



*So he recruited a
cockroach
who had extensive
experience as supervisor
and who was famous for
writing excellent reports.*



The cockroach's first

/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/ant-and-grasshopper.jpg

[2] Aesop's fable : <http://newmexico.watchdog.org>
http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Aesop/Aesops_Fables/The_Ant_and_the_Grasshopper_p1.html

[3] Martin Wolf : <http://newmexico.watchdog.org>
<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/202ed286-6832-11df-a52f-001444feab49a.html#axzz1SuMtsJsc>

[4] Dan Mitchell: <http://newmexico.watchdog.org>
<http://danieljmitchell.wordpress.com/2011/07/21/bureaucracy-humor-probably-created-by-somebody-at-homeland-security-or-hud/>

[5] Lenore Hawkins : <http://newmexico.watchdog.org>
<http://meritasadvisors.com/media-appearances/>

[6] Meritas Advisors : <http://newmexico.watchdog.org>
<http://meritasadvisors.com/>

[7] Image: <http://www.capitolreportnewmexico.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/the-ant-and-the-government-1.jpg>

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decision was to set up a clocking in attendance system.



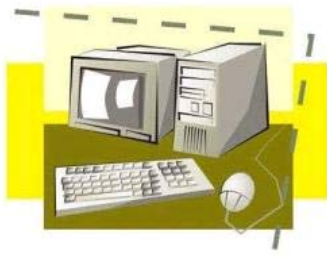
He also needed a secretary to help him write and type his reports and ...



... he recruited a spider, who managed the archives and monitored all phone calls.

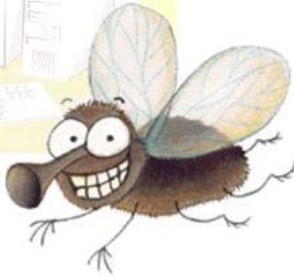


The lion was delighted with the cockroach's reports and asked him to produce graphs to describe production rates and to analyse trends, so that he could use them for presentations at Board's meetings.



So the cockroach had to buy a new computer and a laser printer and ...

... recruited a fly to manage the IT department.



The ant, who had once been so productive and relaxed, hated this new plethora of paperwork and meetings which used up most of her time...!



The lion came to the conclusion that it was high time to nominate a person in charge of the department where the ant worked.

The position was given to the cicada, whose first decision was to buy a carpet and an ergonomic chair for his office.



The new person in charge, the cicada, also needed a computer and a personal assistant, who he brought from his previous department, to help him prepare a Work and Budget Control Strategic Optimisation Plan ...



The Department where the ant works is now a sad place, where nobody laughs anymore and everybody has become upset...



It was at that time that the cicada convinced the boss, the lion, of the absolute necessity to start a climatic study of the environment.



Having reviewed the charges for running the ant's department, the lion found out that the production was much less than before.



So he recruited the owl, a prestigious and renowned consultant to carry out an audit and suggest solutions.



*The owl spent three months in the department and came up with an enormous report, in several volumes, that concluded :
" The department is overstaffed ..."*





Guess who the lion fires first?

*The ant, of course, because she
"showed lack of motivation and had a negative
attitude".*

