

Fable 16.  
**DE CICADA ET FORMICA**  
(Barlow 49)

## **Introduction**

### *The Cricket and The Ant*

In this famous fable, the ant spends the summer working hard, unlike the cricket, who spends all her time singing. What is the cricket going to do when winter finally comes? In a Greek version of the fable, the ant says to the cricket: “Since you sang like a fool in the summer, you better be prepared to dance the winter away!” For Joseph Jacobs, the moral of the story is simply that “It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.” If you place the ant and the cricket at opposite ends of a behavior scale, where would you rank yourself on that scale: more like the cricket, or more like the ant?

For some more stories about what dangers lie ahead when winter comes, see the fable of the drunken man who sold his clothes (Fable 42), the hedgehogs who needed a home (Fable 76), or the story of the satyr who rescued a man in the snow (Fable 64).

## **Grammar Overview**

### *The Postpositive Particle, Autem*

In Fable 2, you learned about the postpositive particle *enim*, which indicates an explanatory connection between two clauses or sentences. In this fable you will see a different postpositive particle, *autem*, which signals an adversative relationship to the preceding sentence. So, when you see *autem*, it means that something contradictory is coming up, something that goes against what you just learned in the preceding sentence. In the fable you are about to read, for example, you will see that *autem* signals the onset of winter after the summer is over: *saeviente autem bruma*. The particle *autem* is not required by the grammar of the sentence; it is just used to emphasize that there is something new and different coming up in the next sentence, a change in the weather from summer to winter. You could omit the word *autem* without doing any damage to the grammar of the sentence, but you would no longer see as clearly the specific relationship between this new sentence and the sentence that came before it. (For another postpositive particle that signals an element of change or surprise, see the comments about *tamen* in the notes to Fable 66.)

## Vocabulary

### *Nouns*

**aestas** (**aestatis**, *f.*): summer, summer heat

**antrum** (**antri**, *n.*): cave, hollow place

**bruma** (**brumae**, *f.*): winter weather, cold

**cicada** (**cicadae**, *f.*): cricket

**granum** (**grani**, *n.*): grain, seed

**hiems** (**hiemis**, *f.*): winter, winter time

**messis** (**messis**, *f.*): harvest, crop

**victus** (**victus**, *m.*): food, sustenance

### *Adjectives*

**famelicus**, **famelica**, **famelicum**: starving, hungry

### *Verbs*

**canto** (**cantare**): sing

**dictito** (**dictitare**): say, repeat

**exerceo** (**exercere**): conduct, carry out

**laboro** (**laborare**), **laboravi**, **laboratus**: work, exert effort

**mendico** (**mendicare**): beg, be a beggar

**renuo** (**renuere**): refuse, shake head no

**repono** (**reponere**): store, put up

**saevio** (**saevire**): rage, rave

**traho** (**trahere**): drag, haul

*Ignavis semper feriae sunt.*

## DE CICADA ET FORMICA

### Dramatis Personae

*Cicada*, the cricket, and *Formica*, the ant.

Dum per aestatem Cicada cantat, Formica suam exercet messem, trahendo in antra grana et in hiemem reponendo. Saeviente autem bruma, famelica Cicada venit ad Formicam et mendicat victum; renuebat autem Formica, dictitans sese laborasse, dum illa cantabat.

### Grammar Notes

**suam exercet messem.** The phrase **suam messem** wraps around the verb (see Fable 6).

**trahendo et reponendo.** For the use of gerunds in the ablative case, see Fable 48.

**saeviente autem bruma.** Ablative absolute construction (see Fable 8), with the postpositive particle **autem** in second position (see the *Grammar Overview* for this fable).

**sese laborasse.** Accusative plus infinitive construction in indirect statement (see Fable 7); **sese** is an alternate form of **se**, and **laborasse** is an alternate form of **laboravisse**.

*Cicada cicadae cara,  
formicae formica.*



Laqueum praetendit rusticus gruibus anseribusque; capitur et ciconia.