

## The Little Red Ant and the Great Big Cake Crumb

There was once upon a time in Mexico an anthill and in that ant hill there lived 999 big strong black ants and one little red ant. Now, every day the 999 big strong black ants would march out of the anthill and they would search the field for food, which they would heave up onto their big strong shoulders and carry back to the anthill. And every day the little red ant would scurry along after them calling 'Wait for me! Wait for me!' But the 999 big strong black ants would just ignore her and march back into the anthill with their food.

One day the little red ant was searching around the field for food when she saw something yellow poking out from under a leaf. Thinking it was a piece of corn the little red ant walked towards it. As she got closer she could see that it was far too big to be a piece of corn and it smelt differently as well. She walked up to the leaf and found underneath a great big cake crumb. A bird must have dropped it as it flew over. The little red ant sniffed at the great big cake crumb and oh it smelt delicious. She licked it and it tasted delicious as well.

The little red ant tried pushing at the great big cake crumb with her little hands, but she couldn't move it. She tried pushing at it with her back, but it wouldn't budge. She wrapped her arms around the great big cake crumb and tried to lift it, but she couldn't. The little red ant sat down exhausted.

'What I need is some help,' she said to herself. 'I need someone big and strong to help me move this great big cake crumb back to the anthill.' And she set off across the field in search of someone to help her.

Well, she walked and walked and then she stopped to sit down on a small log for a rest. But, it wasn't a log at all. Suddenly a slim head turned around to face her and a long forked tongue came towards her. She was sitting on a lizard.

'Hello, little red ant,' said the lizard. 'What are you doing here?'

'I'm looking for someone big and strong to help me move a great big cake crumb,' said the little red ant.

'Well, it's no use asking me,' said the lizard. 'I don't get up until the sun comes up and warms me through. But why don't you stay around until lunchtime,' said the lizard licking his lips.

'Oh, no thank you Mr. Lizard,' said the little red ant. 'I have to find someone to help me move this great big cake crumb.' And she set off to talk to the sun, because if the lizard wouldn't get up until the sun had warmed him then surely the sun must be big and strong.

As the little red ant walked through the corn field she saw the sun rising ahead of her and then she noticed that the sun was caught in a spider's web. She climbed up a corn stalk to

reach the spider's web. As she reached the top the spider came out and said, 'Hello, little red ant. What are you doing here?'

And the little red ant replied, 'I have come up to talk to the sun. I want her to help me move a great big cake crumb that I have found because she is big and strong.'

The spider laughed. 'It's not the sun you need to talk to,' he said. 'The sun doesn't get up in the mornings until the cockerel cock-a-doodle-does. If you want to talk to someone big and strong you need to talk to the cockerel. But why don't you wait here until lunchtime?' said the spider licking his lips.

'Oh, no thank you Mr. Spider,' said the little red ant. 'I need to find someone to help me move this great big cake crumb before it gets dark.' And with that she climbed back down the corn stalk and went off to look for the cockerel.

As she walked along the little red ant tripped over a twig and as she picked herself up she saw there was another twig laid right next to it and another. There was a thicker twig rising up above the three twigs on the ground. Suddenly the twigs moved. They weren't twigs at all. They were the toes and foot and leg of the cockerel. A beak pecked down at the little red ant. It just missed her as she quickly jumped out of the way.

'Oh, please don't eat me, Mr. Cockerel!' she cried. 'Please don't eat me. I need your help to move a great big cake crumb that I have found.'

'Cake crumb, did you say? I'll help you eat your cake crumb', said the cockerel. 'Just show me where it is and I'll eat it up for you straight away.'

Just then there came a howling from across the field. The cockerel looked up. 'It's the chicken chaser,' he said and he ran off across the field as fast as he could go. The little red ant watched the cockerel running away and she thought to herself, 'The cockerel is frightened of the wolf. I need to talk to the wolf. He must be big and strong.'

And so the little red ant walked to the edge of the field where she found the wolf sitting on the path howling at the setting sun. 'Mr. Wolf,' she called out. 'Mr. Wolf. I need your help.'

The wolf turned and looked down at her. 'Don't bother me now,' he said. 'Can't you see that I am saying goodnight to the sun?'

Just then there came the sound of footsteps on the path. The wolf turned around and the little red ant turned around. A man was walking along the path towards them. The wolf suddenly looked frightened and turned and ran off across the field.

'Well,' thought the little red ant. 'If the wolf is frightened of the man then I must talk to the man, because he must be big and strong.' And she stood in the middle of the path and waited for the man to arrive.

As the man came nearer she waved her arms and called up to him, 'Mr. Man! Mr. Man! I need your help!' But the man didn't hear her. His great big boots kept coming closer and closer until he was just about to step on the little red ant.

At the last moment the little red ant jumped up and grabbed the man's bootlace and swung up onto his ankle. She scurried up his trouser leg. The man began to scritch and scratch at his leg. The little red ant ran up into his shirt. The man began to scritch and scratch at his back. The little red ant ran up onto his neck. The man began to scritch and scratch at his neck.

The little red ant ran into the man's ear and called at the top of her voice, 'Mr. Man! Mr. Man! I need your help! The man stopped still and let out a great scream. He took off his hat and began to beat at his head. 'Demons!' he shouted. 'Demons in my ears! AAAARRRGHH!' And he threw his hat on the ground and ran off along the path screaming and shouting.

The little red ant climbed out from underneath the hat and watched the man running away. 'The man is frightened of me,' she said to herself. 'The wolf ran from the man and the cockerel ran from the wolf. The sun won't get up in the morning until the cockerel wakes it up and the lizard won't move until the sun warms it. But the man is scared of me. I am the strongest of us all. I can do anything!'

And with that she set off across the field to the leaf where the great big cake crumb lay. When she got there she wrapped her arms around the great big cake crumb and heaved it up onto her shoulders. Then, step-by-step she walked across the field to the anthill. When she got there she took the great big cake crumb into the anthill, put it down in a corner and sat down next to it.

The little red ant spent all winter eating that great big cake crumb and the next spring she wasn't the smallest ant in the anthill anymore. She was the biggest and strongest ant in the anthill and the 999 big strong black ants made her their queen.

Now, what do you think the meaning of that story is?

Storyteller Steve Mynard can be contacted through his website at [www.stevemynard.com](http://www.stevemynard.com)

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