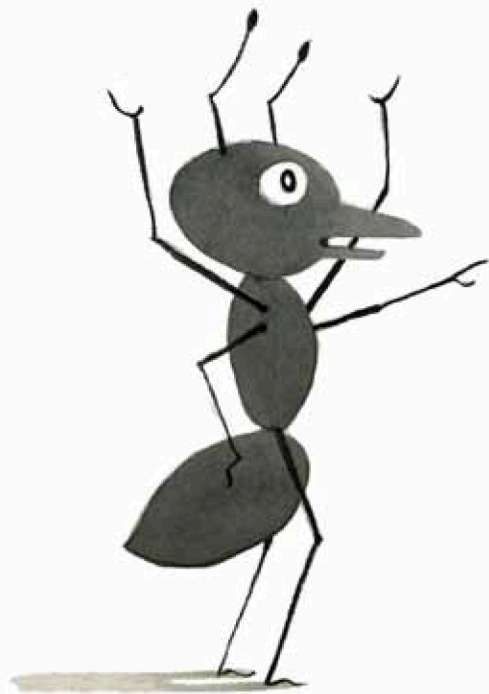


THE MARCH OF THE ANTS

by **URSULA DUBOSARSKY**
Australian Children's Laureate

The ants were heading off on a very important expedition. Each ant said what they were going to bring.



“I’m bringing food,” said the first ant.

“I’m bringing water,” said the second.

“I’m bringing a map,” said the third.

“I’m bringing tools” said the fourth.

“Excellent, excellent!” said the Chief Ant. “You are excellent ants.”

On and on, right through the ant army, each ant said what they were going to bring, until at last it was the littlest ant’s turn.

“I’m bringing my book,” said the littlest ant.

“A book!” said the Chief Ant. “A storybook! What good is that? Find something else. Something useful that will help our expedition!”

But although the littlest ant was little, she was also stubborn. She held her book tightly and shook her head. “I’m bringing my book,” she said.



The Chief Ant sighed. “We have no more time to talk. We must head off. Ants – everyone – forward march!”

The ant army set out. They marched and marched for days and nights. They were very determined and very brave. They ate the food, they drank the water, they looked at the map and they used the tools. They were excellent ants.



But the journey was long. The ants became so tired. And they were afraid. Would they ever reach their destination? Some of them became very sad. Some of them were giving up hope. Some of them thought they would stop marching altogether.

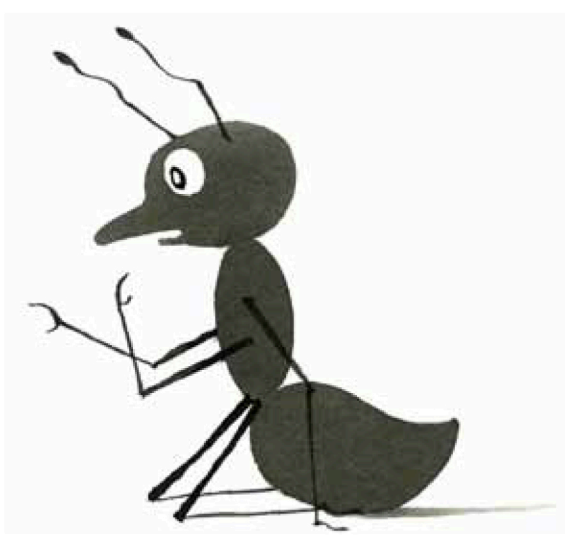


One night, when the stars were bright, the littlest ant brought out her book. She opened it up and began to read out loud. She had a soft small voice, but slowly, one by one, all the ants in the ant army gathered around her, listening very carefully to the story. They listened all night long.

Finally, just as the sun was rising, the littlest ant came to the last page and closed the book.

“Is that the end of the story?”
said the Chief Ant, dismayed.

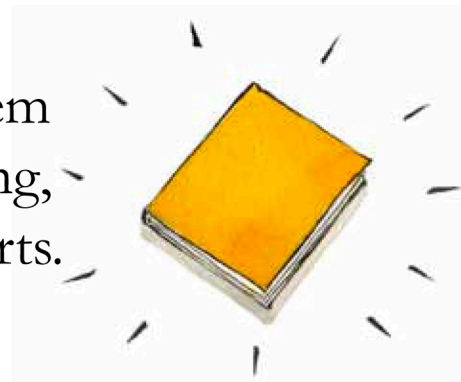
“The best stories never end,”
said the littlest ant. “They keep
on going, inside you.”



And she was right. After listening to the story,
strangely, mysteriously, all the ants in the ant army
felt brave again. They felt strong again. They felt they
could keep going. And they did. They kept going.



And perhaps they are still going. And
every night, the littlest ant reads to them
from her storybook, and every morning,
the ants set out with hope in their hearts.



**Ursula first read
“The March of the Ants” aloud
at the National Library of
Australia on 11 February 2020,
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Australian Children’s Laureate
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