

Better as a Team

"Who wants to help look for food today?" asked one of the ants.

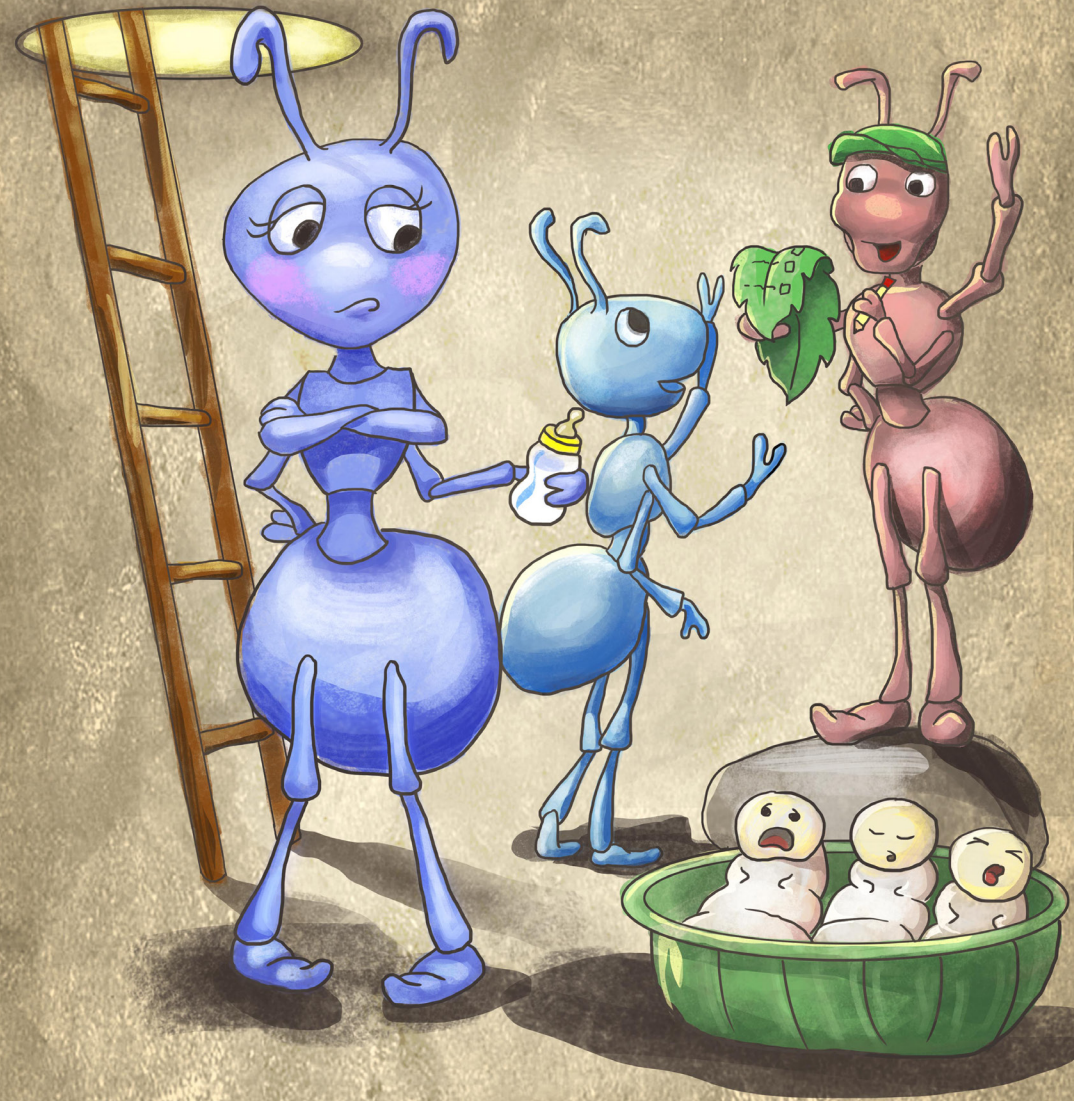
"I will! I will!" shouted several voices.

Ten ants were chosen and the scouts set off to look for food. Once they found some, they would call the others to help carry the food back to the ant colony. While the scouts were looking for food, there was a lot to be done to keep the colony running. There were baby ants to care for, cleaning jobs, and more. The ants busied themselves with their chores.

One little ant, Jana, was not happy with all the work.

"I'm tired of being told what to do!" she said to herself one day. "I'm better off by myself."

When the scouts had returned, they told the others ants about their find. They needed many ants' help to bring it home. Jana went along to gather the food.



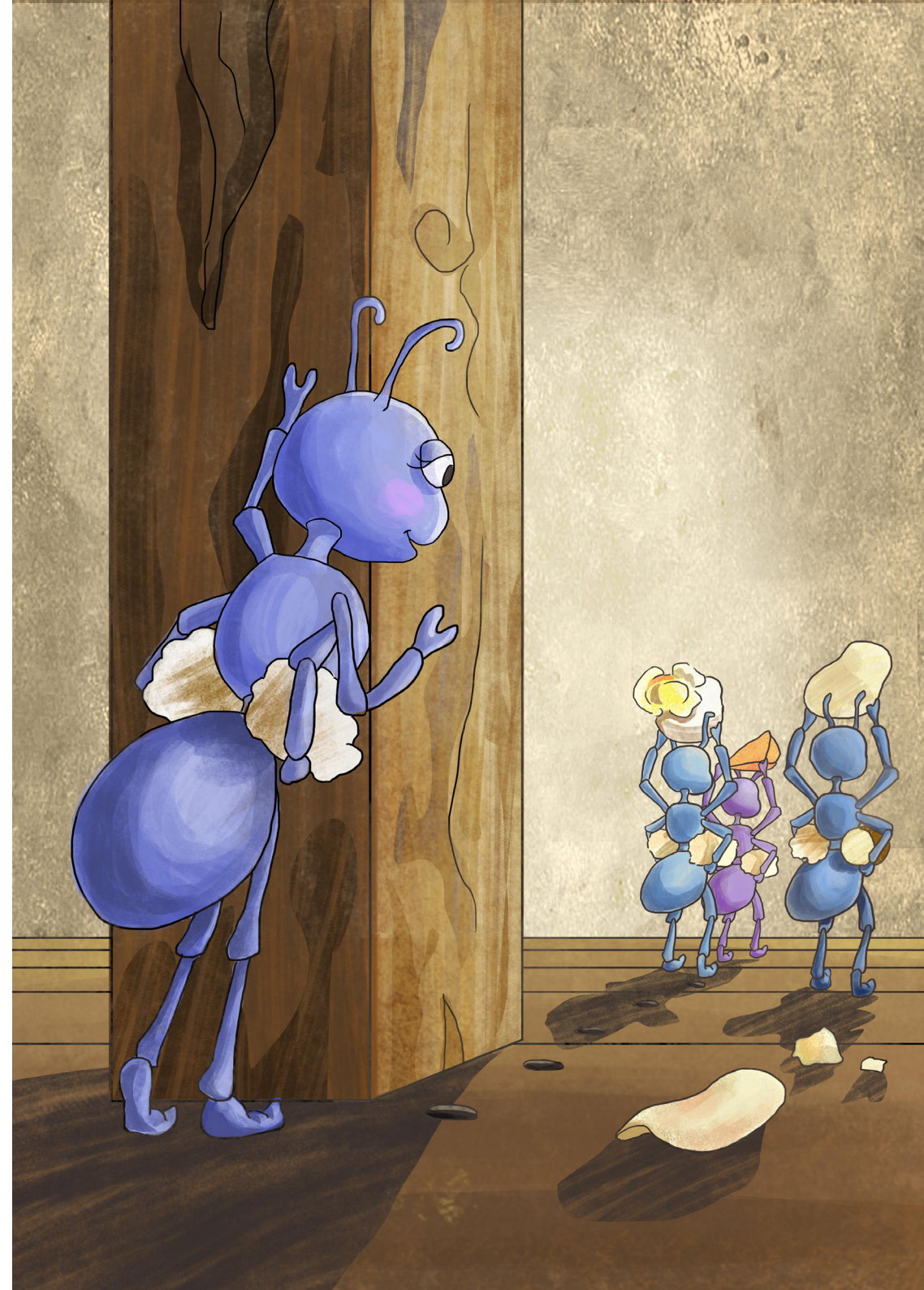
When they got to the porch where the food had been found, the ants started to gather up the crumbs.

I'm so hungry, Jana thought. I think I'll just snatch some now. I don't want to wait till we get back home.

Another ant saw Jana eating the crumbs, and suggested they wait till they get home.

Maybe I'll just go off on my own, thought Jana. *Then I can find my own food and eat it whenever I want. And I won't have to work and there won't be anybody telling me what to do.*

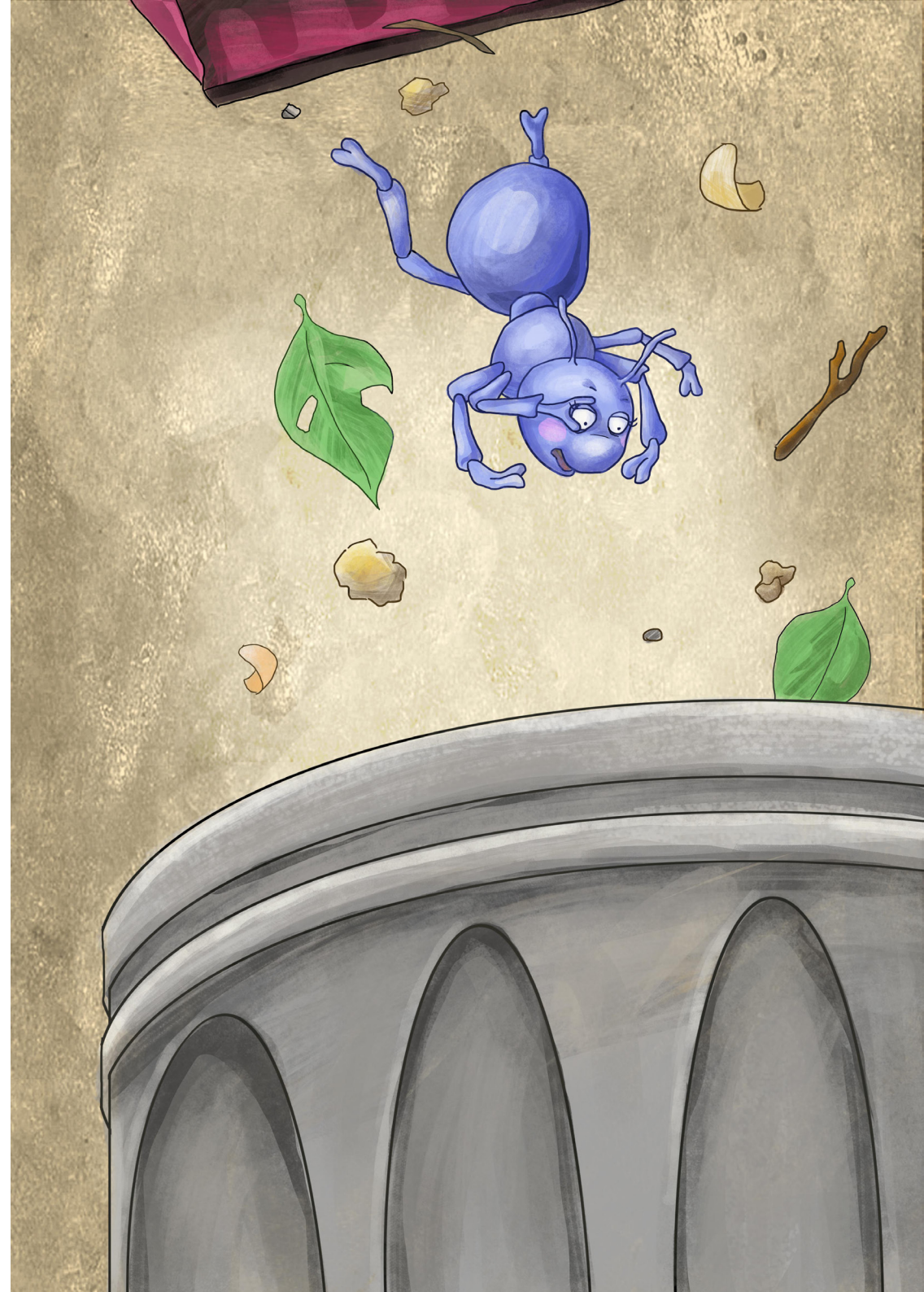
So while the other ants returned home, carrying as much food as they could, Jana snuck behind a table leg and waited for the others to leave.



When all the ants had gone, Jana came out from her hiding place and began to greedily gobble up the cake crumbs that were left on the floor. She was so busy stuffing herself that she didn't notice the large broom coming toward her. Jana found herself being swept along with the cake crumbs into a dustpan. Then with a mighty tumble she fell into the garbage bin.

Inside the garbage bin it was dark and smelly. "Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all," she said sadly.

Jana tried to climb up the steep, slippery sides of the garbage bin. Only to continually fall all the way down. She tried again and again. But at last she sat down, tired and sad.



If only my friends were here, we'd be able to form an ant ladder up the side, and we'd be out in no time at all! she thought.

Jana wondered if anyone was missing her. Just a little while ago, she'd been sure that she'd be better off on her own. Now, she really wished she was back with the others. *I guess I'll be staying here for the night.* A tear rolled down her cheek.

"Jana, Jana!"

Was someone calling her name?



Jana looked up and saw the smiling face of her friend, Kira.

"We noticed you were gone, and so we came looking for you!"

Jana rubbed her eyes and looked again. Yes, it was Kira! Jana was so happy and relieved.

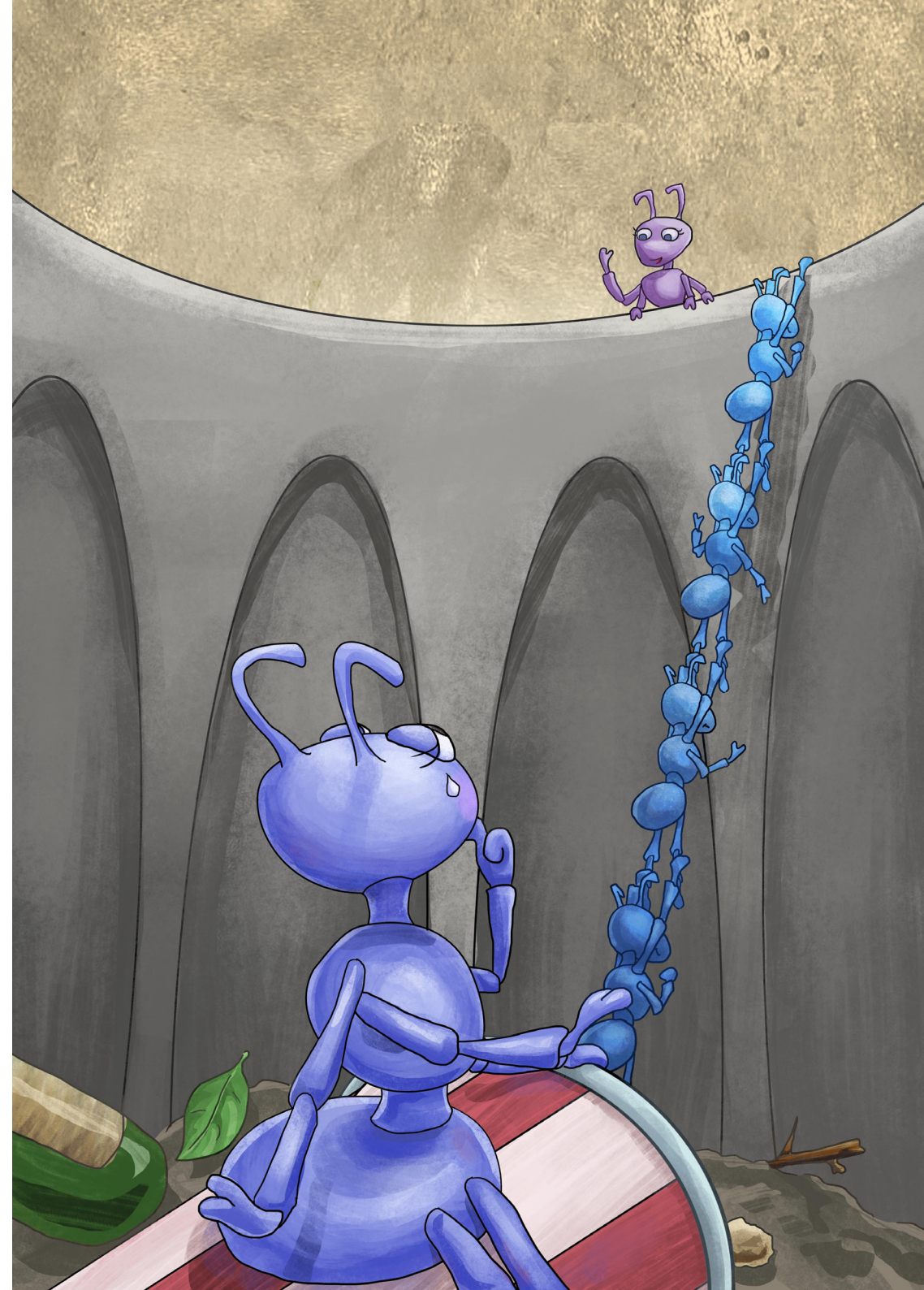
"Oh, thank you for coming back for me," Jana exclaimed. "I-I can't climb the sides by myself. I need help getting out of here."

"Don't worry! We'll get you out of there in no time at all," Kira reassured her.

And with that, a troop of Jana's friends descended, forming an ant ladder that Jana climbed to get out of the bin.

When she was safely out, Jana's friends rushed over to see her, happy that she was all right and eager to see if she was okay.

"I thought I didn't need anyone," Jana told her friends. "But I do need you all. I'm so happy you came back to help me out of there."



"We're so glad we found you!" one of Jana's friends said, to which all her other friends happily agreed.

The next time someone asked for help with a chore or job, Jana was happy to volunteer. She didn't complain when someone told her what to do or asked for her help with something. Whenever she was tempted to complain or murmur, Jana would remember the time she had tried to do it all on her own and she would then be happy that she had others to do things with.

"We're better as a team," she would tell her friends.

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