Best Foot Forward

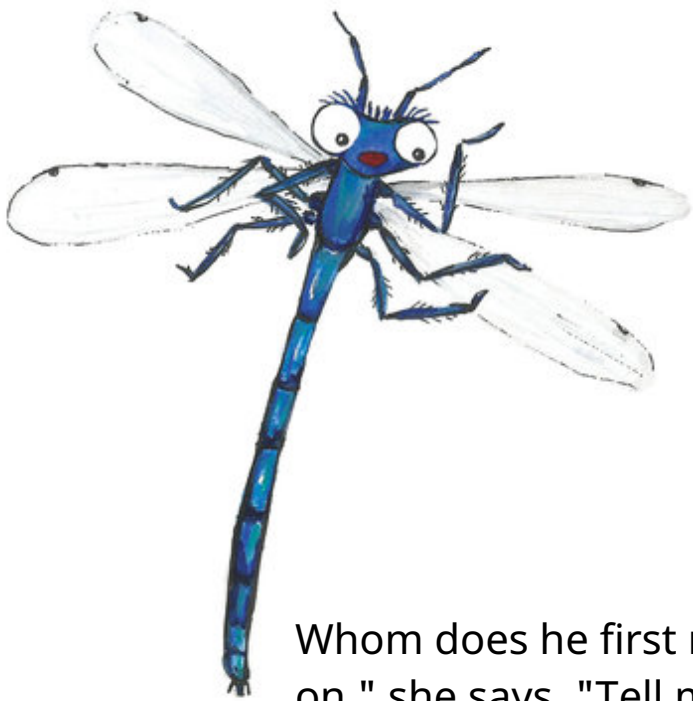**Author:** Rustom Dadachanji
Illustrator: Tanvi Choudhury

Level 2

"A perfect day for a walk!" thinks Mr. Centipede. "What better way to keep my 42 feet strong and fit?"
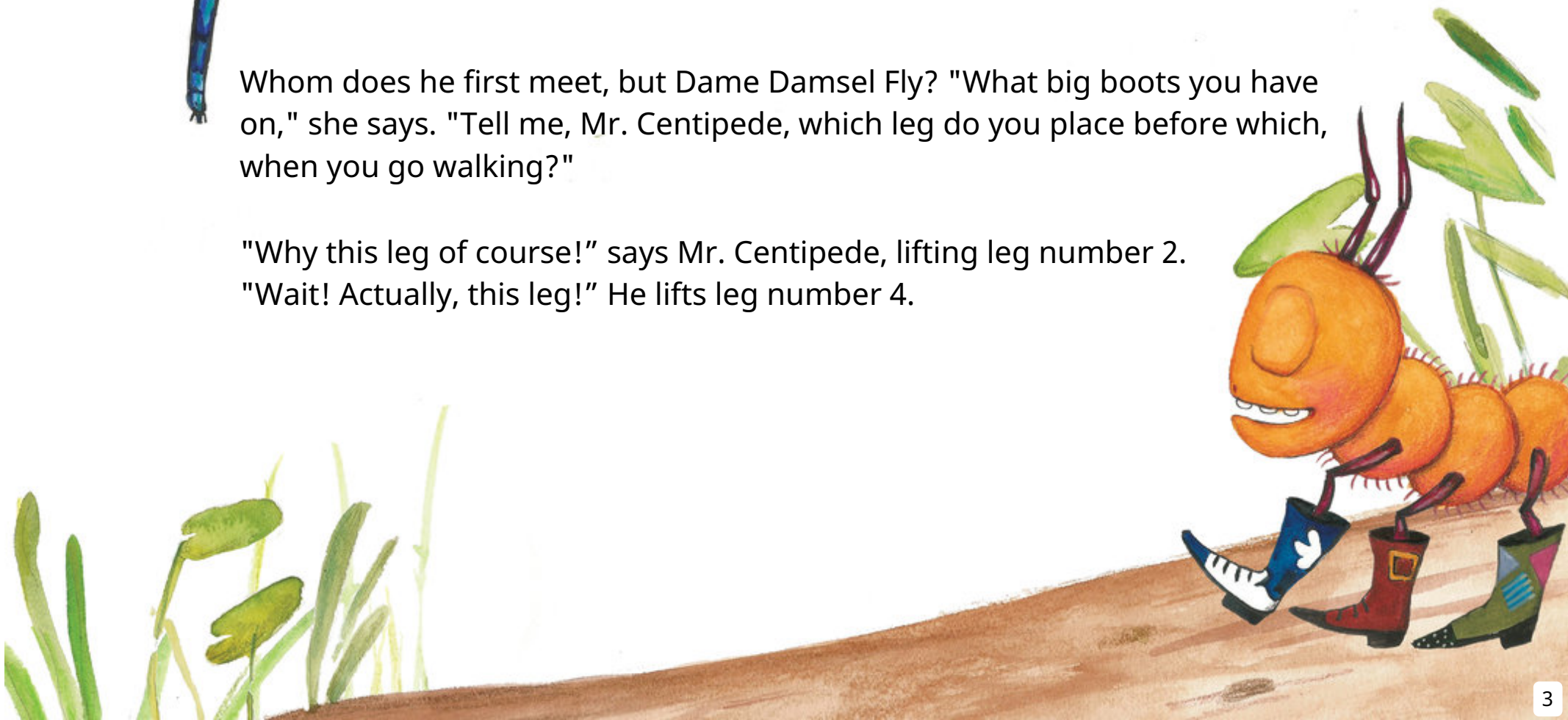
At the end of each foot, Mr. Centipede wears a bold, bright, beautiful, boot. That is 21 pairs of boots for all 42 feet!

Whom does he first meet, but Dame Damsel Fly? "What big boots you have on," she says. "Tell me, Mr. Centipede, which leg do you place before which, when you go walking?"

"Why this leg of course!" says Mr. Centipede, lifting leg number 2. "Wait! Actually, this leg!" He lifts leg number 4.

"Such fine boots!" says the Big Beetle. "Tell me, Mr. Centipede, which leg do you place before which, when you go walking?"

"What a silly question," says Mr. Centipede annoyed. He sticks out leg number 3. And puts it down quickly. He sticks out leg number 6 instead.

"What is happening here?"
asks Elder Ant.

"Shhh! Poor Mr. Centipede is very
confused," whispers Dame Damsel Fly.
"In all this time, even though he has
so many boots, he has been unable
to take a single step."

"Is that so?" says Elder Ant with a sigh.
"Tell me, Mr. Centipede, which leg do you
place before which, when you go for a walk."

"I start simply with this one…" says Mr. Centipede, lifting leg number 4.

"Oh nooo! I mean… that one." He lifts leg number 8.
"Oh noooo! None of them. I mean, one of them.
Oh nooo! I have forgotten what I mean!"

"Run, run quickly!" they hear a voice.

"Who is that?" cries Big Beetle.

"I am Stick Insect. You, with all those boots, had better run."

"I have spotted a blackbird," whispers Stick Insect. "She seems quite hungry and ready for breakfast. She cannot see me because I look like the tree bark I am resting on. But she sure can see you, dressed up in those big bright colourful boots! Run, run quickly!"
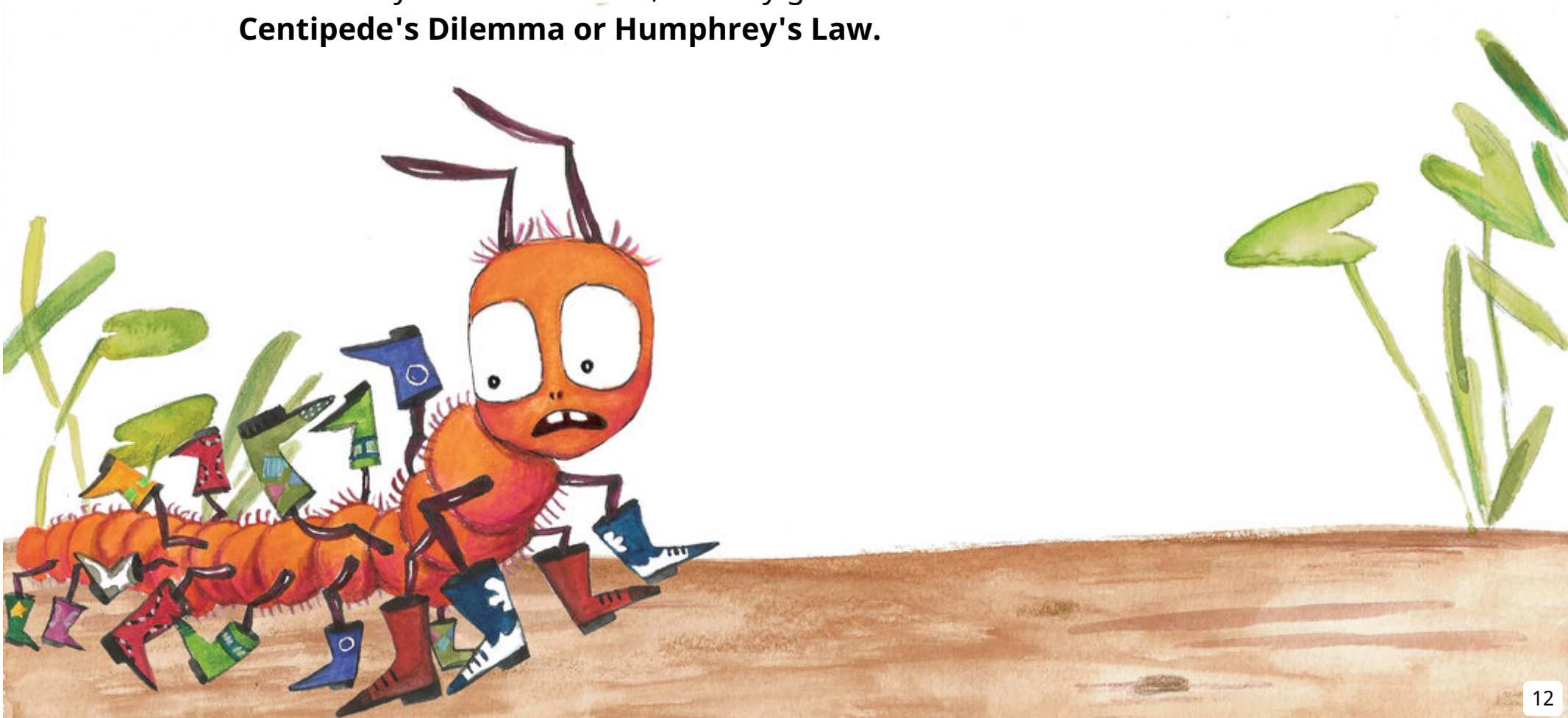
"HAHAHA!" The Stick Insect laughs. "What is so funny?" asks Lady Spider, who just swung by for a visit.

"There was no blackbird!" says Stick Insect.
"It was just a trick to have some fun.
And make all those boots run!
You will agree, now that it is done
Mr. Centipede sure can run!"

Isn't it funny that Mr Centipede was finding it difficult to take a single step but had no trouble running? This could happen to any of us! There are things we do every day without realising – like blinking, or moving our hands while talking. But if we pay careful attention to how often we blink or in what way our hands move, we may get confused. **This is called the Centipede's Dilemma or Humphrey's Law.**

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Best Foot Forward
(English)

Mr. Centipede wears 21 pairs of boots on his morning walk. But with so many legs to choose from, how does he know which foot to use first? Join Mr. Centipede and his garden friends in this story about counting and indecision!

This is a Level 2 book for children who recognize familiar words and can read new words with help.