

CHILDREN'S PAGETHE STRAW, THE COAL AND THE BEAN

An old woman had just enough beans left to cook a single meal. She lit the fire, and heaped on a big handful of straw, so that it would burn up more quickly; and she emptied the beans into the pan. But one bean fell out on to the hearth and came to rest beside a piece of straw. A lump of red-hot coal jumped out of the fire, and landed beside them.

'Dear friends,' said the straw, 'where have you come from?'

'Luckily I was able to escape from the fire,' replied the coal, 'or I should have been burnt to ashes.'

'I also was fortunate to escape with a whole skin,' said the bean. 'I should have been cooked to a pulp like my comrades, if the old woman had managed to put me in the pan.'

'I should certainly have fared no better,' said the straw. 'The old woman sent all my brothers up the chimney in smoke - sixty of us were seized and thrown mercilessly into the fire. I alone managed to escape.'

'What ought we to do?' asked the coal.

'We have all escaped disaster,' said the bean. 'I propose that we should stick together, and go out into the world to seek our fortunes.'

This proposal suited the other two very well, so off they set. But soon they came to a small stream. There was no bridge and they were unable to cross over.

Suddenly the straw had a bright idea, and said, 'I will lie across the stream, and you two can walk over me.'

So he stretched himself from one bank to the other. The coal was a brave young fellow and he stepped boldly on to the bridge. Half-way across, however, when he saw the water rushing and foaming

beneath him, he grew afraid and came to a halt. He was still red-hot and he burnt through the middle of the straw, which broke in two, so that they both fell into the stream and were drowned.

This set the bean laughing, and he laughed so long and loud that he split his sides. Now this would have been the end of him, had a tailor not been passing that way. The tailor took pity on the poor bean, and with needle and thread from his pocket he sewed up the slit. He only had black thread with him, and so from that day to this all beans have had a black seam down their sides.

ALL ABOUT SQUIRRELS

Almost everyone has seen a squirrel. The red squirrel and the gray squirrel are the most common kinds. The red squirrel lives in the woods. His fur is reddish brown. He curls his tail over his back when he sits up. He runs around from one tree to another and chatters from morning until night. Sometimes he throws pine cones down at you.

The gray squirrel lives in towns or in parks in the city. His fur is a silvery gray. His tail is long and bushy. He uses his tail to help keep his balance when he is running along branches. He uses it in the winter to wrap around him like a nice warm blanket.

Squirrels build their homes in the forks of trees. Their nests are made of twigs and leaves woven loosely together. A roof is put over the top to keep the family snug and dry. Under the nest the squirrel family has a storehouse for nuts. This storehouse is a hollow in the tree.

Squirrels do not go south in the winter. They spend much of the time in their warm nests, swin-