

Unit five - Third Reader <sup>25</sup>

# TRAILS IN *the* WOODS

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## Trails in the Woods



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## The Log Cabin

Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane had just come back from a trip through the West, and Jack and Nancy wanted to visit them.

The children didn't live very far from Uncle Jim's house, and so they walked there.



Jack and Nancy had not seen their aunt and uncle for two weeks, and they wanted to know all about the West.

Before Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane started telling about their trip, they gave Jack and Nancy some presents. Uncle Jim had brought a cowboy suit for Jack, and Aunt Jane had brought a lovely Indian doll for Nancy.

Jack and Nancy were very much pleased with the presents. They were always glad to get presents from Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane. Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane seemed to know just what would please Nancy and Jack.

Then Aunt Jane and Uncle Jim and the two children went into the living room. They all sat down in the big comfortable chairs.

Aunt Jane brought in some little cakes that she had baked and some milk for Jack and Nancy. Aunt Jane and Uncle Jim had tea.



As soon as everyone had made himself comfortable, Uncle Jim started to tell about the trip.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane took turns in telling about the places they had visited in the West. They had visited so many cities! They had seen such wonderful things!

You see, Aunt Jane and Uncle Jim had traveled in their car, and so they could stop at many, many places.

“But what we loved best was the time we spent at the log cabin,” said Aunt Jane. “We stayed at the cabin for one week.”

“It was the nicest part of our trip!” said Uncle Jim. “After we had traveled from place to place the first week, we thought it would be a good idea if we stayed and rested in one place for the other week.”

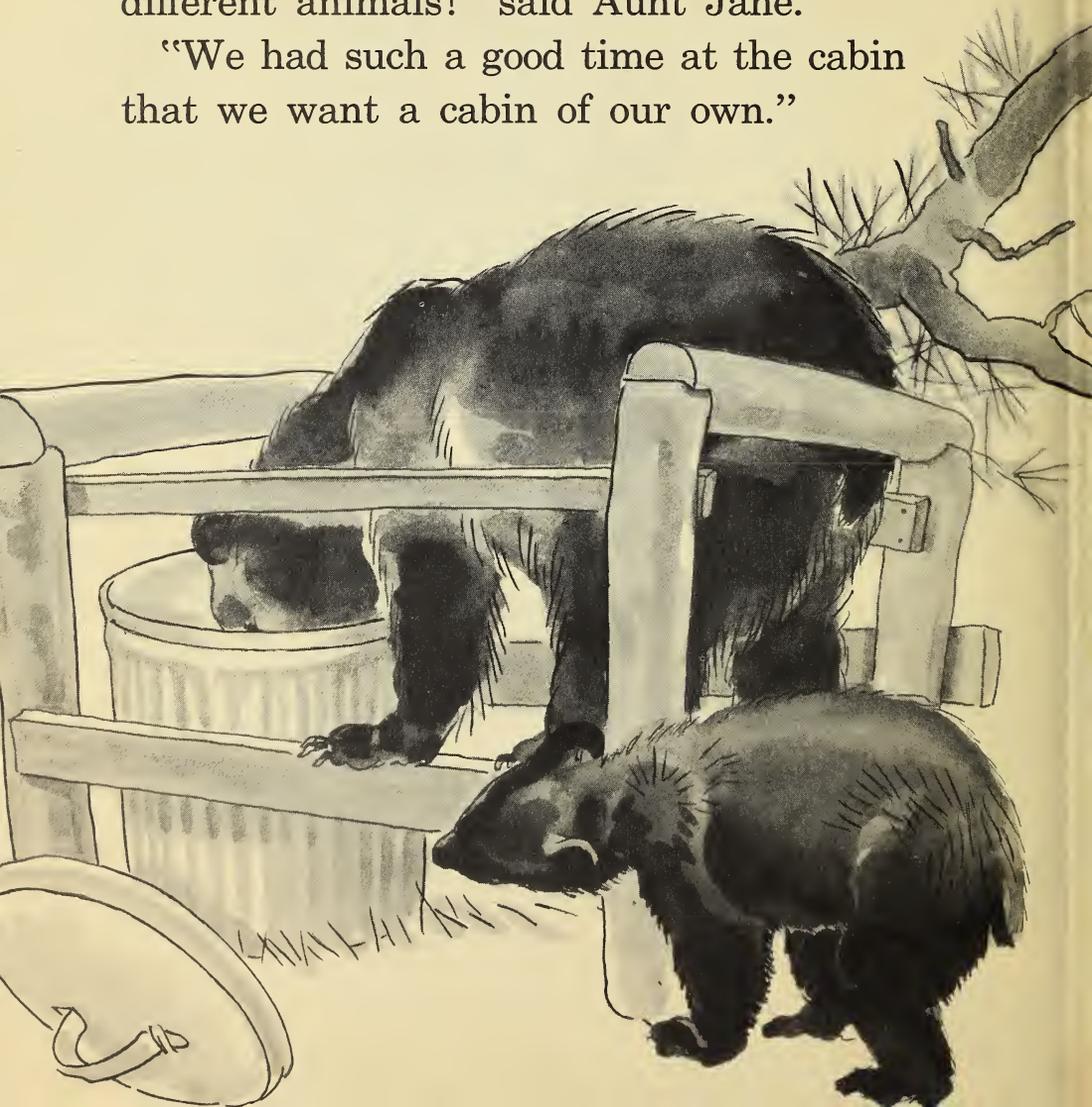
“So we stopped at a log cabin in the mountains,” said Aunt Jane. “It was a small cabin. There were only two rooms in it — a bedroom and a big living room. And it had a wide front porch.

“The weather was fine that week, and we spent most of our time out of doors. You should have seen the squirrels come right up to the porch! They were very friendly.”

“One morning we had quite a surprise,” said Uncle Jim. “What do you think came to our cabin looking for food? A black bear and her cub!”

“It was so much fun watching all the different animals!” said Aunt Jane.

“We had such a good time at the cabin that we want a cabin of our own.”



“We are going to buy some land in the mountains and have a log cabin built,” said Uncle Jim.

“A place that we could get to easily would be fine.”

“Uncle Jim, that’s a wonderful idea!” said Jack.

“You and Nancy may come with us,” said Uncle Jim.

“That would be fun!” cried Jack and Nancy, both at the same time.

Jack and Nancy lived in the city. Even though they liked the city very much, they thought it would be fun to go to the country.

“When are you going to start looking for a place?” asked Nancy.

“At the end of next week,” said Uncle Jim. “We will let you know as soon as the cabin is ready.”

“After the land is bought, it should not take very long to build the cabin,” said Aunt Jane.



That evening Jack and Nancy went home feeling very happy. They talked about nothing but the log cabin. The children were enjoying themselves just talking about the cabin. They could hardly wait until it was ready.

The following week Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane drove to the mountains and spent two days hunting for a place to build the cabin.

At last they had found a good place for their cabin, and they bought the land. Uncle Jim had some men start building the cabin.

Uncle Jim told these men just how he wanted it built.

After some weeks the cabin was ready. It was a good-looking cabin, and it had a wide front porch.

The woods were thick in that part of the mountains, and there were great, tall trees all around the cabin. The spreading branches very nearly reached the porch.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane were very much pleased with the cabin. They liked all the rooms, but they both liked the living room best of all.

It was a large room, and it had three windows. There was a big fireplace on the right side of the front door.

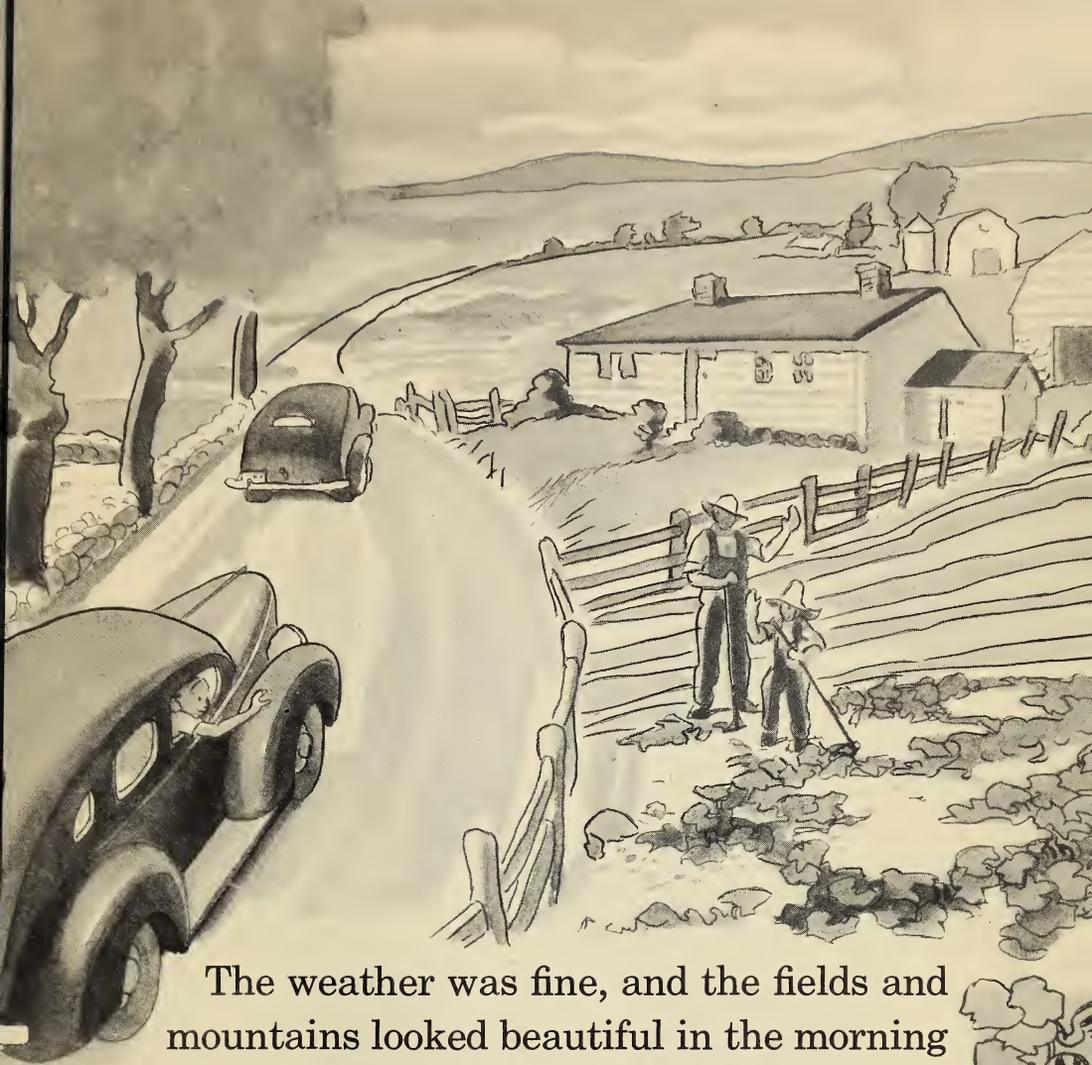
Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane were sure that Jack and Nancy would like the cabin and the wide porch and the thick woods.

About a week after the cabin was ready, Uncle Jim and Aunt Jane moved to the country.

They asked Jack and Nancy to go with them, and they asked Grandmother and Grandfather to go along, too.

Jack and Aunt Jane rode in Uncle Jim's car, and Nancy and Grandmother rode in Grandfather's car.

Jack and Nancy were very happy that day. They had been waiting for a long time to move to the cabin. Anyway, it seemed a long time to them.

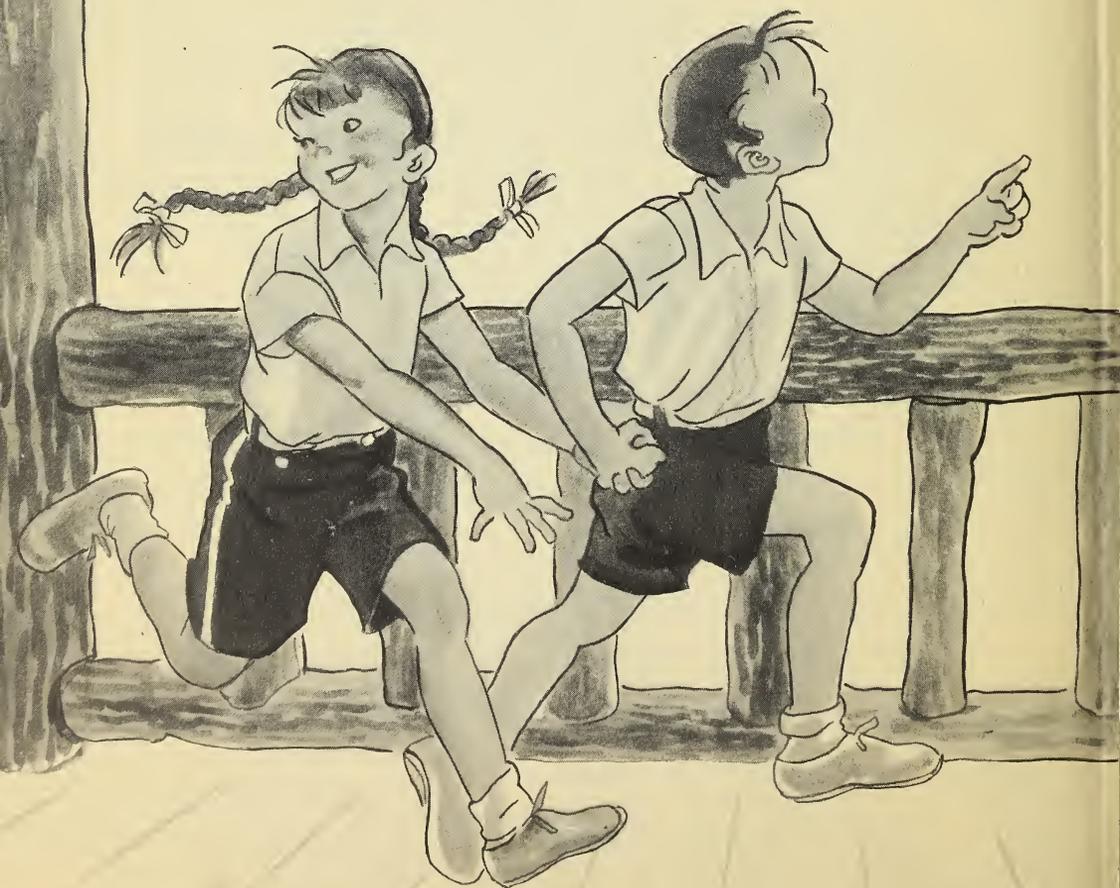


The weather was fine, and the fields and mountains looked beautiful in the morning sunshine.

Jack and Nancy were enjoying the drive through the country, but even so they could hardly wait to get to the cabin.

After two hours of riding, Aunt Jane, Uncle Jim, Jack, Nancy, Grandmother, and Grandfather arrived at the cabin.

Nancy and Jack thought that it was a wonderful cabin, and they thought it was in a beautiful spot. They didn't know what to look at first. They ran around the wide porch. They ran up the road that was near the cabin.



About half a mile up the road, at the edge of Uncle Jim's land, there was a white farmhouse. It had green shutters and a green door. A dog was sleeping by the fence.

Jack and Nancy looked at the farmhouse and at the dog, but they did not stay very long. They still had many things to see before dark.

Then they ran down the road and stopped to try the water pump that was back of the cabin. It was so hard to move the pump that Jack had to help Nancy before any water would come up.

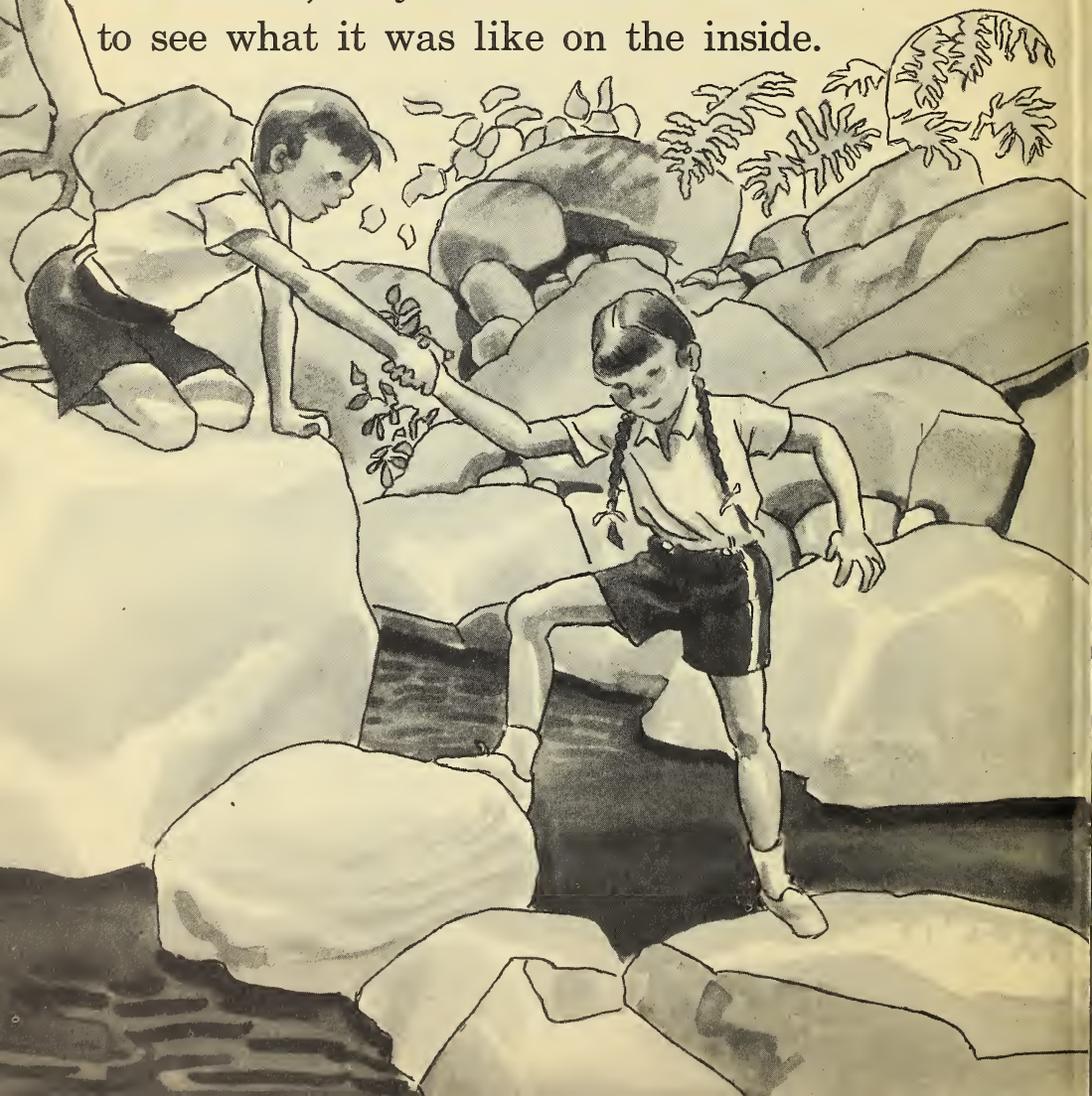
And how cold the water was when it did come up!

Soon after that Jack and Nancy started wandering through the woods, and then they went down a hill until they came to a little river.

There was a big rock quite close to the water, and the children sat on it for a while.

It was fun to watch the rolling river go by. It looked very beautiful with the bright sun shining on it.

When the children felt that they had a good idea of what the place was like on the outside, they went back to the cabin to see what it was like on the inside.



In the living room the children found their grandfather building a fire in the fireplace. They asked him if they could help him in any way, and he said that they could help by handing him the logs. So they did.

Then Jack and Nancy wanted to see the other rooms. When Grandfather finished building the fire, he showed the children the bedrooms.

And what do you think Jack and Nancy saw? There were no beds. There were bunks instead! Two bunks had been built in each bedroom. One bunk was above the other.

Jack and Nancy said that they liked the bunks better than anything else in the house.

Soon Grandmother called everyone to come for supper.

After supper everyone went into the living room and sat around the roaring fire. Toward evening it became rather

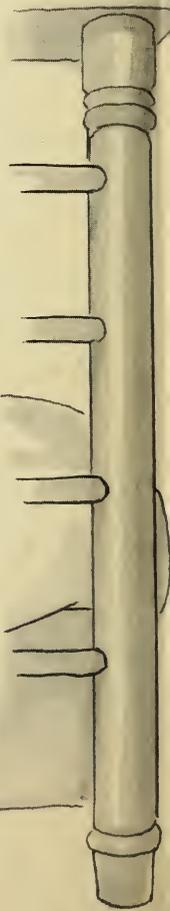


cold in the country, and it was fun to sit close by a roaring fire. It was still more fun to tell stories.

After a few hours of storytelling, the children went to bed. They were glad it was bedtime. All evening they had been thinking about the fun they would have climbing into the bunks.

Aunt Jane went along with Nancy to her bedroom, and Uncle Jim went along with Jack to his bedroom. They had to help the children climb into the bunks.

Both Jack and Nancy wanted to sleep in the top bunks. A ladder had to be used to climb up to the top bunks. What fun they had climbing into those bunks!



## The Bag under the Porch

The next day while Nancy was reading in the hammock, she looked up and saw the clothespin bag moving back and forth. The bag hung on a hook under the porch.

And what do you think? A long piece of grass was being pulled into the bag!



Nancy called her grandmother, who was sitting in a comfortable armchair close to the hammock. Nancy pointed to the bag under the porch. She wanted to know what was happening, and she thought her grandmother might know.

But Grandmother only told her, very softly, to watch the bag and to be as quiet as a mouse.

Nancy didn't even make a sound.

The bag moved back and forth, and at times from side to side. Nancy wondered what would happen next. But she didn't wonder very long. Suddenly out flew Mrs. Wren!

For a minute Mrs. Wren sat on the line that hung under the porch. Then up went her little tail, and away she flew.

Mrs. Wren soon fluttered back to the clothespin bag with another long piece of grass. Slowly the piece of grass was pulled into the bag. Again the bag moved back and forth and from side to side.



By this time Nancy had guessed that Mrs. Wren was building a nest in that bag. What a place to build a nest!

But wrens very often built their nests in queer places.

All afternoon Mrs. Wren was very busy working on the nest. She used dead twigs and feathers as well as grass. Mrs. Wren used the feathers and grass to line the nest.

Once in a while Mr. Wren came along and talked to Mrs. Wren. At times those wrens could be very noisy.

The next morning Nancy looked under the porch to see what was happening. Much to her surprise, the clothespin bag that hung under the porch was no longer there. And the wrens were nowhere to be seen.

Nancy ran to tell Grandmother about it. Grandmother said that the night before a big wind was blowing, and it must have blown the bag, nest and all, right off the hook.

Nancy wondered what happened to Mr. and Mrs. Wren.

Grandmother said, "Maybe the wind was too strong for the birds, too, and so they flew away."

"Do you think the wrens will come back, Grandmother?" asked Nancy.

"Maybe they will," said Grandmother. "We will see."



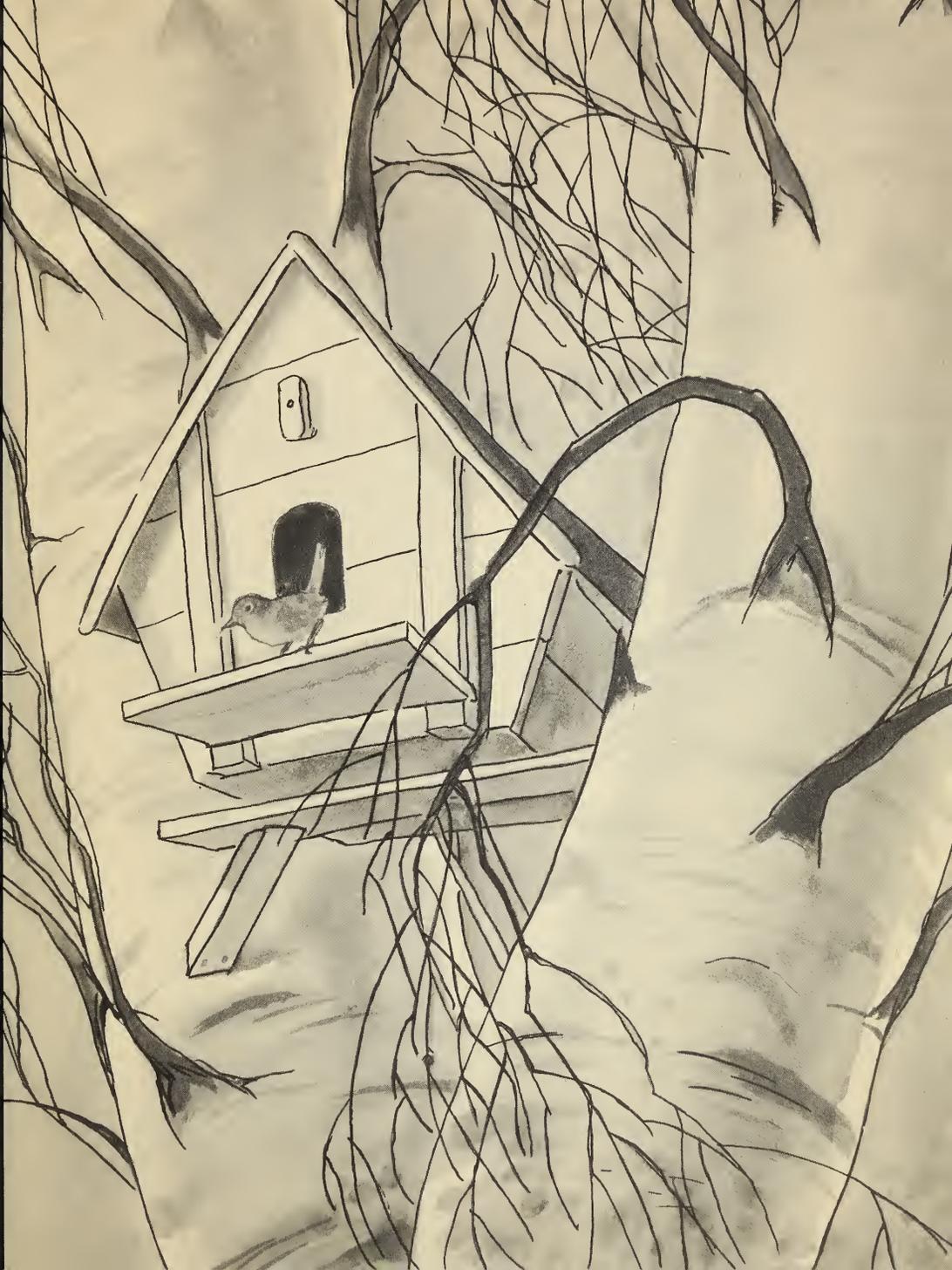
A few days later Mr. and Mrs. Wren came back. This time they went to one of the birdhouses, and Mrs. Wren was busy building a new nest.

Mrs. Wren went through the hole of the birdhouse, pulling a long piece of grass behind her.

Some days after that Grandmother and Nancy were sitting out on the porch, and Grandmother saw Mr. Wren on a branch not far from the birdhouse. She called Nancy and told her to watch him. Nancy watched very carefully.

There was Mr. Wren putting on an act. It was a fine act. Anyone who went by would look at him and not see the new home. No one would guess that Mrs. Wren was sitting on her eggs, and that was just what Mr. Wren wanted.

Nancy watched Mr. Wren walking on a branch. Then off he flew, but he came right back. All the while he talked and scolded.





Two or three times Mr. Wren flew down to a plant. He nearly turned over as he landed. Soon he hurried back to the branch.

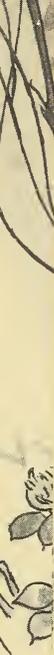
And that is how Mr. Wren spent the day — always staying close to the nest. No one thought about Mrs. Wren. It was such fun watching Mr. Wren's act!

## Gray Tail and Nut Cracker

Whenever Grandfather went wandering through the woods, he found something new.

One morning while he was enjoying the quiet of the forest, he suddenly heard a sound. It seemed to be a cry — the kind of cry that some baby animals make when they are hungry.





Grandfather listened carefully, trying to find out where that cry was coming from. Then he heard it again.

“There must be a nest in one of the trees. I’m sure that sound comes from a tree,” thought Grandfather.

He listened even more carefully than he had before, and at last he found the tree from which the cry was coming.

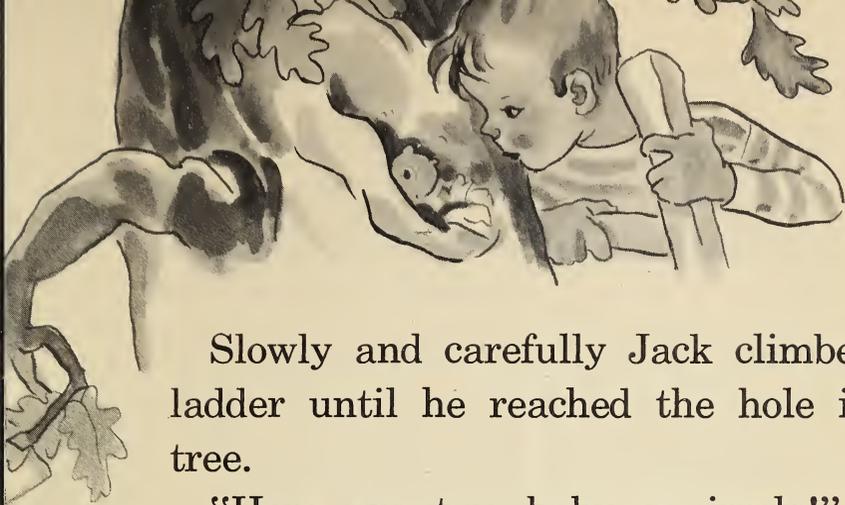
Grandfather heard the cry again. It came from high up in the tree, and so he could not see what the trouble was.

Grandfather went back to the cabin and called Jack.

“Jack, get the ladder and come along with me,” said Grandfather. “I believe there are some hungry baby animals in a nest high up in a tree.”

Jack got the ladder and went with his grandfather. Grandfather showed him the tree, and Jack put the ladder against it.

“Do not climb too fast, Jack,” said Grandfather.



Slowly and carefully Jack climbed the ladder until he reached the hole in the tree.

“Here are two baby squirrels!” cried Jack.

“Is the mother squirrel there?” asked Grandfather.

“No,” said Jack. “Only the two baby squirrels are here. What are we going to do?”

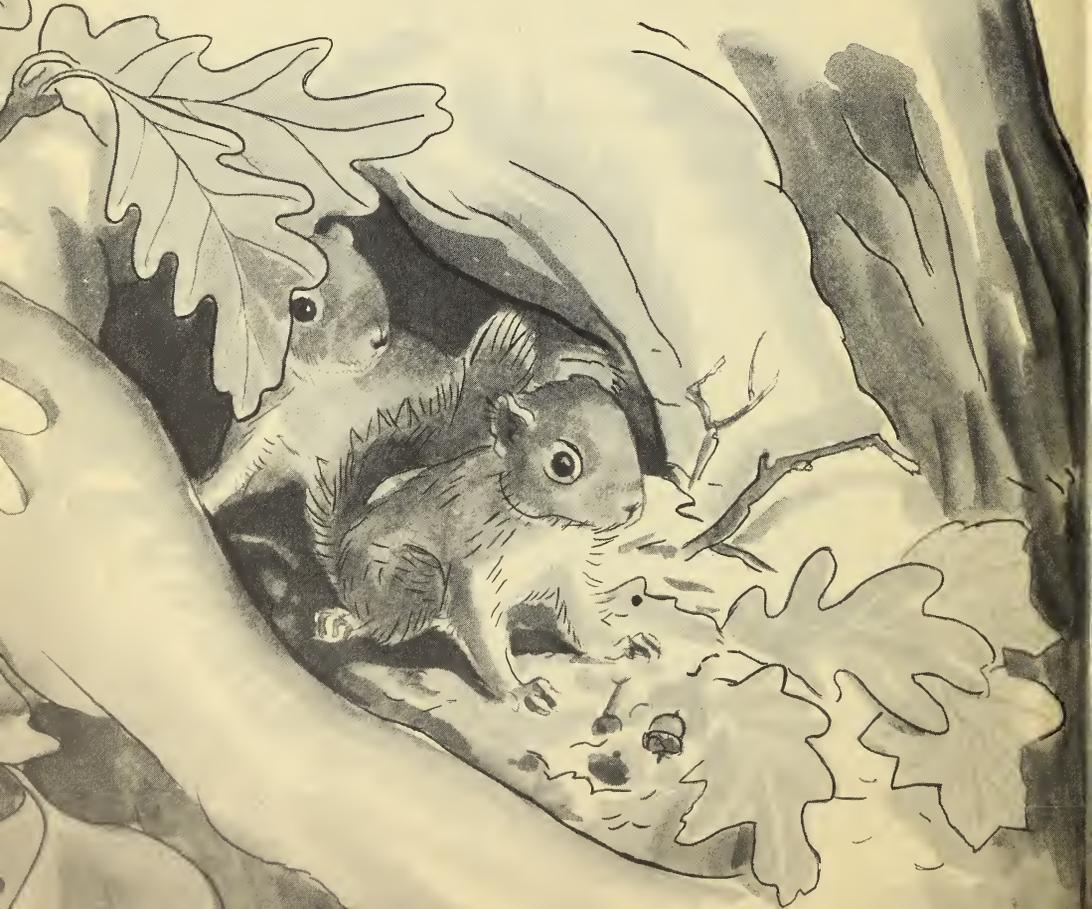
“Jack, we will have to take the babies back to the cabin and feed them,” said Grandfather. “I don’t think the mother squirrel will come back, and the babies must be hungry.

“Take the baby squirrels out of the nest. Do it carefully, Jack. We must not hurt those babies.”

The squirrels were in a nest made of twigs and leaves. Jack picked them up gently and came down the ladder.

Grandfather took one of the squirrels from Jack.

“Something must have happened to the mother squirrel,” said Grandfather. “But we will take good care of the babies.”





“It will be fun to take care of these babies,” said Jack. “I can’t wait until Nancy sees them.”

Grandfather and Jack walked down the road to the cabin.

As soon as they got to the cabin, Jack called Nancy.

“Nancy!” he cried. “Come here. See what we have here!”

“Baby squirrels!” cried Nancy. “How I would like to have them for pets!”

But Grandfather told Nancy she could not keep the baby squirrels for pets. As soon as they were old enough to look for their own food, they would have to be taken to their home in the woods.

At first the baby squirrels were given milk. But as they grew older, they could eat nuts and corn.

Jack and Nancy had lots of fun with the two squirrels. They named one Gray Tail and the other Nut Cracker. They thought those were good names.

Each evening, when everyone sat around the fireplace, the children brought in Gray Tail and Nut Cracker.

Gray Tail was a quiet little squirrel. He had good manners and knew how to keep out of trouble. Nut Cracker was quite different. He liked to have fun.

One evening Nut Cracker made everyone laugh. Grandfather was sitting in his chair close to the fireplace, reading a newspaper. Nut Cracker seemed to like Grandfather better than anyone else. He ran all over the arms of Grandfather's chair.

On this evening, though, he not only jumped up on Grandfather's arm, but in one more jump Nut Cracker was sitting on top of Grandfather's head. There he sat, cracking nuts and throwing the shells on Grandfather's newspaper!

Everyone laughed. So did Grandfather. He thought it was a good joke. Maybe Nut Cracker thought so, too.



One day toward the end of the summer, Grandfather thought that Gray Tail and Nut Cracker were strong enough to take care of themselves.

He thought that they could find their own food now, and so they were taken back to their home in the woods.

“Good-by, Gray Tail and Nut Cracker!” cried Jack and Nancy.





### The Parade

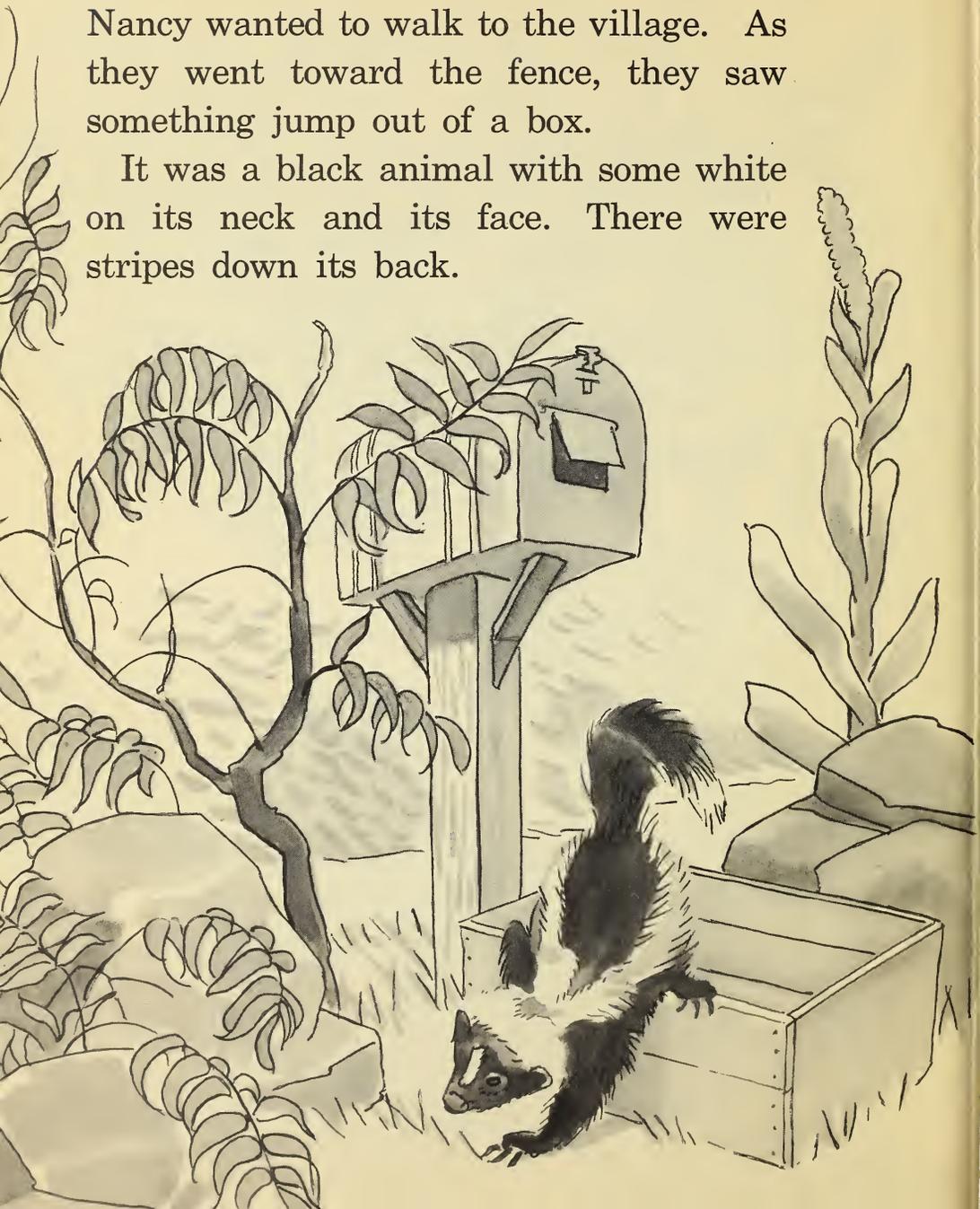
One day Aunt Jane said to Grandmother, "I just saw four lovely kittens. They are black and white kittens."

"That's funny," said Grandmother. "I have not seen a mother cat around here. How can there be any kittens? Are you sure they were kittens?"

"Oh, yes, quite sure," said Aunt Jane.

About two hours later Aunt Jane and Nancy wanted to walk to the village. As they went toward the fence, they saw something jump out of a box.

It was a black animal with some white on its neck and its face. There were stripes down its back.



"It is a skunk!" cried Aunt Jane.

"A skunk!" cried Nancy. "But I don't smell anything unpleasant."

"Well, this time we are safe. But skunks *do* use that unpleasant smell to keep enemies away," said Aunt Jane.

"Let's go inside and tell the others about the skunk," said Nancy.

When Aunt Jane told about the skunks, Grandmother said, "Don't you think those kittens you saw this morning were really baby skunks?"

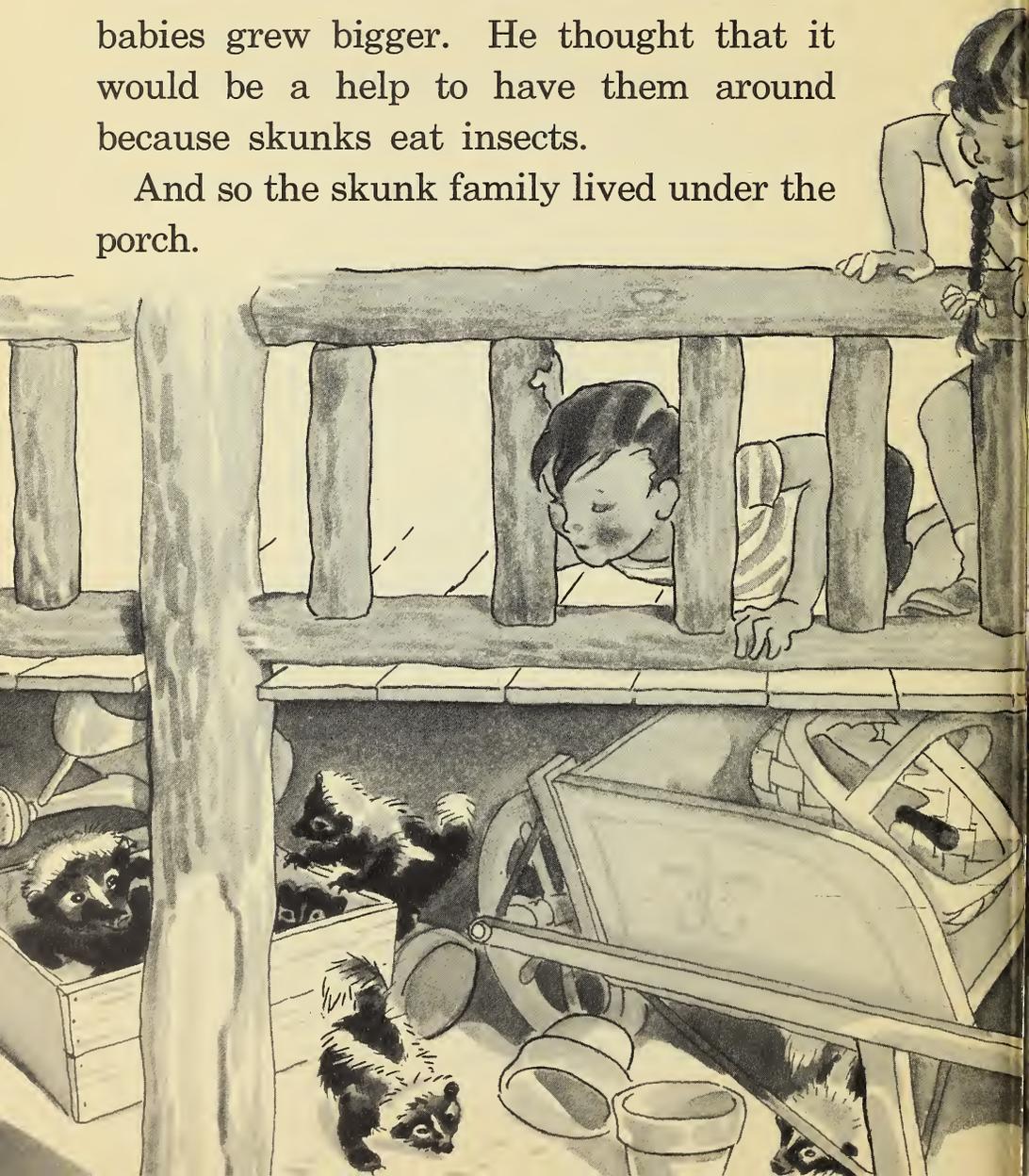
"Yes," said Aunt Jane. "Now I'm sure they were baby skunks."

"It is a good thing that Mother Skunk did not see you near her babies, or she would not have let you get away safely," said Grandmother. "She surely would have used that unpleasant smell."

That day was not the last that Mother Skunk and her babies were seen. For some reason Mrs. Skunk moved her family to a new home under the porch.

Everyone wondered what to do about the skunks, but Grandfather thought that it would be best to let them alone until the babies grew bigger. He thought that it would be a help to have them around because skunks eat insects.

And so the skunk family lived under the porch.





The skunk family had been living under the porch for a week when Grandfather saw something he could hardly believe. Those skunks had chewed the posts which held up the porch. Round and round they had gone. They must have liked the posts. They had chewed so much!

Grandfather said to himself, "If those skunks chewed that much in a week, what will they do in a month? We won't have any posts, or any porch! They must be taken away at once."

Grandfather, who knew all about such things, soon had Mother Skunk and her babies caught in a bag.

He took them to the woods about five miles up the road. There Grandfather opened the bag and let them scamper away into the woods!

A few days later Grandmother went to get the mail from the box, and what do you think she saw? A skunk parade was coming down the road! Mrs. Skunk was



coming, with all her babies following in line one by one behind her! Grandmother called everyone to come and see the skunk parade.

The skunks looked so funny that Aunt Jane took a picture of them.

That evening everyone talked about the parade and wondered where Mrs. Skunk would make her home this time.

## Playing Possum

While everyone was sleeping one night, the dog up the road began barking. It was the dog Jack and Nancy had seen the day they arrived at the cabin. He barked so long that everyone woke up and ran out to see what the trouble was.

Only Grandfather thought of taking a flashlight along.



There on the other side of the fence was an animal with gray fur.

The animal was about two and one half feet long, counting the tail.

Grandfather reached over the fence and picked up the animal.

"It is dead," said Jack.

"What is it?" asked all the others.

"It is a possum," Grandfather said, "and it is not dead."

"Well, it looks as if it were dead," said Jack.

"It is only making believe that it is dead," said Grandfather. "It is playing possum. Possums make believe they are dead when they are caught.

"Some people do not know about this trick. They think that a possum is dead when it is only playing possum. That is how possums keep enemies away."

Then Grandfather put the possum in a box until the morning, and everyone went back to bed again.



After breakfast the following morning, Grandfather, Nancy, and Jack went to look at the possum. She was trying to get out of the box.

“Grandfather, I like this possum. May we keep her for a pet?” asked Nancy.

Grandfather said, “No! This possum is a mother possum, and her babies need her. Mrs. Possum has to go back to her babies. She must feed her babies. They need milk.”



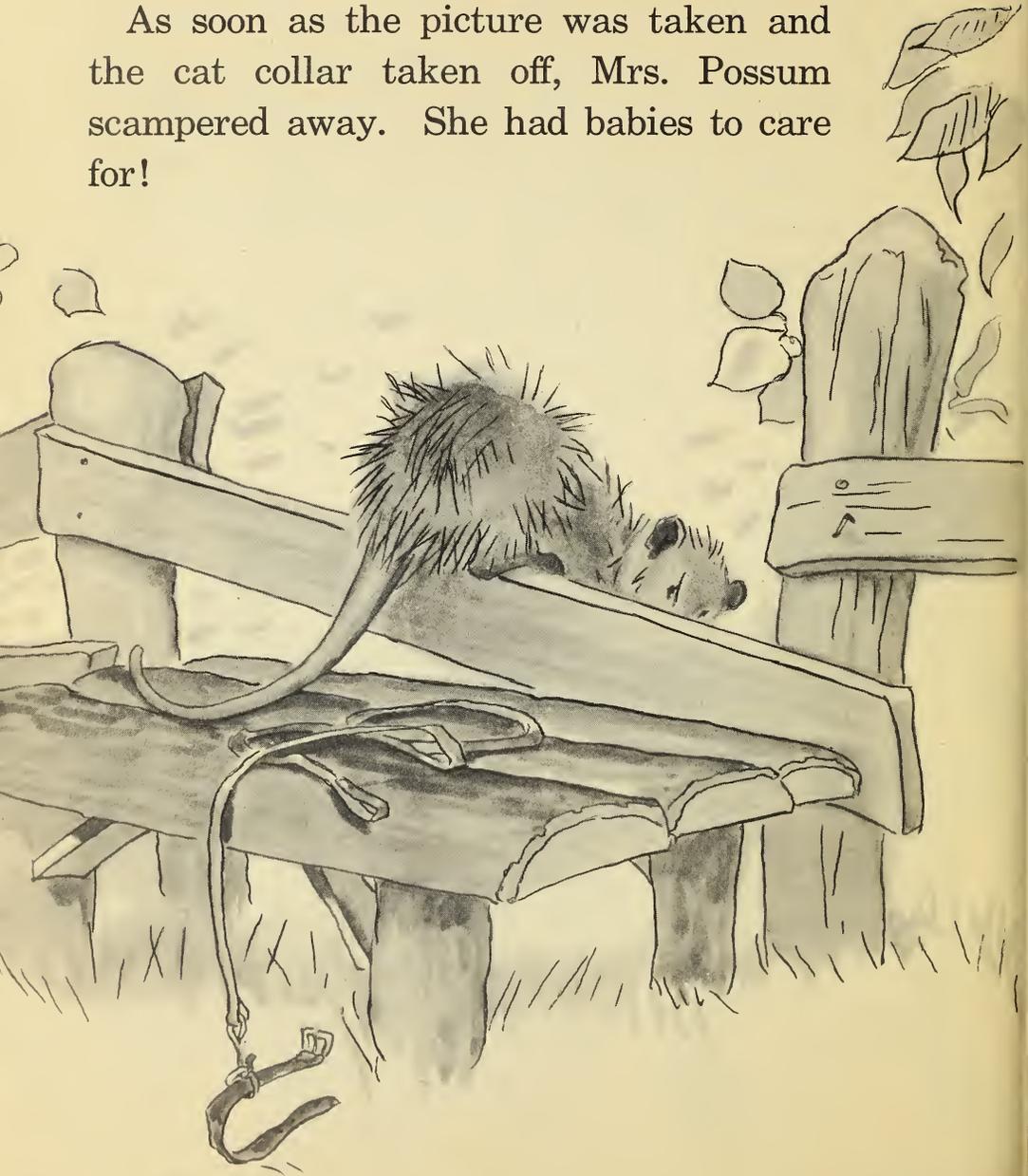
Jack and Nancy had an idea. If they could not have Mrs. Possum for a pet, they surely could have a picture of her.

So Grandfather took Mrs. Possum out of the box and put a cat collar around her neck. Putting on a collar was the only way he could keep her from scampering off.



Then Grandfather took a picture of Mrs. Possum and Jack and Nancy.

As soon as the picture was taken and the cat collar taken off, Mrs. Possum scampered away. She had babies to care for!





### Big Red and Her Fawn

Of all the forest creatures that came to the cabin, everyone loved the deer best. Two or three deer often came out of the woods together. They were very beautiful deer.

In the summer their smooth coats were red-brown, but they changed to gray-brown in the winter.

These deer came to get the salt that was put out on the porch for them. They liked to eat salt very much.

Jack and Nancy watched the deer from the living-room window.

One deer came with her fawn. Jack and Nancy called this mother deer Big Red. Big Red's young fawn looked different from her mother.

There were white spots on the fawn's coat, but these spots would go away when she grew older.

Jack and Nancy thought it was fun to watch all the deer eating the salt. Aunt Jane told the children that salt was not the only thing that the deer ate. They ate grass and leaves and other kinds of plants, too.

Jack and Nancy thought it was even more fun to see the deer leap through the air. They looked so beautiful leaping through the air!

The deer did not always leap. They could trot, and they could run very fast if something frightened them. But Jack and Nancy *did* like to see them leaping.

Jack and Nancy liked the fawn best of all. She was so pretty! They wished she would not grow up. They wondered if they would know her when she came to the cabin next summer.

"I guess not," said Jack. "After all she will be a Big Red then."



One day, at the end of the summer, Uncle Jim said that it was time to go back to the city. So he and Aunt Jane, Grandmother and Grandfather, and Jack and Nancy had to get things ready to go home. They were very busy that day.

It was nearly time for Jack and Nancy to go back to school. They liked the thought of going back to school, though they did not like to leave their forest friends.

They had had such a good time watching the wrens, the baby squirrels, Mrs. Skunk and her babies, the possum, and Big Red and her fawn.

But Aunt Jane and Uncle Jim told the children that they could come to the cabin on days when there was no school.

And so Jack and Nancy went home feeling very happy and thinking about all the fall trips they would make to the cabin in the woods.

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TRAILS IN THE WOODS

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If *Trails in the Woods* is read subsequent to Unit Five of the Third Reader, *Wide Wings*, all words in *Trails in the Woods* will be familiar, with the exception of fifteen new words which are contained in the following list.

The new words are grouped here under the pages on which they first occur.

1	10	20	30	40
2	11	dead	31	41
Nancy	12	21	32	42
trip	13	22	33	43
West	14	act	34	collar
3	15	23	35	44
4	bunks	24	unpleasant	45
5	16	25	36	salt
6	17	26	37	46
7	clothespin	27	scamper	leap
8	18	28	38	47
9	wren	29	39	48
enjoying	19	29	possum	



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