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How the Chestnut Burrs Became

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In the woods of Poconic there once lived a very discontented Porcupine. He was forever fretting. Nothing was ever right, and he complained about it so much that it became perfectly scandalous. At last the Great Spirit grew tired of the grumbling and said:

"You and the world I have made don't seem to fit. One of us must be wrong, and it is easier to change you. You don't like the trees. You are unhappy on the ground. You think everything is upside down. So I will turn you inside out and put you in the water."

That is how the Shad began.

After Manitou had turned the old Porcupine into a Shad, the young ones missed their mother. They climbed up into a high tree to watch for her coming. Manitou happened to pass that way, and they all chattered their teeth at him, thinking themselves safe. They weren't wicked, only ill-trained. Some of them were quite good at heart, but oh, so ill-trained! They chattered and groaned as Manitou came nearer.



Then he remembered that he had taken their mother from them, and he said, "You look very well up there, little Porkys. You had better stay there always and be part of the tree."

That is how the chestnut burrs began. They hang in the crotches of the tree like a lot of little porcupines. They are spiny and prickly and utterly without manners, and yet most of them have a good little heart inside.

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