



### Arthur the Rat

There was once a young rat named Arthur, who could never take the trouble to make up his mind. Whenever his friends asked him if he would like to go out with them, he would only answer, 'I don't know.' He wouldn't say 'yes' and he wouldn't say 'no' either. He could never learn to make a choice.

His aunt Helen said to him, 'No one will ever care for you if you carry on like this. You have no more mind than a blade of grass.' Arthur looked wise, but stupidly said nothing.

One rainy day, the rats heard a great noise in the loft where they lived. The pine rafters were all rotten in the middle, and at last one of the joists had given way and fallen to the ground. The walls shook and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. 'This won't do,' said the old rat who was chief, 'I'll send out scouts to search for a new home.'

Three hours later the seven tired scouts came back and said, 'We have found a stone house, which is just what we wanted; there is room and good food for us all. There is a kindly horse named Nelly, a cow, a calf, and a garden with flowers and an elm tree.' Just then the old rat caught sight of young Arthur. 'Are you coming with us?' he asked. 'I don't know.' Arthur sighed. 'The roof may not come down just yet.' 'Well,' said the old rat angrily, 'we can't wait all day for you to make up your mind; right about face! March!' And they went straight off.

Arthur stood and watched the other little rats hurry away. The idea of an immediate decision was too much for him. 'I'm going back to my hole for a bit,' he said to himself dreamily, 'just to make up my mind.' That Tuesday night there was a great crash that shook the earth and down came the whole roof. Next day some men rode up and looked at the ruins. One of them moved a board and hidden under it they saw a young rat lying on his side, quite dead, half in and half out of his hole.