

The Bonfire in the Sea

Long, long ago, in Australia, it is said fish could travel as easily on land as they could swim in water.

It happened, so the story goes, that the whole fish tribe had been playing tag along a sandy beach near the sea. At last, they became tired of the game. Fin-fin, the leader of the fish, said, "Let us coast down the great, black rock."

Now beyond the level shore where the fish had been playing tag, there were cliffs and rocks. Some of the rocks rose straight out of the water; others sloped toward the sandy beach.

High above the rest towered the great, black rock. The fish climbed to the top. Then, one after another, they followed the leader, each gliding head first down the rock. It was fine sport!

Then the fish formed a circle and danced while Fin-fin slid down the rock alone. Again and again, he climbed to the top and slid down as swiftly as an arrow glides from the bow. Finally he turned a somersault at the foot of the rock and then called to the fish to stop dancing.

"It is time to cook dinner," said Fin-fin. "There is a good place for a camp under the trees on the tall cliff over there."

The fish climbed to the top of the cliff overhanging the sea. They gathered wood and heaped it high at the edge of the cliff. When all was ready for the bonfire, Fin -fin rubbed two sticks briskly together. Soon a spark fell upon the wood, and instantly the flames leaped upward. Then the fish put some roots in front of the fire to roast.