**brownies.**

**From The suns babies by Edith Howes.  
Age Rating 2 to 4.**

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**Amongst the roots of the grass in the lawn lay hundreds of tiny eggs. One by one they hatched out as the sun warmed the earth and the soft showers moistened it, and soon the grass roots were alive with tiny grubs. They crawled about, cutting the poor grass roots and stems with their hard little jaws, and at once beginning to grow fat on the pieces they bit out and swallowed. All day and every day they ate, for their one aim in life was to be big and strong. "Then by and by our wings will grow and we shall fly," they thought. They were not as brown now as they would be when their wings had grown. Only their heads and jaws were brown as yet; their soft ringed bodies and curled-up tails and six jointed legs were all grey-green. They had a lazy time under the ground, for they had nothing to do but to burrow and eat; but that just suited them. They made such good use of their time that the master of the garden looked with despair at the brown patches in his lawn. "Those dreadful grubs!" he said. "They are spoiling my beautiful lawn."**

**They lived there for three or four years. Then one by one they all stopped eating. They were so fat that they could hardly move, and so drowsy that they didn't want to. So they curled themselves up and went to sleep, and did not wake for many a day. As they slept their skins grew hard and transparent, and new ones grew underneath. Two wings grew along their sides, though there was not yet room for them to open out, and two brown shields grew to cover them. One by one the Brownies woke up. "Our wings have come! We must go out and fly!" they said. They stretched their dried outside skins till they cracked open down the middle of the back. Then they pushed themselves out of the opening, and crawled out under the grass blades to dry themselves in the sun. Slowly and carefully they stretched out their fine new wings, tried their feelers, and lifted their strong brown shields till they hardened in the air. They were brown beetles now, and they felt proud of themselves. They crept about to show themselves and to look at one another, and they chattered together and made plans for flying off when they were ready.**

**Just as evening came they were all ready to go. They lifted their wings again and again to let the air into their bodies, then up they flew, out into the wide garden-world. Away at the back of the house there was a patch of growing potatoes. They soon found it out. They alighted on the leaves and began at once to eat them, for they were hungry after their long sleep. They feasted all night, but when the daylight came they slipped under the leaves and hung there out of sight. They had been so long used to the darkness under the earth that now they preferred shady corners to open daylight. "Those dreadful brown beetles have been here and spoilt my potato plants," said the master of the garden. "I wish I could catch them." He did not know that they were hiding under the leaves quite close to him.**