

Read the folktale and answer the questions that follow.

# How Brazilian Beetles Got Their Gorgeous Coats

*A Story from Brazil*

*by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss*

1 Long ago in Brazil, beetles had plain brown coats. But today their hard-shelled coats are gorgeous. They are so colorful that people often set them in pins and necklaces like precious stones. This is how it happened that Brazilian beetles got their new coats.



2 One day a little brown beetle was crawling along a wall. Suddenly a big gray rat darted out of a hole in the wall. When he saw the beetle, he began to make fun of her.

3 “Is that as fast as you can go? What a poke you are! You’ll never get anywhere! Just watch how fast I can run!”

4 The rat dashed to the end of the wall, turned around, and ran back to the beetle. The beetle was still slowly crawling along. She had barely crawled past the spot where the rat left her.

5 “I’ll bet you wish you could run like that!” bragged the gray rat.

6 “You certainly are a fast runner,” replied the beetle. Even though the rat went on and on about himself, the beetle never said a word about the things she could do. She just kept slowly crawling along the wall, wishing the rat would go away.

7 A green and gold parrot in the mango tree above had overheard their conversation. She said to the rat, “How would you like to race with

the beetle? Just to make the race exciting, I'll offer a bright colored coat as a reward. The winner may choose any color coat and I'll have it made to order."



8 The parrot told them the finish line would be the palm tree at the top of the hill. She gave the signal to start, and they were off.

9 The rat ran as fast as he could. When he reached the palm tree, he could hardly believe his eyes: there was the beetle sitting beside the parrot. The rat asked with a suspicious tone, "How did you ever manage to run fast enough to get here so soon?"

10 "Nobody ever said anything about having to run to win the race," replied the beetle as she drew out her tiny wings from her sides. "So I flew instead."

11 "I didn't know you could fly," said the rat with a grumpy look on his face.

12 The parrot said to the rat, "You have lost the contest. From now on you must never judge anyone by looks alone. You never can tell when or where you may find hidden wings."

13 Then the parrot turned to the brown beetle and asked, "What color would you like your new coat to be?"

14 "I'd like it to be green and gold, just like yours," replied the beetle. And since that day, Brazilian beetles have had gorgeous coats of green and gold. But the rat still wears a plain, dull, gray one.