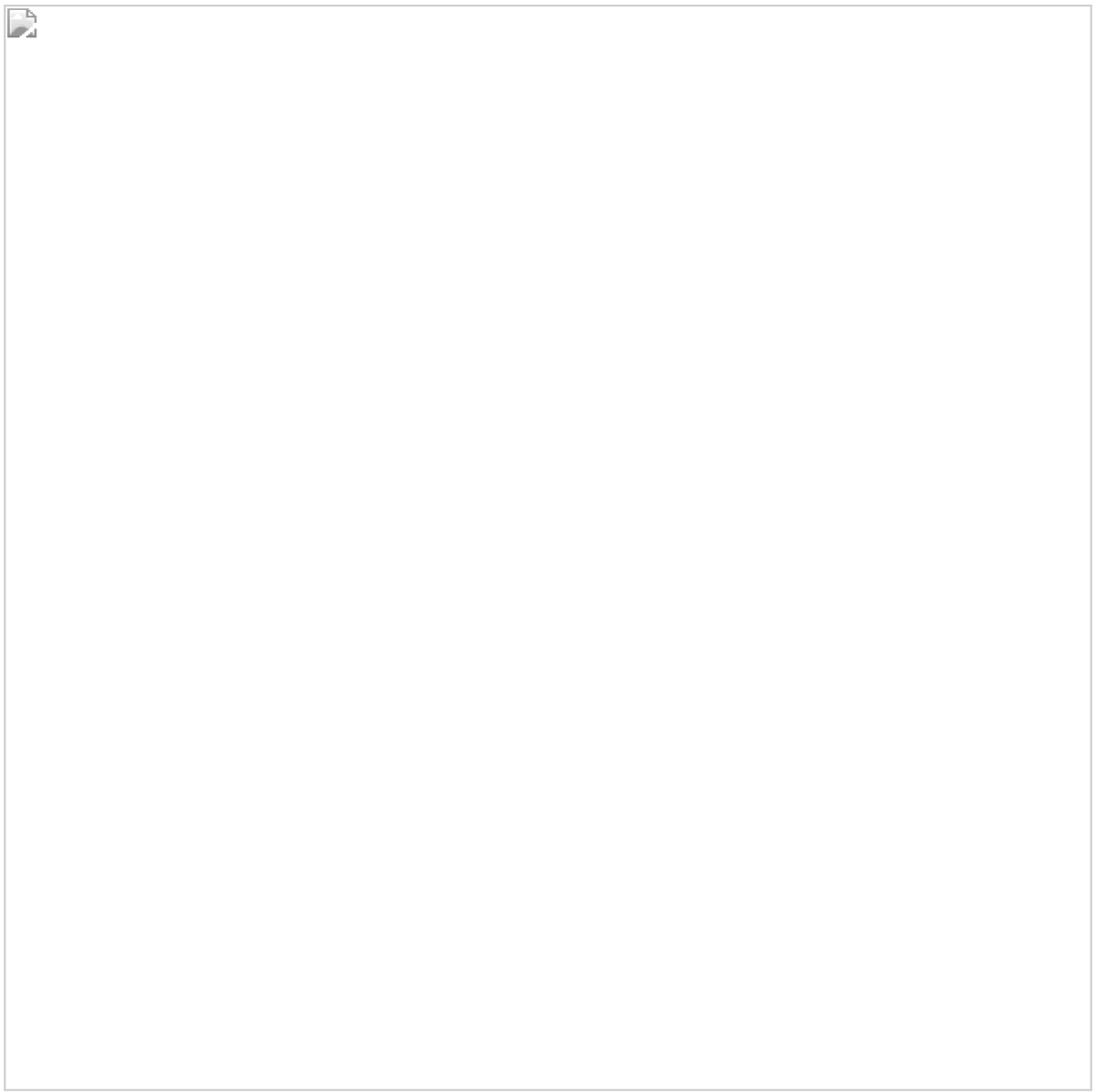
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Railway Children

Bobbie, Peter, Phyllis, and the Railway They Came to Love



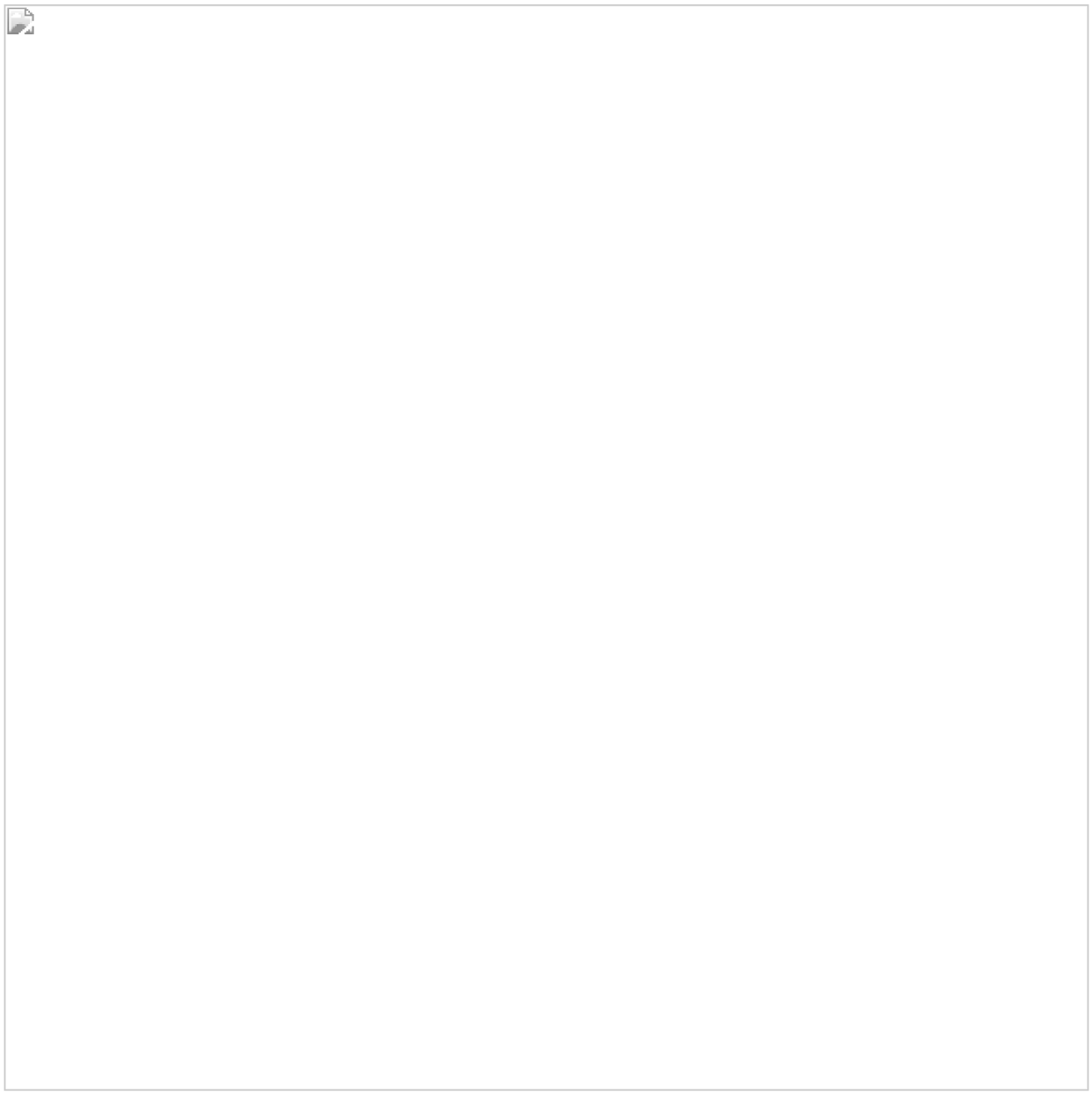
By E. Nesbit

TALK ABOUT IT

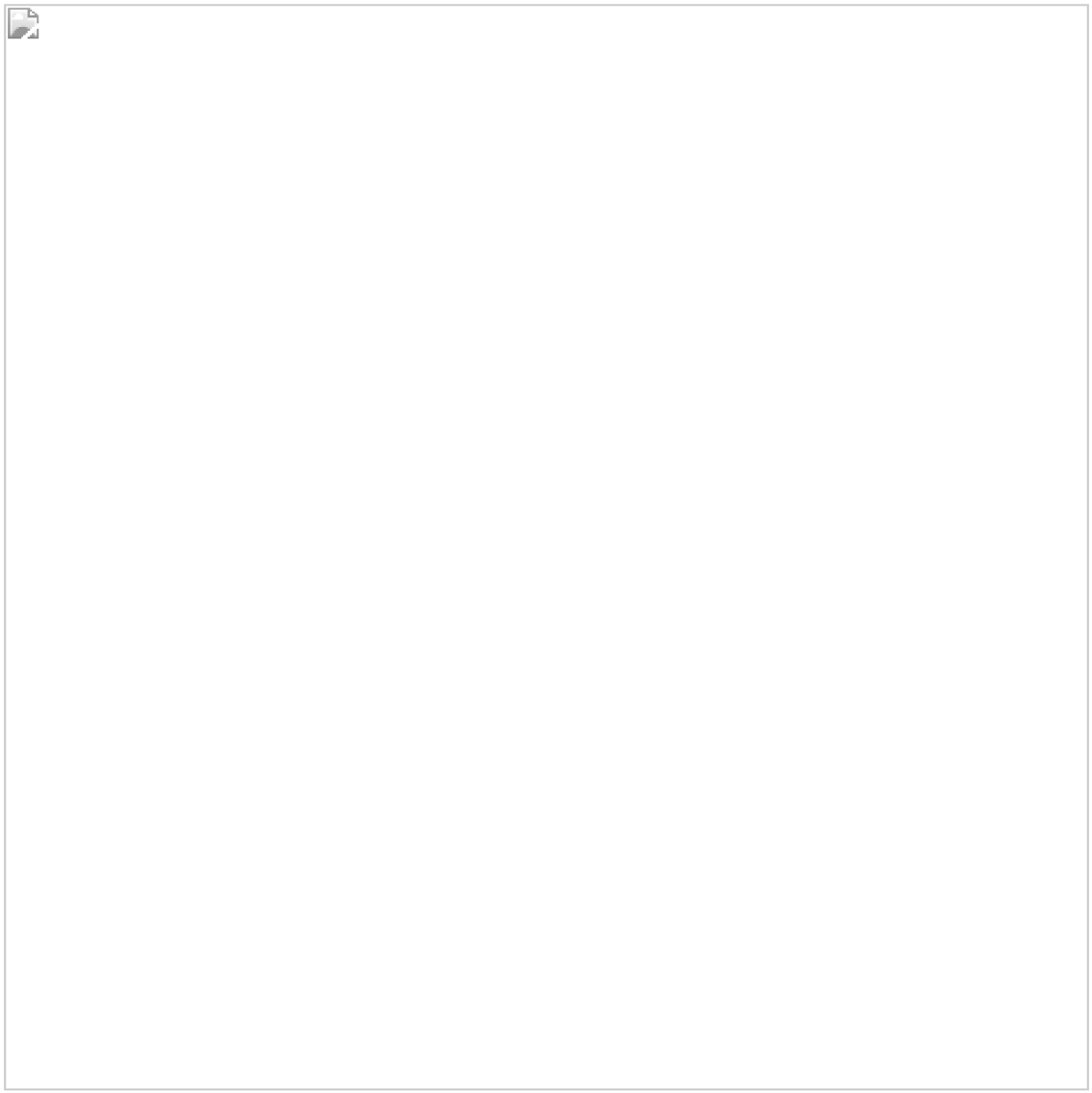
Have you ever watched a train go by? What did you do when you saw it?

This book belongs to _____

The Railway Children · another picture



The Red Villa



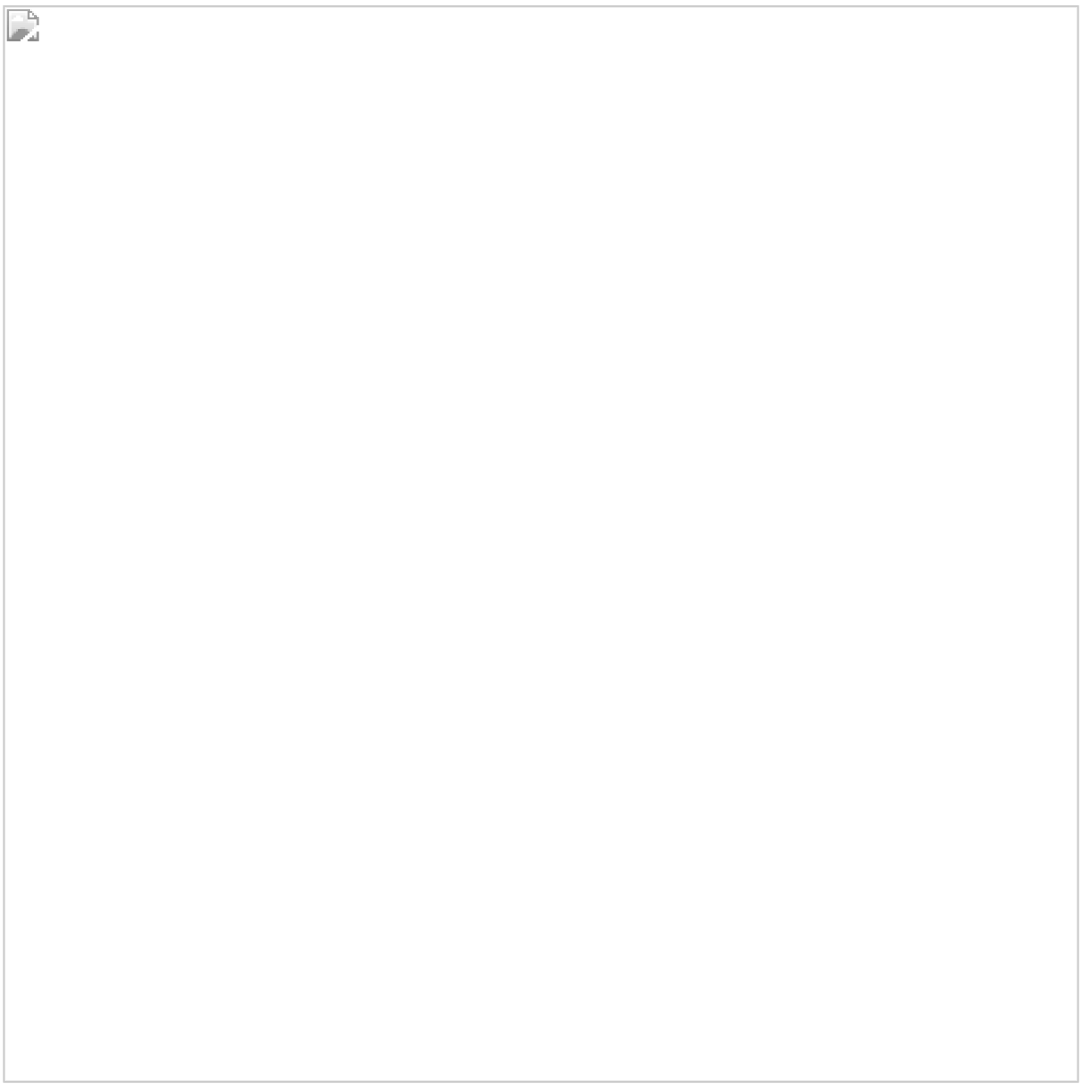
“They were not railway children to begin with.” They lived in a red-brick house with their Father and Mother. Roberta, called Bobbie, was the eldest. Next came Peter, who wanted to be an Engineer. The youngest was Phyllis, who meant extremely well.

Peter’s model engine went off with a bang, and he hoped Father could mend it. “Hope? Rather! Tons of it,” said Father, and he promised to give up Saturday afternoon to it.

Bobbie asked if girls could mend engines. “Girls are just as clever as boys, and don’t you forget it!” said Father. Then there was a knock at the front door.

TALK ABOUT IT

Who in your family is good at mending things? What have they fixed?



Think about it

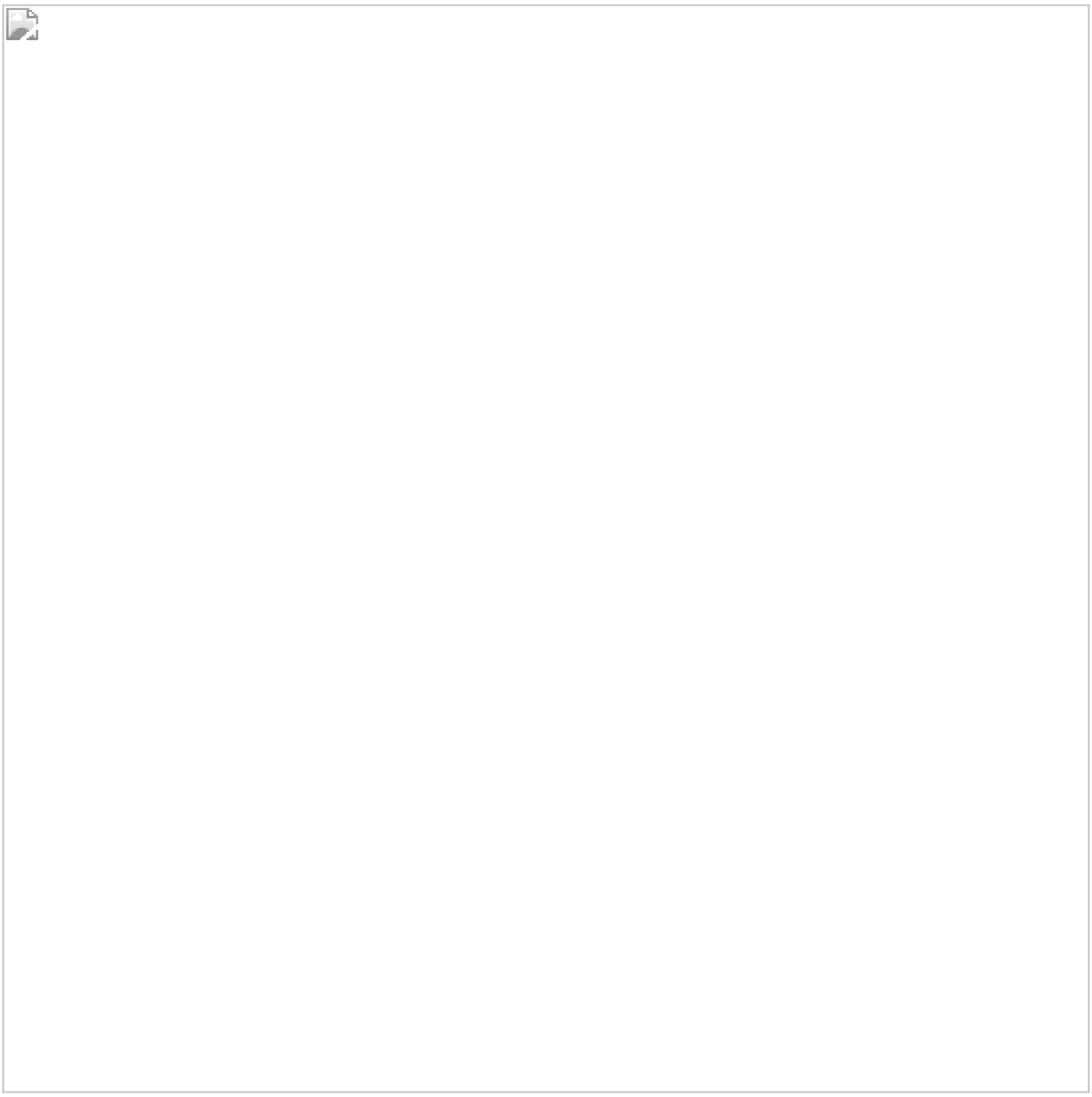
1. Who was the youngest of the three children?

- ○ Phyllis
- ○ Peter
- ○ Roberta

2. What had gone off with a bang?

- ○ Peter's model engine
- ○ A pigeon-pie
- ○ The front door

Father Is Called Away



Two gentlemen came to see Father. They stayed a long time, and when they left, Father went with them in a cab. Mother's dear face was as white as her lace collar.

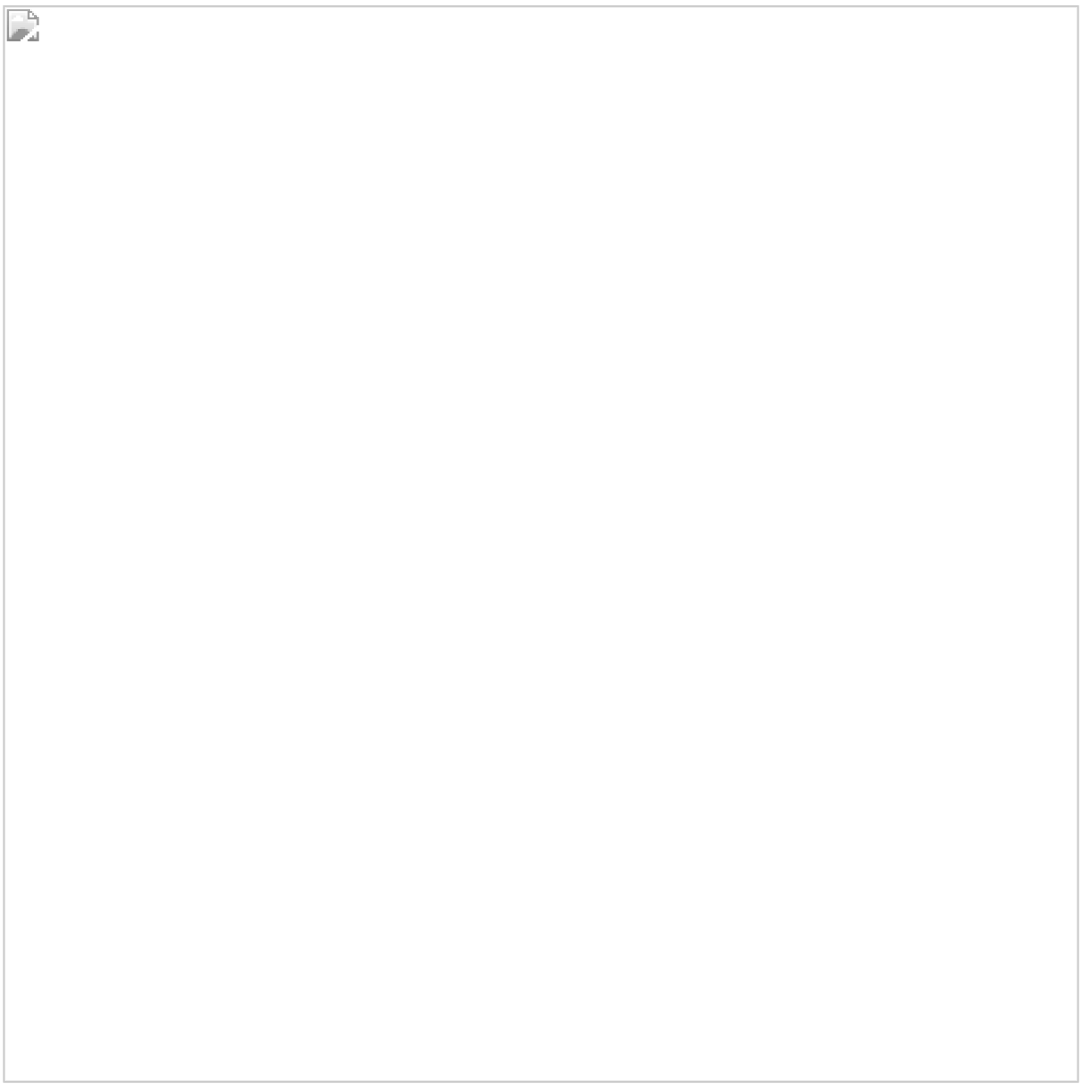
"Father's been called away," said Mother. Bobbie whispered, "Is anyone dead?" and Mother answered, "Nobody's dead." That night Mother kissed all three children as they lay asleep.

Next day Mother said Father would be away for some time. She asked them to be good and happy and not to quarrel. "It'll all come right in the end," she said. Phyllis said, "we'll all be as good as gold."

TALK ABOUT IT

Mother asked the children to help by being good and happy. What is one way you help your family when things are hard?

Father Is Called Away · another picture



Think about it

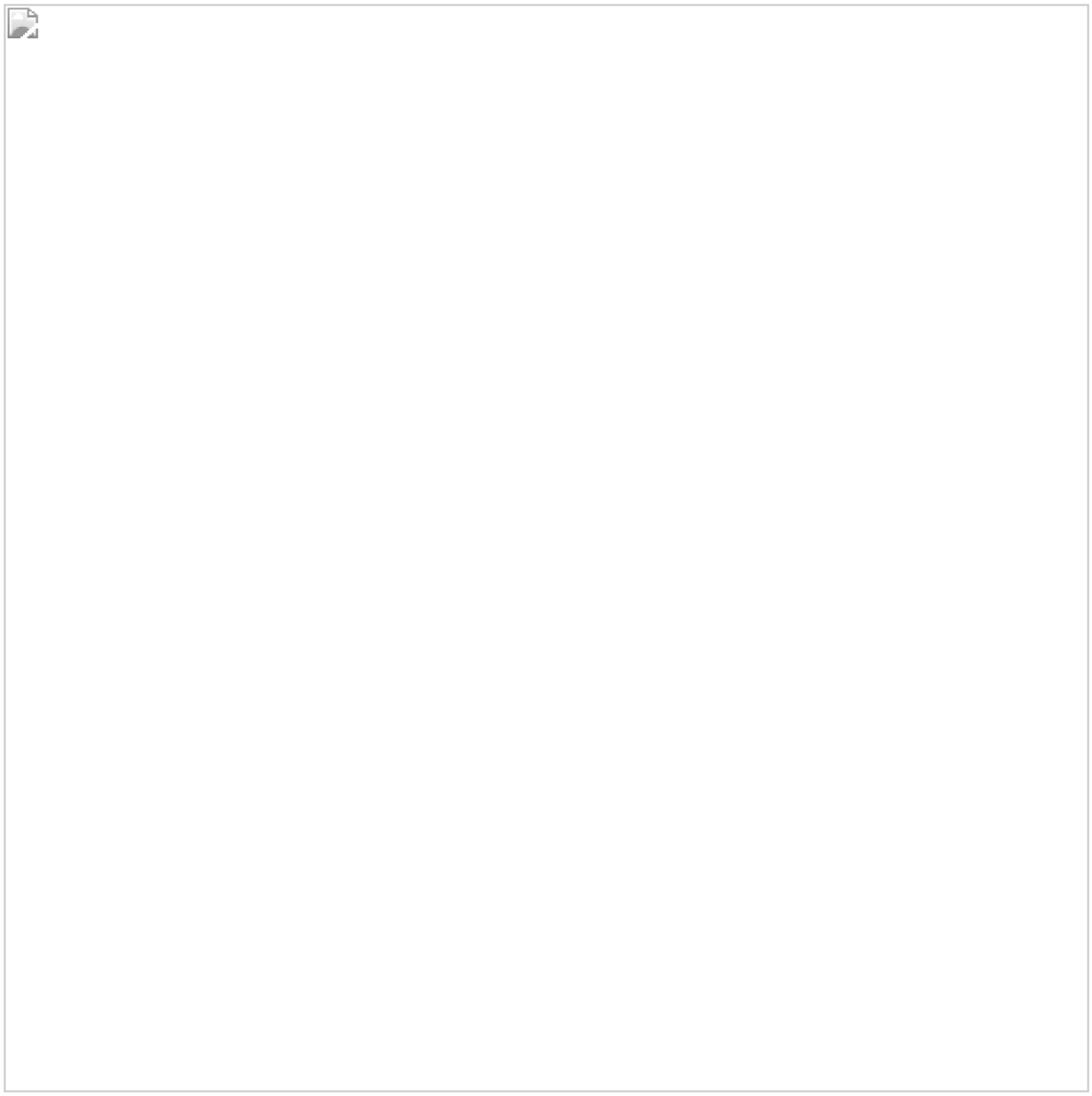
1. What did Mother say about Father?

- ○ He had been called away
- ○ He had gone on a picnic
- ○ He was upstairs

2. What did Mother ask the children to do?

- ○ Be good and happy and not quarrel
- ○ Stay up late
- ○ Pack their toys away

Playing at Being Poor



Soon Mother said, “We’re going to leave this house, and go and live in the country.” Then came a whirling week of packing. Chairs and tables had sacking on their tops and straw on their legs.

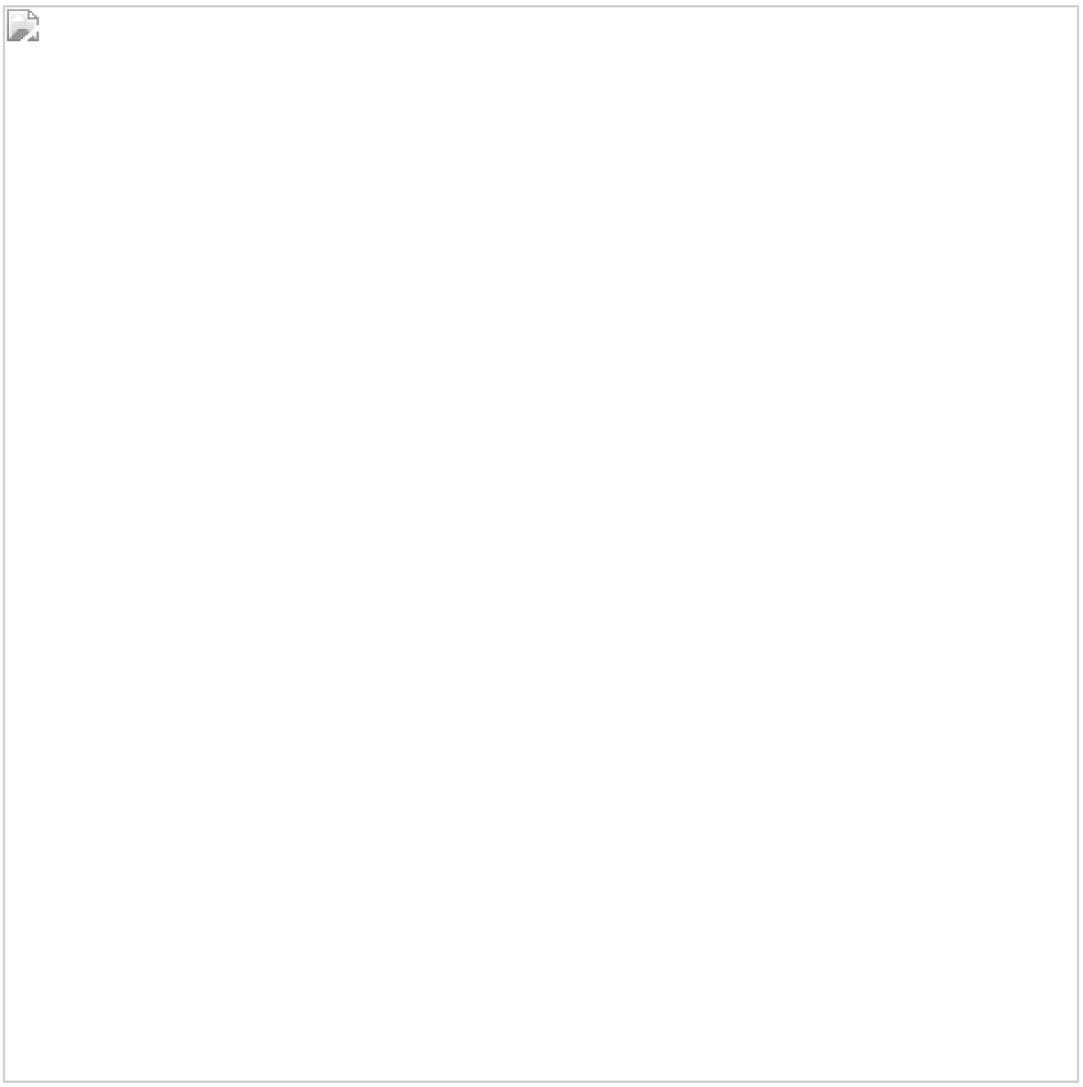
“We’re taking the useful ones,” said Mother; “we’ve got to play at being Poor for a bit, my chickabiddy.” Peter, tucked up on the drawing-room sofa, said, “I say, this is larks.”

Mother laughed. But as she turned away, Bobbie saw her face and never forgot it. “Oh, Mother,” she whispered to herself, “how brave you are! How I love you!”

TALK ABOUT IT

Mother laughed even though things were hard. What do you think Bobbie noticed about her?

Playing at Being Poor · another picture



Think about it

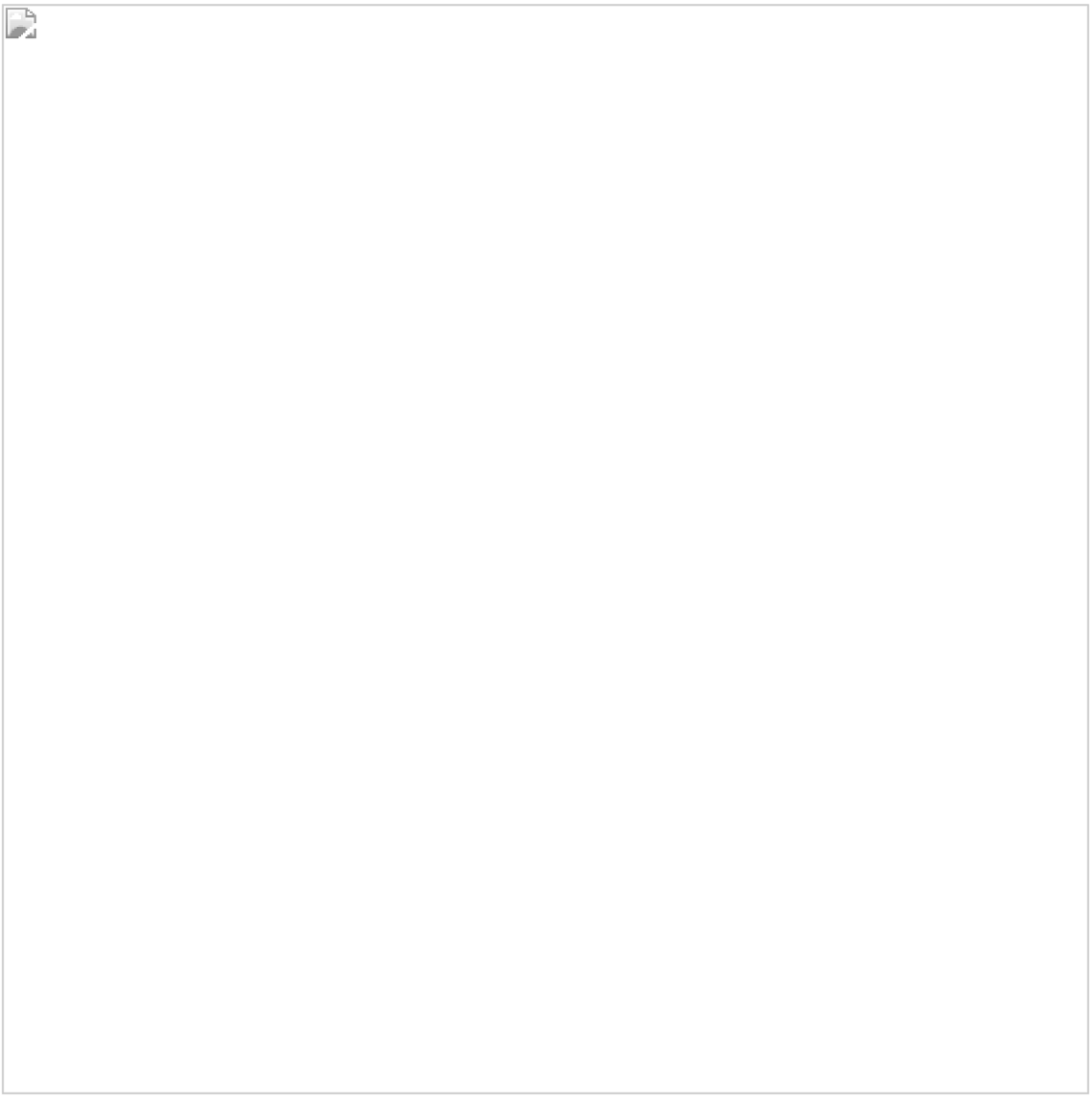
1. What did Mother say they were going to play at?

- ○ Being Poor
- ○ Being kings
- ○ Being sailors

2. Where did Peter sleep that night?

- ○ On the drawing-room sofa
- ○ In the cellar
- ○ In the garden

A Dark House in the Country



A train took them far away, to a draughty platform in the dark. It was the first train they saw on that railway, which was to become very dear to them.

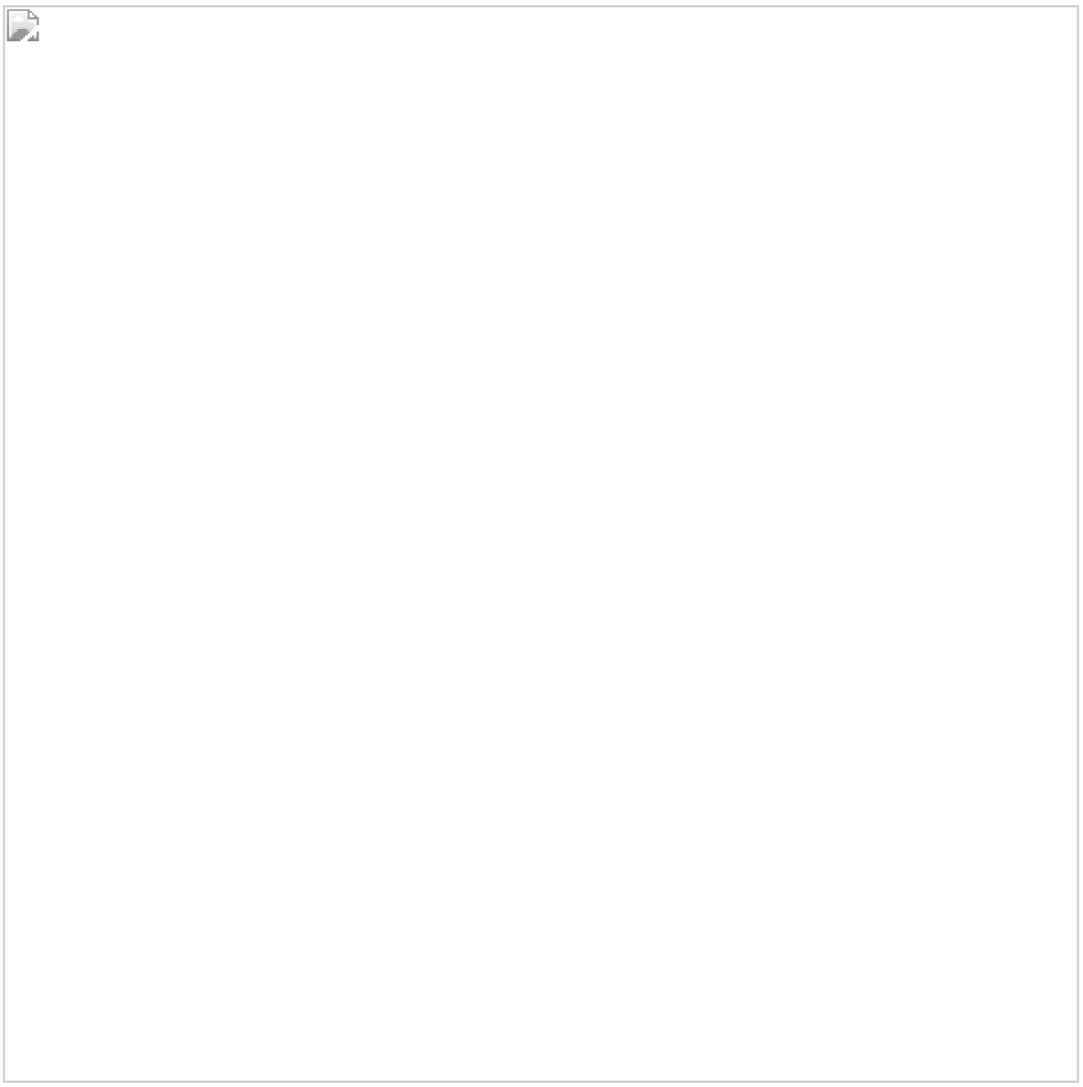
They walked uphill in the dark to a house with no lights. The cart man found the key under the doorstep. There was a scampering sound in the kitchen walls. “It’s only the rats,” he said, and went away.

“I wish we hadn’t come!” said Phyllis. But Mother found candles and lit fourteen of them. “The great thing is to be cheerful,” she said. “Nobody can be cheerful in the dark except owls and dormice.” Then they had supper.

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you have done in that dark kitchen? What helps you when you feel unsure in a new place?

A Dark House in the Country · another picture



Think about it

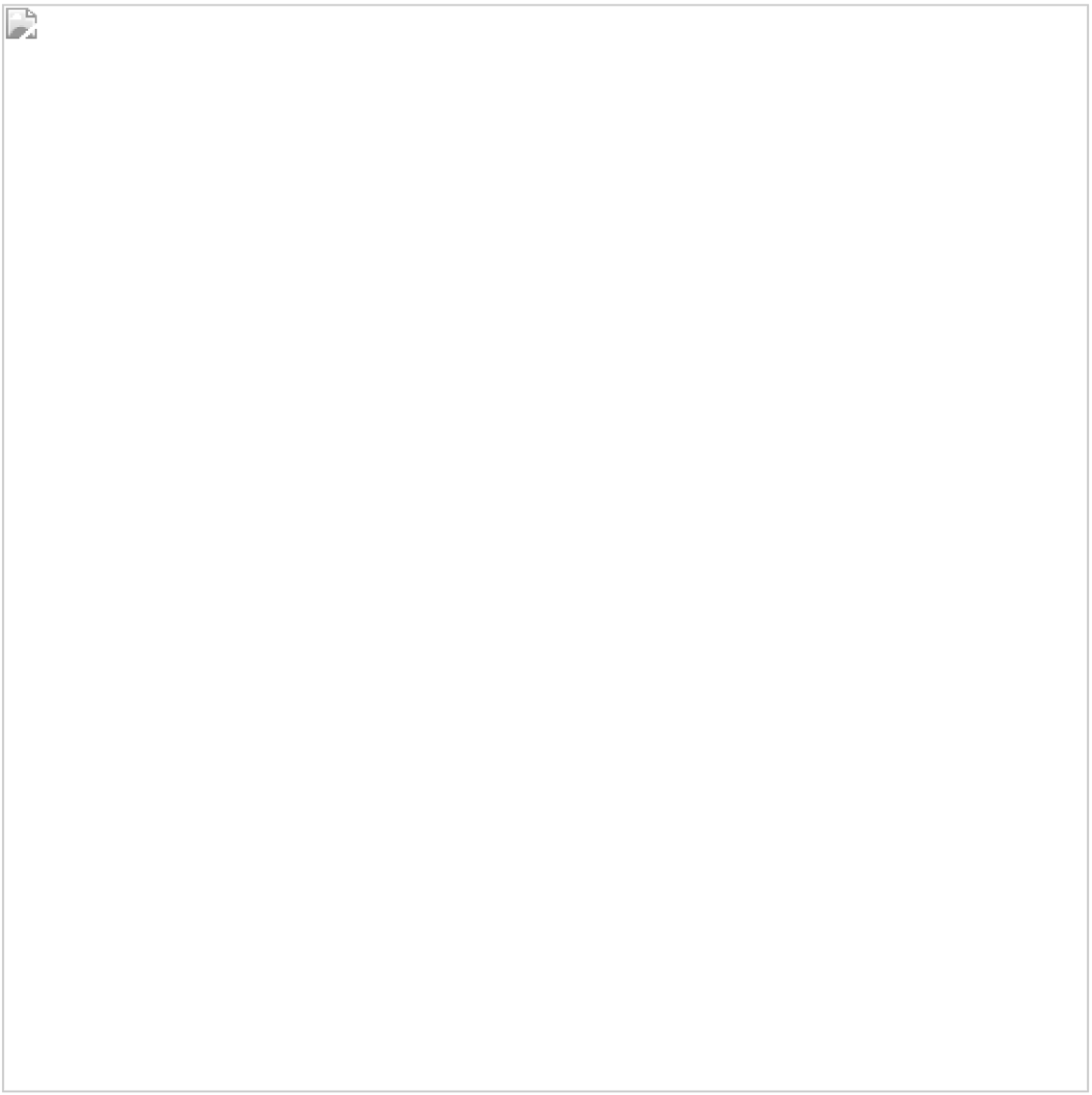
1. What did Mother light to chase away the dark?

- ○ Fourteen candles
- ○ A bonfire
- ○ One lamp

2. Where was the key hidden?

- ○ Under the doorstep
- ○ In a flowerpot
- ○ In Peter’s pocket

The Green Dragon



The house was called Three Chimneys, and just down the hill ran the railway. The 9.15 up was called the Green Dragon, and it came screaming out of a dark tunnel.

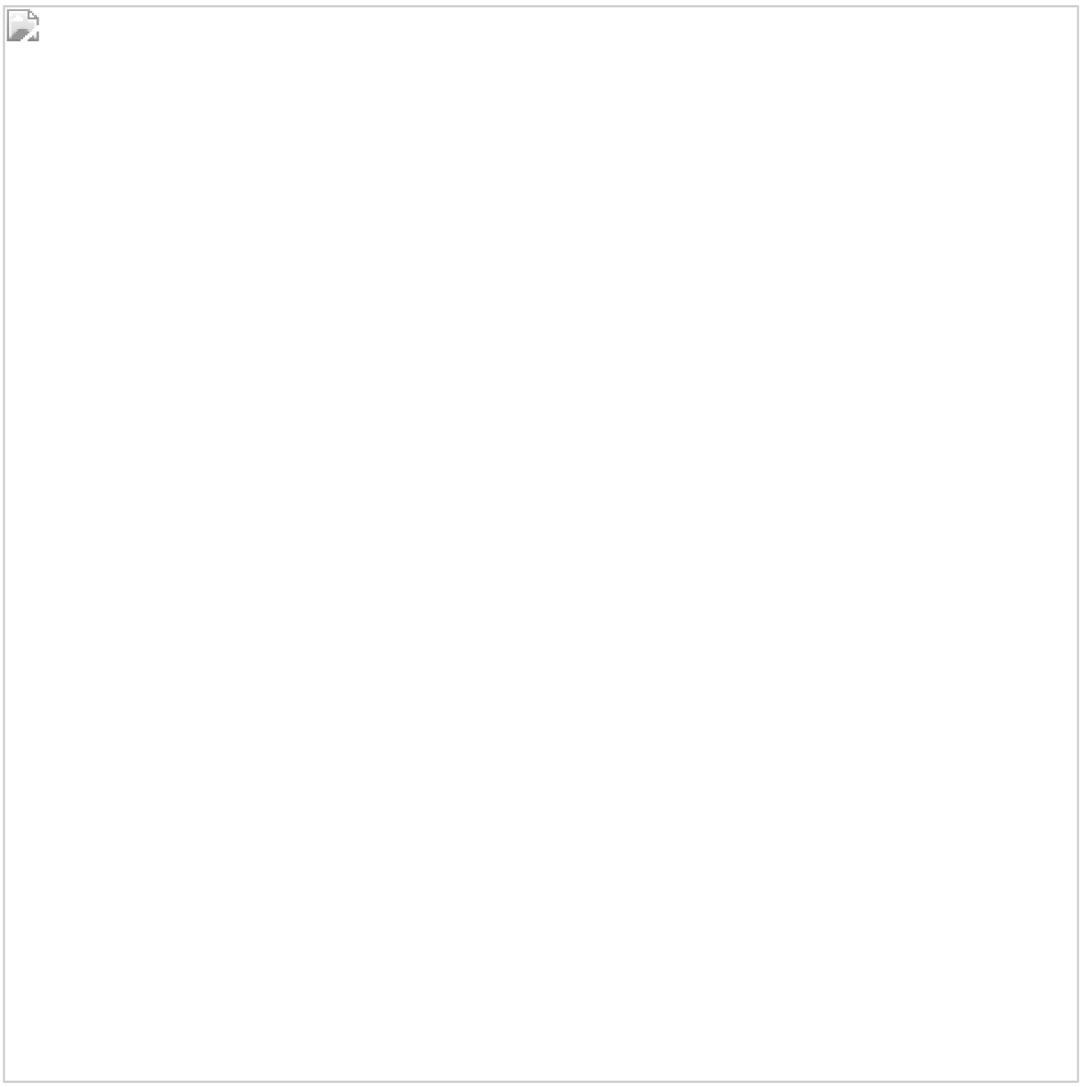
“The Green Dragon’s going where Father is,” said Phyllis. “If it’s a magic dragon, it’ll understand and take our loves to Father.” So when it came, all three stood on the railing and waved their handkerchiefs.

And out of a first-class carriage a hand waved back. “A quite clean hand.” It held a newspaper. It was the hand of an old gentleman, and after this the children and the 9.15 waved to each other every morning.

TALK ABOUT IT

If you could send your love to someone far away on a train, who would it be?

The Green Dragon · another picture



Think about it

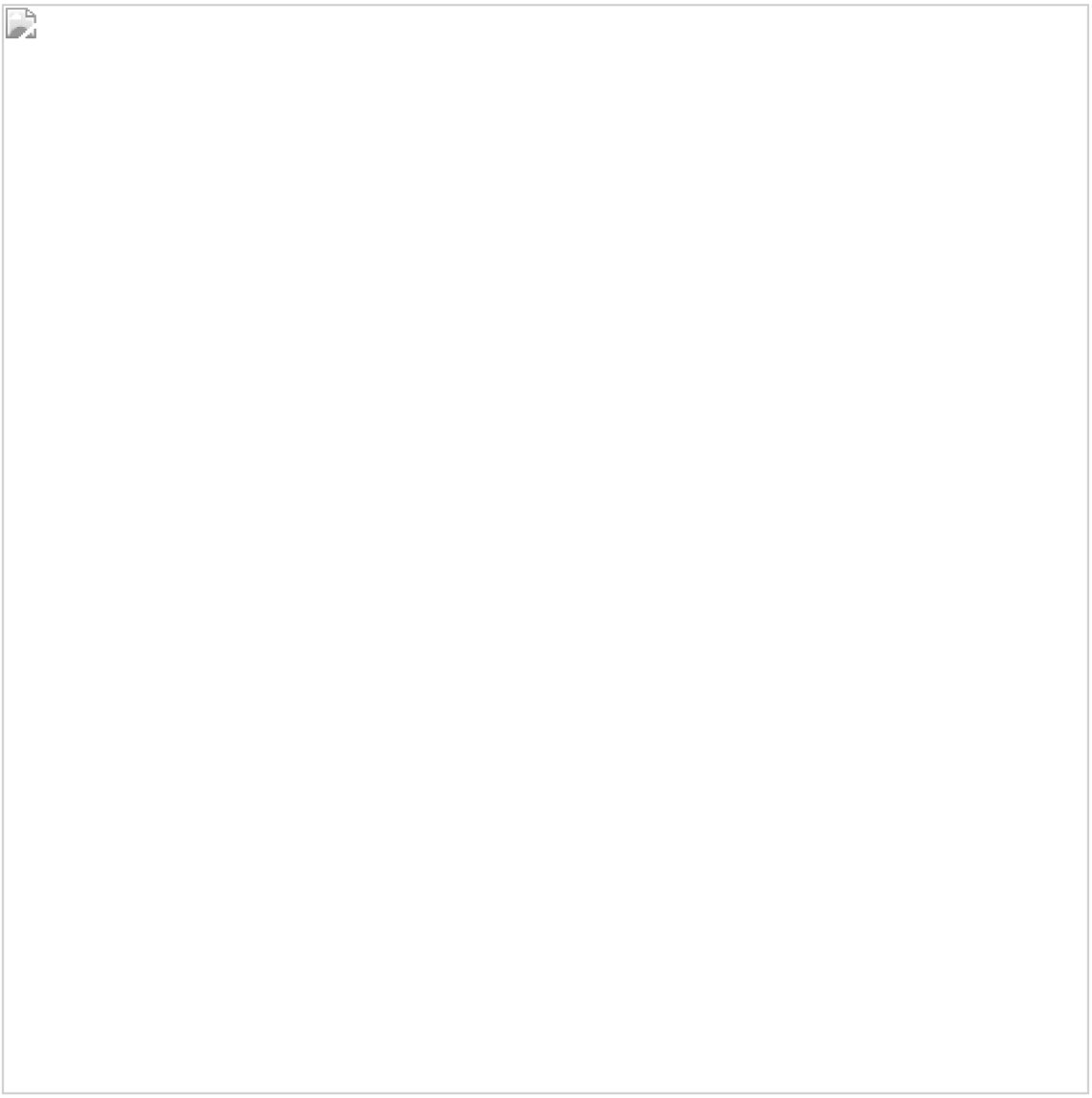
1. What did the children call the 9.15 train?

- ○ The Green Dragon
- ○ The Blue Whale
- ○ The Red Rocket

2. Who waved back from the train?

- ○ An old gentleman
- ○ The driver
- ○ A little dog

A Letter to the Old Gentleman



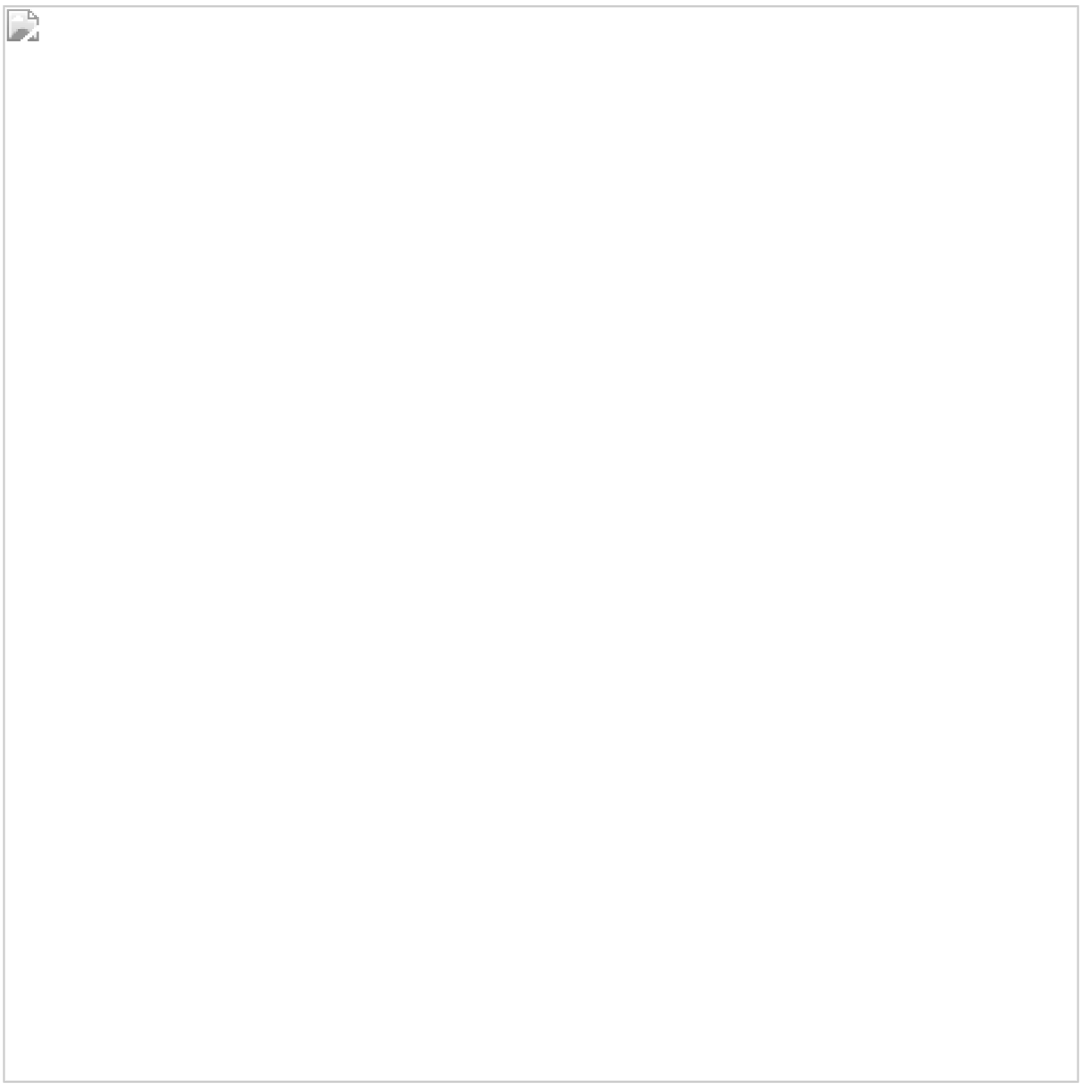
When Mother was ill, the Doctor said she needed good things to eat that the family could not afford. “Dear Mr. We do not know your name,” wrote the children to the old gentleman, and they told him what Mother needed.

They put up a sign by the railway: LOOK OUT AT THE STATION. Phyllis gave him the letter as the train began to move.

That evening a big hamper came with everything on the list, and more. When Mother got better, the children hung up a banner: SHE IS NEARLY WELL THANK YOU, and the old gentleman waved.

TALK ABOUT IT

The children asked a stranger for help because they loved their Mother. Who do you go to when you need help?



Think about it

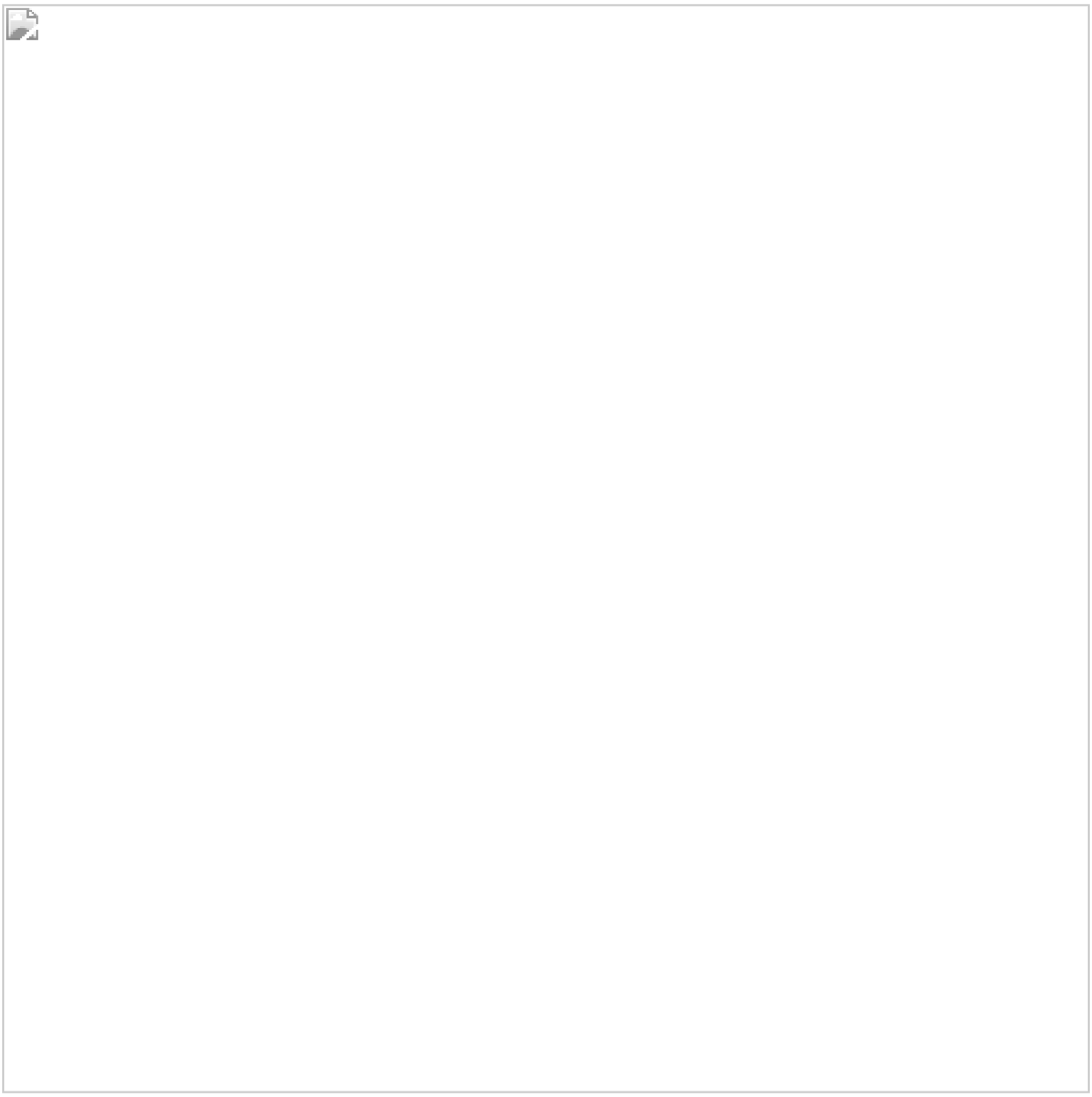
1. Who did the children write to when Mother was ill?

- ○ The old gentleman
- ○ The Doctor's dog
- ○ The Station Master

2. What did the banner say?

- ○ SHE IS NEARLY WELL THANK YOU
- ○ WELCOME HOME
- ○ STOP THE TRAIN

The Russian at the Station



At the station the children found a stranger with no ticket. He had wild, hunted eyes, and no one knew what language he spoke. Bobbie remembered a little French. “Nous etre bong pour vous,” she said. Perhaps he did not understand her words, but he understood the touch of her hand.

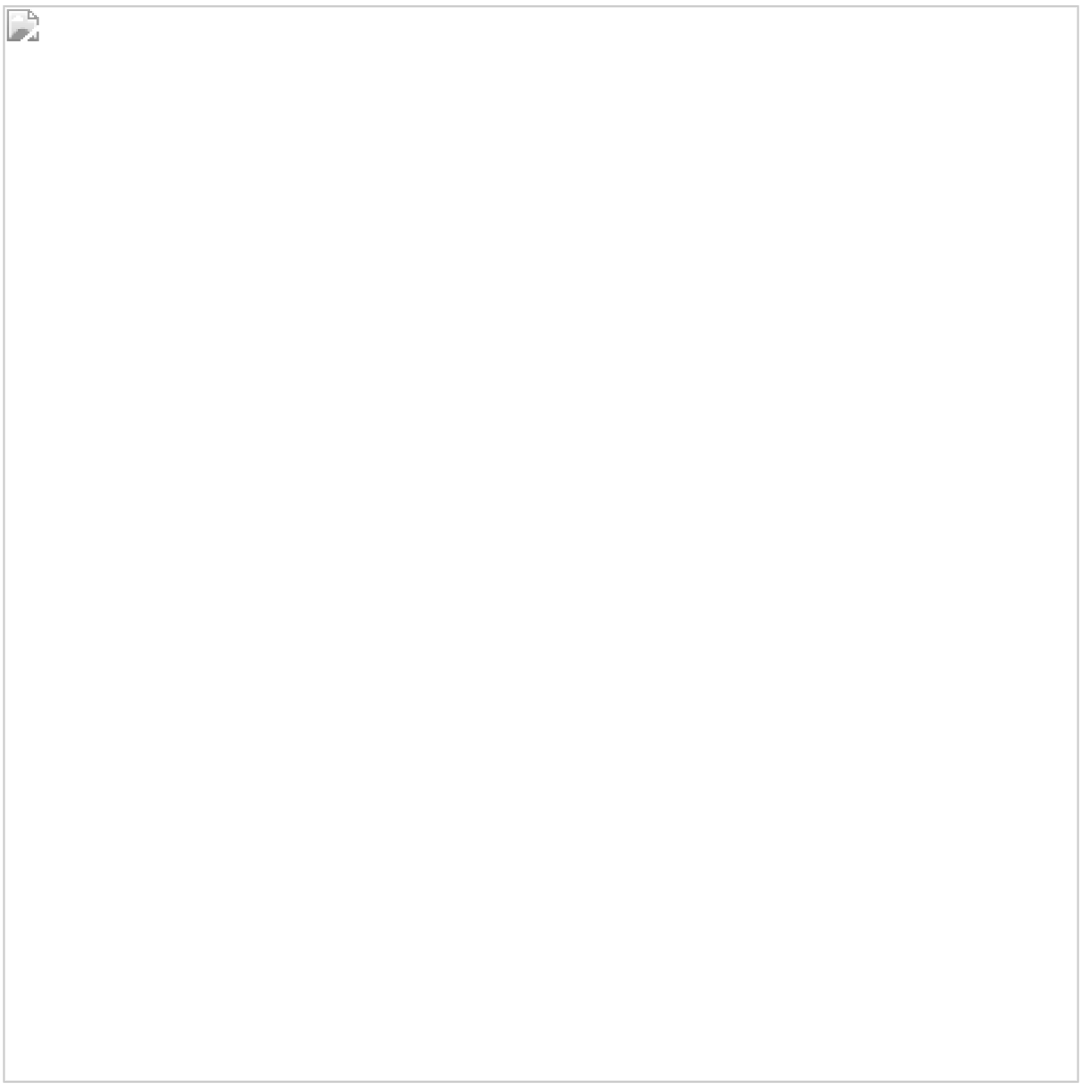
Peter showed him foreign stamps from an envelope. The stranger searched among them, and at last held out a Russian stamp.

Mother came and spoke to him in French. He was a Russian, very ill, and he had lost his ticket. She took him home to Three Chimneys, and Bobbie ran for the Doctor.

TALK ABOUT IT

Bobbie used a few words she hardly knew to be kind. How can you be kind to someone who speaks a different language?

The Russian at the Station · another picture



Think about it

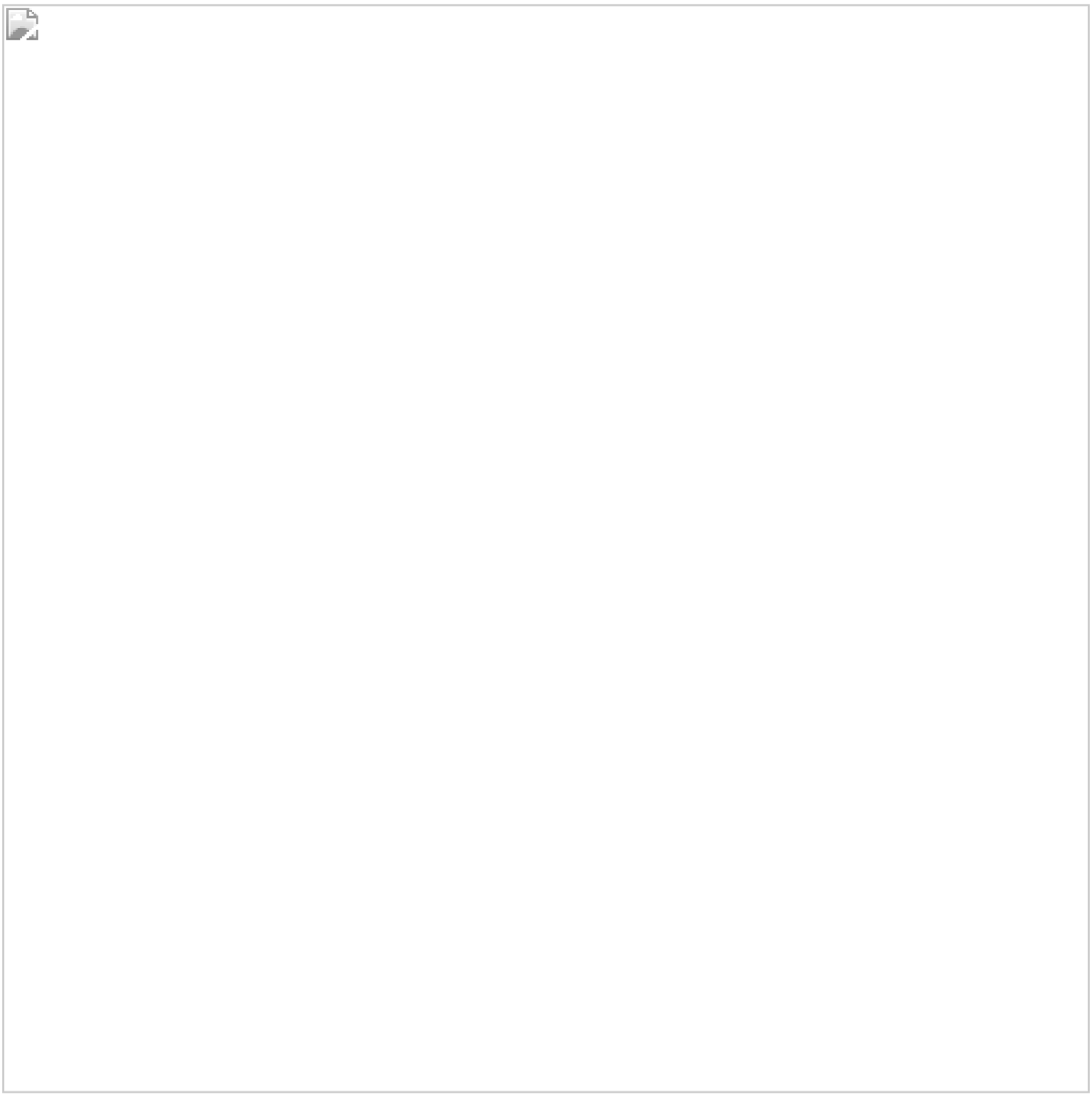
1. How did the children find out where the stranger came from?

- ○ He picked out a Russian stamp
- ○ He drew a map
- ○ He sang a song

2. Who went home with Mother to be looked after?

- ○ The Russian stranger
- ○ The Station Master
- ○ The Porter

All Prisoners and Captives



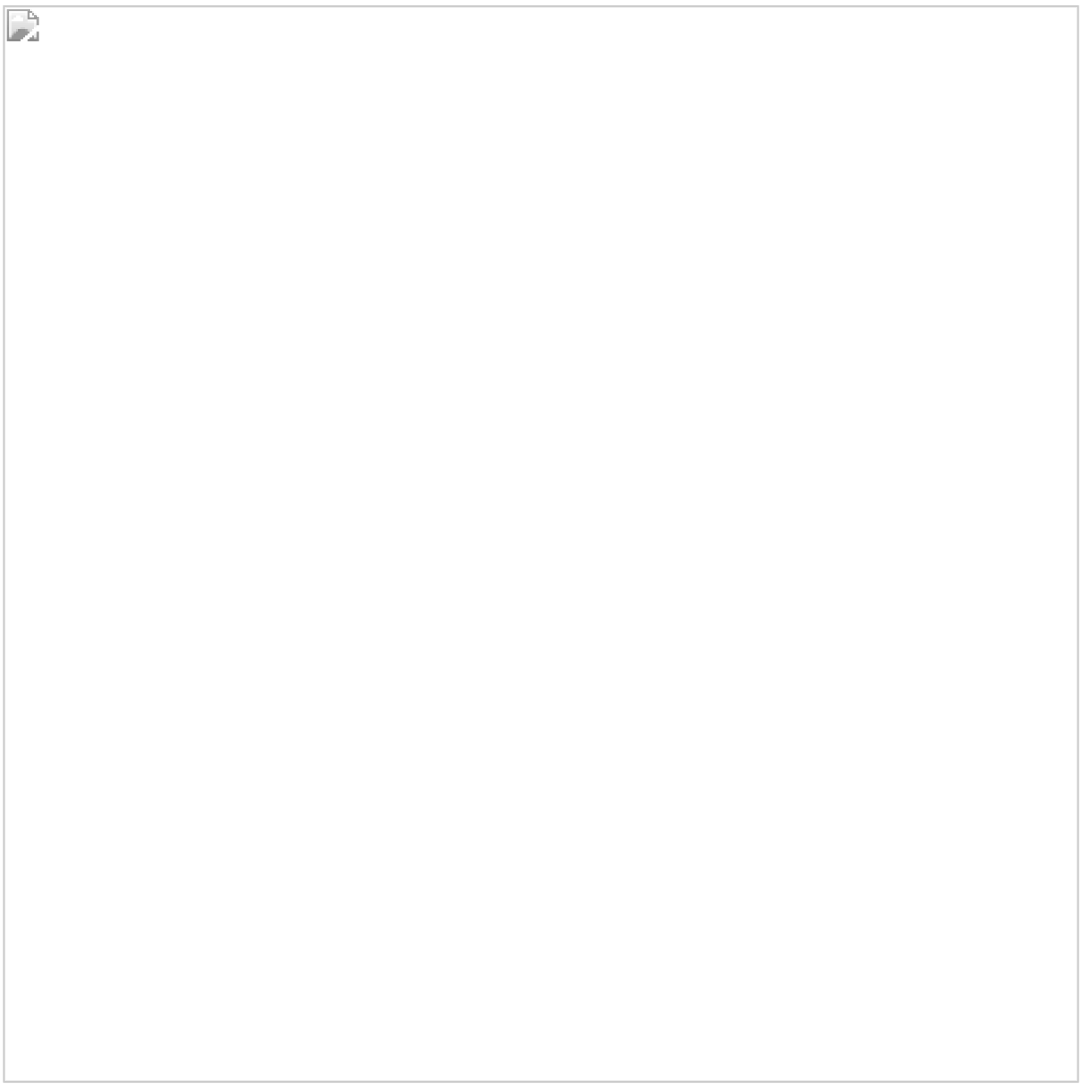
That night, Mother aired some men's clothes from an old trunk, and Bobbie saw the name on the night-shirt: Father's. She asked if Daddy was dead. Mother hugged her. He was quite well, she said, and would come back some day.

The Russian, Mother said, had written a book about helping poor people, and was put in prison for it. He got away, and came to England to find his wife and children.

Mother's voice was very unsteady. "Dears, when you say your prayers, I think you might ask God to show His pity upon all prisoners and captives." Bobbie said the words over slowly.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mother asked the children to pray for people who are shut away. Who do you think of when you pray for someone you can't see?



Think about it

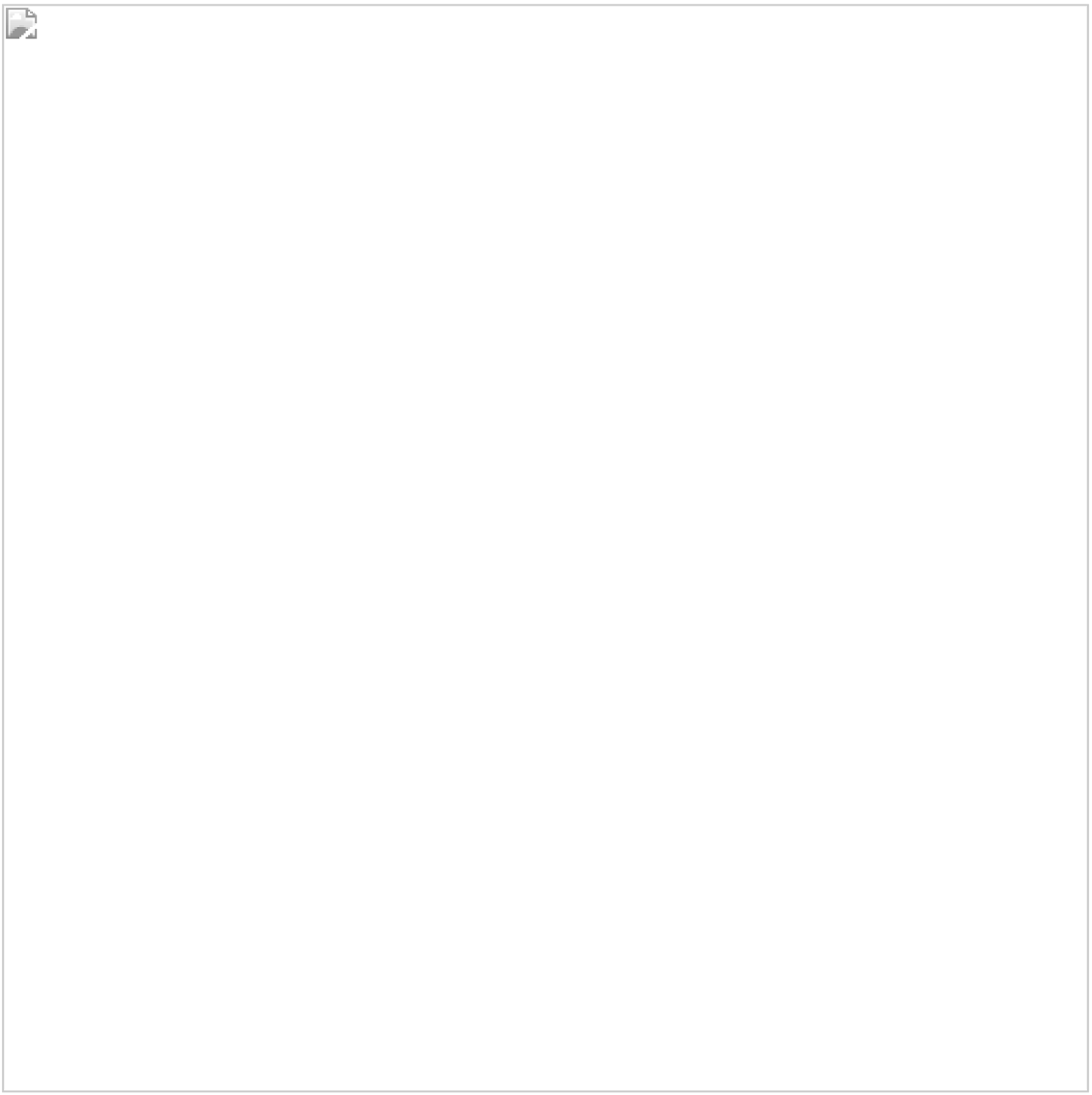
1. Whose name was on the night-shirt?

- ○ Father's
- ○ The Russian's
- ○ Peter's

2. What did Mother ask the children to pray for?

- ○ All prisoners and captives
- ○ A sunny day
- ○ More buns

The Walking Trees



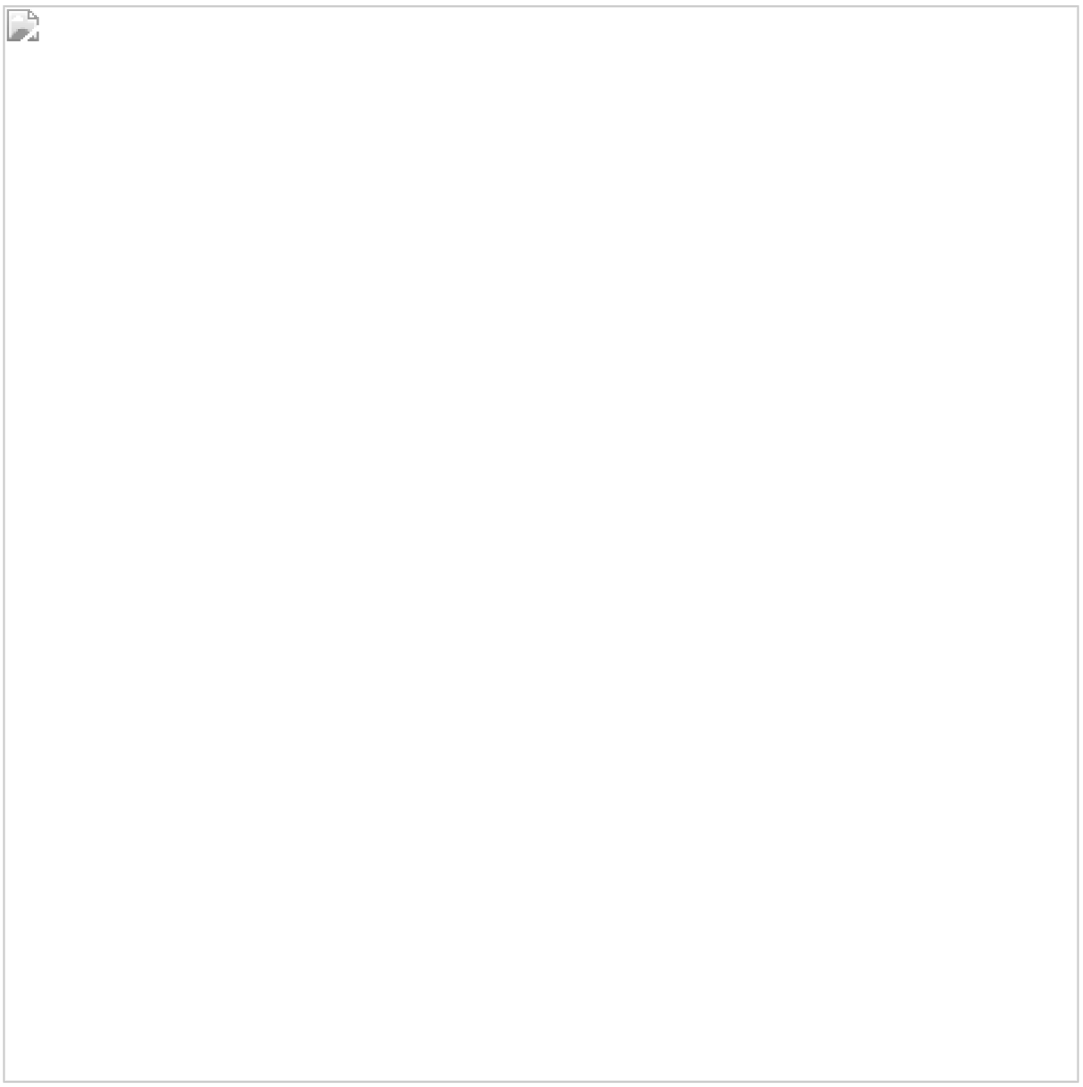
The children went to find cherries near the tunnel, with Mother's silver watch. At the top of the cutting Bobbie said, "Hush. Stop! What's that?" The trees on the other side seemed to be walking down the bank.

"It's moving!" cried Bobbie. Then rock and trees and grass slipped off the cutting onto the line with a crash.

Peter looked at the watch. "The 11.29 down hasn't gone by yet. We must let them know at the station, or there'll be a most frightful accident." But the station was two miles away. "If we had anything red," said Peter, "we could get down on the line and wave it."

TALK ABOUT IT

What would you do if you knew a train was coming and no one else knew about the danger?



Think about it

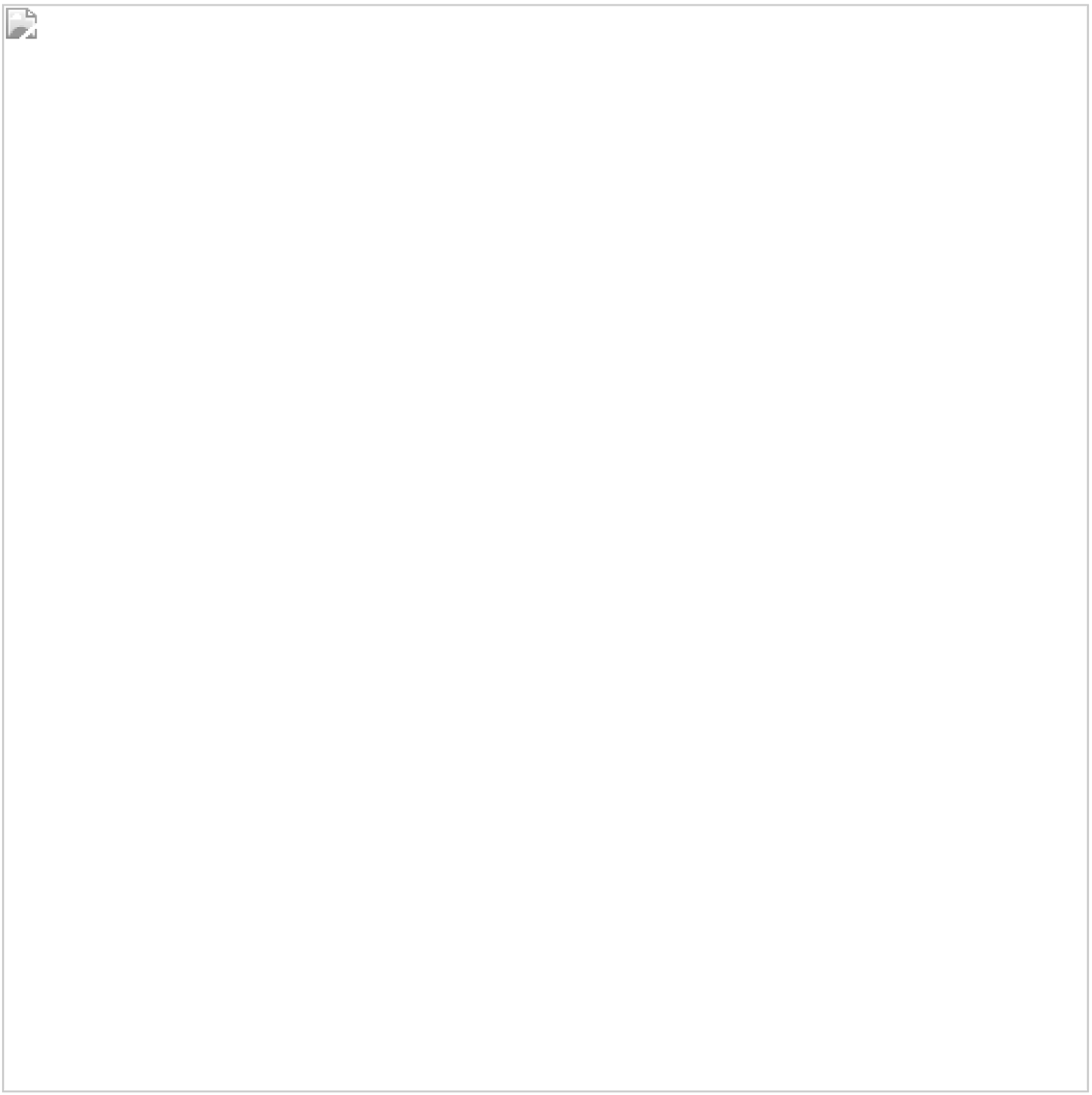
1. What fell onto the railway line?

- ○ Rock, trees, and earth
- ○ A bridge
- ○ A house

2. What did Peter say they needed to stop the train?

- ○ Something red to wave
- ○ A bigger watch
- ○ A basket of cherries

The Red Petticoats



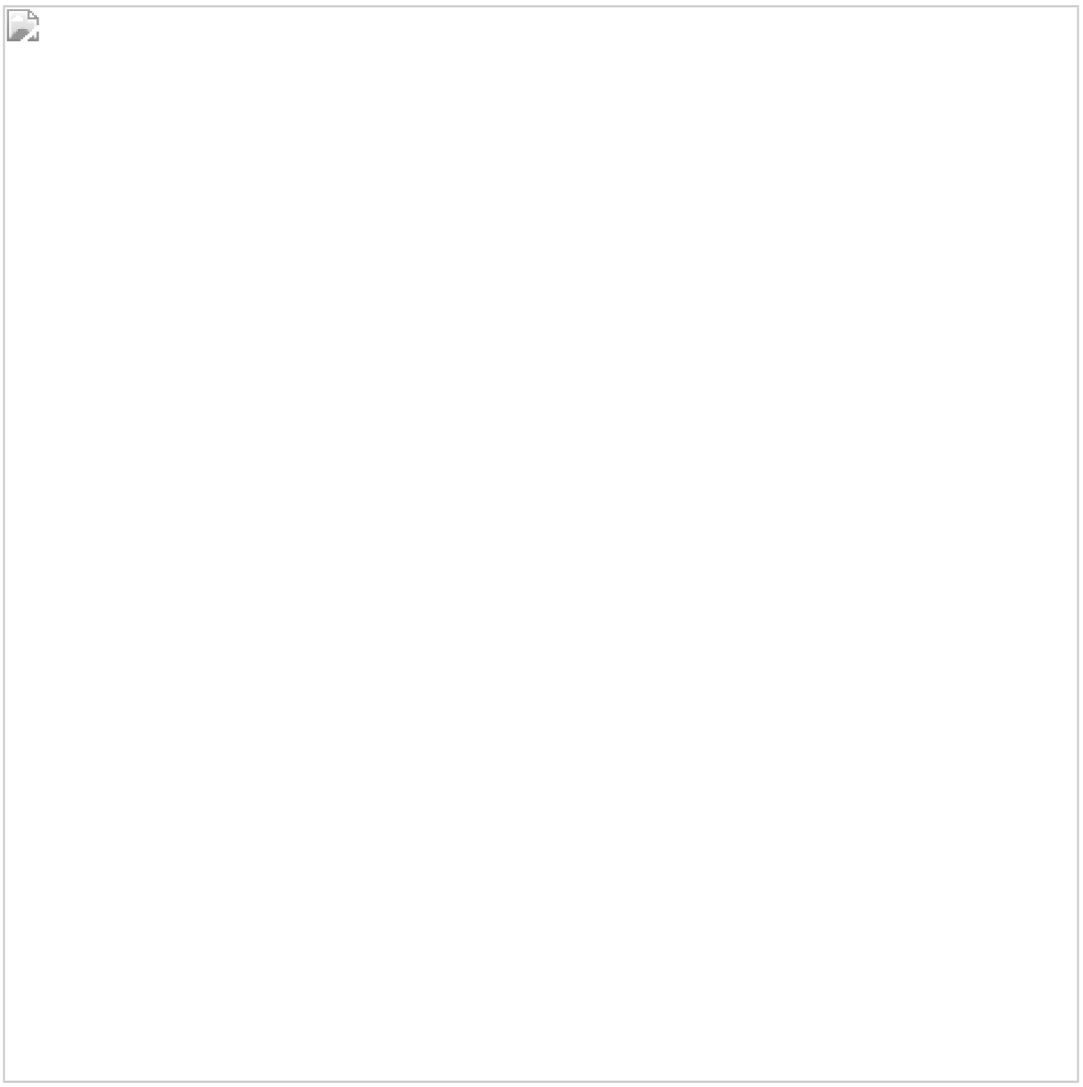
Phyllis said she wished they hadn't put on their flannel petticoats, because she was hot. Then she stopped short. Bobbie cried, "THEY'RE red! Let's take them off."

They tore the petticoats up. "Now, we've got six flags," said Peter. They tied them to sticks and waited, until at last they heard the train.

"Stand firm," said Peter, "and wave like mad!" Bobbie waved her two flags right over the line. "Oh, stop, stop, stop!" she cried. The engine slowed and stopped, not twenty yards away. Bobbie fainted, but she soon woke. She only said, "We never got any cherries, after all."

TALK ABOUT IT

Bobbie kept waving even though she was scared. What gives you courage to keep going?



Think about it

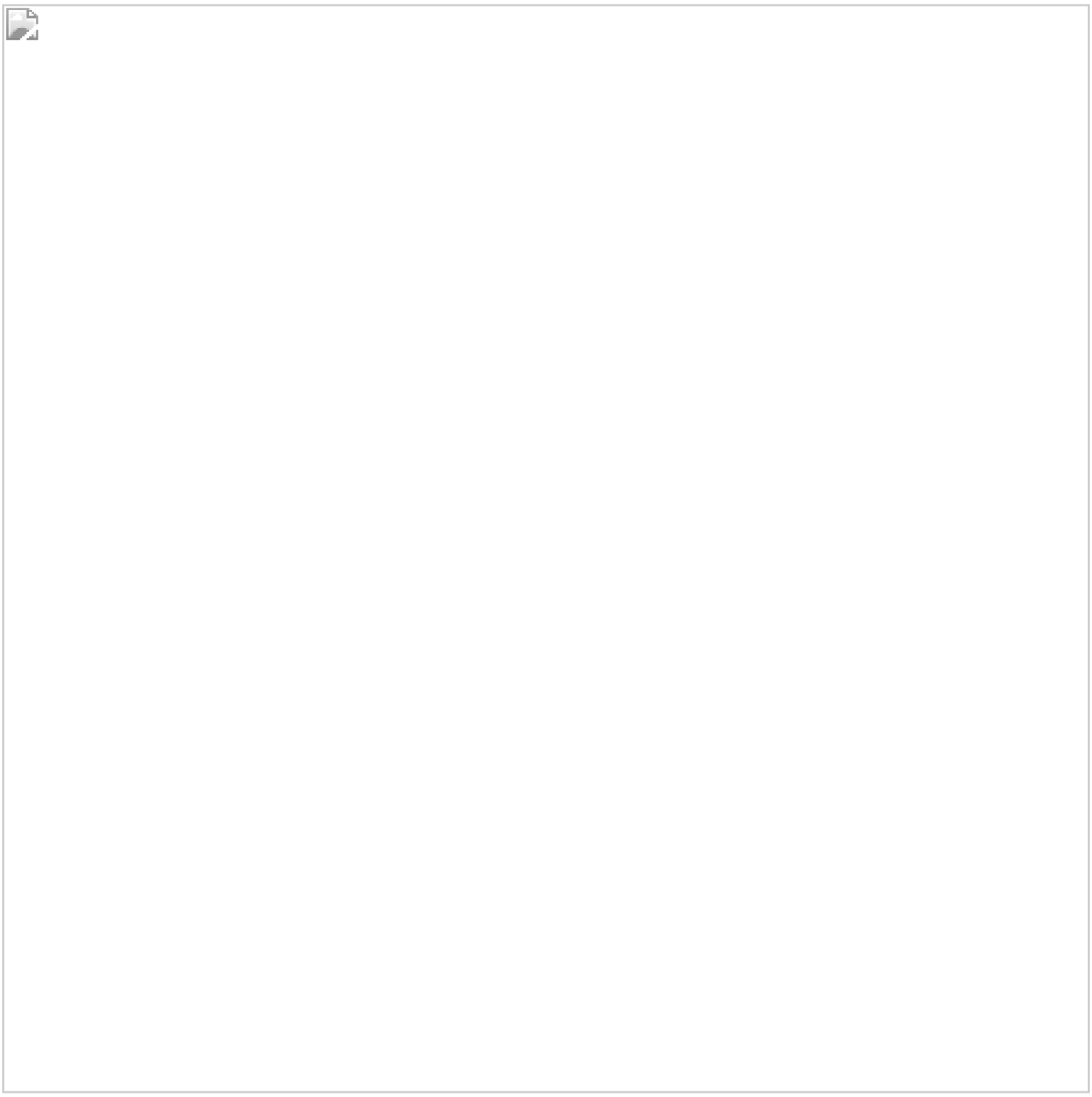
1. What did the children use to make flags?

- ○ Red flannel petticoats
- ○ Handkerchiefs
- ○ Pillowcases

2. What happened when Bobbie waved the flags?

- ○ The engine stopped
- ○ The train went faster
- ○ The train turned around

A Birthday for Perks



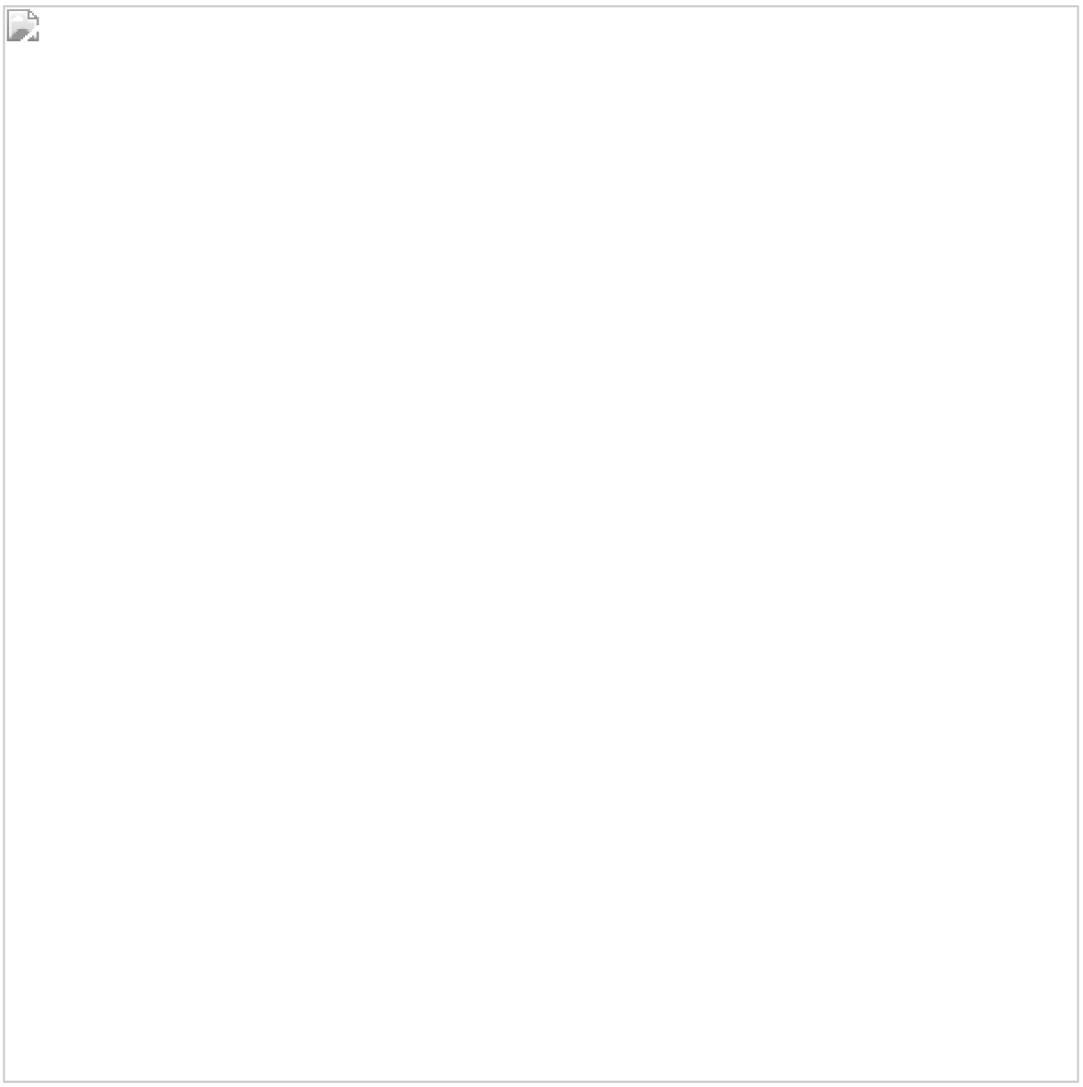
Perks was the kind Porter at the station. “Because it’s Perks’s birthday,” said Bobbie; “he’s thirty-two.” His other name was Albert, so Mother helped them make buns with A. P. on them in pink sugar.

“Let’s go round and ask everybody,” said Peter. Some people were kind and some were crusty. The sweet shop gave a pipe, the grocer tea, the draper a woollen scarf, and the Doctor a stuffed squirrel.

Bobbie and Phyllis left a basket of roses for Mrs. Ransome at the Post-office, because it was her birthday too. She sent the basket back full of gooseberries, and gave them a pram to take to Mrs. Perks.

TALK ABOUT IT

The children made a birthday for someone they liked. What would you do for a friend’s birthday?



Think about it

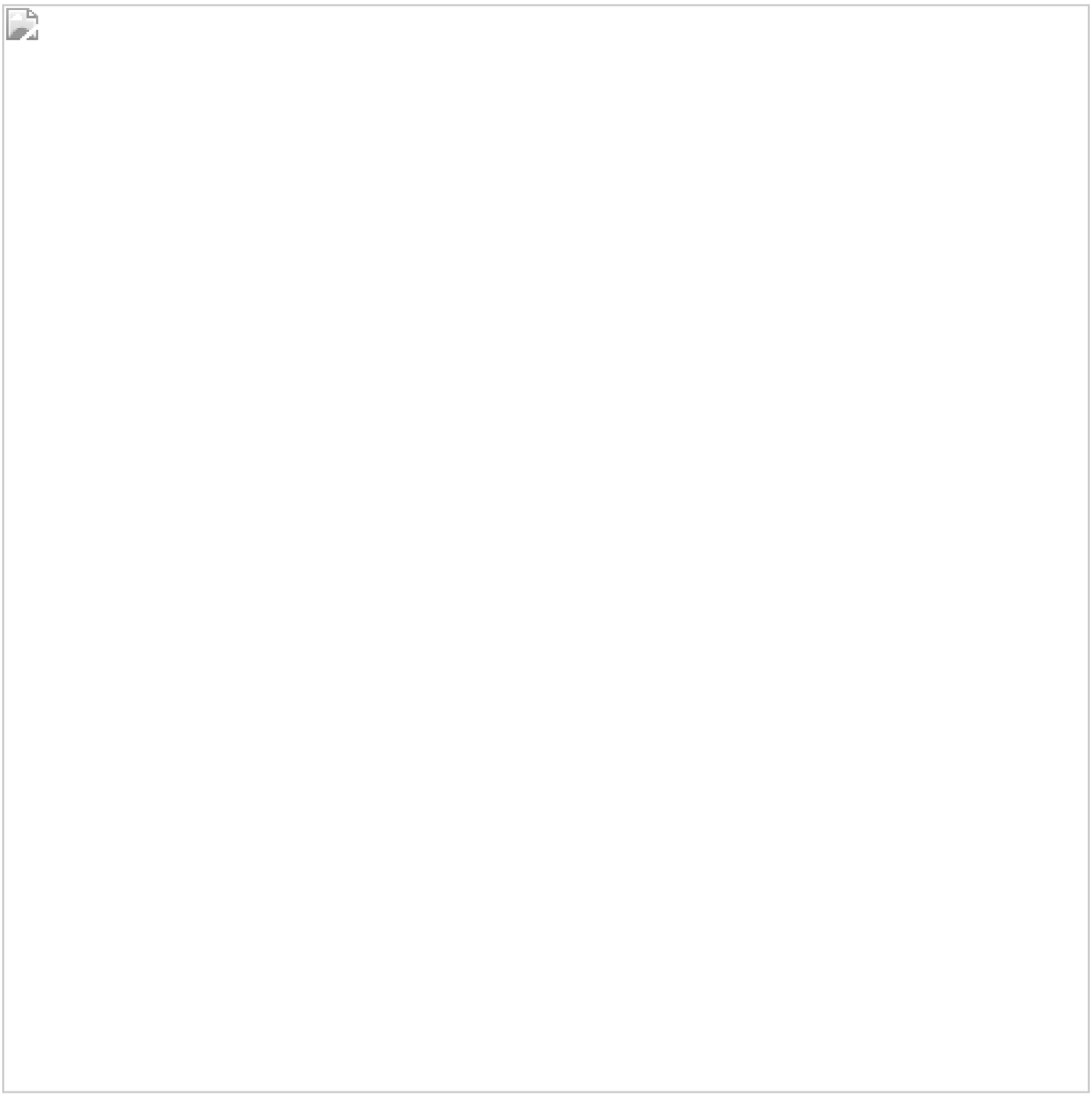
1. What did the children write on the buns?

- ○ A. P.
- ○ Happy Day
- ○ P. P.

2. What did Mrs. Ransome send back in the basket?

- ○ Fat, red gooseberries
- ○ The roses
- ○ A letter

Not Charity



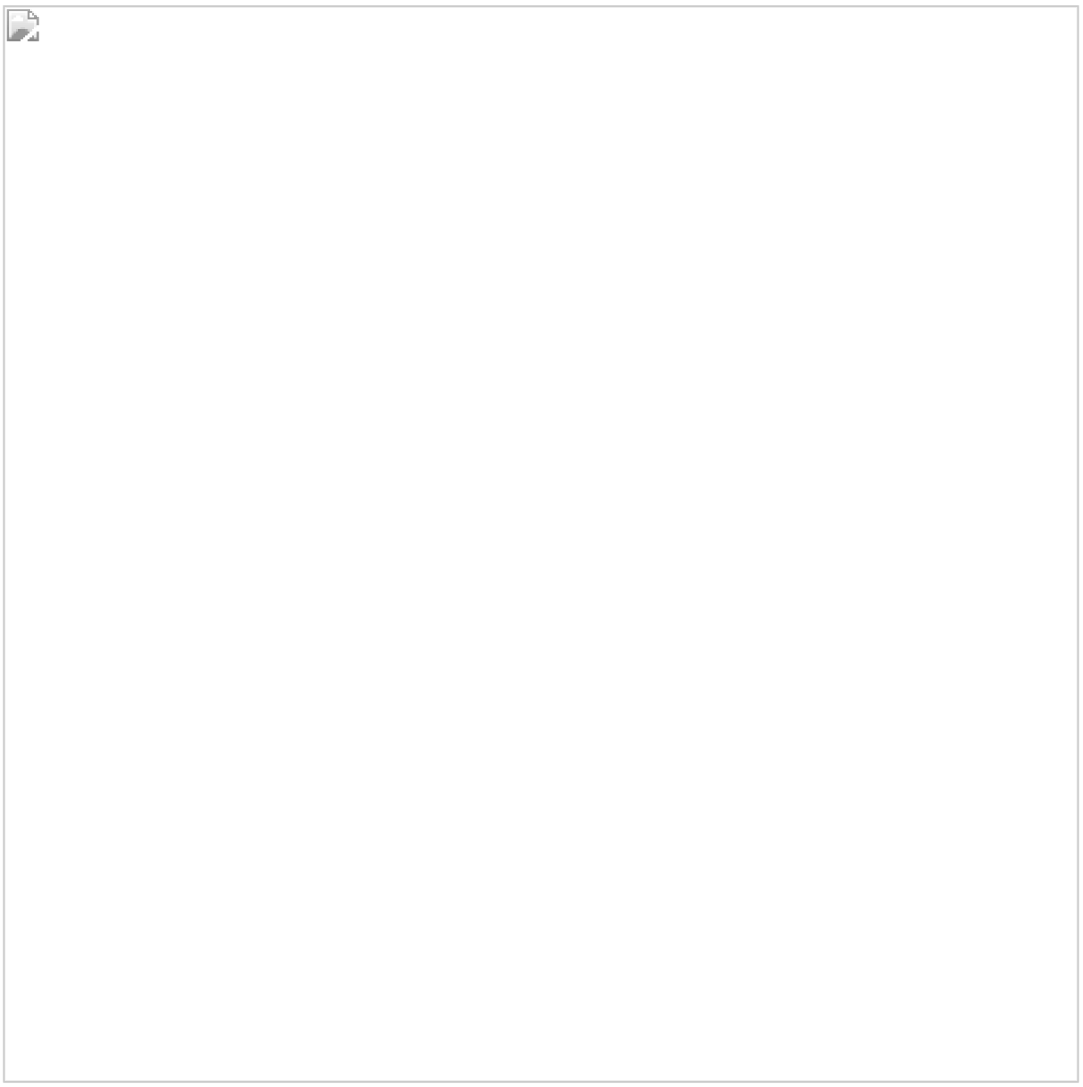
The children wheeled the pram to Perks's little yellow house, and hid in the wash-house to wait. Then Bobbie remembered with horror that she had forgotten to put labels on the presents.

Perks came in and was cross. He thought they had gone round telling everyone he was poor. "It ain't what you means so much as what you does," he said, and he would not look at them.

Bobbie read him the labels, and how everyone respected him. Perks said, "Nell, set on the kettle." His toast at tea was "May the garland of friendship be ever green." The clergyman called it "what is sometimes called loving-kindness."

TALK ABOUT IT

Perks was upset at first, and then he understood. Have you ever done something kind that was taken the wrong way?



Think about it

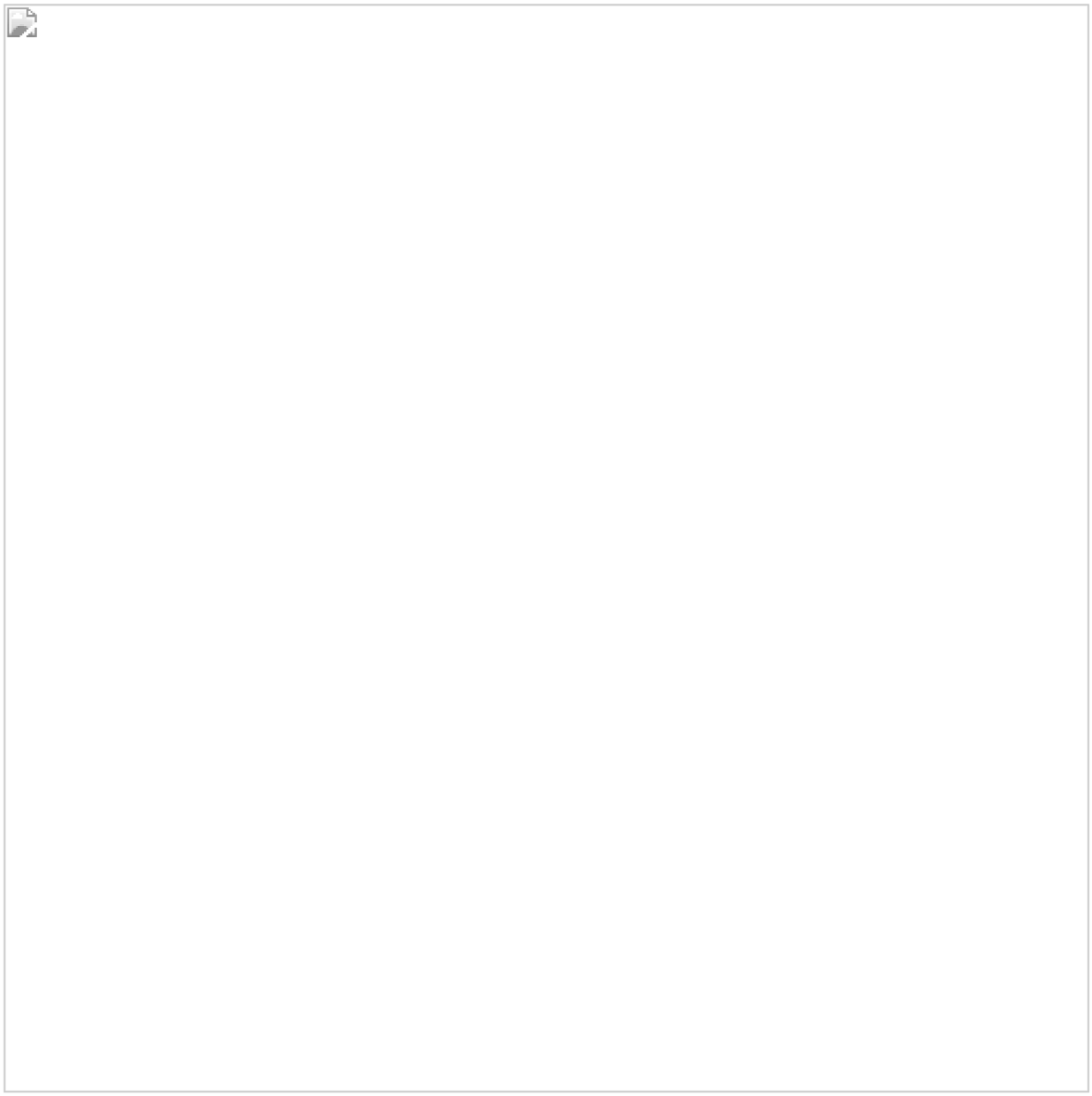
1. Why was Perks cross at first?

- ○ He thought it was charity
- ○ He didn't like buns
- ○ He was late for work

2. What changed his mind?

- ○ Hearing what his neighbours had said about him
- ○ Getting a bigger pram
- ○ Eating the gooseberries

What Bobbie Read



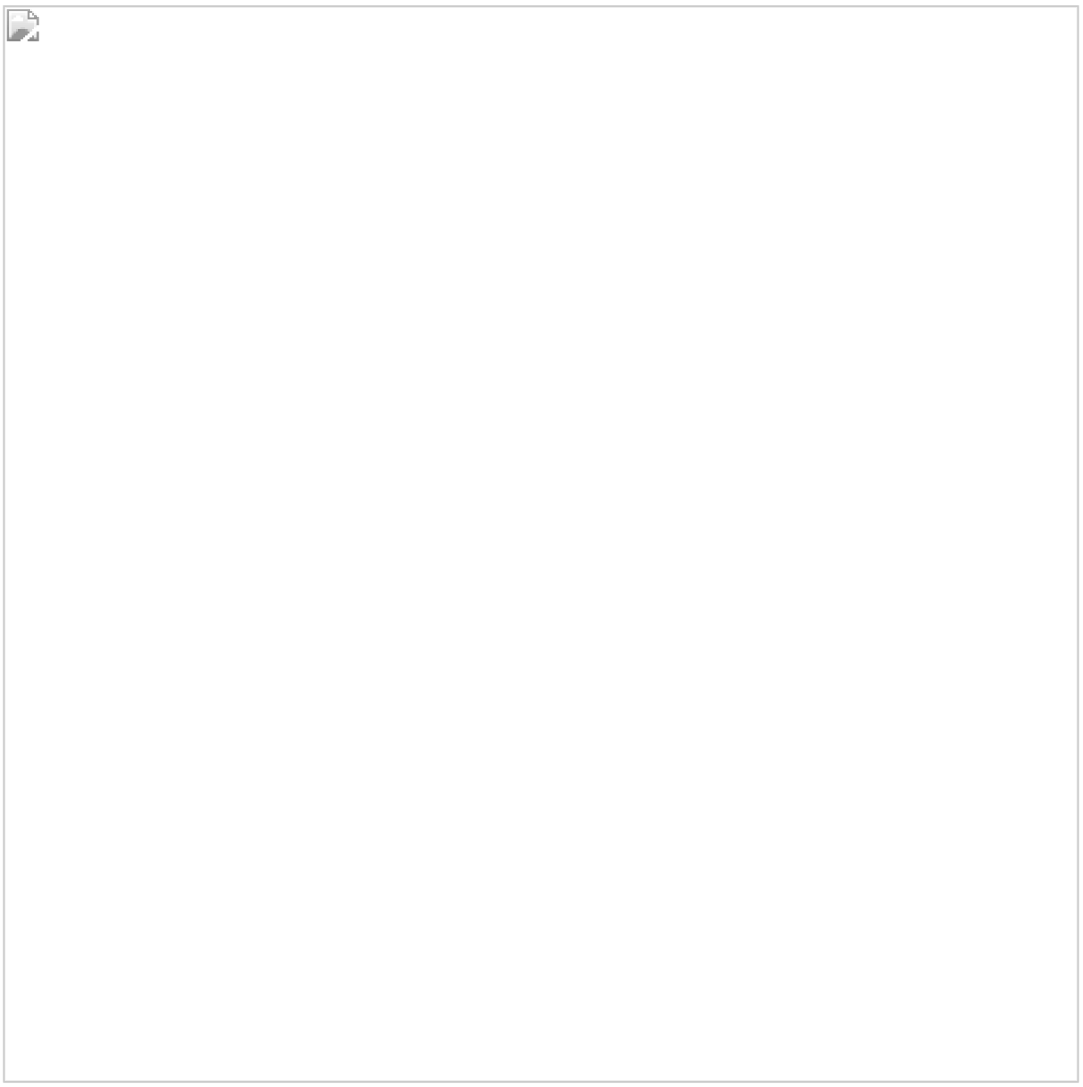
Bobbie carried a parcel for Perks, wrapped in newspaper. While she waited at the level-crossing, she read the paper. Her Father's name was in it. "So now I know," she said. "You never did it! Never, never, never!"

After tea she took Mother upstairs, locked the door, and showed her the paper. Bobbie could find no words, only "Oh, Daddy, oh, Daddy, oh, Daddy!"

"It's not true," said Mother. "And they've shut him up in prison, but he's done nothing wrong." They must wait, and be proud of him. "We two must help each other to be brave." Bobbie wrote to the old gentleman: "Oh, do, do, DO help me."

TALK ABOUT IT

Bobbie believed in her Father when everyone else did not. Who believes in you?



Think about it

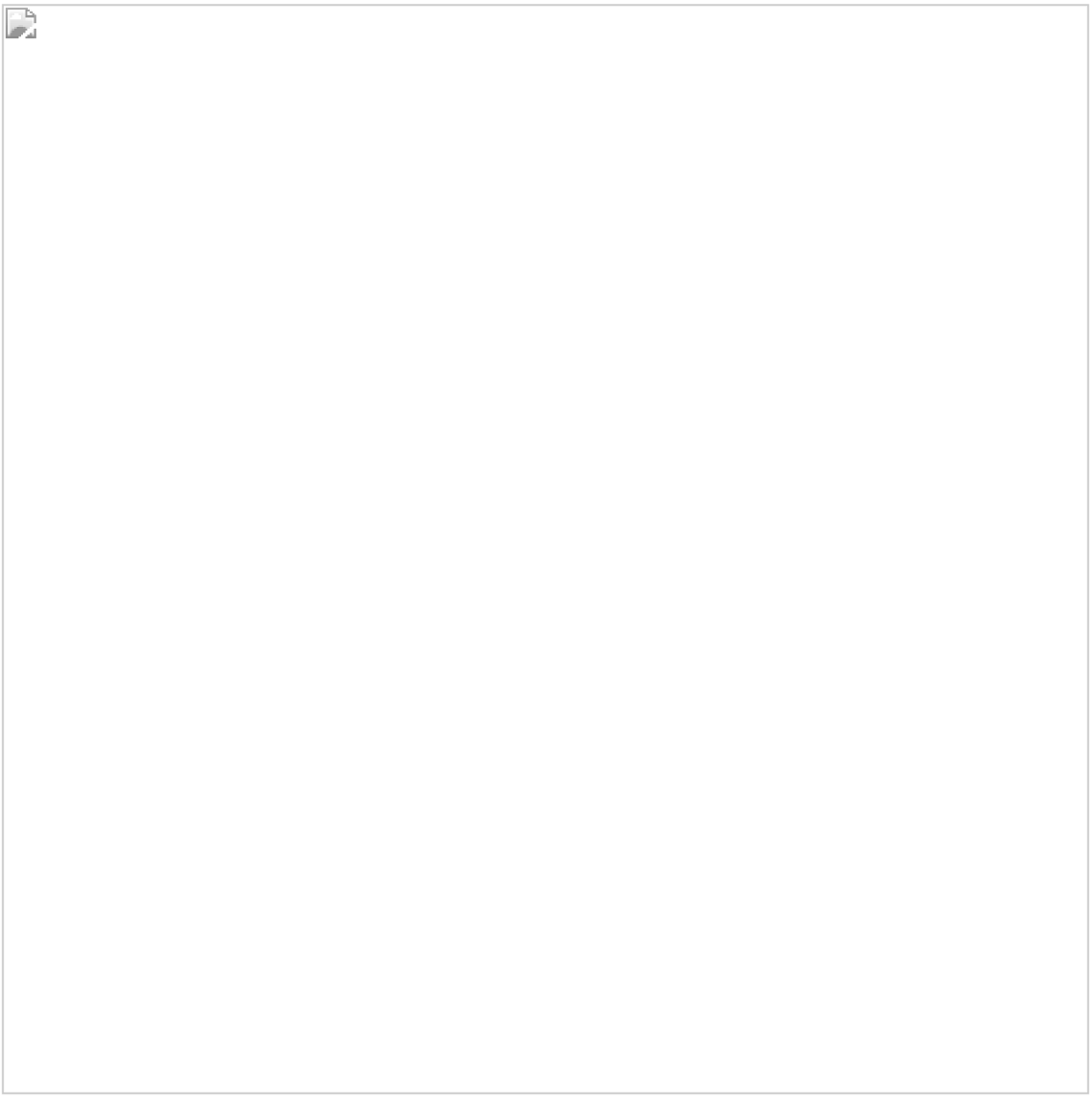
1. How did Bobbie find out where Father was?

- ○ She read it in a newspaper
- ○ A stranger told her
- ○ She saw him at the station

2. Who did Bobbie write to for help?

- ○ The old gentleman
- ○ The Doctor
- ○ The Porter

The Boy in the Red Jersey



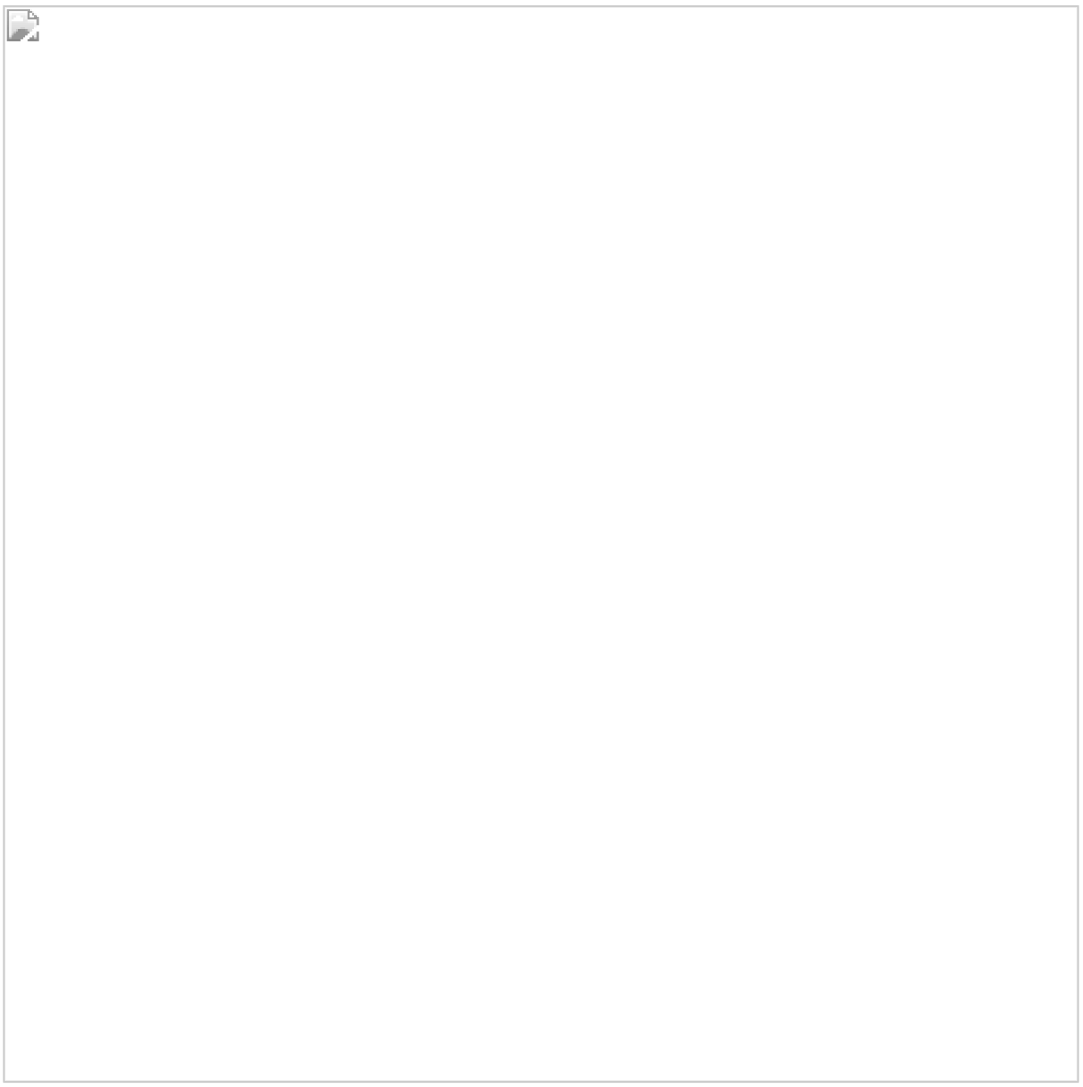
One day in a paper-chase, a hare ran through the tunnel scattering paper, with the hounds after him. All came out but the last, a boy in a red jersey.

“Let’s get down to the tunnel mouth,” said Peter. Inside, a train came roaring. “Quick! Manhole!” shouted Peter, and they stood in the dark recess while it rushed by.

They found the boy by the wall with his eyes shut. “Oh, look up, speak to me! For my sake, speak!” they said. “Fear not, you are in the hands of friends,” said Peter. The boy opened his eyes. “Bother! I believe I’ve broken my leg.”

TALK ABOUT IT

The children went into a dark tunnel to look for a boy they didn’t know. What do you think made them go?



Think about it

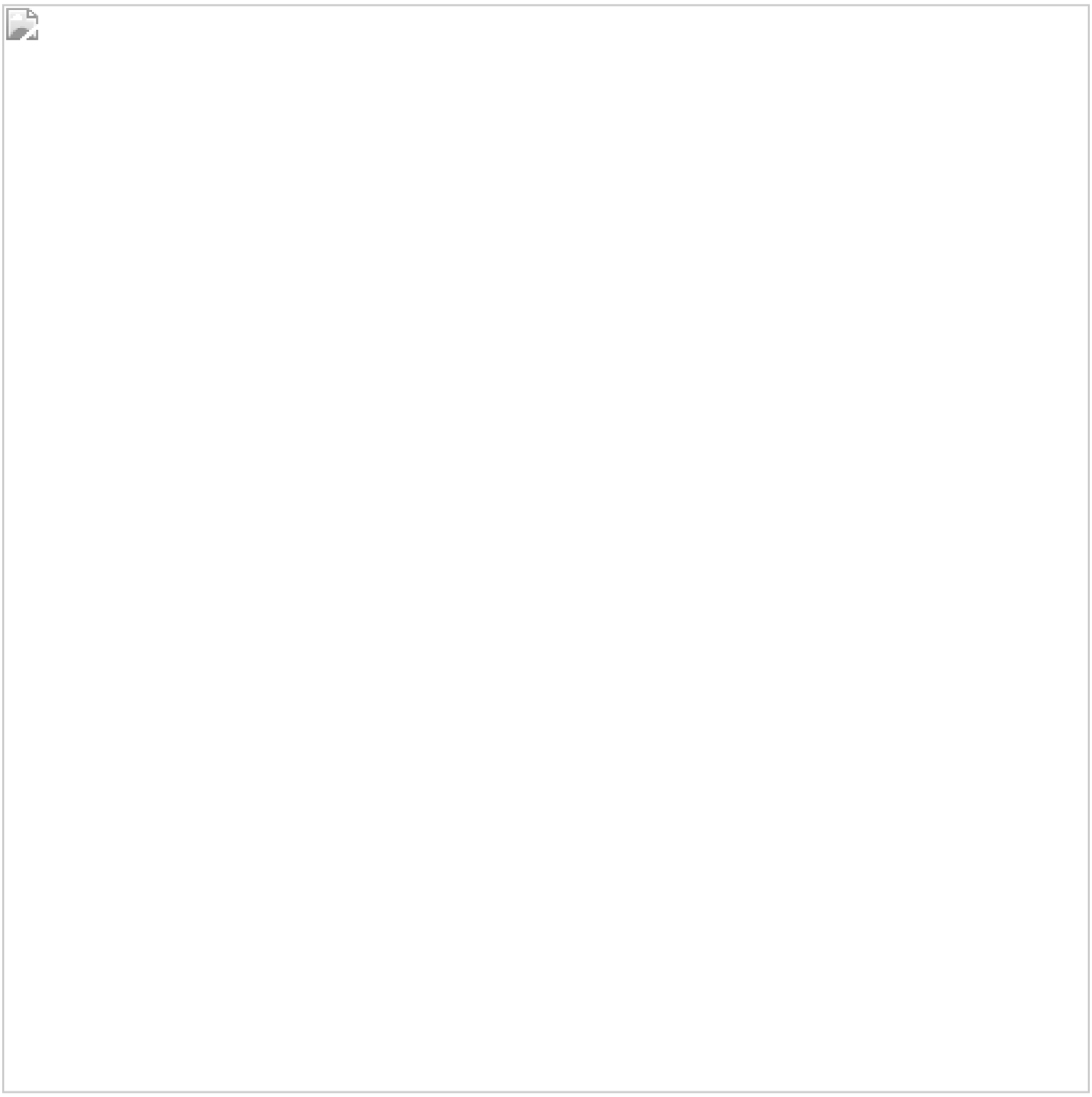
1. What did the lost hound wear?

- ○ A red jersey
- ○ A blue hat
- ○ A green scarf

2. Where did the children hide when the train came?

- ○ In a manhole
- ○ Up a tree
- ○ Behind a signpost

Jim's Grandfather



The boy's name was Jim. Peter and Phyllis went for help, and Bobbie stayed in the dark with him and put her flannel petticoat under his leg. "Let's hold hands," said Jim, and they held hands until the farm men came to carry him.

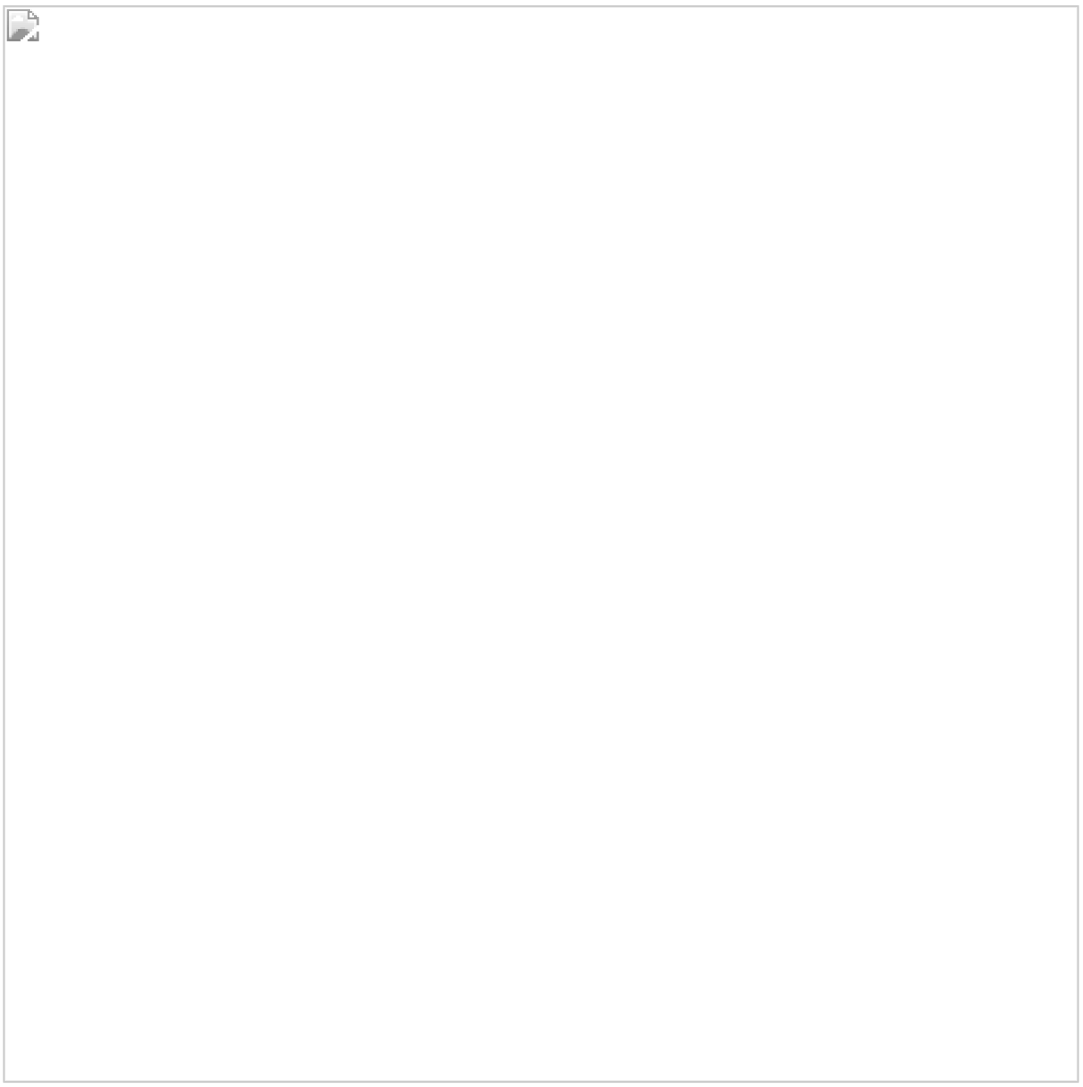
Bobbie brought him home. Mother said, "I am glad you brought him here." Jim's grandfather came to see him, and the children cried out, "It's our own old gentleman!"

At the gate he spoke quietly to Bobbie. "I got your letter," he said. "I have hopes." Bobbie asked, "And you don't think Father did it, do you?" He said, "I'm perfectly CERTAIN he didn't."

TALK ABOUT IT

Bobbie stayed with Jim while the others got help. When have you stayed with someone who needed you?

Jim's Grandfather · another picture



Think about it

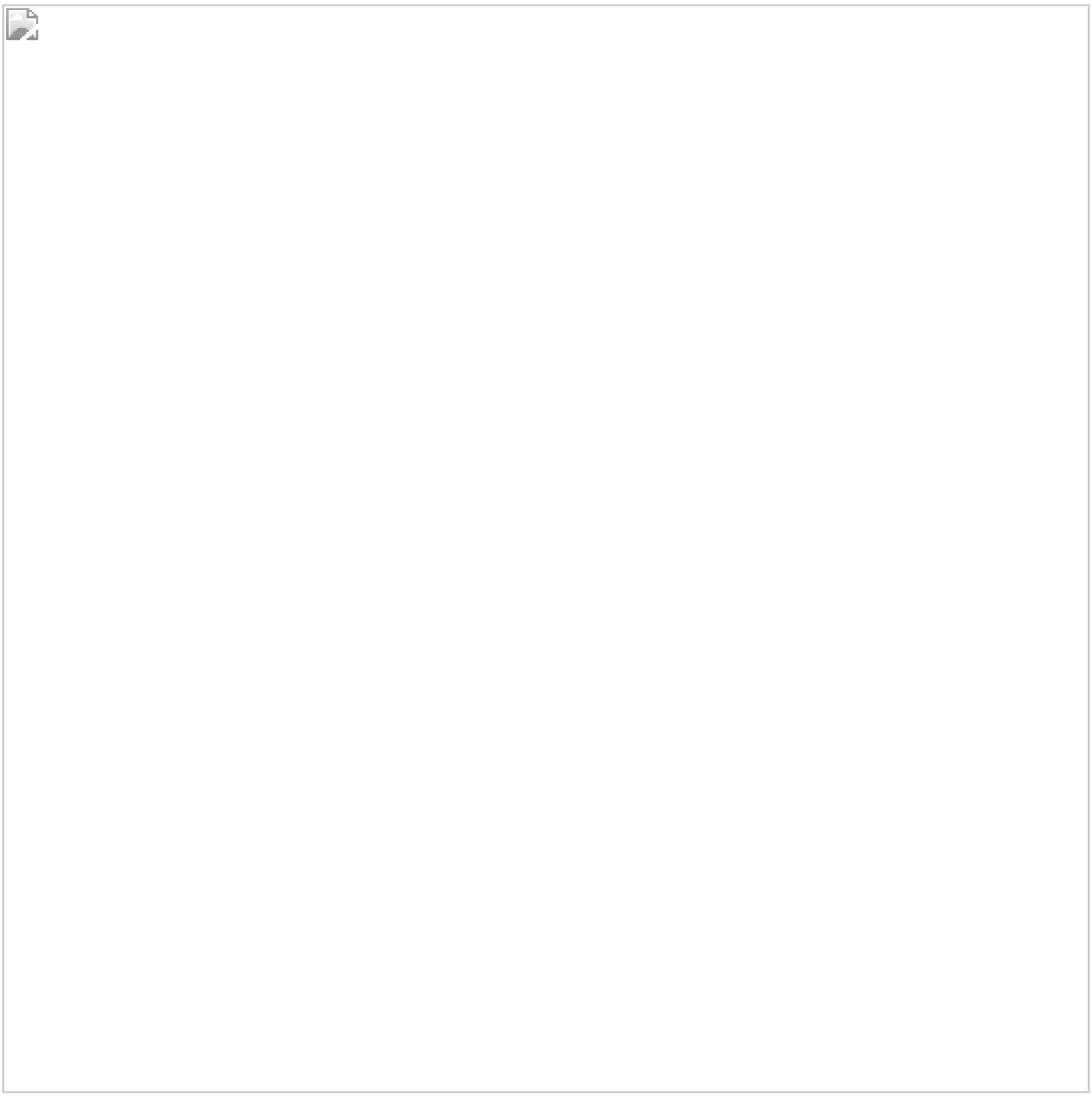
1. Who stayed with Jim in the dark tunnel?

- ○ Bobbie
- ○ Peter
- ○ Phyllis

2. Who was Jim's grandfather?

- ○ The old gentleman from the train
- ○ The Station Master
- ○ The Doctor

My Daddy



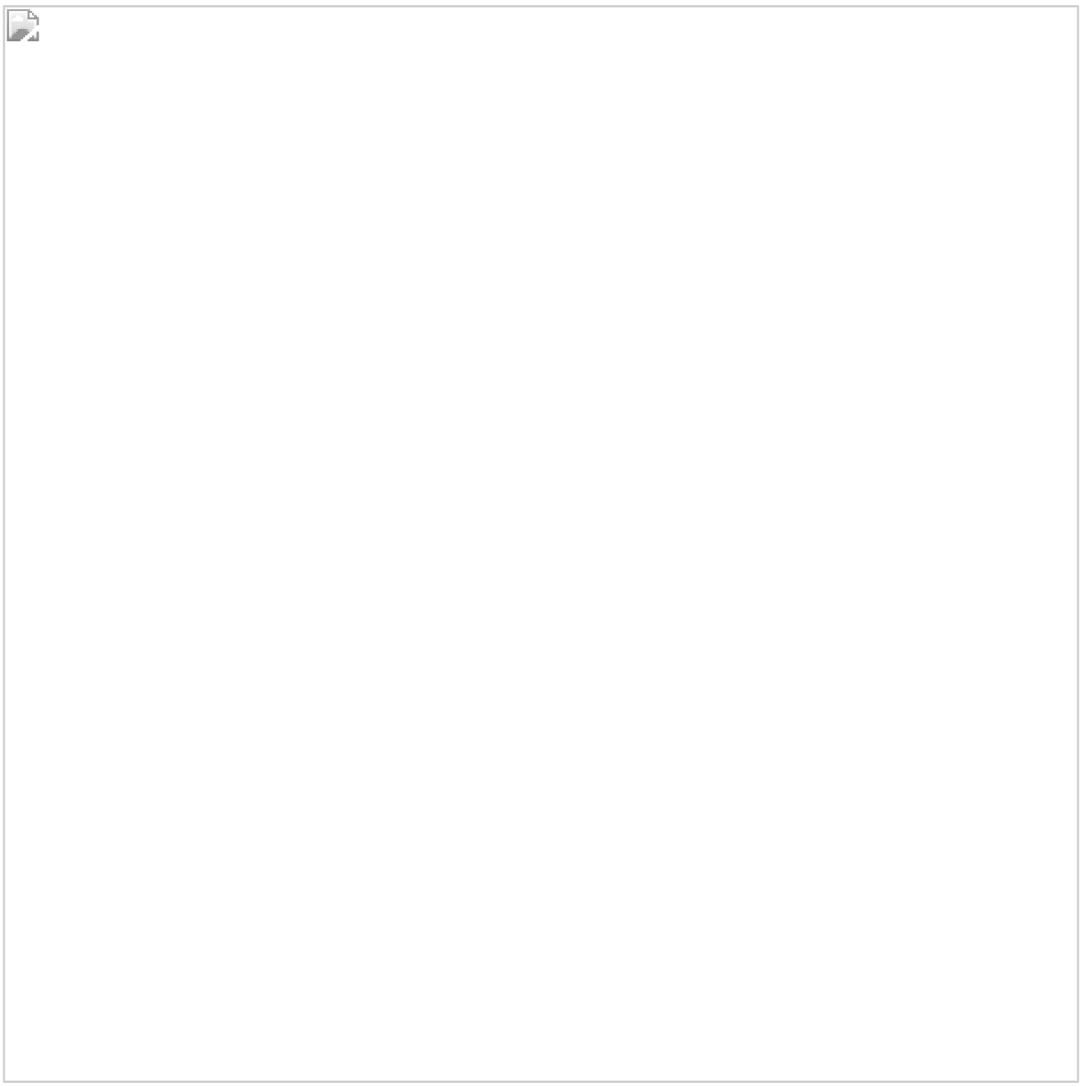
One day everything felt as if it were waiting for something to happen. At the station, everyone was strangely kind to Bobbie. “something IS going to happen! I know it is,” she said. Perks said, “God bless you, my dear!”

The 11.54 came in. Out stepped a tall pale man. “Oh! my Daddy, my Daddy!” Bobbie clung to him with her arms and legs.

“They’ve caught the man who did it,” said Father. “Everyone knows now that it wasn’t your Daddy.” Bobbie ran ahead to tell Mother. “Come in, Daddy; come in!” she called, and the door was shut. “I think that just now we are not wanted there.”

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you notice about how the whole village felt that morning? Who do you picture Bobbie running to first?



Think about it

1. Which train was Father on?

- ○ The 11.54
- ○ The Green Dragon
- ○ The midnight express

2. What did Father say about the man who did it?

- ○ They've caught him
- ○ He ran away
- ○ Nobody knows

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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