

ing him back by the tail of his little tunic, as she hastily proceeded to place a couple of children, one at either side of the tub, with directions to duck in turns, and try to bring out an apple in their teeth! It was by no means so easy a task as would at first appear, but after prolonged diving and spluttering both Teddy and Sybil reappeared one after another, each tightly grasping a prize between their sharp little teeth! They were cheered to the echo by the other children, who hastened in turns to take their places, whilst Daisy and Helen promptly grasped each successful competitor, to give him or her head a good rub with the hot towels, to prevent their taking colds!

"Now lift the tub, please, boys, on to this small table; we're going to race boats across it," directed Daisy, producing a couple of tiny paper fans and two delightful little walnut shell boats, each of which bore a wee paper sail. The children, two by two, proceeded to fan and blow their boats across the water into port, each winner being presented with a chestnut, which he or she was warned to keep ready for the next competition!

The tub seen in the illustration was quickly voted too small, and, struck by a bright idea, Daisy sent for a big, shallow hip-bath, which, filled with a couple of inches of water, made a splendid sailing reach! whilst the spout by which it was emptied provided a delightful harbor winning post for "Home."

"Now everyone must go outside the door until I call them in again," announced Daisy, proceeding, directly the door had shut upon the noisy, chattering throng, to produce and hide a ring, a thimble, and a penny—the ring and the thimble, being silver, were specially provided, so that they could be kept by their finders.

"Come in!" she cried two minutes later. "Now, hunt well, for you will find three emblems foretelling your future, destinies hidden about the room—a ring, a thimble, and a penny! The ring means marriage, the thimble an 'old maid' or 'old bachelor,' and the penny future wealth!" she explained, as the children promptly went down on all fours and proceeded to hunt merrily amongst the chairs, table legs, under the edges of the hearthrug, and along the skirtings of the walls.

"Hurrah! I've found the penny," cried Bobby, jumping up and producing it from underneath the fender.

"And I've got the thimble!" announced Sybil.

"I saw it before you did, but I thought I'd rather have the ring! So I just let it stay there, and went on hunting, and now I've just found the ring hanging round the waist of this china ornament!" said Nancy slyly, proceeding to put it on the third finger of her left hand.

"Now, who is fond of travel?" asked Daisy.

"I am!" cried the children in chorus.

"Sit on the floor, then, in a row, take off your right shoes, and hold them in your hands ready to do what I tell you. Are you ready? Then throw them gently over your left shoulders, and see which way the toes point!"

Five little shoes pointed towards their wearers' backs, but the sixth pointed away from its owner, little Sybil, and as Sybil's parents had promised to take their little daughter to the South of France with them for Christmas, it seemed likely that the prophecy would be fulfilled.

"Now, Nancy, take this apple, and peel it very carefully, so that you don't break the skin!" said Daisy, handing her a big red one, and a silver fruit knife—to avoid possible accidents! Nancy proceeded to peel it, and this done, she was next directed to swing it gently three times round her head and drop it over her left shoulder, to see what initial it would form, the initial being that of the individual she would some day marry!

Nancy, much delighted, did just as she was bidden, and the apple peel formed a beautiful capital letter of very elaborate shape, which Jerry declared after careful examination to be a "J" or a "Y."

"I expect that means you will very likely be an old maid!" he explained gleefully, to her great indignation!

When everyone's initials had been tried—including Helen's and Daisy's, to the delight of the children, they all gathered round the table to try their fortunes with candle ends.

Three played at a time, and the three candle ends—which were of exactly equal length—were lighted simultaneously, and watched eagerly by their respective owners, who were each bidden to wish as they lighted them. The owner of the candle which burned longest would be the first to have his or her wish come true!

Meanwhile the fire had subsided into a steady orange and crimson glow, the very moment, so it seemed, for roasting chestnuts.

"Help yourselves to three each, children, and then we'll play a game with them," directed Daisy as the plate was passed along, and she proceeded to place them in sets of three all along the hot bars to await further developments.

"Now you must each name your three chestnuts. The owner of each set of chestnuts is always the middle of the three, and the ones on either side of you must be called after two of your friends. Watch how they burn, and you will know how much they love you! If they glow gently, it is a steady friendship; if you blaze up together it is a very violent affection between you; and if either of them hop away, it is a sign that your friendship will before long be broken!"

This delighted the children, who, amidst much whispering, named all their nuts, and then, as they grew hotter and began to hop or burn, the excitement grew higher and higher, until the flames died out again, and the nuts which had survived the ordeal and become more or less cooked in the process were unromantically eaten.

Daisy and Helen next produced eight pencils and slips of paper, upon which each child was directed to write a wish.

"Now put each paper into the fire, and if it goes up the chimney you will get your wish, but if it gets burnt you won't!"

Helen's, Nancy's, Sybil's, and Bobby's papers flew up the chimney without being even scorched, but Daisy's, Jerry's, and Jim's were gobbled up by a little flame, much to their disappointment.

"What are these turnips and carrots and things floating in this tub for, Daisy?" asked Helen.

"That's another way of foretelling the future, and it's rather fun!" laughed Daisy. "Do you know these new little rhymes? 'Subaltern, Athlete, Bookman, Bore,' and 'Suffragette, Actress, Clar-woman, Flirt,' for the girls and boys respectively, invented by a girl I know to use for the cherry stones instead of the old 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor.'"

"Oh, no! What fun! Do let me try my fortune," exclaimed Helen, and, according to instructions, she proceeded to perch herself upon the seat of the kitchen chair, grasping the fork, prongs downward, in her right hand, whilst steadying herself by holding on to the back of the chair with her left. Daisy, having rolled up her sleeve and given the water and bobbing fruit and vegetables a good swish round, explained that they came Apple, Turnip, Potato, Carrot in the list. She then stood back again whilst Helen tried to drop her fork into the apple.

She had no luck, however, for after three unsuccessful throws she finally pronged the carrot, and went off to groan amidst loud-voiced condolences and threats of being dropped for ever should she dare to carry out her predestined fate and marry a "Bore!"

Jerry, much to his vexation, got a "Suffragette," to the delight of the children, who teased him unmercifully about it, whilst naughty Sybil pinned a paper saying "Votes for Women" on his back under the pretext of wiping off a splash of water, which he wore for hours before he found out what they were all laughing about!

Nancy got an "Athlete," however, to her complete content, whilst poor Bobby had to put up with the "Char"—a great joke because of her pronounced fondness for him whenever she came in for a day's scrubbing.

"Now for the test of the Three Magic Plates!" cried Daisy, pouncing upon Beryl and blindfolding her ready to begin.



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