

CHAPTER 1

A Family Discussion

Let me start our story by telling you about my family. We're the Bastable children and there are six of us. Dora is 14. I'm Oswald and I'm 12, and Dicky is 11. Alice and Noel, the twins, are 10. Finally*, there's little Horace Octavius, but we call him H.O. He's nearly 8.



Many years ago, we were a happy family and we had a big, beautiful house. But now our mother is dead and life is very different for us. Our father is sad and alone, and his business isn't making any money. Our house is old and needs fixing. We need to paint the walls and the carpets* are very dirty. But we don't have any money to repair* the house.

Father can't pay for our school, so we all stay home. We have no money for servants*. Only Eliza, our cook, lives with us.

One day, my brothers, sisters and I have a talk.

finally לבסוף / أخيراً
carpets שטיחים / سجائيد
repair לשפץ / نرمم
servants משרתים / خدام

"We need money," says Dora. "What can we do?"

"We can work to get some money," says Alice.

"No, we're very young," answers Noel. "Let's read books to get some ideas." Noel loves reading books. He's the family poet*.

"Let's be bandits* and take people's money," H.O. says, and we all laugh.



"That's a stupid idea, Noel," says Dora. "We need a 'magic rod*'. You move it over the ground and it helps you find gold."

"All these ideas are stupid," I say. "Let's dig for treasure*. A lot of people find treasure and become rich! We can do it, too."

Dora doesn't believe we can find treasure, but the others think it's a great idea. Why didn't Daddy think of this?

poet משורר / شاعر
bandits لصووص / سודדים
coins מטבעות / نقود معدنية
magic rod عصا الساحر
treasure אוצר / كنز