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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Strawberry Shortcake

Once upon a time there was a strawberry shortcake, all juicy and sweet and pleasant to eat.

A little boy named Ben picked the berries for it. He went out to the field where the wild strawberries grew, all by himself; and when he came home he had a bucket full of the very ripest and reddest ones.

A little girl, Cousin Pen, who was visiting on the farm, capped the berries, and that was not nearly so easy to do as it sounds. It took Cousin Pen every bit of a half-hour to do it, and—do you believe it?—she did not eat a single berry. She saved every one of them for the strawberry shortcake.

Mamma made the shortcake. She was the best cook! If I should try to tell you all the good things she could make, it would take me longer than it took Cousin Pen to cap the berries; but I will tell you this, if there was one thing

she liked to make better than another it was a strawberry shortcake.



A big boy Fred, almost nine years old, cut the wood, and split the kindling, and made the fire that baked the

pastry for the strawberry shortcake. He had a little axe of his own, and the way he could make chips fly was simply astonishing. Mamma said if he kept on as he had begun he would be as much help as his father when he grew up.

Father was away at work when the shortcake was made, and when he came home to dinner nobody said a word about it. They did not even tell him there was a dessert. They just sat down and ate their dinner as if there were not a strawberry shortcake in the world, much less one in their own kitchen. It was the funniest thing! Father did not know anything about it; but by and by he said:— "Wild strawberries are ripe. Who wants to go and get some for a shortcake?"

And then how the children did laugh! They laughed and laughed until Mamma knew they could not keep the secret another minute.

"Shut your eyes and don't open them until we call 'ready,'" she said, and she slipped out into the kitchen and got the strawberry shortcake, and put it on the table right in front of him.

"Ready," called Cousin Pen and Fred and little Ben.

"Ready."

And if you could have seen how surprised Father was when he opened his eyes and spied that strawberry shortcake, you would have laughed as much as they did.