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The Ball That Went To A Party

Maud Lindsay

One day, Maisie went to a party to join in the fun. Her Aunt Leslie hosted the party, and she invited as many as a dozen children. As soon as everyone had arrived, Aunt Leslie brought out a rubber ball and asked:

“Put on your thinking-caps one and all, What can you do with a rubber ball?”

“I can throw it as high as the ceiling and catch it when it comes down,” said one of the boys.

“I can bounce it and catch it,” said Maisie.

“I can keep it bouncing till I have counted a hundred,” said another little girl.

“I can roll it,” said the tiniest child there.

When the children had thought of everything they could think of and had tried everything they thought of, Aunt Leslie taught them a game.

There was a funny rhyme to say with it:

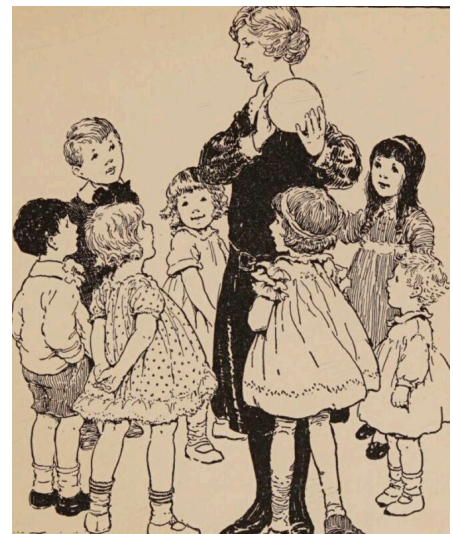
“Flibberty-Gibberty comes to my house, I send him to you. I send him to you. Flibberty-Gibberty comes to my house, I send him to your house, too.”

While they said the rhyme, they had to keep the ball bouncing from one child to another as fast as it could go. It was great fun.

Then Aunt Leslie said that the children must be trees in a forest, and the ball a bird that flew from tree to tree. She let each of them choose what kind of tree he would be, and there were oak-trees, birch-trees, elms, maples, and one cedar.

Nobody knew where the bird would fly, but they all sang a song which said:

“The prettiest tree that ever was seen, The prettiest tree that ever was seen, The prettiest tree of emerald green, Birdie fly to me, oh!”



If the ball fell to the floor and bounced, they said the bird was hopping, and the

nearest tree claimed it. It hardly ever hopped, though, but went flying to this tree and that tree as light as a feather. Then all the children stood in a ring and threw the ball from one to another. If anyone missed it, he had to leave the ring and sit down. And the one who stayed up the longest would win the game.

Nobody spoke a word for fear of missing, and not a child had to sit down the first time the ball went round the ring.

Then a little girl missed, and a little boy, and another girl.

At last, there were only two children left in the game, Maisie, and a little boy named Tom. They were just the same size and just the same age.

Back and forth, back and forth, the ball went between them till Aunt Leslie said she believed that both would win the game.

But that was before the scissors grinder rang his bell in the street. Ting-ting, it sounded, and Maisie turned to look out of the window. She turned back almost as quick as a cat can wink its eye, or at least she thought she did; but she missed the ball. It went by her and landed right among the children who were watching.

Then what clapping there was for Tom. Maisie clapped first of all, the other children clapped, Aunt Leslie clapped, and Tom clapped, too; he was so pleased to have won the game.

The party supper came next, and after that, all the children went home. But the ball stayed at Aunt Leslie's, ready to help in the fun when she had another party.

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