

*The Story of
the Treasure Seekers*

E. NESBIT

Level 2

Retold by Robin Waterfield
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Introduction

'Let's be quiet for ten minutes. How can we find treasure? We must each think about that. Then we'll try all our ideas one after the other.'

The Bastable family had money before but now they are poor, so they start to look for treasure. Each of the six brothers and sisters has a different idea, so they try out their ideas one at a time. When they are looking for treasure, they meet many interesting people and a lot of exciting things happen. But will they find any treasure? Will the family be rich again one day? Who is the man from India and can he help?

Edith Nesbit was born in London in 1858. Her father died when she was young and her family was quite poor. She too was one of six children: she had three sisters and two brothers. They lived in the country. Later, when she was a writer, Edith remembered the exciting games they played together.

Edith got married when she was twenty to a man called Hubert Bland. They were quite poor and Edith worked very hard, writing stories and poems for newspapers and magazines. She only began to write children's stories when she was forty. *The Story of the Treasure Seekers* (1899) was the first one: readers liked it very much. She wrote more books about the Bastable children, and became quite famous. She remembered the things that she did as a child with her brothers and sisters and wrote in a way that was easy for young people to understand. Her most famous book is *The Railway Children* (1906), which is also a Penguin Reader.

Chapter 1 How Do We Get Rich?

One day we started to try to look for treasure. You will see that we tried very hard to find it.

There are six children in our family, and then there is Father. Our mother is dead. I will not talk about her. We all loved her, so it is difficult to talk about her. We live in Lewisham Road in London. We are the Bastables.

Dora is the oldest, then there is Oswald – that's me. Then Dicky is next, then Alice and Noel, who were born at the same time. After them comes Horace Octavius, who is my youngest brother. Everybody calls him H.O.

We have a problem. Father lost all his money. His business went wrong. We weren't always poor, but now we are poor. Now we do not have nice things, and Father does not give us money, and all the chairs and plates and things in the house are old. And we do not go to school now.

'Father never tells us that we are poor,' Dora said one day. 'But we all know.'

'We must do something,' said Alice.

'Yes – but what can we do?' asked Dicky.

'Let's read all our books again,' said Noel. 'We'll get a lot of ideas out of them.' Noel wrote poems, and always read books.

Then Dicky said, 'Let's be quiet for ten minutes. How can we find treasure? We must each think about that. Then we'll try all our ideas, one after the other.'

After ten minutes, we all started to talk at the same time, but Dora told us to be quiet.

I spoke first. 'We must save someone from danger. He'll give us a lot of money, because he'll be very happy with us.'

'But there's no danger near here,' said Dora. 'What do you think, Alice?'



There are six children in our family.

'Noel must find a princess and marry her,' said Alice.

'I don't want to marry a princess,' said Noel. 'I want to put my poems in a book. People will buy the book, and then we'll be rich.'

'That's a bad idea,' said Dicky. 'Who's going to buy *your* poems? We must start a business, I think. We start with a little money. We buy some things and sell them for more money. It's easy. We'll soon be rich.'

'But we have no money to buy the things,' Noel said.

H.O. said, 'Let's be robbers and take money from people.'

'That's a bad thing to do,' said Dora, 'but in books people always find money in the ground. Some people hide their money in the ground, and other people find it. So we must dig for money. Let's do it now, because I'm the oldest.'

Chapter 2 Albert in Trouble

We started to dig in the garden. It was hard work, because the ground was very hard. We dug and dug and dug, but we found nothing.

Soon Albert came from the next house. We like his uncle who lives there, but we do not like Albert very much. But his father is dead, so we are sorry for him, and we try to be friendly. Albert's uncle writes books, and when he talks children can understand him.

'What are you doing?' Albert asked.

'We're digging for treasure,' said Alice. 'You can help us.'

Albert laughed and said, 'You won't find any treasure in your garden.'

Albert is not very good at games. He does not read many books, so he does not have many ideas.

But I said, 'Come and dig. You can have some of the treasure when we find it.'

'I don't want to dig,' said Albert. 'I want to go and have my tea.'