

## The magic finger

The farm next to ours is owned by Mr and Mrs Gregg. The Greggs have two children, both of them boys. Their names are Philip and William. Sometimes I go over to their farm to play with them.

I am a girl and I am eight years old.

Philip is also eight years old.

William is three years older. He is ten.

What?

Oh, all right, then.

He is eleven.

Last week, something very funny happened to the Gregg family. I am going to tell you about it as best I can.

Now the one thing that Mr Gregg and his two boys loved to do more than anything else was to go hunting. Every Saturday morning they would take their guns and go off into the woods to look for animals and birds to shoot. Even Philip, who was only eight years old, had a gun of his own.

I can't stand hunting. I just can't *stand* it. It doesn't seem right to me that men and boys should kill animals just for the fun they get out of it. So I used to try to stop Philip and William from doing it. Every time I went over to their farm I would do my best to talk them out of it, but they only laughed at me.

I even said something about it once to Mr Gregg, but he just walked on past me as if I weren't there.

Then, one Saturday morning, I saw Philip and William coming out of the woods with their father and they were carrying a lovely young deer.

This made me so cross that I started shouting at them.

The boys laughed and made faces at me, and Mr Gregg told me to go home and mind my own P's and Q's.

Well, that did it!

I saw red.

And before I was able to stop myself, I did something I never meant to do.

I PUT THE MAGIC FINGER  
ON THEM ALL!



Answer in sentences.

- 1 Which of Mr Gregg's sons was the same age as the girl who is telling the story?
- 2 What job did Mr Gregg do?
- 3 How do you know that the girl and the two boys were friends?
- 4 What did Mr Gregg and his sons love doing every Saturday morning?
- 5 The girl didn't like what Mr Gregg and his sons did so she tried to "talk them out of it". What does "talk them out of it" mean?
- 6 How did the girl feel when she saw they had killed a young deer?
- 7 How do we know that the boys weren't at all sorry for what they had done?
- 8 What strange thing did the girl say she did to the Greggs before she could stop herself?
- 9 This passage comes from the opening of a book. Do you think it would make people want to read the rest of the book to find out what happens next? Why?