



WORK IN A GROUP

Talk about all of the ways that you depend upon your senses in a single day. Ask questions about what your classmates say. Talk about the answers.



Focusing on "The Tournament"

Think and Read

- ▶ Talk about events in the past that caused changes in the future. Ask your classmates about past events that gave shape to our present lives.
- ▶ Look at the title and the picture on pages 44–45. Think about how past events can cause changes in the present. Then read the introduction to the story.
 - What comes to mind when you look at the picture and read the title?
 - What seems out of place in the picture?
 - What might the selection be about? Why do you think so?
- ▶ Get ready to read a story about traveling into the past. Think about how time travelers might change history. Think about what you would add to this chart.

"The Tournament"	
Characters	Settings
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now turn the page and read "The Tournament." Then you will talk about causing changes in history.

The Tournament

From the novel *Half Magic* by Edward Eager
Illustrated by Jerry Smath

The old coin that Jane found looked almost like a nickel, but it bore strange signs and worked a strange magic—it granted half the wishes its owners made. Soon Jane, her brother Mark, and her sisters Katharine and Martha were all wishing on the magic charm.

Katharine remembered to double her wishes when her turn came. "I wish," she said, "that we may go back twice as far as to the days of King Arthur, and see two tournaments, and go on two quests, and do two good deeds." With the charm's "half magic," the four children found themselves in the England of King Arthur's time. The quest that followed led them to Sir Launcelot, the greatest knight of the Round Table, who was locked in a dungeon by his enemy, Morgan le Fay. With the charm's help, Katharine rescued Sir Launcelot. But was he grateful? Not a bit. He preferred to escape without the help of magic. So an angry Katharine undid her good deed and wished herself and the others to a tournament at Camelot. When they arrive, Katharine still has half of two good deeds to do.





"I can't get used to this being rushed around," complained Martha, as she found herself somewhere else for the third time in three minutes. "Where are we now, and when is it?"

"Camelot, I should think," said Katharine, "in tournament time! Look!"

Jane and Mark and Martha looked. Camelot and the field of tournament looked exactly as you would expect them to look, from the descriptions in *The Boy's King Arthur* and the wonderful books of Mr. T. H. White. Trumpets were blowing clarion calls, and pennons fluttered on the blue air, and armor flashed in the bright light. Gallant knights and trusty squires and faithful pages and ladies fair were crowding into the stands in hundreds to watch the chivalrous sport.

The four children had front-row grandstand seats, for Katharine had made that a part of her wish. They looked around them, taking in the sights.

King Arthur sat enthroned on a high platform at one end of the field. The children could see him clearly, with his kind, simple, understanding face like the warm sun come to shine on merry England. Queen Guinevere was seated at his right, and Merlin, the magician, thin and wise and gray-bearded, at his left.

And now the trumpets blew an extra long fanfare, and the tournament began.

Sir Launcelot was among the first to ride out on the field. The children recognized him by his armor.

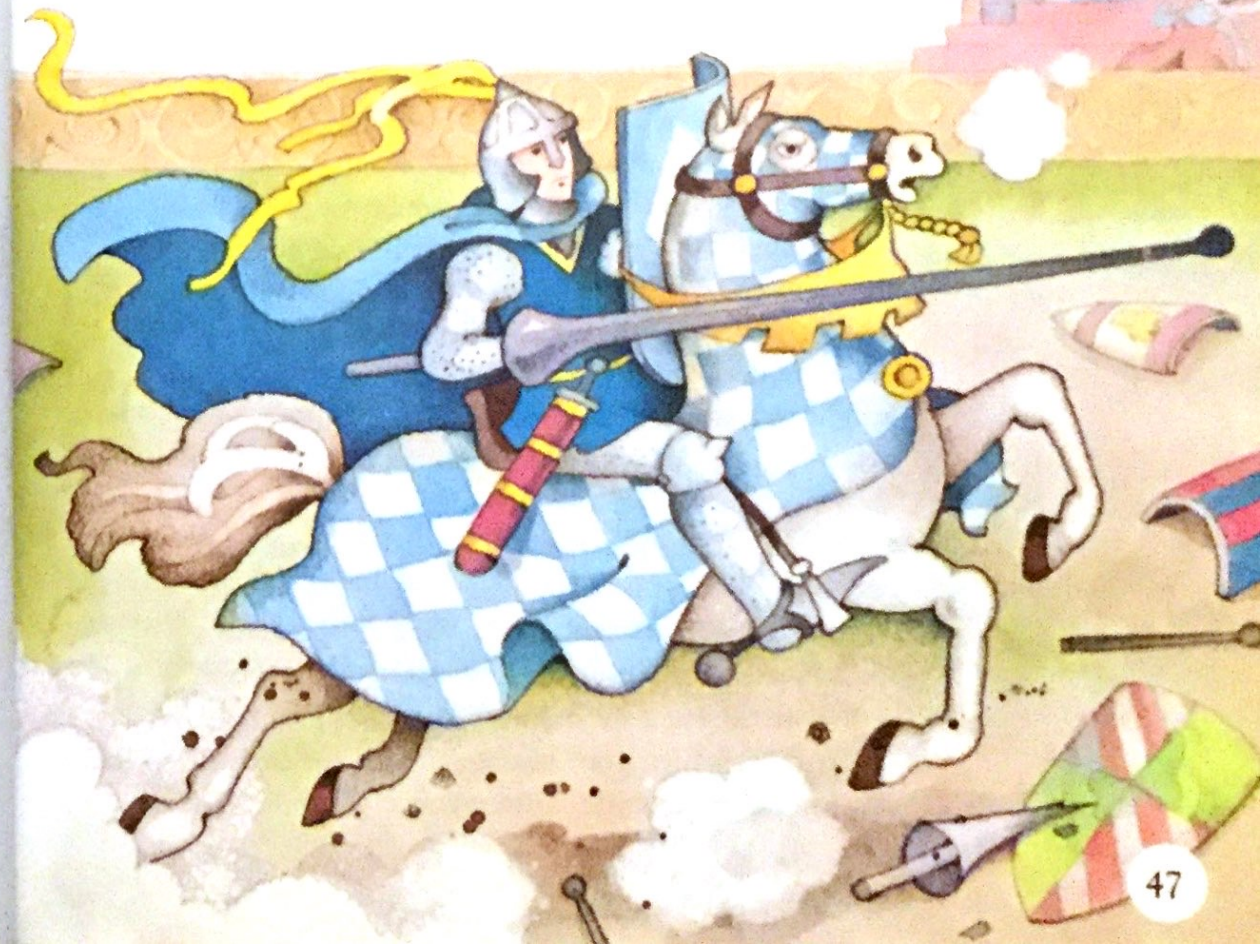
"I told you he'd come out all right," said Katharine, a bit bitterly.

But when Sir Launcelot got going in that tournament, even Katharine had to admire him.

He smote down five knights with his first spear, and four knights with his second spear, and unhorsed three more with his sword, until all the people sitting round on the benches began crying out, "Oh, Gramercy, what marvelous deeds that knight doth do in that field!"

Jane sighed a satisfied sigh. "Kind of glorious, isn't it?" she murmured.

"It's the most wonderful age in human history," said Mark solemnly. "If only it didn't have to end!"



"Why did it?" asked Martha, who hadn't read *The Boy's King Arthur* yet.

"Partly 'cause some of the other knights got tired of being knocked down all the time and having Launcelot always win," Mark told her.

"Yes," said Katharine, in rather a peculiar voice, "it would really be a good deed, in a way, if somebody knocked *him* down for a change, wouldn't it?"

Mark gave her a sharp look, but just then Sir Launcelot started knocking down more knights, and he had to watch the field. When he looked again, Katharine wasn't there.

Mark nudged Jane hard, as a horrible thought came into his mind.

Jane turned and saw the empty spot where Katharine had been, and Mark could tell that she was having the same thought, too.

Just then there was an interruption in the tournament. A strange knight rode out on the field of combat and straight up to King Arthur's platform.

"I crave your Majesty's permission to challenge Sir Launcelot to single combat!" cried the strange knight in a voice loud enough for the children to hear clearly from where they sat.

The hearts of Jane and Mark sank.

Even Martha now guessed the horrid truth. "How dare she?" she whispered.

"I don't know," said Mark. "She's been getting too full of herself ever since we started this wish!"

"Wait till I get her home!" said Jane grimly.

"How call they you, strange sir?" King Arthur was saying, meanwhile, "and whence do you hail?"

"They call me Sir Kath," said the strange knight, "and I hail from Toledo, Ohio."

"I know not this Toledo," said King Arthur, "but fight if you will. Let the combat begin."

The trumpets sounded another clarion call, the strange knight faced Sir Launcelot, and there began the strangest combat, it is safe to say, ever witnessed by the knights of the Round, or any other, Table.

The intrepid Katharine thought herself very clever at this moment. She had wished she were wearing two suits of armor and riding two horses, and she had wished she were two and a half times as tall and strong as Sir Launcelot, and she had wished that she would defeat him twice. And immediately here she was, wearing one suit of armor and riding one horse, and she was one and a quarter times as tall and strong, and she couldn't wait to defeat him once.


But in her cleverness she had forgotten one thing. She had forgotten to wish that she knew the rules of jousting. And here she was, facing the greatest knight in the world, and she didn't know how to start. She knew she'd win in the end, because she'd wished it that way, but what was she to do in the beginning and middle?

Before she could work out another wish to take care of this, Sir Launcelot rode at her, struck her with his lance, and knocked her back onto her horse's tail. Then he rode at her from the opposite direction and knocked her forward onto her horse's neck.

The crowd roared with laughter.

The feelings of Jane, Mark and Martha may well be imagined.



A knight in full plate armor, including a helmet with a visor, is mounted on a brown horse. He holds a shield with a yellow cross on a red background and a red banner with a yellow cross. The horse is galloping to the right. In the background, another horse with a blue and white checkered blanket is running. In the foreground, the backs of several spectators are visible as they watch the scene from behind a wooden fence.

As for the feelings of Katharine, they knew no bounds. She still held the magic charm clutched in one hot hand, and she wasn't bothering about correct arithmetic now.

"I wish I could fight ten times as well as you, you bully! Yah!" were the words that the valiant Sir Kath spoke upon the field. It was a cry of pure temper.

And immediately she could fight five times as well as Sir Launcelot, and everyone knows how good he was.

What followed would have to be seen to be believed. Katharine came down like several wolves on the fold. She seemed to spring from all sides at once. Her sword flashed like a living thunderbolt. Her lance whipped about, now here, now there, like a snake gone mad.

"Zounds!" cried the people, and "Lackaday" and "Wurra wurra!"

Jane, Mark and Martha watched with clasped hands.

If Sir Launcelot had not been the greatest knight in the world, he would never have lived to tell the tale. Even as it was, the end was swift. In something less than a trice he was unseated from his horse, fell to the ground with a crash, and did not rise again.

Katharine galloped round and round the field, bowing graciously to the applause of the crowd.

But she soon noticed that the crowd wasn't applauding very loudly. And it was only the traitorous knights like Sir Mordred and Sir Agravaire, the ones who were jealous of Launcelot, who were applauding at all.

The rest of the crowd was strangely silent. For Launcelot, the flower of knighthood, the darling of the people's hearts, the greatest champion of the Round Table, had been defeated!

Queen Guinevere looked furious. King Arthur looked sad. The attendant knights, except for the traitorous ones, looked absolutely wretched. Merlin looked as if he didn't believe it.

Jane and Mark and Martha looked as though they believed it, but didn't want to.





And it was then that the full knowledge of what she had done swept over Katharine.

She had succeeded and she had failed. She had defeated the greatest knight in history. But she had pretended to herself that she was doing it for a good deed. Really it had been just because she was annoyed with Launcelot for not appreciating her help enough, back in Morgan le Fay's castle.

Her cheeks flamed and she felt miserable. It was hot inside her helmet suddenly, and she dragged it off. Then she remembered too late that she'd forgotten something else when she made her wish. She had wished to be in armor, and to be on horseback, and to be tall and strong, and to win. But she had forgotten to say anything about not being Katharine any longer.

Now, as the helmet came away, her long brown hair streamed down onto her shoulders, and her nine-year-old face blinked at the astonished crowd.

Those sitting nearest the ringside saw. Sir Mordred tittered. Sir Agravaine sneered. The mean knights who were jealous of Sir Launcelot began to laugh, and mingled with the laughter were the cruel words, "Beaten by a girl!"

Sir Launcelot came to and sat up. He heard the laughter. He looked at Katharine. Katharine looked away, but not before he had recognized her. He got to his feet. There was silence all round the field; even the mean knights stopped laughing.

Sir Launcelot came over to Katharine. "Why have you done this to me?" he said.

"I didn't mean to," said Katharine.

With flushed cheeks, but with head held high, Sir Launcelot strode to King Arthur's platform and knelt in the dust before it. In a low voice he asked leave to go on a far quest, a year's journey away at least, that he might hide his shame till by a hundred deeds of valor he would win back his lost honor.

King Arthur did not trust himself to speak. He nodded his consent.

Queen Guinevere did not even look at Sir Launcelot as he walked away from the field of tournament.

Merlin spoke a word in King Arthur's ear. King Arthur nodded. He rose, offered an arm to Guinevere, and led her from the stand. Merlin spoke another word, this time to the attendant knights. They began clearing the people from the field.

Most of the people went quietly, but three children in the front row of the grandstand put up quite a fuss, saying that they had to find their sister Katharine, who'd done something terrible. But a sister was a sister and they'd stick up for her, anyway. The knights cleared them away with the rest.

Presently, after what seemed like at least a year, Katharine found herself alone before Merlin. She was crying.

Merlin looked at her sternly.

"Fie on your weeping," he said. "I wot well that ye be a false enchantress, come here in this guise to defeat our champion and discredit our Table Round!"

"I'm not! I didn't!" said Katharine.

"Ye be, too!" said Merlin, "and you certainly have! After today our name is mud in Camelot!"

"Oh, oh," wept Katharine.

"Silence, sorceress," said Merlin. He waved his wand at her. "I command that you appear before me in your true form!"

Immediately Katharine wasn't tall or strong or in armor any more, but just Katharine. Merlin looked surprised.



"These fiends begin early!" he said. "However, doubtless ye be but the instrument of a greater power." He waved his wand again. "I command that your allies, cohorts, aids, accomplices and companions be brought hither to stand at your side!"

Jane and Mark and Martha appeared beside Katharine, looking nearly as unhappy and uncomfortable as she.

Merlin looked really quite startled. Then he shook his head sadly.

"So young," he said, "and yet so wicked!"

"We're not!" said Martha, making a rude face.

The behavior of the others was more seemly.

"You see, sir," began Mark.

"We didn't mean to," began Jane.

"Let me," said Katharine. "I started it."

And in a rush of words and tears she told Merlin everything, beginning with the charm, and her wish to travel back in time, and going on to what she had hoped to do, and what she'd done and where she'd gone wrong.

"I wanted to do a good deed," she said, "and I *did* one when I rescued Launcelot from that old dungeon. But then he wasn't properly grateful at all and made me undo it so he could rescue himself, all for the sake of his old honor! And that made me cross! And just now I pretended I was defeating him so the other knights wouldn't be so jealous of him, but really I was just trying to get back at him for being so stuck-up! And I always wanted to fight in a real tournament, anyway!"

"Well, now you have," said Merlin, "and what good did you do by it? Just made everybody thoroughly unhappy!"

"I know," said Katharine.

"That's what comes of meddling," said Merlin.

"There is a pattern to history, and when you try to change that pattern, no good may follow."

Katharine hung her head.

"However," went on Merlin, and to the surprise of the four children, he was smiling now, "all is not lost. I have a few magic tricks of my own, you know. Let me see, how shall I handle this? *I could* turn time back, I suppose, and make it as though this day had never happened, but it would take a lot out of me."

"Really?" said Katharine in surprise. "It would be a mere nothing to *us!*"

Merlin looked at her a bit grimly.

"Oh, it would, would it?" he said.

"Oh, yes," went on Katharine happily. "I could wish Launcelot were twice as near as here again, and then I could wish that he'd defeat me twice, and then I could wish that the people would honor him twice as much as they ever did, and then I could wish . . ."

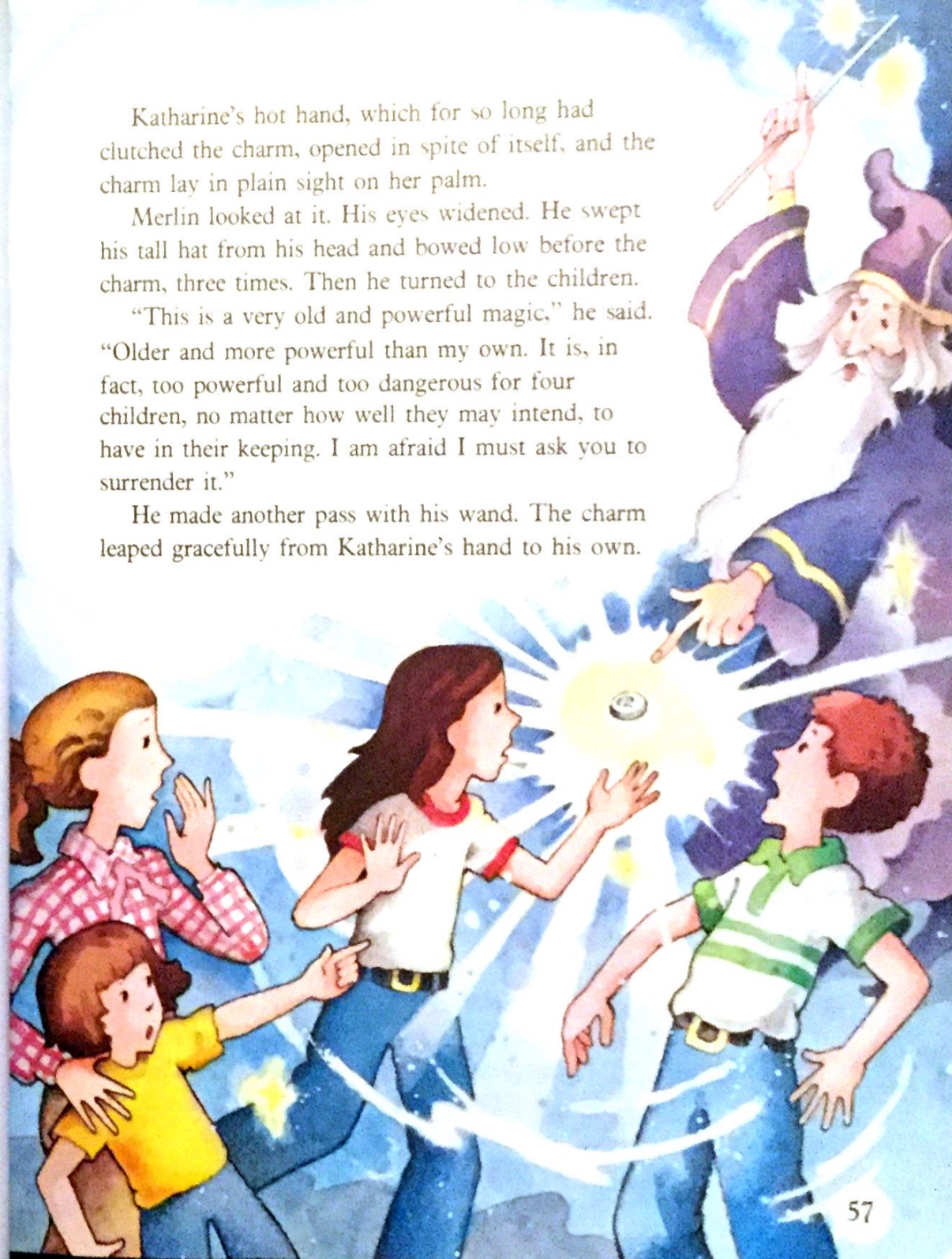
"Hold!" cried Merlin, in alarm. "A truce to your wishes, before you get us in worse trouble! I think I had best see this wonderful charm of yours." He made a pass at Katharine with his wand. "If there be any magic among you, let it appear now or forever hold its peace."

Katharine's hot hand, which for so long had clutched the charm, opened in spite of itself, and the charm lay in plain sight on her palm.

Merlin looked at it. His eyes widened. He swept his tall hat from his head and bowed low before the charm, three times. Then he turned to the children.

"This is a very old and powerful magic," he said. "Older and more powerful than my own. It is, in fact, too powerful and too dangerous for four children, no matter how well they may intend, to have in their keeping. I am afraid I must ask you to surrender it."

He made another pass with his wand. The charm leaped gracefully from Katharine's hand to his own.



Mark spoke.

"But it came to us in our own time," he said, "and that's a part of history, too, just as much as this is. Maybe we were *meant* to find it. Maybe there's some good thing we're supposed to do with it. There is a pattern to history, and when you try to change that pattern, no good may follow."

Merlin looked at him.

"You are a wise child," he said.

"Just average," said Mark modestly.

"Dear me," said Merlin. "If that be so, if all children be as sensible as you in this far future time you dwell in . . ." He broke off. "What century did you say you come from?"

"We didn't," said Mark, "but it's the twentieth."

"The twentieth century," mused Merlin. "What a happy age it must be—truly the Golden Age that we are told is to come."

He stood thinking a moment. Then he smiled.

"Very well. Go back to your twentieth century," he said, "and take your magic with you, and do your best with it. But first, I have something to say."

He held the charm at arm's length, rather as though he feared it might bite him, and addressed it with great respect.

"I wish," he said, "that in six minutes it may be as though these children had never appeared here. Except that they—and I—will remember. And I further wish that our tournament may begin all over again and proceed as originally planned by history. Only twice as much so," he added, to be on the safe side.

"Now may I have it back, please?" Katharine asked, when he had done.

"In a minute," said Merlin. "By the way, have you been making a lot of wishes lately? It feels rather worn out to me. It won't last forever, you know."

"Oh dear, we were afraid of that," said Jane. "How many more do we get?"

"That would be telling," said Merlin. "But you'd best not waste too many. It might be later than you think."


"Oh!" cried Martha. "Maybe we'll never get home!"

"Don't worry," said Merlin, smiling at her. "There are still a few wishes left for you. And one more for me." Again he held the charm out before him.

"And I thirdly wish," he said, "for the future protection of the world from the terrible good intentions of these children and for their protection against their own folly. May this charm, for twice the length of time that it shall be in their hands, grant no further wishes carrying said children out of their own century and country, but may they find whatsoever boon the magic may have in store for them in their own time and place." He put the charm into Katharine's hands. "And now you'd best be going. Because in less than a minute by my wish, it will be as though you'd never appeared here. And if you aren't home when that happens, goodness knows where you *will* be!"

"But what about the good deed I wished?" said Katharine. "None of the ones I tried worked out!"





“My child,” said Merlin, and his smile was very kind now, “you have done your good deed. You have brought me word that for as far into time as the twentieth century, the memory of Arthur and of the Round Table, which I helped him to create, will be living yet. And that in that far age people will still care for the ideal I began, enough to come back through time and space to try to be of service to it. You have brought me that word, and now I can finish my work in peace and know that I have done well. And if that’s not a good deed, I should like to know what is. Now good-bye. Wish quickly. You have exactly seventeen seconds.”

Katharine wished.

And because their mother had been worried yesterday by their being so long away, Katharine put in that when they got home, they should only have been gone two minutes, by real time.

This was really quite thoughtful of Katharine. Perhaps she, too, like Mark the day before, had learned something during her day of adventure.

The next thing the four children knew, they were sitting together in Katharine and Martha’s room, and it was still that morning, and they had only been away from home a minute. Yet that minute was packed with memories.

“Did we dream it?” Katharine asked.

“I don’t think so, or we wouldn’t all remember it,” said Mark.

“And we all do, don’t we?” said Jane.
And they all did.

Think about the story. Fill in the information to finish the chart on page 43. Then answer the questions.

1. What is the “trick” to getting what you want from the magic coin? What would happen if you wished on the coin without knowing this trick?
2. Use your chart. Which character causes the defeat of Sir Launcelot? Why does the character do this?
3. What is the effect of this defeat on Sir Launcelot? What is the effect on the spectators at the tournament?
4. Do you think Sir Launcelot should have accepted Katharine’s apology? Explain why or why not.
5. Use your chart. Which character knows that there is magic at work? How does this character know?
6. How might Sir Launcelot’s defeat have changed the history of Camelot? How might modern history have been changed?
7. What might have happened to the children if they had lost the coin and had to remain in Camelot?

Talk about ways that time travelers could change history. Ask questions to find out about what your classmates think.

Think and Discuss



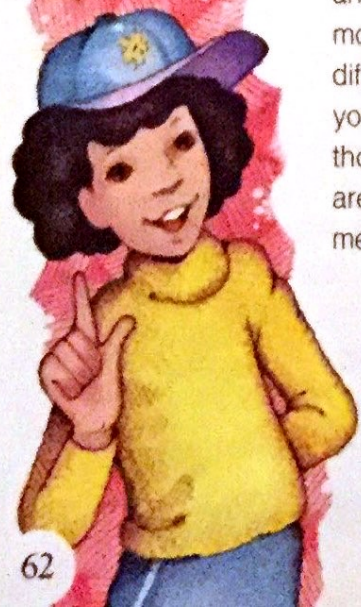
WORK IN A GROUP



Learn About RIDDLES

What's So Punny?

RIDDLE ME,
RIDDLE ME,
WHAT IS THAT,
OVER THE HEAD
AND UNDER
THE HAT?
HAIR.



When first I appear I seem mysterious,
But when I'm explained, I'm nothing serious.
A riddle.

Riddles are among the world's favorite guessing games. For centuries, people everywhere have had fun trying to catch each other with riddles such as the one at the left.

Of all the different kinds of riddles people ask, the trickiest to answer is the *trick question*:

Why is your nose in the middle of your face?
Because it's a scenter.

In many trick questions, like the one above, the answers contain what we call *puns*. A pun is the humorous use of two words that sound alike but have different meanings. In the answer to the riddle about your nose, the word *scenter* sounds like *center*, even though the spellings and meanings of the two words are different. When you read the answer aloud, it means both "nose" (*scenter*) and "middle" (*center*).

Here are two more trick questions:

A nickel and a dime were crossing a bridge and the nickel fell off. Why didn't the dime fall too?
It had more sense (cents) than the nickel.

Why did the lobster blush?
Because it saw the salad dressing.

In the riddle about the nickel and the dime, the pun again is made on two words—*cents* and *sense*—that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. In the riddle about the lobster, the pun is made on two meanings of a word—*dressing*—whose spelling doesn't change.

In each of the following trick questions, the underlined word gives a sensible answer but spoils the pun. Change the word to make a pun. The picture next to each trick question offers a clue to the answer. (Answers are given at the bottom of the page.)

1. What did the kindling wood say to the fireplace?
Good-bye! I've met my fire.



3. What did the steak say to the plate?
Pleased to see you.



2. Why did the rooster refuse to fight?
Because it was afraid.



4. What is the tallest building in town?
The library. It has the most floors.

For fun, write down five of your favorite trick questions. Remember that the answers should be puns. Ask your friends these trick questions to see if they can identify and explain the puns in the answers.

(Answers: 1. match; 2. chicken; 3. meat; 4. stories.)

TALKING ABOUT THE SELECTIONS

You have read these selections.



Two of Everything

The Great Quillow

Can You Believe Your Eyes?

The Tournament

Talk about the stories, the article, and the riddles. Talk about how the ideas are alike and different. Talk about the characters and the theme.

1. How are Mrs. Hak-Tak and Katharine alike?
2. How are Hunder and Sir Launcelot different?
3. What things do riddles and optical illusions use to trick people?
4. Which selection describes the best tricks? Why do you think so?

BOOKSHELF



Quentin Corn by Mary Stolz. David Godine Press, 1985. When a pig is about to be eaten, he decides to disguise himself as a human and run away.

The Great Ringtail Garbage Caper by Timothy Foote. Houghton Mifflin, 1980. A group of daring raccoons organize a scheme to hijack a sanitation truck when their food supply is threatened by overly enthusiastic garbage collectors.

Honestly Myron by Dean Hughes. Atheneum, 1982. Myron decides to become totally honest after his teacher talks in class about telling the truth.

How to Eat Fried Worms by Thomas Rockwell. Franklin Watts, 1973. When Billy bets fifty dollars that he can eat fifteen worms, his family and friends help him invent different ways to cook them.

Summer Switch by Mary Rodgers. Harper & Row, 1982. Benjamin Andrews has a secret desire to be like his father. Suddenly it happens. Benjamin becomes his father on his way to a movie conference, and his father becomes Benjamin on his way to summer camp.

The Mariah Delaney Lending Library Disaster by Sheila Greenwald. Houghton Mifflin, 1977. Mariah Delaney's parents cannot understand her delight in thinking of money-making schemes. Mariah's latest venture would shock them—a lending library of books from the Delaney's collection.