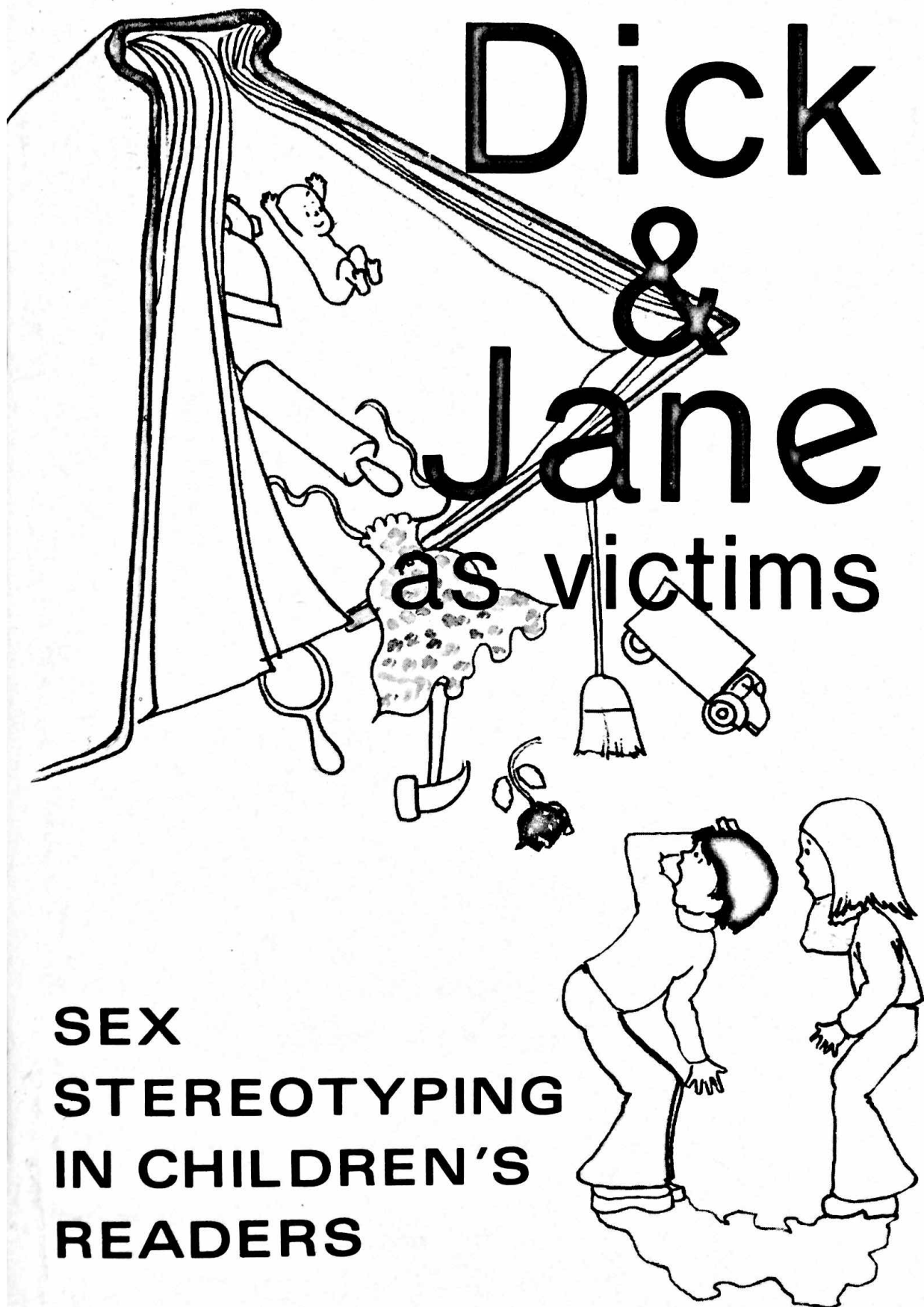


\$3.00



Dick & Jane as victims

**SEX
STEREOTYPING
IN CHILDREN'S
READERS**

EXPANDED 1975 EDITION

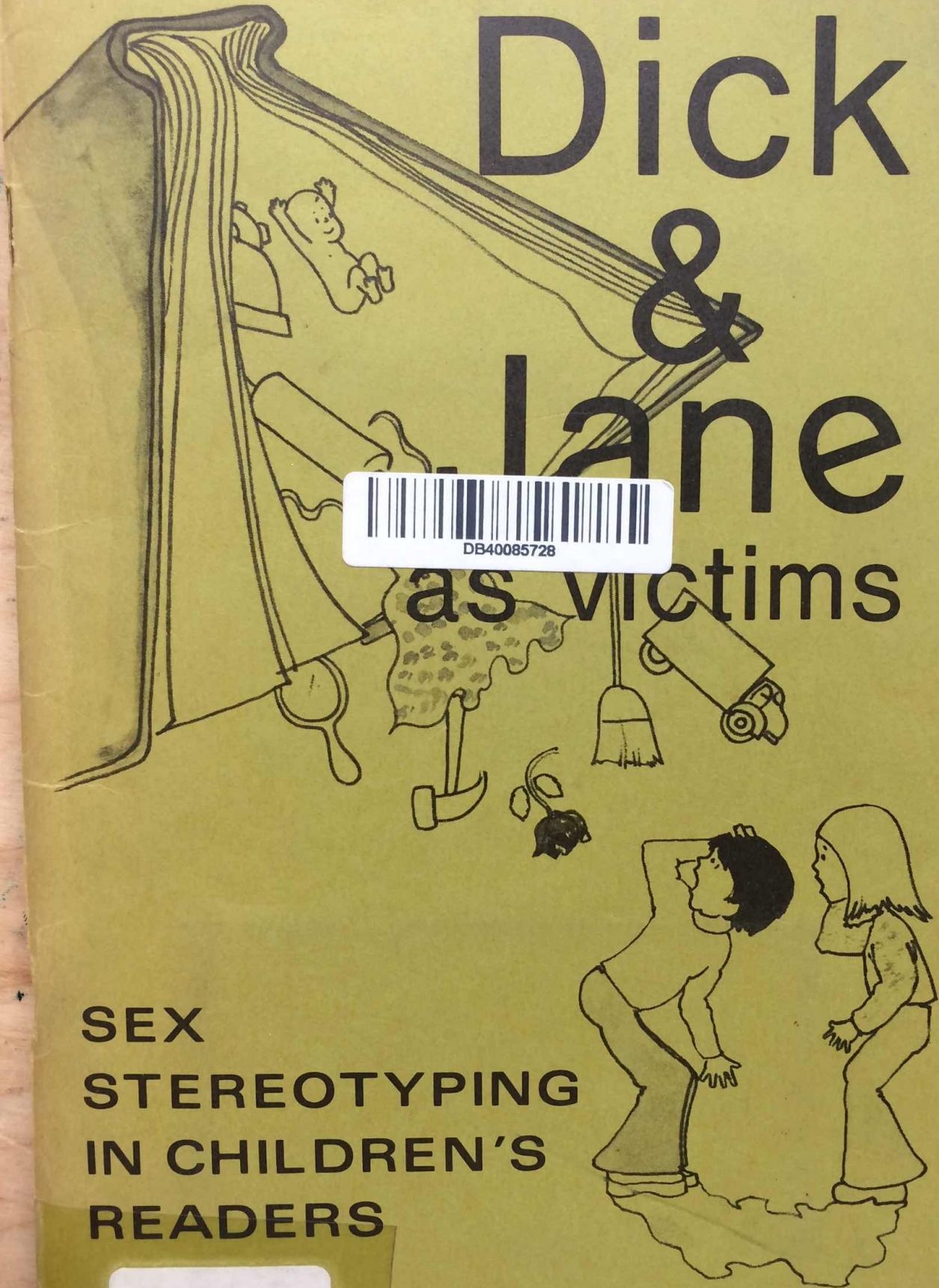
\$1.50

Dick

&

Jane

as victims



**SEX
STEREOTYPING
IN CHILDREN'S
READERS**

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A STUDY BY
WOMEN ON WORDS AND IMAGES

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First Printing 1972
Second Printing 1972
Third Printing 1973

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Johnny says girls aren't fun. Janey says she wants to be a doctor when she grows up, but she knows girls cannot be doctors, so she will be a nurse instead. Dick says he will be an engineer. Sally says she will be a Mommy. Dick says girls are stupid. Janey says she might be only a girl, but she isn't stupid at all.

Where does this all come from? Some station is transmitting a clear message to our children about their place in life. They have been tuned in from birth to a frequency that directs everything they attempt, from skipping rope to getting a Ph.D. Something insures that any deviation from the norm will be fraught with personal hazards and traumas. If Janey does become a doctor, she will feel guilty at not being a Mommy, or as good a Mommy as she "ought" to be. Johnny will not feel at all guilty about being a doctor, whether he is a Daddy or not. Dick will say girls are stupid and most girls will agree



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From one of the earliest of the classic "Dick and Jane" series, we selected these illustrations to demonstrate the expectation that Dick is to be innovative and active, while even in early childhood, Sally learns to play with a carpet sweeper in anticipation of her later expected adult role.

with him, except for Janey, who is thereby on the way to becoming an "aggressive" woman. Dick himself will feel no guilt at his remark. Sally, however, would feel very bad indeed if she called Dick stupid, for it might wound his self-esteem, which, even at the age of nine, Sally knows is a very serious thing. Johnny will spend much of his working and playing life with boys, who he expects will be much more fun than girls; and his wife, locked into domesticity, will be even less fun as a result of her confinement. Sally, being a complete Mommy, will drive her children from one achievement to another, imprison them in a spotless home, and project her own ambitions onto them in a classic smotherlove pattern until they finally break for freedom. Then Sally will find herself out of a job, frustrated, and "growing old," often before her chronological time.

Again, where does it all begin?

One early source of the messages children receive is their elementary school readers. These readers abound in stereotypes. The typical girl in any reader is a frilly little thing with a smile on her pretty face and a passive attitude toward life. The boy portrayed in the readers

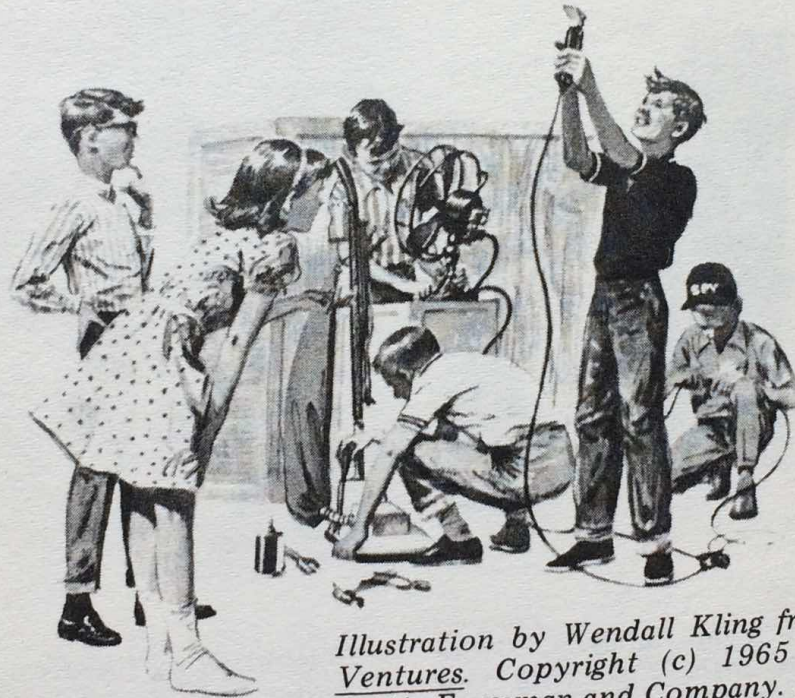


Illustration by Wendall Kling from Ventures. Copyright (c) 1965 by Scott, Foresman and Company. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

In the story this picture illustrates, several boys are constructing a contraption they call an "Electro-Thinker." "Smart Annabelle," who throughout the story is called by that epithet, stops to ask some questions. She is rebuffed by being told, "We are willing to share our great thoughts with mankind. However, you happen to be a girl." Poor Smart Annabelle, who has thus been forewarned not to dally with a "man's prerogative" (namely, thinking), bows out of the story.

has a look of stern concentration: he is busy preparing to be a "man." Mothers and fathers in the readers reflect a simple, standardized existence, which becomes for the child the American Way of Life.

What is at specific issue in our study of current readers is the way in which girls are portrayed in these stories—the activities in which they engage, the attitudes they display, the way in which people treat them, the generalizations which are made about them, and the directions for future life and work which are offered to them—as contrasted with the treatment of boys, whether contemporary or historical—their activities, their ambitions, their hopes and dreams, and their ultimate objectives. The degree to which the treatment of boys and girls differs in Primary School Texts is a good indicator of current social expectations for each sex, and offers some insight into the premises underlying these expectations. Once we know what society, as reflected in the readers, is asking from young people, we will know how young people feel they must behave in their private and personal capacities to become acceptable members of their peer group. If the effort for approval or reward as a boy or a girl involves the warping of an individual's natural proclivities, the outlook for her or his happiness and effectiveness is poor. How many potentially effective human beings can we afford to suppress in the name of traditional role playing?

The message from the readers which is beamed to small girls is very different from that aimed at small boys. This study shows in detail how, and in what ways, it differs. The preponderance of boys to girls, famous men to famous women, adult men to adult women — a pattern which exists without exception in all of the readers we analyzed—does not reflect current reality. Yet the trouble goes deeper than numbers. The authors of this study assume that there are ways in which we can make better use of the talents and energies of our female population beyond directing them into the kitchen and the obstetrics ward. In the coming years there must be a drive in all educational fields to improve motivational incentives for this under-rated, under-encouraged fifty percent of the population. Grade school readers are a top priority area for change, since they influence children at their most vulnerable and malleable stage of development.

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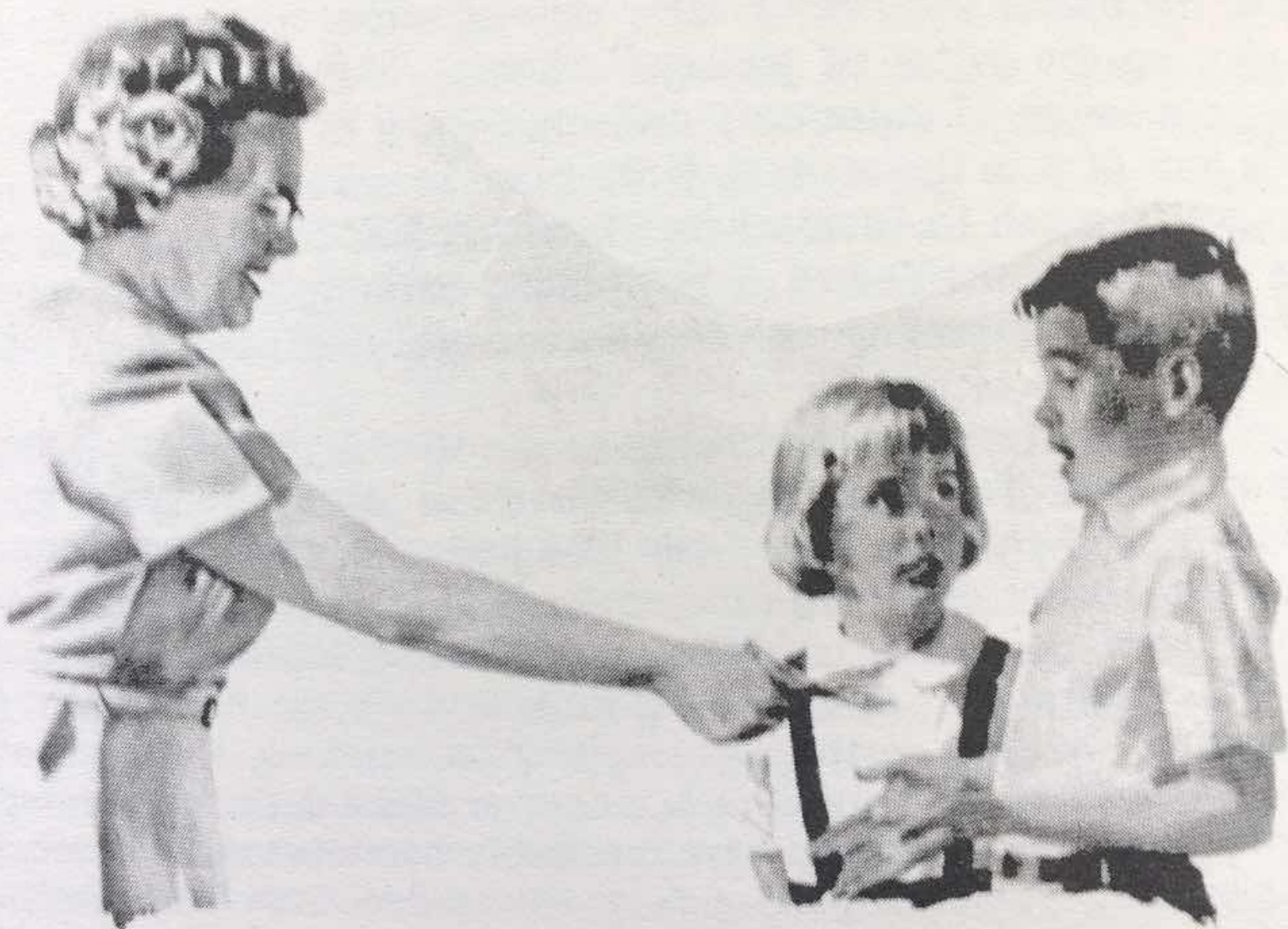
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comparison with the castles, jewels, the remains of earl
ions, beautiful princesses or even a plain bicycle which you
win by birthright. We found boys clearly in this position
but girls only 18 times. A courageous princess is never given
me prince as a prize. Is anyone surprised?



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Competitiveness and Use of Power. Most competitive stories d

TABLE SIX
Occupations of Adult Males

airplane builder	gardener	pony herder
animal trainers	gas station attendant	pop corn vender
architect	glassblower	priest
artist	guard	principal
astronaut	handyman	professor
astronomer	humorist	prospector
athlete	hunter	radio reporter
author	ice cream man	railroad inspector
baby sitter	inn keeper	restaurant owner
baker	inventor	roadmaster
balloonist	janitor	rocket firer
band conductor	judge	sailor
banker	juggler	salesman
barber	king	scientist
baseball player	knight	scoutmaster
blacksmith	landlord	sea captain
botanist	life guard	sheepherder
building contractor	lighthouse keeper	sheriff
businessman	lumberman	ship builder
bus driver	magician	shoemaker
carpenter	mailman	silversmith
circus keeper	mathematician	ski teacher
clerk	mayor	soldier
clockmaker	m.c. in nightclub	space station worker
clown	merchant	stagecoach driver
coach	milkman	statesman
computer operator	miller	steamshovel operator
construction worker	miner	stonecutter
cook	mineralogist	storeowner
cowboy	monk	submarine operator
craftsman	mover	tailor
decorator	museum manager	taxidermist
detective	naturalist	teacher
deliveryman	newspaper owner	telephoneman
dentist	news reporter	telephone lineman
doctor	organ grinder	t.v. actor
doorman	outlaw	t.v. man
electrician	painter	t.v. newsman
engineer	parent	t.v. writer
expert on art	peddler	ticket seller
explorer	pet store owner	train conductor
fairgroundsman	photographer	train engineer
farmer	pilot	trapper
figure skater	pirate	trashman
film maker	plumber	trolley driver
fireman	policeman	truck driver
fisherman		veternarian
foreman		watchman
forest ranger		whaler
		woodcutter
		W.W. II hero
		zookeeper

TABLE SEVEN
Occupations of Adult Females

acrobatist
author
baby sitter
baker
cafeteria worker
cashier
cleaning woman
cook
doctor
dressmaker
fat lady (in circus)
governess
housekeeper

ice skater
librarian
painter
parent
queen
recreational director
school crossing guard
school nurse
secretary
shopkeeper
teacher
telephone operator
witch