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## Children's Play

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# CHILDREN'S PLAY

## Fantasy

By Elva Howard Deeds

**W**hen we were children, we loved to play  
In a big haystack across the way.  
On one adventure late in fall  
With Nellie the leader of us all,  
We hurried toward the stack without a care.  
Suddenly from behind the hay, AN ANGRY BULL  
CHARGED US THERE!  
Terrified, we turned to flee (everyone but me,  
barely three).  
Between dragging arms was Baby Ed.  
Forgotten, I found my feet and fled  
And very close on my behind came the BULL!  
I scrambled under on my belly—just in time—  
The lowest barbed-wire of that blessed fence!  
I've never loved a HE-COW since!

There was no preschool. Ed was three, I two more.  
While Mama checked often from our screen-door,  
We were free to play and explore a shallow creek—  
Our favorite pastime when we tired of "Hide and  
Seek."

Catching crawdads was our most exciting fun.  
We felt around big rocks where they evaded the sun  
And brought them out of the water; we knew just  
how

To avoid angry pincers (to baby fingers—a  
WOW!).

When carelessly left in the sun too long, crawdads  
died.

We buried them under sod left by the breaking plow  
(dried,  
Smooth clods decorated with bits of glass). We  
"cried"

And mournfully sang a funeral song, "Rock of  
Ages"...

Today, that memory is portrayed momentarily in  
my thoughts,

And I'm prone to ponder:  
Can it be that CHILDHOOD FANTASIES  
Might help to prepare us for REALITY?

Sharing in many childhood plans,  
Nellie and Hobart had busy hands.  
On one such very busy day,  
They made mud-pies and baked away.  
Empty gasoline cans were stove and table.  
Into the "oven," Hob put a pie to bake. Unable

To see if the pie was done in the darkened drum,  
He lit a match and "KINGDOM COME"!

Nothing more to say!  
Brother Hobart bears a scar on his forehead today.

I remember well my older sister, Nell.  
It would take a book to tell  
The things I'd like to say  
On this, her special day,  
To let my love shine through—  
My adoration, too  
So she'd be sure to know  
That my thoughts are hard to show.

I remember well my lovely sister, Nell...  
Our mother's hands with gentle care  
Would twine rag curlers in Nell's hair.  
Then after Nell wore them all night,  
Mother brushed and curled Nell's dark hair just  
right.

Then she placed there a ribbon bow,  
Tied and fastened it just so—  
And glowed with happiness as she smiled  
On Nellie dear, her firstborn child.

When I was ten and Nell fourteen,  
She played the organ and I'd sing.  
Our friends would gather round and cheer  
Us on to more old songs they wanted to hear.

My sister Nell was the first to know  
Her speaking lines for our school show.  
When Nellie knelt to tell us there  
Of little "Annie and Willie's Prayer,"  
We listened to her voice so dear  
And wiped away an errant tear.

*(ELVA HOWARD DEEDS, who earned a Master's  
of Teaching degree at Southwestern Oklahoma  
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*Design By Scott Volgt*