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From the beginning, they were just ordinary children, and they lived with their father and mother in an ordinary house with every modern convenience.

There were three of them: Roberta, Peter and the youngest Phyllis. Mother was almost always there, ready to play with the children, and read to them, and help them to do their home lessons. These three lucky children always had everything they needed.

They also had a father who was just perfect - never cross, never unjust, and always ready for a game

So, they were very happy. The dreadful change came quite suddenly. Peter had a birthday - his tenth. Among his presents was a model engine. Its charm lasted in its full perfection for exactly three days. Then the engine suddenly went off with a bang. James was so frightened that he went out and did not come back all day. Perhaps, he cried over it - but of course boys of ten do not cry. He said that his eyes were red because he had a cold. This turned out to be true, though Peter did not know it was when he said it, the next day he had to go to bed and stay there.