**Chapter one**

**Tom and his friends.**

Tom! Tom! Where are you?

No answer.

Where is that boy? When I find him, I’m going to…

Aunt Polly looked under the bed. Then she opened the door and

Looked out into the garden.

Tom!

She heard something behind her. A small boy ran past, but Aunt Polly

Put out her hand and stopped him.

Ah, there you are! And what’s that in your pocket?

Nothing. Aunt Polly.

Nothing! It’s an apple! I can see it. Now listen, Tom.

Those apples are not for you, and I …?

Oh!. Aunt Polly!. Quick \_\_ look behind you?

So Aunt Polly looked, and Tom was out of the house in a second.

She laughed quietly. I never learn. I love that Tom, my dead sister’s child,

But he isn’t an easy boy for an old lady. Well, it’s Saturday tomorrow

And there’s no school, but it isn’t going to be a holiday for Tom. Oh no!

He’s going to work tomorrow!.

Saturday was a beautiful day. It was summer and the sun was hot and

There were flowers in all the gardens. It was a day for everybody to be happy.

Tom came out of his house with a brush and a big pot of white paint in

his hand. He looked at the fence; it was three meters high and thirty meters

long. He put his brush in the paint and painted some of the fence.

He did it again. Then he stopped and looked at the fence, put down his brush and sat down. There were hours of work in front of him and he was the unhappiest boy in the village.

After ten minutes Tom had an idea, a wonderful idea. He took up the

Brush again and began work. He saw his friend Joe Harper in the street,

But he didn’t look at him. Joe had an apple in his hand. He came up to

Tom and looked at the fence.

I am sorry, Tom.

Tom said nothing. The paint brush moved up and down.

Working for your aunt?. Said Joe. I’m going down to the river.

I’m sorry you can’t come with me.

Tom put down his brush. You call this work?. He said.

Tainting a fence? Said Joe. Of course it’s work!

Perhaps it is and perhaps it isn’t. But I like it, said Tom.

I can go to the river any day. I can’t paint a fence very often.

Joe watched Tom for about five minutes. Tom painted very slowly

And carefully. He often stopped, moved back from the fence

and looked at this work with a smile. Joe began to get very interested,

and said:

Tom, can I paint a little?