

## 'Look Behind You!'

'Tom!'

There was no reply.

'Tom!'

There was no reply.

'Where is he?' said Aunt Polly.

She went to the door of the kitchen and looked into the garden. 'TOM!' she shouted again.

There was no reply from the garden.

Then Aunt Polly heard a noise in the kitchen. She turned round and she saw Tom. He came out of the food cupboard. He ran towards the door. Aunt Polly grabbed his jacket and he stopped.

'Why were you in the food cupboard?' she asked.

Then she saw Tom's mouth. It was bright red.

'I know!' she said. 'You were eating my fruit! Tom, you are a bad boy!'

The old lady lifted her hand. She was going to hit Tom.

'Look behind you, Aunt Polly!' said Tom.

Aunt Polly let go of Tom's jacket and turned round quickly. Tom ran away. He ran into the garden and climbed over the fence.

'Tom Sawyer!' said Aunt Polly. Then she laughed. 'He always plays tricks on me,' she said to herself. 'I never learn.'



It was 1844. Tom was eleven years old. He lived in St Petersburg, Missouri. St Petersburg was a town on the Mississippi River, in North America.

Tom's parents were dead. He lived with his father's sister, Aunt Polly. Tom was not clean and tidy. He did not help Aunt Polly with the housework. He often behaved badly. But Aunt Polly loved him very much.

Aunt Polly loved Tom but she worried about him too.

'Tom must behave better,' she said to herself. 'He must obey me. He must be a good boy. He stole my fruit and I will punish him. He must do some work. Tomorrow is Saturday. There's no school on Saturday. Tomorrow, Tom will paint the fence.'

## The Fence

It was Saturday morning. There was no school today. But Tom had to work. He had to paint the fence. It was a long fence around the garden of Aunt Polly's house.

Tom had a big bucket of paint and a brush with a long handle. He looked at the fence.

'I want to go swimming. I want to go fishing. I want to play with my friends,' said Tom to himself. 'I don't want to paint the fence. My friends will all see me. They'll laugh at me.'

Tom started to paint.

After an hour, Tom was tired. He looked sadly at the big bucket of paint and the brush with the long handle. Then Tom had an idea. He smiled.

He started to paint the fence again.

Soon he saw one of his friends, Ben Rogers. Ben was walking towards him. He was making strange noises. Ben was a steamboat on the Mississippi River!

'Ting-a-ling!' he said. He was making the noise of the bell on the steamboat. 'Sssh! Sssh!' he said. He was making the noise of the steam in the engine of the steamboat.

Ben was holding a big red apple.

'I'm going swimming,' Ben said. 'You have to work!'

'I'm not *working*,' said Tom. 'This isn't *work*!'

'Do you like painting the fence?' asked Ben. He was surprised.

'Yes,' said Tom.

Tom started to paint again. Sometimes he stopped and looked at the fence. Then he painted again. There was a happy smile on his face.

Ben watched him. 'Let me paint the fence,' he said.

'No,' said Tom. 'It's very difficult to paint a fence.'

Ben was not happy. Tom liked painting the fence. So Ben wanted to paint the fence.

'Please let me paint it,' he said. 'I'll give you some of my apple.'

Tom thought for a minute. 'No,' he replied. And he smiled and started to paint again.

'I'll give you all of my apple,' said Ben.

Tom thought for another minute. 'All right,' he said.

So Tom sat down and started to eat Ben's apple. And Ben started to paint the fence.

