

I

Bad Tom

Tom must be punished

'Tom,' shouted Aunt Polly.

There was no answer.

'Tom,' she called again, but there was still no reply.

'Where is that boy? Tom!' and she shouted louder than before. 5

She took off her glasses and looked around the room. Then she stood up and went to the open door. She looked out over the garden. No Tom.

'Y-o-u Tom!' 10

There was a noise behind her, and she turned round quickly. She was just in time to catch hold of a small boy by the back of his trousers.

'I had forgotten that cupboard,' she said. 'What have you been doing in there?'

'Nothing.'

'Nothing? Just look at your hands and mouth. What is that mess?'

'I don't know, Aunt.'

'Well, I know. It's jam, that's what it is. You've been in that cupboard eating jam. I've told you so many times to leave that jam alone. Give me that stick.'



The stick was held up high. Tom really was in trouble.

'Oh, look behind you, Aunt!' shouted Tom.

The old lady turned round to see what the matter was. (This gave Tom time to jump up.) He had climbed
5 over the high wooden fence and was out of sight before his aunt knew what was happening.

Aunt Polly stood surprised for a minute. Then she began to laugh.

'Oh, that boy,' she said to herself. 'He's played so
10 many tricks on me like that. I should have been ready for him. He'll stay away from school this afternoon, I know, so I'll have to make him work tomorrow, to punish him. It's very hard to make him work on Saturdays, when all his friends are having a holiday. He
15 hates work more than anything else, but I shall have to punish him somehow.'

The fight

Tom walked down the street practising a new way to whistle. It made a very good sound, and he had only
20 just learnt how to do it.

Suddenly he stopped whistling. In front of him stood a boy, a little taller than himself. Tom had never seen him before.

The village of St Petersburg, where Tom lived with
25 Aunt Polly, his brother Sid, and Mary, his sister, was a small, quiet place. You did not often see new people there. This boy was well dressed, too. It was not Sunday, and he was well dressed, which was very unusual. He even wore a tie. Tom stared at him, and the
30 longer he stared, the dirtier his own clothes seemed. Neither boy spoke. If one moved, the other moved, sideways. They circled around one another, face to face, eye to eye all the time.