

## ***School***

Willie sat down to breakfast in a clean gray shirt and jersey, pressed gray shorts and polished boots. He stared out at the graveyard. It was a dull day.

"Eat up, boy. Soon be time to go to school," said Tom, placing a paper bag on the table. Inside were two apples and a thick egg sandwich.

"You can come back here for dinner if you wants, or have it with the others. Best take yer cap and mackintosh. Looks like rain." He picked up Willie's label from the top of the bookcase and handed it to him.

They walked together through Dobbs's field and Tom stood by the gate and let Willie walk on his own up the lane. Zach was sitting on the Littles' dilapidated gate waiting for him. Willie met him and turned to look at Tom. They waved to each other and Sammy immediately shot forwards.

"Samuel," said Tom firmly. "Here!" The dog stopped, glanced at his master and then bounded back to him. Tom picked him up and watched the two boys disappear round the corner.