

# THE TALE OF TOMMY FOX

## CHAPTER 17: PAYING A CALL ON A FRIEND



BY ARTHUR SCOTT BAILEY



Mr. Crow had dared Tommy Fox to go down to pay a call on his friend dog Spot, at Farmer Green's place. And Tommy was trotting along across the fields. He was quite near Farmer Green's house when he heard a dog bark not far away.

"There's Spot now!" Tommy said to himself. And he turned at once in the direction of the barking. He was smiling, for he knew Spot would be greatly pleased to see him, and very much surprised, too.

Tommy stole slyly up toward the place where the dog was barking. The sound came from beyond some bushes. And Tommy thought he would jump out from behind the bushes and startle Spot. So he crept up to the bushes and then suddenly gave a yelp and leaped clean over them.

It was Tommy Fox himself who got the surprise. For there was a strange dog! And as soon as he saw Tommy he sprang after him.

Tommy did not wait a second. He left that place a great deal faster than he came. And as he went skimming over the fields, a red streak against the brown stubble, he could hear Mr. Crow laughing heartily. The old fellow had sailed along high over Tommy's head, to see what happened; and he was greatly pleased with himself. You see, he knew that Farmer Green's hired man had brought home a new dog just a few days before, and Mr.

Crow hoped that if Tommy went to the farmyard he would meet the strange dog.

Tommy was very angry. He saw at once that old Mr. Crow had tricked him and he made up his mind that if he ever had a chance he would get even with the old gentleman. But now he had no time to think about that. There was that strange dog, following hot on his trail. Tommy had quite enough to worry him, without bothering his head over Mr. Crow just then.

Now, even if Tommy Fox was conceited, he was really a very bright youngster. And as he bounded along he thought of a pretty clever scheme. Yes, he thought of a fine trick to play on that dog. The idea came to him all at once. And as soon as the thought popped into his head, Tommy turned toward Swift River. He was at the bank in no time, and he skipped nimbly down to the river's edge.

Tommy Fox could see no water at all running in Swift River. And you might think he was disappointed. But he wasn't. He found exactly what he had hoped for. He could see no water running, down there in the bed of the river, because the river was covered with ice. It was just a thin shell of ice; but it was strong enough to bear Tommy's weight. He ran across it quickly. And then what do you suppose he did? He sat right down on the opposite bank!

Tommy Fox wanted to see the fun. He had to wait only a minute. For pretty soon the strange dog came rushing down the opposite

bank of the river and leaped far out from the edge of the stream.

There was a crash, and a splitting, crackling noise! And the strange dog was floundering in the cold water. The ice was not thick enough to hold him up, and he had hard work to scramble back to the bank again. But he climbed out of the water at last, and tucked his tail between his legs and made off.

Old Mr. Crow saw what happened. He stopped laughing. And he sailed away silently, thinking that Tommy Fox was a pretty smart young cub, after all.