



CHAPTER 1

Christopher Andrews looked at the clock on the classroom wall anxiously. It was Friday afternoon and it was ten minutes to three. "Ten minutes until spring holidays begin!" he whispered to his best friend Michael Young. Michael's desk was in front of Christopher's.

Mr Edwards, their teacher, heard Christopher's voice. He was a tall, thin man with white hair, and he was very strict. He looked angrily at the boys.

"Be quiet!" he said, as he began to give the students their end of term reports. The reports were in white envelopes and the students had to take them home to their parents.

"You have done well this term," Mr Edwards told Michael. "Keep up the good work."

Mr Edwards didn't smile when he gave Christopher his report. Instead, he gave him a stern look.

"You can do better than this," he told Christopher. "You must work harder next term."

The bell rang, and all the students picked up their bags and left the room. Christopher and Michael went outside together. Their bicycles were parked under a big tree beside the front steps of the school.

"What's the matter?" Michael asked Christopher. "You look upset."

Christopher unlocked his bicycle chain. "I am upset," he said. "Look at my report! My parents won't be impressed. They want me to be a good student like you, but I just can't do it. School is so boring!"

Michael couldn't understand his friend's attitude. "I like school," said Michael. "Besides, I need to work hard. I want to become an engineer like my dad."

Christopher frowned. "My dad is the manager of a shoe factory. That's not very inspiring or interesting," he said.

Michael got on his bicycle. "Do you want to play basketball this evening?" he asked.

"No, thanks," Christopher said. "Maybe tomorrow. I'll call you."

The boys said goodbye and Christopher rode home. His parents were still at work. He left his report on the dining room table, made himself a cheese sandwich and went to his room.

