Chapter 1

Nobody needed to tell Buckaroo when Saturday morning arrived.

He could figure it out from the commotion in the house the night before.

Aaron's Friday-night antics were enough to give it away. He had to spend hours streaming his favorite television shows, watching one episode after another.

Sharon and Nathan would sit there wondering when it was finally going to end.

And Buckaroo was part of the conspiracy.

"Woof! Woof!"

He would bark until he got whatever he wanted too.

By Saturday morning, the effects of the previous night's entertainment were obvious.

Saturday was the one day when Aaron had absolutely nothing scheduled.

No special classes.

No sports.

No other activities.

On every other day, his schedule was so packed that he hardly had time to catch his breath.

Imagine having such a busy life at his age!

For Buckaroo, weekends were pure happiness.

He knew Aaron didn't have to rush off to school. So he would wake up early and wait eagerly for his favorite playmate.

Sharon, meanwhile, would be busy doing something around the house, just as she was every morning.

Resting was simply not in her nature.

She didn't like sleeping late and wasting the day.

Nathan was exactly the opposite.

If nobody disturbed him, he could sleep and sleep.

Since Aaron was still in bed, Buckaroo approached Sharon, wagging his tail.

She knew perfectly well what he wanted.

Someone to play with.

But she pretended not to notice him.

Buckaroo waited patiently.

Then he lost his patience.

"Woof! Woof!"

"Aaron! Aaron!" Sharon called. "Buckaroo's calling you!"

She hoped that might get her son out of bed.

"I'm going jogging. Want to come?"

Sharon already knew what the answer would be.

These days, Aaron wasn't nearly as enthusiastic about jogging with her as he used to be.

He had lost some of his earlier interest.

Still, Sharon insisted that he exercise for his health, and sometimes he would come along, grumbling all the way.

That morning, however, she went jogging without him.

Buckaroo accompanied her.

When they returned, both Nathan and Aaron were still asleep.

"Nathan! Nathan! At least you get up! It's ten o'clock!"

Sharon was beginning to feel irritated.

She wanted her son to be active and energetic, just like her.

But Aaron seemed to have inherited Nathan's easygoing attitude toward life.

"Aaron! Aaron!"

A door opened.

Sharon turned.

Nathan stood there, yawning.

"Why are you shouting so early in the morning?" he asked. "What's wrong with letting him sleep late for one day? You keep him busy with one class after another all week long."

Sharon knew there was some truth in what he said.

But that only made her more irritated.

She was about to respond.

Then she decided against it.

Instead, she gave Buckaroo a sharp look.

The dog promptly ran toward Aaron's room.

Sharon followed a little later.

Aaron was sitting on his bed, talking to Buckaroo.

Buckaroo was happily licking him.

"Do you know what time it is?" Sharon asked.

Aaron didn't answer.

He continued playing with the dog.

"Aaron, have you brushed your teeth?"

Still no answer.

He seemed to be living in a world of his own.

"Buckaroo!"

This time Sharon spoke firmly.

Buckaroo jumped off the bed and dashed out of the room.

Only then did Aaron seem to notice his mother.

"Hi, Mom! Good morning! What's for breakfast? Can we go out?"

Sharon remained silent.

"How about a short run? We could pick up some donuts and bagels on the way!"

Still no answer.

Aaron kept talking, completely absorbed in his own plans.

He got off the bed and started walking away.

Sharon stopped him.

Aaron looked at her questioningly.

She pointed toward his unmade bed.

"I'll make it later," he said. "After breakfast."

Sharon didn't move.

"Now!"

There was no mistaking the firmness in her voice.

"Okay."

Aaron reluctantly straightened his bed.

"Satisfied?" he asked, with a touch of attitude.

"One more thing," Sharon said.

"What?"

Now he was getting annoyed.

Sharon raised her hand and pointed toward the ceiling.

The fan was still spinning.

Aaron reached for the switch and snapped it off.

Then he walked out of the room.

Sharon looked at the clock.

It was almost eleven thirty.

End of Chapter 1