

Anthony Won't Share

by J. Richards

"I haven't any colours, Miss,
And Anthony won't share
I need a blue and he has two
It really isn't fair!"

"Oh, Anthony, do you not know
That sharing's very kind
And if you're asked to lend something
You really shouldn't mind?"

But Miss it isn't true
That I don't share my things at all
For, during break, with loads of boys
I shared my favorite ball

I could have played with it alone
But thought it was a shame
To keep it to myself
When I could start a football game."

"Look, Anthony, I did not say
You never share at all
But while we're on the subject
It's quite different with your ball.

For when you play a good ball game
You get some pleasure too
But sharing's also when there is
Less benefit for you."

It's easy to be generous
When you still stand to gain
But sharing is to be a little selfless
In the main."

"And he has loads of paint left, Miss
While mine is all dried up
And he wouldn't even let me
Dip my paintbrush in his cup!"

"Oh, Anthony, you really must
Have more concern for friends
Now why don't you just share your felts and paints
And make amends?"

"Oh, no Miss, you've got me all wrong –
With friends I always share
I just lent my new ruler
To Sam Simmons, over there

I saw he did not have one
And I rushed to help him out –
That's sharing, is it not,
That's just what this is all about?"

"I didn't mean you only help
The people you know best
In fact when those you know less well need help
Now, that's the test!"

Now, both of you sit down again
And this time just be sure
To get on with one another
And to care a little more

But as she watched as Anthony and Sue
Retook their places
Their teacher noticed nothing much
Was changing on their faces

For Anthony just stood his ground
And when Sue asked again
She wasn't granted so much
As a solitary pen.

Achieving no success with her
Most gentle, kindly voice,
Miss Oak thought: "Time for action now,
I haven't any choice!"

A spoon of his own medicine
Is what this boy should drink
And next time he is asked to share
He might just stop and think.

He needs to know that each of us
Must give as well as take
He needs to see that selfishness
Is such a big mistake.

I have a plan to shock him
Into realising this fact
And seeing for himself
That there's a proper way to act.

I want him, in his heart, to know
That sharing just a pound
Can lift the corners of a smile
And help the world go round."

Miss Oak sat down at lunch time
To compose a little note
And as she read it to herself
She gently cleared her throat:

“Dear Mrs. Smith, I hope you’re well
But now let me begin –
In sparring with your son today
I found I couldn’t win

What happened was he’d plain refused
To share his paints with Sue
And I tried to convince him
Of the decent thing to do

But Anthony could not be moved
And once our chat was finished
He still refused Sue blankly
With conviction undiminished

Permit me to explain
How your assistance in this matter
Could teach our friend to reach out more
And make his ego flatter

Right here I’ll add, respectfully,
I’m sure you’ve trained him well
But he’s of independent mind
As anyone can tell!

Now, here’s the game, it’s quite insane,
But if we see success
Next time our dear boy’s asked to share
He’s likely to say “yes!”

When he comes home from school today
And takes a little snack
Just look him in the face and say:
“You put my biscuit back!

That biscuit’s mine, I bought it,
If you want one, buy your own,
I’m eating the whole packet
After supper, all alone

And I’ll not share with you because
I bought them for myself
So leave them there and don’t you dare
Remove them from the shelf!”

And if he turns the T.V on
Just laugh out loud and say
“I bought that television
So it’s mine to watch all day!

But if I wish it to be off
That’s also up to me
So switch it off at once, dear boy,
That there is my T.V.!”

If Anthony dares lift the phone
To call his friend in town
Just tell him straight: “That’s my phone, mate,
So kindly put it down.

I bought the phone and pay the bills
You, therefore, have no right
To pick it up and make a call
Not morning, noon or night!”

The lesson is, of course
That in this life we’re always sharing
And sometimes without thinking
And sometimes without caring

But that is what life’s all about
For I have always held
That sharing starts from knowing
That we have to share the world.”

Well, Mrs. Smith did all of this
And, though not over night,
Her Anthony did come to see
At last, Miss Oak was right.

He knew, at last, how much it hurt
To be denied a favour
And, with remorse, he took away
A lesson that he’d savour.

And Anthony became a boy
Whose kindness was admired
While he was grateful
That his Mum and teacher had conspired

We see that sharing happily
Is quite the thing to do –
Which is just what made me want
To share this little tale with you.