

situated at a short distance up from the shore. Their father and mother had gone to travel abroad that summer and had left them in care of their former nurse, Hannah, now the housekeeper, with the occasional supervision of an uncle, who came down from the city two or three times a week just to assure himself that all was well with his nephews.

Upon the particular morning when this story opens the ocean was of a deep aquamarine blue reflected from the cloudless sky above, while the beach, in contrast, stretched white and broad and smooth upward from the water. The incoming tide sent its wavelets, ever increasing, until they should later reach a mountainous height. Though the hour was very early, the boys were already upon the shore, where Fred and his brother Harry were hard at work digging a tunnel in the sand. Ben and Paddy stood near, watching that operation with interest, though taking no part in its progress. Their lives had been too strenuous for them to waste their energies in so futile a construction, which the first big wave would ruth-