



They called him the Wizard of Menlo Park. He turned darkness into light; made a machine talk; brought pictures to life—through the magic of electricity and hard work.







He settled in Milan, Ohio, and sent for his family.

What a pretty house!

I've opened a lumberyard and business is good.



Thomas Alva Edison was born there on February 11, 1847.

Your wife's fine, and you have a new son!

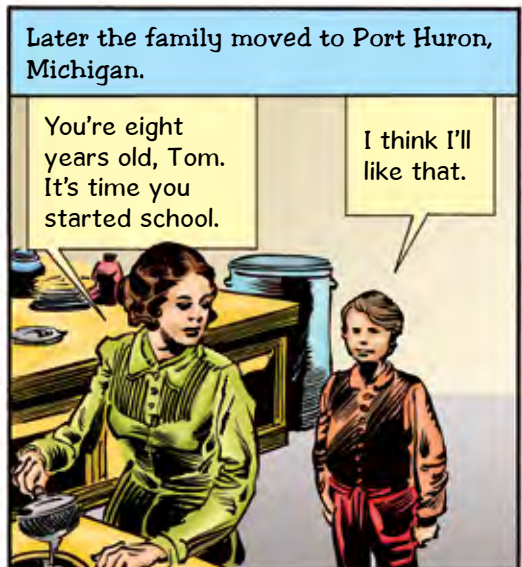
Thank God! We lost our three youngest. Nancy has longed for a baby.



He has an awfully big head! Will he grow into it?

Nonsense! He's perfect! Give him to me.

And his mother would always stand up for him.



Later the family moved to Port Huron, Michigan.

You're eight years old, Tom. It's time you started school.

I think I'll like that.

But he didn't. One morning, three months later, he rushed home.

I'm never going back to that school! I heard the teacher say I'm addle-headed and can't learn anything.

Why did he say such a thing?

I think it's because I ask why and want to know instead of just memorizing.



Tom's mother went to see the teacher.

I've been a teacher. I know Tom is a bright boy. If you can't teach him, I don't think much of your methods.

But Mrs. Edison ...



Tom never went back to school. His mother taught him every day.

Today we are going to read *The Merchant of Venice*, a play by William Shakespeare.

What's a merchant, Mother? And where is Venice?

That's right, son. Always ask "why" when you don't understand. That's the best way to learn.

