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TOM SAWYER

A Comedy in Two Acts

by

TIM KELLY

Adapted and Dramatized
From the Classic American Novel
of Mark Twain

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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TIM KELLY

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(TOM SAWYER)

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Here’s an exciting new adaptation of Mark Twain’s famous tale about the good bad boy Tom Sawyer and all his friends. Packed with adventure, mystery, and wonderful comedy it is designed for a simple yet effective production, complete with helpful notes to make rehearsals a source of fun.

All the familiar characters are here—Huckleberry Finn, Aunt Polly, Becky Thatcher, Widow Douglas, Muff Potter, Cousin Mary, and menacing Injun Joe. The action flows well, and scenes fly by in a lively fashion. The classic “fence-painting” scene, the school lessons from strict Mr. Dobbins, the eerie murder of Doc Robinson in the graveyard at midnight, the pirate journey to Jackson’s Island where buried treasure proves very dangerous, Tom’s side-splitting “funeral”—all these famous scenes from the immortal classic unfold in fascinating stage pictures.

In this basic one-set script special attention has been given to the female roles so that any director looking for a well-balanced cast will find it here. Also, the text has been arranged in such a fashion that the rehearsal schedule is both flexible and easy to manage.

Action-filled, spirited, and packed with laughter to delight both cast and audience, the play runs approximately 90 minutes. Suitable for proscenium or arena production, here is a box office champion by one of America’s best-known and most popular playwrights.

Characters

(9-11 men, 12 women, extras)

Susan Harper , a schoolgirl	Huck Finn , Tom's friend, a free spirit
Gracie Miller , another schoolgirl	Cousin Mary , Tom's relative
Muff Potter , town derelict	Judge Thatcher , new in town
Sheriff	Mrs. Thatcher , his wife
Injun Joe , dangerous	Becky , their daughter
Doc Robinson ,* young surgeon	Sally , another schoolgirl
Mrs. Walters , Sunday School superintendent	Ben Rogers , town boy
Widow Douglas , Aunt Polly's friend	Joe Harper , another town boy
Mrs. Harper , Joe's mother	Alfred Temple , another town boy
Amy Lawrence , another schoolgirl	Mr. Dobbins ,* schoolmaster
Aunt Polly , Tom's aunt	Reverend Sprague , minister
Tom Sawyer , always in trouble	Townspeople, children , as desired

*With a makeup change, whiskers, for example, the actor who portrays Doc Robinson can also assume the role of Reverend Sprague or a Townsman; or the actor portraying Dobbins, with different "personality" and makeup, might also portray Reverend Sprague or a Townsman.

Synopsis

The action of the play takes place in and around the town of St. Petersburg, Missouri. A basic set is described on p. 52.

ACT I

- Scene 1: Near the river
- Scene 2: The graveyard. Midnight
- Scene 3: The schoolhouse

ACT II

- Scene 1: Jackson's Island and Aunt Polly's house
- Scene 2: The church, the following morning
- Scene 3: Outside the jail. Night
- Scene 4: The graveyard. Next morning

This dramatization of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* was developed at the Van Nuys Actors Workshop, Youth Division, Van Nuys, Calif.

TOM SAWYER

By Tim Kelly

ACT I

Scene 1

[The stage represents an area close to a river embankment or levee. Upstage, ready for loading on some paddle boat, are barrels, boxes, crates. If possible, the "embankment" might be suggested by a sloping ramp or platform. A blue cyclorama with a painted steamboat somewhere in the distance would be effective, but it's not required. (NOTE: The barrels, boxes, crates remain in view during the entire play. However, this scenic element can be eliminated if the director chooses. If so, this opening sequence may be played on the open stage. The value of the barrels, boxes, and crates is that they establish the fact we are in "River Country.")]

Entrances and exits are Up Left, Left, Down Left, Up Right, Right, Down Right. Prior to curtain we hear the sound of a RIVER BOAT WHISTLE.

AT RISE: Some CITIZENS of the town promenade and go about their business. (Consult NOTES at back of playbook for suggestions on staging this opening sequence.)

SUSAN HARPER and GRACIE MILLER, adolescent girls, enter Right. SUSAN is playing "roll the hoop," rolling a hoop or wheel by hitting it with a stick. GRACIE follows]

GRACIE. Let me try, Susan. I'm better at it than you are.

SUSAN. My five minutes isn't up yet.

GRACIE. Yes, it is.

SUSAN. No, it isn't.

GRACIE. It's my turn.

SUSAN. In a second. *[SUSAN rolls the hoop or wheel with the stick off Left. GRACIE skips along, exits. MUFF POTTER, the town derelict, stumbles in Down Right. At the same time SHERIFF enters Down Left. He wears a badge on his vest]*

SHERIFF. I've been looking for you, Muff Potter. *[As SHERIFF crosses Down Center, MUFF dutifully steps to him]*

MUFF. I ain't done nothing wrong, Sheriff. Honest I ain't. Folks always think I make trouble.

SHERIFF. You've been sneaking into the Widow Douglas's barn. Sleeping there. She don't like it. I've warned you about that before.

MUFF. I only gets in there when it rains.

SHERIFF. Find some other place to stay dry.

MUFF. [*Humbly*] Yes, Sheriff. I'll do that, Sheriff.

SHERIFF. See that you do. [*SHERIFF steps upstage to speak with some citizen(s). MUFF mumbles to himself, befuddled*]

MUFF. Everybody picking on old Muff. I ain't done nothing real bad. Life sure is hard. [*INJUN JOE, a mean-looking customer, enters Down Right*]

INJUN JOE. What did the sheriff want?

MUFF. Don't want me to sleep in the Widow Douglas's barn no more. I wish I had me some money, Joe.

INJUN JOE. You'd only drink it.

MUFF. Ain't seen a copper penny in almost a week. You got any money?

INJUN JOE. If I had money I wouldn't be standing here talking to the likes of you. [*DOC ROBINSON, a young surgeon carrying a medical bag, enters Down Left. INJUN JOE sees him, grins unpleasantly, whispers to Muff*] Maybe we're going to get some money.

MUFF. Don't see how.

INJUN JOE. You will. [*Voice up*] Good day to you, young Doctor Robinson. [*DOC ROBINSON stops, stiffens, answers coolly*]

DOC ROBINSON. Good day, Injun Joe.

INJUN JOE. Real sorry to hear they're burying poor old Hoss Williams this morning. [*DOC ROBINSON is uncomfortable talking with Injun Joe, looks nervously over his shoulder to see if anyone is watching*]

DOC ROBINSON. I did everything I could to save him.

INJUN JOE. [*With hidden meaning*] I was wondering if you might have some work for me?

DOC ROBINSON. [*Sotto, but sharp*] Tonight. The usual place.

INJUN JOE. Whatever you say, Doctor.

DOC ROBINSON. And don't keep me waiting. [*Anxious to get away, DOC ROBINSON exits Right. GRACIE enters Left propelling the hoop or wheel with the stick. SUSAN skips alongside her. They move across stage and exit Right*]

MUFF. Oh, Joe, I don't know if I want to go grave robbing. Every time I help you do that I have bad dreams. [*SHERIFF is watching them*]

INJUN JOE. You want money for a bottle, don't you? [*MUFF nods*]

Then do what you're told. Don't forget the shovel this time. [*Notices Sheriff*] Careful. [*MUFF notices Sheriff, too. INJUN JOE exits Down Right. MUFF exits Down Left as MRS. WALTERS, WIDOW DOUGLAS, and MRS. HARPER stroll in Left and move downstage. SHERIFF exits Up Right*]

WIDOW DOUGLAS. It's a pity your stay in St. Petersburg is so brief, Mrs. Walters. It isn't often we have such a distinguished visitor.

MRS. WALTERS. I had hoped to present the Bible prize next Sunday, but as I'll be in St. Louis, Mr. Dobbins and the Reverend Sprague suggested I make the award at the schoolhouse before I leave. That way we'd be sure all the children are present.

MRS. HARPER. The boys and girls will be thrilled. I wonder who will win the prize? Maybe my boy, Joe.

MRS. WALTERS. That boy or girl who has the most yellow tickets will win.

MRS. HARPER. Yellow tickets? I don't understand.

MRS. WALTERS. Whenever a Sunday school pupil recites a verse correctly, he or she is given a red ticket. So many red tickets can be exchanged for a blue ticket. When a pupil has ten blue tickets they can be exchanged for a yellow ticket.

MRS. HARPER. Whoever has the most yellow tickets wins?

MRS. WALTERS. Exactly.

WIDOW DOUGLAS. Ain't that clever. [*AMY LAWRENCE, carrying schoolbooks, enters Down Right. She's bright and pretty*]

AMY. 'Morning, Widow Douglas, 'morning, Mrs. Harper, 'morning, Mrs. Walters.

WOMEN. 'Morning, Amy.

AMY. Everyone's mighty excited about that Bible prize.

MRS. WALTERS. Perhaps you'll be the winner, Amy.

AMY. I hope so.

MRS. HARPER. Good luck.

AMY. Thank you, Mrs. Harper.

WIDOW DOUGLAS. Don't lose your yellow tickets.

AMY. I won't.

[*MRS. WALTERS, WIDOW DOUGLAS, and MRS. HARPER exit Right as the voice of AUNT POLLY is heard offstage Down Left*]

AUNT POLLY. Tom! Tom Sawyer! [*AUNT POLLY enters. She's a nice woman who finds her young nephew a bit much to handle. She holds a switch*]

AUNT POLLY. *Tom!*

AMY. 'Morning, Aunt Polly. Tom been up to mischief again? [*AUNT POLLY crosses to Amy*]

AUNT POLLY. He's my own dead sister's boy and I dearly love him, Amy, but he's a handful. He's been into my jam closet again. I caught a glimpse of him climbing over the back fence.

AMY. You're not going to switch him for stealing jam?

AUNT POLLY. He broke the jar. Drat that boy. [*She turns and crosses Left*] Thomas! Thomas Sawyer! *Tom!* [*She exits and, as soon as she does, TOM SAWYER zooms in from Down Right*]

TOM. Wow! She almost caught me. [*TOM is a boyish hero, always up to mischief. He wears a straw hat and is barefooted. His shirt is buttoned all the way up to the neck. A strand of black thread hangs beneath the collar. Over his shoulder he carries a small sack*]

AMY. Tom Sawyer, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You played hooky from school today. You'll get it from Mr. Dobbins.

TOM. I ain't 'fraid of Mr. Dobbins.

AMY. I am. So's everyone else. What makes you so special?

TOM. Hey, Amy, I'll trade you what I got in this sack for one of your yellow tickets.

AMY. You're supposed to earn those tickets. Not fair to trade for them.

TOM. All I want is one.

AMY. [*Flirting*] I don't know . . . Maybe. [*Then*] What's in the sack? [*TOM puts the sack to the ground, reaches in and pulls out a dead rat by its tail*]

TOM. Ain't it a beauty?

AMY. *A rat! Eeeeeek! A rat! A rat!* [*Screaming, AMY rushes out Up Right. TOM shouts after her*]

TOM. Amy, ain't no call to go carrying on! [*Philosophically to himself*] Girls is sure funny. [*HUCK FINN climbs out of a barrel or crate Up Center. He's about Tom's age, maybe taller. He wears ragged clothing, no shoes, has no home, no family. Since he leads a carefree life, he's the envy of every boy in town*]

HUCK. Ain't easy trying to catch a nap in this town. That's a fact.

TOM. Hello, Huckleberry.

HUCK. Hello yourself. I got much better than a dead rat. Dead rats is plumb common.

TOM. I expect. [*Pops rat back into sack as HUCK reaches into crate*]

or barrel and produces his own sack. TOM ties a knot in the top of the rat sack and spins it around his head like a sling and sends it flying off-stage Right] Timber! [*HUCK crosses to Tom with his sack*] What's that you got?

HUCK. Dead cat.

TOM. I reckon a dead cat's worth more than a dead rat. What you going to do with your dead cat, Huck?

HUCK. Cure warts with it. I play with frogs so much I always got considerable warts. What a body has to do is take this here cat to the graveyard when it's midnight.

TOM. Midnight? [*Entranced*] What if you see a ghost?

HUCK. What if you do? Only it ain't a ghost that shows up, it's a devil.

TOM. [*Fascinated*] Devil?

HUCK. Uh-huh. Maybe two, maybe more. Devils always show up when somebody wicked is buried.

TOM. Some folks say Hoss Williams was wicked.

HUCK. When them devils show up you heave your cat after them and say, "Devil follow corpse, cat follow devil, warts follow cat, I'm a-done with ye!"

TOM. [*Interested*] When you going to the graveyard, Huck?

HUCK. Tonight. You can come along, 'less you're afeared.

TOM. [*Boasting*] Tom Sawyer ain't afeared of no devils. Tom Sawyer ain't afeared of nothing. [*HUCK exits Left as Tom's cousin, MARY, hurries in Down Right*]

COUSIN MARY. Tom, Aunt Polly is searching everywhere for you.

TOM. On account of a little jam?

COUSIN MARY. You broke a jar. And I know you didn't go to school today.

TOM. Seems like folks know more about my business than I do. You ain't going to tell Aunt Polly about me playing hooky?

COUSIN MARY. I wouldn't do a thing like that, but you've got to promise to behave. When you see Aunt Polly you apologize about the jar right away. Maybe she won't punish you.

TOM. Shucks, Cousin Mary, I ain't afraid of punishment. [*As COUSIN MARY and TOM talk, a small family group enters Left and promenades across the stage: JUDGE THATCHER, MRS. THATCHER, and their pretty daughter BECKY, wearing a fetching hat and ribbon. When TOM sees her it is love at first sight. He stares at Becky like a moon-struck calf*]

COUSIN MARY. Tom, what's the matter with you? You look like a dog what took sick. *[With his mouth open and his neck stretched out, TOM continues to stare at Becky. She notices, smiles warmly. Overwhelmed, TOM clasps his hand to his heart and drops to his knees in admiration]* Tom, you gone crazy? *[BECKY stops, looks at Tom, giggles. MRS. THATCHER calls back]*

MRS. THATCHER. Come along, Becky.

JUDGE THATCHER. Mustn't dawdle.

BECKY. No, Papa. *[Primpy, BECKY marches behind her parents. TOM watches her depart, fascinated]*

TOM. I reckon she's the purtiest girl I ever did see.

COUSIN MARY. You're acting foolish. Get up, get up. *[He stands]*

TOM. Never seen them folks before.

COUSIN MARY. That's Mr. and Mrs. Thatcher and their daughter. He's the new judge.

TOM. What's the daughter's name?

COUSIN MARY. Didn't you hear Mrs. Thatcher? Her name's Becky. *[Again, TOM puts his hand over his heart, enraptured]*

TOM. Becky. Becky Thatcher. That's a wonderful name for a girl, ain't it? I reckon that's the purtiest name there is.

COUSIN MARY. As good a name as any, I guess. *[AUNT POLLY returns, Left]*

AUNT POLLY. There you are, Tom!

TOM. Ooooooooooh! *[He starts to run off Right]*

AUNT POLLY. Thomas Sawyer, you stay right where you are! *[TOM freezes]*

COUSIN MARY. Quick! Apologize. *[TOM crosses to meet Aunt Polly Down Center. He doffs his straw hat]*

TOM. Gosh, Aunt Polly, I'm real sorry about breaking that jar. Honest injun, I am.

AUNT POLLY. How many times have I told you to stay out of my preserves closet?

TOM. I only took a taste.

AUNT POLLY. That's not the point. You disobeyed me.

COUSIN MARY. Tom's getting too big for a switching, Aunt Polly.

TOM. Cousin Mary's right. I'd listen to Cousin Mary if I was you, Aunt.

AUNT POLLY. Well, you ain't me. Run along, Mary. I'll have a word with Thomas.

COUSIN MARY. I'll set the table for supper. [*COUSIN MARY exits Down Right. AUNT POLLY gives Tom a cold eye. He's uncomfortable*]

AUNT POLLY. [*Suspicious*] Powerful warm today, isn't it, Thomas?

TOM. Yes, Aunt Polly.

AUNT POLLY. You look peculiar. You feeling guilty about something?

TOM. Just that when you call me Thomas I know I've done something wrong.

AUNT POLLY. You don't say. Was warm in school this morning, I reckon.

TOM. Yes'm.

AUNT POLLY. Didn't you want to go swimming?

TOM. No'm—well, not much. [*She checks the thread at his collar*]

AUNT POLLY. I sewed your shirt this morning with white thread. How come it's black now?

TOM. [*Realizes he's trapped*] Ooooooooooh.

AUNT POLLY. I'll tell you why. You tore your shirt off and went swimming and sewed it up again so I wouldn't know. [*She grabs him by the ear*] I'll fix you.

TOM. Oh! Oh! Oh, Aunt Polly! You're hurting my ear.

AUNT POLLY. What are you complaining about? You got two of them, ain't you?

[Holding onto his ear, AUNT POLLY pulls the protesting Tom offstage Right: "Ow, ow, ow!" As they exit, BEN ROGERS and SALLY enter Up Left and resume a game of tag, running around the crates and barrels, eventually running offstage Up Left. At the same time some actors push a section of a picket fence onstage Down Right. (NOTE: Actors will perform the few stagehand duties in full view of the audience. This is "part of the show." Just which actors move what prop is left to the director's discretion.) MUFF POTTER enters Left. He carries a shovel over his shoulder. In the other hand he holds a lantern. Exits. If more time is needed to position the picket fence section, GRACIE and SUSAN might cross the stage with their hoop and stick. JOE HARPER enters Right and crosses the stage pretending to be a steamboat]

JOE HARPER. Ship up to back! Ting-a-ling-ling! Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! Ch-chow-wow! Chow! Let your outside turn over slow! Ting-a-ling-ling! [*He exits Left. We hear the voice of AUNT POLLY from offstage Down Right*]

AUNT POLLY. You'll whitewash my fence and you'll whitewash it good.

TOM. *[Offstage]* Oh, Aunt Polly.

AUNT POLLY. *[Offstage]* Don't you "Oh, Aunt Polly" me!

TOM. *[Offstage]* I think I've got a toothache. *[AUNT POLLY enters Down Right. (NOTE: The ACTOR/STAGEHANDS will exit "in character" when the fence is in place.)]*

AUNT POLLY. Toothache? Rubbish. It's another excuse to get out of honest work. *[TOM enters Down Right. He carries a bucket of white-wash and some paint brushes]*

TOM. Hurts something awful.

AUNT POLLY. Put down that bucket. Let me see. *[He puts down the bucket, opens his mouth. AUNT POLLY inspects, probes with a finger]* That one . . . ? That one . . . ? *[TOM shakes his head]* That one . . . ? That one . . . ? *[TOM continues to shake his head]* This one?

TOM. Ow! *[TOM hops about]*

AUNT POLLY. Stop hopping about. I'll have that loose tooth out in no time and you can get on with your chores. *[She produces some thread]* Open your mouth.

TOM. *[Alarmed]* It's feeling much better already.

AUNT POLLY. Open! *[TOM obeys. AUNT POLLY twines the thread around some tooth. Next, she produces a thimble and puts it on her finger]*

TOM. Aunt Polly, don't hit me with that thimble. It hurts something wicked.

AUNT POLLY. Hush up. *[AUNT POLLY cracks Tom on the forehead with the thimble. TOM jumps back]*

TOM. Ow! *[When TOM jumps back, the "tooth" pops out (consult Production Notes)]*

AUNT POLLY. Now you're good as new. *[TOM rubs his cheek sorrowfully]*

TOM. I reckon. *[Again, AUNT POLLY dips into her apron, this time producing a small bottle of medicine and a spoon. Still rubbing his cheek, TOM stares fearfully at the bottle]* What you got there, Aunt Polly? Looks like medicine.

AUNT POLLY. 'Tis medicine. I was saving it for later. Now is as good a time as any. I sent away for it. It's a new pain-killer. Open up. *[She undoes the cap and pours some liquid into the spoon]*

TOM. Gosh, Aunt Polly, ain't I had enough misery with the tooth?

AUNT POLLY. Hush up, hush up. Take your medicine.

TOM. Leave it here, Aunt Polly. I'll take it later.

AUNT POLLY. No, you won't. You'll give it to the cat like last time.

TOM. Aw, gee, Aunt Polly—

AUNT POLLY. No more arguing.

TOM. I hate medicine—I— *[Too late! With his mouth open to say "I,"*

AUNT POLLY shoves the spoon in his mouth]

AUNT POLLY. Don't you spit it out. Swallow! *[TOM makes a horrible face, swallows. Then, he makes an even more horrible face when he experiences the after-taste]*

TOM. Ugh! That pain-killer was poison, I bet.

AUNT POLLY. Don't talk nonsense. *[Points to bucket]* Get busy. *[She exits Right]*

TOM. *[Still rubbing his cheek]* Aunt Polly sure is hard on a fella. *[With no enthusiasm, TOM dips a brush into the bucket of paint and begins to whitewash a picket. JOE HARPER returns, Left]*

JOE HARPER. Ship to back! Ting-a-ling-ling! Set her back on the stabboard! Ting-a-ling-ling! Chow! *[Continuing his impersonation of a steamboat, he works his way to Tom, stops, watches the whitewashing, miffed because Tom is paying no attention to him]* Hey, Tom, didn't you hear me? I was pretending I was a paddle boat drawing nine feet of water. I'm going swimming. I bet you wish you could go swimming. *[ALFRED TEMPLE enters Down Left. He cautiously walks toward the fence, listening to the conversation. TOM continues painting without paying any attention to the visitors]* But you'd rather work—wouldn't you? 'Course you would. Ha-ha. Poor Tom, poor Tom. Ha-ha-ha.

TOM. *[Surveying his last touch with the eye of an artist, then giving an especially artistic stroke]* What do you call work?

JOE HARPER. Whitewashing that fence.

TOM. Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer.

ALFRED. 'Course it's work. Any fool can see that. *[Tension crackles]*

TOM. I bet I can knock you down, Alfred Temple.

ALFRED. Try it.

TOM. I can do it.

ALFRED. No, you can't.

TOM. Can.

ALFRED. Can't.

TOM. Can!

JOE HARPER. [*Shifting in mood*] Tom, you mean you *like* whitewashing that fence?

TOM. Like it? Well, I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. Does a boy get a chance to whitewash a fence every day?

JOE HARPER. I didn't think about that. [*TOM continues to whitewash, sweeping his brush daintily back and forth, stepping back to note the effect, adding a touch here and there. Both JOE HARPER and ALFRED are intrigued. BEN enters Down Left eating an apple. He, too, watches the fence painting. TOM hums happily as he moves the brush*] Hey, Tom, let me whitewash a little.

TOM. [*Considers a moment, is about to consent, but changes his mind*] No—it wouldn't hardly do. Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence. I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's got to be done.

BEN. Let me try, Tom. I'll give you the core of my apple.

TOM. [*Stops, thinks*] I don't know, Ben.

BEN. I'll give you *all* of it.

TOM. It's a deal! [*With reluctance in his face but delight in his heart, TOM holds out the brush for BEN, who crosses over and immediately begins to whitewash after handing Tom what's left of the apple*]

JOE HARPER. Let me do some.

TOM. I dunno . . .

JOE HARPER. I'll give you my lucky marble. It's all blue and you can see right through it. [*JOE HARPER takes out a blue marble*] Have a look. [*TOM takes the marble and holds it up to the sunlight*] Ain't it purty?

TOM. I reckon. But—

JOE HARPER. I'll give you my last yellow ticket from Sunday School.

TOM. Okay.

JOE HARPER. Golly, this is going to be fun! [*Overjoyed, he gives yellow ticket to Tom, gets a brush from the bucket and also begins to whitewash*]

ALFRED. I'll give you two jawbreakers if you let me whitewash. I don't see why everyone else should have all the fun.

TOM. What flavors?

ALFRED. One's grape and one's root beer.

TOM. Deal. [*TOM holds out his hand and ALFRED gives him the jawbreakers*] Start at the other end. There's another bucket and brush by the lilac bush.

ALFRED. Oh, boy! [*ALFRED goes behind the picket fence and off Right. As JOE HARPER and BEN whitewash they slowly move out of sight, supposedly whitewashing the unseen stretch of fence. BECKY THATCHER wanders in from Up Right, twirling a parasol. As TOM studies the jawbreakers, yellow ticket, and marble, he munches the apple. BECKY stands to the left of him, closes the parasol, strikes a pose*]

BECKY. Your name's Tom Sawyer. Mrs. Harper told my mother all about you. Mrs. Harper says you lead your Aunt Polly a merry chase and you're always getting into trouble. [*Once again, TOM is struck dumb by the presence of such loveliness. He stares wide-eyed at Becky, a foolish lovesick grin on his face. Not knowing what else to do, he holds out the half-eaten apple*]

TOM. Want a bite? [*BECKY steps to him and stares at the apple*]

BECKY. No, thank you. It looks kind of mushy. I don't like mushy apples.

TOM. Your name's Becky Thatcher, ain't it?

BECKY. Uh-huh. All the way from St. Louis on the river packet. First class. [*TOM is desperately searching for something to say, settles for:*]

TOM. Do you like rats?

BECKY. No, I don't care much for rats. What I like is chewing gum.

TOM. Oh, I should say so. I wish I had some now.

BECKY. Do you? I've got some. I'll let you chew it awhile, but you must give it back. [*She takes the gum from her mouth and gives it to him. He chews happily and loudly*]

TOM. Was you ever at the circus? [*TOM is desperately trying to impress Becky. He puts down his "loot" and performs a few tricks as he converses; e.g., a cartwheel, a tumble, balancing on one foot, etc. BECKY, cool, pretends not to notice his efforts*]

BECKY. No.

TOM. I been to the circus three or four times.

BECKY. That's nice.

TOM. Want to see the space where my tooth was? [*He shows her*]

BECKY. Does it hurt?

TOM. Not much. I'm going to be a clown when I grow up.

BECKY. I don't care much for clowns.

TOM. Say, Becky, was you ever engaged?

BECKY. What's that?

TOM. Why, engaged to be married.

BECKY. No.

TOM. Would you like to?

BECKY. I don't know. What's it like?

TOM. Why it ain't like anything. You tell a boy you won't ever let anybody but him give you a kiss and then you kiss and that's all.

BECKY. Oh, you bad thing! *[She turns abruptly away. After a moment—which seems like an eternity of misery to Tom—she slowly turns to face him]* Why do you have to kiss?

TOM. That's what you do when you love somebody.

BECKY. You mean you love me?

TOM. *[Bashfully, TOM digs at the ground with his toe]* I reckon. Now, you have to tell me you love me and give me a kiss. That means we're engaged.

BECKY. I'll whisper it. You turn your face away so you can't see. *[TOM is happy, beams]*

TOM. Okay. *[He turns his face away. BECKY steps to Tom and whispers into his ear—"I—love—you"]* Golly! *[Embarrassed, she springs away, covering her face. TOM does another cartwheel or tumble to express his joy. When she sees that he's not chasing her she stops. He hops to her on one foot]*

BECKY. Promise not to tell anybody.

TOM. Promise. Now the kiss. *[She hides her face again]* Please don't be afraid. It ain't nothing at all. *[He tugs at her hands to uncover her face. BECKY shuts her eyes. TOM kisses her gingerly on the lips or cheek]* You ain't ever to love anybody but me. Ain't ever to marry anybody but me.

BECKY. *[Dreamily]* I'll never love anybody but you, Tom. And you ain't ever to marry anybody but me.

TOM. Certainly. Of course. That's part of it. Being engaged is special. Why, when me and Amy Lawrence was engaged—*[Her big eyes tell Tom that he has blundered]*

BECKY. What! You mean I'm not the first girl you've been engaged to? *[She begins to cry]*

TOM. Don't cry, Becky. I don't care for her any more. Honest.

BECKY. *[Angry and hurt]* Tom Sawyer—

TOM. Yes, Becky?

BECKY. I hate you! *[Fighting to hold back her tears, BECKY runs off Left]*

TOM. Becky! *[Disappointed]* Ah, rats! *[Then:]* Who needs girls anyway? *[Calls Right]* Aunt Polly! Can I go swimming?

AUNT POLLY. *[From offstage Right]* Not until that fence is white-washed. *[She enters, wiping her hands on her apron]* You ain't hardly started.

TOM. Yes, I have.

AUNT POLLY. How much have you done?

TOM. It's all done.

AUNT POLLY. Tom, don't lie to me. I can't bear it.

TOM. I ain't, Aunt. It is all done. *[Points to pickets]* See? *[AUNT POLLY is amazed, steps to fence]*

AUNT POLLY. Well I never. *[ALFRED enters in front of the fence]*

ALFRED. I don't think helping you whitewash this fence was worth my blue marble *and* a yellow ticket. *[AUNT POLLY is furious at being tricked again]*

AUNT POLLY. *Thomas Sawyer!*

TOM. *[Points excitedly]* Look out! Behind you, Aunt Polly! *[Startled, AUNT POLLY turns]*

AUNT POLLY. Who? What? *[TOM takes advantage of the moment's distraction to scoop up his loot and escape, Left. AUNT POLLY turns around in time to see her nephew running off]* Tom! *[Sighs]* Hang the boy, can't I never learn anything? Ain't he played tricks enough like that on me to last a lifetime? I've got to punish him. I love the boy, dearly, but I've got to do some of my duty by him, or I'll be his ruination.

[As Aunt Polly speaks, the stage LIGHTING dims to suggest night time. ALFRED and ACTOR/STAGEHANDS strike the fence and set up cemetery scene (one or two tombstones). Shaking her head at Tom's mischief, AUNT POLLY exits right]

Scene 2

[The graveyard. Midnight. The LIGHTS are still dim. THUNDER is heard. A STORM is in the making. The boxes, barrels, and crates up-stage take on weird shapes in the dim light. The ACTOR/STAGEHANDS who brought on the tombstones slink off like ghostly shadows. More THUNDER. Cautiously, DOC ROBINSON enters from Right. He steps to the marker and stares at the "grave." He checks his pocket watch in the near-darkness, squinting to see]

DOC ROBINSON. Five minutes after twelve. Where are they? *[He looks Right]* Joe? *[He looks Left]* Joe? *[He returns watch to his pocket,*