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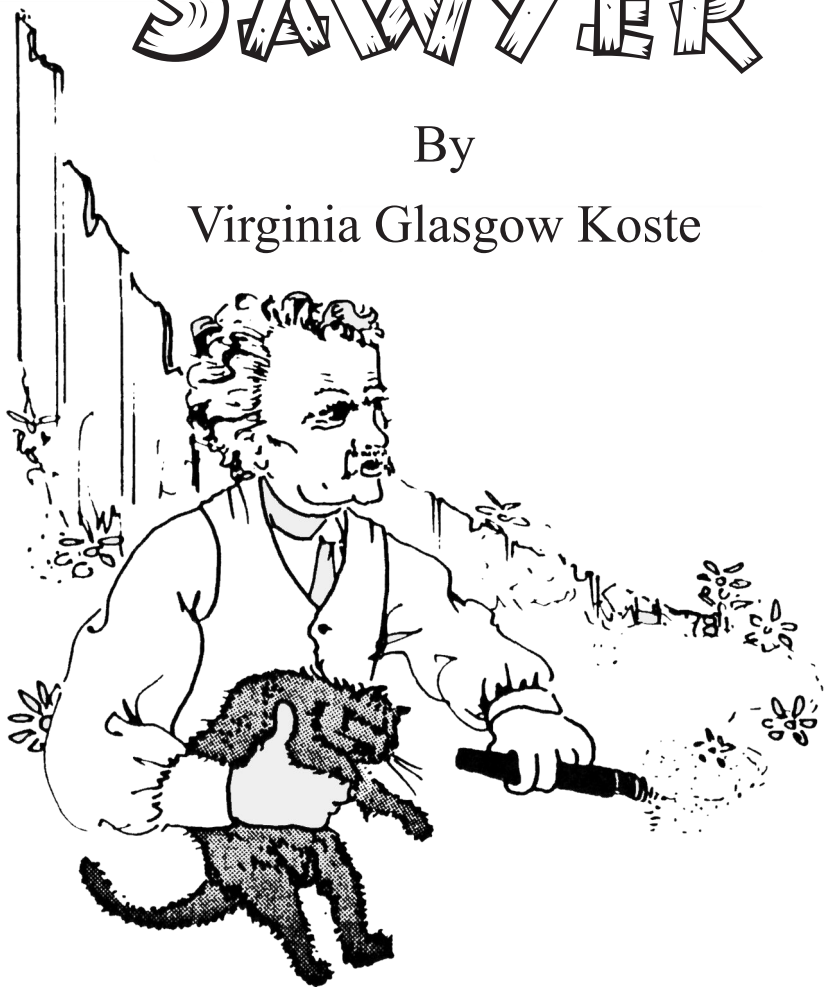
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## **Family Plays**

# THE TRIAL OF TOM SAWYER

By  
Virginia Glasgow Koste



# THE TRIAL OF TOM SAWYER

First production by the Eastern Michigan University Children's Theatre. A fresh dramatization of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

**Drama/Comedy. Adapted by Virginia Glasgow Koste. From Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.** *Cast: 18m., 8w., or 13 minimum (8m., 5w.) with doubling.* As the title suggests, the play dramatically focuses on the inner conflict of Tom one long summer ago—a warm season of ripening, when the boy Tom proves his manhood and the man (Mark Twain as narrator) relives his boyhood. Tom moves through the whitewash work/play enterprise and the school whipping, establishing his bravery in the young world, into the graveyard murder and climactic trial which tests his courage in the old world of life and death itself. Along the way is the escape into the play world of Jackson Island and the happiest funeral in all literature as the “drowned” listen to their own eulogies. *Five simple sets Mid-19th-century American costumes. Approximate running time: 95 minutes (without intermission).* Code: TN2

## Family Plays

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The Trial of Tom Sawyer  
(Koste)

**THE TRIAL  
OF  
TOM SAWYER**

*by*

**VIRGINIA GLASGOW KOSTE**

**A Play from Mark Twain's  
*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer***

**Family Plays**

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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“Produced by special arrangement with  
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**For my father,  
who—like Sam Clemens—kept right on playing,  
and somehow made a living by it.**

## *Synopsis of Scenes*

**Time:** About 1845, summertime.  
**Place:** St. Petersburg, Missouri, and thereabouts.

### *ACT I*

- Scene I:** The front yard of Tom's house, and the street. Beginning of summer, a Friday noon in June.  
**Scene 2:** The same, that evening.  
**Scene 3:** The same, on Saturday.  
**Scene 4:** The same, on Monday morning.  
**Scene 5:** The schoolhouse, later that morning.  
**Scene 6:** The graveyard, that midnight.  
**Scene 7:** The same, the next day.

### *ACT II*

- Scene I:** "Outside" – a day in early June.  
**Scene 2:** Jackson's Island, three days later.  
**Scene 3:** The church, a couple of days later.  
**Scene 4:** The courthouse on a day in mid-August.  
**Scene 5:** "Outside" — End of summer.

**See appendix for detailed synopsis  
of each scene of the play.**

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(in order of appearance)*

**Mark Twain, Narrator**

**Johnny Miller**

**Billy Fisher**

**The Reverend Mr. Sprague**

**Mrs. Sprague**

**Sereny Harper**

**Susan Harper**

**Gracie Miller**

**Huckleberry Finn**

**Becky**

**Tom Sawyer**

**Aunt Polly**

**Alfred Temple**

**Sid Sawyer**

**Ben Rogers**

**Joe Harper**

**Mr. Dobbins, Schoolmaster**

**Amy Lawrence**

**Doc Robinson**

**Muff Potter**

**Injun Joe**

**Mrs. Thatcher**

**Lawyer Riverson, Prosecuting Attorney**

**Lawyer Lawson, Defense Attorney**

**Sheriff**

**Judge Thatcher**



(This play, like all plays, has enjoyed a unique birth and infancy. It is appropriate, because of the creative chronology of this work, to credit those who staged the first production, and those who first staged the work now published.)

April 2, 1965

**QUIRK THEATRE**

The Eastern Michigan University Children's Theatre

presents

**THE TRIAL OF TOM SAWYER**

Dramatized and Directed by Virginia Glasgow Koste

Designed by George Bird

**CAST**

(In order of appearance)

Mark Twain, Narrator.....	Maraman Glossenger
Johnny Miller.....	Nelson Brown
Billy Fisher.....	Mark Buxton
Minister's Wife.....	April Smith
Minister.....	Kenton Struppa
Mrs. Harper.....	Betty Burrows
Susan Harper.....	Stephanie Blume
Gracie Miller.....	Jamie McDaniel
Huckleberry Finn.....	Charles Hogan
Becky Thatcher.....	Sally Ogden
Tom Sawyer.....	Richard Katon (3 performances) Richard Worswick (4 performances)
Aunt Polly.....	Leona Glossenger
Alfred Temple.....	Steven McCarthy
Sid Sawyer.....	Gregory Johnston
Ben Rogers.....	Kenneth Sharrock
Joe Harper.....	Walter Taylor
Mr. Dobbins, Schoolmaster.....	Jerry Lee

Amy Lawrence..... Ann Keller  
 Doc Robinson..... James Taylor  
 Muff Potter ..... Dale Bellaire  
 Injun Joe..... David Dascola  
 Mrs. Thatcher ..... Linda Barker  
 Prosecuting Attorney..... Michael Job  
 Defense Attorney ..... Dennis Lake  
 Sheriff ..... Charles Reinhold  
 Judge Thatcher ..... Terry Dean

**Production Staff**

Stage Manager ..... Joan Rupert  
 Technical Assistant..... Pamela Kidwell  
 Construction Crew ..... Joyce Cusmano,  
   Marie Miller, co-heads; Max Devolder, Eric Vogel,  
   Carolyn Carter, Pat McElliott, Cal Schmucker  
 Stage Crew ..... Max DeVolder,  
   Marie Miller, Eric Vogel, John Stanton.  
 Property Crew ..... Dennis Lake, head;  
   Janie Jackson, Mary Davidson, Diane Dresselhouse, Sarah Ferguson  
 Lighting Crew ..... Diane Bernick,  
   David Payne, co-heads; Max DeVolder, Patricia Jeffers.  
 Costume Crew ..... Carol Whistler, head;  
   Margaret Ockstadt, Barbara Brown, Ellen Tinker,  
   Marilyn Hodges, Dorothy Boardman.  
 Make-up Crew ..... Linda Barker,  
   Robert Evans, co-heads; Pamela Robinson, Michael Job, April Smith  
 Sound ..... Rosalyn Erat  
 Sound Recording ..... Duane Mrohs  
 House Managers..... Francine Fillinger, LeVerna Stilwell  
 Poster Design ..... Jane Bird  
 Assistant To The Director..... Thelma McDaniel

\* \* \* \* \*

February, 1972

QUIRK THEATRE

The Eastern Michigan University Theatre of the Young

presents

**THE TRIAL OF TOM SAWYER**

Dramatized by Virginia Glasgow Koste

from Mark Twain's

***THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER***

Directed by Virginia Koste

Scenery, Lighting Design, and Technical Direction by P. George Bird

Costume Design and Supervision by Dennis A. Parker

CAST

Mark Twain, Narrator .....	Charles Goll
Johnny Miller .....	David Myers
Joe Harper .....	Richard C. Underwood
Mrs. Sprague .....	J. Marina Wiedmann
Rev. Mr. Sprague .....	Thomas C. Van Aken
Mrs. Harper .....	Linda Gail Hornsby
Susan Harper .....	Anne Bird
Gracie Miller .....	Linda Kay Smith
Sally Rogers .....	Margaret Koste
Huckleberry Finn .....	Michael O. Carrington
Becky Thatcher .....	Holly Giffin
Tom Sawyer .....	Fred Keating
Aunt Polly .....	Bonita Anderson
Alfred Temple .....	J. Douglas James
Sid Sawyer .....	Thomas J. Scherer
Ben Rogers .....	Jim Siterlet
Billy Fisher .....	Greg L. Dobrin
Mr. Dobbins, Schoolmaster .....	Ned Walden
Amy Lawrence .....	Dee Nave

Doc Robinson . . . . . Richard Katon  
Muff Potter . . . . . Jim Filer  
Injun Joe . . . . . Kim Potter  
Mrs. Thatcher . . . . . Darlene Kaye McDonald  
Lawyer Riverson, Prosecution . . . . . Stephen H. Morse  
Lawyer Lawson, Defense . . . . . Dale Van Dorp  
Sheriff . . . . . Christopher M. Porter  
Judge Thatcher . . . . . Mark A. Willett

**PRODUCTION STAFF**

Stage Manager and Assistant to the Director . . . . . Kenneth R. McLeod  
Assistant Stage Manager . . . . . Jim Filer  
Technical Assistants . . . . . Bill Ebeling, Jack Raeburn  
Fight Coach . . . . . Fred Keating  
Painting and Construction Crew . . . . . Victoria Radke, Carol Studenka,  
co-heads; Jack Clark, Robin Flemming, Cliff Hoffer,  
Priscilla Hornberger, Pat Murphy, Mary Jo Tanguay,  
Brent Warren, Carolyn Wolf  
Stage Crew . . . . . Victoria Radke, Carol Studenka,  
co-heads; Jack Clark, Cliff Hoffer, Brent Warren, Carolyn Wolf  
Property Crew . . . . . Chuck Mercado, head;  
Judy Deleddo, Lynn Hall, Claudia Hill,  
Leslie Jones, Joan Steele  
Lighting Crew . . . . . Jeanne Dunham, Bill Ernie Taylor,  
co-heads; Phyllis Meli, Carla Van Laanen  
Costume Technicians . . . . . Dick Adams, Jeanne Dunham,  
Sherry Hayne, Linda Lyon, Randy Johnson  
Costume Construction . . . . . Bobbie Blank, Susan Major, co-heads;  
Cheryl Berteel, Chris Clason, Julie Gawenda  
Barbara Laughlin, Maria L. Pannozzo, Terry Tubbs  
Costume Crew . . . . . Bobbie Blank, Susan Major, co-heads;  
Cheryl Berteel, Chris Clason, Julie Gawenda  
Carol Gilbert, Hannah Hardy, Maria L. Pannozzo, Xina Stewart.  
Sound Operator . . . . . Cerene M. Tangalakis  
Make-up Crew . . . . . Linda McAllister, Judy Weiszer,  
co-heads; Pat Castro, Terry Dooley, Sue Fisher,  
Connie Friese, Marcia Fudge, Bari Gottfried,  
Sarah I. Krauss, Charlene Peck, Donelea Rock, Tom Van Aken  
Graphics . . . . . Jane Bird  
House Manager . . . . . Dennis Bowers  
Box Office . . . . . Bruce Belesky, Lauri Sheridan, Kim Weber

# FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

## ASSORTED PRODUCTION NOTES

The running time of the original production (in 1965) of this play in Quirk Theatre at Eastern Michigan University was about 95 minutes without intermission. The script is written, however, so that directors who prefer to can break the performance at the end of Act I with its natural climax and carry-over.

Sound effects and music are intrinsic to the play, not only transitionally between scenes to help sustain the forward flow of the action, but also as underscoring in some scenes. Selected, edited, timed and levelled with care, music and sound make layers of statements—physical, emotional, intellectual—that may equal visual language in dramatic power. For instance, this play begins with the haunting call of a Mississippi steamboat whistle out of the past; in that moment the place, the time and the mood begins. And could anyone do without the plaintive spirit of banjo and mouth-organ for Hannibal in 1845?

Each production will be unique in design and technical treatment. E. M. U. has the talented designer and technical director, George Bird, so I can't resist referring to some of his particular solutions (which, naturally, are better understood when illustrated by his slides, floor plans, and renderings). Of course, the play can be staged as simply as necessity demands. (One production of it was done by a sixth grade class.)

We were fortunate in having a gifted actor to play Mark Twain; in his ice-cream suit, with his inevitable cigar, he opened the show on the apron, with a bent-wood chair and a quick rapport with the audience. Of course, the river is placed out front—(who'd try to fake the Mississippi?!), and its presence must be felt from the beginning. When Twain reaches the point in his opening narration of asking us “to conjure up in our mind's eye the poor shabby village of St. Petersburg, Missouri,” the magical sound of his words is fused by the sight, as the curtain rises, of Tom's house and yard. This narrator does function as Stage Manager (as in, for example, *OUR TOWN*), but beyond that he is also the author of Tom and Huck and Muff Potter. From time to time Mark Twain observes and moves among the actors, always without their being in any way aware of his presence; occasionally he attempts to explain them or comment on their nature and behavior; more often he evokes a place for them to materialize in and sets them in motion, after which the momentum of their own characters

interplaying inevitably with the whole action, carries their lives along as strongly and surely as the river current. The personified presence of Mark Twain increases the play's dimensions theatrically as well as emotionally and intellectually. The subtlety of his looking on and back in amused and compassionate wonder at that part of himself that is Tom, enriches the play for those who are aware of it (and certainly shouldn't bother those who are not!).

The idea that Mark Twain is creating the whole environment as he goes along was visualized in our production by his gestured conjuring of set pieces as they flew in or out, rolled on or off, got rapidly rearranged by actors and crews, with lights being brought up or down in shifting focus on relevant areas in various stage depths — mostly in full view of the audience, and all sustained by appropriate music. The graveyard scene was played behind full scrim, with haunting effect. Tom's house, the schoolhouse, the church, and the courthouse, each had a different authentic structural outline, stylized and flown against the changing background of the cyclorama.

Of course, the same set of benches served each scene, variously used. In the school scene the children all faced front, with the master's desk behind them on a platform up center, and a central aisle; so that all of the children's carryings-on (rehearsed with improvised stretches within the scripted structure) could be fully seen by the audience, and the predatory, hulking presence of the master was heightened and centralized, as were the climactic confrontations.

The church scene was played also with the congregation facing front, for the full comic contrast between their keening and the shaggy, sheepish runaways upstage center in the front door. (The pulpit was down right, raked so that both congregation and audience could share the grandiloquence of the preacher's eulogy; he is too enraptured by his own artistry and too blinded by crocodile tears to see the boys until they began edgily shambling down the central aisle.)

The courthouse scene was played with the people facing up, for strong focus on witnesses and lawyers on the higher level centrally upstage. Most of the trial is written to be played in a stylized way, telescoping time, depersonalizing minor characters, in order to crystallize and summarize the action as does a movie or radio montage effect; these passages were all underscored by music to enhance the sense of compressed, dream-like time. Only the climactic dialogue between Tom and the defense attorney is played realistically. (This may sound odd, but it all worked. Children in their own dramatic play naturally perform this same psychological marvel; there is no need to be bound by any tedious adult conventions in children's theatre. In fact, it seems that much of American children's theatre is trapped back in Sardouledom while senile theatre—what shall we call it when we begin this perilous categorizing and labelling?—flies

ahead, experimenting in all directions. We can lead; why should we always follow? The young are equal to almost any imaginings.) Other parts of the play (e.g. the end of Act I) need to be played as memory or inner thought.

Because I first direct my own scripts (to find out how they work and so revise in rehearsal), and because I cherish the rights of all directors to discover and invent—in collaboration with their own unique actors—their own blocking and business, this script includes only minimal stage directions. When I read a script I find that I skip all of the directions (unless they were written by Shaw!), knowing that if we do the play here each moment will be translated into our own visual and acting details in the course of production.

For instance, in his opening narration, Mark Twain's line, "That brings us to the people," is the cue for an explosion of movement which brings the stage, the street to life; in our production one of the boys chased by a second streaked diagonally across the sedate path of the preacher and his wife, who then stopped momentarily to greet Mrs. Harper, carrying her baby and trying to keep her little girl in tow, etc. Huck, while Twain talks of him, tranquilly checks the connections between the hook and line of his fishing pole before continuing his cross straight off down right. When Tom, dodging Aunt Polly's reluctant licking, yells, "Look behind you, Aunt!" we figure that Tom would point low to make her drop her switch, snatch up her skirts, and spin around in a paroxism of fear—of what likely horror? A yard snake was what we surmised.

In I-2 the ritual of Tom and the new boy circling to fight is choreographed almost as carefully as the *West Side Story* street duel. Of course, during the long narration in the white-washing scene, the whole described happening is acted out, underscored by music to enliven and stylize events which realistically would cover hours. In I-4, during their conversation, our Huck and Tom drew a dust circle downstage center and played marbles, in the practiced, off-hand style of pool-hall habitues.

The discussion of the spells is mainly serious, absolutely matter-of-fact, not a trace of "cuteness" in the tone, no condescending suggestion that this is foolish superstition. Magic is *literally* real to them, as are oaths and Hellfire. If this is forgotten for a moment, Tom's moral crisis is proportionately weakened and falsified.

In I-5 Tom's and Becky's love-scene, from his opening conversational gambit of rats on, is gentle, almost courtly, and tentative—much of the time their backs are, in varying degrees, to each other. The sharing of the chewing gum, besides being a delightful symbol, makes nice earthy business, and relieves what might otherwise become too sentimental a scene for some children in the audience to

tolerate. This particular pas-de-deux needs to be a delicate balance of awkwardness, humor, and tenderness. We found that it held playgoers of all ages.

In I-7, it is a poignant and relevant moment when Muff is led on and everyone moves away or turns away from him in a spreading silence, for the littlest child in the crowd to start spontaneously toward him as he is led down center. This visualized reminder of Muff's gentleness and affection for children heightens the injustice and helplessness of his position, and sharpens the pain felt by Tom and Huck in their awful knowledge of the truth. Muff's unquestioning acceptance of his own guilt contrasted with his real innocence is a plaintive irony throughout.

This script attempts to respect the original's sequence of major episodes, and at the same time to sharpen the dramatic focus on Tom's inner conflict. His fear, both of damnation for breaking a blood-sworn oath and of being killed by Injun Joe, is overwhelmed by his compassion and sense of justice. The depth and reality of the fear must always be plain so that the power of his humanity, even though he believes intellectually that his impulse to save Muff is wrong-headed folly, takes on heroic dimensions. Essentially it is the same intricate affirmation of innate human goodness that Twain makes in *Huckleberry Finn* when Huck, convinced that he is lawless and wicked in the eyes of both God and man, gives up the struggle with his conscience and helplessly yielding to the right dictates of his own nature, saves Jim from slavery. Literally incapable of cruelty even in the face of punishments that to their minds are just and inevitable, Tom and Huck are never virtuous, but cannot help being truly good. Maybe that is why they win our hearts so completely, and stir our deepest feelings.



# THE TRIAL OF TOM SAWYER

## ACT I, SCENE I

MARK TWAIN: (*Enters, apron, in front of curtain, carrying a bentwood chair*) Howdy. You see before you at this moment a man that I reckon knows more about Tom Sawyer than any other living soul in this world, or any other world maybe. Although I suspect there's a little bit of Tom Sawyer in every one of us.

But right now I'm going to tell you some of what *I* know about him. Oh, don't worry - not all of it--just enough. The rest you can find out and figure out for yourself, if you take the notion to.

But let's begin. First—*The time*: Come back to the year of 1845—when the Mississippi is still the *West*, lately a frontier—when you travel either by horse-drawn wagon on a muddy, deep-tracked lane or by river—maybe on the glorious, newly invented steam boat, symbol of a marvelous new age of man-controlled power.

Oh—it's summertime, *beginning* of summer, right now. *The place*: I ask you to conjure up in your mind's eye the poor little shabby village of St. Petersburg, Missouri, (*slow curtain rise, on front yard of Tom's house and the street. Fragment of the famous fence present.*) A small, large world of its own, where a body can be born, and live, and die without ever traveling the eight miles to the next town; I ask you to *see* tomato vines and jimson weeds in a back yard garden; *see* a small, square wooden church—the only place that a boy has to endure the torment of shoes in the summer.

But this is important. Listen: (*Boat whistle*). You must know every minute that this quiet little town of St. Petersburg is a child of the great Mississippi, that it lives with the sound of the river's currents flowing like the earth's breath, all the nights and all the days, summer and winter, through the billions of minutes of thousands of years; hear the 1845 sounds of the steam boats and the timeless sounds of the river, and keep in mind that for a boy with imagination, that old Mississippi River can be the Nile or the Euphrates or the Amazon, and he can explore the

world *without* even traveling to the next town. Remember that, will you? It's important.

That brings us to the people. (*Townpeople begin to enter, boys running through them.*) Notice, that I can see them, touch them even, start them moving—but— they can't see or feel me. Of course, once they get moving they have a life of their own that even I can't always understand, let alone control.

There's Huckleberry Finn— gaudy outcast of the village. He is ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed, but he has as good a heart as any boy ever had. And he is the only truly independent person, boy or man, in the community. And I suppose for this reason, he is continually happy.

Huckleberry comes and goes of his own free will; he does not have to go to school or church; he can go fishing and swimming when and where he chooses, he never has to wash nor put on clean clothes—in short everything that goes to make life precious, that boy has.

There's Becky Thatcher, a new girl in town. (*Becky crosses stage. Tom enters and begins to show off for her.*) and there—showing off for Becky—there's Tom Sawyer, and there's a whole raft of other interesting characters to be found in the quiet village of . . .

AUNT POLLY: (*Hollering from offstage.*) Tom!  
(*Tom hides.*)

M. TWAIN: Did I say *quiet*?  
(*Aunt Polly enters*)  
That's Tom's Aunt Polly, she...

AUNT POLLY: You, Tom!!!

M. TWAIN: Hang it, they won't let me explain any more, they're coming to life.

AUNT POLLY: What's gone with that boy, I wonder?

M. TWAIN: You'll just have to figure them out yourself, I reckon, because...

AUNT POLLY: Well, I lay if I get hold of him I'll...(*she reaches for him*).  
I never did see the beat of that boy, Y-o-o-o-u-u-u-, Tom!  
(*Catches Tom.*)

There! Caught you! What have you been into?  
(*Plants him opposite her.*)

- TOM: Nothing!
- AUNT POLLY: Nothing! Look at your hands. And look at your mouth. What is that truck?
- TOM: I don't know, Aunt.
- AUNT POLLY: (*Tastes her finger*) Well I know. It's jam—that's what it is. (*Breaks from him, then whirls back.*) Forty times I've said if you don't let that jam alone I'd skin you. Hand me that switch. (*He does, then assumes position.*)
- TOM: My! Look behind you, Aunt! (*She does, he escapes behind fence, then tiptoes back to below fence, then dashes off.*)
- AUNT POLLY: Hang the boy, can't I never learn anything? (*looks after disappearing Tom.*) Ain't he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time? But old fools is the biggest fools there is. He knows if he can makes me laugh, I can't hit him a lick. I ain't doing my duty by that boy, and that's the Lord's truth, goodness knows. (*She bends down, picks up switch, then wiggles it and drops it*) Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. He's full of the old Scratch, but laws-a-me! He's my own dead sister's boy, poor thing, and I ain't got the heart to lash him, somehow. (*Walking towards fence*) He'll play hookey now and I'll just be obleeged to make him work Saturdays, but he hates work more than he hates anything else, and I've got to do some of my duty by him, or I'll be the ruination of the child. (*She kicks switch.*)
- M. TWAIN: She's right. Tom does play hookey, and he has a very good time too.

## SCENE 2

He is not a model boy, Tom Sawyer. For instance; on the way home this evening he meets a stranger. Now a newcomer of any age or either sex is an impressive curiosity in St. Petersburg. And this one has shoes on—and it is only Friday.  
 (*During this the boys have entered from opposite sides of stage and stand glaring at each other.*)

- TOM: I can lick you!
- ALFRED: I'd like to see you try it.

TOM: Well I can do it.

ALFRED: No, you can't either.

TOM: Yes, I can.

ALFRED: No, you can't.

TOM: I can.

ALFRED: You can't.

TOM: Can!

ALFRED: Can't!

TOM: What's your name?

ALFRED: Isn't any of your business, maybe.

TOM: Well, I 'low I'll *make* it my business.

ALFRED: Well, why don't you?

TOM: If you say much, I will.

ALFRED: Much--Much--*Much*. There, now.

TOM: Oh, you think you're mighty smart, don't you? I could lick you with one hand tied behind me, if I wanted to.

ALFRED: Well, why don't you *do* it? You *say* you can do it.

TOM: Well, I will if you fool with me.

ALFRED: Oh, of *course* you will.

TOM: Well, I *will*.

ALFRED: Well, why don't you do it then? What do you keep *saying* you will for? Why don't you *do* it? It's because you're afraid.

TOM: I ain't afraid.

ALFRED: You are.

TOM: I ain't.

ALFRED: You are.

TOM: You're a coward and a pup. I'll tell my big brother on you, and he can thrash you with his little finger, and I'll make him do it, too.

ALFRED: What do I care for your big brother? I've got a brother that's bigger than he is—and what's more, he can throw him over that fence, too.

M. TWAIN: Both brothers are imaginary.

TOM: That's a lie.

ALFRED: *You're saying so don't make it so.*

TOM: *(Drawing line in dust with his toe.)* I dare you to step over that line; and I'll lick you till you can't stand up. Anybody that'll take a dare will steal sheep.

ALFRED: *(Steps over)* Now you said you'd do it, now let's see you do it.

TOM: Don't you crowd me now; you better look out.

ALFRED: Well, you *said* you'd do it—why don't you do it?

TOM: By Jingo! For two cents I *will* do it.  
*(Alfred takes pennies from his pocket and holds them out. Tom strikes them to the ground. They fight, and Tom ends up on top.)*

TOM: Holler 'nuff!  
*(Alfred struggles)*  
Holler 'nuff!

ALFRED: Nuff!

TOM: Now that'll learn you. Better look out who you're fooling with next time.  
*(Alfred exits)*

AUNT POLLY: *(Entering from house as Alfred leaves)* Tom Sawyer! Look at you! I 'low I've reached the end of my patience and mercy with you. Tomorrow is Saturday and I promise and pledge...

TOM: Oh, please ma'am, just go on and lick me, Aunt Polly!

AUNT POLLY: .....that from day-dawn to sun-down you, boy, are a-goin' to work!  
*(And she drags him into the house by his suspenders.)*

M. TWAIN: Saturday morning is come, and all the summer world is bright and fresh and brimming with life. There is a song in every heart, cheer in every face, and a spring in every step...  
*(Tom enters)*

But Tom Sawyer appears in the yard with a bucket of whitewash and a brush. He surveys the fence, and all gladness leaves him and a deep melancholy settles down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of fence six feet high. Life to him seems hollow, and existence but a burden.

*(Sid enters, singing "Buffalo Gals", and carrying a tin pail.)*

**TOM:** Say, Sid, I'll fetch the water if you'll whitewash some.

**SID:** Can't Tom. Aunt Polly told me to go and get the water and not to fool around with anybody. She said she expected you'd ask me to whitewash, and so she told me to go along and tend to my own business--*she said she'd tend to the whitewashin'.*

**TOM:** Oh, never you mind what she said, Sid, that's the way she always talks. Gimme the bucket. I won't be gone only a minute. She won't ever know.

**SID:** Oh, I dasn't Tom. Aunt Polly might lick me, she might.

**TOM:** *She!* She never licks anybody—whacks 'em over the head with her thimble—and who cares for that, I'd like to know? She talks awful, but talk don't hurt—anyways it don't if she don't cry. Sid, I'll give you a marvel. I'll give you a white alley! *(Sid looks at the marvel longingly, wavering.)* White alley, Sid!

**SID:** My! That's a mighty gay marvel, Tom, I tell you. But Aunt Polly told me to go to the pump, and .....

**TOM:** And besides, if you will, I'll show you my sore toe.  
*(Sid yields to temptation, puts down the pail and bends over to inspect toe as Tom unwinds the bandage. Aunt Polly flashes out of house, whacks Sid's backside with a slipper, he grabs pail and runs off, while Tom begins whitewashing with great vigor, and Aunt Polly retires from field triumphant.)*

**M. TWAIN:** But Tom's energy does not last. He begins to think of the fun he has planned for this day, and his sorrows multiply—he gets out his wordly wealth and examines it—bits of toys, marbles, and trash; enough to buy an exchange of work, maybe, but not half enough to buy so much as half an hour of pure freedom. So he returns his straightened means to his pocket, and gives up the idea of trying to buy the boys.

At this dark and hopeless moment an inspiration bursts on him; nothing less than a great, magnificent inspiration. He takes up his brush and goes tranquilly to work.

*(Ben Rogers enters, simulating a steamboat, and eating an apple.)*

BEN: *(Finally coming to rest by Tom and docking himself.)* Hey! You're up a stump, ain't you? *(Tom keeps working tranquilly, surveying his work with the eye of an artist, and giving his brushwork an artist's flourishing touch.)*  
Hey, boy, you got to work hey?

TOM: *(Wheeling around, just now noticing him.)* Why it's you, Ben! I warn't noticing.

BEN: Say—I'm going in a-swimming. I am. Don't you wish you could? But of course you'd druther work—wouldn't you? Course you would.

TOM: *(Pause)* What do you call work?

BEN: Why ain't that work?

TOM: *(Resuming whitewashing, careless tone)* Well, maybe it is, and maybe it ain't. All I know is, it suits Tom Sawyer.

BEN: *(Circling around Tom)* Oh, come on, now, you don't mean to let on that you *like* it?

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?

BEN: *(After pause)* Say Tom, let *me* whitewash a little.

TOM: *(Considers it, starts to consent, then changes mind.)* No—no, I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Ben. You see, Aunt Polly's awful particular about this fence—right here on the street you know—but if it was the back fence I wouldn't mind and *she* wouldn't. Yes, she's awful particular about this fence! It's got to be done very careful. I reckon there ain't one boy in a thousand, maybe two thousand, that can do it the way it's go to be done.

BEN: No—is that so? Oh, come on now lemme just try, only just a little—I'd let *you*, if you was me, Tom.

TOM: Ben, I'd like to, honest Injun, but Aunt Polly—well, Sid wanted to do it, and she wouldn't even let Sid. Now don't you see how I'm fixed? If you was to tackle this fence and anything was to happen to it....

BEN: Oh, shucks, I'll be just as careful. Now lemme try—Say—I'll give you the core of my apple.

TOM: Well, here—No, Ben don't. I'm afeard.

BEN: I'll give you *all* of it!

M. TWAIN: Tom gives up the brush with reluctance in his face but alacrity in his heart. And while Ben Rogers works and

sweats in the sun, the retired artist sits on a barrel close by, munches his apple, and plans the slaughter of more innocents. By the time Ben is tuckered out, Tom has traded the next chance to Joe Harper for a hoop in good repair; and when *he* is played out, Johnny Miller buys in for a dead rat and a string to swing it with—and so on and on, hour after hour. And by the middle of the afternoon, from being a poor, poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom is literally rolling in wealth. He has, besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a key that won't unlock anything, a couple of tadpoles, a kitten with only one eye and a *brass doorknob*.

He has had a nice, good, idle time all the while—plenty of company—and the fence has three coats of whitewash on it! If he weren't out of whitewash he would bankrupt every boy in the village. (*Tom stacks up empty buckets.*) If he were a great and wise philosopher, like me, he would now comprehend that work consists of whatever a body is *obliged* to do, and that play consists of whatever a body is *not* obliged to do.

TOM: (*Calls*) Aunt Polly, may I go on now?

AUNT POLLY: (*Calling from inside*) Well, How much have you done?

TOM: It's all done, Aunt.

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

TOM: I ain't, Aunt. It *is* all done.

AUNT POLLY: (*Entering*) Tom Sawyer, if you trick me one more...(*sees fence, it registers that the work is done.*) Well, I never! There's no getting around it, you *can* work when you're a mind to. But it's powerful seldom you're a mind to, I'm bound to say. Now mind you get yourself to school on Monday, Tom Sawyer, or I'll tan you proper! (*She whacks his bottom affectionately, then exits into the house as Tom runs off.*)

#### SCENE 4

M. TWAIN: Monday morning finds Tom Sawyer miserable. Monday morning always finds his so, because it begins another week's slow suffering in school. But even a Monday morning sometimes brings portentous surprises. Tom now has an encounter that is to change his life. He comes upon Huckleberry Finn, and....



TOM: Hello, Huckleberry!

HUCK: Hello yourself, and see how you like it.

TOM: What's that you got?

HUCK: Dead cat...

TOM: *(Taking it and swinging it around)* Lemme see him, Huck. My, he's pretty stiff. Where'd you get him?

HUCK: Bought him off'n a boy.

TOM: What did you give?

HUCK: I give a blue ticket and a bladder that I got at the slaughter house.

TOM: Where'd you get the blue ticket?

HUCK: *(Taking cat back)* Bought it off'n Ben Rogers two weeks ago for a hoopstick.

TOM: *(Looking at the cat's eyes upside-down)* Say--what is dead cats good for, Huck?

HUCK: Good for? Cure warts with.

TOM: No! Is that so? I know something that's better.

HUCK: *(Squatting)* I bet you don't. What is it?

TOM: *(Also squatting)* Why, spunk water.

HUCK: Spunk water! *(Spits)* I wouldn't give a dern for spunk water!

TOM: You wouldn't, wouldn't you? D' you ever try it?

HUCK: No, I hain't. But Bob Tanner did.

TOM: Who told you so?

HUCK: Why, he told Joe Harper and Joe told Johnny Miller and Johnny told Billy Fisher, and Billy told Ben Rogers, and Ben told me. There, now!

TOM: Well, what of it? They'll all lie. Shucks! Now you tell me how Bob Tanner done it, Huck.

HUCK: Why he took and dipped his hands in a rotten stump where the rain water was.

TOM: In the day time?

- HUCK: Certainly!
- TOM: With his face to the stump?
- HUCK: Yes. Least, I reckon so.
- TOM: Did he *say* anything?
- HUCK: I don't reckon he did—I don't know.
- TOM: Aha! Talk about trying to cure warts with spunk water such a blame fool way as that! Why, that ain't a-going to do any good. (*Tom acts this out as he tells it.*) You got to go all by yourself to the middle of the woods, where you know there's a spunk water stump, and just as it's midnight you back up against the stump and jam your hand in and say:
- Barley-corn, Barley-corn, Injun-meal shorts  
Spunk-water, Spunk-water, swaller these warts.
- (Huck lays down cat as he becomes absorbed.)*
- And then you walk away quick, seven steps, with your eyes shut, and then turn around three times and walk home *without* speaking to anybody. Because if you speak the charm's busted.
- HUCK: Well, that sounds like a good way, but that ain't the way Bob Tanner done.
- TOM: No sir, you can bet he didn't, because he's the wartiest boy in this town; and he wouldn't have a wart on him if he'd knowed how to work spunk water. I've took off thousands of warts off my hands that way, Huck. I play with frogs so much that I've always got considerable many warts. But say—how do you cure 'em with dead cats?
- HUCK: Why you take your cat and go and get in the *graveyard* 'long about midnight when somebody that was wicked has been buried; and when it's midnight a devil will come, or maybe two or three, but you can't see 'em, you can only hear something like the wind, or maybe hear 'em talk; and when they're taking that feller away, you heave your cat after 'em and say, "Devil follow corpse, cat follow devil, warts follow cat, I'm done with ye!" That'll fetch *any* wart. (*He squats again.*)
- TOM: (*Taking out marbles and squinting through them*) Sounds right. D' you ever try it, Huck?

HUCK: No, but Old Mother Hopkins told me.

TOM: Well, I reckon it's so, then. Becuz they say she's a witch.

HUCK: Say! Why, Tom, I *know* she is. She witched Pap. Pap says so his own self. *(He takes marble and looks through it.)*

TOM: Say! Hucky, when you going to try the cat? *(Takes marble back.)*

HUCK: Tonight. I reckon they'll come after old Hoss Williams tonight.

TOM: But they buried him Saturday. Didn't they get him Saturday night?

HUCK: Why, how you talk! How could their charms work till midnight? and *then* it's Sunday. Devil's don't slosh around much of a Sunday, I don't reckon. *(Picks up cat.)*

TOM: I never thought of that. That's so. Lemme go with you. *(He strokes cat.)*

HUCK: Of course--if you ain't afeard.

TOM: Afeard! 'Taint likely. *(Starts to leave, then turns back.)* Will you meow?

HUCK: Yes. *(Begins to leave, then turns back)*--and you meow back, if you get a chance. Last time, you kep' me a-meowing around till old Hays went to throwing rocks at me and says, "Dern that cat!"

TOM: I couldn't meow that night, becuz Aunt Polly was watching me, but I'll meow this time.

HUCK: You do it, now, Tom, Remember: M-e-e-o-o-o-w-w-w *(They part, giving a code signal and exit, Huck waving the cat.)*

## SCENE 5

*(Change to Schoolroom set. Establish all children simultaneously reciting aloud to themselves--this is a "blab" school--with various concealed carryings-on going forth out of the master's view.)*