High Stakes Poverty Testing And Failure In American Schools
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The novel opens with Aunt Polly scrounging the house in search of her nephew, Tom Sawyer. She finds him in the closet, discovers that his hands are covered with jam, and prepares to give him a whipping. Tom cries out theatrically, "Look behind you!" and when Aunt Polly turns, Tom escapes over the fence. After Tom is gone, Aunt Polly reflects wistfully on Tom's naughtiness and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom goes out to hồ the streets of St. Petersburg. He meets Huckleberry Finn and all sorts of adventures. Despite his naughtiness, Tom is the favorite of the circuit judge and the town prominent. He never misses a chance to spread himself when he is sent to the town's public school for skipping it. Tom has always an idea of what to say and do. He is the most talkative boy in St. Petersburg, and eventually, he even comes off as a success in the eyes of the town's prominent.

When he returns home in the evening, Aunt Polly is waiting for him. She notices his dirtied clothes and resolves to make him work the next day, a Saturday, as punishment.

On Saturday morning, Aunt Polly sends Tom out to whitewash the fence. Jim passes by, and Tom tries to get him to do some of the whitewashing in return for a "white alley," a kind of marbles he almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chase him off.

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Tom comes home at supper time. His mother, Mary, is not pleased. She has heard about his adventures. During supper, Aunt Polly tells his mother that she has been skipped school that afternoon and went fishing. She did not catch anything, but she did eat fish. Tom's half-brother, Sid, is still asleep from the whiskey he drank last night. Aunt Polly is satisfied, and Tom has sworn the cheat himself to dispose his brother.

Tom goes out of the house into the streets of St. Petersburg. He thinks over the new arrival and eventually changes his course all the way home.

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On Saturday morning, Aunt Polly sends Tom out to whitewash the fence. Jim passes by, and Tom asks to let him do some of the whitewashing in return for a "white alley," a kind of nickname. Jim almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his task.
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