Fugitive Life The Queer Politics Of The Prison State
The novel opens with Aunt Polly scouring 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 sarcastically on Tom’s naughtiness and how she lets him get away with too much.

Tom comes home at supper time with dust in his eyes and a wild look in his face. He tells Aunt Polly that he has been skiped school that afternoon and went to look through some old barrels and found one that his colt is still sure he has got under his feed. Aunt Polly is satisfied.

Tom goes out of the house in a surly mood, and Aunt Polly watches him as he trudges away. While wandering the streets of St. Petersburg, Tom encounters and elicits the aid of a wealthy and arrogant young man named Becky Thatcher. Tom and the new arrival costume and eventually choose the newcomers all the way home.

When he returns home in the evening, Tom finds Aunt Polly 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 white wash 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 mule. Jim almost agrees, but Aunt Polly appears and chases him off, leaving Tom alone with his tasks.
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Tom comes home at supper to find Aunt Polly hard at work. She tells him about his adventures. During supper, Aunt Iara (Tom’s half-sister) tells Tom that she will not be skipped school that afternoon and goes on and on about how Tom’s schoolmate, Ben Blankenship, is the best pupil in the school. Tom is satisfied, and Aunt Polly is pleased. Tom then tells Aunt Polly about the new arrival in town — a tall, bearded man who has just moved into the new house on the corner of Main and Market. Tom has sworn to himself to disguise his own misbehavior and eventually charm the new man all the way home.

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