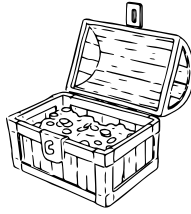


THE ADVENTURES
OF TOM SAWYER

Mark Twain

To
MY WIFE
This Book
is
Affectionately Dedicated.



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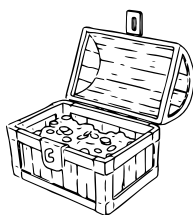
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INTRODUCTION

Toby Sumpter

Ah, *childhood*. Boys. Long summer days, barefoot, fishing, swimming, laughter, pocket knives, dirty hands, dirty faces, sweaty brows, trouble, joy. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is an unmistakable celebration of youth and in particular *boyhood*. At the same time, it's an extended commentary on adulthood, grownups, society, and culture. And that commentary largely consists of a long, exaggerated eye-roll. Welcome to one of the great American stories. Welcome to the wit and the wonder of one of America's greatest writers.

The World Around

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer appeared at the end 1876, the same year the Ottoman Empire ended and a severe famine broke out in China, eventually claiming some 30 million lives and becoming the 5th worst famine in recorded history. The Franco-Prussian War had kicked off the decade, out of which the German Empire began to rise under the leadership of Otto von Bismark. Queen Victoria reigned in England, continuing to grow the British Empire around the world.

In America, Alexander Graham Bell applied for the first telephone patent, and having received it, made the first phone call with the words, "Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you." By the end of the

decade, Thomas Edison had invented the phonograph and the light bulb.

While Reconstruction came to an end in the South after the election of Rutherford B. Hayes—one of the most contested presidential elections in American history—the American Indian Wars grew in intensity in the West, including the Battle of Little Bighorn, in which 300 soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Custer were killed by 5,000 Indians led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.

The Transcontinental Express brought the first passengers to San Francisco, 83 hours and 39 minutes after leaving New York City. And many of the famous and infamous lawmen and outlaws roamed the wild west: Wyatt Erp began work as law enforcement in Dodge City, Kansas, while Wild Bill Hickok, Jesse James, Calamity Jane, and countless others, held up stagecoaches, robbed banks, rustled cattle, and rode into at least a few sunsets.

The same year *Tom Sawyer* appeared, America celebrated its centennial birthday with, among other things, the first official World's Fair in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

About the Author

Mark Twain was born Samuel Langhorne Clemens on November 30, 1835, shortly after the appearance of Halley's Comet.

Clemens grew up Hannibal, Missouri, a bustling port town on the Mississippi River, leaving school after fifth grade and becoming an apprentice printer at the *Hannibal Courier*. At 21, he began learning how to pilot a steamboat on the Mississippi, but his steamboat career ended with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. While Clemens briefly enlisted with the Confederate Army, his volunteer unit disbanded after only two weeks, so he hopped onto a stagecoach heading out West to seek his fortune in the gold rush. After a year without success, Clemens went to work as a reporter for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise* in Virginia City, Nevada.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer centers on Tom who lives in St. Petersburg, Missouri, a port town along the Mississippi River, with his long-suffering and insufferable Aunt Polly, and Sid and Mary. The time period is likely sometime before the Civil War. He spends most of his time with his best friends Huckleberry Finn and Joe Harper, when he isn't trying to impress or win the love of Becky Thatcher.

When Huckleberry tells Tom that heaving a dead cat at spirits in a graveyard after a recent burial is a way to get rid of warts, they decide to give it a try and accidentally witness the murder of Doctor Robinson by Injun Joe who frames Muff Potter. For fear of Injun Joe, Tom, Huck, and Joe run away to Jackson's Island in the middle of the Mississippi river, and are eventually given up for dead. But after Muff Potter is narrowly exonerated, Injun Joe escapes prosecution, and the adventures continue in abandoned shacks and dark caves, weaving boyish games, fabulous superstitions, midnight escapades, and buried treasure into a timeless adventure.

Worldview Analysis

Mark Twain's classic work is a big grin and a wink and a nod at the glory of childhood, and *boys* in particular. But this celebration of boyhood isn't in a vacuum; there is a clear target to Twain's lampooning: a certain bureaucratic bumbling, a stuffy legalism, a fussy Pharisaism, the unmistakable cranky old man syndrome. From Aunt Polly's medicinal quackery and emotional superciliousness to the mind-numbing preacher to the show dog Sunday School teacher, the hypocrisies are thick and stifling. And Twain invites us to cheer when Tom thwarts their designs with his wit and folly, accidental or intended.

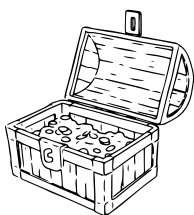
In one of the early and most legendary scenes, Tom outwits his Aunt Polly's designs to keep him occupied all day with the laborious assignment of white-washing a fence, and he succeeds in this by engendering the envy of all the neighborhood children and getting them to pay *him* for a chance to white-wash the fence. Twain writes:

And when the middle of the afternoon came, from being a poor poverty-stricken boy in the morning, Tom was literally rolling in wealth. He had besides the things before mentioned, twelve marbles, part of a jews-harp, a piece of blue bottle-glass to look through, a spool cannon, a key that wouldn't unlock anything, a fragment of chalk, a glass stopper of a decanter, a tin soldier, a couple of tadpoles, six fire-crackers, a kitten with only one eye, a brass door-knob, a dog-collar—but no dog—the handle of a knife, four pieces of orange peel, and a dilapidated old window sash.... Tom said to himself it was not such a hollow world, after all. He had discovered a great law of human action, without knowing it—namely, that in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain.... Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.

Here, Twain captures with characteristic wit a deep pleasure in the curiosities and absurdities and obsessions of boyhood alongside the slothful tendencies of human nature.

In another scene, having “won” a number of Bible memory tickets as a result of trading the wealth he had acquired in the fence white-washing business, Tom is introduced to the new judge in town as the winner of a brand new Bible. With the whole church looking on and the Sunday School teacher trying to make a good impression on the new judge, the judge speaks to Tom:

“That’s a good boy. Fine boy. Fine, manly little fellow. Two thousand verses is a great many—very, very great many. And you never can be sorry for the trouble you took to learn them; for knowledge is worth more than anything there is in the world; it’s what makes great men and good men; you’ll be a great man and a good man yourself, some day, Thomas, and then you’ll look back and say, It’s all owing to the precious Sunday-school



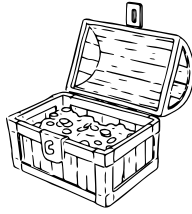
PREFACE

Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine. Huck Finn is drawn from life; Tom Sawyer also, but not from an individual—he is a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew, and therefore belongs to the composite order of architecture.

The odd superstitions touched upon were all prevalent among children and slaves in the West at the period of this story—that is to say, thirty or forty years ago.

Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account, for part of my plan has been to try to pleasantly remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in.

THE AUTHOR.
HARTFORD, 1876.



CHAPTER I

“TOM!”
No answer.

“TOM!”

No answer.

“What’s gone with that boy, I wonder? You TOM!”

No answer.

The old lady pulled her spectacles down and looked over them about the room; then she put them up and looked out under them. She seldom or never looked through them for so small a thing as a boy; they were her state pair, the pride of her heart, and were built for “style,” not service—she could have seen through a pair of stove-lids just as well. She looked perplexed for a moment, and then said, not fiercely, but still loud enough for the furniture to hear:

“Well, I lay if I get hold of you I’ll—”

She did not finish, for by this time she was bending down and punching under the bed with the broom, and so she needed breath to punctuate the punches with. She resurrected nothing but the cat.

“I never did see the beat of that boy!”

She went to the open door and stood in it and looked out among the tomato vines and “jimpson” weeds that constituted the garden. No Tom. So she lifted up her voice at an angle calculated for distance and shouted:

“Y-o-u-u TOM!”

There was a slight noise behind her and she turned just in time to seize a small boy by the slack of his roundabout and arrest his flight.

“There! I might ’a’ thought of that closet. What you been doing in there?”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing! Look at your hands. And look at your mouth. What is that truck?”

“I don’t know, aunt.”

“Well, I know. It’s jam—that’s what it is. Forty times I’ve said if you didn’t let that jam alone I’d skin you. Hand me that switch.”

The switch hovered in the air—the peril was desperate—

“My! Look behind you, aunt!”

The old lady whirled round, and snatched her skirts out of danger. The lad fled on the instant, scrambled up the high board-fence, and disappeared over it.

His aunt Polly stood surprised a moment, and then broke into a gentle laugh.

“Hang the boy, can’t I never learn anything? 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. Can’t learn an old dog new tricks, as the saying is. But my goodness, he never plays them alike, two days, and how is a body to know what’s coming? He ’pears to know just how long he can torment me before I get my dander up, and he knows if he can make out to put me off for a minute or make me laugh, it’s all down again and 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. Spare the rod and spile the child, as the Good Book says. I’m a laying up sin and suffering for us both, I know. 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. Every time I let him off, my conscience does hurt me so, and every time I hit him my old heart

most breaks. Well-a-well, man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble, as the Scripture says, and I reckon it's so. He'll play hookey this evening, * and [* Southwestern for "afternoon"] I'll just be obleeged to make him work, tomorrow, to punish him. It's mighty hard to make him work Saturdays, when all the boys is having holiday, 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."

Tom did play hookey, and he had a very good time. He got back home barely in season to help Jim, the small colored boy, saw next-day's wood and split the kindlings before supper—at least he was there in time to tell his adventures to Jim while Jim did three-fourths of the work. Tom's younger brother (or rather half-brother) Sid was already through with his part of the work (picking up chips), for he was a quiet boy, and had no adventurous, trouble-some ways.

While Tom was eating his supper, and stealing sugar as opportunity offered, Aunt Polly asked him questions that were full of guile, and very deep—for she wanted to trap him into damaging revelations. Like many other simple-hearted souls, it was her pet vanity to believe she was endowed with a talent for dark and mysterious diplomacy, and she loved to contemplate her most transparent devices as marvels of low cunning. Said she:

"Tom, it was middling warm in school, warn't it?"

"Yes'm."

"Powerful warm, warn't it?"

"Yes'm."

"Didn't you want to go in a-swimming, Tom?"

A bit of a scare shot through Tom—a touch of uncomfortable suspicion. He searched Aunt Polly's face, but it told him nothing. So he said:

"No'm—well, not very much."

The old lady reached out her hand and felt Tom's shirt, and said:

"But you ain't too warm now, though." And it flattered her to reflect that she had discovered that the shirt was dry without anybody

knowing that that was what she had in her mind. But in spite of her, Tom knew where the wind lay, now. So he forestalled what might be the next move:

“Some of us pumped on our heads—mine’s damp yet. See?”

Aunt Polly was vexed to think she had overlooked that bit of circumstantial evidence, and missed a trick. Then she had a new inspiration:

“Tom, you didn’t have to undo your shirt collar where I sewed it, to pump on your head, did you? Unbutton your jacket!”

The trouble vanished out of Tom’s face. He opened his jacket. His shirt collar was securely sewed.

“Bother! Well, go ’long with you. I’d made sure you’d played hookey and been a-swimming. But I forgive ye, Tom. I reckon you’re a kind of a singed cat, as the saying is—better’n you look. This time.”

She was half sorry her sagacity had miscarried, and half glad that Tom had stumbled into obedient conduct for once.

But Sidney said:

“Well, now, if I didn’t think you sewed his collar with white thread, but it’s black.”

“Why, I did sew it with white! Tom!”

But Tom did not wait for the rest. As he went out at the door he said:

“Siddy, I’ll lick you for that.”

In a safe place Tom examined two large needles which were thrust into the lapels of his jacket, and had thread bound about them—one needle carried white thread and the other black. He said:

“She’d never noticed if it hadn’t been for Sid. Confound it! sometimes she sews it with white, and sometimes she sews it with black. I wish to gee-miny she’d stick to one or t’other—I can’t keep the run of ’em. But I bet you I’ll lam Sid for that. I’ll learn him!”

He was not the Model Boy of the village. He knew the model boy very well though—and loathed him.

Within two minutes, or even less, he had forgotten all his troubles. Not because his troubles were one whit less heavy and bitter to him

than a man's are to a man, but because a new and powerful interest bore them down and drove them out of his mind for the time—just as men's misfortunes are forgotten in the excitement of new enterprises. This new interest was a valued novelty in whistling, which he had just acquired from a negro, and he was suffering to practise it undisturbed. It consisted in a peculiar bird-like turn, a sort of liquid warble, produced by touching the tongue to the roof of the mouth at short intervals in the midst of the music—the reader probably remembers how to do it, if he has ever been a boy. Diligence and attention soon gave him the knack of it, and he strode down the street with his mouth full of harmony and his soul full of gratitude. He felt much as an astronomer feels who has discovered a new planet—no doubt, as far as strong, deep, unalloyed pleasure is concerned, the advantage was with the boy, not the astronomer.

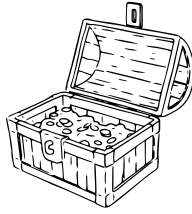
The summer evenings were long. It was not dark, yet. Presently Tom checked his whistle. A stranger was before him—a boy a shade larger than himself. A new-comer of any age or either sex was an impressive curiosity in the poor little shabby village of St. Petersburg. This boy was well dressed, too—well dressed on a week-day. This was simply astounding. His cap was a dainty thing, his close-buttoned blue cloth roundabout was new and natty, and so were his pantaloons. He had shoes on—and it was only Friday. He even wore a necktie, a bright bit of ribbon. He had a citified air about him that ate into Tom's vitals. The more Tom stared at the splendid marvel, the higher he turned up his nose at his finery and the shabbier and shabbier his own outfit seemed to him to grow. Neither boy spoke. If one moved, the other moved—but only sidewise, in a circle; they kept face to face and eye to eye all the time. Finally Tom said:

“I can lick you!”

“I'd like to see you try it.”

“Well, I can do it.”

“No you can't, either.”



CHAPTER II

SATURDAY morning was come, and all the summer world was bright and fresh, and brimming with life. There was a song in every heart; and if the heart was young the music issued at the lips. There was cheer in every face and a spring in every step. The locust-trees were in bloom and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond the village and above it, was green with vegetation and it lay just far enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting.

Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a burden. Sighing, he dipped his brush and passed it along the topmost plank; repeated the operation; did it again; compared the insignificant whitewashed streak with the far-reaching continent of unwhitewashed fence, and sat down on a tree-box discouraged. Jim came skipping out at the gate with a tin pail, and singing Buffalo Gals. Bringing water from the town pump had always been hateful work in Tom's eyes, before, but now it did not strike him so. He remembered that there was company at the pump. White, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there waiting their turns, resting,

trading playthings, quarrelling, fighting, skylarking. And he remembered that although the pump was only a hundred and fifty yards off, Jim never got back with a bucket of water under an hour—and even then somebody generally had to go after him. Tom said:

“Say, Jim, I’ll fetch the water if you’ll whitewash some.”

Jim shook his head and said:

“Can’t, Mars Tom. Ole missis, she tole me I got to go an’ git dis water an’ not stop foolin’ roun’ wid anybody. She say she spec’ Mars Tom gwine to ax me to whitewash, an’ so she tole me go ’long an’ ’tend to my own business—she ’lowed she’d ’tend to de whitewashin’.”

“Oh, never you mind what she said, Jim. That’s the way she always talks. Gimme the bucket—I won’t be gone only a minute. She won’t ever know.”

“Oh, I dasn’t, Mars Tom. Ole missis she’d take an’ tar de head off’n me. ’Deed she would.”

“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. Jim, I’ll give you a marvel. I’ll give you a white alley!”

Jim began to waver.

“White alley, Jim! And it’s a bully taw.”

“My! Dat’s a mighty gay marvel, I tell you! But Mars Tom I’s powerful ’fraid ole missis—”

“And besides, if you will I’ll show you my sore toe.”

Jim was only human—this attraction was too much for him. He put down his pail, took the white alley, and bent over the toe with absorbing interest while the bandage was being unwound. In another moment he was flying down the street with his pail and a tingling rear, Tom was whitewashing with vigor, and Aunt Polly was retiring from the field with a slipper in her hand and triumph in her eye.

But Tom’s energy did not last. He began to think of the fun he had planned for this day, and his sorrows multiplied. Soon the free boys would