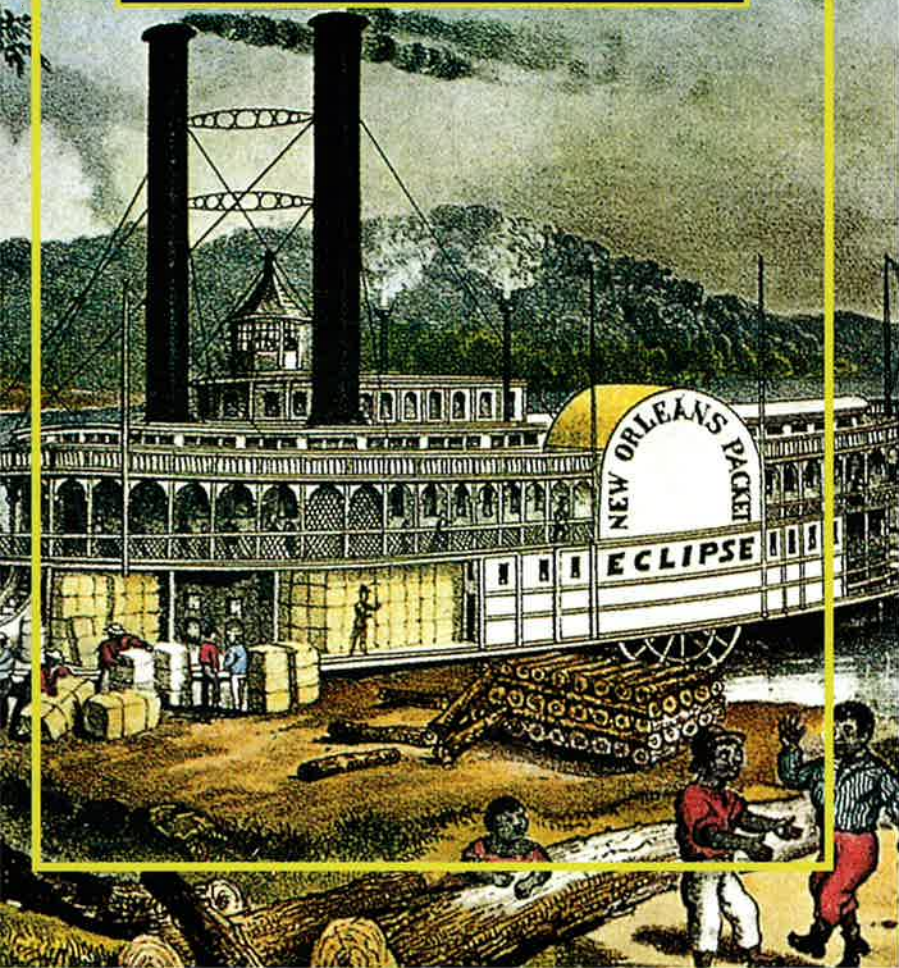


Stanford House Classics - Elementary

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

Mark Twain

literature analysis and response



The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Mark Twain

Mark Twain (1835 – 1910), whose real name was Samuel Clemens, spent his boyhood by the Mississippi and was always fascinated by this river which became one of the main themes in his writing. (His pen-name was, in fact, an expression used by the Mississippi riverboat pilots). He led an adventurous life travelling and contributing to various newspapers.

He wrote many stories but the most famous are “*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*” (1876) and “*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*” (1844).



Stanford House

TRUANT¹

“Tom!”

There was no answer.

“Tom!”

Still no answer.

“Where’s that boy gone? Tom!”

The old lady looked all round the room. She looked under the bed, but found only the cat.

“If I catch that boy...,” she muttered² to herself.

She opened the door and looked out into the garden.

“Tom!” she shouted.

Then she heard a slight³ noise behind her. She turned round just in time to catch the boy as he came out of a cupboard.

“And what have you been doing in there?”

“Nothing,” said the boy.

“Nothing! Look at your hands and your mouth! What is that stuff?”

“I don’t know, Aunt.”

“Well I know. It’s jam. I’ve told you forty times that if you touched that jam I’d skin⁴ you. Give me that stick.”

“Look out, Aunt! Look behind you!”

The old lady turned round and Tom was out of the door in a flash, over the garden fence⁵ and away.

“Damn that boy! Will I never learn? He’s always playing tricks on me. And he seems to know just how far he can go, too. But I can’t take a stick to him. I really can’t. After all, he’s my dead sister’s boy. Ah well, he’ll play truant today and I’ll have to make him work tomorrow. It’s hard to make the boy work on a Saturday but he hates work and I have to teach him a lesson.”

Tom did, in fact, play truant and had a very good time, too. He got home just in time to help Jim, the coloured boy, saw⁶ next day’s wood. At least, he was there to tell Jim his latest adventures, while Jim sawed the wood.

At supper, Aunt Polly tried to trick Tom into confessing that he hadn’t gone to school.

“It was rather hot today, wasn’t it, Tom?”

“Yes,” answered Tom, cautiously.

“Not so hot now, is it?”

“No.” What was Aunt Polly trying to say, wondered⁷ Tom.

“Didn’t you feel like a swim?”

“We used the pump on our heads. Look, my hair is still damp¹.”

Tom thought he was safe.

“You didn’t have to undo² your shirt collar where I sewed it, then.”

Tom was confident³, now. He opened his jacket. His collar was securely sewed.

“Oh Tom,” said Aunt Polly. “You’re a good boy really.”

She was half sorry that she had been wrong about him and half glad that, for once, he had been obedient.

“But, Auntie,” came a voice. It was Sidney, Tom’s younger brother. “Didn’t you sew Tom’s collar with white cotton? Look! Now it’s black!”

Tom was already running out of the door.

“I’ll beat you for that, Sid,” he shouted as he ran down the garden.

THE NEW BOY

Tom soon forgot that problem. He had something much more important on his mind. A black boy had just taught him how to whistle⁴ and he wanted to practice. He wandered down the road, whistling. It was a summer evening and it wasn’t dark yet. Suddenly he saw a stranger in front of him. In the poor little village of St Petersburg a newcomer was an impressive curiosity, and this one was especially interesting. He was taller than Tom and very well-dressed – too well-dressed for a week-day. He even had shoes on, although it was only Friday! The more Tom looked at him, the more badly dressed he felt, and the more superior. Neither boy spoke. They stared⁵ at each other but did not speak or move. Finally, Tom said: “I can beat you!”

“I’d like to see you try.”

“Well, I can.”

“No you can’t.”

“Yes I can.”

“You can’t.”

“I can.”

“Can’t.”

A pause.

“Well?” said the stranger.

“What’s your name?” asked Tom.

1. Answer the questions.

a) Who is looking for Tom?

.....

b) Where was Tom?

.....

c) What was he doing?

.....

d) What day of the week is it?

.....

e) Is the old lady Tom's mother?

.....

f) Has he got a mother?

.....

2. Look at this:

"If I catch that boy"

"If I catch that boy I'll skin him"

Now complete the following in the same way.

a) If Tom plays truant

.....

b) If he steals the jam

.....

c) If the teacher catches him

.....

d) If you help me saw the wood

.....

e) If he's under the bed

.....

f) If he gets to school late

.....

1. truant : when one stays away from school without a good reason.

2. muttered : spoke in a low voice.

3. slight : small.

4. skin : take off the skin, meaning 'to beat'.

5. fence : barrier usually made of wood.

6. saw : cut.

7. wondered : asked himself.

3. Complete the tag questions and give the answers.

e.g. Tom didn't go to school, ?

Tom didn't go to school, did he? No, he played truant.

a) It wasn't a cold day, ?

.....

b) Tom's hair wasn't dry, ?

.....

c) He didn't say he went swimming, ?

.....

d) Tom's collar wasn't sewn with black cotton, ?

.....

e) Aunt Polly didn't use black cotton, ?

.....

f) Aunt Polly didn't notice the different cotton, ?

.....

4. Find the names of the following.

a) Tom's brother

b) Tom's aunt

c) The town where they live

d) The black boy who works for them

Now write a sentence about each.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1. damp : not dry.

2. undo : open.

3. confident : sure of himself.

4. whistle : make harmonious sounds through one's lips.

5. stared : looked for a long time.

"None of your business."
 "Well, I'll make it my business."
 "Why don't you, then?"
 "You think you're clever¹, don't you?"
 "Cleverer than you! And look at that hat!"
 "I dare you to knock it off."
 "And then?"
 "I'll bounce a rock off your head."
 "You're a liar²."
 "You're another."
 "You're afraid."
 "I'm not."
 Another pause.
 Tom drew a line in the dust with his toe³.
 "If you step over that line, I'll beat you till you can't stand up."

The new boy immediately stepped over it.
 "Now," he said. "Let's see you do it."
 "Don't push me."
 "Well, you said you'd do it. Why don't you do it?"
 "For two cents I will do it."
 The new boy took two coins out of his pocket and held them out with scorn⁴.

Tom struck them to the ground.
 In an instant the two boys were on top of each other, rolling and tumbling in the dirt, like two fighting cats. In a cloud of dust, Tom appeared sitting on top of the newcomer, beating him with his fists.

"Say 'enough'," he said.
 The boy tried to get free. Tom went on beating him.
 "Say 'enough'," he repeated.
 At last the new boy managed⁵ to speak.
 "Enough," he said, weakly. Tom let him go and he ran off down the road with Tom laughing at him. But as soon as Tom turned away, a stone hit him in the back. Tom turned and chased the traitor⁶ home. He stood at the enemy's gate for a long time but the boy stayed indoors, occasionally making faces at Tom from the window. Finally, the enemy's mother appeared.

"Get away, you horrid, vulgar boy!" she shouted.
 Tom got home very late. He climbed in through the window but Aunt Polly was there waiting for him. His

5. Put the following into indirect speech.

e.g. "What's your name?" asked Tom.
 Tom asked him what his name was.

- "Why don't you do it?" asked the stranger.
.....
- "Where are you going?" Mary asked her uncle.
.....
- "Who are you?" Aunt Polly asked the stranger.
.....
- "What's the time?" Tom asked Sidney.
.....
- "Which is yours?" Ann asked Harry.
.....
- "How old are you?" the stranger asked Tom.
.....

6. Now do the same with these sentences.

e.g. "Don't push me," said Tom.
 Tom told the stranger not to push him.

- "Go away," said Tom.
.....
- "Come here at once," Auntie said to Sidney.
.....
- "Don't eat that!" said the doctor to the boy.
.....
- "Take off your hat," the gentleman said to the young man.
.....
- "Brush your teeth three times a day," the dentist said to the girl.
.....
- "Don't open that window," the man said to the woman.
.....

-
- clever : smart, astute.
 - liar : a person who does not tell the truth.
 - toe : the 'fingers' of the feet.
 - scorn : disdain, feeling that the other does not merit respect.
 - managed : succeeded.
 - traitor : one who does not respect the rules.