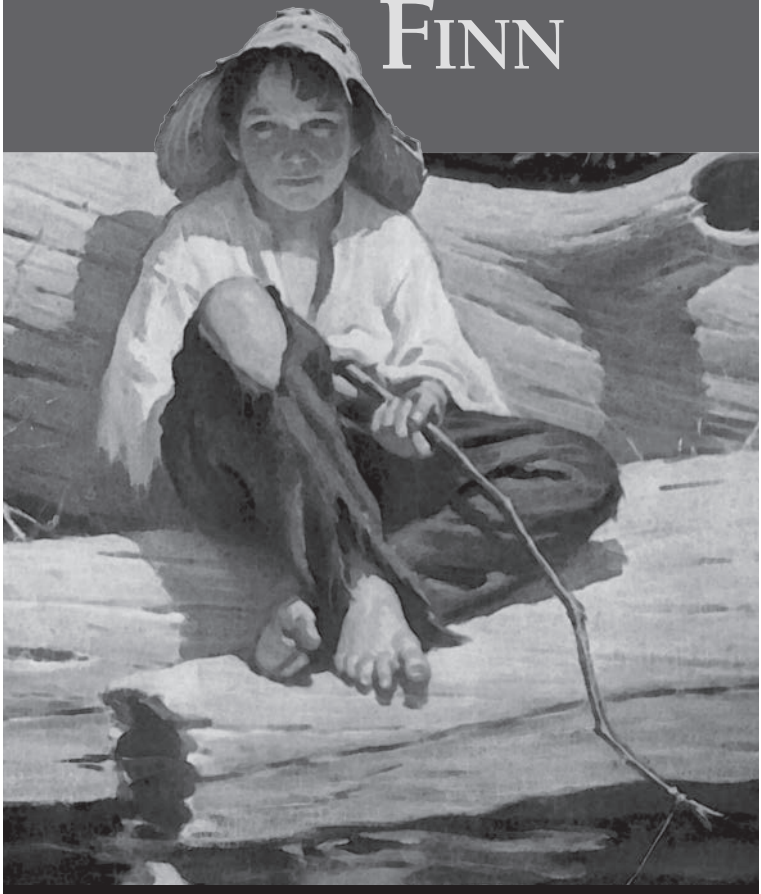
Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Classics

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

by Mark Twain

UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn



Mark Twain

Prestwick House

LITERARY TOUCHSTONE CLASSICS™

P.O. Box 658 Clayton, Delaware 19938 • www.prestwickhouse.com

Senior Editor: Paul Moliken

Editors: Amber Reed and Lisa M. Miller

Design: Jen Mendoza

Production: Dana Kerr

P.O. Box 658 • Clayton, Delaware 19938

Tel: 1.800.932.4593

Fax: 1.888.718.9333

Web: www.prestwickhouse.com

This Prestwick House edition is an unabridged republication, with slight emendations, of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* published in 1899 by Harper & Brothers, New York and London.

Revised February 2014

ISBN: 978-1-58049-583-7

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

By Mark Twain

Contents

Notes

What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was born in Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835. He had two brothers and a sister. A slave named Jenny worked for the family, and it is thought that her storytelling had a strong influence on the young Twain. He traveled extensively, working in various jobs, including a stint on a newspaper and one as a riverboat pilot. Twain supposedly took his pseudonym from the way a river's depth was measured: a piece of line was dropped into the river, and when the rope hit the bottom, the depth was called out to the pilot. Therefore, "Mark Twain" or "two fathoms" literally means "twelve feet."

In 1864, Twain left for San Francisco where he worked as a reporter. After a trip to Hawaii for *The Sacramento Union*, he began giving lectures. Later, in 1869, he wrote *The Innocents Abroad* based on his experiences traveling in France and Italy. The book was immensely popular, and Twain's sharp, humorous barbs set him apart from most other writers of the time.

Twain married Olivia Langdon in 1870, and between 1876 and 1884, he wrote *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Due to bad financial investments and personal family tragedies, however, Twain's early joy for life slowly disintegrated.

Today, he is thought of as both a fine humorist with an uncanny ear for speech and the first truly modern American novelist, adept at pointing out hypocrisy and the inconsistencies in human nature.

READING POINTERS

Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

To better appreciate *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and understand why most critics believe it is the quintessential American novel, we need to look at some of the concepts that Twain explores.

1. How does the relationship between Huck and Jim change throughout the novel, and why is this significant?

2. How do the raft and the shore symbolize civilization and freedom, respectively? What does Twain's message about civilization seem to be? Is he cynical about what civilization has brought to America?

3. What is the correlation between Huck's adventures on shore and his loss of innocence?

4. How Twain develops the following motifs:
   A. Huck's "rite of passage"
   B. Huck's personal sympathy for and friendship with Jim and how these directly conflict with the laws and expectations of antebellum culture
   C. man's inhumanity to man, regardless of race
   D. the oppression and dehumanization of slaves by nineteenth-century culture

5. How do the various dialects contribute to the authenticity and feel of the text?

6. How is the text influenced by having the story told through the eyes of the main character, Huck Finn, a twelve-year-old, unschooled, mischievous boy?

7. What are Twain's criticisms of traditional concepts of religion?

8. How Twain satirizes:
   A. sentimentality (being influenced more by emotion than reason) and gullibility (being easily tricked, cheated, or fooled)
   B. the average man
   C. romantic literature, with its mournful subject matter in poetry and its ridiculous plots in novels
   D. a code of honor that results in needless bloodshed and complexities
   E. education

Notice

PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR,
Per G.G., Chief of Ordnance.

EXPLANATORY

IN THIS BOOK a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary "Pike County" dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guesswork; but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech.

I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.

THE AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I

I DISCOVER MOSES AND THE BULRUSHERS†

YOU DON'T KNOW about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly—Tom's Aunt Polly, she is—and Mary, and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before.

Now the way that the book winds up is this: Tom and me found the money that the robbers hid in the cave, and it made us rich. We got six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was piled up. Well, Judge Thatcher he took it and put it out at interest, and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece all the year round—more than a body could tell what to do with. The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out. I got into my old rags and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied. But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back.

The widow she cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called

†Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.

me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it. She put me in them new clothes again, and I couldn't do nothing but sweat and sweat, and feel all cramped up. Well, then, the old thing commenced again. The widow rung a bell for supper, and you had to come to time. When you got to the table you couldn't go right to eating, but you had to wait for the widow to tuck down her head and grumble a little over the victuals, though there warn't really anything the matter with them—that is, nothing only everything was cooked by itself. In a barrel of odds and ends it is different; things get mixed up, and the juice kind of swaps around, and the things go better.

After supper she got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers,† and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people.†

Pretty soon I wanted to smoke, and asked the widow to let me. But she wouldn't. She said it was a mean practice and wasn't clean, and I must try to not do it any more. That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it. Here she was a-bothering about Moses, which was no kin to her, and no use to anybody, being gone, you see, yet finding a power of fault with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took snuff, too; of course that was all right, because she done it herself.

Her sister, Miss Watson, a tolerable slim old maid, with goggles on, had just come to live with her, and took a set at me now with a spelling book. She worked me middling hard for about an hour, and then the widow made her ease up. I couldn't stood it much longer. Then for an hour it was deadly dull, and I was fidgety. Miss Watson would say, "Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry;" and "Don't scrunch up like that, Huckleberry—set up straight;" and pretty soon she would say, "Don't gap and stretch like that, Huckleberry—why don't you try to behave?" Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad then, but I didn't mean no harm. All I wanted was to go somewheres; all I wanted was a change, I warn't particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said; said she wouldn't say it for the whole world; *she* was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it. But I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn't do no good.

Now she had got a start, and she went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was to go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. So I didn't think much of it. But I never said so. I asked her if she reckoned Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said not by a considerable sight. I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together.

Miss Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome and lonesome. By and by they fetched the niggers† in and had prayers, and then everybody was off

to bed. I went up to my room with a piece of candle, and put it on the table. Then I set down in a chair by the window and tried to think of something cheerful, but it warn't no use. I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead. The stars were shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful; and I heard an owl, away off, who-whooing about somebody that was dead, and a whippowill and a dog crying about somebody that was going to die; and the wind was trying to whisper something to me, and I couldn't make out what it was, and so it made the cold shivers run over me. Then away out in the woods I heard that kind of a sound that a ghost makes when it wants to tell about something that's on its mind and can't make itself understood, and so can't rest easy in its grave, and has to go about that way every night grieving. I got so down-hearted and scared I did wish I had some company. Pretty soon a spider went crawling up my shoulder, and I flipped it off and it lit in the candle; and before I could budge it was all shriveled up. I didn't need anybody to tell me that that was an awful bad sign and would fetch me some bad luck, so I was scared and most shook the clothes off of me. I got up and turned around in my tracks three times and crossed my breast every time; and then I tied up a little lock of my hair with a thread to keep witches away. But I hadn't no confidence. You do that when you've lost a horseshoe that you've found, instead of nailing it up over the door, but I hadn't ever heard anybody say it was any way to keep off bad luck when you'd killed a spider.

I set down again, a-shaking all over, and got out my pipe for a smoke; for the house was all as still as death now, and so the widow wouldn't know. Well, after a long time I heard the clock away off in the town go boom—boom—boom—twelve licks; and all still again—stiller than ever. Pretty soon I heard a twig snap down in the dark amongst the trees—something was astirring. I set still and listened. Directly I could just barely hear a "*me-yow! me-yow*!" down there. That was good! Says I, "*me-yow! me-yow*!" as soft as I could, and then I put out the light and scrambled out of the window on to the shed. Then I slipped down to the ground and crawled in among the trees, and, sure enough, there was Tom Sawyer waiting for me.

Vocabulary and Glossary

addled – confused
aground – onto the shore
Angel of Death – the messenger sent by God to kill the first-born son of the Egyptians to make them release the Jews from bondage; it is unlikely that Pap knows this.
bill – a poster for a show
bodkin – a dagger
bowie – a hunting knife
bray – to make a sound like a donkey
brickbat – a fragment of a hard metal
bullyragging – bullying, teasing
Bulrushers *[bulrushes]* – the reeds that the mother of Moses used to make a small "ark" in which to hide her baby after Pharaoh declared that all newly born Jewish male babies should be killed; Huck has made his first grammatical error.
calico – a cotton cloth
camelopard – a giraffe
Charlemagne – (768-814) king of the Franks and first ruler of the Holy Roman Empire; both the King and the Duke are obviously poor liars, completely dependent upon the total ignorance of their victims.
cravats – neckties
crockery – pottery
currycomb – a comb that is used to clean a horse's coat
Dauphin – technically, the eldest son of a king; the Duke claims to be the *late* Dauphin, which points out his own limited knowledge.
doggery – a cheap saloon
Don Quixote – a book written by Miguel de Cervantes, published in two parts (1605 and 1615); in this work, the chivalrous, but delusional hero fights to rescue the oppressed. Tom has either merely heard of the book or read it and misunderstood it, as is obvious by his statement about "enchantment." It is another comment that shows Twain's disdain for Tom Sawyer and appreciation for Huck.
doxology – a hymn
eaves – the lower borders of a roof that overhang the wall
encore – a continued applause
fantods – fidgets; fits
fox-fire – a glow given off by decaying wood
galluses – suspenders
galoot – [slang] "fellow"
gold-leaf – thin sheets of gold
Goliar – most likely, the biblical giant Goliath
grit – courage
gunnel – the upper edge of a boat's side