



The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

Read by:	John Greenman	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Genre:	Fiction		

Tom Sawyer is an All-American Boy living in a time when America is still young and unencumbered by the complexities of modern life. Tom lives in the middle of a country in the middle of its own adolescence. He's in sync with the country about him, as the country about him is in sync with itself. The result is a portrayal of those halcyon days when we ran fast and wild and free toward a wide, infinite horizon. Tom's adventures make up a wonderful novel, a classic, in love with youth, their courage, their curiosity, their wisdom, their humor, their foibles, their energy and their optimism. When was the last time anyone convinced anyone to white-wash a fence and then pay for the privilege? It's the kind of "clever" people admire even as they shake their heads with the set-up and the fall-out. Tom Sawyer, an embodiment of Walt Whit-

man's vision, an American boy, given to hooky, adventure and those first tugs on the heartstrings, reminds us that everyone lives several lives when they're young, when everything is possible. (Summary by Michael Hogan)

Mark Twain is the pen name of **Samuel Langhorne Clemens** (November 30, 1835 – April 21, 1910), an American novelist, essayist, and lecturer noted for his humor and biting satire. Born in Florida, Missouri to a poor family, his father failed in business repeatedly and died of pneumonia when Sam was eleven. He went to work as an apprentice typesetter and then for brother Orion's *Hannibal Journal*. He worked as a journeyman printer in the east and started writing humorous articles and sketches to fill space. He returned to Missouri and worked as riverboat pilot until the Civil War broke out in 1861. He avoided service in the Confederate Army by journeying to Nevada with his brother Orion, then secretary to the territorial governor. After a failed attempt to strike it rich as a miner he wrote for the paper in Virginia City, where he adopted the pen name Mark Twain. He began developed a specialty as a traveling correspondent, posting pieces from Hawaii for the *Sacramento Union* and then a journal from a six month excursion to Europe and the Holy Land that formed his first book in 1869, *The Innocents Abroad*, considered the most popular travel book ever written. He followed with *Roughing It* in 1872, a portrait of life on the American frontier, and *The Gilded Age* in that same year, a satirical treatise on the follies and foibles of the emerging elite in American culture.

Twain was happily married Olivia Langdon in 1870 and settled first in Buffalo and then Hartford. In spite of his success with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), he experienced substantial financial losses as an entrepreneur with the Paige typesetting machine and then a venture established to publish the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant. He closed shop in Connecticut and embarked on a long tour of lecturing and writing abroad, which enabled him to retire his debts and return a conquering hero in 1900. Twain was born after a visit by Halley's Comet in 1835 and predicted he would "go out with it, too". True to his word, he died the day after its return in 1910.