

# The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Based on the Book by Mark Twain  
Adapted for the stage by Matthew Gutschick

*The village church. All the townspeople sing a hopeful hymn. Becky Thatcher is downstage left. She sings louder than the others. Tom enters with a snake. He slowly approaches Becky and places the reptile down the back of her dress. She screams and the congregation reacts. Tableau with Becky screaming, the townspeople looking at her in horror and Tom, with a wise smirk.*

*This tableau breaks and we are at the gate.*

MRS. DOUGLAS

Now you three bring your sewing and come up and spend the day at Cardiff Hill real soon.

*Becky enters with Sid and Amy Lawrence from upstage left.*

SID

Bye Becky Thatcher. See you after awhile.

AMY

What a poor thing.

*Sid exit.*

BECKY

School's out. May I go play with Amy Lawrence now? We sat in school together.

MRS. THATCHER

Yes dear. But don't be gone too long. Run in and put your book away before you go.

*Her and Amy do so.*

DOUGLAS

Oh I wish you'd let me have your Becky.

MRS. THOMAS

I reckon you'd have to speak to Judge Thatcher about that.

DOUGLAS

Oh I know what he'd say. My house was so empty until I took in poor, filthy vagabond Huckleberry Finn and I had just made up my mind to legally adopt him and he ran away last week. I haven't set eyes upon him since.

THOMAS

My there's teacher now.

DOUGLAS

I reckon you haven't forgotten Walter Potter.

WALTER

I used to be the worst boy in your bible class.

THATCHER

And the smartest!

MRS. HARPER

Was my Joe at school today?

WALTER

If he was, I didn't see him. I reckon he was off, oh I don't know...studying his geography with Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

HARPER

Playing hooky again!

THOMAS

Calm down Mrs. Harper.

HARPER

I'll switch him. Something's got into that child and I don't know what to name it.

DOUGLAS

An affliction named Tom Sawyer.

THOMAS

You going in to see Doc Robinson?

HARPER

There's the doctor coming up the street now with Mary Rogers.

WALTER

I'll after him then.

*Walter exits.*

DOUGLAS

Walter is studying medicine with Doc Robinson. I feel bad for the man. It's too bad about his father.

THOMAS

Muff Potter.

HARPER

He just wasn't the same after Mrs. Potter died. Took to drink and went right down to nothing.

ALL

It's a shame. Too bad about him. Walter turned out alright.

*Exeunt.*

*Injun Joe enters, pauses as he hears footsteps. They are Walter's.*

INJUN

Is the doc in?

WALTER

No he isn't in.

*Joe exits but before he can...*

Joe, hold on!

INJUN

I can't stop now.

WALTER

I reckon you've got time to hear me.

INJUN

Depends on what you want to say. Schoolteacher! I remember a time you couldn't read nor write, just like me.

WALTER

Hold on, I tell you. It's about my father. You've been giving him whiskey for the last week- keeping him drunk.

INJUN

So.

WALTER

I want you to stop.

INJUN

On what authority can you make me stop?

MARY

Walter!

DOC  
How are you Walt? Evening, Joe. Goodbye, Miss Mary. See you tonight at choir.

WALTER  
I wanted to exchange a book.

DOC  
What are you needing?

WALTER  
Professor Grey's Anatomy.

DOC  
I'll fetch it for you.

*Injun joe clears his throat. The doctor and he share a look before the doc exits and Joe finds a hiding spot.*

MARY  
What were you saying to that man?

WALTER  
Father's been drinking again.

MARY  
Promise me you won't get into trouble with that man. You know what people say of him.

WALTER  
Don't worry about me Mary.

*He exits.*

MARY  
Poor Walter!

*Doc re-enters.*

DOC  
Been having words with Walter Potter, eh?

INJUN  
He better look out.

DOC  
How's his father, Muff Potter, today? Thirsty?

INJUN

Dry as a bone.

DOC

Here's a couple dollars.

INJUN

This ain't enough. I want five dollars. If you want your dirty work done, you've got to pay.

DOC

Dirty work!

INJUN

Ha! I know what you're up to. You think Walter has a chance with Mary Rogers and you want me to keep his father a disgrace. She'll throw him over. This ain't enough- You'd better make it ten or I'll talk.

DOC

Well I'm going to speak to Sheriff Jones about you. You can't blackmail me. Who'd take your word against mine. Get out of here.

*Doc exits U.S. Injun Joe exits S.R. Aunt Polly enters S.L. to her stoop.*

POLLY

Tom! What's gone with that boy? Tom!

HARPER

*Entering from U.S.R.*

Your Tom come home yet?

POLLY

Yes Mrs. Harper. He slipped in a few minutes ago. Then back out to go swimming with Huck Finn.

HARPER

Oh Lord help me. Joe's got to be with them. Joe! Joe Harper!

POLLY

Lord Sereny. I ain't doing my duty. Every time I let him off my conscience hurts me so, and every time I hit him my heart almost breaks. He hates work more than anything else so I made him whitewash this fence, but I reckon he's cut and run. Tom!

SID

*Coming to the door.*

Tom's coming right away, Auntie. He's mixing the whitewash back of the shed.

HARPER

*Looking o.s.*

My, there's that girl again. I never see Gracie without a teacup in her hand.

GRACIE

Please, Ms. Harper. MY ma wanted to know if you'd lend her a teacupful of butter and two spoons. We got visitors at our house.

HARPER

Visitors eh? And not enough spoons to put in their mouths.

*They exit in. Doc leaves his office elsewhere onstage. Tom enters from L, whitewash in hand. He makes a pass at the fence with his bruh. Repeats the operation and sit down, discouraged. Sid enters with a bucket from the house while whistling "Buffalo Gals".*

TOM

Say, Sid. I'll fetch the water if you whitewash.

SID

Can't Tom. Aunt Polly told me to get the water and not fool with nobody.

TOM

I'll give you a marble!

SID

I'd like to Tom, but Aunt Polly said...

TOM

And besides. If you do it, I'll show you my sore toe.

SID

*Weakening.*

Well...maybe. Lemme see.

*Aunt Polly enters and sees this.*

POLLY

Get on with you Sid! Now you!

TOM

I wasn't doing nothing Aunt. Please don't whack me.

*Gracie comes out of the Harper house.*

GRACIE

Poor lazy Tom Sawyer.

*Just then Mary and Mrs. Thatcher come to the Harper gate.*

MARY

What's happening Gracie.

POLLY

Umf! Well you didn't get a lick amis. I reckon you been into some other mischief.

GRACIE

Polly's about to give Tom a lickin'.

THATCHER

Poor boy.

GRACIE

No. Stupid boy.

TOM

I don't think I should stand on my sore toe.

POLLY

Sore? Fiddlesticks! Do your work and don't you play hooky until it's finished. When you're done, maybe I'll give you a painkiller and learn you some bible verses.

GRACIE

Darn. That was anti-climactic.

THATCHER

Go along Gracie.

POLLY

*To them.*

You going my way Mary?

MARY

Yes m'am.

*They exit and Mrs. Thatcher goes into the Harper house.*

*Sally enters impersonating a steamboat.*

SALLY



Stop her. Ting-a-ling.  
*She slows down and walks sideways like she is docking a ship.*  
Ship up to back. Tink-a-ling-ling!

*Tom goes about whitewashing the fence until Sally bumps into hm.*

SALLY

Confound it! Can't you get out of the way, Tom Sawyer? Don't you know I'm the "Big Missouri"?

TOM

Why it's you Sally.

SALLY

You're in trouble aren't you? Played hooky and now you got to work. I'm going swimming in an hour. Yes I am. Don't you wish you could on this hot, steamy day? Apparently, you would rather work.

TOM

What do you call work?

SALLY

Why, ain't that work?

TOM

*Carelessly.*  
Well, maybe it I and maybe it ain't. All I know is that it suits me.

SALLY

Oh come on. You don't mean to let on that you like it?

TOM

Like it? Well I don't see why I oughtn't to like it. It's not everyday I get the chance to whitewash a fence.

SALLY

Say Tom. Let me whitewash some.

TOM

You. No I reckon it wouldn't hardly do, Sally. Aunt Polly is very particular about this here fence. I reckon I'm the only person who can do the job right.

SALLY

Not true! Come on- lemme show you. I'd let you if you were me.

TOM

No Sally. I couldn't. I'd be afraid you'd mess it up.

SALLY

I'll prove it.

TOM

Well...here then, but I'm taking a big chance on you Sally.

SALLY

I won't let you down. I'm the best whitewasher there is.

*Huck Finn enters playing a harmonica. He has a dead cat suspended by the tail.*

TOM

Hello Huckleberry.

HUCK

Hello yourself, and see how you like it?

TOM

What you got there?

HUCK

Dead cat.

TOM

What's that good for?

HUCK

Cure warts with 'em. I'm gonna be richer than Doc Robinson.

TOM

No. Everybody knows you cure warts with stump water.

HUCK

Nope. You go into the graveyard round about midnight. Find someone who's been wicked all their life and say "Devil follow corpse, cat follow devil, warts follow cat. I'm done with ye!" That's how you get rid of warts.

TOM

When you doing this?

HUCK

Tonight.

TOM

Lemme come with you.

HUCK

Allright then. I'll meow outside your window and you meow back. Last time you let me meow until Mrs. Harper threw rocks at me and said "Darn you cat!" So I threw a brick through her window. Don't you tell.

*Joe enters, carrying a fiddle case.*

JOE

Say, what's Sally doing sweating over that fence?

TOM

Sally and me the only kids what can whitewash a fence like it's got to be done.

JOE

I bet I can.

TOM

I bet you can't.

JOE

I'll show you.

TOM

I was afraid to trust even Sally.

JOE

Say, I'll lend you my fiddle if you let me.

TOM

Do you really reckon you could do it? Real careful?

JOE

Oh I can. Say, I'll give you all my yellow ticket toward the school merit medal and my fiddle for a day.

TOM

Lemme see the tickets. I wonder if Walter Potter will notice. Alright. You watch Sally and study how she does it and when she's tired I'll let you try.

*Muff Potter enters.*

MUFF

You boys seen schoolteacher Walter?

HUCK

I seen him. Said he wanted to know if I saw you.

MUFF

How'd Walt look?

HUCK

Looked as if he'd like to hit me.

MUFF

Seems to me, Huckleberry, you made a big mistake to leave the Widow Dougla like that. Ain't you ever going back?

HUCK

Me? Gosh no. I tried and it don't work. I can't stand them ways, nor them nice clothes. Don't seem no air get through those clothes. I had to ask to do everything. Had to ask to fish. Had to ask to swim. I couldn't smoke and I couldn't chew no chaw. Being respectable ain't what it's cracked up to be. It's just worry and sweat and wishing you was dead all the time.

MUFF

*Suddenly grabbing Huck.*

What then? Be like me? You and Tom been mighty good to me. Ain't never mocked me. But I hear the other boys. Them's boys whose kites I used to fix. And they's right. Those mockers. They mock me when I ain't steady-and I shame my boy Walt. But Tom, don't. And Huck, don't.

*Muff leaves.*

TOM

I can't wait to get out of this town and become a pirate.

JOE

Where you gonna do that?

HUCK

Oh now you've done it.

TOM

Jackson's Island.

HUCK

Talk lower Tom. We don't want Sally to hear and tattle.

SALLY

I already heard. A pirate eh?

TOM

When you're a pirate you don't have to get up morning or go to school, or wash no fences, or any of that foolishness. Pirate don't have to do anything but take ships and burn 'em and kill everybody.

SALLY

They don't kill the women, do they?

TOM

No. They're too noble.

JOE

When are we becoming pirates Tom?

TOM

Maybe tomorrow. I'm kinda busy though. Maybe next Tuesday.

SALLY

Oh gosh, here comes that darned new boy. Darned smart pants. Seen him at school today.

HUCK

Come on Sally. Let's go down to the swimming hole.

SALLY

I'll get licked if I go.

HUCK

Who cares about a licking anyway?

JOE

Damned if I ain't going.

*They exit. Alfred and Becky enter.*

ALFRED

Well goodbye Becky. Maybe I'll come over after supper. That is, if you'll be out.

BECKY

I'll be out if Ma will let me.

ALFRED

I'm coming back this way pretty soon. I shall miss you whilst I am gone, madam.

*He bows, Tom rolls his eyes. Alfred leaves. Becky catches Tom's eye but coyly looks away.*

TOM

You're Joe Harper's cousin, ain't you?

BECKY

Yes, me and Joe are cousins.

TOM

I saw you in church on Sunday.

BECKY

You did more than just see me. I never had such a fright.

TOM

I saw you through the school window this morning. I played hooky. Name's Tom Sawyer.

BECKY

I heard the teacher ask for your name. I'm Becky Thatcher.

TOM

That's about the prettiest name I ever heard.

BECKY

Oh you bad thing.

TOM

Say, Becky, was you ever engaged?

BECKY

Engaged, what's that?

TOM

Why, engaged to be married.

BECKY

No, not as I know of.

TOM

Would you like to be?

BECKY

I reckon so. What's it like?

TOM

Like? It ain't like anything. You only just tell a boy you won't ever have anybody but him, ever, ever, ever, and then you kiss. And that's all. Anybody can do it.

BECKY

Kiss! What do you kiss for?

TOM

I don't know. Seems like everybody do it.

BECKY

Everybody?

TOM

Everybody that's in love.

*She hangs her head.*

TOM

What is it?

BECKY

I can't tell you.

TOM

Lemme tell you then.

BECKY

No, not now-tomorrow.

TOM

Oh no. now. Please, Becky. I'll whisper it ever so easy.  
*Tom puts his arm around her, his lips dangerously close to her ear.*  
I love you.  
Now you whisper it to me.

BECKY

No, I won't.

TOM

Come on, Becky. It ain't fair not to. Now that I done it.

BECKY

Only if you turn away. And never tell a soul!

TOM

No indeed. I won't. Now, Becky! Hurry! Don't be afraid.

*He has turned away and waits eagerly.*

BECKY

I love you, Tom.

*This sets them free. She runs away and Tom chases her. She takes refuge in a corner and covers her mouth and Tom clasps her about the neck.*

TOM

Now Becky. It's all done but the kiss. And that ain't anything. Please Becky. It's almost dark. Nobody's looking.

*Becky uncovers her mouth. They kiss.*

*A beat.*

*They wipe their mouths with the back of their hands.*

TOM

There. It's all over Becky. And always after this you ain't never to love anybody but me, and you ain't never to marry anybody but me. Will you?

BECKY

No. I'll never love anybody but you Tom Sawyer, and I'll never marry anybody but you, and you ain't ever to marry anybody but me either.

TOM

Certainly not. Oh this is wonderful. Why, when me and Amy Lawrence was engaged-

BECKY

Amy Lawrence! Oh Tom- I ain't the first you ever been engaged to- I ain't the first!

TOM

Oh, don't cry, Becky. I don't care for Amy anymore.

BECKY

Yes you do Tom. Yes you do- you know you do.

*He tries to put his arm around her. She won't let him.*

TOM

Becky- I don't care for anybody but you.

BECKY

I hate you, hate you, hate you! I'll never speak to you again!



*She runs off. Tom runs after her, but Alfred appears and blocks Tom's path.*

ALFRED

I can lick you.

TOM

I'd like to see you try. What's your name again?

ALFRED

None of your business.

TOM

I'll make it my business. I'll tell my big brother on you and he'll thrash you with his little finger.

ALFRED

What do I care? I have a brother bigger than he is and he'll throw your brother into the river.

TOM

*Draws an imaginary line in the sand.*

I dare you to step over that line. If you do I'll...

ALFRED

*Stepping over the line.*

You said you'd do it. Let's see ya.

*Tom goes at him. They wrestle and Tom ends up on top.*

TOM

Holler "enough"!

ALFRED

Enough!

TOM

Go on now. That should learn you. Go home. And don't give me none of your lip.

*Alfred goes but before he exits, the boy picks up a stone and throws it at Tom's head.*

TOM

I'll get you!

*Polly and Sid enter during this. She is not amused.*

POLLY

How much of that fence have you whitewashed?

TOM

It's all done Aund.

POLLY

Tom, don't lie to me...

*Seeing the finished product.*

Well, I never! You can work when you want to.

SID

Auntie, Tom didn't do a lick of that whitewashing. He got Sally and Joe Harper to do it. He just talked to Huck Finn and he's been fighting the minister's grandson. I seen him from the window.

POLLY

Fighting! Tom!

TOM

I'll learn you Sid. I ain't been fighting Aunt.

POLLY

Forty times I told you if you talk to Huck Finn I'll switch you. Grab the switch from the beside the door Sid.

TOM

*Pointing away.*

Aunt Polly, look!

*As she twirls, Tom takes off into the house after Sid.*

I'll kill you Sid.

SID

Ahh!

POLLY

Oh stop! Stop! I'll tan you both!

*They all exit.*

*It is evening now and the townspeople are gathering in church for choir practice.*

DOUGLAS

Lovely evening, ain't it? Where's Mrs. Harper?

THATCHER

My sister said she'd try to run over after she got the dishes done.

DOUGLAS

*To Mr. Sprague, who appears at the Church door.*

You remember Mrs. Thatcher used to sing in our choir. Oh yes she did. And Ms. Adams.

ADAMS

I reckon my singing days are over.

DOUGLAS

Well you just got to join in tonight at choir practice.

ADAMS

I will. Wasn't the hymns lovely at Hoss Williams' funeral and wasn't Mr. Sprague's remarks uplifting?

THOMAS

Oh and here's Mrs. Davis with the girls.

DAVIS

Good evening ladies.

ADAMS

How are you girls?

AMY

I'm well

SALLY

A bit sunburned.

DAVIS

From what?

GRACIE

Word is that Sally was whitewashing all day in place of Tom Sawyer.

ADAMS

That boy will play hooky at his own funeral. I swear.

THOMAS

I thought you would have brought Mary with you.

DAVIS

I saw Walter Potter at their gate. I reckon he'll bring Mary.

DOUGLAS

Let's go in. I suppose I've got to play the organ.

*Doc Robinson exits his office just in time to catch Mary and Walter waking together.*

DOC

I was just going for you Mary. I didn't know you had other company.

WALTER

If I'm intruding-

MARY

No Walter. I didn't promise the Doctor.

MUFF

*Entering.*

Walt! Walt, I gotsta speak with you.

WALT

Father! You've been drinking again.

MUFF

Ain't had a drop

*Burps.*

WALT

Father, haven't you any shame?

DOC

Looks like Walter has his hands full Mary. We'd better go in.

*They go into toward church together. Mary waits at the step. Walter is left with his father.*

WALT

You been drinking again with Injun Joe haven't you?

MUFF

I just had a taste.

WALT

Father!

MUFF

Mary's waiting for you Walter. So sweet of her.

WALT

No. She won't bear the shame of you and me ever again. That's over and done with.

MUFF

Where are you going Walter?

WALT

To find Injun Joe!

MARY

Walter!

WALT

Yes-

MARY

Aren't you coming with me.

WALT

I can't-not tonight. I've got to see someone.

*Mrs. Douglas and Doc come outside to gather Mary.*

DOUGLAS

You coming Mary?

MARY

Yes I'm coming.

*Goes to Muff.*

Don't you see what you're doing to poor Walter?

DOC

Come! He's too drunk to understand what you're saying.

MUFF

Me drunk? Who says I'm drunk?

DOC

I say you're drunk.

MUFF

Lemme tell you something doctor. I don't want you trying to take Walt's girl. It ain't right.

DOC

Get out of my way you drunken philanderer. Come on Mary.

MUFF

Don't you call no names. You don't own this town! I'll learn you some humility.

DOC

Don't threaten me you miserable sot!

MARY

Come on Doctor. Let's go!

DOUGLAS

Mary's right! Leave him alone.

*As they leave, Muff sits. He hears the sound of the choir.*

*Across the stage, Huck meows outside Tom's house. Tom sneaks out.*

TOM

That you Hucky?

HUCK

No, I just meow for fun now.

TOM

You got the cat?

HUCK

Yep. Let's get going.

TOM

I'm a little scared Huck. What if the ghosts rise before our very eyes?

HUCK

Shut up.

*As they sneak across the stage, Doc comes out of church again and goes to his office.*

MUFF

Doc. Doc, I got to speak with you.

DOC

Out of my way.

MUFF

It's about Mary Rogers and my boy.

DOC

What did you say to me?

MUFF

Injun Joe says you're trying to take Mary Rogers away from Walt. Givin' him money to do it.

DOC

Injun Joe is a liar! I'll have him horsewhipped for saying such a thing.

MUFF

Don't you talk that way about my friend!

*Muff has drawn a knife.*

DOC

Drop that knife. I'll have you jailed in the morning. You can't come around here threatening me!

*The doctor and Muff scuffle. As they struggle, Injun Joe enters the fray and picks up the dropped blade. He stabs Doc.*

DOC

Joe!

INJUN

Horsewhip me! Jail me! The score is settled now.  
*He drops the body.*  
Doctor.

*Injun Joe lifts the semi-conscious Muff and presses the knife into Muff's hand.*

MUFF

Joe! What happened? What happened to the doctor?

INJUN

You've done him in, Muff.

MUFF

You don't mean he's-

INJUN

Dead.

*The end of the hymn drifts out of the church.*