

The Big Read 2011
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer
by
Mark Twain
Supplemental Books and Movies

Supplemental Books

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn “Mark Twain's classic novel tells the story of a teenaged misfit who finds himself floating on a raft down the Mississippi River with an escaping slave, Jim. In the course of their perilous journey, Huck and Jim meet adventure, danger, and a cast of characters who are sometimes menacing and often hilarious. Though some of the situations in *Huckleberry Finn* are funny in themselves, this book's humor is found mostly in Huck's unique worldview and his way of expressing himself. Describing his brief sojourn with the Widow Douglas after she adopts him, Huck says: "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." Underlying Twain's good humor is a dark sub current of Antebellum cruelty and injustice that makes *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a frequently funny book with a serious message.”

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court is Mark Twain's classic tale of Hank Morgan, a resident of 19th century Hartford Connecticut who is inexplicably transported to the early medieval England of King Arthur. A classic satire, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" pokes fun at the romanticized notions of chivalry and the idealization of the middle ages. A delightful and enchanting tale, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" shows Twain at his satirical best.

“The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” A Twain short story, first published in *The Saturday Press* in 1865. The narrator of the story, who is searching for a Reverend Leonidas Smiley, visits the long-winded Simon Wheeler, a miner, in hopes of learning his whereabouts. Wheeler instead relates an elaborate story of a different man named Jim Smiley who was a compulsive and imaginative gambler and who once spent three months training a frog named Daniel Webster to jump and then won money by betting on the frog. The gambler, Wheeler reveals, was eventually duped by a quick-thinking stranger.

Life on the Mississippi “Originally published in 1883, this is Mark Twain's memoir of his youthful years as a cub pilot on a steamboat paddling up and down the Mississippi River. Twain used his childhood experiences growing up along the Mississippi in a number of works, including *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but nowhere is the river and the pilot's life more thoroughly described than in this work. Told with insight, humor, and candor, *Life on the Mississippi* is a classic.”

The Autobiography of Mark Twain The year 2010 marks the 100th anniversary of Mark Twain's death. In celebration of this important milestone, Twain's uncensored autobiography is available in its entirety and exactly as he left it. On many best seller lists already after its November 2010 release.

Other Mark Twain books

Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Among the Indians: And Other Unfinished Stories

The Prince and the Pauper

Tom Sawyer, Detective

Tom Sawyer Abroad

Mark Twain's Helpful Hints for Good Living: A Handbook for the Damned Human Race and many more.....

Graphic Novels

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Graphic Revolve) author Mark Twain, illustrator Daniel Strickland

Classics Illustrated Deluxe #4: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (Graphic Novel Adaptation) author Mark Twain, Matt Josdal (Adapter), Brian Shearer (Illustrator)

“The Body” by Steven King, from the collection ***Different Seasons***. “The story takes place during the summer of 1960 in the fictional town of Castle Rock, Maine. A kid named Ray Brower had gone out to pick berries and never returned, having been thought to have been hit by a train. Gordie LaChance and his three friends, Chris Chambers, Teddy Duchamp, and Vern Tessio set out to find his body after telling their parents they will be camping out. Although he is only 12 at the time of the story, Gordon's favorite diversion is writing and storytelling. As much as the story itself is basically a coming-of-age tale of Gordon and his pals and their mostly comical adventures in the woods, there is a bittersweet, poignant quality running throughout it. This is especially the case whenever Gordon, the narrator, begins waxing nostalgic whether describing the bygone sights and sounds of the town he grew up in or when delving into some of the more painful and bitter aspects about his own and his pals' dysfunctional home lives.”

***The Cookbook of Mark Twain (Volume 1)* edited by Tom Thomas**

A cookbook published in 1880 and again in 1893, apparently found in Samuel Clemens kitchen in 1910. This cookbook is an interesting bit of history for anyone interested in Mark Twain and/or the time during which he lived.

My Jim: A Novel by Nancy Rawles. "Written in the great literary tradition of novels of American slavery, *My Jim* is told in the incantatory voice of Sadie Watson, an ex-slave who schools her granddaughter with lessons of love she learned in bondage. To help her granddaughter confront the decisions she needs to make, Sadie mines her memory for the tale of the unquenchable love of her life, Jim. Sadie's Jim was an ambitious young slave and seer who, when faced with the prospect of being sold, escaped down the Mississippi with a white boy named Huck. Sadie is suddenly left alone. Worried about her children, convinced her husband is dead, reviled as a witch, and punished for Jim's escape, Sadie's will and her love for Jim, even in absentia, animate her life and see her through."

Finn: A Novel by Jon Clinch. “Embarking from a scene in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Clinch has written a debut novel of harrowing intensity. Clinch meticulously fills in the back story of Finn (or "Pap Finn," as Twain usually referred to him). He uses the details of the floating-house scene, and much of Twain's plotting, characters, and themes, to create a story at once intricately entwined with *Huckleberry Finn* and separate from that novel in tone and focus. The author makes no attempt to duplicate Twain's humor and satire. Clinch's book contains many surprises: Huck is a mulatto; the extremely racist Finn fancies black women; Finn's father (Judge Finn) is the wealthiest and most respected citizen in town and yet, in significant ways, more evil than his son. Many fans of Twain's masterpiece will want to read Clinch's inspired interpretation of Pap, but some might find it too gruesome, and too void of hope. In any event, Clinch offers a wealth of material for AP English and college-level papers.”

Becky: The Life and Love of Becky Thatcher by Lenore Hart. “Hart imagines the fictional Becky Thatcher—best known as Tom Sawyer’s crybaby girlfriend—as a strong heroine whose true story was held back by childhood friend Samuel Clemens, who chose to give the charismatic Tom Sawyer center stage in his writings. Hart’s riveting and often moving take intersperses Becky’s version of events in the Mark Twain novel with the events of Becky’s life as the wife of Tom’s cousin Sid during and after the Civil War. In Hart’s hands, Becky morphs from sniveling and helpless to woman warrior: dressing as a man to find her husband on Civil War battlefields and trying to hide from Sid and herself her lifelong love for Tom.”

Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe. “The moving abolitionist novel that fueled the fire of the human rights debate in 1852 and melodramatically condemned the institution of slavery through such powerfully realized characters as Tom, Eliza, Topsy, Eva, and Simon Legree. First published more than 150 years ago, this monumental work is today being reexamined by critics, scholars, and students.”

Last Child Left in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder by Richard Louv. A back-to-nature movement to reconnect children with the outdoors.

Jim the Boy by Tony Earley “In this first novel the setting of this coming-of-age story is in a remote North Carolina hamlet. The year is 1934, and like the rest of the country, Aliceville is feeling the pinch of the Great Depression. Yet neither Jim nor his mother nor his three uncles—who have split the paternal role neatly among themselves since the death of Jim’s father a decade earlier—are feeling much in the way of economic pain. Indeed, if you stuck a satellite dish on the front lawn, the story might be taking place in the New South rather than the older, bucolic one. This isn’t to suggest that Earley is deaf to social detail. Indeed, there are all sorts of wonderful touches, like the décor in Jim’s classroom, with its “large, colorful maps of the United States, the Confederacy, and the Holy Land during the time of Jesus.” But *Jim the Boy* is very much the tale of a 10-year-old’s expanding consciousness, which at first barely extends beyond the family property. Earley has a real gift for conveying childhood epiphanies.”

Supplemental Movies

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1938) Not rated. "Tommy Kelly, Ann Gillis, and Jackie Moran as Tom Sawyer, Becky Thatcher, and Huckleberry Finn fill just about everyone's conception of what those kids from Hannibal, Missouri in the 1850s were like. They are given able support from such beloved character players as May Robson as Aunt Polly, **Walter Brennan as Muff Potter**, Victor Jory as the villainous Indian Joe, Olin Howland as the Sunday school teacher, Margaret Hamilton as Mrs. Harper, and Donald Meek as the school superintendent. Selznick did a faithful adaption of the novel; the famous fence whitewashing incident is there as well as Tom and Huck getting a glimpse of their own funerals when everyone assumes they've drowned and the climax, the chase with Indian Joe in the cave. It's a timeless classic; it can be shown to kids of all ages for centuries." Netflix

Tom Sawyer (1917- silent) (2000 release)

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (2008) Not rated. "Featuring more than 60 illustrations from the likes of Norman Rockwell, Mark Twain's celebrated novel springs to life in this engaging dramatization as mischievous orphan Tom Sawyer and his friends share adventures on the mighty Mississippi River. Using his charm and his wits, Tom always skates away from trouble, whether he's pretending to be a buccaneer or pursuing the lovely Becky Thatcher. On-screen text is included so viewers can read along." Netflix

Tom Sawyer (1973) Rated G. "Oscar-winning actress Jodie Foster and Johnny Whitaker ("Family Affair") star in this musical adaptation of Mark Twain's classic tale. Orphan Tom Sawyer (Whitaker) and his scrappy pal Huck get into all kinds of mischief around town, and even though he shirks his responsibilities, Tom always manages to charm freckle-faced Becky (Foster) and his Aunt Polly (Celeste Holm). But when the boys witness a murder, Tom faces a life-and-death situation." Netflix

The Animated Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1988) Rated G. "Mark Twain's classic tale of Tom Sawyer receives the animated and musical treatment in this family film that finds Tom (voiced by Ross Malinger), Huckleberry Finn (Ryan Slater) and Becky Thatcher (Kirsten Dunst) cutting loose in a series of riotous, song-filled adventures. Although they do try to stay out of trouble, that's exactly where Tom and Huck always wind up, much to the chagrin of Judge Thatcher (Christopher Lloyd) and Tom's aunt Polly." Netflix

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Several versions: 1955, 1985, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1960) Rated G. From chicken thief to cabin boy, riverboat pilot to circus performer, Huck Finn (Eddie Hodges) outsmarts everyone on his way down the muddy Mississippi. This 1960 movie was the first color version of the Mark Twain classic. Features a cast of veteran Hollywood actors, including Buster Keaton (as a lion tamer!), Sterling Holloway, Andy Devine, Judy Canova and John Carradine. Directed by Michael Curtiz.

Puddin'head Wilson (1984) TV. Not rated. The theme of racism is covered in this production starring Ken Howard. A study guide included.

Mark Twain Tonight! (1967) Not Rated. “Come meet Mark Twain. OK, true, the humorist has been dead for more years than we care to remember, and not many of us around today were alive to hear what he sounded like. But Hal Holbrook is so spectacular in his one-man performance that you could The gravelly voice, the lined face, the slow shuffle, and cigar-induced throat clearings seem so natural that you'll have difficulty recognizing Holbrook beneath the white suit, the gray hair, and the handlebar mustache. *Mark Twain Tonight!* began as a Broadway show in the 1960s and was filmed as a CBS special in 1967. Yet you'd never know it, because the humor, which is more than a century old, is still laugh-out-loud funny today. Twain-- Holbrook-- gives a monologue that is rambling, intelligent, and humorous as he culls together commentary from a variety of Twain sources.” Netflix

Mark Twain's America (1998) Rated G. “Take a fascinating look at the growth of America through the eyes of celebrated author and humorist Mark Twain. See how Twain's world of river boats and the Old West is still very much a part of the modern world's fast-paced environment. The film's entertaining mix of archival photos and present-day live action makes the life and times of Mark Twain come alive right before you very eyes!” Netflix

Mark Twain - A Film Directed by Ken Burns (2002) Not rated.” Given the legendary life of its subject, it's not surprising that *Mark Twain* is perhaps the most entertaining documentary Ken Burns has made. This is the magnificent story of Missouri-born author Samuel Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain), encompassing legend and fact with an exhilarating sense of adventure. Twain viewed himself as *the* American. Burns's film backs that claim as it follows Clemens's literary odyssey around the globe, from unrivaled acclaim as a writer to near destitution and the devastating deaths of his wife and three children. As usual, eloquent writers and scholars (including longtime Twain performer Hal Holbrook) provide a wondrous flow of anecdotes and observations, recounting Twain's remarkable humor while acknowledging a darker side that felt anger toward an indifferent god. He was considered, in his time, to be the funniest man on Earth. He is one of the most quoted men of his time. Tracing Twain's rise from his humble birth in Missouri to his prosperous life in Connecticut as the nation's best-selling author, *Mark Twain* reveals a compelling portrait of the father of American literature. Nearly three years in the making and drawing from 63 hours of material, thousands of archival photographs and nearly 20 interviews with top writers and Twain scholars, *Mark Twain* is the story of an extraordinary life—one full of rollicking adventure, stupendous success, crushing defeat and hilarious comedy.” Netflix

Stand by Me (1986) Rated R. “A sleeper hit when released, *Stand by Me* is based on Stephen King's novella “The Body,” but it's more about the joys and pains of boyhood friendship than a morbid fascination with corpses. It's about four boys ages 12 and 13 (Wil Wheaton, River Phoenix, Corey Feldman, Jerry O'Connell) who take an overnight hike through the woods near their Oregon town to find the body of a boy who's been missing for days. Their journey includes a variety of scary adventures (including a ferocious junkyard dog, a swamp full of leeches, and a treacherous leap from a train trestle), but it's also a time for personal revelations, quiet interludes, and the raucous comradeship of best friends. Set in the 1950s, the movie indulges an overabundance of anachronistic profanity and a kind of idealistic, golden-toned nostalgia (it's told in flashback as a story written by Wheaton's character as an adult, played by Richard Dreyfuss). But it's delightfully entertaining from start to finish, thanks to the rapport among its young cast members and the timeless, universal themes of friendship, family, and the building of character and self-esteem. Kiefer Sutherland makes a memorable teenage villain, and look closely for John Cusack in a flashback scene as Wheaton's now-deceased and dearly missed brother. This heartfelt movie is a genuine crowd-pleaser.” Netflix

My Girl (1991) Rated PG. "This funny, poignant coming-of-age story follows a momentous summer in the life of precocious 11-year-old Vada (Anna Chlumsky) and her best friend, Thomas J. (Macaulay Culkin). Vada's widowed father (Dan Aykroyd), meanwhile, starts coming out of his shell thanks to his new employee (Jamie Lee Curtis). Young Vada must cope with many profound changes, and before the summer's over, she will learn very powerful lessons about love and loss."

An American Summer (1993) Rated PG. Modern day Tom Sawyer, music by Aerosmith and Moody Blues.

Wishbone: A Tale in Twain (1995)