

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is not merely a literary classic. It is part of the American imagination. More than any other work in our culture, it established America's vision of childhood. Mark Twain created two fictional boys, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, who still seem more real than most of the people we know. In a still puritanical nation, Twain reminded adults that children were not angels, but fellow human beings, and perhaps all the more lovable for their imperfections and bad grooming. Neither American literature nor America has ever been the same.