

# THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

BY

**LAURA EASON**

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY  
**MARK TWAIN**



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

## THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

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by Laura Eason  
adapted from the novel by Mark Twain

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THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER was originally commissioned by  
and received its world premiere at Hartford Stage in 2010.  
Michael Wilson, Artistic Director    Michael Stotts, Managing Director

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER was commissioned and first presented by Hartford Stage (Michael Wilson, Artistic Director; Michael Stotts, Executive Director) in Hartford, Connecticut. It received its world premiere on April 9, 2010. It was directed by Jeremy B. Cohen; the set design was by Daniel Ostling; the costume design was by Ilona Somogyi; the lighting design was by Robert Wierzel; the sound design and original music were by Broken Chord Collective/Daniel Baker and Aaron Meicht; the fight/movement director was Tommy Rapley; and the production stage manager was Cynthia Cahill. The cast was as follows:

TOM SAWYER . . . . . Tim McKiernan  
BECKY THATCHER and others . . . . . Louisa Krause  
HUCKLEBERRY FINN and others . . . . . Casey Predovic  
JOE HARPER and others . . . . . Joe Paulik  
SID SAWYER and others . . . . . Chris Bowyer  
AUNT POLLY and others . . . . . Nancy Lemenager  
INJUN JOE and others . . . . . Teddy Canez  
MUFF POTTER and others . . . . . Erik Lochtefeld

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER received its New York premiere at the New Victory Theatre on March 2, 2012. It was presented in association with Actors Theatre of Louisville, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Kansas City Repertory Theatre and Hartford Stage. It was directed by Jeremy B. Cohen; the set design was by Daniel Ostling; the costume design was by Lorraine Venberg; the lighting design was by Robert Wierzel; the sound design and original music were by Broken Chord Collective/Daniel Baker and Aaron Meicht; and the fight/movement director was Tommy Rapley. The cast was as follows:

TOM SAWYER . . . . . Tim McKiernan  
BECKY THATCHER and others . . . . . Hayley Treider  
HUCKLEBERRY FINN and others . . . . . Robbie Tann  
JOE HARPER and others . . . . . Justin Fuller  
SID SAWYER and others . . . . . Nate Trinrud  
AUNT POLLY and others . . . . . Nance Williamson  
INJUN JOE and others . . . . . Michael D. Nichols  
MUFF POTTER and others . . . . . Joseph Adams

## **CHARACTERS**

ACTOR #1: JOE HARPER, also plays TOWNSPERSON 1,  
DEFENSE LAWYER, ACCOMPLICE

ACTOR #2: BECKY THATCHER

ACTOR #3: SID SAWYER, also plays DOC ROBINSON,  
PROSECUTION LAWYER

ACTOR #4: MUFF POTTER, also WIDOW'S BROTHER

ACTOR #5: INJUN JOE, also plays MASTER DOBINS,  
MINISTER

ACTOR #6: TOM SAWYER

ACTOR #7: HUCKLEBERRY FINN, also plays  
TOWNSPERSON 2

ACTOR #8: AUNT POLLY, also plays WIDOW DOUGLAS

## **TIME**

1840s.

## **PLACE**

St. Petersburg, Missouri, on the Mississippi River.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

**THE SET:** An open and very flexible space. Locations should be established as minimally as possible utilizing lights to set the scene. For example, a simple bench could represent Muff Potter's jail cell, a few chairs and a table could make up the school room, etc.

**THE PHYSICAL LIFE OF THE PLAY:** The world premiere production had a very strong physical life that included carefully choreographed transitions (often using the actors to move set pieces, chairs, etc., instead of the crew) and highly theatrical "movement sections" which are marked as such in the script. Future productions would be wise to incorporate a lively physical life, for much of the spirit and delight of the story lies in the movement of the characters and not just the words they say. Narration placed at the top of a scene is intended to cover the transition into that scene.

**MUSIC / SOUND DESIGN:** The world premiere production was heavily scored with original music — in transitions, under movement section, etc. — which is also recommended.

**THE NARRATIVE VOICE:** All of the actors narrate the story. The narration should be as natural as possible. The audience should feel as if they are sitting with a friend who is in the middle of telling his favorite story with truth, animation and excitement. There shouldn't be anything forced or "acted" about the narration. It is simple straight-forward, honestly excited storytelling. Also, there should be a delineation between the actor narrating and the characters that actor plays. It should never feel like the character of Muff Potter, for example, is narrating, even when there are lines of narration for actor #4 followed immediately by Muff Potter lines. The actor should attack the narration with their natural voice and manner and then switch into any character voice or physicality when the scene begins.

**APPROACHING CHARACTER:** When using only eight actors, the play is conceived to not have child actors. In the original production, Tom, Becky and Huck were played by actors in their very early twenties. It is important, therefore, to not have the actors attempt to "play young" but to simply be as honest and true to the

intention of scenes as possible. There should be nothing pushy or “acting at” in the scenes as anything of that ilk rings very false with this material. The emotions and intentions must be grounded and real or risk cheapening the experience and making the show feel trite and empty.

**DANGER IN THE PLAY:** Although this adaptation is conceived for a family audience, it is important that the aspects of danger and fear in the play not be glossed over or minimized. For example, it serves the story better if the nightmare described at the top of Act Two — but left for the director to imagine in detail — is in some way enacted. The darker aspects of the story are essential for the character arcs and action of the play to work. The world premiere contained stage combat, a staged nightmare with some violent imagery and a very tense cave scene. The danger in the show was significant enough that the suggested minimum age for our audience was eight.

# THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

## PROLOGUE

*The ensemble gathers.*

ACTOR #6. This is the chronicle of a boy named Tom Sawyer.

ACTOR #7. And as such, concerns itself with adventures fitting a boy.

ACTOR #5. Full of superstitions ...

ACTOR #4. And murder ...

ACTOR #3. And buried treasure ...

ACTOR #1. And getting lost ...

ACTOR #2. And being found again.

ACTOR #8. Although we tell this story mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls ...

ACTOR #2. We hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account.

ACTOR #4. For part of our plan is to remind you of what you once were yourselves ...

ACTOR #3. And how you felt and thought and talked ...

ACTOR #6. And of your own unexpected and surprising adventures.

## ACT ONE

### Scene 1

#### Hooky

*The fishing hole. Tom Sawyer swings across the stage on a thick rope.*

TOM. Whooo-hooo! (*He splashes into the "fishing hole". Tom splashes around a bit, singing, perhaps "Buffalo Gals." Singing:*) Buffalo gals, won't you come out tonight, Come out tonight, come out tonight — (*Tom sees Huckleberry Finn, dressed in ragged, torn clothes, approaching.*) Hello, Huckleberry!

HUCKLEBERRY. Hello yourself, Tom Sawyer, and see how you like it.

TOM. What's that you got?

HUCKLEBERRY. Dead cat.

TOM. He's pretty stiff. Where'd you get him?

HUCKLEBERRY. Bought him off'n a boy.

TOM. What'd you give?

HUCKLEBERRY. A cow's bladder I got at the slaughterhouse.

TOM. What is dead cats good for, Huck?

HUCKLEBERRY. Good for? Cure warts with.

TOM. No! I bet I know something that's better.

HUCKLEBERRY. I bet you don't. What is it?

TOM. Spunk-water.

HUCKLEBERRY. Oh, I wouldn't give a dern for spunk-water.

TOM. D'you ever try it?

HUCKLEBERRY. No, I hain't. But Bob Tanner did. And it didn't do him a lick of good.

TOM. How'd he do it?

HUCKLEBERRY. He went and dipped his hand in a rotten stump where the rain-water was —

TOM. In the daytime?

# THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER

by Laura Eason

adapted from the novel by Mark Twain

6M, 2W (doubling, flexible casting)

Join Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn and Becky Thatcher in the greatest summer adventure ever told in this imaginative, highly theatrical adaptation of Mark Twain's incomparable classic. Featuring the thrill of mischief-making, the fickleness of first love, the cold shivers that linger after an adventure gone very wrong and the unbridled joy at discovering real buried treasure, this story is for anyone who has ever been a kid and celebrates all that is grand and glorious about childhood.

*"A near-perfect production ... sassy, ingeniously staged and deeply affecting."*

—The New York Times

*"The show is bright and fresh enough to send a youngster who hasn't yet encountered Tom Sawyer flying home to read the book. And that is no small achievement."*

—Denver Westword

*"Timeless and playful ... [an] adaptation of a classic piece of literature with a modern theatrical appeal."*

—TheArtsLouisville.com

*"Clever, creative ... an inventive, high-spirited and endearing stage version."*

—The Kansas City Star

*"It is exciting and engrossing, for adults as well as children ... the whole production soar[s] like a dream of America long ago, bursting with possibilities and promise."*

—The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

*"An innovative and charming adaptation ... sticks to the bones of the story with admirable fidelity, but creates a flowing physical style that effectively integrates dance with drama."*

—Talkin' Broadway

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