

The adventures of tom sawyer: money can't always buy happiness

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The Summary of the Novel

This is a story about a boy named Tom Sawyer, a rebellious boy who lives in St. Petersburg, America. He lives with his Aunt Polly, a strict woman who constantly worries about him.

Tom is crafty and sly, tricking most of the boys in his town to paint his fence for him. His closest friend is Huck, another rebellious boy like himself. A new family moves into town, the Thatcher's, and Tom is in love with their daughter, Becky. As Tom and Huck play in a graveyard with a dead cat, they overhear some men and witness a murder by Injun Joe, a violent man set on revenge. Tom and his friends pretend to be pirates on a nearby island, living out in the woods for a while. However, because they are gone for so long, the townspeople assume that the boys have drowned in the river. Tom and the boys eventually return. Tom wrestles on whether to tell anyone about Injun Joe, but he is then forced to testify in court and Injun Joe runs away. As the manhunt for Injun Joe continues, Tom and Huck decide to search for buried treasure. However, they come across a haunted house, which is Injun Joe's hiding place. They overhear that he has buried the treasure in a secret location and try to follow him, but instead Huck stops the murder of a widow. Tom takes Becky on a trip to a nearby cave and they get lost. Things look bad, as they've run out of food, but Tom finds a way out and saves Becky. Tom then tells Huck that the treasure is in the cave and the two of them get it. They both become instantly wealthy.

In the end, Huck struggles to the rich lifestyle, while Tom enjoys the money, but intends on being a classy thief.

Adjusting to Life with Money

As always a lot can be said about this story, but what draws my interest and attention is the idea that money can't always buy happiness. In today's world, it's often a matter of "If I only had more money, I'd be happy" but we don't see that in the world of Tom Sawyer. In his world, the poor are often the most free.

By the end of the story, the author provides two rowdy country boys with an enormous amount of wealth and they don't know what to do with it. In fact, they struggle to adjust to life with money.

All Huck wants to do is go outside whenever he wants and enjoy nature. He wants to fish, swim, and explore caves. He doesn't care about the fancy clothes and gourmet food. In his simple ways, he recognizes all of the obligations that wealth brings with it, like manners, politics, and how possessions can begin to possess us. And so for him, wealth is bondage, not freedom.

Even Tom pushes back against his wealth in a way. Instead of investing the money or buying nice things, Tom wants to start a gang of thieves. And while some may say that this shows his growing desire for more wealth, I think Tom wants to be a thief for the thrills and rebellion, not the accrued wealth.

And so it's kind of interesting that the two characters in the story that probably want or need the money the least end up the richest. But that's a good thing. It shows that money doesn't have to change people, especially for our protagonist, even if that protagonist is as rebellious and mischievous as Tom Sawyer.