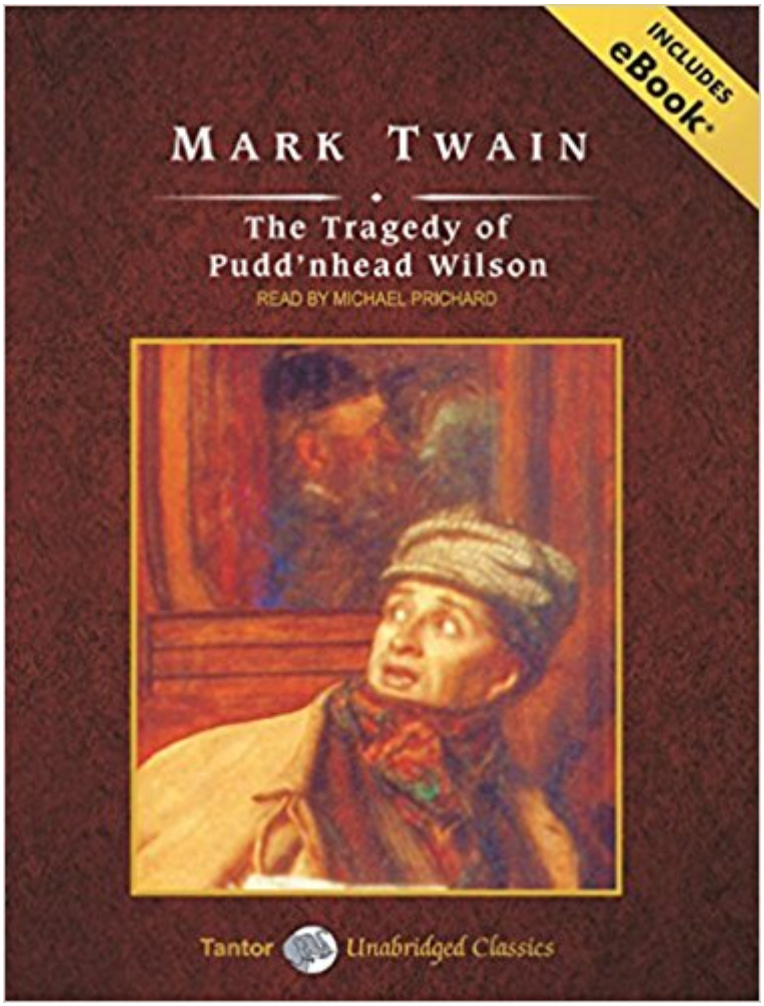
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The Tragedy Of Pudd'nhead Wilson, With EBook (Tantor Unabridged Classics)



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Synopsis

Two half brothers look so similar as infants that no one can tell them apart. One, the legitimate son of a rich man, is destined for a life of comfort, while the other is condemned to be a slave because he is part black. The mother of the would-be slave is also the nurse of the other; to give her son the best life possible, she switches the babies. Soon the boy who is given every advantage becomes spoiled and cruel. He takes sadistic pleasure in tormenting his half brother. As they grow older, the townspeople no longer notice that the boys look similar, and they readily accept that each is born to his station. A local lawyer, David Wilson, has had a similar experience. On his first day in the village, he made an odd remark about a dog, and the townspeople gave him the condescending name "Pudd'nhead." Although he was a young, intelligent lawyer, he is unable to live down this name, so he toils in obscurity for over twenty years. Finally, he is presented with a complex murder trial-a chance to prove himself to the townspeople and shake this unjust label.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mark Twain is the pseudonym of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), American writer and humorist, whose best work is characterized by broad, often irreverent humor or biting social satire. Twain's writing is also known for realism of place and language, memorable characters, and hatred of hypocrisy and oppression.Michael Prichard has recorded well over five hundred audiobooks and was named one of SmartMoney magazine's Top Ten Golden Voices. His numerous awards and accolades include an Audie Award and several AudioFile Earphones Awards.

I loved having the text of the story displayed on-screen while I listened. The combination of visual and auditory inputs made this great story come alive in a much more powerful way than simply reading or listening by itself. I strongly recommend this method for anyone seeking to gain a deeper understanding of any written work.

If the colorful but denigrating perceived Negro dialect of Matk Twain's steamboat pilot days were to be deleted from this book, there wouldn't be a book left, vbut with that caveat there is much humor in the fact that MarkTwain started out to write a short narrative and found tht his characters had taken contro, introduced more, and were telling him an entirely different story. Te part that he cut out and treated as a separate story is funny. Puddin Head Wilson is a variant of the "switched tins" theme of The Prince and the Pauper. TTimes now are different. Wince with embarassment while you are reading it, but appreciate the historical verity.

This is a review of the Tantor Media production of The Tragedy of Pedd'nhead Wilson AND a review of the book itself. As you will note below, I have read this work several times but never listen to it be read to me. I have a grandson, who in turn has a young friend (they both are very bright students about to graduate from high school), who I found were put off and quite leery of reading this work. Further investigation revealed that kids today are a bit put off, intimidated or just "turned off" and have difficulties reading book which use heavy regional, racial or historic dialect. What to do? Well, I have had some success in understanding the Canterbury Tales and other old English works by first listening to the books on tape or CD and then reading the actual book. I thought that if it worked for me...why not this young man and woman. I tried it and it worked. I first had them listen to the CDs being reviewed here and then had them read the book. I think I made a breakthrough with both of them. Was I simply lucky? I don't know, I only know that I was able to open new doors for at least two young people and that is good enough for me.This CD presentation being reviewed here is read by Michael Prichard. The quality is great. The running time is 6 hours, 33 minutes with 3 minute tracks...there are 6 CDs in the package.The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson is not, I will admit, one of Twain's better works, yet when all is said and done, never the less one of my favorite. But that is of moot consideration for me personally as I am one of those individuals who admire everything that Twain ever wrote and would quite likely go into some sort of reading ecstasy if I were to lay my hands on even one of his grocery lists. This is my fifth or seventh reading of this particular work and it is just as fresh to me today as it was when I first read it at the age of 14, which I hate to admit, was

many and many a year ago.The plot of this work is quite well known and has been very well addressed by several reviewers here so I will not add a lot as it would be a bit redundant and others have done much better in this area than I could manage. Briefly though, this is the story which is set in a small Missouri town along the Mississippi River, sometime before the Civil War. It is the story of two you men, one white and one black, who were switched at an early age by the black child's mother to save him from being eventually "sold down the river," a fate no slave at the time living in Missouri wanted. Many have been critical of this plot ploy by Twain, calling it unrealistic, but hey, it works for me. The story of course involves a much larger cast of characters, of which the only one in possession of any admirable characteristics is the name sake of the book; Pudd'nhead Wilson, an eccentric lawyer...actually, my kind of guy.Now for me this work has several qualities or points that I not only admire, but feel that Twain pulled off perfectly. They are, in my opinion, the heart; the guts and purpose of the story. They are what make this work valuable to me.First, it addresses slavery and the state of the slave and "master" during this period. There has been a myth in Missouri and many of the other boarder states perpetuated throughout the years that slaves living here during that time really did not have it all that bad. I can remember as a child actually talking to several individuals, very, very old individuals, who actually remembered the days of slavery or had at the very least, first hand accounts and remembrances of them through their parents. I have heard on many occasions words such as "Our family treated our slaves/darkies/blacks/, etc. just like family and they all had it pretty good...they all love my family." This folks is a load of...well, you know. Twain, who was very antislavery, was also an extremely good observer. Through works such as this he has etched in the mind of any thinking reader just how horrible it would be to be enslaved by even the most benign of owners. He has graphically pointed out in this small novel the inequities, hypocrisies, cruelties and inhumanity of the institution of slavery. This is powerful stuff folks.Secondly, Twain was a master of dialect...the dialect of the southern black slave and the dialect of the white southerner. There has been some recent critical articles as to his mastery and handling of this writing technique, but do keep in mind that he was a pioneer in this area and was more or less working alone with no great example to lead him...he lead others.Thirdly, despite the rather grim subject matter that the author was working with here, his ironic humor glimmers off of each page. Simply put; Twain was a funny man and was able to make observations into the state of our human nature that has probably never been equaled. Sarcastic, ironic, cutting...all of these, but all so true. The little excerpts form Wilson's calendar and pure literary gold. What makes it even better is that we can still see all of these foibles in ourselves even to this day. Twain had we the people nailed, and nailed perfectly. What an insightful man he was.Forth, Twain is simply a good

story teller even if he is not on his "A Game."Again, this may not be his best work, but it is one of my favorite.Please reference my review of the actual book atThe Tragedy of Pudd’nhead WilsonDon BlankenshipThe Ozarks

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