

Character Study Edward Rutherfurd's Favourite Fictional Figure

Tom Sawyer was certainly my first literary hero, if not my only one. My parents read the first chapter of Mark Twain's classic to me, then gave me the book to read for myself when I was about eight or nine. How could any boy fail to warm to a fellow who has his own robber gang? And what about the delicious cunning with which he persuaded the other boys to whitewash a fence for him? What a lesson in psychology and delegation. Tom was also in love with



Becky Thatcher. And at that time I was badly in love with a girl called Jane. Like him, I lost her and got her back. For a while, anyway.

But of all Tom's adventures on the Mississippi, or in the caves with the terrifying Injun Joe, nothing can quite equal his genius in turning up alive at his own funeral. I still dream of doing that.

Edward Rutherfurd's latest novel, New York, is published by Arrow Books, priced £7.99.

