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# **The Young Outlaw or, Adrift in the Streets**

Horatio Alger

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THE YOUNG OUTLAW;

Or,

Adrift in the Streets.

by

HORATIO ALGER, JR.,

\* \* \* \* \*

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[Frontispiece: the deacon asks directions of the street Arab.]

[Series Title Illustration]

**THE YOUNG OUTLAW;**

Or,

Adrift in the Streets.

by

**HORATIO ALGER, JR.,**

Author of "Ragged Dick,"—"Tattered Tom,"—"Luck and Pluck,"—  
"Brave and Bold," Series.

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Boston.

To  
MY YOUNG FRIEND,  
HARRY L. DE VISSER,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

## PREFACE.

"The Young Outlaw" is the sixth volume of the Tattered Tom Series, and the twelfth of the stories which are wholly or mainly devoted to street-life in New York. The story carries its moral with it, and the writer has little fear that the Young Outlaw will be selected as a model by the boys who may read his adventures, and be amused by the scrapes into which he manages to fall. In previous volumes he has endeavored to show that even a street-boy, by enterprise, industry and integrity, may hope to become a useful and respected citizen. In the present narration he aims to exhibit the opposite side of the picture, and point out the natural consequences of the lack of these qualities.

This may be a proper occasion to express gratitude for the very remarkable favor with which these stories of humble life have been received throughout the country. The writer is glad to believe that they have done something to draw attention to a neglected class of children, whom it is important to elevate and redeem.

NEW YORK, March 25, 1875.

## THE YOUNG OUTLAW;

OR,

ADRIFT IN THE STREETS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE YOUNG OUTLAW.

"Boy, is this Canal Street?"

The speaker was evidently from the country. He was a tall man, with prominent features, and a face seamed and wrinkled by the passage of nearly seventy years. He wore a rusty cloak, in the style of thirty years gone by, and his clothing generally was of a fashion seldom seen on Broadway.

The boy addressed was leaning against a lamppost, with both hands in his pockets. His clothes were soiled and ragged, a soft hat, which looked as if it had served in its varied career as a foot-ball, was thrust carelessly on his head. He looked like a genuine representative of the "street Arab," with no thought for to-morrow and its needs, and contented if he could only make sure of a square meal to-day. His face was dirty, and marked by a mingled expression of fun and impudence; but the features were not unpleasing, and, had he been clean and neatly dressed, he would undoubtedly have been considered good-looking.

He turned quickly on being addressed, and started perceptibly, as his glance met the inquiring look of the tall, stranger. He seemed at first disposed to run away, but this intention was succeeded by a desire to have some fun with the old man.

"Canal Street's about a mile off. I'll show yer the way for ten cents."

"A mile off? That's strange," said the old man, puzzled. "They told me at the Astor House it was only about ten minutes walk, straight up."

"That's where you got sold, gov'nor. Give me ten cents, and you won't have no more trouble."

"Are you sure you know Canal Street, yourself?" said the old man, perplexed. "They'd ought to know at the hotel."

"I'd ought to know too. That's where my store is."

"Your store!" ejaculated the old man, fixing his eyes upon his ragged companion, who certainly looked very little like a New York merchant.

"In course. Don't I keep a cigar store at No. 95?"

"I hope you don't smoke yourself," said the deacon (for he was a deacon), solemnly.

"Yes, I do. My constitushun requires it."

"My boy, you are doing a lasting injury to your health," said the old man, impressively.

"Oh, I'm tough. I kin stand it. Better give me a dime, and let me show yer the way."

The deacon was in a hurry to get to Canal Street, and after some hesitation, for he was fond of money, he drew out ten cents, and handed it to his ragged companion.

"There, my boy, show me the way. I should think you might have done it for nothing."

"That aint the way we do business in the city, gov'nor."

"Well, go ahead, I'm in a hurry."

"You needn't be, for *this* is Canal Street," said the boy, edging off a little.

"Then you've swindled me," said the deacon, wrathfully. "Give me back that ten cents."

"Not if I know it," said the boy, mockingly. "That aint the way we do business in the city. I'm goin to buy two five-cent cigars with that money."

"You said you kept a cigar-store yourself," said the deacon, with sudden recollection.

"You mustn't believe all you hear, gov'nor," said the boy, laughing saucily.

"Well now, if you aint a bad boy," said the old man.

"What's the odds as long as you're happy?" said the young Arab, carelessly.

Here was a good chance for a moral lesson, and the deacon felt that it was his duty to point out to the young reprobate the error of his ways.

"My young friend," he said, "how can you expect to be happy when you lie and cheat? Such men are never happy."

"Aint they though? You bet I'll be happy when I'm smokin' the two cigars I'm goin to buy."

"Keep the money, but don't buy the cigars," said the deacon, religion getting the better of his love of money. "Buy yourself some clothes. You appear to need them."

"Buy clo'es with ten cents!" repeated the boy, humorously.

"At any rate, devote the money to a useful purpose, and I shall not mind being cheated out of it. If you keep on this way, you'll end in the gallus."

"That's comin' it rather strong, gov'nor. Hangin's played out in New York. I guess I'm all right."

"I'm afraid you're all wrong, my boy. You're travellin' to destruction."

"Let's change the subject," said the street boy. "You're gittin' personal, and I don't like personal remarks. What'll you bet I can't tell your name?"

"Bet!" ejaculated the deacon, horrified.

"Yes, gov'nor. I'll bet you a quarter I kin tell your name."

"I never bet. It's wicked," said the old man, with emphasis.

"Well, we won't bet, then," said the boy. "Only, if I tell your name right, you give me ten cents. If I don't get it right, I'll give back this dime you gave me. Aint that fair?"

The deacon might have been led to suspect that there was not much difference between the boy's proposal, and the iniquity of a bet, but his mind was rather possessed by the thought that here was a good chance to recover the money out of which he had been so adroitly cheated. Surely there was no wrong in recovering that, as of course he would do, for how could a ragged street boy tell the name of one who lived a hundred and fifty miles distant, in a small country town?

"I'll do it," said the deacon.

"You'll give me ten cents if I tell your name?"

"Yes, and you'll give me back the money I give you if you can't tell."

"That's it, gov'nor."

"Then what's my name, my boy?" and the deacon extended his hand in readiness to receive the forfeit of a wrong answer.

"Deacon John Hopkins," answered the boy, confidently.

The effect on the old man was startling. He was never more surprised in his life. He stared at the boy open-mouthed, in bewilderment and wonder.

"Well, I declare!" he ejaculated. "I never heard of such a thing."

"Aint I right, gov'nor?"

"Yes, my boy, you're right; but how on earth did you find out?"

"Give me the money, and I'll tell you;" and the boy extended his hand.

The deacon drew the money from his vest-pocket, and handed it to the young Arab, without remonstrance.

"Now tell me, my boy, how you know'd me."

The boy edged off a few feet, then lifted his venerable hat so as to display the whole of his face.

"I'd ought to know you, deacon," he said; "I'm Sam Barker."

"By gracious, if it aint Sam!" ejaculated the old man. "Hallo! stop, I say!"

But Sam was half-way across the street. The deacon hesitated an instant, and then dashed after him, his long cloak floating in the wind, and his hat unconsciously pushed back on the top of his head.

"Stop, you Sam!" he shouted.

But Sam, with his head over his shoulder, already three rods in advance, grinned provokingly, but appeared to have no intention of stopping. The deacon was not used to running, nor did he make due allowance for the difficulty of navigating the crowded streets of the metropolis. He dashed headlong into an apple-stand, and suffered disastrous shipwreck. The apple-stand was overturned, the deacon's hat flew off, and he found himself sprawling on the sidewalk, with apples rolling in all directions around him, and an angry dame showering maledictions upon him, and demanding compensation for damages.

The deacon picked himself up, bruised and ashamed, recovered his hat, which had rolled into a mud-puddle, and was forced to pay the woman a dollar before he could get away. When this matter was settled, he looked for Sam, but the boy was out of sight. In fact, he was just around the corner, laughing as if he would split. He had seen his pursuer's discomfiture, and regarded it as a huge practical joke.

"I never had such fun in all my life," he ejaculated, with difficulty, and he went off into a fresh convulsion. "The old feller won't forget me in a hurry."



## CHAPTER II.

### SAM'S EARLY LIFE.

Three years before the meeting described in the previous chapter Sam Barker became an orphan, by the death of his father. The father was an intemperate man, and no one grieved much for his death. Sam felt rather relieved than otherwise. He had received many a beating from his father, in his fits of drunken fury, and had been obliged to forage for himself for the most part, getting a meal from one neighbor, a basket of provision from another, and so managed to eke out a precarious subsistence in the tumble-down shanty which he and his father occupied.

Mr. Barker left no will, for the good and sufficient reason that he had no property to dispose of. So, on the day after the funeral, Sam found himself a candidate for the poorhouse. He was a stout boy of twelve, strong and sturdy in spite of insufficient food, and certainly had suffered nothing from luxurious living.

It was a country town in Connecticut, near the Rhode Island border. We will call it Dudley. The selectmen deliberated what should be done with Sam.

"There isn't much for a lad like him to do at the poorhouse," said Major Stebbins. "He'd ought to be set to work. Why don't you take him, Deacon Hopkins?"

"I do need a boy," said the deacon, "but I'm most afeard to take Sam. He's a dreadful mischievous boy, I've heerd."

"He's had a bad example in his father," said the major. "You could train him up the way he'd ought to go."

"Mebbe I could," said the deacon, flattered by this tribute, and reflecting, moreover, that he could get a good deal of work out of Sam without being obliged to pay him wages.

"You could train him up to be a respectable man," said the major. "They wouldn't know what to do with him at the poorhouse."

So the deacon was prevailed upon to take Sam to bring up.

"You're goin to live with me, Samuel," said the deacon, calling the boy to his side.

"Am I?" asked Sam, surveying the old man attentively.

"Yes; I shall try to make a man of you."

"I'll get to be a man anyway, if I live long enough," said Sam.

"I mean I will make a man of you in a moral sense," explained the deacon.

This, however, was above Sam's comprehension.

"What would you like to do when you're a man?" asked the deacon.

"Smoke a pipe," answered Sam, after some reflection.

The deacon held up his hands in horror.

"What a misguided youth!" he exclaimed. "Can you think of nothing better than to smoke a pipe?"

"Dad liked it," said Sam; "but I guess he liked rum better."

"Your father was a misguided man," said the deacon. "He wasted his substance in riotous living."

"You'd ought to have seen him when he was tight," said Sam, confidentially. "Didn't he tear round then? He'd fling sticks of wood at my head. O jolly! Didn't I run? I used to hide under the bed when I couldn't run out of doors."

"Your father's dead and gone. I don't want to talk against him, but I hope you'll grow up a very different man. Do you think you will like to live with me?"

"I guess so," said Sam. "You live in a good house, where the rain don't leak through the roof on your head. You'll give me lots to eat, too; won't you?"

"You shall have enough," said the deacon, cautiously, "but it is bad to over-eat. Boys ought to be moderate."

"I didn't over-eat to home," said Sam. "I went one day without eatin' a crumb."

"You shall have enough to eat at my house, but you must render a return."

"What's that?"

"You must pay me for it."

"I can't; I aint got a cent."

"You shall pay me in work. He that does not work shall not eat."

"Have I got to work very hard?" asked Sam, anxiously.

"I will not task you beyond your strength, but I shall expect you to work faithfully. I work myself. Everybody works in my house."

Sam was occupied for a brief space in considering the great problem that connects labor and eating. Somehow it didn't seem quite satisfactory.

"I wish I was a pig!" he burst out, rather unexpectedly.

"Why?" demanded the deacon, amazed.

"Pigs have a better time than men and boys. They have all they can eat, and don't have to work for it nuther."

"I'm surprised at you," said the deacon, shocked. "Pigs are only brute animals. They have no souls. Would you be willing to give up your immortal soul for the sake of bein' idle, and doin' no work?"

"I don't know anything bout my immortal soul. What good does it do me?" inquired Sam.

"I declare! the boy's actilly gropin' in heathen darkness," said the deacon, beginning to think he had undertaken a tough job.

"What's that?" asked Sam, mystified.

"I haven't time to tell you now, but I must have a long talk with you some day. You aint had no sort of bringing up. Do you ever read the Bible?"

"No, but I've read the life of Cap'n Kidd. He was a smart man, though."

"Captain Kidd, the pirate?" asked the deacon, horrified.

"Yes. Wa'n't he a great man?"

"He calls a pirate a great man!" groaned the deacon.

"I think I'd like to be a pirate," said Sam, admiringly.

"Then you'd die on the gallus!" exclaimed the deacon with energy.

"No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't let 'em catch me," said Sam, confidently.

"I never heerd a boy talk so," said the deacon. "He's as bad as a—a Hottentot."

Deacon Hopkins had no very clear ideas as to the moral or physical condition of Hottentots, or where they lived, but had a general notion that they were in a benighted state, and the comparison seemed to him a good one. Not so to Sam.

"You're calling me names," he said, discontentedly. "You called me a Hottentot."

"I fear you are very much like those poor, benighted creatures, Samuel," said his new guardian; "but it isn't wholly your fault. You have never had any religious or moral instruction. This must be rectified. I shall buy you a catechism this very day."

"Will you?" asked Sam, eagerly, who, it must be explained, had an idea that a catechism was something good to eat.

"Yes, I'll stop at the store and get one."

They went into Pendleton's store,—a general country variety store, in which the most dissimilar articles were kept for sale.

"Have you got a catechism?" asked the deacon, entering with Sam at his side.

"We've got just one left."