

## A F e w   W o r d s   t o   B e g i n


MOST OF THE ADVENTURES IN THIS BOOK REALLY HAPPENED. ONE OR two were my own experiences. The others were experiences of boys in my school. Huck Finn really lived.

My book is for boys and girls, but I hope that men and women also will read it. I hope that it will help them to remember pleasantly the days when they were boys and girls, and how they felt and thought and talked, what they believed, and what strange things they sometimes did.

MARK TWAIN

*Hartford, Connecticut*  
1876

## E d u c a t i n g   H u c k



YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT ME UNLESS YOU HAVE read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. That book was written by Mark Twain, and he holds the truths mainly. Not all parts of the story are true, but most of it is. I don't know anyone who tells the truth all the time, except perhaps Aunt Polly or the Widow Douglas or Tom Sawyer's sister, Mary. These people are written about in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

That book ends like this: Tom and I find money that was stolen and we are allowed to keep it. We become rich. We each have 6,000 dollars in gold. Judge Thatcher put the money in a bank for us, and we can have a dollar a day. That is more money than a person can know how to spend.

The Widow Douglas took me into her home to live, but I did not enjoy living in a nice house. I put on my old clothes and ran away and was free and happy, but Tom Sawyer found me and said that if I wanted to join his club and be friends, I would have to return to live with the widow. For this reason, I returned to live with her.

The widow cried over me and gave me new clothes to wear, but I hated those new clothes. I felt too warm in them and I could not move my arms and legs freely. When supper was being served, the widow always rang a bell, and I had to come quickly. I was happier when I could eat whenever I chose to, though this meant I had to make meals of the bits of food other people had thrown away.

When I asked permission to smoke, the widow said, "No." She thought that smoking was a dirty habit and told me that I must not smoke.

Her sister, Miss Watson, a woman who had never married and who had no children of her own, came to live with her. She thought that she could change me and make me a better person by educating me and teaching me to spell. She worked with me for an hour until the widow made her stop. Miss Watson complained about everything I did.

"Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry. Sit straight in your chair. Why can't you improve the way you act? Don't be so disrespectful to those who are trying to correct you."

Then, when she told me about hell and said that it was where the bad people go when they die, I said that I wished that I was there already. She got angry when I said that, but I didn't intend to make her angry. All I wanted was a change; I wanted to go somewhere, anywhere; I didn't care where that was. Hell had to be better than the life that I was forced to live.

Miss Watson said that it was sinful to talk that way. She lived in a way that would allow her to go to heaven when she died. Well, I could see no advantage in going to heaven if she was going to be there, so I decided that I wouldn't try for it. But I never said so because that would only make more trouble.

Miss Watson told me more and more about heaven and how all

the good people were going there. They would do nothing all day but sing and sing forever. I didn't think much of such a place, but I didn't say so. I asked her if she thought Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said, "No! Never!" I was glad to hear that because I wanted to be where Tom Sawyer was going to be. Miss Watson continued to complain about my behavior, which made me feel unhappy and lonely. In the evening, before we went to sleep, she said prayers for me. I went to my room and sat in a chair and tried to think of something cheerful, but I couldn't. I felt so lonely that I wished I was dead. The stars were shining, and the wind moving the trees sounded as though it was whispering to me. I couldn't understand what the wind was saying.

Far away in the trees I heard the kind of sound that a **ghost** makes when it wants to tell about something but can't make itself understood. I became so sad and frightened that I wished that I had some company. Then a small bug walked on my hand; I shook it off. The bug fell against my **candle** and burned completely. I didn't need anyone to tell me that this was a bad sign which would bring me bad luck.

To try to change my luck, I stood up and turned around three times and made a cross on my chest each time. Then I tied a thread around some of my hair. But I didn't really think that it would change my luck. I didn't know of any way to change the bad luck that comes from killing a small bug.

I sat down again feeling very frightened. The house was very quiet. Everyone was asleep. Far away I heard a clock go *boom—boom—boom—* 12 times—midnight. Then all was quiet again. Soon I heard a quiet "Me-yow! Me-yow!" outside my window. I answered, "Me-yow! Me-yow!" as quietly as I could. Then I climbed out of my window onto the porch roof. From the roof I jumped to the ground and walked slowly among the trees. There was Tom Sawyer waiting for me.

## T o m   S a w y e r ' s   C l u b

TOM AND I WALKED QUIETLY ALONG A PATH AMONG THE TREES. When we passed near the Widow's kitchen, I fell and made a noise. We lay very still. Miss Watson's black slave, Jim, was sitting in the kitchen door. We could see him clearly because there was a light behind him. He stood up and asked, "Who's there?"

Jim stood listening, then walked toward us. We didn't make a sound. Then he stood where Tom and I were hiding and asked again, "Who are you? I know that I heard something. I'll just sit here until I hear the noise again."

Jim sat on the ground between Tom and me. He leaned against the tree we were hiding behind. He almost touched my leg. My nose began to feel uncomfortable and I wanted to rub it, but I dared not. We sat quietly for a long time. Then Jim began to breathe heavily and we knew that he was asleep. Very quietly, Tom and I stood up and walked away.

Then Tom decided that we would need some candles. He also wanted to play a trick on Jim. I said, "No, forget the candles. Jim'll wake up, and then the Widow will learn that I'm not in bed."

But Tom loved jokes and he loved danger. He walked quietly into the kitchen and took three candles. He left five cents on the table to pay for them. Then he walked quietly to Jim and took Jim's hat off his head and hung it on a tree nearby. Jim moved a little but he didn't wake up. Later Jim said that a ghost had played a trick on him and left his hat on the tree as a sign.

Tom and I walked quickly into town where we could see only three or four lights. Almost everyone was asleep. Near the town was a big river, a mile wide, and very quiet at this time of night. Near the river we found Joe Harper, Ben Rogers, and two or three other boys hiding. We climbed into a small boat and traveled two and a half miles down the river before we stopped the boat and went ashore.

Tom led us to some bushes where he made everyone promise to keep his secret. He pushed aside the bushes and showed us a hole in the hill. We lit our candles and used them to light our way through the hole and into a large cave. Soon we came to a kind of underground room where we stopped.

Tom said, "Now we'll start our club and call it Tom Sawyer's Club. Everyone who wants to join has got to make a promise and write his name in blood."

Everyone was willing to do this. Tom wrote the program on a sheet of paper and read it to us. All the boys had to promise that they would never tell any of the club's secrets. If they did, other members of the club would kill them and would burn their dead bodies. Some boys thought that it would be a good idea to also kill the families of the boys who told club secrets. Tom added this to the promise.

Then Ben Rogers said, "Huck Finn doesn't have a family. How can we let him join the club?"

"Well, he has a father," said Tom Sawyer.

"Yes, he has a father, but you can never find him. A few years ago his father would lay in the road, drunk from too much **whiskey**, but he hasn't been seen in this town for more than a year."

The boys talked about this problem. They decided that I could not join their club. I became very sad and felt like crying. Then I thought of

a solution to my problem. "Miss Watson can be part of my family. You can kill her if I tell any club secrets."

Everyone agreed to this. I was able to join the club.

Each boy made a small cut in his finger with a pin to get blood to write his name.

"What will we do in our club?" asked Ben Rogers.

"Oh, kill people and take their money," said Tom.

"Must we always kill people?"

"Oh, certainly. Killing is what they do in all the stories that I read," said Tom. "We have to act just like they do in books. The people who wrote the books knew the correct way to do things."

When that was decided, Tommy Barnes said that he wanted to go home. We said that we would all go home and meet again the following week. At that time, we would plan whom we would steal money from and kill.

When I got home, I climbed up onto the porch roof and in through my window. My new clothes were wet and dirty with mud, and I was very tired.

## H u c k i s D i s a p p o i n t e d

MISS WATSON WAS VERY ANGRY WITH ME IN THE MORNING BECAUSE of the dirt on my clothes, but the Widow wasn't. She was very sad and unhappy, though, as she cleaned my clothes. Because I didn't want her to feel sad, I promised to be good and do things to make her feel proud of me. Then Miss Watson told me to pray every day, and that whatever I asked for I would get. But my prayers weren't answered. I talked to the Widow about prayers and she said that my prayers would not be answered with material things. She said that I must pray to help other people, and that I was never to think about myself. I knew that she meant that I would also have to pray to help Miss Watson.

I walked out into the woods and thought about this for a long time, but I couldn't see any advantage in that kind of life for me—all the advantage would be for Miss Watson. I decided not to worry about praying and being good anymore.

**Pap** hadn't been seen by anyone during the previous year, and that was fine with me. I didn't want to see him again. When he wasn't drunk and could catch me, he would beat me, though I tried to hide from him whenever he came to our town of St. Petersburg. Some



people told me that he was found drowned in the Mississippi River about twelve miles from town. They assumed that it was Pap because the drowned man was his size and was wearing torn clothes and had unusually long hair. Not much was left of his face because the body had been in the water a long time. They said that the body was floating on its back in the water. I knew that the body couldn't have been Pap because a drowned man doesn't float on his back; he floats on his face. The body had been that of a woman dressed in men's clothing. They buried the body before I got to see it, but I was frightened knowing that Pap might soon return to find me.

The boys in Tom Sawyer's club came together for meetings but we didn't really steal money or kill anyone. We only imagined that we were killing people and taking their money. Tom Sawyer did a lot of fancy talking, but the rest of us did very little. After a while, I tired of this game. I told Tom Sawyer that I didn't find the game fun, and he said that it was because I had no imagination. He said that if I read more books, I would know of many famous people who had good imaginations like his.

## H u c k   a n d   t h e   J u d g e

THREE OR FOUR MONTHS PASSED, AND WINTER ARRIVED. I WENT TO school almost every day and was learning to read and write and spell. The teacher was also trying to teach me mathematics, but I knew even if I studied forever, I would never learn mathematics.

At the beginning, I hated school very much, but after a while, I hated it less. Whenever I began to hate school, I simply stayed away a few days. The teacher would beat me when I returned, but the beatings didn't trouble me. I had become accustomed to living in a proper house with the Widow and sleeping in a proper bed. The Widow said that I would become a good boy if I continued to study and to improve my character and that she was no longer unhappy with me. My life seemed to be improving.

Then one morning, while I was eating breakfast, I poured some salt on the table. It was an accident. I knew that it was bad luck to accidentally pour salt and that the only way to get rid of the bad luck was to throw some salt over my left shoulder. But Miss Watson stopped my hand and shouted, "Take your hands away from that salt, Huckleberry. You've already made the table dirty. Don't make it dirtier."

I knew that I couldn't stop the bad luck; it would follow me always. I quickly left the table and ran out of the house. I was worried and frightened. I knew that something bad was going to happen to me, but I didn't know where or when it would happen.

I walked through the front garden and climbed over a high fence. Snow was on the ground, and I could see tracks made by a man's shoes in the snow. The tracks showed that the man had walked around the garden fence, but had not come into the house. I bent down to look closely at the tracks and discovered that the heel of one shoe had left a mark that showed that it had a cross in it made with two nails. I knew that someone had put this cross on the heel of his shoe to get rid of bad luck.

I stood up quickly and was soon running down the hill. I looked over my shoulder, but didn't see anyone following me. I ran to Judge Thatcher's house as quickly as I could.

"Hello, Huckleberry, why have you been running? Did you come to ask me about your money? Do you need a few dollars?"

"No, sir," I answered. "Did the bank send you some money for me? "Yes, more than 150 dollars. That's a large amount of money. I would like to keep it for you, together with your 6,000 dollars. If I give you all the money now, you'll only spend it on foolish things."

"I don't want to spend my money. I don't even want it ever. Not even the 6,000 dollars. I want you to have it. I want to give all my money to you."

The judge looked surprised. He couldn't understand what I was saying. "What do you mean?" he asked.

"Don't ask me questions, please. Just take the money. You will—won't you?"

The judge said, "I'm puzzled. Is something wrong?"

"No," I said, and walked away.

Miss Watson's black slave, Jim, had a large hair ball that had been taken from the stomach of an ox. Jim thought that the hair ball had special powers. He said that it had the ability to tell what would happen in the future. I went to Jim and told him about the tracks that

I had seen in the snow. I told him that I knew that Pap was in town again because I knew that he had made a cross with two nails in the heel of his left shoe.

I wanted to know what Pap was planning to do. Would he stay in St. Petersburg a long time?

Jim took his hair ball and said some words over it. Then he held it up and dropped it on the floor. The hair ball rolled a short distance. Jim did this several times, but the hair ball acted the same each time. Jim put his ear against it and listened, but he heard nothing. He said that the hair ball would not talk unless I gave him some money. I gave Jim twenty-five cents, and he put the money under the hair ball. This time the hair ball talked to Jim, and he told me what it said.

“Your Pap doesn’t know what he’ll do. Sometimes he thinks he’ll go away and sometimes he thinks he’ll stay. The best plan is to stop worrying and let your Pap do what he chooses. You’ll have much trouble in your life, but also much joy. Sometimes you’ll be hurt and sometimes you’ll be sick, but always you’ll be healthy.”

I returned to the Widow’s house that night. When I took my lighted candle and went up the stairs to my room, Pap was sitting there.

## H u c k ' s F a t h e r

I CLOSED THE DOOR. I TURNED AROUND, AND THERE HE WAS. I EXPECTED to be frightened of him now, but I wasn't.

Pap was nearly fifty years old. His black hair was long and uncombed and dirty. He had allowed hair to grow on his face, and where his skin showed, the skin was a sickly white. Just looking at the ugly white skin made me feel sick. His clothes?—dirty and torn. His feet showed through large holes in his shoes. His hat was on the floor—an old black hat with a large hole in it.

I stood looking at him. He sat looking back at me. I put my lighted candle down. I noticed that the window was open; that's how he had come into the room.

"Clean clothes. New shoes. You think highly of yourself, don't you?" he **sneered**.

"Maybe I do and maybe I don't," I answered.

"Don't talk to me in that tone. You've changed in many ways since I have been away. I don't like these changes. I heard that you go to school. You think you're better than your father because he can't read and write. Who gave you permission to go to school? Answer me."

“The Widow gave me permission. She told me to go to school.”

“The widow? Who gave the widow permission to tell my son how to live? She’s not part of your family. She has no authority to tell you anything.

“You stop going to school. I’m your father, and I don’t want you to be better educated than I am. I don’t want to find you at that school again. Your mother couldn’t read and she couldn’t write before she died. No members of your family could read or write before they died. And I don’t want you to be better than the other family members. If I see you near the school again, I’ll beat you.”

He sat there looking angry. “I see that you’re now living in a proper house and are wearing fancy clothes. You have a good bed to sleep in while your father sleeps outside on the ground. People tell me that you’re rich.”

“People lie to you.”

“Be careful what you say to me. I’ve been in this town for two days and all the people tell me how rich you are. I heard about your money when I was far away down the river. That’s why I am here. I want your money. I want you to get it for me tomorrow.”

“I don’t have any money.”

“You’re telling a lie. Judge Thatcher has your money. Get the money from him! I want it!”

“I don’t have any money. Please believe me. Ask Judge Thatcher. He’ll tell you that I have no money.”

“I’ll ask him tomorrow. I’ll force him to give me your money. How much money do you have in your pocket?”

“I have only a dollar, and I want it to—”

“I don’t care why you want it. Give it to me now.”

Pap took the dollar and said that he was going into town to buy whiskey. Then he climbed out the open window and onto the porch roof. I heard him jump to the ground.

The next day, Pap was drunk and went to Judge Thatcher’s house. He tried to force the Judge to give him my money, but the Judge refused. Then Pap told Judge Thatcher that he would make the law force him.

The Judge and the Widow went to court and tried to force the law to take me away from Pap and allow me to live with one of them. A new judge, who did not know Pap, had arrived at the court. The new judge said that the court must not separate a child from his father; so the Widow and Judge Thatcher didn't succeed in their plan. Pap would have authority over me, though I continued to live with the Widow.

## L i f e   w i t h   P a p

PAP AGAIN WENT TO COURT TO TRY TO FORCE JUDGE THATCHER TO give him my money. He also tried to stop me from attending school. When he saw me going to school, he would catch me and beat me. But I continued to go to school, and tried to prevent Pap from seeing me. I wasn't happy going to school before, but now I went because I knew that it made Pap unhappy. Some days I would ask Judge Thatcher for two or three dollars, which I gave to Pap. He would buy whiskey with the money and get very drunk and start fights with men in town.

Pap began coming to the Widow's house to see me. She told him to stay away or she would cause trouble for him. This made him very angry. He told her that he had authority over his son and she couldn't tell him how he must act around his son, what he could and could not do to me.

The next day, Pap caught me alone near the river. He pushed me into a small boat, and we traveled three miles up the Mississippi. We crossed to the Illinois shore to a place where there were many trees and no houses. Pap took me to a small **cabin** made of logs. This cabin was so hidden in the trees that no one could see it from the river.



Pap stayed with me all the time, and I never had the opportunity to run away. Whenever Pap left the cabin, he would lock me inside and take the key with him. At night, he slept with the key under his pillow. He had a gun, which he had stolen, and we used it to hunt animals for our food. We also fished in the river. Every two or three days, Pap took some fish to a store where he traded them for whiskey. When he returned to the cabin, he would be very drunk and would beat me. I didn't like the beatings, but otherwise life with Pap wasn't difficult. I never had to do any work or any studying and could smoke whenever I wished. We spent most of the time fishing or just sitting and watching the river. I never had to wash or put on clean clothes and could sleep whenever I wanted. We ate our meals when we were hungry and not when someone told us to.

Pap stayed away from the cabin often. Once he stayed away for three days, and I was locked inside alone. I didn't enjoy that. Whenever Pap returned from a trip, he would be very drunk and beat me more and more. When he was away for long periods of time, I began to worry that he would never return. What would happen to me? I could die locked inside the cabin. I began to think of a way to escape. I found an old dirty saw that Pap didn't know was in the cabin. With this tool, I began to saw a hole through one of the logs in the wall behind my bed. I wanted to make a hole large enough to climb through and escape. Making such a hole was going to take a long time, and I worked at it whenever Pap was out of the cabin. I kept the saw hidden while Pap was home. When Pap would leave, I pushed the bed away from the wall and sawed at the log. When I heard him returning, I hid the saw and pushed the bed back to its normal position. Pap never knew about the hole that I was making.

One day, Pap returned from a trip to the store feeling very angry. He began to shout and knock furniture to the floor. His lawyer had told him that he would never be able to force Judge Thatcher to give him the money. He also said that he heard that the Widow Douglas was again asking the court to take me away from him, and this time the lawyer thought that the Widow would succeed.

I knew that I did not want to return to living with the Widow. I could never return to living in a proper house and going to school. I had become accustomed to the type of life that Pap and I lived and I didn't want to change again.

Pap said that he would never allow the courts to take me away from him. He would hide me in another cabin six or seven miles away, and no one would ever find me. I began to worry. I knew that I had to escape before we moved out of our present cabin.

Pap told me to go to his boat and bring the food and whiskey that he had bought at the store. I carried one heavy load into the cabin and returned for a second. I sat by the boat and thought about my problem. Where would I go once I escaped from the cabin? I began to make a plan; I would take Pap's gun and walk through the forest as far as I could go. I would walk mostly at night and would hunt animals for food. I would travel far away, and neither Pap nor the Widow would find me again. If Pap drank a bottle of whiskey and got very drunk, I would complete the job of sawing through the log and could leave tonight. That was my plan.

I finished unloading the boat and carried the last of Pap's things to the cabin. It was beginning to get dark and Pap was very angry because I had taken a very long time to unload the boat. He shouted at me to cook his supper. Then he drank some whiskey and began to shout about the government.

"I hate this government and I hate its laws. The law wants to take my son away from me—my very own son. I had all the trouble and all the worry and all the expense of raising him, and now the government wants to take him away from me. Now that my son is old enough to work and give me money, the government wants to take that son away from me. The law and the courts help Judge Thatcher to keep my son's money. I could be a rich man if the law would force Judge Thatcher to give me the 6,000 dollars. I have to live in this dirty cabin and wear old, torn clothes and eat food that pigs will not eat, all because the government won't force Judge Thatcher to give me my son's money."

Pap continued to shout about the government and the wrongs

that it had done to him. Finally, he ate the supper that I had prepared and drank some more whiskey. I expected him to be very drunk and asleep soon, and then I would steal his key and unlock the door and run away. Pap drank almost a complete bottle of whiskey, but he didn't go to sleep. He shouted and threw furniture against the walls and made many loud noises like those an animal makes, but he didn't sleep.

It was late at night, and I became very tired. I could no longer keep myself awake. I don't know how long I slept, but suddenly I heard a loud scream and was awake. Pap looked wild and was running around the cabin shouting about poisonous **snakes** that were attempting to kill him. He was having a dream, but I had never seen him act this wild before.

"Take the snakes off me! Take them off! They're biting my neck!" Pap screamed and threw chairs against the wall and knocked down the table. He ran around the room, waving his knife in the air and threatening to kill me. He held onto my jacket and would have killed me with his knife, but I slipped out of the jacket and ran away before his knife cut me. Finally, he was too tired to move. He took a blanket and wrapped it around himself and lay on the floor. He would cry quietly, then shout, then would cry again. I had had many bad experiences with him in the past, but nothing had ever been as bad as this. He finally said that he was too tired to chase me anymore. He would sleep and then would kill me in the morning when he felt stronger.

I knew that I had to protect myself. When Pap was asleep, I took his gun and sat with it in my arms. I would shoot Pap if he awakened and threatened me with his knife again. I didn't sleep again that night.

## H u c k   E s c a p e s

“STAND UP! WHY ARE YOU ASLEEP?”

I opened my eyes and looked around. I could see Pap standing over me looking very angry—and sick, too.

“Why are you holding that gun?” he asked.

I knew that Pap had forgotten all that had occurred the night before. I answered, “Someone tried to get into the cabin last night. I took the gun to protect us.”

“You should have awakened me.”

“I tried. I really tried. I shook you, but you continued to sleep.”

“Don’t stand there talking all day. Go to the river to catch some fish for breakfast. I’m hungry.”

Pap unlocked the door, and I walked along the river until I found a good place to fish. I noticed many branches floating on the river. The river was much deeper than it was normally and was flowing much faster. Several large logs floated down the river. I became excited. What else might I find?

Suddenly, I saw an empty **canoe** floating on the river. It was thirteen or fourteen feet long and in excellent condition. I jumped into

the river and began to swim to the canoe. When I reached it, I jumped in and rowed to shore. At first, I planned to give the canoe to Pap to sell for ten dollars, but when I reached the shore, I couldn't see Pap. Then I had another idea. I would hide the canoe and use it to escape. Instead of walking many miles through the forest to get away from Pap, I would use the canoe to go fifty miles down the river to a place where no one would be able to find me.

I hid the canoe in a small stream near the river, and covered it with tree branches. I knew that Pap would not be able to find it. When I returned to the cabin, Pap noticed my wet clothes. I told him that I had fallen into the river. Then I cooked the fish for our breakfast.

After breakfast, Pap said that he would sleep awhile. I sat and thought about my escape plan. I was troubled by one part of my plan. I knew that when Pap discovered that I had escaped, he would begin to search for me and I would always live with the fear of being found. I needed to think of a new plan. Finally, an idea came to me. This new plan would assure that no one would search for me.

At noon, Pap awoke and walked to the river. He called to me to say that he saw a **raft** made of nine logs floating down the river. He wanted to get the raft because he knew that he could sell the logs at the store. We jumped into our boat and rowed out into the river. I seized the rope tied to the raft and pulled the raft to shore.

Pap was eager to sell the logs to buy more whiskey. He locked me in the cabin and said that he would slowly pull the raft down the river to the store. I knew that this would take a long time and that he would not return until the following day.

I quickly got my saw and moved my bed away from the wall. I soon finished sawing the hole through the log wall and climbed through to freedom. I carried bags of food from the cabin to my hidden canoe. I also took blankets and dishes and pots and pans and everything else that I thought might be useful. The last things that I took were Pap's gun and his ax. Then I pushed the piece of log back into the hole. I didn't want Pap to know how I had escaped.

I took Pap's gun and walked into the forest to hunt for a wild pig.

Soon I shot one and dragged it to the cabin. With the ax, I cut a large hole in the front door. Then I dragged the pig into the cabin and cut its throat. Blood poured out onto the floor.

Next, I got a large bag and filled it with rocks. I dragged this heavy bag across the cabin floor, through the door, across the ground outside the cabin, and all the way to the river. I threw the bag into the river and watched it disappear in the deep water. Marks made by the sack were left on the ground. Anybody looking at these marks would think that they were made by dragging a dead body over the ground.

Night came and I was very tired. I sat in the canoe and waited for the moon to rise. I smoked some tobacco and thought again about my plan. When Pap returned and found the cabin empty and blood over the floor, he would think that I had been murdered. He would assume that my body was dragged across the ground and thrown into the river. He might search for my body for awhile, but he wouldn't suspect that I was alive and therefore, wouldn't attempt to find me.

The river was very wide, nearly a mile across to the far shore. The moon was bright now, and I knew that it was time to begin my journey. I began to untie my canoe, when I heard a faint sound on the river. I knew that it was the quiet sound made by a man rowing a boat. Could Pap be returning? I had not expected him until the next day.

The boat came nearer; it was now close enough so that I could have reached out and touched the man in it. It was Pap! I could see him in the moonlight, but he couldn't see me or my canoe because I was hidden in the tree branches that grew out over the water. Pap didn't appear to be drunk.

I waited until Pap had rowed past me, then quietly moved my canoe down the river. I stayed close to the shore so that I would be hidden by tree branches. When I became too tired to row, I lay in the canoe and let it float gently down the river. As I lay there, I smoked my tobacco and looked into the sky; not a cloud was in it. The sky looks very deep when you lie down on your back in the moonlight. I had never known this before.

A person can hear voices a long distance on such nights. I heard

people talking on the far shore, and I could understand every word they spoke. I heard one man say that it was three o'clock in the morning and daylight would come soon. As my canoe floated further down the river with the current, the men's voices became faint. Then all was quiet again.

I sat up and could see Jackson's Island far ahead of me. It was in the middle of the river, large and dark and with many trees growing on it. There were no lights on the island and no signs that anyone lived on it. That's where I planned to live.

I rowed the canoe to the edge of the island and hid it under some tree branches. Then I sat quietly watching the river. The sky was beginning to turn gray. I knew that the sun would soon be in the sky. I found a safe place under the trees and went to sleep.

## E x p l o r i n g   t h e   I s l a n d

THE SUN WAS HIGH IN THE SKY WHEN I AWAKENED. I LAY IN THE GRASS in the cool shade of some large trees. I felt very comfortable and planned to wait before I cooked my breakfast.

While I lay under the trees, I heard the distant sound of a large gun being shot across the water. I sat up and listened. I heard the sound again. Then a third time. A large boat filled with people was traveling on the river. I knew what they were doing; they were shooting the large gun in an attempt to force my dead body to float to the top of the water.

I was now hungry, but it wasn't a good time to build a fire to cook my breakfast. The people on the boat might see the smoke. I sat there watching them for a long time. The boat passed close to where I was hiding, and I could see many people I knew—Pap, Judge Thatcher, Joe Harper, Tom Sawyer, Tom's Aunt Polly, and his brother Sid, and many more. Everyone was talking about my murder.

The boat captain shouted, "Look carefully! The current flows toward the island here. The river may have carried Huck's body to the edge of the island."

All the people on the boat crowded to one side and watched the



shore. I stayed hidden. They shot the big gun, and the noise made my ears hurt. The boat floated on and was soon out of sight around the island. I could hear the noise of the gun further and further away, and then I didn't hear the gun anymore.

The island was three miles long. When the boat came to the end of the island, it turned and traveled up the other side. I crossed to that side and watched it travel toward the far shore, and I knew that the people were returning to their homes.

I was going to be safe now; no one would search for me again. I carried my supplies from the canoe to a place under some large trees near the center of the island. There, I made a tent out of my blankets and put my supplies inside. I caught a fish, cleaned it with my knife, and cooked it for supper.

When it was dark, I sat by my campfire smoking tobacco and feeling well satisfied. After a while, I became lonely and walked to the edge of the island. I listened to the river current and counted the stars in the sky. Then I counted the logs and rafts floating down the river. There's no better way to spend your time when you are alone. Soon you lose that feeling of loneliness.

For three days and nights my life followed this pattern. Nothing was different; each day I did exactly the same things. On the fourth day, I explored the island. The whole island belonged to me, and I wanted to know everything about it. I was also growing bored and needed a change. I found grapes and other small fruit to eat. I carried my gun and hoped to find an animal that I might kill for food.

I had walked a long way and knew that I must be near the end of the island. Suddenly, directly in front of me were signs of a small campfire. Smoke was rising from the burned wood. My heart jumped. I held my gun tightly as I slowly backed away. Quietly, I began the long walk to my tent. I would walk a short distance, then stop to listen. I was so frightened that I could hardly breathe. I knew that another person was on the island with me.

When I reached my tent, I quickly gathered all my supplies and carried them to my canoe. Then I scattered the bits of burned wood

from my fire. When I was satisfied that I had left no signs of my camp, I climbed a tall tree and looked around. I stayed in the tree for two hours, but could neither see nor hear anything. I couldn't stay in that tree forever and finally, climbed down. I stayed hidden most of the day and listened for sounds made by the other man.

When it was dark, I quietly got into my canoe and traveled to the far shore near a town. I was very hungry and looked for a place to get some food. Suddenly, I heard the sounds made by many horses. The sounds came nearer, and I could hear men talking.

"We'll stop here. The horses are very tired. We can continue our search in the morning. We're sure to find him."

I didn't wait. I ran quietly to my canoe and returned to the island. No place was safe. I tried to sleep in the canoe, but I didn't sleep much. After a few hours, I said to myself, "You can't live this way. You have to find the other person living on this island."

Having decided to do this, I felt better immediately. I rowed the canoe close to shore, staying in the shadows made by the tree branches that grew out over the water. The moon was shining brightly, and outside the shadows it was nearly as light as day. I rowed quietly for an hour. Nothing else moved except the river current. When I reached the end of the island, I came ashore. I carried my gun out of the canoe and walked through the trees overhead. The moon was gone from the sky now, and the sun would soon appear. I took my gun and walked quietly toward the place where I had seen the campfire. A fire was burning. I approached it slowly.

There lay a man on the ground. He was wrapped in a blanket with his head toward the fire. I sat behind some bushes and watched him. The day was getting brighter, and the man slowly sat up. He stretched his arms, and his blanket fell to the ground. The man was Miss Watson's black slave, Jim!

"Hello, Jim. Am I glad to see you!" I shouted.

Jim jumped up and stared at me wildly. Then he dropped down on his knees and put his hands together and said, "Don't hurt me—don't! I've never done you harm. I've always liked ghosts and did what

I could for them. Get back into the river where you belong.”

I quickly made him understand that I was not a ghost and I was not dead. I was very happy to see Jim. I wasn’t lonely now. I talked for a long time, but Jim sat quietly. He never said a word.

“I’ll cook our breakfast. Add more wood to your fire. We’ll need a large fire for cooking.”

“What will we cook? All I’ve been eating are some of the fruit that grows on the island. Fruit doesn’t have to be cooked.”

“How long have you been on the island, Jim?”

“I came here the night your Pap said that you were murdered.”

“You’ve been here that long time and have eaten only fruit? You must be starved.”

“I’m hungry. What have you been eating?”

“I have a gun and have been shooting small animals for food. I’ll get my supplies from my canoe now, while you put more wood on the fire.”

After eating a large breakfast, Jim turned to me and asked, “Who was murdered in that cabin, and why did your Pap think that you were dead?”

I told Jim the whole story, and he said that I was very clever, that even Tom Sawyer could not have thought of a better plan.

Then I asked, “How do you happen to be here, Jim?”

Jim looked unhappy and said nothing for a moment. “Maybe I shouldn’t say.”

“Why, Jim?”

“I have my reasons. Promise that you won’t tell anyone.”

“You know I won’t tell, Jim.”

“I believe you, Huck. I ran away.”

“Jim!”

“Remember, Huck. You promised not to tell.”

“I won’t tell, Jim. People will call me an **Abolitionist** and will hate me for not telling, but I don’t mind. I’ll never return to St. Petersburg again, anyway. Tell me why you ran away.”

“You know I belong to Miss Watson. She didn’t always treat me

well, but she promised that she would never sell me down the river to New Orleans. The city of New Orleans is as close to hell as a black slave can get on this earth. Last week, I saw a slave trader talking to Miss Watson. This made me feel uneasy. One night, I listened at an open door as Miss Watson was talking to the Widow Douglas. I heard her say she was planning to sell me for 800 dollars and that I would be sent down the river to New Orleans. She said that she hated to do this, but that 800 dollars was a lot of money and she needed money. As soon as I heard this, I started to run. I hid in town all day. I heard people talking about how you were murdered, and I saw them leave in a boat to search for your body. When it was dark, I jumped into the river and swam to this island.”

“And you’ve had almost nothing to eat until I found you.”

“I couldn’t look for food along the shore because someone might see me. I’ve had to stay hidden in the bushes during the day, and all I could find there was fruit.”

## The Cave and the Floating House

I WANTED TO EXPLORE THE MIDDLE OF THE ISLAND WHERE I HAD SEEN a high hill. Jim and I had a difficult time climbing to the top of the hill because it was covered with bushes growing close together. Near the top, we found a **cave** in the rocks. It was as big as two or three rooms, and Jim could stand up straight in it. Jim suggested that we hide the canoe and carry the supplies up to this cave. If anyone were to come to the island to search for him, they would never find him in the cave. Also, when it rained, our supplies would stay dry.

After we moved our supplies to the cave and built a fire, we cooked supper. Then the sky got dark, and it began to thunder and lightning. The rain poured, and I never saw the wind blow so hard. It got very dark and looked blue-black outside. It rained so hard that we could barely see the trees. The wind bent the trees until they nearly touched the ground. And when the night was at its darkest—fst!—it was as bright as day. The lightning gave us a quick view of the treetops bending in the storm. Suddenly, it was dark again, and we heard the thunder crash, and then roll across the sky.

“Jim, this is nice,” I said. “I don’t want to be anywhere but here in this cave with you.”

The big storm caused the river to rise. The next day, we saw that the low places on the island were flooded. As we looked across the river to the far shore, we saw that parts of the land there were flooded, too.

We watched many trees and logs float down the river. And one lucky night we caught a section of a log raft—a very nice raft 12 feet wide and 16 feet long, with a solid, level floor.

Another night, just before sunrise, we saw a complete house float down the river. We rowed out to the house and climbed in through the window. We could see a bed, a table, and two old chairs, and clothes hanging against the wall. There was something lying on the floor in the far corner that looked like a man.

Jim called, “Hello!” But the man didn’t move.

“He can’t be asleep. He must be dead!”

Jim went to check. “You’re right. He’s dead. He’s been shot in the back. He’s been dead two or three days. Don’t look at his face, Huck. It’s awful.”

I didn’t look at him, but I threw some old clothes to Jim to use to cover the body. Then I looked around the room. There were two dirty dresses and a woman’s hat and some men’s clothing, too. We took everything of value we could find—candles, a cup, a blanket, an ax, some nails, and a few other supplies, but most of the things were torn and quite dirty.

When we left the floating house, it was already daylight. I made Jim lie down in the canoe and cover himself with the blanket. If he were to sit up in the canoe, someone might notice that he was black and come to get him. However, I rowed all the way back to the island without seeing anyone at all.

## B a d L u c k

THE FOLLOWING DAY I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT THE DEAD MAN AND why he was murdered, but Jim refused. He said that talking about the murder would cause bad luck. I said no more about this, but continued to think about the dead man and wished that I knew who had shot him and why.

I searched through the pockets of the old clothes we had taken from the floating house and found eight silver dollars in an old coat. I showed the money to Jim and said, "You're always talking about bad luck. When I showed you the snakeskin I found yesterday, you said that touching a snakeskin would bring me the worst bad luck in the world. Do you call this bad luck? We found all those clothes and other supplies in that old house, and now we have eight silver dollars. I wish that we had this kind of bad luck every day."

"Don't make a joke about bad luck, Huck. It's coming. Listen to me. Bad luck is coming."

It did come, too. Four days later, we were resting on the grass after eating a large meal. I went into the cave to get some tobacco and found a large, poisonous snake. I killed it and placed it on Jim's blanket in such

a way that the snake appeared to be alive. I thought that this would be a funny trick to play on Jim and was waiting to see him jump with fear when he saw the snake.

When it grew dark, and we returned to the cave to sleep, I had forgotten about the dead snake. While I was lighting a candle, Jim lay down on his blanket and suddenly screamed. He was bitten by a live snake! He wasn't wearing shoes and was bitten on his foot. I felt like a fool. I had forgotten that whenever you kill a snake, a second snake will come and curl around it.

Jim told me to cut off the snake's head and throw it away. Then he told me to remove the snake's skin and cook a piece of its body. I did that, and Jim ate what I had cooked. He said that this would cure him. I carried both snakes out of the cave and threw them as far as I could into the bushes. I didn't want Jim to see *two* dead snakes and to discover the trick that I had played on him.

Jim became very, very sick. I thought that he was going to die. The snake's poison caused his foot and leg to swell to twice their normal size. We had found some whiskey in the floating house, and I gave that to Jim to drink. He was too drunk to notice the pain in his leg.

After four days and four nights, the swelling in Jim's leg began to grow smaller. He felt less pain and was able to walk again. I made a promise to myself that I would never again touch a snakeskin. All Jim said to me was that he hoped that I would now believe him when he spoke to me about bad luck.

When Jim was no longer sick and I didn't have to care for him, I began to get bored. I was curious about what was happening in St. Petersburg. What were they talking about? Did people continue to talk about me? I told Jim that I wanted to return to the town for a day or two.

Jim liked the idea, but said that I would have to go when it was dark and that I had to be careful. He said that no one would recognize me if I dressed like a girl, and I agreed. I rolled up my trousers and put on a girl's dress and hat that we had found in the floating house. All day I practiced acting like a girl until I could do it quite well.

When it grew dark, I went in the canoe to the shore near the far



end of town. I saw a light in a small cabin that had been empty for years. I looked in the window and saw a woman that I did not know. She was a stranger in this town, which was lucky for me. I began to worry that people who knew me would recognize me even though I was dressed like a girl. I decided that this woman would be able to tell me all I wanted to know about what was being said in the town.

I knocked on the door and tried to remember that I was a girl.

## H u c k   a s   S a r a h   W i l l i a m s

“COME IN,” SAID THE WOMAN, AND I DID. “SIT DOWN.”

I sat in a chair, while she looked at me with shiny eyes and said, “What’s your name?”

“Sarah Williams.”

“Where do you live? In this town?”

“No, I live in Hookerville, seven miles down the river. I’ve walked from there and I’m tired. My mother’s sick and has no money, and I’ve come to tell my uncle Abner Moore. He lives in this town, but I’ve never visited him. Do you know him?”

“No, but I don’t know everyone yet. I’ve lived here only two weeks. It’s dark outside now, and your uncle must live in the other end of the town, since I know the people who live nearby. I don’t think that it will be safe for you to look for your uncle’s house in the dark. My husband will be home soon, and he can help you.”

“I won’t need help. I’m not afraid of the dark.”

“Then you must not have heard about the murder.” And she told me all about how Huck Finn had been killed and his murderer had not been caught.

“Who do people think did the killing?” I asked.

“Most people thought his Pap murdered him—at least that’s what they thought at first. But then they changed their minds. Now they say that he was murdered by a runaway slave named Jim. He ran away the very night that Huck Finn was killed. A large reward—300 dollars—will be paid to anyone who catches Jim. A reward of 200 dollars will be paid to anyone who finds Huck’s father. He had come to town the morning after the murder and told about it. Then he went out on a boat with many others to search for Huck’s body. The next day he went to Judge Thatcher to get some of Huck’s money. He said that he needed the money to search for Jim. The last time he was seen he was very drunk and walking with two strangers. No one has heard from him since then. Some people think that he killed Huck for the money and that he’ll return in a few weeks and demand what’s left of the 6,000 dollars from Judge Thatcher.”

“Why are they searching for Jim?”

“Because of the 300 dollars! That’s a lot of money. Some people think that Jim hasn’t gone very far. I was asking some neighbors about Jackson’s Island out in the river. They told me that no one lives there. Yet I know that I saw smoke from a campfire on the island two or three times recently. I think that’s where Jim is hiding. I spoke to my husband about the smoke, and he’s going over to Jackson’s Island to search for Jim.”

I became so worried that I couldn’t sit still and had to do something with my hands. I took a needle off a table and began to thread it. My hands were shaking, and I had trouble threading the needle. The woman stopped talking and stared at me. I quickly put down the needle and thread and said, “Three hundred dollars is a lot of money. I wish that my mother could get it. Is your husband going to the island tonight?”

“Oh, yes. He went to get a friend to go with him. They want to borrow a boat and another gun. They’ll leave tonight.”

“They could see better if they waited until daylight.”

“Yes, and Jim will be able to see better, too. After midnight, he’ll be asleep. They can find his campfire easily in the dark.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

The woman looked at me in a curious way, and I felt very uncomfortable. Next she asked me, “What did you say your name was?”

“M———Mary Williams.”

I was afraid to look at the woman’s face. Had I said Mary before or had I said Sarah?

“Dear, I thought you said that your name was Sarah when you first came into the house.”

“Oh, I did. My name is Sarah Mary Williams. Some people call me Sarah, and some call me Mary.”

“Is that the truth?”

“Ya———Yes.” I was feeling a little better, but I wished I could leave.

The woman quickly changed the subject and started telling me about the problems caused by **rats** in their house. I could see a rat stick out its nose out of a hole as she talked. She kept some rocks on a table to throw rocks at the rats. She asked me to do it for her. I threw one rock and hit the rat’s hole but the rat had disappeared.

“Watch for other rats. Here’s another rock to throw when you see one.” And she dropped the rock into the skirt of my dress. I quickly brought my legs together to catch the rock.

After a few minutes, the woman looked straight into my face and said, “Tell me. What’s your real name? Who are you?”

“Wh———What?”

“What’s your real name? Is it Bill or Tom or Bob———What is it?”

I was shaking like a tree in the wind. I thought a moment before I spoke. “Please, don’t joke with me. I’m a poor girl. If I’m causing you a problem, I’ll leave.”

“No, you won’t. Sit down and stay where you are. I’m not going to hurt you. Just tell me your secret. I won’t tell anyone. Trust me. I’ll help you. My husband will help you, too. Tell me the truth now, like a good boy.”

I could see that she was not fooled by the girl’s dress that I was wearing. I told her that I would speak the truth but that she must keep

her promise not to tell anyone my secret. I told her that my mother and father were dead, and that I was forced to work for a mean farmer who lived about 30 miles from the river. He beat me and treated me in a bad way and I knew that I had to run away from him. He was going to be away from his farm for a few days, and I knew that this was the time to leave. I stole a dress and hat from his daughter, so that no one would recognize me on the road. I believed that my uncle, Abner Moore, would take care of me, which is why I came to this town of Goshen to search for him.

“Goshen? Do you think that this is the town Goshen? This is St. Petersburg. Goshen is ten miles further up the river.”

“Well, if this is St. Petersburg, then I must leave. By walking quickly, I should get to Goshen in the morning.”

“Wait. I’ll give you some food to take with you. Before you leave, tell me your real name.”

“George Peters.”

“Remember that name, George. Don’t tell me later that it is Alexander, and then that it is George Alexander. And don’t try to be a girl again. You might fool a man, but you’ll never fool a woman. When you thread a needle, don’t hold the thread still and bring the needle to it. That’s the way a man does. A woman always holds the needle still and brings the thread to it. And when you throw a rock at a rat, don’t do it in a skillful manner. And be sure to miss the rat’s hole by five or six feet. And when a girl tries to catch something in the skirt of her dress, she throws her knees apart. She doesn’t bring them together. I realized that you were probably a boy when I watched you thread the needle. I asked you to do the other things as a kind of test. If you ever need a friend, remember me—Mrs. Judith Loftus.”

I left quickly and quietly returned to my canoe, which was some distance from the woman’s small cabin. I went as fast as I could to the island. First, I ran to my old camping place and started a large fire. Then I ran to the cave and awakened Jim. “Hurry. We have no time to waste. They’re after us!”

Jim asked no questions; he said not a word. We loaded all our

supplies onto the raft that we had found a few weeks before. We worked in the dark. Thirty minutes after I reached the cave, we were ready to leave. Jim was on the raft with the supplies, while I rowed the canoe. We stayed close to the island as we traveled, protected by the tree branches that grew out over the water. We soon passed the end of the island and were out in the open river and neither of us had spoken a word.

## A S l o w J o u r n e y

WE TIED THE CANOE TO THE RAFT WITH A ROPE AND FLOATED SLOWLY, very slowly, on the quiet river. If we heard anyone following us, we planned to jump into the canoe and row for the shore. We were in such a hurry to leave the island that we had not put any supplies into the canoe. This was not a good plan, but we didn't have the time to think of a good plan.

When the men came to the island to search for Jim, I knew that they would find the campfire which I built. They would probably watch it all night, expect Jim to return to it. Since we could hear no one following us, I was fairly certain that the campfire had fooled them.

In the early morning, as it was beginning to get light, we traveled to the Illinois shore and tied the raft to a tree on a sandbar, which is a long, raised area of sand extending into the river. The sandbar was covered with tall trees growing close together and was a good place to hide the raft and canoe. We used our ax to get branches from the trees to cover the raft.

At this place in the river, there were mountains on the Missouri side and nothing but trees on the Illinois side, so we felt fairly safe here. We

stayed hidden in the bushes all day and watched the rafts and boats travel down the river and the huge boats, powered by steam, travel up the river. I told Jim the complete story of my conversation with Mrs. Judith Loftus the night before.

Jim said that she was a very intelligent woman, and if she had gone to search for him, she would have brought a dog with her to help find him. She would not have sat by a fire all night waiting.

Toward evening we saw no boats on the river. All was quiet. Jim took some of the boards that were part of the floor of the raft and built a kind of tent with them in the middle of the raft. This tent would protect us when it rained and would be a good place to store our supplies. We put a layer of dirt five or six inches deep within a frame in the middle of the tent. We would be able to build a fire there on cold, rainy days.

The second night we traveled for seven or eight hours, with a current that was moving fairly fast. We fished and talked and then went swimming whenever we felt sleepy. We were filled with wonder and a new respect for nature as we floated down the big, quiet river. We lay on our backs, looking up at the stars and talking quietly. We didn't laugh often, and then, only a quiet kind of laugh. We had very nice weather and no problems that first night or the next or the one after that.

Each night we traveled past towns. Some of them were on top of high black hills. We could see no houses, just lights. The fifth night, we passed the large city of St. Louis, and the whole world seemed suddenly one big light. In my small town, people would say that 20,000 or 30,000 people lived in St. Louis, but I never believed them until I saw that wonderful spread of lights at two o'clock on that quiet morning. There wasn't a sound; everyone was asleep.

Each night I would go ashore and buy a small amount of food. Sometimes I would take a chicken or some vegetables from a farmer's garden. Pap always called this "borrowing" and said that this should not be called "stealing" if you planned to return the chicken or vegetables at some later time. The Widow Douglas said that this was just plain stealing and could not be called anything else, and that no well-mannered person would ever steal. Jim said that Pap was partly correct



and that the Widow was partly correct, and that the best plan was to promise not to “borrow” certain vegetables or fruit, but that there would be no harm in continuing to borrow the others. So, we promised ourselves that we would not borrow any of the fruit that wasn’t ripe at this time of year. We both felt better immediately.

Our tenth night on the river, we had a big storm after midnight, with much thunder and lightning. The rain poured down heavily. We stayed inside our tent, and no one guided the raft. In the bright light of a flash of lightning, we suddenly saw a large boat crashed on some rocks. We were floating straight toward the boat. The flashes of lightning allowed me to see quite clearly now. The boat was leaning over, with much of it under the water.

I was excited at the thought of exploring this mysterious boat, but Jim said, “No!” He was certain that a man would be on the boat to protect the supplies it carried.

“What’s there to protect? Most of the boat is under water. Who would remain on a boat in that condition in a storm like this? At any moment, the boat might break apart and disappear.”

Jim couldn’t answer that argument and didn’t try. I continued, “We might find some good supplies that we could use. Boat captains are rich and always travel with the best supplies.”

Jim wasn’t happy, but he finally agreed to go with me on the boat. A flash of lightning showed the boat directly in front of us, and we tied the raft to a part of the boat extending above the water.

We found it difficult to walk on the deck of the boat because it was leaning greatly. We moved very, very slowly, feeling our way with our feet. It was so dark that we could see nothing. Soon we reached the door of the captain’s cabin, which was open. We looked around and far off we could see a light and hear some voices. Jim whispered that he was feeling sick and that we must return to the raft immediately. I agreed and was slowly backing away from the door, when I heard a voice say, “Please, don’t. I promise not to tell anyone.”

“You’re telling a lie, Jim Turner. You’ve done this before. You always want more than your share, and you always got what you

demanded because you threatened to tell. But this time, you'll not threaten us again."

By this time, Jim had returned to the raft, but I was curious about what was happening in the boat. I said to myself, "Tom Sawyer would stay and listen to what these men have to say, and I'll stay, too."

I got down on my hands and knees and moved slowly toward the room with the light. I could see a man lying on the floor with his hands and legs tied with ropes. Two men were standing over him; one was holding a gun pointed at his head.

The man on the floor was saying, "Please don't shoot, Bill. I'll never tell anyone."

The second man said, "You never spoke truer words. I won't give you the opportunity to tell anyone. If we hadn't surprised you and managed to tie a rope around your arms and legs, you would've killed us both. You won't threaten us again, Jim Turner. Put away that gun, Bill."

"Let me shoot him, Jake. He killed Hatfield and showed him no mercy. He deserves to be killed."

"Thank you, Jake," said the man on the floor. "I'll be grateful as long as I live."

Jake didn't answer him but motioned to Bill to follow him out of the room. I tried to back away quickly in the dark, but the deck slanted upward so greatly that I could barely move. I hid on a bed in a nearby room, seconds before the two men entered. They talked seriously and quietly.

Bill said, "I know he'll tell the police. I want him dead."

"So do I," said Jake quietly.

"Why don't we shoot him, then?"

"Listen to me. Shooting him could cause us problems. If we were ever caught, we would be hanged for murder. We can take whatever of value we find on this boat and hide out on the shore to wait. In a few hours, this boat will sink completely and Jim Turner will **drown**. No one will be able to blame us for his murder."

"What happens if the boat doesn't sink?"

"We can wait the two hours, can't we?" And they left the room.

I hurried as quickly and quietly as I could to where we had tied the raft. “Quick, Jim, we have to hurry. We must find the boat that brought the men here and untie it. Then all three of them will be left here. Get on the raft and begin the search.”

“Raft? What raft? I can’t find our raft. The rope must have become untied, and the raft floated away.”

## E s c a p e   f r o m   a S i n k i n g   B o a t

WHEN I HEARD JIM'S WORDS, I COULD HARDLY BREATHE. WE WERE caught on a sinking boat with a group of murderers! I had no time to stand there worrying. We *had* to find the boat that belonged to the three men.

We got down on our hands and knees and moved very, very slowly along the slanted deck. Jim said that he was too frightened to move, but I forced him to continue the search. After what seemed like a week, we found their boat. At that moment, one of the men appeared and jumped into the boat. "Give me that bag, Bill." Bill gave him the bag and jumped into the boat, too. "We must hurry. This boat could sink at any moment."

"Wait. Did you look in Jim Turner's pockets? His share of the money must be in them."

"I didn't search him. Did you?"

"No. We have to return to get his money." They got out of their small boat and returned to the sinking one.

Immediately, Jim and I jumped into their boat, cut the rope, and

we were off. We didn't speak or whisper, and we barely breathed. Soon we lost sight of the sinking boat in the dark, and we knew that we were safe. Those two men would soon miss their boat and would realize that they were in as much danger as Jim Turner. Jim began to row the boat, and I searched the river for our raft. Then I began to worry about those men. What an awful situation they were in—awful even for murderers.

I began to feel sorry for those men and said to Jim, "When we see a light, we'll tie up the boat, and I'll tell the people about the sinking boat and the men on it. Prison would be a better place for those men than drowning in the river."

My plan was a good one, except that we couldn't find anyone to tell. And then the rainstorm returned. We continued down the river searching for our raft. After a while, a flash of lightning revealed a large, dark object ahead, and we rowed toward it. We had found our raft and were very happy to climb onto it again. Soon we saw a light on shore, and I said that I'd row the small boat toward it, while Jim continued floating down the river on the raft. He was supposed to go ashore a few miles further downstream and build a small fire, so I could find him.

I surprised a man sleeping in a boat tied to the shore. He had left a light burning and was supposed to be guarding the boat. I started to cry and told the man this story.

"My father and mother and sister are in trouble. If you'll go to them—"

"Where? Where are they?"

"On a sinking boat up the river."

"Are they on a boat named the *Walter Scott*? That's the only sinking boat that I know on the river."

"Yes. That's where they are." And I began to cry again. "Can you help them? My uncle lives in this town and I know he'll pay you for your work."

"I'll hurry to find some men to help me, and then we'll get your family off that boat. Are you certain that your uncle will pay?" And he rushed down the street in the dark to find help.

I quickly returned to my boat but decided to sit there until I was

certain that the man had returned and was on his way to find the men on the sinking boat. I would have liked the Widow to know the good that I was doing. I thought that she would be proud of me.

Suddenly, in the dark, I saw a black mass float slowly, silently down the river. I began to tremble, and my stomach felt sick. What I was seeing was the very top of the sinking boat. Nearly all of the boat was beneath the water. I moved close and called, “Hello” several times, but no one answered. All was quiet—the quiet of death.

I moved quickly to the middle of the river, then started toward the place where I had asked Jim to wait for me. By the time I reached the fire that Jim had built, the night was ending and we found a safe place to hide our raft. We were very tired and could finally sleep.

## A G e n e r a l G o o d T i m e

WHEN WE AWOKE, JIM AND I EXAMINED THE SUPPLIES THAT WE FOUND in the small boat belonging to the three men. We found heavy shoes, blankets, clothes, books, tobacco—all kinds of things that the men had stolen. Neither Jim nor I had ever owned this much before. We sat all afternoon, talking. I told Jim what I had heard inside the sinking boat and how we had had a real adventure like those in books.

Jim said, “I would rather live without adventure. When I found the raft missing, I thought that it was the end for old Jim. If no one saved me, I would be drowned, and if someone did save me, I would be returned to Miss Watson for the reward money, and she would sell me down the river to New Orleans.”

Well, Jim was right, but then he was almost always right. Jim certainly understood a lot about people and what made them act the way that they do. He had a good mind.

I read to Jim from one of the books that we found in that boat. I read about kings and dukes and the fancy clothes that they wore and how they called each other “Your Majesty” instead of just plain mister. Jim was very interested. He said that he did not know about kings, he

knew only about King Solomon in the Bible.

“The Bible says that King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, but he had many, many wives and I don’t think that was so wise. Think of all the talking and the noise. And remember the time that two women came to him and each claimed to be the mother of the same baby. What does King Solomon say? He says that he’ll cut the baby into two pieces and give each woman a piece. Now what can a woman do with half a baby? Do you think that was wise?”

“But Jim, you don’t understand what King Solomon was doing.”

“Don’t tell me that I don’t understand. I have common sense, and common sense will tell you that you can’t settle an argument about a *whole* child with *half* a child.”

“But Jim, King Solomon knew that the baby’s *real* mother wouldn’t allow him to cut the baby in two.”

“You’re wrong, Huck. King Solomon had so many, many children that one more meant little to him. He didn’t value the baby the way a man would who has only one or two.”

I knew that I could never reason Jim about King Solomon, so I changed the subject to French kings. I told him about King Louis XVI who had his head cut off France many years ago and about his son, the Dolphin, who was supposed to become king but was put in prison. Some said that he died in prison, but others said that he escaped to America.

“What would the Dolphin do in America? There are no kings here.”

“Well, he could teach people to talk in French,” I answered.

“What do you mean, Huck? Don’t the French people talk the way Americans talk?”

“No, Jim. You wouldn’t understand a single word spoken by a Frenchman.”

“Why, Huck? It makes no sense for a Frenchman to speak in a different language. He should talk so that everyone could understand him.”

“Listen, Jim. Does a cat talk like we do?”

“No, a cat does not.”

“Does a cow talk like us?”



“No.”

“Does a cat talk like a cow or a cow talk like a cat?”

“No, they don’t.”

“Then it’s natural and correct for a cat or a cow to talk different from us and different from each other. Do you agree?”

“Certainly, Huck.”

“Then why should it not be natural for a Frenchman to talk in a language different from the one we speak?”

“Is a cat a man, Huck? Is a cow a man?”

“Well, no.”

“Then, of course, a cat or a cow won’t talk like a man. But is a Frenchman a man?”

“Well, yes.”

“Then why can’t he talk like a man? Answer that.”

I knew that I was wasting my words. I could never win in this kind of argument with Jim, so I quit.

## T r i c k i n g   J i m

JIM AND I PLANNED TO TRAVEL TO THE CITY OF CAIRO, AT THE SOUTHERN tip of Illinois. The Ohio River joins the Mississippi River at Cairo. We planned to sell our raft there and use the money to pay to travel north on the Ohio River to the Free States. Once Jim reached the Free States in the North, he would be a free man and would not have to worry about being sold ever again. We figured that it would take us three more days to reach Cairo.

On the second night, a heavy **fog** surrounded us. We couldn't see where we were traveling in the fog and had to stop. I took hold of a rope tied to the raft, got into the canoe, and started moving toward shore. I could find only a small tree to tie the rope around. The current was very strong, and soon the raft pulled the tree out of the ground and went racing down the river. I was shocked. In half a minute, Jim and the raft were lost in the thick fog.

I tried to untie my canoe, but my hands were shaking. Finally, I began following after the raft, but I was soon lost in the thick, white fog. I didn't know which direction to row; therefore, I simply allowed the current to carry me downstream.

I shouted to Jim, and from faraway came Jim's answer. I went toward the sound of Jim's voice. The next time Jim shouted, he was again far away, and again I tried to reach him. Sometimes it seemed that Jim was to the left of me, while at other times he seemed to be on the right.

Then all was quiet. I called out to Jim many times but heard nothing. I was puzzled because I seemed too close to a shore, yet I knew that I was traveling near the middle of the river. Then I understood what had happened. I was not along the shore of the river, but along the shore of a large island in the river. I saw some dark forms in the fog, which were large trees. This meant that the island was very large. I was traveling on one side of the island, while Jim was traveling on the other side. Often my canoe hit against logs and trees floating down the river. I knew that Jim was having the same problem on the raft.

After a long while, I was traveling in the open river again. I called to Jim again and again, but heard nothing. I knew that the raft must be caught against some logs or floating trees. I was certain that I would never see Jim again. I could think of nothing more I could do, and I lay down in the canoe and fell asleep. I must have slept a long time, for when I awoke the fog had disappeared and there were stars in the sky.

The river was very wide here, and huge trees grew on both shores. I looked for the raft and thought that I saw it far ahead. I went as fast as I could, but when I reached the dark spot that I thought was the raft, I found only a large tree floating on the water. For the next hour, I moved toward many other dark spots on the river, but each time I found only floating trees. Finally, I found the raft. Jim was asleep on it. Part of the raft had been broken by the force of the river current, and branches and pieces of dirty wood covered the deck.

I tied my canoe to the raft and lay down beside Jim. I stretched my arms and acted as though I were simply awakening.

"Hello, Jim. I've been asleep."

"Is that you, Huck? You aren't dead? You aren't drowned? I can't believe that you're alive. Is this really you? I'm so happy. I didn't expect to see you ever again."

“Why are you talking like that, Jim? Are you **drunk**?”

“Drunk? I never had time to drink.”

“Then why are you talking in this crazy manner? Why are you talking as though I’ve been away?”

“Huck—Huck Finn, look into my eyes and tell me that you have been on this raft this entire night—that you never left the raft.”

“Left the raft? Why would I have left the raft? Where would I have gone?”

“Huck, do you remember tying the rope from the raft to that small tree when we were in the thick fog?”

“What small tree, Jim? And what fog? What are you talking about?”

“I’m talking about the fog that was here most of the night. I’m talking about how we were separated—you were in the canoe and I was on the raft, and my raft was nearly destroyed when it struck some big logs being pushed by the river current.”

“You must have been dreaming, Jim. That didn’t happen. There was no fog, and we were never separated. I’ve been sitting on this raft talking to you all night, until you went to sleep.”

“But how could I have dreamed all that? That makes no sense.”

“Well, you must have dreamed it because I’ve been sitting here on the raft and never left it.”

Jim rubbed his hand over his face. “If that was a dream, Huck, that was the strangest dream I ever had. That dream must have been sent to me as a warning. If we are going to prevent bad luck, we must understand exactly what each part of the dream means. That dream tried to tell me that we were going to meet much trouble and have many problems with bad people, but if we are careful and are nice to people who are mean to us, we’ll finally come out of the fog and have no more problems and will end in the big, clear river, which represents the Free States of the North, where I’ll finally be a free man.”

“That sounds fine, Jim, but how do you explain all these branches and pieces of dirty wood on the deck of the raft? How do you explain that part of the raft that is broken?”

Jim looked at me, then at the broken part of the raft and the dirty wood on the deck, then he looked at me again. He never smiled, but had the saddest look on his face that I had ever seen.

“I’ll tell you how I explain them, Huck. After I made my throat sore from calling and calling to you in the fog, and after searching for you until I thought that I wouldn’t be able to move another muscle again, I began to cry. I knew that you were drowned and I would never see you again. In that condition I went to sleep. When I awoke and saw you safe in the raft, I was so happy that I wanted to get down on my knees and kiss your feet. But what were you thinking? Only how you could trick old Jim and make him seem to be a fool. The branches and dirty wood on this raft are worthless, and a friendship is worthless if the friend plays a trick like the one you played. What you did is shameful, Huck.”

Jim stood up and slowly walked into the tent. He said nothing more, but what he had said was enough to make me feel deep shame. I wanted to kiss his feet and have his friendship again.

It was fifteen minutes before I went in to tell Jim that I was sorry about the trick. I was always happy that I told Jim how sorry I felt, and I never again played an unkind trick on him.

## T h e   S n a k e s k i n ' s B a d   L u c k

WE SLEPT MOST OF THE DAY AND STARTED TRAVELING AGAIN THAT night. We talked about Cairo and wondered if we would recognize it when we reached it. I said that we might not recognize it in the dark because I had been told that it was a small town with no more than a dozen houses. Jim said that we would surely be able to recognize where a river as large as the Ohio River joined the Mississippi. I wasn't certain about this.

Jim began to worry, but then he thought that he would surely *feel* different when we were near Cairo because he would then be a free man. If we missed Cairo, we would be in slave country again and he would have lost his one chance to be free.

Each time Jim saw even a small light, he began to tremble with excitement. He knew that he was very close to being a free man. Suddenly, I began to tremble as I listened to him talk, for I realized that he *was* almost free, and who was responsible for that? I was. And that thought troubled me. I had never really thought clearly about what I was doing, but now I worried about it more and more. I did not really

steal Jim from Miss Watson, but I knew that he was running away from her and that I should have told someone—I should have stopped him. Miss Watson had never done me harm. She taught me to read; she tried to teach me manners. Why was I helping her lose property that was worth 800 dollars?

Jim talked out loud about freedom, while I worried silently and tried to decide what I should do. Jim said that the first thing that he would do when he was a free man in a Free State was work and save every cent of his money until he had enough to buy his wife out of slavery. Then they would both work until they could buy their two children, or maybe they would get Abolitionists to steal the children for them.

I became sick with guilt when I heard Jim say those words. He would never have dared talk of stealing his children before and was saying that now only because he felt he was almost free. I was helping Jim run away and he was talking about stealing his children—children who belonged to a man that I had never met, a man who had never done me harm.

I was sorry to hear Jim say those words; it was such a lowering of himself. I felt so guilty that I told myself that I would go to shore the first time I saw light and tell someone about Jim. I knew that was the correct thing to do. I felt much better.

After some time, Jim called out, “We’re safe. I see a light and that means we have reached Cairo.”

“I’ll get into the canoe and go to see if we are in Cairo. You could be mistaken.”

Jim got the canoe ready and put his old coat in the bottom for me to sit on. As I began to row, he said, “Soon I’ll be shouting for joy. I’ll owe my freedom to you, Huck. I’ll never forget you; you’re the best friend I’ve ever had. And you’re the *only* friend I have now.”

I was rowing quickly, eager to tell someone that Jim was a runaway slave, but when I heard Jim’s praise of me, I slowed my rowing down. What should I do? I no longer knew.

Jim shouted, “There goes my good friend, Huck, the only white

man who ever kept his promise to old Jim.”

My stomach felt sick when I heard those words. At that moment, a boat approached with two men in it, each holding a gun. I stopped.

One of the men asked, “Is that raft yours?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Are there any men on it?”

“Only one, sir.”

“Five black slaves ran away tonight from a man who lives further up the river. Is your man white or black?”

I tried to answer, but the words would not come. I knew what I had planned to say, but I was weakening.

“He’s white.”

“We’ll go to your raft to check for ourselves.”

“I wish you would,” I said quickly. “My Pap is on the raft, along with my mother and sister. They are all very sick with a serious disease that has caused many people to die. No one else has wanted to come near them. Everyone has been frightened about getting the disease.”

The men stopped rowing. I started to cry. “Please, help my family. They’ll all die. Don’t leave like all the others have.”

“We’re sorry to learn about your family, but we don’t want to get sick. Other men will be along soon. Ask them for help but don’t tell them about the sickness in your family. Just stay away from our boat. I’ll float a twenty dollar gold piece to you on a board. I hate to leave you but the money should help.”

The second man said, “Let me add a second twenty dollar gold piece to that board. I hope your family will get better. And if you see any runaway slaves, get help and catch them. We earn a lot of money catching runaway slaves.”

“Good-bye, sirs,” said I. “If I see any runaway slaves, I’ll catch them.”

After they left, I returned to the raft feeling sad; I knew that I had done wrong. But then I said to myself, “Suppose I had done the right thing and told the men about Jim. Would I feel better now? No, I would feel just as guilty as I do now. Whatever I do, I’ll feel guilty. I’m



going to stop worrying.”

I entered the tent on the raft, but Jim wasn’t there. I looked everywhere and could not see Jim. I called out, “Jim.”

“Here I am, Huck.” Jim was in the river, with just his nose above the water. I told him that the men were gone and he could return to the raft.

“I listened to what you said to those men, Huck. That was a clever trick.”

I gave Jim one of the twenty dollar gold pieces and he said that was enough money to pay for our boat trip up the Ohio River to freedom. He thought that we were within twenty miles of Cairo, but the night was ending and we had to find a place to hide the raft. We spent the day wrapping our supplies in blankets and tying them together. We had everything prepared for leaving the raft. That night we saw lights from a town, and I rowed the canoe to shore to ask the name of the town. I met a man fishing from his boat and asked, “Is this the town of Cairo?”

“Cairo? No. You must be a fool.”

I returned to the raft. Jim was very disappointed, but I said that I was certain Cairo would be the next town.

We passed another town just before daylight. The town was built on some high hills, but Jim said that the country around Cairo was very flat. We sat through the whole day without talking much. We both knew that something was wrong. We should have reached Cairo by now. Finally I said, “Maybe we passed Cairo in the fog at night.”

“Don’t talk about it,” said Jim in the saddest voice that I have ever heard. “I’ve never had good luck. I suspect that snakeskin is still working its bad luck on us.”

“I wish that I’d never touched that snakeskin, Jim. I wish that I’d never seen it.”

“Don’t blame yourself, Huck. You didn’t know that snakeskins bring bad luck.”

We talked about the problem. We knew that we couldn’t turn the raft around and travel up the river because a raft travels with the

river current—all rafts travel downstream only. All we could do was wait until dark, leave the raft forever, and row the canoe up the river to Cairo. We slept all day hidden in some bushes so that we wouldn't be tired for rowing. When we returned to the raft, the canoe was gone!! Neither of us spoke. We knew that this was more bad luck sent to us by the snakeskin.

We knew that we now had no other choice. We had to continue traveling South, deeper into slave territory. I told Jim that I would buy a canoe with my twenty dollar gold piece just as soon as I found someone who would sell a canoe to me.

The night was very dark; no moon or stars were in the sky. It was the worst kind of night for traveling, almost as bad as traveling in the fog. Suddenly, we saw a huge boat coming toward us. I quickly put a light on our deck and hoped that the captain would see it. At the last moment, before the boat hit us, we heard the captain shout. Jim and I both jumped into the river. I could hear the crash of the big boat against our raft. I stayed very deep in the water because I knew that I could be killed by the huge water wheel that powered the boat. The huge boat continued up the river; the captain never stopped to see if we were hurt.

I called to Jim, but heard no answer. I was able to hold onto a floating log, and swam with it to shore. The river was very wide, and it took a long time before I reached the shore. I had no idea where I was, but I could see a large house nearby. I had planned to walk quietly past the house without awakening anyone, but a large group of dogs ran from the house, barking and showing their teeth, and I knew that I had to stand quietly.

## The Grangerfords

A MAN'S HEAD APPEARED AT A WINDOW AND HE SHOUTED, "WHO are you?"

"It's me—George Jackson."

"What do you want?"

"Nothing, sir. I want to walk past your house, but your dogs won't allow me."

"Why are you outside so late at night?"

"I fell into the river from the deck of that large boat you may have seen. I'm only a boy. I don't intend to harm anyone."

I heard him shout to his wife. "Bring me a light and wake Bob and Tom. Tell them to get their guns." Then to me, he said, "Is there anyone with you?"

"No, sir, nobody."

"George Jackson, do you know the Shepherdsons?"

"No, sir. I never heard of them."

"You may be telling the truth or you may be lying. Step forward slowly. If there's anyone with you, he'll be shot. Slowly, open the door and step into the house."

I was very frightened. I couldn't have moved quickly even if I dared. The dogs were quiet. Not a sound was made by anyone. All I could hear was the beating of my heart. I walked up three steps to the door and heard someone unlocking it. Slowly, I opened the door a little, then a little more.

I heard a man's voice say, "That's far enough. Put your head inside."

I did, but fearing someone would shoot my head. I saw a lighted candle on the floor. Three big men holding guns stood looking at me. The oldest man was perhaps sixty; the two younger men were in their thirties—all of them were handsome, fine-looking people. Then I noticed the sweetest, gray-haired lady, and behind her stood two younger women.

Finally, the oldest man said, "Come in."

As soon as I was inside the house, the old man locked the door with several locks. The younger men kept their guns pointed at me, while we all walked into a large room that had few windows. They looked at my face closely, and then they all said, "He's not a Shepherdson. He looks nothing like any of the Shepherdsons."

The oldest man said that he hoped that I didn't think that they had bad manners, but that they had to be very careful. He asked me to tell them about myself.

The gray-haired woman interrupted him and said, "Saul, the poor boy is completely wet and he's probably hungry. Send someone to awaken Buck and tell him to dress the boy in some of his dry clothes."

When Buck appeared, I could see that he was a boy of about my own age—thirteen or fourteen—though he was bigger than me. He stood in the room looking very sleepy. His mother told him to take me to his room and give me some dry clothes to wear.

After Buck gave me a clean shirt and trousers, he asked, "How long will you stay with us? I want you to live with us. I want you to be my friend."

When we returned to his family, they had a breakfast prepared for me. Buck and his mother and all the men smoked tobacco and talked,

while I ate and talked. They asked me about my life, and I told them that my family was living on a small farm in the State of Arkansas, and that my sister Mary Ann had run away to get married. My brother Bill left to look for her and was never heard from again. My brothers Tom and Mort died, and no one remained in the family but my father and me. He became so sick worrying about the disappearing family, that he, too, died. The farm didn't belong to our family, and I left and started traveling up the river until I fell off the large boat.

They told me that I could live with them—that I could share a bed with Buck. I was happy to hear this. They were a nice family, and the house was beautiful. I had never seen such a fine house before. All of the furniture was of the latest style. I knew that they had spent much money furnishing the house; all of their dishes were of the best quality. They owned many books, too, and fine paintings. All the windows had lovely curtains, and they had a piano in the living room. The two daughters played the piano and sang songs in the evening. That house had everything a person could want, and the food was good, too.

## The Deadly Quarrel

COLONEL GRANGERFORD WAS A GENTLEMAN, A COMPLETE GENTLEMAN. He and his family were members of the upper class of the South. In our town, the Widow Douglas was thought to be a member of the upper class, while Pap was from the very lowest class. But the Grangerfords were members of a much higher class than the Widow.

Colonel Grangerford was very tall and very thin and kept himself neat and clean. He dressed in a clean white shirt and wore a complete suit with a jacket every day of his life. His suit was made of white material—the white was so bright and clean that my eyes hurt just to look at it. He never spoke in a loud voice and was the kindest man that I have ever met. He never had to remind his family about good manners; everyone was always good-mannered when he was near.

When Colonel Grangerford and his wife arrived at the breakfast table in the morning, the other family members stood up from their chairs and said, “Good morning.” Bob was the oldest son, and Tom next—tall, beautiful men with very broad shoulders, black hair, and black eyes. They dressed in pure white suits, like their father’s, and wore expensive hats.

One sister's name was Charlotte. She was twenty-five, and was tall and proud and beautiful. Her sister, Sophia, was twenty, and kind and gentle and sweet.

Each member of the family had a black slave to work for him. I was given a black slave, too, but he didn't have much work to do since I wasn't accustomed to having a slave.

These were all the people who remained in the family then, but the family had once been larger. Three sons had been killed and a daughter, Emmeline, had died.

The Colonel owned many farms and more than one hundred black slaves. The Grangerfords had many cousins living on nearby farms. The cousins would visit for five or six days, during which the Grangerfords would give parties for them and picnics and dances. The men who came to visit always brought their guns with them.

There was another upper-class group of families named Shepherdson living in the same area. The Shepherdsons were as rich and as grand as the Grangerfords, and their houses were equally splendid.

One day, as Buck and I were hunting with our guns, we heard the sounds of a horse approaching. "Quick! Hide!" whispered Buck.

We hid behind some bushes and watched a handsome young man ride by on his horse. He was carrying a gun. *I recognized Harney Shepherdson!*

I heard Buck's gun shoot, and Harney's hat fell to the ground. Harney aimed his gun straight at the place where we were hiding, but we were already running back to the Grangerford house.

Colonel Grangerford looked happy when we told him the story, although he said that he did not like for Buck to shoot from behind a bush. "You should have stepped out into the road when you shot at him."

As soon as I was alone with Buck, I asked him, "Did you want to shoot Harney?"

"I certainly did."

"Has Harney ever attempted to harm you?"

"No. He's never hurt me."

"Then why did you want to kill him?"

“Because of the feud.”

“What’s a feud?”

“I’ll tell you what the word feud means. A man has a quarrel with another man and kills him. The dead man’s brother then kills the murderer. Then other brothers in both families have been killed. That’s what’s called a feud.”

“When did your family’s feud with the Shepherdsons begin?”

“More than thirty years ago. There was trouble about something, and the problem was taken to a court of law. One man wasn’t happy with how the problem was settled and he shot and killed the other man.”

“What was the trouble about, Buck?”

“I have no idea.”

“Well, which family began the shooting?”

“That was so long ago that I don’t know.”

“Have any men been killed this year, Buck?”

“Yes, we killed one and the Shepherdsons killed one. About three months ago, my fourteen-year-old cousin, Bud, was riding his horse on the other side of the river. He didn’t have his gun with him. Old Baldy Shepherdson met him and chased him for five miles before he shot him dead. By the end of the week, one of the Grangerford cousins had killed old Baldy.”

The following Sunday, we attended a church service three miles away. The men, including Buck, took their guns with them and sat in church with guns in their arms. The Shepherdsons attended the same church, and their men, also, sat holding guns. The minister talked about brotherly love and faith and doing good works. I thought that this was one of the worst Sundays that I had ever lived through, but the Grangerfords enjoyed what the minister had to say and talked about brotherly love on the way home.

After we had eaten Sunday dinner, the men sat sleeping in their chairs, while Buck and his dog lay stretched out in the sun asleep. I always considered Sunday the dullest day of the week. I decided to go to my room to sleep, when Miss Sophia motioned for me to come into her room. She closed her door softly and asked me if I would do some-



thing for her and not tell anyone. I said that I would. She then told me that she had left her Bible in church that morning and wanted me to get it for her.

I walked to the church without being seen and soon found Sophia's Bible. I knew that something was wrong because it wasn't normal for a girl to be so eager to have her Bible. I shook the book and a piece of paper fell out. On the paper were written the words, "Half-past-two." Nothing else. Half-past-two must mean a time of day, 30 minutes after the hour of two o'clock. I could figure nothing more from the note, so I returned it to the Bible and hurried to Miss Sophia.

Miss Sophia was waiting for me in her room. She took the Bible and shook it until the paper fell out. As soon as she read it, she looked happy. Again she asked me not to tell anyone. Her face turned red for a few minutes and her eyes seemed to shine. I asked her what the message on the paper meant, and she said that it was nothing, only a book mark to keep her place in the Bible. She then told me to go away and play.

I walked to the river, thinking about that message, and soon noticed that my black slave was following me. When we were out of sight of the house, he came to me and said, "If you come up the river with me a short distance, I'll show you a nest of dangerous snakes."

There's something strange about this, I thought to myself. He told me about that nest of dangerous snakes yesterday, too. He should know that I don't have a love for dangerous snakes and I don't go hunting for them. I wondered about his real purpose and said, "Show me the way."

I followed him for a half mile along the river. Then we walked over another half mile of land that was partly covered by water. We came to a small flat piece of land that was dry and covered with trees and bushes, and he said, "Walk in there a few steps. That's where the snakes are. I've seen them before and don't want to see them again." Then he left.

I pushed aside some of the bushes and saw an open area that looked almost like a room in a house. A man was lying there asleep. It was my old friend Jim!

I awakened him and expected him to be very surprised to see me.

He was very happy, but not surprised—he said that he knew all about what I'd been doing. The Grangerford slaves had found him and showed him this place to hide. They brought him food every day and told him what I was doing.

"You should have sent for me sooner. I thought that you had drowned. Why did you wait to let me know you were safe?"

"I wanted to repair the raft first."

"What raft?"

"Our old raft."

"I thought our raft was destroyed when we were hit by that large boat."

"Parts of it were damaged, but I was able to repair the damage. We lost most of our supplies, but I've been buying new pots and pans and other supplies."

"How did you find the raft?"

"The slaves found it and told me about it. I bought it from them. They were happy to get the money."

I don't want to talk much about the next day. I awakened very early and noticed that the house was very quiet. Buck was not in bed beside me. I ran outside and asked my black slave where the Grangerfords had gone.

"Don't you know?"

"No, I don't know anything."

"Miss Sophia ran off in the night to get married to Harney Shepherdson. When the family learned about it a short while ago, they all rode off on their horses carrying guns. They say that they'll shoot Harney Shepherdson before he can cross the river with Miss Sophia."

I started running along the river road as fast as I could. I could hear guns at a distance. When I got near the store, I could see four or five men on horses screaming to some boys who were hiding behind a woodpile. I climbed up into a tree to be able to see better. The boys behind the woodpile shot one of the men on horseback. The other men jumped off their horses to help the wounded man. That gave the boys time to run, but the men were soon after them. I suddenly realized

that the boys were Buck and his cousin Joe. They ran behind a woodpile that was beneath my tree. I called to Buck, and he was surprised to see me. He said that he and his cousin would kill some Shepherdsons before the day was ended. His father and his two brothers were already killed.

I asked him what had become of Harney and Miss Sophia, and he said that they had gotten safely across the river. Suddenly, I heard *Bang! Bang! Bang!* from three or four guns. The Shepherdson men had come quietly from behind without their horses. The boys ran for the river; both of them were injured.

“Kill them! Kill them!” the men shouted. I became so sick that I almost fell out of the tree. I won’t tell all that happened next. It makes me so sick just to think about it. I wish that I had never met the Grangerfords.

I stayed in the tree until nighttime. Sometimes I heard guns far in the distance and twice I saw groups of men ride by on their horses.

I felt very guilty and as though the fault were mine. I knew now that the piece of paper in the Bible meant that Miss Sophia was to meet Harney at half-past-two in the morning and run off with him. If I had told her father about that message, all of this would not have happened.

When I climbed down from the tree, I walked quietly along the shore of the river and found two bodies lying in the water. I dragged them out of the water and covered their faces. I cried as I covered Buck’s face because he had been a very good friend to me.

It was dark now. I never returned to the Grangerford house. I went directly to the place where Jim was hiding. We got on the raft and started down the river. I didn’t feel comfortable until we were two miles below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. I was very glad to get away from the feud, and Jim was glad to get out of hiding. We said that there was no home as wonderful as a raft. Other places seem so tight and breathing is difficult. You feel very free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

## T h e   D u k e   a n d t h e   D a u p h i n

TWO OR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS PASSED; ACTUALLY THEY MOVED along quiet and smooth and lovely. The river was very wide; sometimes a mile and a half wide. We traveled at night and hid during the day. When we saw the first signs of early morning, we would tie the raft to shore and cover it with branches. Then we would fish and have a swim in the river to cool ourselves. We would sit in the part of the river where the water was not deep and watch the sun rise. Not a sound anywhere—perfectly still—just like the whole world was asleep, though sometimes we heard the call of a single bird.

The first thing that we saw in the pale light of morning, looking far across the water, was a kind of dull line. It was the trees on the other side. We could see nothing else. Then a pale space appeared in the sky; then more paleness spreading out from the first. Then the river seemed to soften, turning from black to gray. We could see little dark spots moving on the water very far away—boats—and long black streaks—rafts. Then a gentle wind would blow, cooling us. The air smelled sweet because of the flowers and trees.

The day was bright now. A little smoke would not be noticed, so we built a fire and cooked some fish and other food for breakfast. Afterwards, we sat and watched the loneliness of the river until we were asleep.

As soon as it was dark, we would push the raft out into the river again. Sometimes we would be the only people on the river for hours and hours. It was lovely to live on a raft. The sky above us was filled with stars. We lay on our backs and looked at the stars and discussed whether they were made or just happened. Jim said that they were made, but I said that they just happened. It would have taken a long time to make so many stars. Jim said that the moon could have laid them. That seemed reasonable to me when I thought about all the eggs that birds have laid. We watched falling stars, too, and Jim said that they were stars that were spoiled and were thrown out of the nest.

Once or twice during the night, a large boat would pass us in the dark. After a while, the waves made by the large boat would reach our raft and shake it a little; then all would be quiet again.

After midnight the people who lived in the houses on the shore went to bed. Then for two or three hours the shore was black—no lights in the house windows. The lights in the windows acted as our clock—the first light that appeared again meant that morning was coming, so we needed to find a place to hide the raft immediately.

One morning after sunrise, I found a canoe and went a mile up a stream that flowed into the river. I was searching for fruit for Jim and me. Suddenly, two men came running and shouting to me to save their lives. They said that men with dogs were running after them. They jumped into the canoe with me, and soon I was rowing as quickly as I could toward our raft hidden on the river.

One of the men had gray hair and appeared to be nearly 70 years old. He wore an old town hat, a dirty blue wool shirt, and torn blue trousers stuffed into his boots.

The other man was much younger—about 30. He was dressed in dirty old clothes, too. After Jim and I fed the two men their breakfasts, we realized that they didn't know each other.

“What were you doing that caused you to be in trouble?” the older man asked.

“I was selling a substance for cleaning teeth—and it did clean them, but it ruined them too. I stayed in that town one night longer than I should. I was leaving when I met you. You said that men with dogs were running after you. Since I was expecting trouble also, I decided to run with you. And what caused your trouble?”

“I was giving talks on the evils of drinking whiskey and was earning as much as five or six dollars each night. Women, especially, enjoyed what I had to say. Then, somehow, it was discovered that I often drink whiskey myself. I learned this morning that people were quietly gathering with their dogs and planning to run me out of town.”

“Old man,” said the young one, “would you care to become part of a team with me?”

“I might. What do you do?”

“I’ve worked at a variety of jobs—printing, teaching music, giving speeches—but what I enjoy most is acting in the theater. I like to think of myself as an **actor**. What kind of work do you do?”

“I give a lot of speeches in churches—I talk about religion and the evils of drinking whiskey. I also attempt to cure diseases. I’m not a real doctor, but I heal the sick by laying my hands on them.”

No one said anything for a while. Then the younger man sighed a long, sad sigh.

“Why are you sighing?”

“To think that I should now be in such shameful company.” And he wiped a tear from his eye with a dirty piece of cloth.

“What’s wrong with us? Why would you want better company than we are?” asked the older man.

“I don’t blame you gentlemen. I brought myself down to this low state.”

“Brought yourself down from where? Where were you brought down from?”

“You won’t believe me. No one wants to believe me. I’ll reveal to you my true name because I have confidence in you. I’m the **Duke** of Bridgewater. My great-grandfather, the oldest son of the Duke of

Bridgewater, came to America to breathe the pure air of freedom. He married, had a son, and died—at the same time that his father died back in England. I’m directly related to that baby boy. I’m the real Duke of Bridgewater, though someone else now holds that title. Here I am, hated by the world, hunted by men with dogs, shamed into living on a raft with such low company.” And he began to cry.

Jim and I pitied him. We tried to comfort him, but he said that the only thing that would make him feel better was if we would recognize him as a duke. We said that we would be happy to do this, if he would tell us how to act.

“You must bow when you speak to me and call me ‘Your Grace’ or ‘My Lord’ or simply ‘Bridgewater.’ One of you must serve me my meals and do any jobs that I need done.”

Throughout dinner, Jim stood and served Bridgewater his food. “Will Your Grace like some fish? Will My Lord like some corn bread?” Bridgewater seemed very pleased with this attention.

I noticed that the old man was not pleased. He was very quiet and didn’t seem happy with all the attention being shown to Bridgewater. That afternoon he said, “I’m sorry about your troubles, Bridgewater, but you’re not the only person with troubles of that kind. No, you aren’t the only person who has fallen from a high position.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’re not the only person who has a secret—who is of noble birth. Can I trust you?”

“To the bitter death!” He took the old man’s hand in his and said, “That secret of yours—speak!”

“Bridgewater, I’m the Dauphin.”

Jim and I stared.

The duke said, “You’re who?”

“Yes, my friend, it’s true. Your eyes are looking this very moment at the long lost Dauphin, Louis the Seventeenth, son of Louis the Sixteenth and Marie Antoinette.”

“But you’re too old to be the Dauphin.”

“Trouble has aged me. Trouble has caused my gray hairs. This

unhappy person that you see before you in these dirty old clothes is the rightful King of France.”

He cried and looked so unhappy that Jim and I decided that the only way we could make *him* feel good was to tell him how happy and proud we were that he was with us. We told him that we would gladly treat him in the same manner that we were treating the duke. He thanked us and said that there was not much we could do to help him feel happy. However, he said that it often made him feel better if people treated him like a king, if they got down on one knee whenever they spoke to him and always called him “Your Majesty,” and if they served him first at meals, and always remained standing until he told them that they could sit.

Jim and I thought that we could manage that, and always said “Your Majesty” when we spoke to him, and always remained standing until he told us to sit down. This made him feel much happier, but we soon noticed that the duke was looking unhappy and not the least bit pleased with the way we were treating the old man.

When the old man noticed the change in the duke, he said, “We’ll be together on this raft for a long time, and we can’t be unpleasant and unfriendly to each other. That would only make us all feel uncomfortable. It’s not my fault that I wasn’t born a duke and it’s not your fault that you weren’t born a king. We’ll have to make the best of this situation. Give me your hand and let’s be friends.”

The duke shook the old man’s hand. Jim and I were happy to see that they were friends again. We couldn’t permit any unfriendliness or uncomfortableness on the raft. What’s needed on a raft, more than anything else, is for everyone to be satisfied and to feel kindly toward the others.

I knew from the beginning that these men were not kings or dukes, but just liars. I never said anything, never let them know, but kept this information to myself. I didn’t want to have quarrels on the raft, didn’t want to have trouble. If they wanted Jim and me to call them king and duke, I wouldn’t object. What I wanted was to keep peace in the family. I learned one thing from Pap and that was the best way to get along with this kind of people is to let them have their own way.



## R o y a l t y A t t e n d s a C h u r c h M e e t i n g

THE TWO MEN ASKED JIM AND ME MANY QUESTIONS. THEY WANTED to know why we hid the raft and why we never traveled in the daytime. Traveling at night was far more difficult and dangerous than traveling during the day, and they suspected that we were hiding for some reason. Finally, they asked if Jim was a runaway slave.

“Would a runaway slave run south? Would a runaway slave travel toward New Orleans? You know that New Orleans is as close to hell as a slave can get,” I answered.

“Of course he wouldn’t. But why are you two always hiding?”

“My family lived in Missouri, where I was born. Everyone died except for my Pap and my brother Ike and me. We were traveling down to New Orleans to live with my Uncle Ben when a large boat hit our raft. My Pap and my brother drowned; only our slave Jim and I escaped. The following day, several people came out to our raft to try to take Jim, saying they believed that he was a runaway slave. For this reason, we don’t travel in the daytime anymore. At night, no one notices us.”

The duke said, “Let me think of a way that we can travel in the

daytime if we want to. I'll think of a plan—but not today. Until we get far away from this town, we should travel only at night.”

When it was dark, very dark, we started down the river. At about ten o'clock, it began to rain and blow and thunder and lightning. The king told us both to stay awake and watch for danger, while he and the duke went inside the tent to sleep. I didn't mind staying out in the storm. How the wind screamed! And every few seconds, the lightning would light up the waves in the river. Then would follow the *whack!*—*bum! bum! bumble-umble-um-bum-bum-bum-bum* of the thunder. The waves nearly washed me off the raft sometimes, but I wasn't wearing clothes and didn't mind. When I became sleepy, I tried to enter the tent, but there was no room for me inside. I slept outside in the rain while Jim stayed awake to watch. When he saw the first lights in cabins on shore, he awakened me and we began to look for a place to tie the raft.

After breakfast, the king and the duke sat talking about how they could earn some money. The duke told of plays that he had acted in and showed us some of the clothing that he had worn in these plays. The king said that he would be happy to take part in anything that would pay but that he had never acted in a play before.

The duke said that he had finally thought of a plan that would allow us to travel during the daytime without it being dangerous for Jim. He said that he wanted to visit the next town we passed, and the king said that he would go with him. They hoped to find a way to earn some money. We needed some supplies, so Jim told me to go with them.

When we reached the town, the streets were empty. No one was to be seen anywhere. A black slave told us that everyone had gone to a church camp meeting held in a nearby forest. The king asked me to go with him to this church meeting. The duke said that he didn't want to attend, but would look for a printing shop.

Nearly 1,000 people were at the camp meeting. Church services were being held in cheaply built wooden buildings. The people sat on logs instead of chairs and sang many church songs. The more they sang, the louder they got and some began to shout. Some seemed almost

crazy, and rolled on the floor in a wild manner.

Suddenly, the king started to shout. He ran to the front of the room and told them all that he had been a pirate in the Indian Ocean for 30 years. He said that many of his pirates were killed in a fight last spring and that he was looking for men who would be willing to work as pirates. He said that all his money had been stolen from him and he was glad that it had happened. He was now a changed man and was happy for the first time in his life. Though he was poor, he planned to begin to work to pay for a return trip to the Indian Ocean and would spend the rest of his life trying to get pirates to stop their killing and stealing and live good, respectable lives. He said that he could do this better than anyone else because he knew all the pirates in the Indian Ocean. And each time that he helped a pirate he planned to say, "Don't thank me. Thank the good people who live in Pokeville, whom I met at a church camp meeting."

Then he began to cry and so did everyone else. Then someone shouted, "Collect money for him." Then several men jumped up and said, "Let *him* come around and collect money." Which is what he did.

When we returned to the raft, he counted his money and had 87 dollars. The duke had already returned to the raft, and told how he had done some printing jobs for farmers and took the money. The owner of the printing company was at the church camp meeting, so the duke acted as though he were the shop owner and took money for printing jobs. He had earned more than nine dollars in this way. Then he showed us a job he had printed for us. It had a picture of a runaway, black slave and the words "200 DOLLAR REWARD" under the picture. The writing beneath this was about Jim and described him exactly. It said that whoever caught Jim and returned him to his owner in New Orleans would get the reward money.

"After tonight," said the duke, "we can travel in the daytime. Whenever we see anyone approaching, we can tie Jim's hands and feet with a rope and say that we had caught Jim up the river and are returning him to his owner in New Orleans and that we will be paid the reward money."

We all thought that the duke had arrived at the perfect solution to our problem. We knew that there would be trouble in Pokeville when the print shop owner returned and realized what had happened, so we stayed hidden until late at night. Then we traveled our last night on the river. After this, we would be free to travel during daylight hours and could do so at a much faster speed.

## A Q u i e t S o u t h e r n T o w n

DAYLIGHT CAME, BUT WE CONTINUED TO TRAVEL. IT WAS THE FIRST time that Jim and I had traveled during the daytime. After breakfast, the king sat on a corner of the raft, took off his shoes, rolled up his trousers, and let his legs hang in the water. When he was nicely comfortable, he began to read Shakespeare's play, "Romeo and Juliet." He was learning certain speeches and when he could say them without looking at the book, the duke began to practice with him. The duke told the king exactly how his voice should sound when saying the speeches, how he should stand, and the motions he should make with his hands.

Next, they practiced fighting with long swords which the duke had made from pieces of wood. The duke called himself King Richard III and taught the king the noble art of sword fighting. They practiced until the king tripped and fell into the river.

After dinner, the duke said, "We'll want this to be a good show, so we'll need to add one more scene. Why don't we do a scene from 'Hamlet?'" Then he stood in a most noble manner, with one leg slightly forward, his arms stretched high, and his head back and looking up

at the sky. He began to speak in a loud voice, making long, loud, sad cries, his arms waving wildly and his chest swelling out. It was the best acting that I had ever seen.

The king said that he liked the speech and soon was able to act it as well as the duke. As soon as we came to a small town, we stopped and the duke located a printer and had announcements printed. The following few days, as we traveled down the river, the raft became a very lively place. The king and duke were sword fighting or practicing their speeches all the time.

One morning we came in sight of a small town in the state of Arkansas. We hid the raft in a small stream and left Jim with our supplies. The king, the duke, and I rowed the canoe into town to learn if there was a possibility that we could perform our show here.

We were lucky. A traveling show had arrived that morning and people from the surrounding country were already coming in to see it. That show was to be performed in the afternoon, and the people might stay to see our show if we gave it later.

We nailed our printed signs onto trees throughout the town. They read like this:

Scenes from Shakespeare  
 Wonderful Show  
 One Night Only  
 World Famous Actors  
 David Garrick, the Younger, of Drury  
 Lane Theatre, London, England  
 Edmund Kean, the Elder, of Royal Hay  
 Market Theatre, London, England  
 in scenes from  
 "Romeo and Juliet"  
 "Richard III"  
 "Hamlet"  
 Has been performed 300 times in Paris!  
 Charge: Adults — 25 cents    Children — 10 cents

When we had no more signs to put on the trees, we walked around the town. All the stores and houses were old and hadn't been painted in years. No flowers or grass grew in the yards, which were filled with broken bottles, old shoes, and dirty pots and pans. Pigs, instead of being kept in pens, wandered through the yards.

A few stores were along one street. Men sat on empty boxes in front of these stores, smoking tobacco, talking about nothing important, half asleep. They seemed to care about little, and had nothing else to do all day long. No one worked.

The streets were simply mud—black mud, as much as a foot deep in some places. A mother pig with a dozen baby pigs could be seen lying in the mud in the middle of the main street.

People were beginning to come into the town to see the show. They rode in wagons pulled by horses. Many were eating their lunches on the backs of their wagons. Many of the men were drinking whiskey and fighting with each other.

Soon someone shouted, "Here comes old Boggs—in from the country to get drunk. Here he comes, boys!"

All the men sitting on the boxes in front of the stores suddenly looked happy. One of them said, "I wonder whom he'll threaten this time. If he killed all the men that he has threatened to kill, there would be few men left alive in this town."

Boggs came riding on his horse, shouting and calling in a loud voice, "Get out of my way! I plan to shoot someone!"

He was very drunk and nearly fell off his horse. Everyone called loudly to him, and he shouted back to them and said he would shoot them later. But first he had come to town to kill old Colonel Sherburn. When he saw me, he said, "Where did you come from, boy? Are you prepared to die?"

I was frightened, but a man standing near me said, "He doesn't mean what he says. He talks that way only because he's drunk. He's one of the nicest men in the state of Arkansas. He never hurt anyone."

Boggs rode to the largest store in the town, and shouted, "Come out here, Sherburn! Come out and meet the man whose money you

stole. You're the man I want to see so that I can shoot you."

He called Sherburn every disrespectful name that he could think of. The crowd on the street listened and laughed until a well dressed man, about 55 years old, walked out of the store. The crowd stepped back to give him space. The man spoke to Boggs in a calm, slow voice, "I'm tired of your talk but will listen to it until one o'clock—until one o'clock and no longer. If you say one more word against me after that time, I'll kill you."

Then he turned and went inside the store. The crowd was now quiet and serious. Nobody moved, and there was no more laughing. Boggs continued riding up and down the street shouting to Sherburn. Some men crowded around him and attempted to get him to be quiet, but he refused. He continued to call Sherburn every disrespectful name that he could think of. Several men told him that it would soon be one o'clock and they tried to force him to go home.

A man shouted, "Someone run to get his daughter—quick! Get his daughter, please. Sometimes he'll listen to her. Perhaps she can make him stop the shouting." And I watched two men run off down the street.

All was quiet for awhile. In five or ten minutes I saw Boggs again, but not on his horse. He was walking down the street toward me, with a friend on each side of him holding his arms and hurrying him along. He was quiet and unhappy.

Suddenly, a man called out, "Boggs!" I looked to see who had shouted, and I saw Colonel Sherburn standing perfectly still in the street, with a small gun in his right hand—not aiming it, but holding it pointed up toward the sky. At that same instant, I saw a young girl and two men running toward Boggs.

When Boggs heard his name called, he turned to see who had spoken to him. When the two men holding Boggs saw the gun, they jumped away from him. Sherburn slowly lowered the gun and aimed at Boggs.

"Don't shoot!" Boggs cried, just as the first shot was fired. Boggs fell back as a second shot was heard. Boggs now lay on the ground with his arms spread out. The young girl screamed and came running. She



threw herself on top of her father and kept crying, "He killed him! He killed him!"

The crowd made a tight circle around the two, with people in the back stretching their necks to see what was happening. Colonel Sherburn threw his gun onto the ground and turned and walked away.

Several men carried Boggs to a nearby store. I followed and could watch what was happening through the store window. They lay Boggs on the floor and put a large Bible under his head. He breathed a few times and then lay quietly. He was dead. The men pulled his daughter away from him screaming and crying, and led her away. Soon all the people of the town were pushing toward the window to look through at Boggs. I decided to leave, fearing that there might be trouble. Everyone who had seen the shooting was telling how it happened.

One tall, thin man wearing a tall, white fur hat marked the places on the ground where Boggs had stood and where Sherburn had stood. The people watched closely, shaking their heads to let him know that they understood. Finally, the man stood straight and stiff where Sherburn had stood, and called out, "Boggs!" and lifted his walking stick as though to aim it and shouted, "Bang!" Then he called out "Bang!" a second time and fell backwards onto the ground. The people watching him said that he did it perfectly; they said it was exactly the way that it all happened. Then at least a dozen people took out their bottles of whiskey and gave him drinks.

Soon, someone shouted that Sherburn ought to be hanged. Then everyone was saying it. The crowd soon went mad, yelling and getting every piece of rope they could find to do the hanging with.

## The Hanging Party

THE CROWD OF MEN MOVED SLOWLY AND STEADILY TOWARD SHERBURN'S house, shouting and screaming, "Hang him! Hang him!" Children were pushed out of the way. Women's faces appeared at every window, eager to see what the crowd would do. Many women and girls were crying, frightened by the thought of what would happen next.

The men stood shoulder to shoulder in front of the fence surrounding Sherburn's front yard. "Tear down the fence! Tear down the fence!" they shouted. Then came the sound of broken wood as the fence was torn apart, and the crowd moved into the front yard.

At that moment, Sherburn stepped out onto the roof of his front porch with a large gun in his hand. He stood perfectly calm and still. He spoke not a word. The crowd was suddenly silent, and those in the front slowly began to move back.

Sherburn never said a word—just stood there looking down. The stillness made every man in the crowd look uncomfortable. Sherburn moved his eyes slowly along the faces in the crowd, and whenever he stopped to look a man directly in the eye that man quickly looked down at the ground. No man could look directly into Sherburn's face. Then

Sherburn laughed; not a pleasant laugh but the kind of laugh that makes you feel like you've been eating bread with sand in it.

Finally, Sherburn spoke. "The idea of *you* hanging anyone! This makes me laugh. The idea of any of you thinking that you had the courage to hang a *man*! A *man* is perfectly safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind—at least in the daytime.

"Do I know you? I know you very well. I was born and raised in the South and I've lived in the North, so I know both kinds of people. The average man has no courage. Your newspapers call you a brave people so often that you think that you are brave. Why don't your courts of law hang men for murder? Because they're afraid that the man's friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark—and this is just what they *would* do.

"The courts always allow murderers to go free. Then a *man* goes in the night, with one hundred cowards at his back, and hangs the murderer. Your mistake is that you didn't bring a *man* with you; that's one mistake. Your second mistake is that you didn't come in the dark. You brought *part* of a man—Buck Harkness, there—without him, you wouldn't have come at all.

"You didn't want to come. The average man doesn't like trouble and danger. *You* don't like trouble and danger. But if only half a man—like Buck Harkness, there—shouts, 'Hang him! Hang him!' you're afraid not to follow him, afraid you'll be seen as the cowards you are. So you follow behind this half a man, shouting about the big things that you're going to do. The pitiful thing about men in an angry crowd is that they don't fight with the courage that's born in them, but with courage that's borrowed from a leader. But a crowd without a real man as a leader is beneath pitifulness. Now the thing for you to do is to go home and hide in a hole. If any hanging is to be done, it will be done in the dark. Now *leave*—and take your half-a-man with you." With these words he lifted his gun and aimed it at the crowd.

The crowd moved away from him suddenly. Men began to run in all directions. Buck Harkness turned and ran after the others. I could have stayed if I wanted but I didn't want to.

That night we gave our show, but only about twelve people came to see it. The people didn't understand the show and laughed all the time. That made the duke very angry. Everyone left before the show had ended, except for one boy who was asleep. The duke said that the people were not smart enough for Shakespeare. He said that he knew the type of show that would please them. The next morning he got some large sheets of paper and some black paint and made new signs. This is what he wrote on the signs:

AT THE COURT HOUSE  
for 3 nights only  
World-Famous Actors  
David Garrick, the Younger,  
and  
Edmund Kean, the Elder  
In the Exciting Play  
"The King's Cameleopard"  
Charge 50 cents  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN NOT ADMITTED

"There," said the duke, "if that last line doesn't bring them to the show, I don't know Arkansas!"

## The King's Cameleopard

ALL DAY, THE DUKE AND THE KING WORKED TO BUILD A STAGE WITH a curtain and a row of candles for footlights. That night the house was filled with men coming to see the show. The duke came onto the stage in front of the curtain and made a little speech. He praised the show and said that it was the most exciting one that ever was. He told how Edmund Kean was the best actor in the world.

When the duke had got the men very excited and eager to see the show, he opened the curtain and the king came out. He was completely naked and his body was painted every bright color imaginable. He looked wild, but it was very funny. The people almost died laughing. The king did a kind of little dance, and the men laughed louder. They stood up and cheered louder, and the king returned and did the dance one more time. Then he left the stage.

The duke closed the curtain and bowed to the men and said that the show would be performed two more times. He said that he was sorry that they could not perform it more often, but that they must soon return to London. He said if they had succeeded in pleasing

them, to please ask other men in the town to come to see the show.

Twenty people shouted, "What? Has the show ended? Is that *all*?" Suddenly, the angry crowd stood up and began to move toward the stage. Then a tall, good-looking gentleman jumped up and stood on a chair, shouting, "Stop! Listen to me. We were tricked! We've been made to look like fools. But do we want the entire town laughing at us. No! What we have to do is to leave here quietly, tell the others that it was a great show, and try to get all the men of the town to come to see it. Then we'll all be fools together."

Everyone agreed that he was correct and left quietly. The following day, the men were busy telling other men about the great show. There was a large crowd the second night, and again the king appeared naked with his body brightly painted and again the show lasted only a few minutes. And again the men were angry, but left quietly.

On the third night, the crowd was very large, the largest that it had been. But I noticed that the men who had already seen the first or second shows were returning to see the third one. That seemed strange to me. Then the duke and I noticed that every man had a large object under his coat or in his pocket, and I knew from the smell that these objects were old and spoiled fruits, vegetables, and eggs. When the room was so full that no more men could fit into it, the duke said that it was time for him to go on stage and introduce the king. I followed him. When we came near the stage door, he said, "Walk quickly down the street. As soon as we are away from this theater, run to the raft."

I did as he said, and we both ran to the raft as fast as we could. Soon we were moving away from the shore and out toward the middle of the river. Neither of us said a word. I felt sad for the poor king who had been left behind with the angry crowd. You can imagine my surprise when I heard a voice call out from the tent on the raft, "What happened at the show?" The king had not left the raft to go to the show that night.

We did not dare build a fire or show a light until we were ten miles down the river. Then as Jim and I cooked supper, the king and the duke laughed and laughed at the way that they had tricked the

men of that town. They counted the money they had earned—465 dollars—and felt that was good pay for three nights of work.

Later, when they were asleep, Jim said, “Are you surprised at the way the king and duke act, Huck?”

“No, Jim, I’m not. Our duke and king are not honest, but then I don’t think any member of royalty has ever been honest.”

“That’s how I feel too, Jim. But we have them with us, and we’ll have to continue treating them like royalty.”

I didn’t tell Jim what I had suspected for a long time—that the two men traveling with us were not real kings and dukes. But real kings and dukes would have acted, in the same way that our two acted, so what difference did it make?

It was time for me to go to sleep, and Jim said that he would sit up and watch. Just before daylight, I heard him crying softly to himself. He was thinking about his wife and children and was missing them. It was the first time that he had ever been away from his home and he longed to be back with his family. I do believe that he cared as much for his family as white men cared for theirs.

I asked him about his family, and he said, “What made me think of my family now was a sound that I heard on the shore—the sound of a door closing with a bang. The sound reminded me of a time that I was mean to my Elizabeth. She was only four years old and she had been very sick. When she was no longer sick, I saw her playing one day and said to her, ‘Close the door.’ She didn’t do it. She just continued to smile at me and didn’t obey. Again I said, ‘Close the door,’ and again she didn’t obey. This made me so angry that I hit her with my hand and she fell to the floor. She lay there crying but still she wouldn’t close the door. I was going to hit her again, when suddenly the wind blew the door closed with a very loud *bang!* Elizabeth never noticed; she never moved. I called to her as loud as I could call, and she never looked at me. Then I knew that she couldn’t hear—her illness had caused a problem with her ears and she wasn’t able to hear. I began to cry and picked her up in my arms and said, ‘Forgive me,’ but she couldn’t hear me. I asked God to forgive me, but I never have been able to

forgive myself. And my little girl has never spoken a word since. She can't hear and she can't speak."



## A N e w C h a r a c t e r f o r t h e K i n g

WE TRAVELED ALL THE NEXT DAY AND STOPPED FOR THE NIGHT IN A section of the river where there was a town on either shore. The duke and the king again began to plan how they would trick the people in those towns. Jim said that he hoped that they would not stay away from the raft a long time because he was tired of having to be tied up with ropes and kept in the tent on the raft all day. He was frightened every time that he heard anyone come near the raft. We kept Jim tied so that it would appear that we had caught him as a runaway slave and were holding him prisoner until we could return him to his owner.

The duke and the king were afraid to repeat the show that they had performed the last three nights, for they feared that men in this town may have heard about the trick that they had played. The duke said that he would stay on the raft and think about a new plan, while the king and I went to one of the towns to see what the people were like. The king had bought himself a new suit of black clothes, which he was wearing. I never knew that clothes could change a person so completely. In his old clothes, he looked like the meanest man who

ever lived, while his new clothes made him look like a grand and good and holy person.

The king and I stepped into the canoe. We had seen a large passenger boat about three miles up the river, and the king decided to row to the boat and buy a ticket and ride back down to the town where we had left the raft. The king thought that he could make the people in the town believe that we come from a large city like St. Louis or Cincinnati.

I was very excited at the thought of getting a ride on a large passenger boat and began to row quickly up the river toward the boat. We had not gone very far when we noticed a boy walking along the river's edge, carrying some heavy bags.

"Where are you going?" asked the king.

"I'm going to ride on the passenger boat to New Orleans."

"Get into our canoe and we'll row you to the boat. My **servant** will help you with your bags. Help this gentleman, Adolphus."

I knew that he meant me, so I jumped out of the canoe and helped the boy. Then the three of us continued rowing up the river.

"When I first saw you, I thought that you must be Mr. Wilks and that you had arrived just a bit too late, but then I thought again and realized that you would not be rowing *up* the river if you were Mr. Wilks, so you must be someone else."

The king answered, "No, I'm not Mr. Wilks. My name is Blodgett—Alexander Blodgett. I'm sorry that this Mr. Wilks did not arrive in time, and I hope that he didn't miss anything important."

"He didn't miss getting property. He'll still get that. But he missed seeing his brother Peter alive. Peter would have given anything to have seen his brother before he died. He talked of little else the last three weeks of his life. The two brothers had not seen each other since they were children. And there was a third brother, William, whom Peter had never seen at all. William was much younger—he would be only thirty or thirty-five years old—and he couldn't hear or speak. Only the two brothers—Harvey and William—are left of the family, and they live in England."

"Did anyone write to them to tell them that Peter was ill?"

“Oh yes. Peter himself wrote a few months ago—when he first became ill. He was quite old and had the feeling that he would never be well again. He had one brother, George, who had lived here in America with him, but George and his wife died last year. They had three daughters, who continued to live with Peter and he wanted to be sure that they got all his property after his death. That was all that the girls would have to live on.”

“I’m sorry Peter didn’t live to see his brothers. What are his nieces’ names and how old are they?”

“Mary Jane is nineteen, Susan is fifteen, and Joanne is fourteen. Joanne is very sweet and is always doing good works, but she’s not all that pretty.”

The king looked very sad. “I’m sorry that the girls are left all alone in the cold, cold world.”

“They’re not alone. Peter Wilks had many friends, and these friends will see that the girls get the property Peter has left for them. There’s Hobson, Lot Hovey, Ben Rucker, Abner Shackelford, Levi Bell, the lawyer, and Dr. Robinson. The wives of all these men are also his friends and so is the Widow Bartley. Those are the people that Peter wrote to his brother Harvey about. When Harvey arrives, he’ll know who to turn to for help.”

The king continued asking the boy questions until he knew about everything and everyone in that town—all about the Wilkses, about Peter’s business (he was a **tanner**), and about his brothers’ businesses. Finally, he asked, “Was Peter Wilks wealthy?”

“Oh, yes, quite wealthy. He had houses and land and left nearly 4,000 dollars hidden somewhere.”

“When did he die?”

“Last night. His funeral will be tomorrow at about noon.”

When we reached the boat, the king never said a word about our going on it for a ride. I was disappointed because I had wanted very much to travel on a passenger boat. The boy left us and went on the passenger boat alone.

As soon as the boy was gone, the king told me to go another mile

further up the river; then he got out of the canoe and went on shore. He told me that he would wait there, but that I was to take the canoe and go quickly to get the duke and return with him. He said that I should row as fast as I possibly could.

I knew what his plan was but never said a word. I returned with the duke as quickly as I could, then hid the canoe. The king told the duke the complete story of Peter Wilks and was already trying to speak like an Englishman. He then asked the duke if he could act as though he were a man who couldn't hear or speak, and the duke said that he thought that he could manage that very well.

Late in the afternoon, another large passenger boat came down the river, and we waved our arms until the boat stopped. We then traveled the four or five miles to the town where Peter Wilks had lived. Many men from the town were waiting to greet passengers getting off the boat. The king asked if anyone could direct him to the house of Mr. Peter Wilks.

One man spoke softly and gently. "I'm sorry, sir, the best that I can do is to tell you where he *had* lived until yesterday."

The king fell against the man, put his head on the man's shoulder, and cried like a baby. "Oh, my poor brother—gone—dead. And we never got to see him. This is too hard to bear."

Then he turned to the duke and began making signs with his hands as though he were telling him something. The next instant the duke burst into tears, also. Well, I could see they were starting a new plan to fool these people like they had done to the others.

The men of the town felt so sorry for these two that they held them as they cried, then told the king about his brother's last hours of life. The king made signs with his hands as though he were then telling all that he heard to his brother. Then they both began to cry even harder than before. The sight of these two made me feel sick. It was enough to make a person feel shame for the human race.

## I s I t T h e m ?

THE NEWS THAT WE HAD ARRIVED SOON SPREAD THROUGH THE TOWN. People came running from every direction to greet us, some still putting on their coats as they ran. Soon we were in the middle of a large crowd. I could hear people asking, “Is it *them*?”

When we reached the Wilks’s house the street in front of it was filled with people, and three girls were standing at the door. Mary Jane, the oldest, was beautiful and her face seemed to glow, she was that happy that her uncles had come. The king held her in his arms, while the duke held the youngest girl. All the women watching cried for joy to see them meet again at last.

When the king saw Peter Wilks’s body laid out at one end of the room, he put his arm round the duke’s shoulder and slowly walked toward the body. They both started crying again, louder than ever, and were soon joined by the three girls. Tears were in the eyes of every person in the room, but the two who cried the loudest and the longest were the king and the duke. I never felt so angry and so ashamed in my life.

When the king could control his crying, he told the people in the room the long journey we had made from England—a journey of 4,000

miles. He said that he and his nieces would be happy if a few of Peter's closest friends stayed to eat supper with them that evening, and he named those people his brother had often mentioned in his letters: Mr. Hobson, Lot Hovey, Ben Rucker, Abner Shackleford, Levi Bell, Dr. Robinson, and their wives, and the Widow Bartley.

Mr. Hobson and Dr. Robinson were out of town together and Levi Bell was in Louisville on business, but the rest were there and thanked the king for the invitation. The king continued talking about nearly everyone in that town and mentioned many things that had happened. He said that his brother Peter had written all this in letters to him. That was a lie, of course. He had learned these facts from the young boy that we had taken to the passenger boat that morning.

Mary Jane gave the king the letter that Peter Wilks had left. The king read it aloud and cried. Peter had left the house and 3,000 dollars in gold to the girls, and he left the **tannery** and 3,000 dollars in gold to his brothers, Harvey and William. He told where he had hidden the 6,000 dollars in the basement of his house.

The king and the duke asked me to go with them to the basement and when they found the bag of gold they poured it out onto the floor and counted it. Four hundred and fifteen dollars were missing! They counted the money a second time, and again they found that instead of 6,000 dollars in gold, they had only 5,585 dollars. They searched the basement, but couldn't find the missing dollars. The king said the best plan would be to add four hundred and fifteen dollars of their own money, otherwise they might appear dishonest.

The duke said that he had another idea. To keep the people from suspecting they were dishonest, he told the king that they should carry the bag upstairs, count the money in front of the group, and give the complete 6,000 dollars to the girls. The king said that was the cleverest idea that they had had yet.

When we got upstairs, everyone crowded around the table as the king poured out the gold dollars. He put the money into twenty piles—three hundred dollars in each pile. The people in the room looked hungrily at the money. The king then turned to the people and began

another of his speeches.

“Friends, my poor brother, who now lies dead, was generous to those he loved—his three nieces. And we know that he would have been even more generous to them if he had not been afraid of hurting my brother William and me. I’m certain that William feels as I do. Let me ask him.” And the king turned to William and made a lot of signs with his hands. William looked foolish at first, and then his face brightened as though he suddenly understood and he started jumping around from joy and the king said, “I knew that he would feel the way that I do about this. Here, Mary Jane, Susan, and Joanna, take the money—take it *all*. The complete 6,000 dollars.”

Mary Jane danced about and began kissing the king, while Susan and Joanna kissed the duke. Then everybody started kissing the duke and the king and shaking their hands and saying that it was the loveliest thing that they had ever seen.

Then the king made another speech about his dear dead brother, and invited everyone in the room to come to the funeral. Suddenly, a man laughed right in his face. Everyone turned to see who had dared to laugh at such a sad time.

“Why, Dr. Robinson,” said Abner Shackleford, “you’ve been away and haven’t met this man. This is Harvey Wilks.”

The king smiled and extended his hand to shake the hand of the doctor.

“Keep your hands to yourself,” said the doctor. “You’re no Englishman. Your voice sounds nothing like an Englishman. *You* say that you’re Peter Wilks’s brother! Never! You’ve been lying.”

The crowd around the doctor tried to quiet him and tried to explain to him how Harvey had proved in many ways that he was Peter Wilks’s brother—how he knew everyone’s name in town and even knew the names of the dogs. They begged the doctor not to hurt the girls’ feelings, but the doctor wouldn’t listen to them. Peter Wilks’s three nieces began to cry and begged the doctor to stop.

“I was your father’s friend, and I’m your friend,” the doctor said to them. “I warn you as a friend, and an honest one who wants to protect

you and keep you out of harm and trouble, to turn your backs on these two liars and have nothing to do with them. This man has given you a lot of names and facts which he learned somewhere, and you're eager to believe that this proves that he is your uncle. Mary Jane Wilks, you know me for your friend, send these two liars away. I beg you to do this. Will you?"

Mary Jane looked into the doctor's eyes and said, "Here's your answer." She picked up the bag of gold dollars and put it into the king's hands and said to the king, "Take this 6,000 dollars and put it into a bank or a business for my sisters and me. I trust you."

She then put her arms around the king and her sisters did the same. The king held up his head and smiled proudly.



## H u c k S t e a l s t h e M o n e y

WHEN THE PEOPLE HAD LEFT, THE KING ASKED MARY JANE IF THERE was room for us to sleep in her house. She said that she had a spare room for Uncle William, a very small room that I could use, and that she would be happy for Uncle Harvey to sleep in her room. She would move into the room that her sisters shared.

We went upstairs with her and she showed us the rooms. She told the king that she would remove her dresses that were hanging along the wall of the room which he would use; but he told her to leave them.

At supper that evening, I had to wait on the king and the duke and serve them their food. Afterward, Joanna and I ate our own supper in the kitchen and had a nice long talk. I liked her very much and began to feel very guilty and mean when I remembered how I was helping the duke and the king steal her money. I decided that I would take the money away from the king and give it to the three girls.

I went to bed early so that I could have time to think of a plan for getting the money. I wanted to take the money in such a manner that the king would never suspect me. I planned to steal the money and hide it. Later when we were far down the river, I would write Mary Jane a

letter and tell her where the money was hidden.

But where was the money? I knew that I had to search the king's and the duke's rooms. I entered the king's room, but it was too dark to see much. I began feeling around the room, when suddenly I heard the sound of feet in the hall. I quickly hid behind the dresses that were hanging on the wall. The king and the duke came into the room and closed the door. The first thing that the duke did was look under the bed. I was glad that I had not chosen to hide there.

"What did you want to tell me?" asked the king. "Talk quickly. We should be downstairs with the others."

"I don't feel comfortable. I keep worrying about that doctor. I think that we should take the 6,000 dollars and leave tonight—when everyone is asleep."

This talk frightened me. Would I be able to steal the money before they left?

"What! And not sell the rest of the property? We would be fools to leave before we have gotten all the money that we can out of this. The house and the tannery must be worth 9,000 dollars."

The duke complained about this plan and argued that the bag of gold was enough. He didn't want to take *everything* that the three girls had.

"Don't talk that way," said the king. "We won't be taking anything more from them than the 6,000 dollars. The people who buy the property will be the ones to suffer. As soon as it's discovered that we didn't really own the property, the sale will be found to be unlawful and the girls will get their property returned. We'll be far away with the money and the girls will be happy here with their property. They won't suffer at all."

The king continued to talk like this until the duke finally agreed to stay for the funeral and to sell the property. The duke said that he was uncomfortable about the doctor, though.

"Forget the doctor," said the king. "We have all the fools in this town on our side, and that's most of the people."

They started to leave the room, when the duke said, "I don't think

that we've hidden the money in a good place."

"What's wrong with where the money is hidden?"

"Mary Jane may send her black slave into this room to get some dresses for her. Do you think a slave can find a bag of money and not borrow some of it?"

"You're correct this time, duke." And the king began looking among the dresses only a few feet away from where I was hidden. I stood absolutely still—I didn't move a muscle. I wondered what they would have done to me if they had discovered me. But the king found the bag of gold before he found me. He pushed the bag under the blankets of his bed. Then they left the room.

As soon as I heard the sound of their feet on the stairs, I came out of my hiding place, took the bag of gold, and returned to my own small room. I knew that I would have to think of a good place to hide the gold, but where? If I hid it inside the house, they would surely search everywhere and find it, once they realized that it was no longer in the king's bed.

I stayed awake until I heard the king and the duke come upstairs. I waited to see if the king would notice that the gold was gone, but I heard nothing. I waited in my room until the house was completely quiet, then I walked slowly and quietly down the stairs.

## T h e   F u n e r a l

THE HOUSE WAS QUIET. I OPENED THE DINING ROOM DOOR SLIGHTLY and could see men sitting in chairs. They were asleep. I walked slowly into the living room where the body of Peter Wilks lay. Suddenly, I heard someone coming down the stairs. I didn't know what to do. There was no place for me to run. I quickly hid the bag of gold dollars under the body of Peter Wilks. His body was so cold that I felt sick with fear. Then I ran across the room and hid behind a door.

The person coming was Mary Jane. She walked softly toward the body of her uncle and sat down beside it. She held a handkerchief to her face and was crying. Her back was toward me. Quietly, I moved out of my hiding place and returned to my room.

I knew that I had not hidden the money well. If it would stay hidden with the body, there would be no problem. Once we were far away, I would, simply write to Mary Jane and tell her to get them to dig up the body and recover the money. However, what would happen if the money was discovered before the body was buried? The king would get it again, of course, and he would guard it so closely that I could never hope to steal it again. I knew that I should try to move the money to

a safer place, but I was afraid that I would be caught if I attempted to do so.

The next day the family began to make preparations for the funeral. The coffin, with Peter Wilks's body in it, was placed on several chairs in the middle of the room. The rest of the room was filled with rows and rows of chairs, which extended into the dining room and hall.

Neighbors and friends from the town began to arrive. Soon all the chairs were full. I had hoped to move the money to a safer hiding place, but knew I could not do that with so many people watching. The king, the duke, and the three girls sat in the first row of chairs. They all held handkerchiefs to their eyes and kept their heads bent down. The only sound was that of quiet crying and the noises made by men blowing their noses—people always blow their noses more at a funeral than at any other time.

The man in charge of the funeral moved noiselessly through the crowd like a cat. He never spoke; he moved people around, made space for those who arrived late, and made certain that everyone was comfortable, but he did this all with nods and signs with his hands, not words. When he was satisfied that all was ready, he stood against the wall.

The three sisters had borrowed a piano—a sick one. A young woman sat down and played a sad song and everyone joined in singing. After the song ended, the Reverend Hobson began his talk in a slow, low voice.

Suddenly, there was a terrible noise in the basement. The noise was made by a dog, but it was the loudest, meanest dog that I had ever seen. Reverend Hobson refused to notice the noise and continued talking about the dead man. Finally, the noise became so loud that he had to stop talking. No one seemed to know what to do.

The man in charge of the funeral moved from his position against the wall. He made a sign to Hobson as if to say, "Don't worry—depend on me." Then he moved smoothly and easily along the wall, all the while not making a sound. All eyes in the room followed his movements. The noise in the basement grew louder and louder. Finally, the

man disappeared behind the door leading to the basement. We heard a loud *whack*, then a loud dog cry, and all was still. Hobson continued his talk. In a few minutes, the man returned from the basement, again moved smoothly and easily along the wall, returned to the same spot where he had been standing before, and said in a loud whisper, “He had a rat!”

You could see that this was a great satisfaction to the people because naturally they had wondered what was troubling the dog. A small, helpful act like that was what made this man so well-liked in town.

When the Reverend Hobson had finished talking, the man in charge of the funeral left his position against the wall and came over to the coffin and closed the top. I didn’t know if anyone had discovered the money. Was it really going to be buried with Peter Wilks?

After they had buried Peter Wilks, we returned to the house. I began to watch the faces of the king and the duke to see what I could learn. Did they know that the money was gone? Their faces told me nothing. They sat in the evening, talking to the people who were still at the house. The king said that they were eager to return to England, and would have to sell the property immediately. He said that he and his brother would be happy to take the girls home to England with them. The girls were so happy at the thought of moving to England that they forgot about losing their uncle. It made my heart sick to see them being lied to again.

The very next day, the king decided to sell the house, the tannery, and the black slaves. The slaves were being sold immediately— the two sons were sold to a family living up the river in Memphis, Tennessee, and their mother was sold down the river to New Orleans. The three sisters and the black slaves cried and cried when the time came for them to separate. The girls said that they never realized that the slaves would be sold away from the town. Many people in the town were angry that the mother and her two sons were going to be separated in this way.

The following morning the king and the duke entered my room

very early and I knew that there was trouble.

“Were you in my room two nights ago?” asked the king.

“No, I wasn’t even near your room since the girls took us there that first day.”

“Well, did you see anyone go in there?”

“Not that I can remember.”

“Stop and think.”

“Well, I did see two black slaves go in there on the day of the funeral. I was walking down the stairs and I saw them go in the king’s room.”

“What did they do in there?”

“Nothing that I could see. I thought that they were simply cleaning the room.”

The duke had a strange smile on his face. “Those black slaves have tricked us. They cried and made a scene about having been sold away from this town, but that was simply an act.”

“Is something wrong?” I asked.

“This is not any business of yours. You keep your mouth shut. You know nothing about any of this.” Then the duke shouted at the king, “This is your fault. I knew that we should have left with the money. But you wanted to wait until you sold the property.”

The king did not like these remarks and said the fault was mine. He said that I should have come to him immediately when I saw the black slaves leave his room. I didn’t mind his saying this. I knew that they wouldn’t try to search for the money and they really couldn’t harm the black slaves either.

## H u c k   T e l l s   t h e   T r u t h

THE NEXT MORNING, AS I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS, I HEARD the sound of someone crying. The door to Mary Jane's room was open, and I could see her sitting by her open trunk. She had been packing her clothes for the trip to England. But now she stopped packing and sat with her face in her hands, crying. I felt very sad to see her like this.

I entered her room and said, "Miss Mary Jane, I hate to see people feeling sad. Tell me what troubles you."

She said that she was crying because of the black slaves. She said that the beautiful trip to England was ruined for her and that she could never be happy in England knowing that the black mother and her two children would never see each other again. Then she threw out her arms and cried, "Oh, oh! They'll be separated forever."

"But they *will* get together again. I know that they will!" I assured her.

I had said that before I could think. And before I could say another word, she put her arms around me and kissed me and told me to say that again, and again, and again!

I knew that I had made a mistake to say what I had said, and told



her that I needed a minute to think. In the past, I had never told the truth when I was in a difficult situation, but this time it seemed to me that the truth would actually be safer than a lie. I decided to take a chance and tell the truth this time and hope all would turn out well.

I said to her, “Miss Mary Jane, is there any place out of town where you could stay for three or four days?”

“Yes, I could visit Mr. Lothrop. Why?”

“I can’t tell you yet. I’ll assure you that the black slaves will see each other again soon—within two weeks—if you’ll visit Mr. Lothrop and stay four days.”

“Four days! I would be happy to stay a whole year if I could be assured that our slaves will be united again.”

I stood up and closed her bedroom door, then returned to her and said quietly, “I’ll tell you the truth. This will not be pleasant but I can’t change that. Those two men are not your uncles; they have simply been tricking you. They’re here to steal your money. I’ve told you the worst; the rest is not so bad.”

She was very troubled by what I had said, but I knew that I had to tell her the complete truth. I told her about the boy we had met who told us about Peter Wilks and about the people in the town. I told her how the king and the duke had made the plans to trick her and her sisters. And I told her that they did not intend to take her and her sisters to England.

She jumped up angrily and said that she wanted the people of the town to be told the truth, too. But I reminded her of her promise to visit Mr. Lothrop for four days, and she said that she would keep her promise.

Once I had said those things, I thought of a new plan. I could see there was a way for Jim and me to escape if the king and the duke were put into prison.

“Miss Mary Jane, I have a new plan. This plan won’t require you to stay at the Lothrops for four days. I want you to leave immediately and stay the day there. At nine o’clock tonight, tell them that you have forgotten something and must return home. If you arrive here before eleven o’clock, put a lighted candle in the window. If I see the candle,

I'll come to you. If I don't come to you, you will know that I am on my raft and have gone away. Only then should you tell the men of this town that the king and the duke are not really your uncles."

"I'll do that," she answered.

"If I escape on the raft, I won't be here to prove that those two men are not your uncles. There are people in other towns who can tell you of the tricks that those two have played before. I will write down the names of the towns and you can talk to people there. When the court wants to learn what type of men they are, I'm sure men from those towns will be happy to tell the court."

I hoped that she understood exactly what she had to do. Then I continued, "Let them sell your property. Don't worry about that. No one will pay for the property immediately, and the king and the duke are not going to leave until they have all the money."

"I'll go down to breakfast now, and leave for the Lothrops immediately after I've eaten."

"Don't wait until after breakfast. Leave now! Why do you think that I've asked you to leave at all?"

"I have no idea. Why do you want me to leave?"

"Because you're not able to keep a secret."

"What about my sisters? Are they safe with those two?"

"They'll be safe enough. I'll tell them that you have gone to visit someone who's sick and that you should return tonight or tomorrow morning."

"I feel sad to think that I gave them that bag of gold dollars."

"But they don't have it. I *had* it because I stole it from them to give to you. But I don't have it any longer. I'm sorry, Miss Mary Jane. I'm very sorry. I did the best I could. I had to hide it quickly and didn't hide it in a good place."

"Oh, stop blaming yourself. But where did you hide it?"

"I would rather not tell you where I put the money, but I'll write it for you on a piece of paper, and you can read it as you travel to Mr. Lothrop's house."

I wrote: "I put the money in the coffin with Peter Wilks's body.

It was there when you were crying that night. I was hiding behind the door. I felt very sorry for you, Miss Mary Jane.”

She took the paper, then she said to me, “Good-bye. I’ll do everything that you’ve told me. If I don’t see you again, I want you to know that I’ll never forget you. I’ll pray for you, too”—and she was gone.

Later, when I saw Susan, I said to her, “Mary Jane has gone across the river to visit the Proctors. One of them is very sick.”

“What kind of sickness is it?”

“There’s no name for it, but it’s very serious. The family sat up with her all night, and they don’t think that she has much longer to live.”

“That’s awful. I must tell Uncle Harvey immediately.”

“Don’t tell him.”

“Why not?”

“Would your Uncle Harvey be willing to take Mary Jane on the long boat ride to England if he thought that she might become very ill with the same sickness that the Proctor girl has? Of course he wouldn’t. I think that a better idea is to tell your uncle that Mary Jane has gone across the river to tell your friends, the Lothrops, that your house and the tannery are going to be sold. You can say that Mary Jane is certain that the Lothrops would be interested in buying the house because Peter Wilks had said that he would prefer the Lothrops to own it.”

I felt very good about the work that I had done that day. I was certain that Tom Sawyer could not have done it better himself. Of course, Tom’s plans would have been fancier, but my plans have always had to be simple and realistic because that’s the way I was raised.

They sold all the property and furniture by the end of the afternoon. As they were finishing the sale, a large boat stopped to unload its passengers. Minutes later, a crowd ran up the street laughing and calling in loud voices, “Here is a second set of brothers of Peter Wilks!”

## T H E M O N E Y I S F O U N D

THE CROWD WAS LEADING A NICE-LOOKING OLD GENTLEMAN AND A nice-looking younger gentleman, whose arm was wrapped in a white cloth and appeared to be broken. The people in the crowd were shouting and laughing, but this did not seem like a joke to me. I knew that the duke and the king would see nothing to joke about either. I expected them to turn pale and look frightened, but they didn't. The king simply looked in a sorrowful manner at the two strangers as though it pained his heart to see such awful liars. Several men stood next to the king to let him know that they believed he was the true brother.

The older of the two strangers spoke like this to the crowd: "I wasn't expecting to find two men here who claim to be brothers to Peter Wilks. I'm not in a good position to prove that we're the real brothers, for our traveling bags with our belongings in them were mistakenly taken off the boat in a town further up the river. But I'm Peter Wilks's brother, Harvey, and this is his brother, William. He can't hear or speak and can't make signs with his hands since one arm is broken. We are who we say we are, and in a day or two, when we get our bags, we can prove it. But until that time, I'll say nothing more; we'll go to our hotel

and wait.”

The king laughed and said, “Broke his arm—not likely. But how convenient. Now he has a good excuse for not expressing himself through signs, which, of course, he has never learned. Lost their bags! Another convenient excuse.”

The king laughed again, and so did most of the men in the crowd, except for three or four, or maybe half a dozen. One of those who did not laugh was the doctor; another was a sharp-looking gentleman who had just come off the boat and was talking to the doctor in a low voice. They would glance toward the king and nod their heads. This was Levi Bell, the lawyer who had been visiting in Louisville.

Another stranger, who was not laughing, now spoke to the king: “If you are Harvey Wilks, when did you arrive in this town?”

“The day before the funeral, friend,” said the king.

“At what time of day?”

“In the evening—about an hour or two before sunset.”

“How did you travel?”

“We came on the big passenger boat from Cincinnati.”

“Well, how did it happen that I saw you in a canoe that very morning near where I live?”

“I was not in a canoe that morning.”

“That is a lie!”

Several men jumped up and attempted to quiet him. They said that he should not talk that way to an old man.

“He’s a liar. I saw him that morning in a canoe with Tim Collins and another boy.”

“Would you recognize the boy if you were to see him again?”

“I’m not certain, but perhaps I would. I see him standing there now. I recognize him perfectly.”

It was me that he pointed to.

The doctor spoke next: “Neighbors, I don’t know whether the two new men are the true Wilks brothers or not, but these two here surely are not. I think that it is our duty to keep them in this town until we can prove which men are speaking the truth. Come, all of you.

We'll take these two fellows and the boy to the hotel and question them along with the other two."

The crowd started toward the hotel. It was nearly sundown by now. The doctor led me along by the hand. He was kind to me but he never let go of my hand.

When we reached the hotel, the doctor asked the two men to meet with us to discuss the problem. He said, "I don't wish to cause problems, but I would feel better if we had the bag of gold that Peter Wilks left. I would not want friends of these two men to attempt to leave town with the gold while we're talking here."

Everyone agreed that it was a good idea. I wondered how the king would deal with this new problem. But he simply looked sorrowful and said, "Gentlemen, I wish that the money was here, for I would like to help you in every way that I can. But I can't produce the money."

"Where is it, then?"

"When my niece gave me the bag of money to keep for her, I hid it in my bed. I thought that would be a safe place, but one of the black slaves stole it. When I sold the slaves, I had not yet realized that the money was stolen, so I didn't question them about it. They've taken the money down to New Orleans with them. My servant here can tell you about it."

I could see that the doctor and several of the others did not believe him. One man asked me if I saw one of the slaves steal the money, and I said no, but I did see them leaving the room quickly, and they seemed to be acting in a guilty manner.

Then the doctor turned to me and said, "Are you English, too?"

I said yes, and he and some others laughed and I knew that they didn't believe me.

They began seriously questioning the king and the other gentleman who also claimed that he was Harvey Wilks. They questioned them for hour after hour, and no one thought about supper or how late it was. They asked the king to repeat his story again, and then they asked the other Harvey Wilks to repeat what he had said earlier. The longer that I listened to the two men, the more I was certain that most of the men

knew that the king was telling a lie while the other man was telling the truth. Finally, they asked me to tell what I knew. The king gave me a long, meaningful look, and I knew that I must tell a good story. I began to tell about the town of Sheffield and about the Wilks family there, but I had not said much when the doctor began to laugh.

Levi Bell, the lawyer, said, "Sit down, boy. You can stop talking. You're not accustomed to lying and don't do it well. You need to have more practice if you're going to be a good liar."

The king and Levi Bell then talked quietly for a few minutes. The lawyer asked the king to write a few words on a sheet of paper. Then he spoke to the duke—who looked quite sick—and asked him to write a few sentences, too. Last, he turned to the other two men who claimed to be the Wilks brothers and asked them to write a few lines and sign their names. The old man wrote, but nobody could read his writing.

The lawyer looked at what all three men had written and acted surprised. Then he took several old letters out of his pocket and examined them. Then he examined the old man's writing again.

Finally, he said, "These letters were written by Harvey Wilks. If you compare the handwriting in these letters to the lines these men have written, you'll see that they are not alike. Not any of these men wrote these letters. (The king and the duke looked foolish when they realized how the lawyer had tricked them.)

The old gentleman said, "Please, let me explain. Nobody can read my handwriting but my brother William here. When I write a letter, he copies it for me and we mail his copy. You have *his* letters, in your hand, not mine."

"Well," said the lawyer, "I have some letters here signed by William, also, so if you'll ask him to write a few lines, we can compare the handwriting.

"He can't write with his left hand," said the old gentleman. "If he could use his right hand, which you see is broken, you would know that he wrote his own and my letters, too. Look at both letters. Compare the handwriting. You'll see that the writing is the same."

The lawyer compared the letters and said, "I believe that's true.

The handwriting in the letters signed Harvey is very similar to the handwriting in the letters signed William. I hadn't noticed that before. This still doesn't absolutely prove that you're the true brothers, but one thing is proved—neither of these other two are Wilkses”—and he nodded his head toward the king and the duke.

The old gentleman who claimed to be Harvey Wilks suddenly spoke, “I’ve thought of something. Is there anyone here who saw my brother’s body after he died?”

“Yes,” answered a man. “Ab Turner and I did. We’re both here.”

Then the old gentleman turned to the king and said, “Perhaps this man can tell me what was **tattooed** on his chest.”

I wondered how the king would answer this. There was no way he could know what was tattooed on that man’s chest. His face turned white; he couldn’t control that. It was very quiet in the room; everyone moved a little closer and stared at the king. I knew that the king would now have to admit that he was lying. That was the only thing that he could do. Or was it? I could hardly believe what I was hearing. The king smiled and began to speak very slowly. “That is a difficult question. Yes, I can tell you what is tattooed on Peter Wilks’s chest—simply a small, thin, blue **arrow**. The tattoo is faint, and you must look very closely to see it.”

The old gentleman turned to Ab Turner and his friend and said, “You heard what this man said. Was there a tattoo like the one described on Peter’s chest?”

Both of them answered, “We didn’t see such a tattoo.”

“Good!” said the old gentleman. “The tattoo on his chest were the letters P, B, and W—the first letters of his name. They’re not very clear, but, if you looked closely, you should have been able to see them. I’m certain that’s the tattoo that you saw.”

The crowd was getting excited now. Several men shouted, “All of them are lying. Let’s force them all to leave this town.”

Suddenly, the lawyer jumped onto the table and shouted, “Gentlemen, gentlemen! Listen to me. Please! We can still prove if these men are liars. We have to go to the graveyard and dig up the body of Peter



Wilks and look at his chest.”

“Hooray!” they all shouted and started to leave the hotel.

“Wait!” shouted the doctor. “Seize these four men and the boy, too. Don’t let them run away. Bring them to the graveyard.”

I was very frightened, but I couldn’t escape. Several men grasped each of us and made us walk with them to the graveyard. To make the situation worse, I noticed that the night sky was very black and lightning was beginning to flash. This was the most frightening situation that I had ever been in. I wished that Mary Jane were at home and could save me. What would happen when they did not find the blue arrow tattoo mark? I didn’t want to think about that, yet somehow I could think of nothing else. The night was getting darker as the storm approached. It would have been a good time to escape except that a huge man held tightly to my arm. He nearly dragged me along by the arm; he was so excited to get to the graveyard. Many men had brought tools for digging. They soon located Peter Wilks’s grave and began the job of digging up the body. No one had brought a light, so they worked in darkness. The rain started and a strong wind began to blow. Suddenly, the lightning flashed more frequently, followed by loud thunder. The crowd moved in close, with everyone pushing to get a better view.

Suddenly, a huge flash of lightning made the dark night as bright as day. The coffin lid was lifted, and someone shouted, “Look! Here’s the bag of gold!”

Everyone in the crowd was surprised by this unexpected event. The man who held my arm suddenly threw up his hands in surprise, and I was free. It was my chance to escape, and I began to run as fast as I could. I was the only person on the road and I was running so fast that I felt like I was flying. As I ran past the Wilks’s house, I could see the lighted candle in Mary Jane’s window and I felt happy. She was the best girl that I had ever known.

As soon as I reached the river above the town, I looked for a canoe to borrow. The first time the lightning showed me one that was not tied to a tree, I jumped in and began to row toward the raft. As soon as I saw the raft, I shouted to Jim, “Hurry. Untie the raft. We can escape without

the king and the duke.”

Jim was so happy to see me that he cried for joy. He held me in his arms and was ready to have a good, long cry, but I said that we had no time for that. “Cut the rope and let’s start down the river.”

In two seconds, the rope was cut and we were moving with the river current. It was good to be free again and all by ourselves on the big river. No one would trouble us now. Suddenly, I heard a sound that was very familiar to me—the sound of someone rowing a boat.

When the next flash of lightning burst across the sky, I saw a small boat hurrying toward us. In it were the king and the duke.

I fell down onto the deck of the raft. I wanted to stop living and simply cry.

## A R o y a l Q u a r r e l

WHEN THE KING AND THE DUKE GOT INTO THE RAFT, THE KING SHOOK me by the shoulders and shouted, "Trying to get away without us, were you? Are you tired of having us with you?"

"No, Your Majesty," I said. "Please don't hurt me."

"Quick, then, tell us what you were doing, or I'll shake the insides out of you."

"I'll be honest with you and tell you everything exactly as it happened. A huge man was holding my arm very tightly and said that he was sorry to see a boy in such a serious situation. Then they all were so surprised to find the bag of gold that he let go of my arm and whispered, 'Run now, or they'll certainly hang you.' I could see no good reason for me to stay and I didn't want to be hanged if I could avoid it. I ran as fast as I could and never stopped running until I found a canoe. I rowed to the raft and told Jim to hurry. I was certain that you and the duke had already been hanged. Jim and I felt very sad and we certainly were happy to see you two coming in your boat. Ask Jim. He'll tell you that I'm telling the truth."

Jim said that those were the facts—that everything that I had

said was the truth.

The king said that he did not believe a word of what I had said and was going to kill me, but the duke told him to take his hands off me. "You're a fool. You know that you would have done the same thing if you were in his situation. Did you ask anyone in the crowd what had happened to *him*? I didn't hear you if you did."

The king stopped shaking me and began to complain about the town and everyone in it. But the duke said, "You have no one to blame but yourself for the problems that we now have. You refused to listen to any advice that I offered. The only smart thing that you said was about the tattoo. That's what saved us. That got us to the graveyard where they dug up the body and found the bag of gold. It was only then that the excited fools let go of us, and we were able to run away."

They were both quiet for a moment, thinking. Then the king said, "And we thought the slaves had stolen the money."

"Yes," said the duke slowly, "*we* thought that."

After about a half minute, the king said slowly, "That's what I thought, anyway."

"I'm not certain that I agree with you. *I* thought that the money was stolen by the slaves. I don't know what you thought."

The king was beginning to sound angry. "What do you mean by that?"

"And what did you mean earlier? You sound as though you don't believe me."

"Perhaps you were asleep and didn't know what you were doing," said the king.

The duke was very angry now. "Do you think that I'm a fool? Do you think that I don't know who hid that bag of money?"

"Of course you know who hid it," shouted the king. "You hid it yourself."

"That's a lie!" And the duke jumped at him and tightened his hands around the king's throat.

"Take your hands off my throat!"

"Tell the truth. Admit that you hid the money and had planned

to return later to dig it up. You planned to keep the complete 6,000 dollars and not share it with me.”

“I can’t believe what I’m hearing! Tell the truth, duke. Say that you honestly did not hide the money and I’ll believe you. And I promise that I’ll never again accuse you of stealing it.”

“You know perfectly well that I didn’t take the money.”

“I believe you, duke. But I want to ask one question—and don’t get angry with me. Did you ever *think* about stealing the money and hiding it?”

“It doesn’t matter what I may have *thought* about doing. I did not actually steal the money and you did.”

“I won’t say that I never *thought* about taking the money because I did think about it. But you—I mean *somebody*—stole the money before I could take it.”

“You’re lying! You stole the money and you have to admit it.” Then the duke began to tighten his hands around the king’s throat. The king began to make strange sounds and his face turned bright red. With his last breath, the king said, “I admit it.”

The duke took his hands away from the king’s throat. “If you ever deny that again I’ll kill you. Don’t cry like a baby now. You’re the cause of our problems. I trusted you like you were my own father. Now they not only have Peter Wilks’s money returned to them, but they have our money also. We have almost no money now. Go to bed. I don’t want to hear you speak again tonight.”

The king went to bed and took a bottle of whiskey with him for comfort. The duke had his own bottle of whiskey, and soon they were both very drunk and asleep in each other’s arms.

Now that the king had admitted taking the bag of money, I didn’t have to worry that somehow it would be discovered that I had actually hidden the money. Once I was certain that they both were asleep, I told Jim everything that had happened.

## T h e   M e a n e s t   T r i c k o f   A l l

WE DARED NOT STOP AT ANY TOWN FOR DAYS AND DAYS; WE SIMPLY continued traveling down the river. We were in the Deep South now—a long distance from the town where Peter Wilks had lived—and the weather was hot. The duke and king felt that it was safe to begin to visit small towns along the river again.

In one small town, they gave a speech about the evils of drinking whiskey, but this didn't earn them enough money to buy a bottle of whiskey for themselves. In another small town, they organized a dancing school, but they knew little about dancing and soon the people forced them to leave the town. They tried many other tricks in many other small towns, but with little success. They simply weren't able to earn much money. Finally, they had spent the last of their money and had no more. They simply lay on the raft as we floated down the river, thinking and thinking and never saying a word. That was the first time that we had seen them in such low spirits and without hope.

After several days of this, Jim and I noticed a change in their manner. They would sit together in the small tent on the raft and talk

quietly for two and three hours at a time. We had no idea what they were talking about, but we were very uneasy. We feared that they were planning a new trick of some kind that would be even worse than those that they had played before. Jim and I promised each other that if we ever had the opportunity, we would escape from these two.

Early one morning, we hid the raft in a good, safe place about two miles below a small town named Pikesville. The king went ashore and told us to remain hidden while he went into town to see if there was a way we could earn some money and to learn if anyone had heard about us. He said that if he didn't return by noon, the duke and I would know that it was safe for us to follow him.

We remained on the raft and waited. The duke was angry and complained about everything that Jim and I did. Nothing we did could please him. I was happy when noon finally arrived and we could go to the village to find the king. The duke and I searched for him for quite a while before we found him very drunk in the back room of a store. Other drunks were laughing at him, which made the king very angry, but he was too drunk to do anything about this.

The duke was very angry with the king, and loudly told him so. He called the king an old fool, and the king called the duke names that were even worse. While they were arguing and shouting at each other, I saw my chance to escape and ran as fast as I could to the raft. I knew that this was the opportunity that Jim and I had been waiting for. I knew that if we left without them this time, it would be a long day before they would see Jim and me again.

I reached the raft filled with joy and shouted, "Cut the rope, Jim. We can escape. I ran away from the duke."

But all was quiet; no one answered and no one came out of the tent on the raft. Jim was gone! I shouted and shouted and shouted some more. I ran among the trees and searched everywhere for him. Jim was gone. Then I sat down and cried. I couldn't control my tears.

After a while, I stood up and began to walk toward the town. I met a boy on the road and asked him if he had seen a black man dressed in certain clothes (I described the clothes Jim had been wear-

ing when I last saw him).

He answered, "Yes, I saw him. He's at Silas Phelps's farm two miles from here. He's a runaway slave, and they've caught him. There's a two hundred dollar reward for him, and they'll keep him until they get the reward money."

"Who caught him?"

"An old man—a stranger—he sold his chance to collect the reward to Silas Phelps for only forty dollars. He says that he has to travel up the river and cannot wait to collect the two hundred dollars. Can you imagine not waiting for two hundred dollars?"

"I wonder why he was willing to sell his chance for the reward for only forty dollars. That's very cheap. Are you certain that the reward is lawful?"

"It is. I saw the printed notice myself. The notice describes the runaway slave exactly. And it tells the name of his owner in New Orleans."

I returned to the raft and sat in the tent to think. I couldn't decide what I should do. I thought and thought, but couldn't see how to solve this new problem. After all this long journey, and after all Jim and I had done for the duke and the king, I couldn't believe that they played such a mean trick on Jim. How could they have caused Jim to become a slave again—after his months of freedom—for forty dirty dollars!

I said to myself that it would be a thousand times better for Jim to return to Miss Watson, so I decided to write a letter to Tom Sawyer asking him to tell Miss Watson where she could find Jim. But then I thought about this a second time. I knew that Jim would be hated for having run away and he would probably be sold down the river to New Orleans anyway. Also, when my old friends discovered that I helped Jim escape, I wouldn't be able to feel comfortable around them anymore.

So many thoughts were in my mind at the same time that I couldn't decide what to do. I tried to pray, but I couldn't find the right words to use. I knew that the correct thing to do would be to return Jim to Miss Watson and I knew that I should pray for help to do this. But I also knew deep down inside of me that I would never be able to



do this to Jim, and I knew that God knew I wouldn't be able to do this. A person can't pray a lie—I learned that.

I felt so troubled and didn't know what I should do. Then I had an idea. Perhaps if I wrote a letter to Miss Watson, I would feel better and my troubles would be gone. I got a piece of paper and a pencil and wrote:

Miss Watson:

Your runaway slave Jim is two miles below Pikesville on the Mississippi River. Mr. Silas Phelps has him and will return him to you for a two hundred dollar reward.

Huck Finn

Suddenly, I felt good, as though I had been washed clean. Then I began to think about the trip Jim and I had taken down the river. I could see Jim in my mind—Jim in the day and in the night, Jim in the moonlight and Jim in a storm. Sometimes we were talking or singing or laughing. All I could remember were the good things Jim had done for me and how he had said that I was the best friend that he had in the world. And then I thought again of the letter that I had just written, and my hands began to shake. I knew that I had to decide forever between two things. I thought for a moment, almost without breathing, and then said to myself, “I don't care if I go to hell”—and tore the letter into many pieces.

Those were awful thoughts and awful words, but they were said. I knew that I wouldn't change my mind again. I knew that I had to begin to work on a plan for stealing Jim out of slavery. I decided to sleep on the raft. The next morning, after breakfast, I put on my best clothes, got into the canoe, and rowed to the shore. I hid the canoe and began to search for the Phelps farm.

I walked along a road and soon passed a mill with a sign on it that said, “Phelps's Sawmill.” When I came to a farmhouse near the mill, I could see no one in the yard or around the house. I didn't want to see anyone yet—I simply wanted to see what the farmhouse looked like and exactly where it was.

I returned to the road and started to walk to the town. The first

person that I met was the duke. He was nailing printed signs onto trees along the road. The signs told about a show that he and the king were going to put on. It was going to be the same show in which the king was painted in bright colors and danced completely naked. Those fools were going to try that old trick again.

The duke was very surprised to see me and said, "Hello! Where did you come from? Where's the raft? Have you hidden it well?"

"That's what I planned to ask you."

"Why would you ask me?" said the duke, slowly.

"Well, yesterday when I saw the king so drunk, I said to myself that we wouldn't be leaving for many hours. So I offered to help a man in the town with his sheep and that took most of the day. When it was getting dark, I returned to the raft and found that it was gone. I said to myself that you and the king must have gotten into trouble and had to leave quickly, taking my slave Jim with you. I slept in the forest last night. What did happen to the raft?—and Jim—where's Jim?"

"I don't know what happened to the raft. The king—old fool that he is—made a trade and got forty dollars and spent much of it on whiskey and lost the rest. When we returned to the raft last night, we found that it was gone. We thought that you had continued traveling down the river and simply left us here."

"I wouldn't leave Jim, would I? He was my slave and the only property that I own."

"We never thought of that. We had come to consider Jim *our* slave. Yes, we certainly thought that he was ours. We had plenty of trouble protecting him and hiding him."

Then he asked me for some money, and I gave him ten cents. I had a lot of money, but I told him that ten cents was all I had. I told him to buy food with the ten cents and to give me some because I hadn't eaten anything since the day before.

He then looked at me with fear in his eyes and said, "Do you think that Jim will tell people in this town about our play? We'll kill him if he does."

"How can he tell about the play? I thought that he ran away."

“No! The king—fool that he is—sold him. And he never gave me any of the money, and the money is gone.”

“Sold him?” I said, and began to cry. “He was my slave and the money should be mine. Where is he? I want my slave.”

“You can’t have your slave, so stop crying about him. Do you plan to tell the people in this town about us? If you were to tell—”

“I don’t plan to tell anything. I have no time for that. I need to find my Jim.”

The duke stood thinking for a while. At last he said, “We have to be here for three days to earn money on this show. If you promise not to tell the men of this town about us, I’ll tell you where to find Jim.”

I promised.

“A farmer by the name of Silas Ph—” and then he stopped.

He started to tell me the truth, but when he stopped and began to think about it, I knew that he was changing his mind. He wouldn’t trust me. He wanted to be certain that I wouldn’t be in this town during the three days of the show.

He began a second time to give me an answer. “The man who bought Jim is named Abram Foster and he lives forty miles down this road, near a town called Lafayette.”

“I can walk there in three days,” I said. “I’ll start this afternoon.”

“No, you won’t. You’ll begin *now*! Don’t waste any time and don’t talk to anyone along the road. Walk quickly and you won’t get into any trouble. Do you understand?”

I had no problem understanding him. Now I was free to work on my own plans.

“Start walking,” the duke said, angrily. “Tell Mr. Foster whatever you please. He may believe Jim is your slave even though you have no proof. Maybe he’ll believe that he was tricked into thinking that he was going to get a reward for Jim. Tell Mr. Foster anything—I don’t care. But don’t speak to anyone in this town.”

I began to walk along the country road for a mile or two. When I knew that the duke couldn’t see me anymore, I left the road and ran through the forest to the Phelps’s farm. I needed to talk to Jim. I

didn't want Jim telling anyone about the king and the duke. I wanted no further trouble from them. I was afraid of what they might do to us if we were to reveal the truth about them.

## H u c k C h a n g e s H i s N a m e

WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE PHELPS'S FARM, ALL WAS QUIET. THE BLACK slaves were working in the fields. I could hear the quiet sound made by bugs and flies; this made the farm seem so lonely. They raised cotton, and the farm looked like many other small farms that I had seen in the South. The farmhouse was large and made of logs. Behind the houses was a small building used for smoking meat. Behind this smokehouse were three small log cabins where the black slaves lived. Off by itself, near the back fence, stood a small log building. I didn't know what it was used for.

I walked toward the farmhouse, not certain what I would say to the people who lived in it. As I neared the house, a great number of dogs—perhaps fifteen—came running toward me, barking and jumping and showing their teeth. I stopped and faced toward them and stood very still. It was as though I were the center of a wheel with dogs in a circle all around me. A black slave woman came out of the house and shouted at the dogs, "Go away! All of you. Run off!" And she hit several of them with a stick.

Behind the black woman, a white woman came running from the house. “Is it you, finally?” she shouted.

“Yes,” I answered, without thinking.

She put her arms around me and kissed me, with tears in her eyes. “You don’t look as much like your mother as I expected, but I’m happy to see you anyway. How are you, Tom? Have you eaten breakfast? Did you eat on the boat?”

I said that I ate on the boat. She then led me to the house and asked me to sit down. “I’ve waited many years to see you, Tom. We expected you a few days ago. Why was your boat late?”

I said that the boat developed engine problems and we were delayed.

“Why don’t you call me Aunt Sally?” she asked. “Your Uncle Silas has gone into town to learn if you arrived. He’s been looking for you for two days now. He should return very soon. You must have passed him on the road.”

“No, I didn’t see anyone, Aunt Sally. The boat arrived at day-break, and I hid my traveling bags and decided to walk to your house.”

“I’m surprised that you were given breakfast on the boat that early in the morning. Usually they don’t serve breakfast until later. Are you certain that you ate?”

I began to fear that my lies would be discovered. I needed to find some children to question if I were to learn who I was supposed to be. Who had this woman been expecting?

Mrs. Phelps continued to talk in her rapid manner. I hardly listened to what she was saying. Suddenly, a great fear came over me as I heard her say, “Now I’ll stop talking for a while and give you a chance. I want to know everything about my sister and about all the others in your family—*everything*. How are they? What are they doing? What did they tell you to tell me? I’m ready to hear what *you* have to say.”

I didn’t know what to say. I simply had made no plans for this. I could think of nothing to say and began to feel sick. I opened my mouth to begin to tell the truth, when Mrs. Phelps suddenly pushed me under the bed.

“Here he comes,” she whispered. “Stay hidden under this bed. I don’t want him to see you. This will be a great joke.”

I could think of nothing to do but follow her instructions.

I could hear someone enter the house. Then Mrs. Phelps said, “Has he come?”

“No,” said her husband.

“What could possibly have happened to him?”

“I don’t know, but I’m beginning to feel a little frightened.”

“A *little* frightened? I’m *very* frightened. Could you have passed him on the road and not realized it?”

“Sally, that could not have happened. You know that.”

“What will my sister say? He should be here. I’m certain that you passed him on the road without realizing it.”

“I’m also worried about him. I have no idea where he could be. He should have been here several days ago. I’m afraid something has happened to his boat.”

“Silas, look! Up the road! I see someone coming.”

When Silas ran to the window to look out, Mrs. Phelps pulled on my legs and had me come out from under the bed. When he returned from the window, there she stood, smiling and smiling, while I simply looked uncomfortable.

The old man stared at me and asked, “Who’s that?”

“Who do you think it is?”

“I have no idea.”

“It’s Tom Sawyer.”

I nearly fainted. But I had no time to show my surprise. The old man took my hand and kept shaking it, while his wife danced around and laughed and cried. Then they asked a dozen questions about Sid and Mary and all the other Sawyers.

If they felt joyful, that was nothing to what I was feeling. I felt like I had been born again. I was so happy to discover who I was supposed to be. In the following two hours, I told them more about my family—I mean the Sawyer family—than ever happened to any six Sawyer families. And I told them my boat had developed engine prob-

lems and that it took three days before the engine was repaired.

I was feeling both very comfortable and very uncomfortable. It was easy to act like Tom Sawyer because I knew all about him and his family. But, then I heard the sounds of a large boat on the river. What will happen if Tom Sawyer is on that boat? What will happen if he walks into this house and calls out my name?

I simply could not allow that to happen. I had to meet him along the road and tell him of my problem. I told Mr. Phelps that I would go into town to get my traveling bags that I had hidden. He said that he would go with me, but I insisted that I could go alone. I told him that I had been trouble enough already.



## A S a d R o y a l E n d i n g

I TOOK A HORSE AND WAGON AND STARTED DOWN THE ROAD TO THE town. As I had expected, I soon saw Tom Sawyer riding in a wagon coming toward me.

He jumped with fear and surprise when he saw me. "I never did you any harm when you were alive, Huck. Why do you return from the dead to frighten me now?"

"I'm not a ghost. I never died."

When Tom heard my voice, he seemed less frightened. But he still was not quite ready to believe me.

"You're not playing a trick on me, are you? If I were dead, I'd never return to play a trick on you. I don't understand. I thought that you had been murdered."

"No, I wasn't murdered. I played a trick to make it *look* like I was murdered. If you touch me, you'll know that I'm not a ghost."

Tom touched my hand and that satisfied him. He was very happy to see me again. He wanted to know all about what I had been doing and all that had happened to me. He thought that I must have had a grand adventure. Tom loved a mystery more than anything in the world

and he loved a good story.

Tom asked the man who was driving him in the wagon to wait a few minutes, and he climbed into my wagon, and we drove off a short distance so that we could talk without being heard. I told him about Aunt Sally and how she thought that I was Tom Sawyer and asked his advice on how to manage this difficult situation.

Tom thought and thought and finally said, “I have a good plan. Take my bags with my clothes and put them in your wagon. Pretend that they are your clothes. I’ll return to the town and wait. Then I’ll come out to Aunt Sally’s house and time my visit so as to arrive thirty minutes after you. Pretend that you don’t know who I am.”

“Wait. I need to tell you one more fact—a fact that no one knows but me. There’s a black man that I’m trying to steal out of slavery. His name is Jim—old Miss Watson’s Jim.”

“What! But Jim is—”

I stopped him before he could finish. “I know what you’re thinking. You think that I shouldn’t be helping a runaway slave. I don’t care what you think. I plan to steal him and I need you to help. Will you?”

Tom looked very excited. “I certainly will help.”

I couldn’t believe what I had heard. I had always thought very highly of Tom and never dreamed that he would help a runaway slave. I never dreamed that he would be an **Abolitionist**.

“Are you joking, Tom?”

“No I’m not joking, Huck.”

“Remember, then, if you hear anyone talking about a runaway slave act as though you know nothing about him. I’ll also act as though I know nothing about Jim.”

Tom put his bags into my wagon and returned toward the town while I returned to the Phelps’s house.

About a half hour later, Tom’s wagon arrived at the Phelps’s house. Aunt Sally saw it through the window and said, “I wonder who that could be? He appears to be a stranger.”

Everyone ran toward the front door. Tom was on the front porch and watched the man turn his wagon around and return toward the

town. Tom was wearing his best clothes and I could sense that he was planning an act of some kind. He lifted his hat and bowed toward Silas Phelps and said, "Mr. Archibald Nichols, I assume."

"No," said Mr. Phelps, "I'm sorry that your driver brought you to the wrong house. Mr. Nichols lives three miles from here. But come into the house."

Tom looked down the road. "It's too late to call my driver. He's gone."

"Yes, he's gone. But please come inside and eat your dinner with us. Then I'll drive you to the Nichols's farm."

"Please come in," said Aunt Sally. "We've already put an extra plate on the table. There's plenty of food."

Tom thanked them in a grand fashion and came into the house. He told them that his name was William Thompson and that he was from Hicksville, Ohio. He told them many stories about Hicksville and his family there. Suddenly, he leaned toward Aunt Sally and kissed her on her mouth.

She jumped up in surprise, wiped her mouth, and shouted, "How dare you!"

He looked sad and said, "I'm surprised that you did not like my kiss. I expected you to want me to kiss you."

"What made you think that I would like it, you fool?" And she picked up a wooden spoon and I was certain that she was going to hit him with it.

"But they told me that you would want me to kiss you."

"Who told you? Tell me their names before I hit you with this spoon."

"I'm sorry that I kissed you. But everyone said that you would like a kiss. I won't kiss you again, though, until you ask me to."

"Until I ask you! What makes you think that I'll ever ask you?"

Then he turned to me and said, "Tom, was I wrong to expect Aunt Sally to open her arms and say to me, 'Sid Sawyer—' "

Hearing those words, Aunt Sally jumped up and said, "You bad boy. I had no idea." And she attempted to kiss him.

“No kisses. Not until you ask me first.”

She quickly asked his permission. “My sister Polly told me that only Tom would be coming. She never said that she would be sending you, also.”

“She never intended for both of us to come. I had to beg and beg her for permission, and only at the last minute did she allow me to come. While traveling on the boat, Tom and I thought that it would be a great joke for him to arrive at your house first, and for me to arrive later and act as though I were a stranger. But that was a mistake. This is not a good place for a stranger to come.”

“Not a place for strangers with bad manners. I’ve not been so upset by anyone in years as I was by your unexpected kiss. But I don’t mind. I’m so very happy to have you visit with us.”

We ate a large dinner—there was enough food on the table for seven families—and all the food was hot and tasty, the best food that I had ever eaten.

Later that afternoon, one of the Phelps children said, “Pa, can Tom and Sid and I go to the show?”

“No,” said Mr. Phelps. “There won’t be a show. The runaway slave told me how they had tricked men in other towns. I told Mr. Burton this, and he said that he would tell other men in town and I’m certain that they have caught those two men by now.”

I felt very sad when I heard this. I knew that I had to warn the king and duke. Tom and I said that we were tired and would go to bed early. As soon as we could, we climbed out of the bedroom window and jumped to the ground. We were soon walking quickly down the road to the town.

As we walked, Tom told me how my friends thought that I had been murdered, and how my Pap disappeared soon afterward and was never seen again. I told Tom about the king and the duke and about their foolish play. When we reached the town, we saw a crowd of people rushing down the street, shouting and screaming and making loud noises by hitting sticks against large pans. We jumped to the side of the road to allow them to pass, and as they moved past us, I could see the

duke and the king in the center of this angry crowd. They were covered with feathers and a sticky black substance called tar. They didn't look human. I felt sick to see them. I was sorry for them even though I knew how cruel they had been. It was awful to see them in this condition. Human beings can be very cruel to one another.

We were too late. I knew that we couldn't help them. We asked some people what had happened. They told us that everyone who had gone to the show had been told in advance about the trick the king and the duke would try to play. When the king was doing his little dance naked on the stage, someone gave a signal and all the men ran onto the stage and seized them.

We slowly returned to the Phelps's house. We were both feeling very sad after what we had seen. I was feeling guilty, for some reason, though I had done nothing wrong. It seemed to make little difference to me whether I did right or wrong; I always felt guilty. I wished that I could get rid of that part of me that was forever trying to decide what was right and what was wrong. It filled a big space inside of me, but was of little use to me.

## W e   F i n d   J i m

TOM AND I STOPPED TALKING AND STARTED TO THINK. AFTER A while, Tom said, “Huck, what fools we’ve been. I think that I know where Jim is.”

“Where?”

“In that small cabin down near the fence. When we were eating dinner, I saw a black slave walk down there with some bowls of food.”

“I thought that he was going to feed the dogs.”

“But he had fruit in one of the bowls, and dogs don’t eat fruit. I watched him unlock the door of the cabin as he went inside, and then he locked it again before he left. I’m certain that a man is being held prisoner inside, and that man must be Jim. We need to think of a plan for stealing him.”

“We can easily discover if Jim is inside. Then tomorrow night we can row my canoe to the island where I have my raft hidden. The first dark night, we can steal the key from Mr. Phelps’s trousers pocket after he has gone to sleep. We can unlock the cabin door and free Jim. Once we get him to the raft, we can travel south, hiding in the daytime and traveling only at night. Will this plan succeed?”

“Certainly it’ll succeed. But your plan is too simple. A good plan will require more work than that. We have to think of a plan that will give people something to talk about for years to come.”

Tom then told me his plan, and I could see that his was worth fifteen of mine. His plan had style and would make Jim just as free a man as my plan would and might get us killed besides. I was satisfied. I won’t tell his plan here because I knew that he would probably change it many times.

When we returned to the Phelps’s farm, we walked down to the small cabin by the fence. We found a small, square window on the back wall of the cabin. A thick board was nailed across the window.

“This window is large enough for Jim to get through if we take the board off,” I said. “That’s so simple. I hope that we can find a more difficult way to get Jim out. We’re in no hurry.”

Behind the cabin was another small building joined to it. We went into this small building and saw that it had no floor at all—it was simply built on the dirt ground.

“We can dig him out,” said Tom. “That should take us a week.”

We walked to the house and quietly and carefully returned to our bedroom. The next morning, we went down the cabins where the black slaves lived and talked to the man who carried the food to Jim—if it was Jim who was being held prisoner in that small cabin.

Tom said, “What are you going to do? Are you going to feed the dogs?”

The black slave smiled and said, “Yes, Master Sid, I’m feeding a dog. An unusual dog. Would you like to see the dog?”

“Yes.”

“But Tom,” I whispered, “that’s not part of our plan.”

“Well, it’s our plan now.”

When we entered the small cabin, we could see nothing at all; it was so dark inside. But Jim was there and he could see us. He shouted, “Huck! And Master Tom, too!”

I knew that this would happen. I expected it. Now what were we going to do?

“Does he know you two gentlemen?” asked the slave.

Tom looked at the black slave and asked, “Does *who* know us?”

“This runaway slave.”

“He’s never seen us before in his life. What caused you to think that he knew us?”

“But he called your names as if he knew you well.”

Tom shook his head as though he were puzzled. “*Who* called our names? *When* did he speak?” then he turned to me and said in a perfectly calm voice, “Did you hear anyone speak to us?”

There was only one answer I could give and so I said, “No, I heard no one speak to us.”

Then he turned to Jim, looking at him as though he had never seen him before in his life, and said, “Did you speak to us?”

“No, sir,” said Jim. “I said nothing, sir.”

“Not a word?”

“No, sir, not a word.”

“Have you ever seen us before in your life?”

“No, sir, never.”

At last, Tom turned to the black slave, who looked very unhappy and frightened. “What’s your problem? How can you hear voices when no one has spoken?”

“It must have been the devil. The devil is always troubling me. Please don’t tell anyone about this. Master Silas would be very angry if he learned that the devil was troubling me again.”

Tom gave him ten cents and said that he wouldn’t tell anyone. While the black slave stepped to the door to look at his ten cents, Tom whispered to Jim, “Don’t tell anyone that you know us. If you hear anyone digging around your cabin at night, that will be us. We’re going to set you free.”



## H e l p i n g J i m

AS SOON AS WE KNEW THAT EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP THAT NIGHT, TOM and I went down to the small building behind Jim's cabin. We closed the door and began our digging. Tom said that if we dug in a certain place, our hole would come up inside Jim's cabin directly under his bed. No one would be able to see the hole because the blankets on his bed would cover it up. We dug and dug for many hours until we were very tired. Our hands were covered with sores, but we had dug a large hole.

The next day, Tom stole a spoon and a candleholder from the house. He wanted to make pens for Jim out of these in the manner of people that he had read about in books. He wanted Jim to write messages using the pens and his own blood. Jim said that he would be willing to do this if it would make Tom happy.

That night, we returned to our digging. After two and a half hours the job was done. We lay down on our stomachs and pushed our way through the narrow hole and soon found we were under Jim's bed in his cabin. He was asleep but we awakened him. He was so happy to see us that he almost cried. He wanted us to help him escape immediately, but Tom explained to him how that would be too simple, that he had bet-

ter plans that would be like those he read about in books, and assured him that he would be free in a short while if he would just be patient. Jim agreed to follow Tom's plans, though he didn't understand them very well. Jim assured us that he was comfortable, that he was being given good food, and that Uncle Silas came to talk with him and pray with him every day.

Tom told Jim how he wanted him to write about his experiences using the pens he would make for him and in his own blood. Jim said that he didn't know how to write and didn't see much sense in doing it, but if that was what white folks did, he was willing to try.

In the morning, Tom got an ax and cut the candleholder into several pieces. He went to the slave cabins where Jim's food was being prepared and hid the piece of the candleholder inside of Jim's bread. Then we went with the black slave who took the food to Jim. When Jim bit into his bread, he nearly knocked out his teeth, but he acted as though nothing had happened. Tom was very pleased and thought that this was exactly how people acted in the books that he read.

While we were watching Jim eat his breakfast, several dogs came running into the cabin from under Jim's bed. They must have gotten into the small building behind the cabin and found the hole we had dug. Soon the cabin was filled with eleven barking dogs. The black slave screamed, "Devils!" and fell to the floor. He cried and acted like he was dying.

Tom opened the cabin door and threw out a piece of Jim's meat. The dogs ran outside to eat the meat. Then Tom talked to the black slave lying on the floor. He asked him what had frightened him and if he was imagining things again.

The black man answered, "Master Sid, you'll think that I'm a fool, but I do believe a million dogs or devils or something were here in this cabin a few minutes ago."

Tom shook his head slowly as though he had no idea what the black man was talking about.

## Tom Gets Company for Jim

MAKING THE PENS WAS A DIFFICULT JOB, BUT JIM SAID THAT WRITING about his experiences was going to be even more difficult. Tom said that he simply had to do the writing; all prisoners that Tom had read about in books always wrote about their experiences.

“I know that the writing is going to be difficult, but it must be done. I’ll write on paper what I want you to copy onto stone.”

“But, Tom, where are we going to get a large stone to write on?” I asked.

“There’s a large **grindstone** down by the mill. We’ll steal it and move it into Jim’s cabin. He can write on that.”

Tom took a large piece of paper and wrote these lines for Jim to copy:

1. Here a prisoner broke his heart.
2. Here a poor prisoner, without friends, spent his sorrowful life.
3. Here a lonely, tired prisoner died, after living alone for thirty-seven long years.
4. Here, homeless and friendless, after thirty-seven years of being

kept in this small cabin, a noble stranger died.

Tom read these lines to us with tears in his eyes. At first, he wanted me to choose only one of the lines for Jim to write on the grindstone. But, he thought they were all good and decided that Jim should write them all.

It was nearly midnight when Tom and I left Jim's cabin and walked to the mill. We stole the grindstone and began to roll it toward Jim's cabin. The grindstone was very large and heavy. Rolling it was very difficult because it kept falling over. The stone was so heavy that it was almost impossible for the two of us to lift it.

When we had rolled the grindstone half the way to Jim's cabin, we became so tired that we couldn't move it further. We knew that we had to get Jim to help us. We returned to his cabin and told Jim our problem. Jim's leg was chained to a log of the bed, but all we had to do was raise the bed and slip off the chain. With Jim's help, we had no problem getting the grindstone to the cabin.

Our hole was quite large, but not large enough to push the grindstone through. Jim got some tools and dug a larger hole and soon we had the grindstone inside. Tom marked on the stone some words for Jim to write. Jim began to work by the light of his candle and continued until the candle was completely burned out.

Then we slipped his chain around the bed leg again and told Jim that he could go to sleep.

Suddenly, Tom thought of something. "Do you have any bugs in here?"

"No, I don't."

"Then we have to get you some."

"But I don't want any bugs in here. I don't like bugs. I'm afraid of them. I would rather have a poisonous snake in here than bugs."

"That's a good idea. I'm sure that it's been done in some book. Where could you keep it?"

"Keep what, Tom?"

"A poisonous snake."

"A poisonous snake! If a snake came in here, I would break through

that door and leave in a hurry—even if I had to use my head to break through the door.”

“You wouldn’t be afraid of it after a while. If you treated the snake in a friendly manner, you’d begin to like it. The snake would begin to love you, too, and want to sleep with you.”

“Tom, I don’t want a snake to love me. What the snake will do is bite me.”

“Can’t you at least *try* to live with a poisonous snake? All I’m asking is for you to try.”

“But, I’ll die if the snake bites me. Then you won’t need to set me free.”

“If you refuse to cooperate, we’ll bring you a harmless snake. We’ll simply *imagine* that it’s poisonous.”

“I could manage with a harmless snake, but I would far rather have no snake at all. I never knew that it would be so difficult to be a prisoner.”

“It’s difficult when it’s done properly. Do you have any rats in here?”

“No, I haven’t seen any rats.”

“We’ll get you some rats, too.”

“But, Tom, I don’t want any rats. They might bite my toes and awaken me when I’m sleeping. You can put a harmless snake in here with me, but not rats.”

“But, Jim, you must have rats—all prisoners have rats with them. They teach the rats tricks and become very friendly with them. The rats will run over you and have a good time.”

“I know that the rats may have a good time, but what kind of time will poor Jim be having? I don’t know why rats are needed, but I’ll have them here if I must.”

Tom wanted to think of other things for Jim to do. “Could you raise a flower in here?”

“I don’t know. It’s very dark in here, and a plant needs sunlight. I don’t need a flower plant in here. It would be too much trouble.”

“We’ll bring you a small plant, and you can water it with your tears.”

“Why water it with my tears when I can pour water on it from my glass?”

“Prisoners have always watered their plants with their tears. That’s the way that you must do it.”

“The plant will die, Tom, because I don’t cry easily.”

Tom said that Jim would have to do the best that he could. Jim complained about all the work that he was being asked to do—he didn’t want to raise the plant; he didn’t want to play with rats; he didn’t want to sleep with a snake; he didn’t want bugs walking over him; and he didn’t want to write on the grindstone using his own blood with the pen made out of the candlestick. He said that being a prisoner required more responsibility and more work than anything that he had done before.

Tom almost lost patience with Jim. He said that Jim had the opportunity to be a famous prisoner, if only he did things correctly, that Jim should actually thank him for the good ideas that he came up with. Jim said that he was sorry and that he would try to be grateful to Tom for helping him do all the things a prisoner is supposed to do.

Tom and I left the cabin and returned to the house and our beds.

## F i n a l P r e p a r a t i o n s

IN THE MORNING, WE WALKED TO THE TOWN AND BOUGHT A SPECIAL box in which to catch rats. We took the box into the basement and put it next to the best rathole we knew of. Within an hour, we had caught fifteen large rats in the box. We hid the box under Aunt Sally's bed, and then we went to search for bugs.

One of Aunt Sally's small sons found the box and opened it to see if the rats would come out. They did.

Aunt Sally entered the room at that moment, jumped on top of her bed, and began screaming. Aunt Sally knew that we had put the rats in the box, and she punished us. It took us two hours to collect fifteen new rats, but they weren't as nice as the first ones.

We collected a splendid group of bugs and insects, and, last, we looked for some harmless snakes. They were easy to find, and we soon had two dozen snakes in a bag. This time, we hid the snakes in *our* room, but when we returned after we had eaten dinner, the bag was empty. Not even one snake was to be seen in the room. We knew that they had to be in the house somewhere, and we were certain that we could catch some of them again.

There was no lack of snakes around the house for many days. We could see them on the walls or hanging from the lamps. Some would fall onto the table while we were eating or fell down our backs. They were handsome snakes and quite harmless, but Aunt Sally could not see the beauty in them. She hated snakes; she did not care whether they were harmless or not. When a snake fell onto her neck, she would drop whatever she was doing and run screaming for help. And when she found one of them in her bed, she would jump out of bed and scream so loud that you would think the house was on fire. Even after all the snakes had been caught and taken out of the house and none had been seen for a week, Aunt Sally was still nervous. If she was sitting in her chair thinking and I came near her and touched her neck with a feather, she would jump out of her stockings.

We were punished each time Aunt Sally was frightened by one of the snakes. I didn't object to the punishment, but I did object to our having to catch a new group of snakes. We finally had all the snakes, rats, bugs, and other insects that we needed, and brought them to Jim's cabin. Jim complained that there was hardly space in the cabin for him to move around. He said that if he ever got out of that cabin, he wouldn't return to being a prisoner again even if we paid him.

By the end of three weeks, we had everything ready for Jim's escape. Tom said that the last thing that we had to do was to write a letter to the Phelpses warning them that Jim might escape.

I couldn't believe what he had said. "Why would we want to *warn* anyone? Let them discover that Jim is gone once we have escaped with him."

"We can't expect Aunt Sally and Uncle Silas to notice all the trouble that we've taken to do this correctly. Unless we warn them that someone plans to steal Jim, the escape will be too easy. All our work and trouble will be useless if no one notices."

The next night, Tom wrote the following letter, and we put it on Jim's cabin door:

Don't tell anyone what I have written here. I wish to be your friend. A group of criminals from the Indian Territory are planning to



steal your runaway slave tonight. I am one of this group, but I don't want to live with these criminals anymore. I wish to live an honest life, which is why I am telling you of this plan. They have a key to the slave's cabin, and will enter at midnight. I am to watch for danger, and if I see someone approaching they have asked me to blow on a small horn. Instead, I will make a sound like a sheep to let you know when they are all inside the cabin. Then you can quickly lock them inside and kill them all. I do not wish a reward; I simply want to feel that I have done the right thing.

An Unknown Friend

## A   S p l e n d i d   E s c a p e

TOM AND I SPENT THE ENTIRE DAY IN MY CANOE ON THE RIVER. WE checked the raft to be sure that it would be ready when we returned late that night with Jim.

We returned to the Phelps's house at suppertime, and found the whole family acting in a troubled manner. They didn't tell us what was worrying them, but they asked us to go to bed immediately after we finished eating.

Tom and I planned to climb out of our bedroom window and hurry to Jim's cabin just as soon as everyone had gone to bed. But Tom asked me to get some food to take with us. As I went down to the kitchen to steal some food, Aunt Sally saw me.

"What are you doing down here?"

"Nothing, Aunt Sally."

"You must be down here for something. What is it that you want?"

"I don't know."

"Go into the living room and wait for me. I want to ask you some questions. I'm busy at the moment, but I'll be free to speak to you soon.

I have this feeling that you're down here for no good reason and are going to cause trouble again."

I walked into the living room and found a crowd of fifteen farmers sitting in there. Each of them carried a gun! I felt sick to my stomach. I knew why they were there. I wished that Aunt Sally would punish me quickly, so that I could rush upstairs to warn Tom.

When Aunt Sally returned, she asked me some questions, but I had trouble listening to her. I was too busy listening to what the farmers were saying. Some said that they thought everyone should wait for the sheep signal. Others said that they wanted to get inside the cabin first and wait for the criminals. I nearly fainted.

Suddenly, Aunt Sally thought that I looked sick and told me to hurry upstairs to bed. I ran upstairs in a second and was soon out the window and running through the dark to Jim's cabin. Tom was already there, and I told him as quickly as I could about the fifteen men with guns waiting in the house.

Tom became very excited and said, "That's great. If I were to plan this again, I'm sure that I would have two hundred men. If we could put this off—"

"Hurry, Tom. Where's Jim?"

"He's standing next to you in the dark. Everything has been done, and we can now escape with him."

But then we heard the sound of men outside the cabin. We could hear them testing the door to see if it was locked.

"I told you that we would arrive too soon. They haven't come. The door's locked. I'll unlock it. Some of you wait inside in the dark. Kill them when they come. Others must hide outside and listen. They'll warn those inside when they hear the criminals approaching."

Some men came inside but couldn't see us in the dark. We quickly jumped under the bed, and quietly left through the hole that we had dug. Soon we were inside the small building next to the cabin, and we could hear men outside. We opened the door just a little, but could see nothing because it was very dark. We listened and listened for a long time, and then Tom said that it was safe for us to leave if we were very

quiet. We walked safely to the fence, and Jim and I were quickly over the fence, but Tom's trousers got caught on a fence board. The board broke when he pulled himself free.

"Who's there? Answer, or I'll shoot."

But we didn't answer. We simply ran. We heard men running and the bang! bang! bang! of their guns.

"They're running toward the river. Catch them. Don't let them escape. Let the dogs catch them."

We could hear their heavy shoes running after us. They couldn't hear us because we didn't wear shoes. The dogs ran past us and were not interested in us because they knew us; they were the Phelps's dogs that we played with all the time. The dogs ran on, searching for strangers.

We reached the canoe and soon rowed to our raft. When we finally got onto the raft, I said, "Jim, you're a free man. You won't be a slave ever again."

"That was a beautiful escape, Huck. It was planned beautifully and it was done beautifully. There's no one who could have thought of a plan that was more splendid than that one."

We were all happy to be on the raft, but no one was happier than Tom. He said that he was happy to finally get to sit down. He had been shot in the leg!

Suddenly, Jim and I didn't feel as happy as we had felt before. Tom's leg pained him very much, and we could see that it was bleeding. We tore off the duke's shirts into long strips and wrapped these around the leg to stop the blood. Tom didn't want us to worry about his leg and kept shouting for us to untie the raft and start down the river. But Jim and I talked quietly to each other about this new problem, and finally Jim said, "We'll not leave this place until you see a doctor, Tom. If you were the slave and I were the free man who had been shot in the leg, I know that you would do the same for me."

I knew that Jim was white on the inside, and I knew that he would say what he did. I told Tom that I was going to get a doctor, and though Tom objected, Jim and I insisted. I left in the canoe to get a doctor.

# The Doctor

THE DOCTOR WAS AN OLD MAN, A VERY NICE, KIND-LOOKING OLD man. I told him that my brother and I had been hunting on an island in the river and that he had dropped his gun, which accidentally shot him in the leg. I told him that we wanted him to go to the island to look at the leg, but that we didn't want our family to know of the accident. He acted as though he didn't quite believe my story, but he took a light and followed me to my canoe. When he saw the size of the canoe, he said that it was too small for the two of us and insisted on going alone.

I stayed on shore and soon fell asleep behind a pile of wood. When I awakened, the sun was high in the sky. I ran to the doctor's house to ask him about Tom, but his wife told me that he had gone away during the night and had not returned. I thought that must mean that Tom was very sick and I was determined to get to the raft. As I hurried toward the river, I suddenly met Uncle Silas.

He said, "Tom, where have you been all night? We were worried about you."

"Sid and I were hunting for that runaway slave."

“Where did you go? Your aunt has been very worried.”

“She need not have worried. We’re fine. We looked for the runaway all night. Sid is at the post office now hoping to hear news of him.”

Uncle Silas and I walked to the post office to find Sid, but, as I suspected, he was not there. We waited, but Sid didn’t come. The old man insisted that I walk home with him and said that Sid could follow later.

When we got home, Aunt Sally was very happy to see me. The house was filled with farmers eating dinner and talking about what had happened the night before. They kept discussing how the black slave must have been crazy to have written those strange words on the grindstone.

“And how did he get that grindstone inside the cabin?”

“And who dug that hole?”

“He couldn’t have done any of those things without help.”

“Did you see the pen made from the candleholder?”

“Who sawed off the leg of his bed?”

“A dozen men must have helped him—no, forty men—a dozen couldn’t have done all that. All the black slaves on this farm must have helped him. And Sid and Tom were watching all the time, and never saw anything happening.”

Later that afternoon, when all the farmers and their wives had gone home, Aunt Sally finally remembered about me and wanted to know where I had been. “And where’s Sid?”

I told her the same lie that I had told Uncle Silas, about how Sid and I had looked for the runaway slave.

“It’s nearly night, and Sid hasn’t come home. Where is that boy?”

“I’ll run into town to get him,” I said.

“No, you won’t. One boy lost is enough. Uncle Silas will go to look for him.”

When Uncle Silas returned at ten o’clock that night, he had not found Sid. He told Aunt Sally not to worry, that Sid would surely be home in the morning.

I went to bed early, but Aunt Sally came upstairs to my room and sat on my bed. She talked to me for a long time and said what a splen-

did boy I was and what a splendid boy Sid was. She didn't want to stop talking about Sid. She was sure that he was lying hurt somewhere or maybe even dead. She wanted to be near him to help. She cried softly as she talked, with tears on her face. She kissed me and told me to sleep well and not to climb out the window.

"The door won't be locked, Tom, but you'll be good and stay inside, won't you? To please me."

I wanted to please her very badly, but I knew that I had to see what was happening with Tom. I really intended to go to Tom, but I felt so sad about Aunt Sally that I just could not disappoint her. Twice during the night I climbed out my window and went around to the front of the house and saw Aunt Sally sitting at a window watching the road. I wished that I could do something to help her, but I could not. All I could do was to promise myself that I would not make her unhappy again.

## T o m   T e l l s   t h e   T r u t h

UNCLE SILAS WENT TO TOWN EARLY THE NEXT MORNING—BEFORE breakfast. No one had seen Tom. Silas returned to the house very sad and worried. He and Aunt Sally sat at the table unable to eat anything.

Finally, Silas said, “Here’s a letter that came yesterday. I forgot to give it to you.”

Aunt Sally looked at the letter. “It’s from my sister Polly. She must be writing to ask about Sid and Tom.”

I began to feel very uncomfortable and was prepared to run from the room, when Aunt Sally shouted, “Look! Outside there!”

The doctor was walking down the road, followed by a crowd of people. Someone was carrying Tom, and Jim was being led with his hands tied behind his back.

Tom turned to look at Aunt Sally, and she cried, “He’s alive! Thank God!” Then she ran to the house to get his bed prepared.

I followed the men to see what they were planning to do with Jim, while Uncle Silas and the doctor went into the house with Tom.

Some men wanted to hang Jim as an example to other slaves who might try to run away. But others said that it would not be right. If Jim’s



owner were to come to claim him, there might be problems if he were dead.

They returned Jim to his cabin again and put a chain around his leg. Jim never said a word and acted as though he didn't know me.

Later, the doctor came out to the cabin and told the men not to be rough with Jim. "He's a good man. When I found the boy, he was too sick to move and I knew that I needed help to care for his leg properly. As soon as I told the boy that I was going to need help, this black man came out from a hiding place and said that he would help me. And he did help and did a very good job of helping. I never knew a person who was a better nurse than he. He lost his freedom by helping. I like that black man. He's worth a thousand dollars and deserves kind treatment."

The men promised to treat Jim kindly and all agreed that he was a good person. I felt thankful to that old doctor for doing a favor for Jim. I was happy that the doctor agreed with my feelings about Jim—from the first moment that I met Jim, I knew that he had a good heart and was a good man.

I knew that I had much to explain to Aunt Sally and didn't know what I should tell her about how Tom was shot in the leg. I avoided her as much as I could, but that was easy to do since she spent all her time at Tom's bedside.

The next day, I was told that Tom was a little better and that Aunt Sally had finally gone to her own room to sleep. I went in to speak to Tom, but I found him sleeping peacefully. I watched Tom sleep for a long time, but was afraid to awaken him. Later that day, Aunt Sally came in to sit with me. She whispered how we could all be happy now that the worst part of Tom's illness had ended. He had been talking in a crazy manner when the doctor first brought him home, but she was certain that his mind would be clear when he awakened.

We sat by the bed watching Tom sleep. Suddenly, he began to move a little and then he opened his eyes. He looked around the room and said, "Hello! I'm at home! Where's the raft?"

"Everything's fine," I assured him.

“How’s Jim?”

“The same.” I tried to sound like I was telling the truth, but my voice didn’t sound natural. Tom didn’t notice.

“Good! Splendid! We’re all safe. Did you tell Aunt Sally?”

I wanted to quiet Tom, but I was too late.

Aunt Sally spoke. “Tell Aunt Sally what, Sid?”

“About the way the whole thing was done.”

“What whole thing, Sid?”

“There’s only one whole thing. Did he tell you how we helped the runaway slave escape?”

“What’s he talking about? Is he talking crazy again?”

“No, I’m not talking crazy. I know what I’m saying. We did help the slave escape, and we did it in a grand manner.”

Once Tom started talking, I knew I couldn’t make him stop. He told Aunt Sally everything—about the weeks and weeks we spent planning and working, how we never slept at night, how we moved the grindstone and made the pens, about the snakes and the bugs and the rats. And finished by saying, “You can’t imagine what fun we had.”

“I never heard such a story in all my life. I can’t believe that it was you two who have made all the trouble for us and frightened us nearly to death. You get all the enjoyment you can out of this now, but if I find you helping him again—”

“Helping who?” Tom asked.

“The runaway slave. Certainly you know who I mean.”

Tom looked at me sadly and said, “I thought that you told me everything was fine. Is he on the raft?”

“The runaway slave? No, he’s locked in that cabin again,” said Aunt Sally. “We’ll keep him until his owner comes to get him.”

“You have no right to keep him a prisoner. Let him go free immediately. He’s no slave; he’s as free as any man who walks on this earth.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean every word that I have spoken, Aunt Sally. I have known him all my life and so has Tom. He belonged to old Miss Watson, and she died two months ago. She felt such great shame when she remem-

bered how she had threatened to sell him down to New Orleans that she left a letter setting him free.”

“Then why did you go through all that trouble to set him free if he was already free?”

“Don’t you understand anything, Aunt Sally? I wanted the *adventure*, that’s why. I would have been happy—why, Aunt Polly! What are *you* doing here?”

Aunt Polly was standing there, right in the room. I could not believe my eyes. Quickly, I hid under Tom’s bed.

After Aunt Polly had kissed Aunt Sally several times, she turned toward the bed and said, “What do you have to say about all this, Tom?”

“Oh! Has he changed that much? That’s Sid, not Tom. Tom is—where is Tom? He was here a minute ago.”

“You mean, where’s Huck Finn? I should be able to recognize Tom Sawyer when I see him. Come out from under the bed, Huck Finn.”

So I came out.

Aunt Sally couldn’t understand what was happening. She had to be told several times before she would believe Aunt Polly. Then Uncle Silas had to be told and he, too, had trouble understanding it all. I said that I had not planned to act as though I were Tom, but that when Aunt Sally assumed that’s who I was the very first day that she met me, I could never figure out how to tell her the truth. And when Tom Sawyer arrived, I knew that he would love the mystery and adventure, and he was happy to act as though he were Sid.

Aunt Polly said that Tom was correct; Miss Watson had set Jim free before she died. And that Tom Sawyer had gone through all that trouble and all that pain to set a free slave free!

I had wondered how Tom, good citizen that he was, could have helped a runaway slave, but now I understood. Tom was not an Abolitionist.

Aunt Polly said that when Aunt Sally wrote to her that Tom and Sid had arrived safely, she knew that something was wrong. “The only

way that I could discover the trouble Tom was in this time was to travel the 1,100 miles down the river—especially since you didn’t answer my letters.”

“What letters? I didn’t get any letters from you.”

“Tom, what did you do with those letters?”

Tom looked very uncomfortable and said, “They’re in my bag. I didn’t open them and haven’t read any of them. I thought that you were in no hurry—”

“Tom Sawyer, you need to be punished. But I wrote a third letter saying that I was coming. The letter is not here in Tom’s bag.”

“Oh, it came yesterday, but I never read it.”

## F r e e a t L a s t

WE HAD JIM OUT OF THE CHAINS AND OUT OF THAT CABIN IMMEDIATELY. Aunt Polly, Aunt Sally, and Uncle Silas were good to him and invited him to visit Tom in his bedroom and gave him good food to eat. Tom gave Jim forty dollars for being such a good prisoner.

Jim was very pleased and said, "Huck, I told you when we began our trip that I was rich before and would be rich again. Now that has come true."

Tom talked and talked and said that the three of us should now buy horses and travel to the Indian Territory and live a life of much adventure for a few weeks. I said that would be fine, but I had no money. I said that I was sure that I couldn't get money from Judge Thatcher because Pap must have all the money by now.

Tom said, "Your Pap doesn't have your money, Huck. Judge Thatcher still has all of it. Your Pap hasn't been seen since the day you disappeared."

Jim looked at me sadly and said, "He's never returning, Huck."

"How do you know, Jim?"

"Do you remember that house we found floating on the river?"

There was a dead man in that house. I looked carefully at his face, and the man was your Pap.”

Tom’s feeling well now, and there’s nothing more to write about, and I’m happy to stop. If I had known what trouble it was to make a book, I would not have begun the job. I may leave for the Indian Territory without waiting for Tom and Jim because Aunt Sally wants to make me her son and raise me in a proper manner, and I cannot endure that. I’ve been there before.

## GLOSSARY

*(Meanings explained here are only for the use of the words in this book.)*

- Abolitionist:** a person who was in favor of ending slavery in America in the 19th century
- actor:** one who performs in a play
- adventure:** an exciting experience, often requiring much daring
- arrow:** a mark or sign shaped like a line with a pointing “V” at the end
- cabin:** a small house, often made of logs cut from trees
- candle:** a stick made of wax, with a string through its center, which gives light when burned
- canoe:** a small boat, light in weight
- cave:** a deep hole in a hill or mountain
- drown:** to die by remaining under water
- drunk:** state of losing control of one’s actions because of drinking too much alcohol
- duke:** a high-ranking noble
- fog:** a thick cloud of small drops of water near the ground that causes difficulty in seeing
- ghost:** the non-physical part of a dead person, a spirit imagined as wandering among living persons in the form of a pale shadow
- grindstone:** a large, round, flat stone used for sharpening tools
- Pap:** a familiar term for father
- raft:** a long, flat boat made of logs and boards
- rat:** a small animal with a long, thin tail and sharp teeth
- servant:** a person employed to do housework in the home of another
- snake:** an animal with a long, thin body and no legs
- sneer:** to speak in a critical way
- tannery:** a place where hides are made into leather
- tattoo:** to mark the skin with pictures and words by using special needles and special inks
- whiskey:** a strong alcoholic drink

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