Huckleberry Finn

by Mark Twain

Easy English words by Dave McKay

About the Book and the Writer

Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens. He was born into a rich family in 1835, and he died 75 years later. His family owned many slaves.

He grew up on the Mississippi River, and went to work as a printer when he was 16. In his early 20s he started working on riverboats on the Mississippi. In 1861, when he was 26 years old, he joined the army from the South in the war between the States, but the men in his group ran away from the war because they did not believe in it.

He moved to Nevada with his brother, to look for silver, but two years later he started writing, at the age of 28. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, printed in 1876, when he was 41, was, at the time, believed to be his best book.

He hired people to sell his books from door to door and made a lot of money; but he also wasted it. In 1884, when he was 49 years old, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn was printed. It was much longer, and more serious than the earlier book. In this book Twain tries to get people to see the evils of slavery in an entertaining way.

Sadly, today there is much anger at his use of the word "nigger" in the book, because it has now become a very bad word. At a time when most great writers were using perfect English, Mark Twain chose to use the language of the people. This book is full of bad English, but it is the way that real people talked in real life in those days and in that part of the world.

Chapter 1

You don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of Tom Sawyer; but don’t worry none about that. That other book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mostly. There was things which he put on a little, but mostly he told the truth. And putting on is nothing. I never seen anyone but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary.

Mary, Aunt Polly -- Tom’s Aunt Polly, that is -- and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some putting on, as I said before.

Now the way that the book finishes up is this: Tom and me found the money that the robbers was hiding in the cave, and it made us rich. We got six thousand dollars each -- all gold. It was an awful mountain of money when it was all there in front of us. Well, Judge Thatcher he took it and put it out at interest, and it give us a dollar a day each all the year round -- more than a body could tell what to do with. The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and believed she would make me straight; but it was rough living in the house all the time, seeing as how boringly straight and good the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't take it no longer I took off. I got into my old clothes and took up sleeping in my old sugar barrel again, and was free and happy.

But Tom Sawyer he looked me up and said he was going to start up a gang of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be straight for a time. So I went back, and that's where this story starts.

The widow she cried over me when I come back, and called me a poor lost lamb, and she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant to hurt me by it. She put me in them new clothes again, and I couldn't do nothing but feel hot and scratchy and all tied up. Well, then, the old troubles started again.

The widow would ring a bell for meals, and you had to come to time. When you got to the table you couldn't go right to eating, but you had to wait for the widow to bend down her head and whisper a little over the food, when there weren't really anything wrong with it, -- that is, nothing only that everything was cooked by itself. It's different when it's cooked in a barrel of this and that all together; things get mixed up, and the juice kind of moves around it all, and the things go down better.

After eating she got out her book and taught me about Moses and the Bulrushes, and I was in a hurry to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a very long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no interest in dead people.

When I wanted to smoke, I asked the widow to let me, but she wouldn't. She said it was a low act and wasn't clean, and I must try to not do it any more. That is just the way with some people. They get down on a thing when they don't know nothing about it. Here she was a-worrying about Moses, who was no family to her, and no use to anyone, being gone, you see, yet finding a lot of wrong with me for doing a thing that had some good in it. And she took tobacco herself too (breathed it up her nose, she did); but that was all right, because she done it.

Her sister, Miss Watson, a thin old woman with glasses, and no husband, had just come to live with her, and got herself worked up trying to teach me good English. She worked me hard for about an hour, and then the widow made her back off. I couldn't of stood it much longer. Then for an hour it was nothing... just boring, and I was having trouble just sitting still.

Miss Watson would say, "Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry;" and

“Don’t squeeze up like that, Huckleberry -- sit up straight;” and a minute later she would say, “Don’t open your arms and put your legs out like that, Huckleberry -- why don’t you try to be good?”

Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got angry then, but I didn’t mean no trouble. All I wanted was to go somewhere; all I wanted was a change, I wasn’t big on where it had to be. She said it was evil to say what I said; said she wouldn’t say it for the whole world; she was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn’t see no help in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn’t try for it. But I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn’t do no good.

Now she had got a start, and she went on and told me all about the good place. She said all a body would have to do there was to go around all day long with a harp and sing, forever and ever. So I didn’t think much of it, but I never said so. I asked her if she thought Tom Sawyer would go there, and she said not by a long way. I was glad about that, because I wanted him and me to be together.

Miss Watson

Miss Watson she never let up that night, and it got very hard to put up with it all. By and by they asked the slaves to come in and had prayers, and then everyone was off to bed. I went up to my room with a piece of candle, and put it on the table. Then I sat down in a chair by the window and tried to think of something to make me happy, but it weren't no use. I felt so much alone I almost wished I was dead. The stars were out, and the leaves moving in the trees sounded ever so sad; and I heard an owl, away off, who-whooing about someone that was dead, and a dog crying about someone that was going to die; and the wind was trying to whisper something to me, and I couldn't make out what it was, and so it made the cold shakes run over me. Then away out in the trees I heard that kind of a sound that a ghost makes when it wants to tell about something that's on its mind and can't make itself understood, and so it can't rest easy in the ground, and has to go about that way every night feeling sad.

I got so low and scared I did wish I had some company. Soon a spider went walking up my shoulder, and I hit it off and it landed in the candle; and before I

could move an inch it was all burned up. I didn't need anyone to tell me that that was an awful bad sign and would bring me some bad luck, so I was scared and was almost shaking the clothes off of me. I got up and turned around on the spot three times and crossed my chest every time; and then I tied up a little piece of my hair with a thread to keep witches away. But I hadn't no confidence. You can do that when you've lost a horseshoe that you've found, instead of nailing it up over the door, but I hadn't never heard anyone say it was any way to keep off bad luck when you'd killed a spider.

I sat down again, a-shaking all over, and got out my pipe for a smoke; for the house was all as quiet as death now, so the widow wouldn't know. Well, after a long time I heard the clock away off in the town go boom -- boom -- boom -- twelve hits; and all quiet again -- quieter than ever. Pretty soon I heard a little branch break down in the dark between the trees -- something was a moving. I sat quiet and listened. I could only just hear a "me-yow! me-yow!" down there. That was good!

Says I,"me-yow! me-yow!" as soft as I could, and then I put out the light and climbed out of the window onto the roof of the tool room. Then I jumped down to the ground and moved on my hands and knees into the trees, and, sure enough, there was Tom Sawyer waiting for me.

"I climbed out the window."

Chapter 2

We went walking on our toes on our way through the trees back toward the end of the widow's garden, bending down so as the branches wouldn't hit our heads.

"Walking on our toes."

When we was passing by the kitchen I fell over a root and made a noise. We dropped down and laid still.

Miss Watson's big slave, named Jim, was sitting in the kitchen door; we could see him pretty clear, because there was a light behind him.

He got up and put his neck out about a minute, listening.
Then he says: "Who dere?"

He listened some more; then he come walking quietly down and stood right between us; we could a touched him, nearly. Well, likely it was minutes and minutes that there weren't a sound, and us all there so close together. There was a place on my ankle that needed to be scratched; and then my ear started to feel the same; and next my back, right between my shoulders. Seemed like I'd die if I couldn't scratch. Well, I've seen that same thing happen lots of times since. If you are with high quality people, or at a funeral, or trying to go to sleep when you aren't sleepy -- if you are anywhere where it won't do for you to scratch, why you will feel like scratching all over in close to a thousand places.

Pretty soon Jim says:
"Say, who is you? Where is you? Dog my cats if I didn't hear sumfin. Well, I know what I's gwyne to do: I's gwyne to sit down here and listen until I hears it again."

So he sat down on the ground between me and Tom. He leaned his back up against a tree, and put his legs out until one of them almost touched one of mine. My nose started to feel like scratching. It went on until the tears come into my eyes. But I didn't scratch. Then it started on the inside of my ear. Next I got to feeling the same way under my bottom. I didn't know how I was going to keep from moving. This pain went on as much as six or seven minutes; but it seemed a lot longer than that. I was feeling it in eleven different places now. I thought I couldn't stand it more than a minute longer, but I set my teeth hard and got ready to try. Just then Jim started to breathe heavy; next he started to snore -- and then I was pretty soon comfortable again.

Tom he made a sign to me -- kind of a little noise with his mouth -- and we went quietly away on our hands and knees. When we was ten foot off Tom whispered to me, and wanted to tie Jim to the tree for fun. But I said no; he might wake and make a noise, and then they'd find out I wasn't in. Then Tom said he hadn't got candles enough, and he would go secretly in the kitchen and get some more. I didn't want him to try.
I said Jim might wake up and come. But Tom wanted to try; so we went in there real quiet like and got three candles, and Tom put five cents on the table to pay for it. Then we got out, and I was in a hurry to get away; but nothing would make Tom happy if he couldn't go up secretly to where Jim was, on his hands and knees, and play a trick on him. I waited, and it seemed a good while, everything was so dark and quiet.

As soon as Tom was back we cut along the footpath, around the garden fence, and by and by finished up on the steep top of the hill the other side of the house. Tom said he took Jim's hat off of his head and hanged it on a

branch right over him, and Jim moved a little, but he didn't wake. The next day Jim said the witches took hold of him and controlled his mind so that they could ride him all over the towns around there, and then put him back under the trees again, and hanged his hat on a branch to show who done it. And next time Jim told it he said they forced him to carry them down to New Orleans; and, after that, every time he told it he put on more and more, until by and by he said they were riding him all over the world, and tired him most to death, and his back was all over saddle-sores. Jim was powerful proud about it, and he got so he wouldn't so much as look at the other slaves. Black people would come miles to hear Jim tell about it, and he was more looked up to than any black man in that country. Slaves who never knew him would stand with their mouths open and look him all over, same as if he was a miracle. Slaves is always talking about witches in the dark by the kitchen fire; but whenever one was talking and letting on to know all about such things, Jim would happen in and say, "Hmm! What you know about witches?" and that slave was stopped up and had to take a back seat.

"What you know about witches?"

Jim always kept that five-cent piece round his neck with a string, and said it was magic the devil give to him with his own hands, and told him he could heal anyone with it and bring in witches whenever he wanted to just by saying something to it; but he never told what it was he said to it. Black people would

come from all around there and give Jim anything they had, just for a look at that five-cent piece; but they wouldn't touch it, because the devil had had his hands on it. Jim was not much good for a servant after that. He got a big head all because of having seen the devil and having witches ride on him.

Well, when Tom and me got to the top of the hill we looked away down into the village and could see three or four lights showing, where there was sick people maybe; and the stars over us was looking ever so nice; and down by the village was the river, a whole mile across, and awful quiet and powerful. We went down the hill and found Jo Harper and Ben Rogers, and two or three more of the boys hiding in the old leather works. So we cut loose a flat bottomed boat and pulled down the river two mile and a half, to the big cutting on the side of the hill, and pulled up on the beach.

We went to a big group of bushes growing close together, and Tom made everybody swear to keep it secret, before he showed them a hole in the hill, right behind the thickest part of the bushes. We put a match to the candles, and went in on our hands and knees. We went like this for about two hundred yards, and then the cave opened up. Tom went around from opening to opening, and pretty soon went down under a wall where you wouldn't a seen that there was a hole. We followed him there, along a narrow place, and got into a kind of room, all wet and cold, and there we stopped. Tom says: "Now, we'll start this gang of robbers and call it Tom Sawyer's Gang. Everybody that wants to join has got to make a holy promise, and write his name in blood."

Everybody was willing. So Tom got out a piece of paper that he had wrote the promise on, and read it. It said every boy would promise to stick to the gang, and never tell any of the secrets; and if anyone done anything to any boy in the gang, any boy who was told to kill that person and his family must do it, and he mustn't eat and he mustn't sleep until he had killed them and cut a cross on their chest, which was the sign of the gang. And nobody that didn't belong to the gang could use that mark, and if he did he must be taken to court; and if he done it again he must be killed. And if anyone that belonged to the gang told the secrets, he must have his throat cut, and then have his dead body burned up and the ashes thrown all around, and his name taken off of the list with blood and never said again by the gang, but have a curse put on it forever.

Everybody said it was a real beautiful promise, and asked Tom if he got it out of his own head. He said, some of it, but other parts was out of pirate-books and robber-books, and every gang that was high quality had it.

Some thought it would be good to kill the families of boys that told the secrets. Tom said it was a good one, so he took a pencil and wrote it in. Then Ben Rogers says:

“Here’s Huck Finn, he ain’t got no family; what you going to do about him?”
“Well, ain’t he got a father?” says Tom Sawyer.

“Yes, he’s got a father, but you can’t never find him these days. He used to lie drunk with the pigs in the leather yard, but he ain’t been seen in these parts for a year or more.”

They talked it over, and they was going to rule me out, because they said every boy must have a family or someone to kill, or else it wouldn’t be fair and square for the others. Well, nobody could think of anything to do, and they sat there saying nothing. I was almost ready to cry; but all at once I thought of a way, and so I said they could have Miss Watson -- they could kill her. Everybody said: “Oh, she’ll do. That’s perfect. Huck can come in.”

Then they all sticked a needle in their fingers to get blood to sign with, and I made my mark on the paper.

“Now,” says Ben Rogers, “what’s the line of business of this gang?”

“Nothing, only robbing and killing,” Tom says.

“But who are we going to rob? -- houses, or cows, or -- “

“No way! Robbing cows and such things ain’t robbing; it’s burglary,” says Tom Sawyer. “We ain’t burglars. That ain’t no kind of quality. We are true robbers.

We stop coaches on the road, with masks on, and kill the people and take their jewelry and money."

"Must we always kill the people?"

"Oh, for sure. It's best. Some people think different, but mostly it's believed to be best to kill them -- all but some that you bring to the cave here, and keep them until they're ransomed."

"Ransomed? What's that?"

"I don't know. But that's what they do. I've seen it in books; and so it's only right that's what we've got to do."

"But how can we do it if we don't know what it is?"

"Why, end it all, we've got to do it. Didn't I tell you it's in the books? Do you want to go to doing different from what's in the books, and get things all confused?"

"Oh, that's all very nice to say, Tom Sawyer, but how in the world are these people going to be ransomed if we don't know how to do it to them? -- that's the thing I want to get at. Now, what do you think it is?"

"Well, I don't know. But maybe if we keep them until they're ransomed, it means that we keep them until they're dead. "

"Now, that's more like it. That'll do. Why couldn't you a said that before? We'll keep them until they're ransomed to death; and a pain in the neck they'll be, too -- eating up everything, and always trying to get loose."

"How you talk, Ben Rogers. How can they get loose when there's one of us watching them, ready to shoot them down if they move an inch?"

"Watching them? Well, that's good. So someone's got to sit up all night and never get any sleep, just so as to watch them. I think that's foolishness. Why can't a body take a big strong club and ransom them to death as soon as they get here?"

"Because it ain't in the books so -- that's why. Now, Ben Rogers, do you want to do things right, or don't you? -- that's the question. Don't you think that the people that made the books knows what's the right thing to do? Do you think you can learn 'em anything? Not by a good way. No, sir, we'll just go on and ransom them in the right way."

"All right. I don't mind; but I say it's foolishness, anyway. Say, do we kill the women, too?"

"Well, Ben Rogers, if I was as stupid as you I wouldn't let on. Kill the women? No; nobody ever saw anything in the books like that. You bring them to the

cave, and you're always nice as pie to them; and by and by they fall in love with you, and never want to go home any more."

"Well, if that's the way, I'm agreed, but I don't put no hope in it. Pretty soon we'll have the cave so full up with women, and people waiting to be ransomed, that there won't be no place for the robbers. But go ahead, I ain't got nothing to say."

Little Tommy Barnes was asleep by then, and when they waked him up he was scared, and cried, and said he wanted to go home to his mama and didn't want to be a robber any more.

So they all made fun of him, and called him cry-baby, and that made him angry, and he said he would go straight and tell all the secrets. But Tom give him five cents to keep quiet, and said we would all go home and meet next week, and rob someone and kill some people.

Ben Rogers said he couldn't get out much, only Sundays, and so he wanted to start next Sunday; but all the boys said it would be very bad to do it on Sunday, and that ended the thing. They agreed to get together and fix a day as soon as they could, and then we chose Tom Sawyer first leader and Jo Harper second leader of the gang, and so we started home.

I climbed up the tool room and into my window just before day was breaking. My new clothes was all dirtied up, and I was dog-tired.

Chapter 3

I got a good going-over in the morning from old Miss Watson because of my clothes; but the widow she didn't say nothing, only cleaned off the mud and clay, and looked so sad that I thought I would try to be good for a while if I could.

"a good going over"

Then Miss Watson took me in a room and prayed, but nothing come of it. She told me to pray, and whatever I asked for I'd get. But it wasn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fish-line, but no hooks. It was no good to me without hooks. I tried praying for them three or four times, but one way or another I couldn't make it work. By and by, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said that was foolish. She never said why, and I couldn't make it out no way.

I sat down one time back in the trees, and had a long think about it. I says to myself, if a body can get anything they pray for, why don't Deacon Winn get back the money he lost on pigs? Why can't the widow get back her silver tobacco box that was robbed? Why can't Miss Watson fat up? No, says I, there ain't nothing in it. I went and told the widow about it, and she said the only thing a body could get by praying was "spiritual gifts." This was too much for me, but she told me the deeper mean- ing -- I must help other people, and do everything I could for them, and look out for them all the time, and never think about myself. Miss Watson had to be one of them, as I took it. I went out in the trees and turned it over in my mind a long time, but I couldn't see no point of it -- only for the other people; so at last I said I wouldn't worry about it no more, but just let it go.

Sometimes the widow would take me one side and talk about God giving

things in a way to make a body's mouth water; but maybe next day Miss Watson would take hold and knock it all down again. I judged I could see that there was two ways God could give things, and a poor boy would stand a much better show with the widow's way, but if Miss Watson got him there weren't no help for him any more. I thought it all out, and thought I would belong to the widow's God if he wanted me, but I couldn't make out how he was going to be any better off then than what he was before, seeing I was so kind of low-down and bad.

Pap hadn't been seen for more than a year, and that was okay by me; I didn't want to see him no more. He used to always hit into me when he wasn't drunk and could get his hands on me; but I used to take to running into the trees most of the time when he was around.

Well, about this time he was found in the river drowned, about twelve mile above town, so people said. They judged it was him, anyway; said this drowned man was just his size, and was in old dirty clothes, and had hair that was too long, which was all like pap; but they couldn't make nothing out of the face, because it had been in the water so long it wasn't much like a face at all. They said he was lying on his back in the water. They took him and buried him on the beach. But I wasn't comfortable, because I knowed mighty well that a drowned man don't lie in the water on his back, but on his face. So I knowed, then, that this wasn't pap, but a woman dressed up in a man's clothes. I judged the old man would turn up again by and by, but I wished he wouldn't.

We played robber now and then about a month, and then I quit. All the boys did. We hadn't robbed nobody, hadn't killed any people, but only just acted like we did. We used to jump out of the bushes and go running down on people driving pigs and women in wagons taking garden food to market, but we never took any of them. Tom Sawyer called the pigs "gold," and he called the vegetables "jewelry," and we would go to the cave and talk over what we had done, and how many people we had killed and marked. But I couldn't see no good in it.

One time Tom sent a boy to run about town with a burning stick, which he said was the sign for the gang to get together, and then he said he had got secret news that next day a whole group of Spanish businessmen and rich Muslims was going to camp on Cave Beach with two hundred elephants, and six hundred camels, and over a thousand donkeys, all weighed down with diamonds, and they didn't have only four hundred soldiers to protect them, and so we would surprise them, and kill the lot and take the things. He said we must clean up our swords and guns, and get ready. He never would go after even a potato cart but he must have the swords and guns all cleaned up for it, even if they was only flat sticks and broom-sticks, and you might wash them until you died, and even then they wasn't worth a mouth full of ashes more than what they was before. I didn't believe we could win against such a crowd of Spanish men and Muslims, but I wanted to see the camels and elephants, so I was on hand next day, Saturday, in the hiding place; and when we got the word we raced out of the trees and down the hill. But there weren't

no Spanish people or Muslims, and there weren't no camels or no elephants. It weren't anything but a Sunday-school outing, and only the littlest children at that.

We broke it up, and the children ran up the beach; but we never got anything but some biscuits and jam, and Ben Rogers found a cloth doll, and Jo Harper got a song-book. But then the teacher ran in, and made us drop everything and cut.

I didn't see no diamonds, and I told Tom Sawyer so. He said there was barrels of them there; and he said there was Muslims there, too, and elephants and things. I said, why couldn't we see them, then? He said if I wasn't so stupid, but had read a book called Don Quixote, I would know without asking. He said it was all done by magic. He said there was hundreds of soldiers there, and elephants and great wealth, and so on, but we had enemies which he called magicians; and they had turned the whole thing into little Sunday-school children, just to hurt us. I said, all right; then the thing for us to do was to go for the magicians. Tom Sawyer said I was stupid.

"Why," says he, "a magician could call up a lot of spirit people, and they would cut you up like nothing before you could say Jack Robinson. They're tall as a tree and big around as a church."

"Well," I says, "what if we got some spirit people to help us -- can't we win against the other crowd then?"

"How you going to get them?"

“I don’t know. How do they get them?”

“Why, they rub an old tin lantern or an iron ring, and then the spirit people come pouring out, with lightning shooting around and smoke everywhere; and anything they’re told to do they up and do it. They don’t think nothing of pulling a whole brick tower up by the roots, and hitting a Sunday-school teacher over the head with it -- or any other person.”

“Who makes them run around so?”

“Why, whoever rubs the lantern. They belong to whoever rubs the lantern or the ring, and they’ve got to do whatever he says. If he tells them to build a king’s palace forty miles long out of diamonds, and fill it full of lollies, or whatever you want, and bring a king’s daughter from China for you to marry, they’ve got to do it -- and they’ve got to do it before the sun comes up the next morning, too. And more: they’ve got to dance that house around over the country wherever you want it, you understand.”

“Well,” says I, “I think they're a gang of empty heads for not keeping the palace themselves instead of giving it away like that. And what’s more -- if I was one of them I would see a man in Jericho before I'd drop my business and come to him for the rubbing of an old tin lantern.”

“How you talk, Huck Finn. Why, you’d have to come when he rubbed it, if you wanted to or not.”

“What! and I as tall as a tree and as big as a church? All right, then; I would come; but I promise I’d make that man climb the highest tree there was in the country.”

“Shoot, it ain’t no use to talk to you, Huck Finn. You don’t seem to know anything, for some reason. You’re a perfect air head.”

I thought this over for a few days, and then I thought I would see if there was anything in it. I got an old tin lantern and an iron ring, and went out in the trees and rubbed and rubbed until I was as hot as an Indian, planning to build a palace and sell it; but it weren’t no use, none of the spirit people come. So then I judged that all that talk was just one of Tom Sawyer’s lies. I could see that he believed in the Muslims and the elephants, but as for me I think different. It had all the marks of a Sunday-school story.

"I rubbed and rubbed."

Chapter 4

Well, three or four months run along, and it was well into the winter now. I had been to school most all the time and could read and write just a little, and could say the times table up to six times seven is thirty-five, and I don't think I could ever get any farther than that if I was to live forever. I don't put no worth in sums, anyway.

At first I hated the school, but by and by I got so I could stand it. Whenever I got too tired I wouldn't go, and the trouble I got into next day for doing it done me good and made me feel better. So the longer I went to school the easier it got to be. I was getting kind of used to the widow's ways, too, and they weren't so rough on me. Living in a house and sleeping in a bed pulled on me pretty tight mostly, but before the cold weather I used to go out secretly and sleep in under the trees sometimes, and so that was a rest to me. I liked the old ways best, but I was getting so I liked the new ones, too, a little. The widow said I was coming along slow but sure, and doing very much okay. She said she wasn't embarrassed by me at all.

One morning I happened to turn over the salt at breakfast. I reached for some of it as quickly as I could to throw over my left shoulder and keep off the bad luck, but Miss Watson was in ahead of me, and cut me off. She says, "Take

your hands away, Huckleberry; you're always so messy!" The widow put in a good word for me, but that weren't going to keep off the bad luck, I knowed that well enough.

I started out, after breakfast, feeling worried and weak, and thinking about where it was going to fall on me, and what it was going to be. There's ways to keep off some kinds of bad luck, but this weren't one of them kind; so I never tried to do anything, but just went along slowly and low-spirited and on the watch for it.

I went down to the front garden and climbed over the gate where you go through the high board fence. There was an inch of new snow on the ground, and I seen someone's footprints.

They had come up from the rock yard and stood around the gate a while, and then went on around the garden fence. It was funny they hadn't come in, after standing around so. I couldn't make it out. It was very strange. I was going to follow around, but I bent down to look at the footprints first. I didn't see anything special at first, but then I did. There was a cross in the left heel made with big nails, to keep off the devil.

I was up in a second and running down the hill. I looked over my shoulder every now and then, but I didn't see nobody. I was at Judge Thatcher's as fast as I could get there. He said: "Why, my boy, you are breathing so heavily. Did you come for your interest?"

"No, sir," I says; "Is there some for me?"

"Oh, yes, come in last night for half a year -- over a hundred and fifty dollars. A lot of wealth for you. You had better let me put it back with your six thousand, because if you take it you'll spend it."

"No, sir," I says, "I don't want to spend it. I don't want it at all -- or the six thousand either. I want you to take it; I want to give it to you -- the six thousand and all."

He looked surprised. He couldn't seem to make it out. He says: "Why, what can you mean, my boy?"

"What can you mean, my boy?"

I says, “Don’t you ask me no questions about it, please. You’ll take it -- won’t you?”

He says: “Well, I’m confused. Is something wrong?”

“Please take it,” says I, “and don’t ask me nothing -- then I won’t have to tell no lies.”

He studied a while, and then he says: “Oh! I think I see what you’re saying. But you need to sell your wealth to me -- not give it. That’s the right way.”

Then he wrote something on a paper and read it over, and says: “There; you see it says ‘for a sum.’ That means you have sold it to me. Here’s a dollar for you. Now you sign it.”

So I signed it, and left.

Miss Watson’s slave, Jim, had a hair-ball as big as your fist, which had been took out of the fourth stomach of a cow, and he used it to do magic. He said there was a spirit in it, and it knowed everything. So I went to him that night

and told him pap was here again, for I found his footprints in the snow. What I wanted to know was, what he was going to do, and was he going to stay? Jim got out his hair-ball and said something over it, and then he held it up and dropped it on the floor. It fell pretty solid, and only moved about an inch. Jim tried it again, and then another time, and it acted just the same. Jim got down on his knees, and put his ear against it and listened. But it weren't no use; he said it wouldn't talk. He said sometimes it wouldn't talk without money. I told him I had an old counterfeit coin that weren't no good because the yellow metal showed through the silver a little, and it wouldn't pass anyway, even if the yellow didn't show, because it was so smooth it felt like it had oil on it, and that would tell on it every time. (I wasn't going to say nothing about the dollar I got from the judge.) I said it was pretty bad money, but maybe the hair-ball would take it, because maybe it wouldn't know the difference. Jim smelled it and squeezed it with his teeth and rubbed it, and said he could do something so the hair-ball would think it was good. He said he would cut open a potato and put the coin in between and keep it there all night, and next morning you couldn't see no yellow, and it wouldn't feel like oil no more, and so anyone in town would take it in a minute, let alone a hair-ball. Well, I knowed a potato would do that before, but I didn't think of it at the time.

Jim put the coin under the hair-ball, and got down and listened again. This time he said the hair-ball was all right. He said it would tell my whole future if I wanted it to. I says, go on. So the hair-ball talked to Jim, and Jim told it to me.

He says: "Your old father don't know yet what he's a-gwyne to do. Sometimes he thinks he'll go away, den again he thinks he'll stay. De best way is to rest easy and let de old man take his own way. Dey's two angels hanging round about him. One of 'em is white and full of light, and t'other is black. De white one gets him to go right a little, den de black one sails in and breaks it all up. A body can't tell yet which one gwyne to lead him at de last. But you is all right. You gwyne to have a lot of trouble in your life, and a lot of happiness. Sometimes you gwyne to get hurt, and sometimes you gwyne to get sick; but every time you's gwyne to get well again. Dey's two girls flying about you in

your life. One of ‘em’s light and t’other is dark. One is rich and t’other is poor. You’s gwyne to marry de poor one first and de rich one by and by. You wants to keep away from de water as much as you can, and don’t do anything dangerous, because it’s down in de ball dat you’s gwyne to be hanged.”

Chapter 5

When I took a candle and went up to my room that night there sat pap himself!

I had shut the door to. Then I turned around. and there he was. I used to be scared of him all the time, he hit me so much. I thought I was scared now, too; but in a minute I seen I was wrong -- that is, after the first surprise, as you may say, when my breathing kind of stopped, he being so not what I was thinking would be there; then right away after, I seen I wasn’t scared of him worth worrying about.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and messy and dirty, and was hanging down so you could see his eyes looking through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no grey; so was his long, confused beard. There weren’t no colour in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man’s white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a

body's skin turn cold -- a tree-frog white, a fish-stomach white. As for his clothes -- just pieces of broken cloth, that was all. He had one ankle resting on the other knee; the shoe on that foot was broken open, and two of his toes were sticking through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was lying on the floor -- an old black hat with a concave top.

I stood a-looking at him; he sat there a-looking at me, with his chair leaning back a little. I put the candle down. I could see the window was up; so he had climbed in by the tool room. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says: "Straight clothes -- very. You think you're the best part of a big head now, don't you?"

"Maybe I am, maybe I ain't," I says.

"Don't you give me none of your lip," says he. "You've put on way too many airs since I been away. I'll take you down a step or two before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say -- can read and write. You think you're better than your father, now, don't you, because he can't? I'll take it out of you. Who told you you might be part of such high minded foolishness, hey? -- who told you you could?"

"The widow. She told me."

"The widow, hey? -- and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain't none of her business?"

"Nobody never told her."

"Well, I'll learn her to mix things up. And you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better than what he is. Don't let me catch you going to that school again, you hear? Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write either, before she died. None of the family couldn't before they died. I can't; and here you're a-lifting yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it -- you hear?"

Then he says, "Say, let me hear you read."

I took up a book and started something about George Washington and the wars. When I'd read about half a minute, he give the book a hit and knocked it across the room. He says: "It's so. You can do it. I didn't believe it when you told me. Now look here; you stop that putting on airs. I won't have it. I'll be watching, and if I catch you at that school I'll whip you good. First thing you know, you'll get religion, too. Never seen such a son."

He took up a little blue and yellow picture of some cows and a boy, and says: "What's this?"

"It's something they give me for learning my school work."

After tearing it up, he says: "I'll give you something -- I'll turn your skin to

leather.

He sat there making angry talk a minute, and then he says: “Ain’t you a sweet-smelling little girl? A bed; blankets; a mirror; and a rug on the floor -- and your own father got to sleep with the pigs in the leather yard. I never seen such a son. I’ll take some of these ways out of you before I’m done with you. Why, there ain’t no end to your airs -- they say you’re rich. How’s that?”

“They lie -- that’s how.”

“Look here -- mind how you talk; I’ve taken about all I can. Don’t give me no back talk. I been in town two days, and ain’t heard nothing but about you being rich. I heard about it way down the river, too. It’s why I come. You get me that money tomorrow.”

“I ain’t got no money.”

“It’s a lie. Judge Thatcher’s got it.”

“You get it. I want it.”

“I ain’t got no money, I tell you. Ask Judge Thatcher; he’ll tell you the same.”

“All right. I’ll ask him; and I’ll make him give out, too, or I’ll know the reason why. Say, how much you got in your pocket now?”

“I ain’t got only a dollar, and I want that to -- “

“Don’t make no difference what you want it for; give it over.” He took a bite of it to see if it was good, then said he was going to town to get some whiskey; said he hadn’t had a drink all day. When he had got out on the tool room roof he put his head in again, and told me off for putting on airs and trying to be better than him. When I thought he was gone he come back and put his head in again, and told me to mind about that school, because he was going to be looking for me and whip me if I didn’t drop it.

Next day he was drunk, and he went to Judge Thatcher’s and argued with him, and tried to make him give up the money; but he couldn’t; then pap promised he’d make the law force him.

The judge and the widow went to law to get the court to take me away from him and let one of them take care of me; but it was a new judge that had just come, and he didn’t know my old man; so he said courts must not force their way in and separate families if they could help it; said it was best not to take a child away from its father. So Judge Thatcher and the widow had to quit on the business.

That pleased the old man until he couldn't rest. He said he'd whip me until I was black and blue if I didn't get some money for him. I asked for three dollars from Judge Thatcher, and pap took it and got drunk, and went a-blowing around and using bad words and shouting and carrying on; and he kept it up all over town, with a tin pan, until almost midnight; then they locked him up, and next day they had him before court, and put him away again for a week. But he said he was okay; said he was boss of his son, and he'd make it warm for him.

When he got out the new judge said he was a-going to make a man of him. So he took him to his own house, and dressed him up clean and nice, and had him to breakfast and lunch and dinner with the family, and was just old pie to him, so to speak. And after dinner he talked to him about not drinking and such things until the old man cried, and said he'd been foolish, and wasted his life; but now he was a-going to turn over a new leaf and be a man nobody would be embarrassed by, and he hoped the judge would help him and not look down on him. The judge said he could hug him for them words; so he cried, and his wife cried again; pap said he'd always been a man that no one had understood before, and the judge said he believed it. The old man said that a man that was down wanted trust and love, and the judge said it was so; so they cried again. And when it was time for bed pap got up and held out his hand, and says: "Look at it, everyone; take it, hold it, and shake it. There's a hand that was the hand of a pig; but it ain't so no more; it's the hand of a man that's started in on a new life, and will die before he'll go back. You mark them words -- just remember I said them. It's a clean hand now; shake it -- don't be afraid."

So they shook it, one after the other, all around, and cried. The judge's wife she kissed it. Then the old man he signed a promise -- made his mark. The judge said it was the holiest time in history, or something like that. Then they put the old man into a beautiful room, which was the extra room, and in the night some time he got powerful thirsty and climbed out onto the roof and down the side and sold his new coat for a bottle of whiskey, and climbed back again and had a good old time; and toward morning he climbed out again, drunk as could be, and fell off the roof and broke his left arm in two places, and was almost dead from the cold when someone found him after sun-up. And when they come to look at that extra room they had a devil of a job putting it all back together.

The judge he felt kind of angry. He said it seemed the only way a body could change the old man was with a gun.

Chapter 6

Pretty soon the old man was up and around again, and then he went for Judge Thatcher in the courts to make him give up the money, and he went for me too, for not stopping school. He caught me a few times and whipped me, but I went to school just the same, and was able to hide from him or run away most of the time. I didn't want to go to school much before, but I I wanted to

go now to get back at pap. That court business was so slow -- seemed they weren't ever going to get started on it; so every now and then I'd ask for two or three dollars off of the judge for pap, to keep from getting a whipping. Every time he got money he got drunk; and every time he got drunk he made trouble around town; and every time he made trouble he got locked up. He was just perfect for that -- this kind of thing was right up his line.

He got to hanging around the widow's too much and so she told him at last that if he didn't quit coming around there she would make trouble for him. Well, wasn't he angry? He said he would show who was Huck Finn's boss. So he watched out for me one day at the end of winter, and caught me, and took me up the river about three mile in a flat bottom boat, and crossed over to the Illinois side where there was lots of trees and no houses but a rough old log cabin in a place where the trees was so thick you couldn't find it if you didn't know where it was.

He kept me with him all the time, and I never got an opening to run off. We lived in that old cabin, and he always locked the door and put the key under his head nights. He had a rifle which he had robbed, I'd say, and we fished and hunted, and that was what we lived on. Every little while he locked me in and went down to the shop, three miles, to where he gave fish and other animals for whiskey, and would bring it home and get drunk and have a good time, and whip me.

The widow she found out where I was by and by, and she sent a man over to get hold of me; but pap forced him off with the rifle, and it weren't long after that before I was used to being where I was, and liked it -- all but the whipping part.

It was kind of lazy and fun, resting all day, smoking and fishing, and no books or study. Two months or more run along, and my clothes got to be all holes and dirt, and I didn't see how I'd ever got to like it so well at the widow's, where you had to wash, and eat on a dish, and smooth your hair, and go to bed and get up at special times, and be forever worrying over a book, and have old Miss Watson talking at you all the time.

I didn't want to go back no more. I had stopped using bad words, because the widow didn't like it; but now I took to it again because pap hadn't no problem with it. It was pretty good times up in the trees there, take it all around.

But by and by pap got too enthusiastic with his whipping stick, and I couldn't stand it. I was all over sores. He got to going away so much, too, and locking me in. Once he locked me in and was gone three days. It was awful being there all alone. I judged he had got drowned, and I wasn't ever going to get out any more. I was scared. I made up my mind I would fix up some way to leave there. I had tried to get out of that cabin many a time, but I couldn't find no way. There weren't a window to it big enough for a dog to get through. I couldn't get up the chimney; it was too narrow. The door was thick, solid flat pieces of timber. Pap was pretty careful not to leave a knife or anything in the cabin when he was away; I would say I had hunted the place over as much as a hundred times; well, I was most all the time at it, because it was about the only way to put in the time. But this time I found something at last; I found an old dirty saw blade without any handle; it was in between a horizontal board and the angle boards of the roof. I oiled it up and went to work. There was an old horse-blanket nailed against the logs at the far end of the cabin behind the

table, to keep the wind from blowing through the holes and putting the candle out. I got under the table and lifted the blanket, and went to work to saw a piece of the bottom log out -- big enough to let me through. Well, it was a good long job, but I was getting toward the end of it when I heard pap's rifle in the distance. I cleaned up any signs of my work, and dropped the blanket and put my saw back, and pretty soon pap come in.

Pap wasn't in a good spirit -- like he is most of the time. He said he had been down in town, and everything was going wrong. His lawyer said he believed he would win his argument and get the money if they ever got started; but then there was ways to put it off a long time, and Judge Thatcher knowed how to do it. And he said people were saying there'd be another move to get me away from him and give me to the widow for my care, and they believed it would win this time. This shook me up a lot, because I didn't want to go back to the widow's any more and be so squeezed up and straight. Then the old man got to using bad words, and he used them against everything and everybody he could think of, and then did them all over again to make sure he hadn't missed any, and after that he finished off with a kind of a general shout all around, with quite a lot of people which he didn't know the names of, and so he called them what's-his-name when he got to them, and went right along with his bad words.

He said he would like to see the widow try and get me. He said he would watch out, and if they tried any such game on him he knowed of a place six or seven mile off to hide me in, where they might hunt until they dropped and they couldn't find me. That made me pretty scared again, but only for a minute; I made my mind up that I wouldn't stay on hand long enough for him to do that.

The old man made me go to the boat and bring the things he had got. There was a fifty-pound bag of corn meal, and a side of salted pig meat, bullets, and a four-gallon container of whiskey, and a few other things. I carried up some of it, and went back and sat down on the front of the boat to rest. I thought it all over, and I thought I would walk off with the rifle and some lines, and take to the trees when I run away. I wouldn't stay in one place, but just walk right across the country, mostly night times, and hunt and fish to keep alive, and get so far away that the old man or the widow couldn't ever find me any more. I planned to saw my way out and leave that night if pap got drunk enough, and I believed he would. I got so full of thinking about it I didn't know how long I had been staying at the boat until the old man shouted and asked me if I was asleep or drowned.

I got the things all up to the cabin, and then it was about dark. While I was cooking dinner the old man took a drink or two and got himself warmed up, and went to angry talking again. He had been drunk over in town, sleeping all night in the open, and he was something to look at. A body would a thought he was Adam -- he was just all mud.

Whenever his whiskey started to work he most always went for the government. This time he says: “Call this a government? Why, just look at it and see what it’s like. Here’s the law a-standing ready to take a man’s son away from him -- a man’s own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the worry and all the cost of caring for. Yes, just as that man has got that son growed up at last, and ready to go to work and start to do something for him and give him a rest, the law up and goes for him. And they call that government! That ain’t all, either. The law backs that old Judge Thatcher up and helps him to keep me out of my money. Here’s what the law does: The law takes a man worth six thousand dollars and more, and squeezes him into an old prison of a cabin like this, and lets him go round in clothes that ain’t good enough for a pig. They call that government? A man can’t get his rights in a government like this. Sometimes I’ve a strong feeling to just leave the country for good and all. Yes, and I told ‘em so; I told old Thatcher so to his face. Lots of 'em heard me, and can tell what I said. Says I, for two cents I’d leave this awful country and never come near it again. Them’s the very words.

I says look at my hat -- if you can call it a hat -- but the top sticks up and the rest of it goes down until it's below my face, and then it ain't really a hat at all, but more like my head was pushed up through a piece of stove pipe. Look at it, says I -- such a hat for me to wear -- and me one of the richest men in this town if I could get my rights.

"Oh, yes, this is a wonderful government, wonderful. Why, look here. There was a free nigger there from Ohio -- half and half he was, almost as white as a white man. He had the whitest shirt on you ever seen, too, and the cleanest hat; and there ain't a man in that town that's got as good clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain, and a silver-headed walking stick -- the awfulest old grey-headed businessman in the country. And what do you think? They said he was a teacher in a university, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything. And that ain't the worst. They said he could vote when he was at home. Well, that let me out. Thinks I, what is the country a-coming to? It was voting day, and I was just about to go and vote myself if I wasn't too drunk to get there; but when they told me there was a place in this country where they'd let that nigger vote, I pulled out. I says I'll never vote again. Them's the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may come to nothing for all I care -- I'll never vote again as long as I live. And to see the cool way of that nigger -- why, he wouldn't a give me the road if I hadn't pushed him out of the way. I says to the people, why ain't this nigger put up for sale and sold? -- that's what I want to know. And what do you think they said? Why, they said he couldn't be sold until he'd been here for six months, and he hadn't been there that long yet. There, now - - that's proof. They call that a government that can't sell a free nigger until he's been one place six months. Here's a government that calls itself a government, and lets on to be a government, and thinks it is a government, and yet it's got to sit doing nothing for six whole months before it can take a hold of a travelling, robbing, awful, white-shirted free nigger, and -- "

Pap was a-going on so he never saw where his old legs was taking him to, so he went head over heels over the bucket of salted pig meat and took skin off the front of both legs. After that his talking was all the hottest kind of language -- mostly hitting at black people and the government, but he give the bucket some, too, all along, here and there. He jumped around the cabin a lot, first on one leg and then on the other, holding first on one leg and then onto the other, and at last he let out with his left foot and give the bucket a shaking kick.

But it weren't a good choice, because that was the shoe that had two or three of his toes hanging out the front end of it; so now he let out a shout that was enough to make a body's hair stand up, and down he went in the dirt, and lay there, holding his toes; and the bad words he used then stood over anything he had ever done before. He said so himself after that. He had heard old Sowberry Hagan in his best days, and he said it stood over him, too; but I think that was kind of putting it on, maybe.

After dinner pap took the bottle, and said he had enough whiskey there for two drunks and one round of the dreaming shakes. I judged he would be blind drunk in about an hour, and then I would take the key, or saw myself out, one or t'other. He went on drinking and drinking, and fell down on his blankets by and by; but luck didn't run my way. He didn't go deep asleep, but was moving around. He groaned and moaned and threw his arms and legs around this way and that for a long time. At last I got so tired it was all I could do to keep my eyes open, and so before I knowed what I was about I was deep asleep, and the candle was still burning.

I don't know how long I was asleep, but all out of the quiet there was an awful shout and I was up. There was pap looking wild, and jumping around every which way and shouting about snakes. He said they was coming up his legs; and then he would give a jump and shout, and say one was biting him on the cheek -- but I couldn't see no snakes. He started to run around and around the cabin, shouting "Take him off! take him off! he's biting me on the neck!" I

never seen a man look so wild in the eyes. Pretty soon he was all tired out, and fell down breathing real fast; then he turned over and over wonderful fast, kicking things every which way, and hitting and reaching at the air with his hands, and crying and saying there was devils took a-hold of him. He tired out by and by, and was quiet a while, moaning. Then he was quieter still, and didn't make a sound. I could hear the owls and the wolves away off in the trees, and it seemed awful quiet. He was laying over by the corner of the cabin.

By and by he lifted himself up part way and listened, with his head to one side.

He says, very low: "Step -- step -- step; that's the dead; step -- step -- step; they're coming after me; but I won't go. Oh, they're here! Don't touch me -- don't! Hands off -- they're cold; let go. Oh, let a poor devil alone!"

Then he went down on all fours and moved around like that, begging them to let him alone, and he covered himself up in his blanket and squeezed in under the old table, still a-begging; and then he went to crying. I could hear him through the blanket.

By and by he come out and jumped up on his feet looking wild, and he seen me and went for me. He ran after me around and around the place with a pocket-knife, calling me the Angel of Death, and saying he would kill me, and then I couldn't come for him no more. I begged, and told him I was only Huck; but he laughed such an awful laugh, and shouted and used bad words, and kept on coming after me. Once when I turned short and raced under his arm he made a reach and got me by the coat between my shoulders, and I thought I was gone; but I come out of that coat fast as lightning, and saved myself. Pretty soon he was all tired out, and dropped down with his back against the door, and said he would rest a minute and then kill me. He put his knife under him, and said he would sleep and get strong, and then he would see who was who.

I climbed up as soft as I could, not to make any noise, and got down the rifle. I pushed the stick down it to make sure it had gunpowder in it, then I rested it on the top of a barrel, pointing toward pap, and sat down behind it to wait for him to move. And how slow and quiet the time did go by.

Chapter 7

" Get up! What're you about?"

I opened my eyes and looked around, trying to make out where I was. The sun was up, and I had been fully asleep. Pap was standing over me looking sour and sick, too.

He says: “What you doing with this gun?”

I judged he didn’t know what he had been doing, so I says: “Someone tried to get in, so I was waiting for him.”

“Why didn’t you wake me up?”

“I tried to, but I couldn’t; I couldn’t move you.”

“Well, don’t stand there talking all day. Outside and see if there’s fish on the lines for breakfast. I’ll be along in a minute.”

He opened the lock on the door, and I ran out up to the river. I saw some logs and other things moving on the water, so I knowed the river had started to come up. I knew it would have been great times now if I was over at the town.

The June rains used to be always good luck for me; because as soon as that happens here comes firewood down the river, and pieces of timber rafts -- sometimes ten or more logs together; so all you have to do is to catch them and sell them to the timber yards.

I went along up the river with one eye out for pap and t'other one out for what the waters might bring along. Well, all at once here comes a canoe; just a perfect one, too, about thirteen or fourteen foot long, riding high like a duck. I jumped head-first off the side of the river, like a frog, clothes and all on, and started swimming for the canoe. I was thinking there'd be someone lying down in it, because people often done that to trick people, and when a boy had pulled a boat out almost to it they'd jump up and laugh at him. But it weren't so this time. It was a free canoe sure enough, and I climbed in and pushed her to the beach. Thinks I, the old man will be glad when he sees this -- she's worth ten dollars. But when I got to land pap weren't around yet, and as I was running her into a little place by a cliff, with willows hanging all over, I come up with a plan: I judged I'd hide her good. The n, instead of taking to the trees when I run off, I'd go down the river about fifty miles and camp in one place for good, and not have such a rough time walking out on foot.

It was pretty close to the cabin, and I thought I heard the old man coming all the time; but I got her covered; and then I looked around a few trees, and there was the old man down a piece just lining up a bird with his rifle. So he hadn't seen anything.

When he got along I was hard at it taking up a fish line. He shouted at me for being so slow; but I told him I fell in the river, and that was what made me take so long. I knowed he would see I was wet, and then he would be asking questions. We got five fish off the lines and went home.

While we rested up after breakfast, both of us being tired, I got to thinking that if I could fix up some way to keep pap and the widow from trying to follow me, it would be better than trusting to luck to get far enough off before they missed me.

Well, I didn't see no way for a while, but by and by pap got up a minute to get a drink of water, and he says: "Another time a man comes a-looking around here you wake me up, you hear? That man weren't here for no good. If I see him, I'll shoot him. Next time you wake me up, you hear?"

Then he dropped down and went to sleep again; but what he had been saying give me the very plan I needed. I says to myself, I can fix it now so nobody won't think of following me.

About twelve o'clock we got up and went along up the river. The water was coming up pretty fast, and lots of timber was going by. By and by along comes part of a raft -- nine logs tied together. We went out with the boat and pulled it to the beach. Then we had lunch. Anyone but pap would a waited and seen the day through, so as to catch more timber; but that weren't pap's way. Nine logs was enough for one time; he must go straight over to town and sell. So he locked me in and took the boat, and started off pulling the raft about half-past three. I judged he wouldn't come back that night. I waited until I believed he had got a good start; then I come out with my saw, and went to work on cutting a way out again. Before he was to the other side of the river I was out of the hole; him and his raft was just a little black spot on the water away off in the distance.

I took the bag of corn meal to where the canoe was, and pushed the willow branches apart and put it in; then I done the same with the side of salted pig meat; then the whiskey. I took all the coffee and sugar there was, and all the bullets; I took the bucket and a tin cup, and my old saw and two blankets, and a heavy iron cooking pan and the coffee pot. I took fish lines and matches and other things -- everything that was worth a cent. I cleaned out the place. I wanted an axe, but there weren't any, only the one out where we cut firewood, and I knowed why I was going to leave that. I took out the rifle, and was done.

I had marked the ground a lot by climbing out of the hole and pulling out so many things through it. So I fixed that as good as I could from the outside by shaking loose dirt all over the place.

That covered up my footprints and it covered the sawdust from cutting the log too. I fixed the piece of timber back into place, and put two rocks under it and one against it to hold it there. If you stood four or five foot away and didn't know it was cut, you wouldn't never think any different; besides, this was the back of the cabin; it weren't like anyone would go looking around there.

It was all grass between there and the canoe, so I hadn't left footprints. I followed around to see. I stood on the high ground and looked out over the river. All safe. So I took the rifle and went up a piece into the trees, and was hunting around for some birds when I seen a wild pig; pigs soon go wild in them parts after they get away from the farms. I used the gun to kill this one and took the body into camp.

I took the axe and broke in the door. I cut it a lot a-doing it. I brought the pig in, took him back almost to the table and cut his throat with the axe, and put him down on the ground to bleed; I say ground because it was ground -- hard dirt, and no boards. Well, next I took an old bag and put a lot of big rocks in it -- all I could put in and still pull it -- and I started it from the pig, and pulled it to the door and through the trees down to the river and pushed it in, and down it went, to the bottom. You could easy see that something had been pulled over the ground. I did wish Tom Sawyer was there; I knowed he would take an interest in this kind of business, and throw in the special touches. Nobody could show himself like Tom Sawyer in such a thing as that.

Well, last I pulled out some of my hair, and blooded the axe good, and made it stick on the back side, and threw the axe in the corner. Then I took up the pig and held him to my chest with my coat (so he couldn't drop blood) until I got a good piece below the cabin and then pushed him into the river too.

Now I thought of something else. So I went and got the bag of corn meal and my old saw blade out of the canoe, and brought them to the house. I took the bag to where it used to stand, and cut a hole in the bottom of it with the saw, for there weren't no knives and forks on the place -- pap done everything with his pocket-knife about the cooking. Then I carried the bag about a hundred yards across the grass and through the trees east of the house, to a shallow

lake that was five miles wide and full of bullrushes -- and ducks too at the right time of year. There was a very little river coming into it on the other side from miles away, I don't know where, but it was away from the Mississippi. Some of the meal come out and made a little line all the way to the lake. I dropped pap's stone for making his knife sharp there too, so as to look like it had been done by accident. Then I tied up the hole in the meal bag with a string, so it wouldn't come out no more, and took it and my saw to the canoe again.

It was about dark now; so I dropped the canoe down the river under some willows that was hanging over the bank, and waited for the moon to rise. I tied up to one of the trees; then took a bite to eat, and by and by leaned back in the canoe to smoke a pipe and lay out a plan. I says to myself, they'll follow the marks from that bag of rocks to the beach and then go into the river to look for me. And they'll follow the marks from the bag of meal to the lake and go up the little river that leads into it to find the robbers that killed me and took the things. They won't ever hunt the river for anything but my dead body. They'll soon get tired of that, and won't think no more about me. So I can stop anywhere I want to. Jackson's Island is good enough for me; I know that island pretty well, and nobody ever comes there. And then I can take the boat over to town nights, and go around in secret and pick up things I want. Jackson's Island's the place.

I was pretty tired, and the first thing I knowed I was asleep. When I come awake I didn't know where I was for a minute. I sat up and looked around, a little scared. Then I remembered. The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so big I could a counted the logs that went a-moving along, black and quiet, hundreds of yards out from the sides. Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and it smelled late. You know what I mean -- I don't know the words to put it in.

I took a good look, and was just going to cut loose from the tree and start, when I heard a sound away over the water. I lis- tened. Pretty soon I made it out. It was that boring kind of over and over sound that comes from oars working in the locks on the side of a boat when it's a quiet night. I took a little look out through the branches, and there it was -- a boat, away across the water. I couldn't tell how many was in it. It kept a-coming, and when it was across from me I see there weren't but one man in it. Thinks I, maybe it's pap, but I wasn't thinking it would be him. He dropped below me with the movement of the river, and by and by he came up close to the beach in the easy water, and he went by so close I could a reached out the rifle and touched him. Well, it was pap, sure enough -- and he weren't drunk, too, by the way he was using his oars.

I didn't lose no time. The next minute I was a-moving down river soft but fast in the darkness of the high ground on the side of the river. I made two mile and a half, then pushed out four hundred yards or more toward the middle of the river, because pretty soon I would be passing the boat landing on this side of the river, and people might see me and call out to me. I got out where all the logs were moving along, and then got down in the bottom of the canoe for a good rest, and let her go without oars.

I had a smoke out of my pipe, looking away into the sky; not a cloud in it. The sky looks ever so deep when you lay down on your back in the light of the moon; I never knowed it before. And how far a body can hear on the water such nights! I heard people talking at the ferry landing. I heard what they said, too -- every word of it. One man said it was getting toward the long days and the short nights now. T'other one said this weren't one of the short ones, the way he saw it -- and then they laughed, and he said it over again, and they laughed again; then they waked up another man and told him, and laughed, but he didn't laugh; he shouted out something bad, and said let him alone.

The first man said he wanted to tell it to his old woman -- she would think it was pretty good; but he said that weren't nothing to some things he had said in his time. I heard one man say it was nearly three o'clock, and he hoped morning wouldn't wait more than about a week longer. After that the talk got farther and farther away, and I couldn't make out the words any more; but I could hear the sound of them talking, and now and then a laugh, too, but it seemed a long way off.

I was way below the ferry now. I put my head up, and there was Jackson's Island, about two miles and a half down river, covered with trees and standing up out of the middle, big and dark and solid, like a big ship without any lights. There weren't any signs of the sand at the head of it -- it was all under water. It didn't take me long to get there. I flew past the head because the water was moving so quickly, but then I got into the dead water and landed on the side toward Illinois. I run the canoe into a deep opening in the short cliff that hangs over the river on that side, that I knowed about; I had to separate the willow branches to get in; and when I tied up nobody could a seen the canoe from the outside.

Chapter 8

The sun was up so high when I came awake that I judged it was after eight o'clock. I stayed there lying in the cool of the grass thinking about things, and feeling rested and pretty comfortable and happy. I could see the sun out of one or two holes, but mostly it was big trees all about, and dark in there under them all. There was spots on the ground where the light come down through the leaves, and the spots moved about a little, showing there was a little wind

up there. Two squirrels sat on a branch and talked at me very friendly.

I was powerful lazy and comfortable -- didn't want to get up and cook breakfast. Well, I was falling off to sleep again when I thinks I hears a deep sound of a cannon going off away up the river. I lifts up, and rests on my elbow and listens; pretty soon I hears it again. I jumped up, and went and looked out at an opening in the willows, and I seen a lot of smoke laying on the water a long way up -- about opposite the ferry. And there was the ferry full of people moving along down. I knowed what was happening now. "Bang!" I see the white smoke explode out of the boat's side. You see, they was shooting a cannon over the water, trying to make my dead body come to the top.

I was pretty hungry, but it weren't going to do for me to start a fire, because they might see the smoke. So I sat there and watched the cannon smoke and listened to the noise. The river was a mile wide there, and it always looks pretty on a summer morning -- so I was having a good enough time seeing them hunt for my dead body if I only had a bite to eat.

Well, then I happened to think how they always put liquid metal in loaves of bread and put them on top of the water because they always go right to where the body went down and stop there. So, says I, I'll keep a looking, and if any of them comes around after me I'll give 'em a show. I changed to the Illinois side of the island to see what luck I could have, and I weren't wrong. One of them loaves come along, and I almost got it with a long stick, but my foot give

way and she moved out farther into the river. I was where the movement of the water come in the closest to the land -- I knowed enough for that. But by and by along comes another one, and this time I won. I shook out the little liquid metal that was in it, and put my teeth in. It was wheat bread -- what the quality people eat; none of your poor man's corn bread.

I got a good place in behind the willows, and sat there on a log, chewing the bread and watching the ferry boat, and feeling very good. And then something hit me. I says, now the way I see it, the widow or the pastor or someone prayed that this bread would find me, and here it has gone and done it. So there's no arguing that there is something in that thing -- that is, there's something in it when a body like the widow or the pastor prays; but it just don't work for me, and the way I see it, it don't work for only just the right kind.

I took out my pipe and had a good long smoke, and went on watching. The ferry boat was just following the movement of the river, and I believed I'd be able to see who was on it when she come along, because she would come in close, the way the bread did. When she had got pretty well along down toward me, I put out my pipe and went to where I fished out the bread, and got down behind a big log on the side of the river, in a little open place. Where the log forked I could look through.

By and by she come along, and she come in so close that they could a run out a long board and walked to the land. Most everybody was on the boat: Pap, and Judge Thatcher, and Bessie Thatcher, and Jo Harper, and Tom Sawyer, and his old Aunt Polly, and Sid and Mary, and a lot more. Everybody was talking about the killing, but the man who owned the boat cut in and says: "Look close, now; the water movement comes in the closest here, and maybe he's washed up and got caught up in the bushes growing at the side of the water. I hope so, anyway."

I didn't hope so. They all crowded up and leaned over the side of the boat, nearly in my face, and kept quiet, watch- ing with all their might. I could see them clear as anything, but they couldn't see me. Then the man running the boat shouted out: "Stand away!" and the cannon let off such an explosion right before me that it destroyed my hearing with the noise and pretty near made me blind with the smoke, and I judged I was gone. If they'd a had a cannon ball in, they would a got the dead body they was after. Well, I see I weren't hurt, thank God. The boat moved on and went around the shoulder of the island to where I couldn't see it. I could hear the explosions now and then, farther and farther off, and by and by, after an hour, I didn't hear it no more. The island was three miles long. I judged they had got to the foot of it, and was giving it up. But they didn't yet for a while. They turned around the foot of the island and started up the river on the Missouri side, with the motor going, and shooting every once in a while as they went. I crossed over to that side and watched them. When they got to the head of the island they quit shooting and dropped over to the Missouri side and went back home to the town.

I knowed I was all right now. Nobody else would come a-hunting after me. I got my rabbit traps out of the canoe and made me a nice camp in the thickest

part of the trees. I made a kind of a tent out of my blankets to put my things under so the rain couldn't get at them. I caught a fish and cleaned him with my saw blade, and toward dark I started my camp fire and had a nice meal. Then I put out a line to catch some fish for breakfast.

When it was dark I sat by my camp fire smoking, and feeling pretty good; but by and by it got kind of boring, and so I went and sat on the side of the river and listened to the waves washing along, and counted the stars and the logs and rafts that come down, and then went to bed; there ain't no better way to put in time when you are bored; you can't stay bored; you soon get over it.

And so it was for three days and nights. No difference -- just the same thing. But the next day I went looking around down through the island. I was boss of it; it all belonged to me, so to speak, and I wanted to know all about it; but mostly I wanted to fill in the time. I found a lot of strawberries, big and red and ready to eat; and green summer grapes, and green berries was just starting to show. They would all be a help by and by, I judged.

Well, I went playing around deep in the trees until I judged I weren't far from the foot of the island. I had my gun along, but I hadn't killed nothing; it was just to protect me; I thought I would kill something to eat back closer to home. About this time I nearly stepped on a good-sized snake, and it went off through the grass and flowers, and me after it, hoping to shoot it. I ran along, and all by surprise, I come right onto the ashes of a camp fire that was still smoking.

My heart jumped up into my lungs. I never waited for to look farther, but went quietly back on my toes as fast as ever I could. Every now and then I stopped a second there in the thick leaves and listened, but my breathing come so hard I couldn't hear nothing else. I went along another piece farther, then listened again; and by and by, if I seen a cut off tree, I took it for a man; if I stepped on a stick and broke it, it made me feel like a person had taken away half of the air from my breathing, and the bigger half, too.

When I got to camp I wasn't feeling very confident. There weren't much I could do; but I says, this ain't no time to be playing games. So I got all my traps into my canoe again so no one could see them, and I put out the fire and threw the ashes around to make it look like an old last year's camp, and then climbed a tree.

I must a been up in the tree two hours; but I didn't see nothing, I didn't hear nothing -- I only thought I heard and seen as much as a thousand things. Well, I couldn't stay up there forever; so at last I got down, but I stayed deep in the trees and looking out all the time. All I could get to eat was berries and what was left over from breakfast.

By the time it was night I was pretty hungry. So when it was good and dark I

pushed off from the island before the moon come up and went by canoe over to the Illinois side of the river -- about four hundred yards. I went into the trees there and cooked a meal, and I was just planning to stay there all night when I heard a plunkety-plunk, plunkety-plunk, and says to myself, horses coming; and next I hear people's voices. I put everything into the canoe as quickly as I could, and then moved quietly through the trees by the side of the river, to see what I could find out. I hadn't got far when I heard a man say: "We better camp here if we can find a good place; the horses is about tired out. Let's look around."

I didn't wait, but pushed off and used my oar softly to get away. I tied up in the old place, and ended up sleeping in the canoe.

I didn't sleep much. I couldn't, for thinking. And every time I waked up I thought someone had me by the neck. So the sleep didn't do me no good. By and by I says to myself, I can't live this way; I'm a-going to find out who it is that's here on the island with me; I'll find it out or die trying. Well, I felt better right off.

So I took my oar and moved quietly along, just a step or two out from the land, letting the canoe stay in the darkness from the trees. The moon was out, and outside where I was, behind the trees, it was almost as light as day. I moved slowly along well on to an hour, everything quiet as sleeping rocks. Well, by this time I was most down to the foot of the island. A little cool wind started to blow, and that was as good as saying the night was about done. I give her a turn with the oar and brought her nose to the beach; then I got my gun and climbed out and into the trees. I sat down there on a log, and looked out through the willows. I seen the moon go off watch, and the darkness start to blanket the river. But in a little while I seen a grey line over the tops of the trees, and knowed the day was coming. So I took my rifle and walked off toward where I had run across that camp fire, stopping every minute or two to listen. But I hadn't no luck; I couldn't seem to find the place.

But by and by, sure enough, I caught a little sign of fire away through the trees. I went for it, careful and slow. After a while I was close enough to have a look, and there was a man on the ground. It most give me the shakes. He had a blanket around his head, and his head was nearly in the fire. I sat there behind some bushes about six foot away from him, and kept my eyes on him without moving. It was getting grey morning light now. Pretty soon he moved and took off the blanket, and it was Miss Watson's Jim!

I know I was glad to see him. I says: "Hello, Jim!" and danced out.

He jumped up and looked at me wild. Then he drops down on his knees, and puts his hands together and says: "Don't hurt me -- don't! I ain't never done no bad to a ghost. I always liked dead people, and done all I could for 'em. You go and get in de river again, where you belongs, and don't do nuffin to Old Jim, that was always your friend."

Well, I wasn't long making him understand I wasn't dead. I was ever so glad

to see Jim. I wasn't bored from being alone now. I told him I knew he wouldn't tell people where I was. Anyway, I talked along, but he only sat there and looked at me; never said nothing.

Then I says: "It's good light now. Let's get breakfast. Make up your camp fire good."

"What's de use of making up de camp fire to cook strawberries and such? But you got a rifle, ain't you? We can get sumfin better den strawberries."

"Strawberries and such," I says. "Is that what you live on?"

"I couldn't get nuffin else," he says.

"Why, how long you been on the island, Jim?"

"I come here de night after you was killed."

"What, all that time?"

"Yes -- that's true."

"And ain't you had nothing but that kind of food to eat?"

"No, sir -- nuffin else."

"Well, you must be most dead from hunger, ain't you?"

"I think I could eat a horse. I think I could. How long you been on de island?"

"Since the night I got killed."

"No! Why, what has you lived on? But you got a gun. Oh, yes, you got a rifle. Dat's good. Now you kill sumfin and I'll make up de fire."

So we went over to where the canoe was, and while he built a fire in an open place under the trees, I got some corn meal and pig meat and coffee, and a kettle and a pan, and sugar and tin cups, and Jim was surprised more than a little, because he believed it was all done with magic. I caught a good big fish, too, and Jim cleaned him with his knife, and cooked him.

When breakfast was ready we lay back on the grass and eat it smoking hot. Jim jumped into it for all he was worth, as he was almost dead from hunger. Then when we had got pretty well filled, we just laid down and rested.

By and by Jim says: "But look here, Huck, who was it dat was killed in dat cabin if it weren't you?"

Then I told him the whole thing, and he said it was smart. He said Tom Sawyer couldn't get up no better plan than what I had.

Then I says: “How do you come to be here, Jim, and how did you get here?”

He looked pretty worried, and didn’t say nothing for a minute. Then he says: “Maybe I better not tell.”

“Why, Jim?”

“Well, dey’s reasons. But you wouldn’t tell on me if I was to tell you, would you, Huck?”

“Punish me if I would, Jim.”

“Well, I believe you, Huck. I -- run off.”

“Jim!”

“But remember, you said you wouldn’t tell -- you know you said you wouldn’t tell, Huck?”

“Well, I did. I said I wouldn’t, and I’ll stick to it. Honest Indian, I will. People would call me a low-down Abolitionist and hate me for not talking -- but that don’t make no difference. I ain’t a-going to tell, and I ain’t a-going back there, anyway. So, now, let’s know all about it.”

“Well, you see, it was dis way. Old Mrs. -- dat’s Miss Watson -- she is at me all de time, and she can be pretty rough, but she always said she wouldn’t sell me down to New Orleans. But I saw dey was a slave buyer around de place a lot dese days, and I started to get worried. Well, one night I goes secretly to de door pretty late, and de door weren’t quite shut, and I hear old Mrs. tell de widow she gwyne to sell me down to Orleans, and she didn’t want to, but she could get eight hundred dollars for me, and it was such a big hill of money she couldn’t say no. De widow she tried to get her to say she wouldn’t do it, but I never waited to hear de rest. I took off pretty fast after dat, I tell you. “I took out and run down de hill, planning to rob a boat along de river somewhere above town, but dey was people moving around yet, so I went into de old broken-down barrel shop on de side of the river to hide and wait for everybody to go away. Well, I was dere all night. Dey was someone around all de time. Along about six in de morning boats started to go by, and about eight or nine, every boat dat went along was talking about how your pa come over to de town and say you was killed. Dese last boats was full of men and women a-going over for to see de place. Sometimes dey’d pull up at de beach and take a rest before dey started across, so by de talk I got to know all about de killing. I was powerful sorry you was killed, Huck, but I ain’t no more now.

“I stayed dere under de timber all day. I was hungry, but I weren’t afraid of anyone looking for me; because I knowed old Mrs. and de widow was going to start to de church camp-meeting right after breakfast and be gone all day, and dey knows I goes off wid de cows about daylight, so dey wouldn’t be looking for me round de place, and so dey wouldn’t miss me until after dark dat night.

De other servants wouldn't miss me, because dey'd go off and have a rest soon as de old ones was out of de way.

"Well, when it come dark again I took out up de river road, and went about two miles or more to where dey weren't no houses. I'd made up my mind about what I was a-gwyne to do. You see, if I kept on trying to get away on foot, de dogs would find me; if I robbed a boat to cross over, dey'd miss dat boat, you see, and dey'd know about where I'd land on de other side, and where to pick up my smell wid de dogs. So I says, a raft is what I's after; it don't make no smell.

"I see a light a-coming round de point by and by, so I jumped in and pushed a log ahead of me and started swimming more than half way across de river, and got in behind de timber that was coming down the river, and kept my head down low, and kind of worked against the movement of the water until de raft come along. Den I moved to de back of it and took a hold. It clouded up and was pretty dark for a little while. So I climbed up and lay myself down on de boards. De men was all away up in de middle, where de lantern was. De river was a-coming up, and dey was a good fast movement; so I worked out dat by four in de morning I'd be twenty-five mile down de river, and den I'd go back in the water just before the sun come up and swim to the beach, and take to de trees on de Illinois side.

"But I didn't have no luck. When we was almost down to de head of de island a man started to come toward de back wid de lantern. I see it weren't no good for to wait, so I dropped quietly into the water and headed for the island. Well, I thought I could land almost anywhere, but I couldn't -- the land on the side of the river was too steep. I was almost to de foot of de island before I found a good place. I went into de trees and judged I wouldn't play with rafts no more, long as dey move de lantern around so. I had my pipe and some tobacco and some matches in my hat, and dey weren't wet, so I was all right."

"And so you ain't had no meat or bread to eat all this time? Why didn't you get mud turtles?"

"How you gwyne to get dem? You can't come up on dem and hold dem; and how's a body gwyne to hit dem wid a rock? How could a body do it in de night? I weren't gwyne to show myself on de side of de river in de light."

"Well, that's so. You've had to keep in the trees all the time, for sure. Did you hear them shooting the cannon?"

"Oh, yes. I knowed dey was after you. I see dem go by here -- watched dem through de bushes."

Some young birds come along, flying a yard or two at a time and then landing. Jim said it was a sign it was going to rain. He said it was a sign when young chickens flew that way, and so he believed it must be the same way when young birds done it. I was going to catch some of them, but Jim wouldn't let me. He said it was death. He said his father was powerful sick once, and

some of them caught a bird, and his old grandmother said his father would die, and he did.

And Jim said you must not count the things you are going to cook for dinner, because that would bring bad luck. The same if you shook the table cloth after the sun goes down. And he said if a man owned a bee hive and that man died, the bees must be told about it before the sun come up next morning, or else the bees would all become weak and quit work and die. Jim said bees only wouldn't hurt stupid people; but I didn't believe that, because I had tried them lots of times myself, and they didn't hurt me.

I had heard about some of these things before, but not all of them. Jim knowed all kinds of signs. He said he knowed most everything. I said it looked to me like all the signs was about bad luck, and so I asked him if there weren't any good luck signs.

He says: "Very few -- and dey ain't no use to a body. What you want to know when good luck's a-coming for? Want to keep it off?" And he said: "If you's got a lot of hair on your arms and on your chest, it's a sign dat you's a-gwyne to be rich. Well, dey's some good in a sign like dat, if it's a-gwyne to be far ahead. You see, maybe you's got to be poor a long time first, and so you could get discouraged and kill yourself if you didn't know by de sign dat you gwyne to be rich by me by."

"Have you got hair on your arms and on your breast, Jim?"

"What's de good to ask dat question? Don't you see I has?"

“Well, are you rich?”

“No, but I been rich once, and gwyne to be rich again. Once I had fourteen dollars, but I took to doing business and got cleaned out.”“What did you do business in, Jim?”

“Well, first I started wid animals. I put ten dollars in a cow. But I won't do it again. De cow up and died on my hands.”

“You lost the ten dollars?”

“No, I didn’t lose it all. I only lost about nine of it. I sold de skin and fat for a dollar and ten cents.”

“Did you do more business with the five dollars ten cents you had left?”

“Yes. You know dat slave wid one leg dat belongs to old Mr. Bradish? He started up a bank, and said anyone put in a dollar would get four dollars more at de end of de year. Well, all de Blacks went in, but dey didn’t have much. I

was de only one dat had much. So I held out for more dan four dollars, and I said if I didn't get it I'd start a bank myself. Dat nigger wanted to keep me out de business for sure because he says dey weren't business enough for two banks, so he says I could put in my five dollars and he'd pay me thirty-five at de end of de year.

"So I done it. Den I planned to put de thirty-five dollars to work and keep things a-moving. Dey was a slave named Bob, dat had found a boat and his master didn't know about it; and he sold it to me. I told him to take de thirty-five dollars when de end of de year come; but someone robbed de boat dat night, and next day de one-legged Black say de bank collapsed. So dey didn't none of us get no money."

"What did you do with the ten cents, Jim?"

"Well, I was gwyne to spend it, but I had a dream, and de dream told me to give it to a Black named Balum; he's one of dem stupid people, you know. But he's lucky, dey say, and I could see I wasn't. De dream say let Balum do business wid de ten cents and he'd make a lot of money for me. Well, Balum he took de money, and when he was in church he hear de preacher say dat whoever give to de poor is giving to de Lord, and will get his money back a hundred times over. So Balum he took and give de whole ten cents to de poor, and sit back to see what was gwyne to come of it."

"Well, what did come of it, Jim?"

"Nuffin never come of it. I couldn't get back dat money no way; and Balum he couldn't too. I ain't gwyne to give no more money without I see what's coming back of it. Sure to get your money back a hundred times, de preacher says! If I could get de ten cents back, I'd call it square, and be glad of it."

"Well, it's all right anyway, Jim, long as you're going to be rich again some time or other."

"Yes; and I's rich now, come to look at it. I owns myself, and I's worth eight hundred dollars. I wished I had de money, I wouldn't want no more."

Chapter 9

I wanted to go and look at a place right about the middle of the island that I'd found when I was looking around; so we took off walking and soon got to it, because the island was only three miles long and four hundred yards wide.

This place was a long, steep hill about forty foot high. We had a rough time getting to the top, the sides was so steep and the bushes so thick. We walked and climbed around all over it, and by and by found a good big cave in the rock, almost up to the top on the side toward Illinois. The cave was as big as two or three rooms pushed together, and Jim could stand up straight in it. It was cool in there. Jim was for putting our traps in there right away, but I said we didn't want to be climbing up and down there all the time.

Jim said if the canoe was hiding in a good place near the hill, and we had all the traps in the cave, we could hurry there if anyone was to come to the island, and they would never find us without dogs. And, besides, he said them little birds had said it was going to rain, and did I want the things to get wet?

So we went back and got the canoe, and brought it up opposite the cave, and carried all the traps up there. Then we hunted up a place close by to hide the canoe in, where the willow branches was thick. We took some fish off of the lines and set them again, and started to get ready for dinner.

The door of the cave was big enough to wheel a barrel through it, and on one side of the door the floor projected out a little, and was flat and a good place to build a fire on. So we made it there and cooked dinner.

We put the blankets down inside for a rug, and eat our dinner in there. We put all the other things at the back of the cave. Pretty soon it turned dark, and started to thunder and lightning; so the birds was right about it. Soon after it started to rain, and it rained like all hell, too, and I never seen the wind blow so.

It was one of these real summer storms. It would get so dark that it looked all blue-black outside. It was beautiful; and the rain would come down so thick that the trees off a little ways looked grey and like a spider web; and here would come an explosion of wind that would bend the trees down and turn up the white under side of the leaves; and then an even bigger wind would follow along and make the branches throw their arms as if they was just wild; and next, when it was just about the bluest and blackest -- fst! it was as light as heaven, and you'd have a little show of tree tops a-moving about away off in the distance, hundreds of yards farther than you could see before; dark as sin again in a second, and then you'd hear the thunder let go with an awful noise, and then go groaning and turning down the sky toward the under side of the world, like pushing empty barrels down steps -- where it's long steps and they jump around a lot, you know.

“Jim, this is nice,” I says. “I wouldn’t want to be nowhere else. Pass me another piece of fish and some hot corn bread.”

"Well, you wouldn’t a been here if it hadn’t a been for Jim. You’d a been down dere in de trees widout any dinner, and getting almost drowned, too; dat you would, honey. Chickens knows when it’s gwyne to rain, and so do de birds, child.”
The river went up higher and higher for ten or twelve days, until at last it was over the sides of the river. The water was three or four foot deep on the island in the low places and on the Illinois bottom. On that side it was a good many miles wide, but on the Missouri side it was the same old distance across -- a half a mile -- because the Missouri side was just a wall of cliffs.

Each day we went all over the island in the canoe. It was pretty cool in under the trees, even if the sun was burning outside. We went bending in and out between the trees, and sometimes the vines were hanging so thick we had to back away and go some other way. Well, on every old broken-down tree you could see rabbits and snakes and such things; and when the island had been flooded a day or two they got so quiet, because of being hungry, that you could take the canoe right up and put your hand on them if you wanted to; but not the snakes and turtles -- they would drop off into the water. The line of hills our cave was in was full of them. We could a had animals enough to play with if we had wanted them.

One night we caught a little piece of a timber raft -- nice boards. It was twelve foot wide and about fifteen or sixteen foot long, and the top stood above water six or seven inches -- a solid, level floor. We could see saw logs go by in the light sometimes, but we let them go; we didn’t show ourselves in the light.

Another night when we was up at the head of the island, just before the sun come up, here comes a whole timber house down, on the west side. She was a big one, and leaning over a lot. We took the canoe out and got on it -- climbed in at a window. But it was too dark to see yet, so we tied the canoe to it and sat there waiting for the sun to come up.

The light started to come before we got to the foot of the island, so we looked in at the window. We could make out a bed, a table, two old chairs, and lots of things around the floor, and there was clothes hanging against the wall. There was something on the floor in the far corner that looked like a man.

So Jim says: “Hello, you!”

But it didn’t move. So I shouted again, then Jim says: “He ain’t asleep -- he’s dead. You hold here -- I’ll go see.” He went in, and got down close and looked, and says:

“It’s a dead man. Yes, it is; with no clothes on, too. He got a bullet in de back. I’d say he’s been dead two or three days. Come in, Huck, but don’t look at his face -- it’s too awful.”

I didn’t look at him at all. Jim throwed some old dirty cloths over him, but there was no need for that; I didn’t want to see him. There was lots of old dirty cards all around over the floor, and old whiskey bottles, and two masks made out of black cloth; and all over the walls was the stupidest kind of words and pictures made with coals from a fire. There was two old dirty dresses, and a sun hat, and some women’s under clothes hanging against the wall, and some men’s clothes, too. We put the lot into the canoe -- maybe we could find a use for them. There was a boy’s old hat on the floor; I took that, too. And there was a bottle that had had milk in it, and it had a piece of cloth in it for a baby to put in its mouth to get milk from it. We would of took the bottle, but it was broken. There was a dirty old timber box, and an old broken suitcase. They was open, but there weren’t nothing left in them that was of any good to us. The way things was all over the place we said to ourselves that the people must of left

in a hurry, and weren't fixed so as to carry off most of their things.

We got an old tin lantern, and a sharp meat knife without any handle, and a nice new knife worth money in any shop, and a lot of candles made from fat, and a tin stick to hold a candle, and a tin cup, and a dirty old quilt off the bed, and a hand bag with needles and wax and buttons and thread and all such things in it, and an axe and some nails, and a fish line as thick as my little finger with some very big hooks on it, and a big piece of leather, and a horse shoe, and some bottles of medicine that didn't have no name on them; and just as we was leaving Jim found a dirty old violin bow, and a timber leg. The belts to hold it on was broken off of it, but, apart from that, it was a good enough leg, but it was too long for me and not long enough for Jim, and we couldn't find the other one, even after hunting all around.

And so, take it all around, we made a good time of it. When we was ready to leave we was four hundred yards below the island, and it was pretty much light outside; so I made Jim lay down in the canoe and cover up with the quilt, because if he set up people could tell he was a black man a good ways off. I took the boat over to the Illinois side, and was pushed down the river almost a half a mile doing it. I worked my way back up to the island in the dead water under the high ground on that side, and hadn't no accidents and didn't see nobody. We got home all safe.

Chapter 10

After breakfast I wanted to talk about the dead man and about how he come to be killed, but Jim didn't want to. He said it would bring bad luck; and on top of that, he said, his ghost might come looking for us; he said a man that weren't buried would more often do that than one that was planted and comfortable. That sounded pretty true, so I didn't say no more; but I couldn't stop from studying over it and wishing I knowed who killed the man, and what they done it for.

We went through the clothes we'd got, and found eight dollars in silver sewed up inside an old coat.

Jim said he had a feeling the people robbed the coat and didn't know it had money in it, because if they'd a-knowed they wouldn't a left it. I said I had a feeling they killed him, too; but Jim didn't want to talk about that.

I says: "Now you think it's bad luck; but what did you say when I showed you the snake skin that I found on the top of the hill day before yesterday? You said it was the worst bad luck in the world to touch a snake skin with my hands. Well, here's your bad luck! We've brought in all these things and eight dollars on top of it. I wish we could have some bad luck like this every day, Jim."

"Never you mind, honey, never you mind. Don't you get too smart. It's a-coming. Remember I tell you, it's a-coming."

It did come, too. It was a Tuesday that we had that talk. Well, after dinner Friday we was lying around in the grass at the highest end of the hill, and got out of tobacco. I went to the cave to get some, and found a rattlesnake in there. I killed him, and put him on the foot of Jim's blanket, ever so alive looking, thinking there'd be some fun when Jim found him there. Well, that night I wasn't thinking about the snake, and when Jim threw himself down on the blanket as I was lighting a candle the snake's mate was there, and took a bite of him.

He jumped up shouting, and the first thing the light showed was the snake coiled up for another jump at him. I killed it in a second with a stick, and Jim picked up pap's whiskey bottle and started to pour it down his throat.

He had no shoes on, and the snake went for him right on the heel. That all comes of my being so stupid as to not remember that wherever you leave a dead snake its mate always comes there and hugs it. Jim told me to cut off the snake's head and throw it away, and then skin the body and cook a piece of it. I done it, and he eat it and said it would help him heal. He made me take off the rattles and tie them around his wrist, too. Then I went out quiet and throwed the snakes clear away in the bushes; for I weren't going to let Jim find out it was me that brought the snake's mate there, not if I could help it.

Jim kept on drinking at the whiskey, and now and then he got out of his head and ran around and shouted; but every time he come to himself he went to drinking whiskey again. His foot went up pretty big, and so did his leg; but by and by the effect of drinking started to come, and so I judged he was all right; but I think it would be better the snake's bite than pap's whiskey.

Jim was sick for four days and nights. Then his leg went back down and he was around again. I said to myself then I wouldn't ever take hold of a snake skin again with my hands, now that I see what had come of it. Jim said he could see I would believe him next time. And he said that handling a snake skin was such awful bad luck that maybe we hadn't got to the end of it yet. He said he would be happier to see the new moon over his left shoulder as much

as a thousand times than take up a snake skin in his hand. Well, I was getting to feel that way myself. Still, I've always said that looking at the new moon over your left shoulder is one of the most dangerous and foolish things a body can do. Old Hank Bunker done it once, and talked proud of it; and in less than two years he got drunk and fell off of a tower, and hit the ground so hard that he was just as thin as a blanket, as you may say; and they put him like that between two barn doors, and buried him like that, so they say, but I didn't see it. Pap told me. But anyway it all come of looking at the moon that way, like a stupid person.

Well, the days went along, and the river went down between its sides again; and about the first thing we done was to put meat from a skinned rabbit on one of the big hooks and catch a catfish that was as big as a man, being six foot two inches long, and weighed over two hundred pounds. It's easy to see that we couldn't handle him; he would a throwed us into Illinois. We just sat there and watched him throw himself around until he died. We found a metal button in his stomach and a round ball, and lots of other things. We cut the ball open with the axe, and there was a thread cylinder in it. Jim said he'd had it there a long time, to cover it over so with chemicals from his stomach and make a ball of it. It was as big a fish as was ever caught in the Mississippi, I'd say. Jim said he hadn't ever seen a bigger one. He would a been worth a lot of money over at the village. They sell out such a fish as that one by the pound in the market there; everybody buys some of him; his meat's as white as snow and makes a good meal.

Next morning I said it was getting slow and boring, and I wanted to get some action up some way. I said I would just go quietly over the river and find out what was happening. Jim liked that plan; but he said I must go in the dark and look sharp. Then he studied it over and said, couldn't I put on some of them old things and dress up like a girl? That was a good plan, too. So we made one of the dresses a little shorter, and I turned up my pant legs to my knees and got into it. Jim tied it behind with the hooks, and it was a good job. I put on the sun hat and tied it, so that for a body to look in and see my face was like looking down a stove pipe with a bend in it. Jim said nobody would know me, even in the light of day. I worked at it all day to get the feel of the things, and by and by I could do pretty well in them, only Jim said I didn't walk like a girl; and he said I must quit pulling up my dress to get at my pocket. I listened to him, and done better.

I started up the Illinois side in the canoe just after dark. Then I started across to the town from a little below the ferry landing. The movement of the river brought me in at the bottom of the town. I tied up and walked along the side of the river. There was a light burning in a little cabin that hadn't been lived in for a long time, and I wanted to know who had took up living there. I moved quietly up and looked in at the window. There was a woman about forty years old in there knitting by a candle that was on a timber table.

I didn't know her face; she was a stranger, for you couldn't show a face in that town that I didn't know. Now this was lucky, because I had been starting to fear; I was getting afraid that people might know my voice and find me out. But if this woman had been in such a little town even two days she could probably tell me all I wanted to know; so I knocked at the door, and promised myself I wouldn't forget I was a girl.

Chapter 11

"Come in," she says, and I did. She says: "Take a chair."

I done it. She looked me over with her little dark eyes, and says: "What might your name be?"

"Sarah Williams."

"Where about do you live? Near here?"
"No, ma'am. In Hookerville, seven mile below. I've walked all the way and I'm all tired out."

“Hungry, too, I think. I’ll find you something.”

“No, ma'am, I ain’t hungry. I was so hungry I had to stop two miles below here at a farm; so I ain’t hungry no more. It’s what makes me so late. My mother’s down sick, and out of money and everything, and I come to tell my Uncle Abner Moore. He lives at the top end of the town, she says. I ain’t ever been here before. Do you know him?”

“No; but I don’t know everybody yet. I haven’t lived here quite two weeks. It’s a long way to the top end of the town. You better stay here all night. Take off your hat.”

“No,” I says; “I’ll rest up, and go on. I ain’t afraid of the dark.”

She said she wouldn’t let me go by myself, but her husband would be in by and by, maybe in an hour and a half, and she’d send him along with me. Then she got to talking about her husband, and about her family up the river, and her family down the river, and about how much better off they was before, and how they didn’t know but they’d done the wrong thing coming to our town, instead of letting good enough alone -- and so on and so on, until I was afraid I done the wrong thing coming to her to find out what was going on in the town; but by and by she dropped on to pap and the killing, and then I was pretty happy to let her go right on talking. She told about me and Tom Sawyer finding the six thousand dollars (only she got it ten) and all about pap and what a hard lot he was, and what a hard lot I was, and at last she got down to where I was killed.

I says: “Who done it? We’ve heard about this down in Hookerville, but we don’t know who it was that killed Huck Finn.”

“Well, as I see it, there’s a lot of people here that’d like to know who killed him too. Some think old Finn done it himself.”

“No -- is that so?”

“Most everybody thought it at first. He’ll never know how close he come to being hanged. But that night they changed around and judged it was done by a runaway slave named Jim.”

“Why he -- “

I stopped. I thought I better keep quiet. She run on, and never saw I had put in at all:

“That slave run off the very night Huck Finn was killed. So there’s a reward out for him -- three hundred dollars. And there’s a reward out for old Finn, too -- two hundred dollars. You see, he come to town the morning after the killing, and told about it, and was out with ‘em on the ferry hunt, and right away after he up and left. Before night they wanted to hang him, but he was gone, you

see. Well, next day they found out the slave was gone; they found out he hadn't been seen since ten o'clock the night the killing was done. So then they put it on him, you see; and while they was full of it, next day, back comes old Finn, and went crying to Judge Thatcher to get money to hunt for the slave all over Illinois with. The judge gave him some, and that night he got drunk, and was around until after midnight with two very hard-looking strangers, and then went off with them. Well, he ain't come back since, and they ain't looking for him back until this thing blows over a little, for people thinks now that he killed his boy and fixed things so people would think robbers done it, and then he'd get Huck's money without having to wait a long time for the court. People do say he weren't any too good to do it. Oh, he's smart, I say. If he don't come back for a year he'll be all right. You can't prove anything on him, you know; everything will be quieted down then, and he'll walk in and take Huck's money as easy as nothing."

"Yes, I think so, ma'am. I don't see nothing in the way of it. Has everybody quit thinking the slave done it?"

"Oh, no, not everybody. A good many thinks he done it. But they'll get the Black pretty soon now, and maybe they can scare it out of him."

"Why? Are they after him yet?"

"Well, you're such a sweet thing, ain't you! Does three hundred dollars lay around every day for people to pick up? Some people think the slave ain't far from here. I'm one of them -- but I ain't talked it around. A few days ago I was talking with an old man and woman that lives next door in the log cabin, and they happened to say nobody don't ever go to that island over there that they call Jackson's Island. 'Don't anyone live there?' says I. 'No, nobody,' says they. I didn't say any more, but I done some thinking. I was pretty near sure I'd seen smoke over there, about the head of the island, a day or two before that, so I says to myself, like as not that slave's hiding over there; anyway, says I, it's worth the trouble to give the place a hunt. I ain't seen any smoke since, so I think maybe he's gone, if it was him; but my husband's going over to see -- him and another man. He was gone up the river; but he got back today, and I told him as soon as he got here two hours ago."

I had got so worried I couldn't sit in one place. I had to do something with my hands; so I took up a needle off of the table and went to threading it. My hands shook, and I was making a bad job of it. When the woman stopped talking I looked up, and she was looking at me pretty strange and smiling a little. I put down the needle and thread, and let on to be interested -- and I was, too -- and says: "Three hundred dollars is a lot of money. I wish my mother could get it. Is your husband going over there tonight?"

"Oh, yes. He went up to town with the man I was telling you of, to get a boat and see if they could find another gun. They'll go over after midnight."

"Couldn't they see better if they was to wait until morning?"

“Yes. And couldn’t the black man see better, too? After midnight he’ll probably be asleep, and they can move around through the trees and hunt up his camp fire all the better for the dark, if he’s got one.”

“I didn’t think of that.”

The woman kept looking at me pretty strangely, and I didn’t feel at all comfortable. Pretty soon she says: “What did you say your name was, honey?”

“M -- Mary Williams.”

It didn’t seem to me that I said it was Mary before, so I didn’t lookup—seemed to me I said it was Sarah; so I felt kind of in a corner, and was afraid maybe I was looking it, too. I wished the woman would say something more; the longer she did nothing the more worried I was.

But now she says: “Honey, I thought you said it was Sarah when you first come in?”

“Oh, yes ma’am, I did. Sarah Mary Williams. Sarah’s my first name. Some calls me Sarah, some calls me Mary.”

“Oh, that’s the way of it?”

“Yes ma’am.”

I was feeling better then, but I wished I was out of there, anyway. I couldn't look up yet.

Well, the woman fell to talking about how hard times was, and how poor they had to live, and how the rats was as free as if they owned the place, and on and on, and then I got re- laxed again. She was right about the rats. You'd see one put his nose out of a hole in the corner every little while. She said she had to have things close by to throw at them when she was alone, or they wouldn't give her no rest. She showed me a bar of soft metal turned around itself into a ball, and said she was good at throwing it most times, but she'd pulled her arm a day or two ago, and didn't know if she could throw true now. But she watched for them, and soon banged away at a rat; but she missed him wide, and said "Ow!" it hurt her arm so. Then she told me to try for the next one. I wanted to be getting away before the old man got back, but I weren't stupid enough to let on. I got the thing, and the first rat that showed his nose I let go, and if he'd a stayed where he was he'd a been a very sick rat. She said that was very good, and she believed I would kill the next one. She went and got the ball of metal and brought it back, and brought along knitting thread which she wanted me to help her with. I held up my two hands and she put the circles of thread over them, and went on talking about her and her husband's business. But she cut herself off to say: "Keep your eye on the rats. You better have the ball on your lap, where you can get it."

So she dropped the ball into my lap just that same second, and I squeezed my legs together on it and she went on talking. But only about a minute. Then

she took off the thread and looked me straight in the face, and very nicely she says: “Come, now, what’s your real name?”

“Wh -- what, ma’am?”

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

I think I was shaking like a leaf, and I didn’t know what to do. But I says: “Please don’t make fun of a poor girl like me, ma’am. If I’m in the way here, I’ll just...”

"No, you won’t. Sit down and stay where you are. I ain’t going to hurt you, and I ain’t going to tell on you, either. You just tell me your secret, and trust me. I’ll keep it; and, what’s more, I’ll help you. So will my old man if you want him to. You see, you’ve done run away that’s all. It ain’t anything. There ain’t nothing wrong with it. You’ve been hurt, and you made up your mind to cut. Bless you, child, I wouldn’t tell on you. Tell me all about it now, that’s a good boy.”
So I said it wouldn’t be no use to try to play it any longer, and I would tell her everything, but she mustn’t go back on her promise. Then I told her my father and mother was dead, and the law had given me to a cruel old farmer in the country thirty mile back from the river, and he was so cruel I couldn’t take it no more; he went away for a few days, and so I made my move and took some of his daughter’s old clothes and left, and I had been three nights coming the thirty miles. I traveled nights, and rested days, and the bag of bread and meat I carried from home was enough for all the way there. I said I believed my Uncle Abner Moore would take care of me, and so that was why I had headed for this town of Goshen.

“Goshen, child? This ain’t Goshen. This is St. Petersburg. Goshen’s ten mile farther up. Who told you this was Goshen?”

“Why, a man I met first thing this morning, just as I was going to turn into the trees for my sleep. He told me when the roads separated into two, I must take the right side, and five miles would bring me to Goshen.”

“He was drunk, I’d say. He told you opposite to what's true.”

“Well, he did act like he was drunk, but it ain’t no different now. I got to be moving along. I’ll be in Goshen before morning.”

“Hold on. I’ll fix you some food to eat. You might need it.”

So she put me up some food, and says: “Say, when a cow’s laying down, which end of her gets up first? Answer up quickly now -- don’t stop to study over it. Which end gets up first?”

"The back end, ma'am."

“The back end, ma’am.”

“Well, then, a horse?”

“The front end, ma’am.”

“If fifteen cows is eating on the side of a hill, how many of them eats with their heads pointed the same direction?”

“The whole fifteen, mum.”

“Well, I do believe you've lived in the country. I thought maybe you was tricking me again. What’s your real name, now?”
“George Peters, ma’am.”

“Well, try to remember it, George. Don’t forget and tell me it’s Alexander before you go, and then get out by saying it’s George Alexander when I catch you. And don’t go about women in that old dress. You do a poor job as a girl,

but you might trick men, maybe. Bless you, child, when you set out to thread a needle don't hold the thread still and bring the needle up to it; hold the needle still and push the thread at it; that's the way a woman most always does, but a man always does t'other way. And when you throw at a rat or anything, stand up on the top of your toes and bring your hand up over your head as rough as you can, and miss your rat about six or seven foot. Throw straight-armed from the shoulder, like a girl; not from the wrist and elbow, with your arm out to one side, like a boy. And, remember, when a girl tries to catch anything in her lap she throws her knees apart; she don't squeeze them together, the way you did when you caught that ball of metal. Why, I knew you for a boy when you was threading the needle; and I planned the other things just to be sure. Now run along to your uncle, Sarah Mary Williams George Alexander Peters, and if you get into trouble you send word to Mrs. Judith Loftus, which is me, and I'll do what I can to get you out of it. Keep the river road all the way, and next time you go walking take shoes and socks with you. The river road's a rough one, and your feet'll be powerful sore when you get to Goshen, I'd say."

I walked up the river about fifty yards, and then I turned back secretly to get to where my canoe was, a good piece below the house. I jumped in, and was off in a hurry. I went up the river far enough to make the head of the island when crossing, and then started across. I took off the sun hat, for I didn't want anything to keep me from seeing well. When I was about the middle I heard the clock start to sound, so I stops and listens; the sound come softly over the water but clear -- eleven. When I reached the head of the island I never waited to rest, even if I was pretty tired, but I headed right into the timber where my old camp used to be, and started a good fire there on a high and dry spot.

Then I jumped in the canoe and raced off to our place, a mile and a half below, as hard as I could go. I landed, and pushed on through the timber and up the hill and into the cave. There Jim was, fast asleep on the ground.
I shouted: "Get up and get moving, Jim! There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!"

Jim never asked no questions, he never said a word; but the way he worked for the next half hour showed how scared he was. By the end of half an hour everything we had in the world was on our raft, and she was ready to be pushed out from the hiding place where she was kept. We put out the camp fire at the cave first thing, and didn't show a candle outside after that.

I pushed the canoe out from the land a little, and took a look. If there was a boat around I couldn't see it, for stars and darkness ain't good to see by. Then we got out the raft and moved quietly along down in the darkness under the cliff at the side of the river, past the foot of the island without ever saying a word.

Chapter 12

It must a been close on to one in the morning when we got below the island at last, and the raft did seem to go mighty slow. If a boat was to come along we was going to take to the canoe and break for the Illinois side; and just as well a boat didn't come, for we hadn't ever thought to put the rifle in the canoe, or a fishing-line, or anything to eat. We was in too much of a hurry to think of so many things. It weren't good planning to put everything on the raft.

If the men went to the island they would a found the camp fire I made, and watched it all night for Jim to come. Anyway, they stayed away from us, and if my building the fire never tricked them it was still a good plan. I played it as low down on them as I could.

When the first sign of day started to show, we tied up to a little spot of sand with thick trees growing on it, in a big bend on the Illinois side. We cut off some branches with the axe, and covered up the raft with them so it just looked like the side of the river had collapsed there.

We had mountains on the Missouri side and thick trees on the Illinois side, and the boats all moved down the Missouri side at that place, so we weren't afraid of anyone running across us. We stayed there all day, and watched the rafts and big boats fly down the Missouri side, and those going up fight against the big river in the middle. I told Jim all about the time I had talking with that woman; and Jim said she was a smart one, and if she was to start after us herself she wouldn't sit down and watch a camp fire -- no, sir, she'd get a dog. Well, then, I said, why couldn't she tell her husband to get a dog? Jim said he believed she did think of it by the time the men was ready to start, and he believed they must a gone up-town to get a dog and so they lost all that time, or else we wouldn't be here on a little island sixteen or seventeen

miles below the village -- no, truth is, we would be back in that same old town again. So I said I didn't care what was the reason they didn't get us as long as they didn't.

When it was starting to come on dark we put our heads out of the trees, and looked up and down and across; nothing to be seen; so Jim took up some of the top boards of the raft and made a timber tent to get under in rain or in hot weather, and to keep the things dry. Jim made a floor for the tent, and lifted it a foot or more above the level of the raft, so now the blankets and all the traps was out of reach of waves from the big river boats. Right in the middle of the tent we made a box of dirt about five or six inches deep; this was to build a fire on in wet or cold weather; the tent would keep it from being seen. We made an extra steering-oar, too, because one of the others might break.

We fixed up a short stick with a fork in it, to hang the old lantern on, because we must always light the lantern when we seen a river boat coming down toward us, to keep from getting run over; but we wouldn't have to light it for boats going up river, apart from if we see we was in what they call a "crossing"; for the river was pretty high yet, so up-going boats didn't always run the channel, but hunted easy water.

This second night we run between seven and eight hours, making over four miles an hour. We caught fish and talked, and we took a swim now and then to keep off feeling too sleepy. It was kind of holy and serious, going slowly down the big, quiet river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn't ever feel like talking loud, and it weren't often that we laughed -- only a little kind of a low quiet laugh. We had pretty good weather as a general thing, and nothing ever happened to us at all -- that night, or the next, or the next.

Every night we passed towns, some of them away up on black hills, nothing but just a big bed of lights; not a house could you see. The fifth night we passed St. Louis, and it was like the whole world was lighted up. In St. Petersburg they used to say there was twenty or thirty thousand people in St. Louis, but I never believed it until I seen that wonderful blanket of lights at two in the morning. There weren't a sound there; everybody was asleep.

Every night we would land about ten o'clock at some little village, and I'd go and buy ten or fifteen cents worth of meal or meat or other things to eat; and sometimes I lifted a chicken that weren't sitting comfortable, and took him along. Pap always said, take a chicken when you can, because if you don't want him yourself you can easy find someone that does, and a good act like that people won't ever forget. I never see pap when he didn't want the chicken himself, but that is what he always said, anyway.

Mornings before the sun come up I would go into corn fields and borrow a watermelon, or a pumpkin, or some new corn, or things of that kind. Pap always said there weren't no wrong to borrow things if you was meaning to pay them back sometime; but the widow said it weren't anything but a soft name for robbing, and no right person would do it. Jim said he thought the widow was partly right and pap was partly right; so the best way would be for

us to take out two or three things from the list and say we wouldn't borrow them any more -- then he said it wouldn't be no problem to borrow the others. So we talked it over all one night, going along down the river, trying to make up our minds if we was to drop the watermelons, or pumpkins or what. But toward morning we got it all fixed up, and said we would drop crabapples and persimmons. We weren't feeling just right before that, but it was all comfortable now. I was glad the way it come out, too, because crabapples ain't ever good, and the persimmons wouldn't be ready for two or three months yet.

We killed a duck now and then that got up too early in the morning or didn't go to bed early enough at night. Take it all around, we lived pretty high.

The fifth night below St. Louis we had a big storm after midnight, with a power of thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in a solid wall. We stayed in the tent and let the raft take care of itself. When the lightning come out we could see a big straight river ahead, and high cliffs on both sides.

By and by says I, "Hello, Jim, look over there!" It was a river boat that had run up onto a rock. We was moving straight down on her. The lightning showed her very clearly. She was leaning over, with part of her top floor above water, and you could see every little chimney rope clean and clear, and a chair by the big bell, with an old soft hat hanging on the back of it, when the lightning come.

Well, it being away in the night with a storm and all, I felt just the way any other boy would a felt when I seen that broken ship laying there so sad and all alone in the middle of the river. I wanted to get onto her and look around a little, and see what there was there.

So I says: "Let's land on her, Jim."

But Jim was dead against it at first. He says: "I don't want to go playing around on some broken ship. We's doing well enough, and we better let well enough alone, as de good book says. Like as not dey's a watchman on dat ship."

"Watchman your grandmother!" I says. "There ain't nothing to watch but cabins and the steering room; and do you think anyone's going to try to rob them on such a night as this, when it could break up and wash off down the river any minute?" Jim couldn't say nothing to that, so he didn't try.

"And what's more," I says, "we might borrow something worth having out of the cabin. Cigars maybe -- that cost five cents each, solid money. River boat drivers is always rich, and get sixty dollars a month, and they don't care a cent what a thing costs, long as they want it. Put a candle in your pocket; I can't rest, Jim, until we give her a look over. Do you think Tom Sawyer would ever go by this thing? Not for pie, he wouldn't. He'd call it an adventure -- that's what he'd call it; and he'd land on that ship if it was his last act. And wouldn't he make it special too? -- wouldn't he put his whole being into it? Why, you'd

think it was Christopher Columbus finding America. I wish Tom Sawyer was here."

Jim he argued a little, but give in. He said we mustn't talk any more than we could help, and then talk mighty low. The lightning showed us the ship again just in time, and we tied up to a hook on the right side of it.

Out there, the floor was pretty high. We went slowly down it to the left, in the dark, toward the steering room, feeling our way with our feet, and pushing our hands out to stop us from hitting the ropes, for it was so dark we couldn't see no sign of them. Pretty soon we come to the forward end of the window in the roof of the steering room, and climbed on to it; and the next step brought us in front of the door to the top cabin, which was open, and true as anything, away down at the other end of the steering room we seen a light! and all in the same second we seemed to hear low voices down there!

Jim whispered and said he was feeling powerful sick, and told me to come along. I says all right, and was going to start for the raft; but just then I heard a voice call out and say: "Oh, please don't, boys; I promise I won't ever tell!"

Another voice said, pretty loud: "It's a lie, Jim Turner. You've acted this way before. You always want more than your part of the takings, and you've always got it, too, because you've promised if you didn't get it you'd tell. But this time you've said it just one time too many. You're the lowest, most two-faced dog in this country."

By this time Jim was gone for the raft. I was just burning up with wanting to know what was happening; and I says to myself, Tom Sawyer wouldn't back out now, and so I won't either; I'm a-going to see what's going on here. So I dropped down on my hands and knees in the narrow walkway, and moved forward in the dark until there weren't but one cabin between me and where the room with the voices was at the end of the walkway. In there I could see a man lying on the floor and tied hand and foot, and two men standing over him, and one of them had a lantern in his hand, and the other one had a gun. This one kept pointing the gun at the man's head on the floor, and saying:

"I'd like to! And I should, too -- you dirty skunk!"

The man on the floor would pull against the ropes and say, “Oh please don’t, Bill; I ain’t ever going to tell.”

Each time he said that the man with the gun would say: “It’s true you ain’t! You never said no truer thing than that, you can count on it.” And once he said: “Hear him beg! and yet if we hadn’t got the best of him and tied him he’d a killed us both. And what for? Just for nothing. Just because we stood on our rights -- that’s what for. But I know you ain’t a-going to be a danger to nobody any more, Jim Turner.”

And the other man says, “Put up that gun, Bill.”

Bill says: “I don’t want to, Jake Packard. I’m for killing him -- and didn’t he kill old Hatfield just the same way -- and ain’t it right that he gets the same thing?”

“But I don’t want him killed, and I’ve got my reasons for it.”

“Bless your heart for them words, Jake Packard! I’ll never forget you long as I live!” says the man on the floor, in a crying like voice.

Packard didn’t take no interest in that, but hanged up his lantern on a nail and

started toward where I was there in the dark, and moved his hand to show that he wanted Bill to come. I moved back as fast as I could about two yards, but the boat leaned so that I couldn't make very good time; so to keep from getting run over and caught I moved into a cabin on the high side. The man came a-feeling along in the dark, and when Packard got to my cabin, he says: "Here -- come in here."

And in he come, and Bill after him. But before they got in I was up in the top bed, cornered, and sorry I come. Then they stood there, with their hands on the side of the bed, and talked. I couldn't see them, but I could tell where they was by the whiskey they'd been having. I was glad I didn't drink whiskey; but it wouldn't a made much difference anyway, because most of the time they couldn't a found me because I didn't breathe. I was too scared. And, besides, a body couldn't breathe and hear such talk. They talked low and serious. Bill wanted to kill Turner. He says: "He's said he'll tell, and he will. If we was to give all that both of us have to him now it wouldn't make no difference after the fight and the way we've done him. Sure as you're born, he'll turn and help the police; now you hear me. I'm for putting him out of his troubles."

"So am I," says Packard, very quiet.

"Well, I'll be... I'd started to think you wasn't. Well, then, that's all right. Let's go and do it."

"Hold on a minute; I ain't had my say yet. You listen to me. Shooting's good, but there's quieter ways if the thing's got to be done. What I say is this: it ain't good thinking to go doing something with a rope around you if you can get at what you're up to in some way that's just as good and at the same time don't bring no new problems into the action. Ain't that so?"

"Too right it is. But how you going to do it this time?"

"Well, my plan is this: we'll look around and bring together whatever things we've missed in the cabins, and push off for the other side of the river and hide the takings. Then we'll wait. Now I say it ain't a-going to be more than two hours before this old ship breaks up and washes off down the river. See? He'll be drowned, and won't have nobody to go to prison for it but himself. I say that's a good measure better than killing him. I don't feel good about killing a man as long as you can get around it; it ain't wise, it ain't right in the eyes of God. Ain't I right?"

“Yes, I think you are. But what if she don’t break up and wash off?”
“Well, we can wait the two hours anyway and see, can’t we?”

“All right, then; come along.”

So they started back to their prisoner, and I left after them, scared half to death, and climbed forward. It was dark as tar up there; but I said, in a kind of rough whisper, “Jim!” and he answered up, right at my elbow, with something like a groan, and I says:

“Hurry, Jim, it ain’t no time for playing around and groaning; there’s a gang of killers back there, and if we don’t hunt up their boat and cut it loose so these boys can’t get away from this ship there’s one of them going to be in a bad way. But if we find their boat we can put all of them in a bad way -- for the police will get them. Fast -- hurry! I’ll hunt the right side, you hunt the left. You start at the raft, and -- “

“Oh, my good lord! Raft? Dey ain’t no raft no more; she done broke loose and went -- and here we is!”

Chapter 13

Well, I caught my breath and almost fainted. Shut up on a dying ship with such a gang as that! But it weren't no time to be feeling sorry for ourselves. We needed to find that boat now -- had to have it for ourselves. So we went a-shaking down the right side, and slow work it was, too -- seemed a week before we got to the back of the ship. No sign of a boat.

Jim said he didn't believe he could go any farther -- so scared he had almost no strength left, he said. But I said, come on, if we get left on this ship we are in serious trouble, for sure. So on we went again. We headed for the back of the steering house, and found it, and then moved forward on the roof, hanging on from window to window, for the side of the roof was in the water.

When we got pretty close to the door to where the gang was, there was the boat, sure enough! I could just make her out in the darkness. I felt ever so thankful. In another second I would a been into it, but just then the door opened. One of the men put his head out only about two foot from me, and I thought I was gone; but he pulled it in again, and says:

"Cover that stupid lantern, Bill!"
He threw a bag of something into the boat, and then got in himself and sat

down. It was Packard. Then Bill he come out and got in. Packard says, in a low voice:

“All ready -- push off!”

I almost couldn’t hang on, I was so weak. But Bill says: “Hold on -- did you go through him?”

“No. Didn’t you?”

“No. So he’s still got his part of the money.”

“Well, let's go; no use to take things and leave money.”
“Say, won’t he know what we’re up to?”

“Maybe. But we got to have it anyway. Come along.”

So they got out and went in.

The door shut loudly because it was on the side leaning in; and in a half second I was in the boat, and Jim come jumping after me. I cut the rope with my pocket-knife, and away we went!

We didn’t touch an oar, and we didn’t speak or whisper, or almost even breathe. We went moving along quietly and quickly, past the top of the big wheel that moves the boat, and past the back of it; then in a second or two more we was a hundred yards below the ship, and the darkness covered her up, every last sign of her, and we was safe, and knowed it.

When we was three or four hundred yards down the river we seen the lantern show like a little candle at the steering house door for a second, and we knowed by that that the robbers had missed their boat, and was starting to understand that they was in just as much trouble now as Jim Turner was.

Then Jim took the oars, and we took out after our raft. Now was the first time that I started to worry about the men. I think I hadn’t had time to before. I started to think how awful it was, even for killers, to be in such a way. I says to myself, there ain’t no telling but I might come to be a killer myself yet, and then how would I like it? So says I to Jim: “The first light we see we’ll land a hundred yards below it or above it, in a good hiding-place for you and the boat, and then I’ll go and make up some kind of a story, and get someone to go for that gang and get them out of there, so they can be hanged in the right way when their time comes.”

But that plan never got started; for pretty soon it started to storm again, worse than ever. The rain poured down, and never a light showed; everybody in bed, I think. We raced down the river, watching for lights and watching for our raft. After a long time the rain let up, but the clouds stayed, and the lightning kept showing a little here and there, and by and by it showed us a black thing ahead, moving on the water, and we made for it.

It was the raft, and mighty glad was we to get on it again. We seen a light now away down to the right, on the side of the river. So I said I would go for it. The boat was half full of things which that gang had robbed there on the ship. We pulled it onto the raft, and I told Jim to keep going down, and show a light when he judged he had gone about two miles, and keep it burning until I come; then I got in the boat and headed for the light. As I got down toward it, three or four more showed -- up on a hill. It was a village. I reached land above the light, and put down my oars and let the river move me. As I went by I see it was a lantern hanging on a big ferry boat. I got out and looked around for the watchman. By and by I found him resting at the front of the boat, with his head down between his knees. I gave his shoulder two or three little pushes, and started to cry.

He waked up in a kind of surprised way; but when he seen it was only me he took a good look, and then he says: “Hello, what’s up? Don’t cry, boy. What’s the trouble?”

I says: “Pap, and mom, and my sister, and – “

Then I broke down crying out loud.

He says: “Oh, stop it now, don’t take on so; we all has to have our troubles, and this one’ll come out all right. What’s the problem with them?”

“They’re -- they’re -- are you the watchman of the boat?”

“Yes,” he says, kind of proud like. “I’m the driver and the owner and the watchman and the head helper; and sometimes I’m all that I carry too. I ain’t as rich as old Jim Hornback, and I can’t be so very generous and good to Tom, Dick, and Harry as what he is, and throw around money the way he does; but I’ve told him many a time that I wouldn’t want to be him; for, says I, a sailing life’s the life for me, and I’d die before I’d live two mile out of town, where there ain’t nothing ever going on, not for all his money and as much more on top of it. Says I -- “I broke in and says:

“They’re in an awful lot of trouble, and -- “

“Who is?”

“Why, pap and mom and my sister and Miss Hooker; and if you’d take your boat and go up there -- “

“Up where? Where are they?”

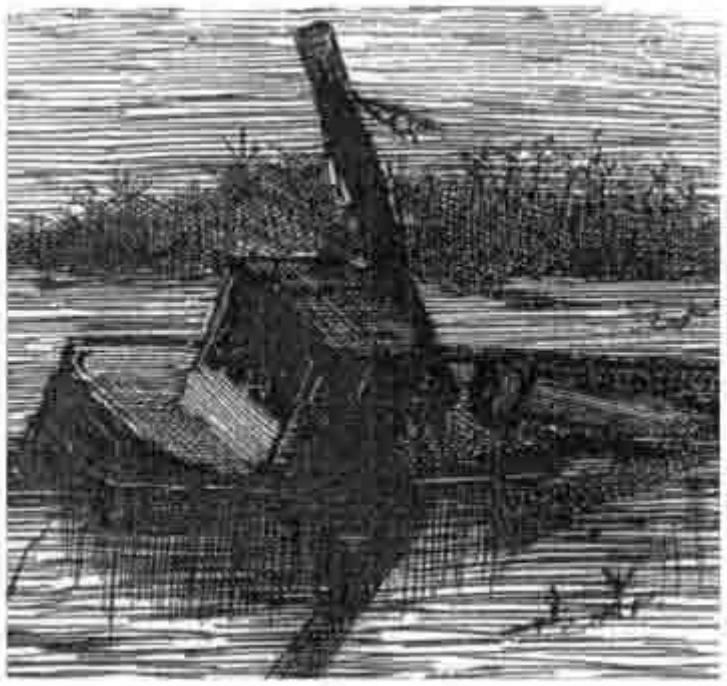
“On the broken ship.”

“What broken ship?”

“Why, there ain’t but one.”

“What, you don’t mean the Walter Scott?”

“Yes.”



“Good land! What're they doing there, for the love of God?”

“Well, they didn’t go there a-planning to.”

“I should think they didn’t! Why, great God, there ain’t no hope for them if they don’t get off mighty soon! Why, how in the world did they ever get into such a place?”

“Easy enough. Miss Hooker was visiting up there to the town -- “

“Yes, Booth’s Landing -- go on.”

“She was a-visiting there at Booth’s Landing, and just about the time the sun was going down she started over with her servant woman in the horse ferry to stay all night at her friend’s house, Miss What-you-call-her -- can’t remember her name -- and they lost their steering oar, and the ferry turned around and went a-moving down, back first, about two mile, and hit up against the broken ship, and the man driving the ferry and the servant woman and the horses was all lost, but Miss Hooker she jumped onto the ship. Well, about an hour after dark we come along down in our flat-bottomed boat, and it was so dark we didn’t see the ship until we was right on it; and so we hit into it too. All of us was saved but Bill Whipple -- and oh, he was the best person! -- I almost wish it had been me, I do.”

“My George! It’s the strangest thing I ever heard. And then what did you all do?”

“Well, we shouted and took on, but it’s so wide there we couldn’t make nobody hear. So pap said someone got to get to land and get help. I was the only one that could swim, so I made a try for it. Miss Hooker she said if I didn’t find help sooner, come here and hunt up her uncle, and he’d fix the thing. I made the land about a mile below, and been trying ever since to get people to do something, but they said, ‘What, on such a night and in such a strong river? There ain’t no point in it; go for the ferry.’ Now if you’ll go and -- “

“By Jackson, I’d like to, and I don’t know but I will; but who in the world’s a-going to pay for it? Do you think your pap -- “

“Why that’s all right. Miss Hooker she told me, very clearly, that her uncle Hornback -- “

“Great guns! is he her uncle? Look here, you head for that light over there, and turn out west when you get there, and about four hundred yards out you’ll come to a pub; tell them to take you out to Jim Hornback’s, and he’ll pay them for it. And don’t you play around any, because he’ll want to know the news. Tell him I’ll have his niece all safe before he can get to town. Get moving, now; I’m a-going up around the corner here to wake up my helper.”

I started for the light, but as soon as he turned the corner I went back and got into my boat and pulled up the side of the river in the easy water about six hundred yards, and moved myself in with some timber boats tied there; for I couldn’t rest easy until I could see the ferry boat start. But take it all around, I

was feeling pretty comfortable because I had taken all this trouble for that gang, when not many would a done it. I wished the widow knowed about it. I judged she would be proud of me for helping these no-goods, because no-goods is the kind the widow and other good people takes the most interest in.

Well, before long here comes that broken ship, out in the dark, off the rocks moving down the river! A kind of cold shaking went through me, and then I headed out for her. She was very deep, and I see in a minute there weren't much hope for anyone being alive in her. I pulled all around her and shouted a little, but there wasn't any answer; all dead quiet. I felt a little sad about the gang, but not much, for I thought if they could take it I could.

Then here comes the ferry boat; so I pushed out toward the middle of the river; and when I judged I was out of eye-reach I put down my oars, and looked back and see the ferry go and smell around the ship looking for Miss Hooker's body, because the owner would know her uncle Hornback would want it; and then pretty soon the ferry boat give it up and went back, and I returned to racing down the river.

It did seem a powerful long time before Jim's light showed up; and when it did show it looked like it was a thousand mile off. By the time I got there the sky was starting to get a little grey in the east; so we stopped at an island, destroyed the boat, and put the raft in a good hiding place, then turned in and had a sleep like we were dead people.

Chapter 14

By and by, when we got up, we turned over the things the gang had robbed off of the ship, and found shoes, and blankets, and clothes, and a lot of books, and a telescope, and three boxes of cigars. We hadn't ever been this rich before in either of our lives. The cigars was the best you can find anywhere. We rested up all the afternoon in the trees talking, and me reading the books, and having a general good time.

I told Jim all about what happened inside the broken ship and at the ferry

boat, and I said these kind of things was adventures; but he said he didn't want no more adventures. He said that when I went in the steering house and he went back to get on the raft and found her gone he nearly died, because he judged it was all up with him any way that it could be fixed; for if he didn't get saved he would drown; and if he did get saved, whoever saved him would send him back home so as to get the reward, and then Miss Watson would sell him South, for sure. Well, he was right; he was most always right; he was smarter than most Blacks.

I read a lot to Jim about kings and important people in England like dukes and such, and how pretty they dressed, and how much show they put on, and called each other lords instead of Mr., and Jim's eyes opened big to show he was interested.

He says: "I didn't know dey was so many of dem. I ain't heard about none of dem, but old King Solomon, without you counts dem kings dat's in a box of cards. How much do a king get?"

"Get?" I says. "Why, they get a thousand dollars a month if they want it; they can have just as much as they want; every- thing belongs to them."

"Ain't that nice? And what dey got to do, Huck?"

"They don't do nothing! Why, how you talk! They just sit around."

"No; is dat so?"

“For sure it is. They just sit around -- apart from, maybe, when there’s a war; then they go to the war. But other times they just lay around lazy; or go hunting -- just hunting and -- Shhh! -- do you hear a noise?”

We come out from behind the trees and looked; but it weren’t nothing but the sound of a river boat’s wheel turning, coming from away down around the point; so we come back.

“Yes,” says I, “and other times, when things is boring, they argue with the government; and if everybody don’t do just so, he cuts their heads off. But mostly they hang around the harem.”

“Round de which?”

“Harem.”

“What’s de harem?”

“The place where he keeps his wives. Don’t you know about the harem? Solomon had one; he had about a million wives.”

“Why, yes, dat’s so; I -- I remember it now. Most likely dey has some loud times in de room where dey keeps de babies.

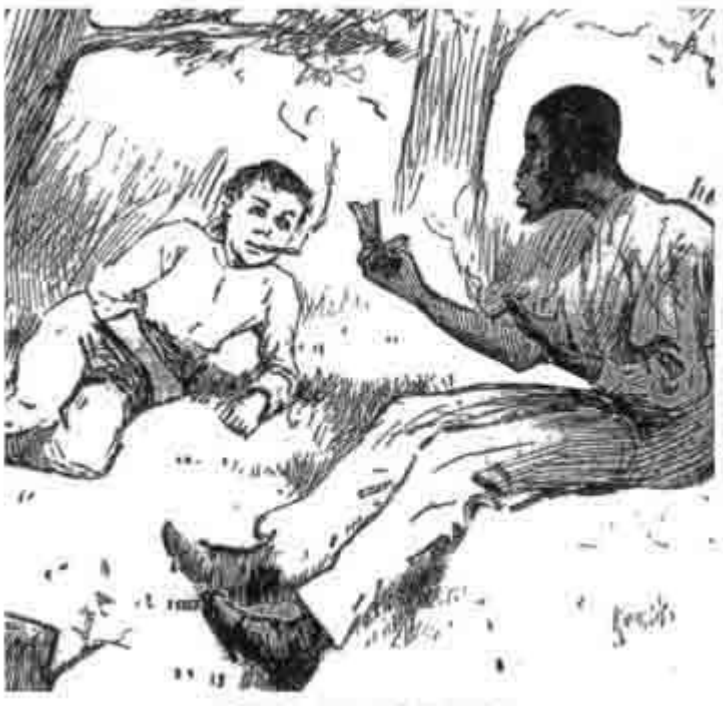
“And I believe de wives fights a lot; and dat makes de noise worse. Yet dey say Solomon de wisest man dat ever lived. I don’t put no trust in dat, because why would a wise man want to live in de middle of such boom-banging all de time? A wise man would take and build a metal yard; and den he could shut down de metal yard when he want to rest from de noise.”

“Well, but he was the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, herself.”

“I don’t care what de widow say, he weren’t no wise man either. He had some of de craziest ways I ever see. Does you know about dat child dat he was gwyne to cut in two?”

“Yes, the widow told me all about it.”

“Well den! Weren’t dat de stupidest thing in de world? You just take and look at it a minute. Dere’s de tree, dere -- dat’s one of de women; here’s you -- dat’s de other one; I’s Solomon; and dis here dollar’s de child.



“Both of you wants it. What does I do? Does I ask around de neighbours and find out which of you de dollar do belong to, and hand it over to de right one, all safe and sound, de way dat anyone dat had any brains would? No; I take and axe de dollar in two, and give half of it to you, and de other half to de other woman. Dat’s de way Solomon was gwyne to do wid de child. Now I want to ask you: what’s de use of dat half a dollar? -- can’t buy nothing wid it. And what use is a half a child? I wouldn’t give a turn for a million of them.”

“But hang it, Jim, you’ve clean missed the point -- shoot, you’ve missed it a thousand miles.”

“Who? Me? Go along. Don’t talk to me about your points. I think I knows wise when I sees it; and dey ain’t no being wise in such doings as dat. De argument weren’t about a half a child, de argument was about a whole child; and de man dat think he can fix an argument about a whole child wid a half a child don’t know enough to come in out de rain. Don’t talk to me about Solomon, Huck, I knows him by de back.”

“But I tell you you don’t get the point.”

“Kill de point! Way I see it, I knows what I knows. And hear dis, de real point is down deeper. It lays in de way Solomon was brought up. You take a man dat’s got only one or two children; is dat man gwyne to be wasting children? No, he ain’t; he can’t. He knows de worth of dem. But you take a man dat’s got about five million children running around de house, and it’s different. He as soon cut a child in two as a cat. Dey’s a lot more. A child or two, more or less, weren’t no big worry to Solomon, God help him!”

I never seen such a man. If he got a thought in his head once, there weren’t no getting it out again. He was the most down on Solomon of any slave I ever

seen. So I went to talking about other kings, and let Solomon rest. I told about Louis the Sixteenth that got his head cut off in France a long time ago; and about his little boy, that would a been a king, but they took and shut him up in prison, and some say he died there.

“Poor little boy.”

“But some says he got out and got away, and come to America.”

“Dat’s good! But he’ll be pretty sad -- dey ain’t no kings here, is dey, Huck?”
“No.”

“Den he can’t get no job as a king. What's he gwyne to do?”

“Well, I don’t know. Some of them gets on the police, and some of them learns people how to talk French.”

“Why, Huck, don’t de French people talk de same way we does?”

“No, Jim; you couldn’t understand a word they said – not one word.”

“Well, now, I be hit on de head! How do dat come?”

“I don’t know; but it’s so. I got some of their talk out of a book. What if a man was to come to you and say Polly-voo-franzy -- what would you think?”

"I wouldn’t think nothing; I’d take and hit him over de head -- dat is, if he weren’t white. I wouldn’t let no nigger call me dat.”

“Shoot! It ain’t calling you anything. It’s only saying, do you know how to talk French?”

“Well, den, why couldn’t he say it?”

“Why, he is a-saying it. That’s a French man’s way of saying it.”

“Well, it’s a fully stupid way, and I don’t want to hear no more about it. Dey ain’t no thinking in it.”

“Look here, Jim; does a cat talk like we do?”
“No, a cat don’t.”

“Well, does a cow?”

“No, a cow don’t, either.”

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

“No, dey don’t.”

“It’s good and right for them to talk different from each other, ain’t it?”
“True.”

“And ain’t it good and right for a cat and a cow to talk different from us?”
“Why, most surely it is.”

“Well, then, why ain’t it good and right for a French man to talk different from us? You answer me that.”

“Is a cat a man, Huck?”

“No.”

“Well, den, dey ain’t no good in a cat talking like a man. Is a cow a man? -- or is a cow a cat?”

“No, she ain’t either of them.”

“Well, den, she ain’t got no business to talk like either one or the other of them. Is a French man a man?”

“Yes.”

“Well, den! Dad blame it, why don’t he talk like a man? You answer me dat!”

I see it weren’t no use wasting words -- you can’t learn a black man to argue. So I quit.

Chapter 15

We judged that three nights more would bring us to Cairo, at the bottom of Illinois, where the Ohio River comes in, and that was what we was after. We would sell the raft and get on a river boat and go way up the Ohio to where slaves can be free, and then be out of trouble.

Well, the second night a fog started to come on, and we made for an island with some trees to tie to, for it wouldn’t do to try to run in a fog; but when I went ahead in the canoe, with the rope to tie up the raft, there weren’t anything but little baby trees to tie to. I passed the rope around one of them right on the border of the island, but the river was so strong that when the raft come flying by so quickly she pulled it out by the roots and away she went. I see the fog closing down, and it made me so sick and scared I couldn’t move for almost half a minute it seemed to me -- and then there weren’t no raft to be seen; you couldn’t see twenty yards. I jumped into the canoe and run to the back of it, and picked up the oar and started to use it. But she didn’t move. I was in such a hurry I hadn’t untied her. I got up and tried to untie her, but I was so worried my hands shook so I couldn’t do much of anything with them.

As soon as I got started I took out after the raft, hot and heavy, right down the side of the island. That was all right as far as it went, but the island weren’t sixty yards long, and the minute I flew by the foot of it I found myself out in the

middle of solid white fog, and hadn't no more understanding of which way I was going than a dead man.

Thinks I, it won't do to use the oar; I'll run into the beach or an island or something; I got to sit here and wait, and yet it's mighty difficult business to have to hold your hands still at such a time. I shouted and listened. Away off in the distance I hears a small shout, and up comes my spirits. I went pushing after it, listening sharp to hear it again. The next time it come I see I weren't heading for it, but heading away to the right of it.

And the next time I was heading away to the left of it -- and not getting much closer to it either, for I was flying around, this way and that, but it was going straight ahead all the time.

I wished the man would think to hit a tin pan, and do it all the time, but he never did, and it was the quiet places between the shouts that was making trouble for me. Well, I fought along, and soon I hears the shout behind me. I was mixed up good now. That was someone else's shout, or else I was turned around.

I throwed the oar down. I heard the shout again; it was behind me yet, but in a different place; it kept coming, and kept changing its place, and I kept answering, until by and by it was in front of me again, and I knowed I was all right if that was Jim and not some other raft shouting. I couldn't tell nothing about voices in a fog, for nothing don't look right or sound right in a fog.

The shouting went on, and in about a minute I come a-racing down on a short cliff on the side of the river with grey ghosts of big trees on it, and the movement of the river throwed me off to the left and moved me so quickly through a lot of branches that the sound of it was louder than any shout.

In another second or two it was solid white and quiet again. I sat there, listening to my heart bang inside of me, and I'd say I didn't breathe at all while it hit against my ribs a hundred times.
I just give up then. I knowed what the problem was. That short cliff was an island, and Jim had gone down the other side of it. It weren't no little island

that you could be by in ten minutes. It had the big timber of a real island; it might be five or six miles long and more than half a mile wide.

I kept quiet, with my ears open, about fifteen minutes, I'd say. I was moving along, maybe four or five miles an hour; but you don't ever think of that. No, you feel like you are not moving at all on the water; and if you see a branch go by you don't think to yourself how fast you're going, but you stop breathing for a second and you think, my! how that branch is flying along. If you think it wouldn't make you sad and scared out in a fog that way by yourself in the night, you try it once -- you'll see.

Next, for about half an hour, I shouts now and then; at last I hears the answer a long way off, and tries to follow it, but I couldn't do it, and soon I judged I had got into a nest of little islands, for I could see little movements of them on both sides of me -- sometimes just a narrow channel between, and some that I couldn't see I knowed was there because I'd hear the wash of the water against the old dead bushes and branches that was hanging over the sides. Well, I weren't long losing the shouts down in all those little islands; and I only tried to follow them a little while, anyway, because it was worse than running after a ghost. You never knowed a sound jump around so, and change places so quickly and so much.

I had to fight to get away from the sides of the islands pretty strongly four or five times, to keep from knocking the islands out of the river; and so I judged the raft must be hitting into the sides every now and then too, or else it would be farther ahead and out of hearing -- it was moving a little faster than what I was.

Well, I seemed to be in the open river again by and by, but I couldn't hear no sign of a shout nowhere. I reasoned Jim had been stopped by a branch, maybe, and it was all up with him. I was dead tired, so I lay myself down in the canoe and said I wouldn't worry no more. I didn't want to go to sleep; but I was so sleepy I couldn't help it; so I thought I would take just one little very short sleep.

But I think it was more than a little sleep, for when I waked up the stars was out, the fog was all gone, and I was turning down a big bend back first. At first I thought I was dreaming; and when things started to come back to me they seemed to come up out of last week.

It was an awful big river here, with the tallest and the thickest kind of timber on both sides; just a solid wall, as well as I could see by the stars. I looked away down the river, and seen a black spot on the water. I took after it; but when I got to it it weren't nothing but two saw logs tied together. Then I see another spot, and ran after that; then another, and this time I was right. It was the raft.

When I got to it Jim was sitting there with his head down between his knees, asleep, with his right arm hanging over the steering-oar. The other oar was broken off, and the raft was covered with leaves and branches and dirt. So she'd had a rough time.

I tied up and got down on the raft under Jim's nose on the raft, and started to push my fists out against Jim, like I was just waking up, and says: "Hello, Jim, have I been asleep? Why didn't you wake me up?"

"Good Lord, is dat you, Huck? And you ain't dead -- you ain't drowned -- you's back again? It's too good for true, honey, it's too good for true. Let me look at you child, let me feel of you. No, you ain't dead! you's back again, alive and safe, just de same old Huck -- de same old Huck, thanks to de good Lord!"

"What's the trouble with you, Jim? You been a-drinking?"

"Drinking? Has I been a-drinking? Has I had a way to be a-drinking?"

"Well, then, what makes you talk so wild?"

"How does I talk wild?"

"How? Why, ain't you been talking about my coming back, and all that, as if I'd been gone away?"

"Huck -- Huck Finn, you look me in de eye; look me in de eye. Ain't you been gone away?"

"Gone away? Why, what in the world do you mean? I ain't been gone anywhere. Where would I go to?"

"Well, look here, boss, dey's something wrong, dey is. Is I me, or who is I? Is I here, or where is I? Now dat's what I wants to know."

"Well, I think you're here, clear enough, but I think you're a mixed up old crazy man, Jim."

"I is, is I? Well, you answer me dis: Didn't you take out de rope in de canoe for to tie up to dat little island?"

"No, I didn't. What little island? I ain't seen no little island."

"You ain't seen no little island? Look here, didn't de rope pull loose and de raft go whistling down de river, and leave you and de canoe behind in de fog?"

"What fog?"

"Why, de fog! -- de fog dat's been around all night. And didn't you shout, and didn't I shout, until we got mixed up in de islands and one of us got lost and t'other was just as good as lost, because he didn't know where he was? And didn't I hit up against a lot of dem islands and have an awful time and almost get drowned? Now ain't dat so, boss -- ain't it so? You answer me dat."
"Well, this is too much for me, Jim. I ain't seen no fog, or no islands, or no troubles, or nothing. I been sitting here talking with you all night until you went

to sleep about ten minutes ago, and I think I done the same. You couldn't a got drunk in that time, so it must be you've been dreaming."

"Dad blame it, how is I gwyne to dream all dat in ten minutes?"

"Well, hang it all, you did dream it, because there didn't any of it happen."

"But, Huck, it's all just as clear to me as -- "

"It don't make no difference how clear it is; there ain't nothing in it. I know, because I've been here all the time."

Jim didn't say nothing for about five minutes, but sat there studying over it. Then he says: "Well, den, I think I did dream it, Huck; but dog my cats if it ain't de powerfullest dream I ever seen. And I ain't ever had no dream before dat's tired me like dis one."

"Oh, well, that's all right, because a dream does make a body tired like everything at times. But this one was a powerful dream; tell me all about it, Jim."

So Jim went to work and told me the whole thing right through, just as it happened, only he painted it up a lot. Then he said he must start in and get the meaning of it, because it was sent for a warning. He said the first little island stood for a man that would try to do us some good, but the water movement was another man that would get us away from him. The shouts was warnings that would come to us every now and then, and if we didn't try hard to make out to understand them they'd just take us into bad luck, instead of keeping us out of it. The group of little islands was troubles we was going to get into with people who want to argue, and with all kinds of bad people, but if we stayed to ourselves and didn't talk back and make them angry, we would pull through and get out of the fog and into the big clear river, which was the free place, and we wouldn't have no more trouble.

It had clouded up pretty dark just after I got on to the raft, but it was clearing up again now.

"Oh, well, that's all understood well enough as far as it goes, Jim," I says; "but what does these things stand for?"

It was the leaves and dirt on the raft and the broken oar. You could see them easily now.

Jim looked at the messy raft, and then looked at me, and back at the raft again. He had got the dream so strong in his head that he couldn't seem to shake it loose and get the truth back into its place again right away. But when he did get the thing straight he looked at me without ever smiling, and says: "What do dey stand for? I's gwyne to tell you what dey stand for. When I got all tired out wid work, and wid de calling for you, and went to sleep, my heart was almost broken because you was lost, and I didn't care no more what

become of me and de raft. And when I wake up and find you back again, all safe and healthy, de tears come, and I could a got down on my knees and kissed your foot, I was so thankful. And all you was thinking about was how you could make a joke of old Jim wid a lie. Dat dere on de raft is dirt; and dirt is what people is dat puts dirt on de heads of dey friends and makes 'em feel bad."

Then he got up slow and walked to the tent, and went in there without saying anything but that. But that was enough. It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed his foot to get him to take it back.

It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a slave; but I done it, and I weren't ever sorry for it after that either. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't a done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way.

Chapter 16

After sleeping almost all day, we started out at night, a little ways behind an awful long raft that was as long going by as a parade. She had four long oars at each end to steer it, so we judged she carried as many as thirty men, likely. She had five big tents on her, wide apart, and an open camp fire in the middle. There was a lot of show about her. Being a worker on a raft as big as that would be something special.

We went down into a big bend, and the night clouded up and got hot. The river was very wide, and was walled with solid timber on both sides.

You couldn’t see a break in it hardly, or a light. We talked about Cairo, and were not sure if we would know it when we got to it. I said likely we wouldn’t, because I heard say there weren’t but about ten or twelve houses there, and if they didn’t happen to have a light on, how was we going to know we was passing it? Jim said if the two big rivers joined together there, that would show. But I said maybe we'd think we was passing the foot of an island and coming into the same old river again. That worried Jim -- and me too. So the question was, what to do? I said, land the raft the first time a light showed, and tell them pap was behind, coming with a flat boat, and was a green hand at the business, and wanted to know how far it was to Cairo. Jim thought it was a good plan, so we took a smoke on it and waited.

There weren’t nothing to do now but to look out sharp for the town, and not pass it without seeing it. He said he’d be mighty sure to look, because he’d be a free man the minute he seen it, but if he missed it he’d be in a slave country again and no more show for freedom. Every little while he jumps up and says: “Dere she is!”

But it weren’t. It was candles in pumpkins, or fire flies; so he set down again,

and went to watching, same as before. Jim said it made him all over shaking and hot to be so close to freedom. Well, I can tell you it made me all over shaking and hot, too, to hear him, because I started to get it through my head that he was almost free -- and who was to blame for it? Why, me. I couldn't get that out of my conscience, no way. It got to troubling me so I couldn't rest; I couldn't stay in one place. It hadn't ever come home to me before, what this thing was that I was doing. But now it did; and it stayed with me, and burned me more and more. I tried to make out to myself that I weren't to blame, because I didn't run Jim off from his owner; but it weren't no use, conscience up and says, every time, "But you knowed he was running for his freedom, and you could a landed and told someone." That was so -- I couldn't get around that no way. That was where it hurt. Conscience says to me,

"What had poor Miss Watson done to you that you could see her slave go off right under your eyes and never say one word? What did that poor old woman do to you that you could be so mean to her? Why, she tried to learn you your book, she tried to learn you the best ways to act, she tried to be good to you every way she knowed how. That's what she done."

I got to feeling so mean and so bad I almost wished I was dead. I walked up and down the raft, arguing with myself, and Jim was walking up and down past me. Both of us couldn't stay in one place. Every time he danced around and said, "Dere's Cairo!" it went through me like a bullet, and I thought if it was Cairo I would die of guilt.

Jim talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got free, he would go to saving up money and never spend a cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Watson lived; and then they would both work to buy the two children, and if their master wouldn't sell them, they'd get an Abolitionist to go and rob them.

It was enough to freeze me hearing such talk. He wouldn't ever have had confidence to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was as the old saying goes, "Give a slave an inch and he'll take a yard." Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this slave, which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would take his children -- children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever hurt me.

I was sorry to hear Jim say that, it was so low of him. My conscience got to making me hotter than ever, until at last I says to it, "Let up on me -- it ain't too late yet -- I'll land at the first light and tell." I felt easy and happy and light as a feather right off. All my troubles was gone. I went to looking out sharp for a light, and kind of singing to myself. By and by one showed.

Jim sings out: "We's safe, Huck, we's safe! Jump up and hit your heels toether! Dat's de good old Cairo at last, I just knows it!"

I says: “I’ll take the canoe and go and see, Jim. It mightn’t be, you know.” He jumped up and got the canoe ready, and put his old coat in the bottom for me to sit on, and give me the oar; and as I pushed off, he says:

“Pretty soon I’ll be a-shouting for happiness, and I’ll say, it’s all because of Huck; I’s a free man, and I couldn’t ever been free if it hadn’t been for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won’t ever forget you, Huck; you’s de best friend Jim’s ever had; and you’s de only friend old Jim’s got now.”

I was heading off, all in a hurry to tell on him; but when he said this, it seemed to kind of take the enthusiasm all out of me. I went along slow then, and I weren’t right down sure if I was glad I started or if I weren’t. When I was fifty yards off, Jim says:

“Dere you goes, de old true Huck; de only white man dat ever kept his promise to old Jim.”

Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I got to do it -- I can’t get out of it. Right then along comes a boat with two men in it with guns, and they stopped and I stopped. One of them says: “What’s that up there?”

“A piece of a raft,” I says.

“Do you belong on it?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Any men on it?”

“Only one, sir.”

“Well, there’s five slaves run off tonight up a piece, above the head of the bend. Is your man white or black?”

I didn’t answer up quickly. I tried to, but the words wouldn’t come. I tried for a second or two to force it out, but I weren’t man enough -- hadn’t the strength of a rabbit. I see I was getting weak; so I just give up trying, and up and says: “He’s white.”

“I think we’ll go and see for ourselves.”

“I wish you would,” says I, “because it’s pap that’s there, and maybe you’d help me pull the raft to the beach where the light is. He’s sick -- and so is mom and Mary Ann.”

“Oh, the devil! we’re in a hurry, boy. But we probably should do something. Come, move along and let’s go see.”

I picked up my oar and they picked up theirs. When we had made a push or two, I says: “Pap’ll be mighty much thankful to you, I can tell you. Everybody goes away when I want them to help me bring the raft in, and I can’t do it by myself.”

“Well, that’s awful mean of them. Strange, too. Say, boy, what’s the problem with your father?”

“It’s the -- a -- the -- well, it ain’t anything much.”

They stopped pulling. It weren’t but a little ways to the raft now. One says: “Boy, that’s a lie. What IS the problem with your pap? Answer up square now, and it’ll be the better for you.”

“I will, sir, I will, honest -- but don’t leave us, please. It’s the -- the -- Sirs, if you’ll only pull ahead, and let me throw you the rope, you won’t have to come near the raft -- please do.”

“Turn her back, John, turn her back!” says one. They backed water. “Keep away, boy -- keep to the left. Worst luck, the wind has probably blowed it to us. Your pap’s got the smallpox, and you know it very well. Why didn’t you come out and say so? Do you want to give it to all of us?”

“Well,” says I, a-crying, “I’ve told everybody before, and they just went away and left us.”

“Poor devil, there’s something in that. We are right down sorry for you, but we -- well, hang it, we don’t want the smallpox, you see. Look here, I’ll tell you what to do. Don’t you try to land by yourself, or you’ll break everything to pieces. You go along down about twenty miles, and you’ll come to a town on the left-hand side of the river. It will be long after the sun has come up by then, and when you ask for help you tell them your parents are down with shakes and being hot. Don’t be so stupid again, and let people see the truth. Now we’re trying to be kind to you; so you just put twenty miles between us, that’s a good boy. It wouldn’t do any good to land down there where the light

is -- it's only a timber yard. Say, I think your father's poor, and I'm sure he's had some pretty hard luck. So here, I'll put a twenty dollar gold piece on this board, and you get it when it goes by you on the water. I feel mighty mean to leave you; but my lord! it won't do to play with smallpox, don't you see?"

"Hold on, Parker," says the other man, "Here's a twenty to put on the board for me too. Goodbye, boy; you do as Mr. Parker told you, and you'll be all right."

"That's so, my boy -- goodbye, goodbye. If you see any slaves hiding out there you get help and take them, and you can make some money by it."

"Goodbye, sir," says I; "I won't let no slaves get by me if I can help it."

They went off and I got on the raft, feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong, and I see it weren't no use for me to try to learn to do right; a body that don't get started right when he's little ain't got no show -- when a test comes there ain't nothing to back him up and keep him to his work, and so he loses. Then I thought a minute, and says to myself, hold on; what if you'd a done right and give Jim up, would you of felt better than what you do now? No, says I, I'd feel bad -- I'd feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I, what's the good of you learning to do right when it's difficult to do right and it ain't no trouble at all to do wrong, and the pay is just the same? I couldn't answer that. So I said to myself I wouldn't worry no more about it, but after this always do whatever come easiest at the time.

I went into the tent; Jim weren't there. I looked all around; he weren't anywhere. I says: "Jim!"

“Here I is, Huck. Is dey gone yet? Don’t talk loud.”

He was in the river under the back oar, with just his nose out. I told him they were gone, so he come up. He says: “I was a-listenin’ to all de talk, and I gets down into de river and was gwyne to swim for land if dey come on de raft. Den I was gwyne to swim to de raft again when dey was gone. But my good lord, how you did it to dem, Huck! Dat was de smartest trick! I tell you, child, I believe it saved old Jim -- old Jim ain’t going to forget you for dat, honey.”

Then we talked about the money. It was a pretty good lift -- twenty dollars each. Jim said we could take a river boat up the Ohio now if we was happy to sleep out on the ship’s floor at night, and the money would go as far as we wanted to go. He said twenty mile more weren’t far for the raft to go, but he wished we was already there.

Toward morning we tied up, and Jim was mighty careful about hiding the raft good. Then he worked all day fixing things into bags, and getting all ready to quit rafting.

That night about ten we saw the lights of a town away down in a left-hand bend.

I went off in the canoe to ask about it. Pretty soon I found a man out in the river with a boat, setting a long line of hooks. I pulled up and says:

“Mr., is that town Cairo?”

“Cairo? no. You must be full on stupid.”
“What town is it, Mr.?”

“If you want to know, go and find out. If you stay here talking to me for about a half a minute longer you’ll get something you won’t want.”

I went back to the raft. Jim was awful discouraged, but I said not to worry. I reasoned that Cairo would be the next place.

We passed another town before morning, and I was going out again; but it was high ground, so I didn’t go. No high ground around Cairo, Jim said. I knew that but had not remembered it. We rested up for the day on a little island pretty close to the left-hand side. I started to think something was wrong. So did Jim. I says: “Maybe we went by Cairo in the fog that night.”

He says: “Don’t let’s talk about it, Huck. Poor niggers can’t have no luck. I always believed dat snake skin weren’t done wid its work.”

“I wish I’d never seen that snake skin, Jim -- I do wish I’d never set eyes on it.”
“You ain’t to blame, Huck; you didn’t know. Don’t you hit yourself around about it.”

When the sun was up, here was the clear Ohio water on one side, sure

enough, and out in the middle was the muddy water of the Mississippi! So it was all up with Cairo.

We talked it all over. It wouldn't do to walk back on land and we clearly couldn't take a raft up the river. There weren't no way but to wait for dark, and start back in the canoe and trust our luck. So we rested up all day in some thick trees, so as to be wide awake for the work, and when we went back to the raft about dark the canoe was gone!

We didn't say a word for a good while. There weren't anything to say. We both knowed well enough it was some more work of the snake skin; so what was the use to talk about it? It would only look like we was finding wrong in what was happening, and that would be sure to bring more bad luck -- and keep on bringing it, too, until we knowed enough to not fight it.

We talked about what to do, and found there weren't no way but just to go along down with the raft until we could buy a canoe to go back in. We wouldn't borrow it when people weren't around, the way pap would, for that might bring people after us.

So we started out after dark on the raft.

Anyone that don't believe yet that it's foolishness to handle a snake skin, after all that that snake skin done for us, will believe it now if they read on and see what more it done for us.

The place to buy canoes is off rafts laying on the beach. But we didn't see none laying up; so we went on for three hours or more. Well, the night got grey and thick, which is almost as bad as fog. You can't tell the shape of the river, and you can't see no distance. It got to be late and quiet, when along comes a big river boat up the river. We put a light in the lantern, and judged she would see it. Boats going up river didn't most times come close to us; they go out and hunt for easy water; but nights like this they push right up the channel against the whole river.

We could hear her moving, but we didn't see her good until she was close. She was coming right for us. Often they do that to see how close they can come without touching; sometimes the wheel bites off an oar, and then the driver puts his head out and laughs, and thinks he's smart. Well, here she comes, and we said she was going to try and cut it close; but she didn't turn off at all. She was a big one, and she was coming in a hurry, too, looking like a black cloud with lines of fire flies around it; but all at once she was right on us big and deadly, with a long line of wide open fire doors looking like red-hot teeth, and all of her body hanging right over us. There was a shout at us, and a ringing of bells to stop the motors, more shouting, and whistling of the hot air in the motors -- and as Jim went over on one side and I on the other, she come cutting straight through the raft.

I went down as far as I could, looking to find the bottom, for a thirty foot wheel had got to go over me, and I wanted it to have enough room. I could always

stay under water a minute; this time I'd say I stayed under a minute and a half. Then I went for the top in a hurry, for I was almost exploding. I broke the water and blowed water out of my nose, and breathed heavy for a while. The river was moving strongly; and that boat must a started her motors again ten seconds after she stopped them, as they never cared much for people on rafts; so now she was too far away to see in the thick weather, even if I could still hear her.

I shouted for Jim ten or twelve times, but I didn't get no answer; so I took hold of a board I found on the water while I was waiting there and headed for the beach, pushing it ahead of me. But the movement was toward the left side, meaning that I was in a crossing; so I changed off and went that way. It was one of those long two-mile crossings; so I was a good while getting over made a safe landing,and climbed up the side.

I couldn't see but a little ways, but I went slowly along over rough ground for a few hundred yards, and then I come across a big old log house. I was going to hurry by and get away but a lot of dogs jumped out and went to barking, andI knowed better than to move another inch.

Chapter 17

In about a minute someone spoke out of a window without putting his head out, and says:

"Be done, boys! Who's there?"

I says: “It’s me.”

“Who’s me?”

“George Jackson, sir.”

“What do you want?”

“I don’t want nothing, sir. I only want to go along by, but the dogs won’t let me.”
“What are you looking around here for this time of night?”

“I weren’t looking around, sir, I fell off the river boat.”

“Oh, you did, did you? Bring a light here, someone. What did you say your name was?”

“George Jackson, sir. I’m only a boy.”

“Look here, if you’re telling the truth you needn’t be afraid -- nobody’ll hurt you. But don’t try to move; stand right where you are. Wake up Bob and Tom, some of you, and bring the guns. George Jackson, is there anyone with you?”

“No, sir, nobody.”
I heard the people moving around in the house now, and I seen a light. The

man shouted out: “Take that light away, Betsy, you stupid old thing -- don’t you understand? Put it on the floor behind the front door. Bob, if you and Tom are ready, take your places.”

“All ready.”

“Now, George Jackson, do you know the Shepherdsons?”

“No, sir; I never heard of them.”

“Well, that may be, and it may not. Now, all ready. Step forward, George Jackson. And remember, don’t hurry -- come very slowly. If there’s anyone with you, let him stay back -- if he shows himself we’ll shoot. Come along now. Come slow; push the door open yourself -- just enough to squeeze in, you hear?”

I didn’t hurry; I couldn’t if I’d a wanted to. I took one slow step at a time and there weren’t a sound, only I thought I could hear my heart. The dogs were as quiet as the people, but they followed a little behind me. When I got to the three log steps in front of the door I heard them taking off locks and bars. I put my hand on the door and pushed it a little and a little more until someone said, “There, that’s enough -- put your head in.” I done it, but I judged they would take it off.

The candle was on the floor, and there they all was, looking at me, and me at them, for about fifteen seconds: Three big men with guns pointed at me, which made me pull back in fear, I tell you; the oldest, grey and about sixty, the other two thirty or more -- all of them strong and good looking -- and the sweetest old grey-headed woman, and back of her two young women which I couldn’t see right well.

The old man says: “There; I think it’s all right. Come in.”

As soon as I was in the old man he locked the door and put a bar across it, and told the young men to come in with their guns, and they all went in a big room that had a new cloth rug on the floor, and got together in a corner that was out of the line of the front windows. They held the candle, and took a good look at me, and all said, “Why, he ain’t a Shepherdson -- no, there ain’t any Shepherdson about him.”

Then the old man said he hoped I would agree to him feeling me for weapons, because he didn’t mean nothing by it -- it was only to make sure. So he didn’t put his hands into my pockets, but only felt outside with his hands, and said it was all right. He told me to make myself easy and at home, and tell all about myself; but the old woman says: “Why, bless you, Saul, the poor thing’s as wet as can be; and don’t you think it may be he’s hungry?”

“Right you are, Rachel -- Forgive me for not thinking of it.”

So the old woman says: “Betsy” (This was a black woman.) “you fly around

and get him something to eat as fast as you can, poor thing; and one of you girls go and wake up Buck and tell him -- oh, here he is himself. Buck, take this little stranger and get the wet clothes off him and dress him up in some of yours that's dry."

Buck looked about as old as me -- thirteen or fourteen or along there, but he was a little bigger than me. He hadn't on anything but a shirt, and his hair was very messy. He came in with his mouth wide open and digging one fist into his eyes, and he was pulling a rifle along with the other hand.

He says: "Ain't they no Shepherdsons around?"

They said, no, it was a false warning.

"Well," he says, "if they'd been some, I think I'd a got one."

They all laughed, and Bob says: "Why, Buck, they might have killed us all, you've been so slow in coming."

"Well, nobody come after me, and it ain't right I'm always put down; I don't get no show."

"Don't worry, Buck, my boy," says the old man, "you'll have show enough, all in good time, don't you worry about that. Go along with you now, and do as your mother told you."

When we got up to his room he got me a rough shirt and a short coat and pants of his, and I put them on.

While I was at it he asked me what my name was, and then he started to tell me about a blue-bird and a young rabbit he had caught in the trees day before yesterday, and he asked me where Moses was when the candle went out. I said I didn't know; I hadn't heard about it before, no way.

"Well, try," he says.

"How am I going to try," says I, "when I never heard tell of it before?"

"But you can try, can't you? It's just as easy."

"Which candle?" I says.

"Any candle," he says.

"I don't know where he was. Where was he?"

"He was in the dark! That's where he was!"

"Well, if you knowed where he was, what'd you ask me for?"

"Why, shoot, it's a joke, don't you see? Say, how long are you going to stay here? You got to stay always. We can just have great times -- they don't have no school now. Do you own a dog? I've got a dog -- and he'll go in the river and bring out sticks that you throw in. Do you like to brush up Sundays, and all that kind of foolishness? You can be sure I don't, but mum she makes me. I hate these old pants! I'd better put 'em on, but I'd be happier not, it's so warm. Are you all ready? All right. Come along, old horse."

Cold corn-bread, cold salt-meat, butter and milk -- that is what they had for me down there, and there ain't nothing better that ever I've come across yet. Buck and his mum and all of them smoked corn pipes, all but the black woman, who was gone, and the two young women. They all smoked and talked, and I eat and talked. The young women had quilts around them, and their hair down their backs. They all asked me questions, and I told them how pap and me and all the family was living on a little farm down at the bottom of Arkansas, and my sister Mary Ann run off and got married and never was heard of no more, and Bill went to hunt them and he weren't heard of no more, and Tom and Mort died, and then there weren't nobody but just me and pap left, and he was just cut down to nothing, because of his troubles; so when he died I took what there was left, because the farm didn't belong to us, and started up the river, sleeping out on the floor of the ship, and fell over into the river; and that was how I come to be here. So they said I could have a home there as long as I wanted it. With Jim gone and all, I could see this was as good a plan as any I could think of.

Then it was almost morning and everybody went to bed, and I went to bed with Buck, and when I waked up in the morning, end it all, I couldn't remember what my name was. So I was lying there about an hour trying to think, and

when Buck waked up I says:

“Can you spell, Buck?”

“Yes,” he says.

“I don’t think you can spell my name,” says I.

“What you don’t think I can? I can,” says he.

“All right,” says I, “go ahead.”

“G-e-o-r-g-e J-a-x-o-n -- there now,” he says.

“Well,” says I, “you done it, but I didn’t think you could. It ain’t no easy name to spell -- right off without studying.”

I wrote it down secretly, because someone might want me to spell it next, and so I wanted to be good with it and spell it easy, like I did it all the time.

It was a mighty nice family, and a mighty nice house. I hadn’t seen no house out in the country before that was so nice.

They had pictures hanging on the walls -- mostly soldiers and wars. But there was some that one of the daughters, Emmeline, which was dead now, had made herself when she was only fifteen years old. Everybody was sorry she died, because she had planned out a lot more of these pictures to do, and a body could see by what she had done what they had lost. They kept Emmeline’s room clean and nice, and all her things in it just the way she liked to have them when she was alive, and nobody ever used the room to sleep in. The old woman took care of it herself, when it was easy to see there was enough slaves to do it, and she sewed there a lot and read her Bible there. All in all I was thinking that I had landed in the nicest family I could think of.

Chapter 18

The old man, Mr. Grangerford was well born, and that's worth as much in a man as it is in a horse, so the Widow Douglas said, and nobody ever argued that she wasn't the most well born in our town; and pap he always said it, too,even if he weren't no more quality than a skunk himself.

Mr. Grangerford was very tall and very thin, with the thinnest kind of lips, and the thinnest kind of high nose, and the blackest kind of eyes, so deep back that they seemed like they was looking out of caves at you, as you may say.His hair was black and straight, hanging down to his shoulders. His hands was long and thin, and every day of his life he put on a clean shirt and a full suit from head to foot made out of cloth so white it hurt your eyes to look at it; and on Sundays he put on a blue coat with a tail and gold-coloured buttons on it. There weren't no foolishness about him, not at all, and he weren't ever loud. He was as kind as he could be you could feel that, you know, and so you had confidence around him.

Sometimes he smiled, and it was good to see; but when he pulled himself up straight, and the lightning started to come out from his eyes, you wanted to climb a tree first, and find out what the trouble was later. He didn't ever have to tell anyone to be good -- everybody was always good acting where he was. Everybody loved to have him around, too; he was like the sun most always -- I mean he made it seem like good weather. When he turned into a dark cloud it was awful for half a minute, and that was enough; there wouldn't nothing go wrong again for a week.

When him and the old woman come down in the morning all the family got up from their chairs and give them good-day, and didn't sit down again until they had sat down. Then Tom and Bob would mix a glass of whiskey and hand it to him, and he held it in his hand and waited until Tom's and Bob's was mixed, and then they would say, "We are here to serve you, sir, and madam." And they said thank you, and so they would all three drink.

Bob was the oldest and Tom next -- tall, beautiful men with very wide shoulders and brown faces, and long black hair and black eyes. They dressed in white from head to foot too, like the old man, and each had wide hats made from leaves, from South America.

Then there was Miss Charlotte; she was twenty-five, and tall and proud and wonderful, but as good as she could be when she weren't angry; and when she was angry she had a look that would make you stop dead, like her father. She was beautiful.

So was her sister, Miss Sophia, but it was a different kind. She was kind and sweet and soft, and she was only twenty.
Each person had their own slave to wait on them -- Buck too. My slave had a very easy time, because I never had anyone to do things for me, but Buck's was on the jump most of the time.

This was all there was of the family now, but in the past there was more -- three sons; they got killed; and Emmeline that died.

The old man owned a lot of farms and over a hundred slaves. That week a crowd of people come there on horses, from ten or fifteen mile around, and stayed a few days. We had parties round about and on the river, and dances and meals on the grass under the trees when it was day, and more dances at the house at night. These people was mostly relatives. The men brought their guns with them. It was a good looking lot of quality, I tell you.

There was another well born family around there -- five or six families -- mostly of the name of Shepherdson. They was as well born and rich and great as the Grangerfords. The Shepherdsons and Grangerfords used the same river-boat landing, which was about two miles above our house. When I went there I saw a lot of the Shepherdsons there on their nice horses.

Later the next week Buck and me was out in the country hunting, and heard a horse coming. We was crossing the road. Buck says: “Quickly! Jump behind the trees!”

We done it, and looked out secretly through the leaves. Pretty soon a good-looking young man come riding down the road, sitting easy on his horse and looking like a soldier. He had his rifle across the saddle. I had seen him before. It was young Harney Shepherdson.

I heard Buck’s gun go off at my ear, and Harney’s hat fell off. He lifted his rifle and came straight toward the place where we was hiding. But we didn’t wait. We started through the trees on a run. The trees weren’t thick, so I looked over my shoulder for bullets, and two times I seen Harney cover Buck with his gun, but not shoot; and then he turned and left the way he come -- to get his hat, I think, but I couldn’t see. We never stopped running until we got home.

When we told the old man, his eyes lighted up a minute -- He was happy mostly, I judged. -- then his face kind of smoothed down, and he says, quietly: “I don’t like that shooting from behind a bush. Why didn’t you step into the road, my boy?”

“The Shepherdsons don’t, father. They always take us by surprise.”

Miss Charlotte she held her head up like a queen while Buck was telling his story. The two young men looked dark, but never said nothing. Miss Sophia she turned white, but the colour come back when she found the man weren’t hurt.

Soon as I could get Buck alone down under the trees, I says: “Did you want to kill him, Buck?”
“Sure I did.”

“What did he do to you?”

“Him? He never done nothing to me.”

“Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?”

“Why, nothing -- only it’s because of the feud.”

“What’s a feud?”

“Where was you brought up? Don’t you know what a feud is?”

“Never heard of it before -- tell me about it.”

“Well,” says Buck, “a feud is this way: A man has a fight with another man, and kills him; then that other man’s brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins join in -- and by and by everyone’s killed off, and there ain’t no more feud. But it’s kind of slow, and takes a long time.”

“Has this one been going on long, Buck?”

“Well, I should think so! It started thirty years ago, or some-where along there. There was trouble about something, and then they went to court to fix it; and the court went against one of the men, and so he up and killed the man that won in the court -- which you could understand him doing. Anyone would.”

“What was the trouble about, Buck? -- land?”

“Maybe -- I don’t know.”

“Well, who done the shooting? Was it a Grangerford or a Shepherdson?”

“Lord, how do I know? It was so long ago.”

“Don’t anyone know?”

“Oh, yes, my father knows, I think, and some of the other old people; but they don’t know now what the argument was about in the first place.”

“Has there been many killed, Buck?”

“Yes; it makes for a lot of funerals. But they don’t always kill. Pa’s got some metal in him from their guns; but he don’t worry much about that because he don’t weigh much, anyway. Bob’s been cut up some with a knife, and Tom’s been hurt one or two times.”

“Has anyone been killed this year, Buck?”

“Yes; we got one and they got one. About three months ago my cousin Bud, fourteen years old, was riding through the trees on t’other side of the river, and didn’t have no weapon with him, which was just foolishness, and in a

place away from any houses he hears a horse a-coming behind him, and sees old Baldy Shepherdson a-riding after him with his gun in his hand and his white hair a-flying in the wind; and instead of jumping off and taking to the bushes, Bud thought he could run away from him; so they had it, run and follow, for five mile or more, the old man a-getting closer all the time; so at last Bud seen he weren't going to get away, so he stopped and turned around so as to have the bullet holes in front, you know, and the old man he come up and did just that. But he didn't get much time to talk about his luck, for inside of a week our people killed him back."

"I think it was low down of that old man to kill a boy who didn't have a weapon, Buck."

"I don't think it was low down. Not at all. There ain't any Shepherdsons who are low down -- not a one. And there ain't no low down Grangerfords either. Why, that old man kept up his end in a fight one day for half an hour against three Grangerfords, and come out a winner. They was all on horses; he jumped off of his horse and got behind some cut timber, and kept his horse in front of him to stop the bullets; but the Grangerfords stayed on their horses and ran around the old man, shooting away at him, and he was shooting away at them. Him and his horse both went home crippled and with holes in them, but the Grangerfords had to be carried home -- and one of them was dead, and another died the next day. No, sir; if a body's out hunting for people who are afraid to fight he don't want to waste any time with them Shepherdsons, because they don't have any that are afraid of a good fight."

Next Sunday we all went to church, about three miles away, everybody on horses. The men took their rifles along; so did Buck, and kept them between their knees or stood them close by against the wall. The Shepherdsons done the same. It was pretty bad preaching -- all about loving your brother, and other boring talk; but everybody said it was good preaching, and they all talked it over going home, and had such a powerful lot to say about faith and good works and forgiveness and preforeordestination, and I don't know what all, that it did seem to me to be one of the roughest Sundays I had run across yet.

About an hour after dinner everybody was sleeping, some in their chairs and some in their rooms, and it got to be pretty boring. Buck and a dog was lying out on the grass in the sun sound asleep. I went up to our room, and judged I would have a sleep myself.

I found that sweet Miss Sophia standing in her door, which was next to ours, and she took me in her room and shut the door very soft, and asked me if I would do something for her and not tell anyone, and I said I would. Then she said she'd left her Bible on the bench at church between two song books, and would I go back there secretly and bring it to her. I said I would. So I went off up the road, and there weren't anyone at the church, apart from maybe a pig or two, for there weren't any lock on the door, and pigs like a timber floor in the summer because it's cool. If you study it, you'll see that most people don't go to church only when they have to; but a pig is different.

Says I to myself, something's up; it ain't right for a girl to be so worried about a Bible. So I give it a shake, and out drops a piece of paper with "Half past two" wrote on it. I went through it, but couldn't find anything more. I couldn't make anything of it, so I put the paper in the book again, and when I got back to my room there was Miss Sophia in her door waiting for me. She pulled me in and shut the door; then she looked in the Bible until she found the paper. When she read it she looked glad; and before a body could think she give me a squeeze, and said I was the best boy in the world, and not to tell anyone.

She was red in the face, and her eyes lighted up, and it made her powerful pretty. When I was over the hug I asked her what the paper was about, and she asked me if I had read it, and I said no, and she asked if I could read writing, and I told her "no, only a few words," then she said the paper weren't anything but a marker to keep her place in the Bible, and I could go and play now.

I went down to the river, studying over this, when I saw my slave was following along behind. When we was away from the house he looked around a second, then comes a-running, and says: "Master George, if you'll come down to de wet land I'll show you a whole family of snakes."

Thinks I, that's mighty strange. He asked the same thing yesterday. He should know a body don't love snakes enough to go around hunting for them. What is he up to, anyway? So I says: "All right; run ahead."

I followed half a mile; then we went into the wet land and walked ankle deep another half-mile. We come to a little flat piece of dry land thick with trees and bushes and vines.

He says: "Push right in dere just a few steps, Master George; dere's where dey is. I's seen 'em before; I don't care to see 'em no more."

Then he went off to where I couldn't see him for the trees. I pushed into the place a ways and come to a little open place as big as a bedroom with vines hanging all around it, and found a man lying there asleep -- and, by boom, it was my old Jim!

I waked him up, and I thought it was going to be a great surprise to him to see me again, but it weren't. He nearly cried he was so glad, but he weren't surprised. Said he had been swimming along behind me that night, and heard me shout every time, but was afraid to answer, because he didn't want nobody to catch him and force him to be a slave again. Says he: "I got hurt a little, and couldn't swim fast, so I was a good ways behind you toward de last. When you landed I thought I could catch up wid you on de land widout having to shout at you, but when I see dat house I slowed down. I was off too far to hear what dey said to you -- I was afraid of de dogs; but when it was all quiet again I knowed you was in de house, so I went out into de trees to wait for day. Early in de morning some of de slaves come along, gwyne to de fields, and dey took me and showed me dis place, where de dogs can't find me

because of de water, and dey brings me things to eat every night, and tells me how you's a-getting along."

"Why didn't you tell my man to bring me here sooner, Jim?"

"Well, it weren't no use to worry you, Huck, until we could do sumfin -- but we's all right now. I been a-buying pans and food, as I am able, and a-fixing up de raft nights when -- "

"What raft, Jim?"

"Our old raft."

"You mean to say our old raft weren't broken all to sticks?"

"No, she weren't. She was broken up a little -- one end of her was; but dey weren't no great problem, only our traps was almost all lost. If we hadn't been swimming so far under water, and if de night hadn't been so dark, and if we weren't so scared, and been such pumpkin-heads, as de saying is, we'd a seen de raft. But it's just as well we didn't, because now she's all fixed up again almost as good as new, and we's got a new lot of things, in de place of what was lost."

"So, how did you get hold of the raft again, Jim -- did you catch her?"

"How I gwyne to catch her when I's out in de trees? No; some of de slaves found her caught on a tree branch along here in de bend, and dey put her in a hiding place on a side river, and dey was so much talking about who she belong to de most dat I come to hear about it, so I ups and ends de problem by telling 'em she don't belong to none of 'em, but to you and me; and I asked 'em if dey gwyne to rob a young white man's raft, and get a whipping for it? Den I give 'em ten cents each, and dey was mighty glad, and wished some more rafts would come along and make 'em rich again. Dey's mighty good to me, dese niggers is, and whatever I wants 'em to do for me I don't have to ask 'em more dan once, honey. Dat Jack's a good man, and pretty smart."

"Yes, he is. He ain't ever told me you was here; told me to come, and he'd show me a lot of snakes. That way, if anything happens he ain't mixed up in it. He can say he never seen us together, and it'll be the truth."

I don't want to talk much about the next day. I think I'll cut it short. I waked up just as the sun was coming up, and was a- going to turn over and go to sleep again when it seemed that things were too quiet. That weren't right. Next I seen that Buck was up and gone. Well, I gets up, confused, and goes down the steps -- nobody around; everything as quiet as a mouse. Just the same outside. Thinks I, what does it mean? Down by where they cut timber, I comes across my Jack, and says: "What's it all about?"

Says he: "Don't you know, Master George?"

“No,” says I, “I don’t.”

“Well, den, Miss Sophia’s run off! True, she has. She run off in de night some time -- nobody don’t know just when; run off to get married to dat young Harney Shepherdson, you know -- or dat is what dey think. De family found it out about half an hour ago -- maybe more -- and I tell you dey weren’t no time lost. Such hurrying up guns and horses you never seen another! De women has gone to tell de relatives, and old Master Saul and de boys took dey guns and horses and headed up de river road to catch dat young man and kill him before he can get across de river wid Miss Sophia. I think dey’s gwyne to be rough times.”

“Buck went off without waking me up.”

"I believe he did! Dey weren’t gwyne to mix you up in it. Master Buck he just took his rifle and promised he’s gwyne to bring home a Shepherdson or die trying. Well, dey’ll be a lot of ‘em dere, I think, and you can be sure he’ll bring one if he can.”

I took up the river road as fast as I could. By and by I starts to hear shooting a good ways off. When I came to where I could see the building where the river boats land I worked along under the trees and bushes until I reached a good place, and then I climbed up into the fork of a tree that was out of reach, and watched. There was a wall of firewood four foot high a little ways in front of the tree, and first I was going to hide behind that; but maybe it was luckier I didn’t.

There was four or five men moving around on their horses in the open place before the big timber shop, shouting and using bad language, and trying to get at two boys that was behind another wall of firewood that was beside the river-boat landing; but they couldn’t come it. Every time one of them showed him- self on the river side of the timber the boys would shoot at him. The two boys was down low back to back behind the timber, so they could watch both ways.

By and by the men started riding toward the shop; then up gets one of the boys, points his rifle over the firewood, and drops one of them out of his saddle. All the men jumped off of their horses and run to the hurt one and started to carry him to the shop; and that same minute the two boys started on the run. They got half way to the tree I was in before the men saw it. When the men seen it, they jumped on their horses and took out after them. They was faster than the boys, but it didn't do no good, the boys had too good a start; they got to the firewood that was in front of my tree, and got in behind it, and so they had the better of the men again. One of the boys was Buck, and the other was a thin young man about nineteen years old.

The men moved around on their horses for a minute or two, and then left. As soon as they was gone I shouted out to Buck and told him. He didn't know what to make of my voice coming out of the tree at first. He was awful surprised. He told me to watch out sharp and let him know when the men returned; said they was up to some bad business or other -- wouldn't be gone long. I wished I was out of that tree, but I was too scared to come down.

Buck started to cry and shout, and promised that him and his cousin Joe (that was the other young man) would make up for this day yet. He said his father and his two brothers was killed, and two or three of the enemy. Said the Shepherdsons had been waiting to take them by surprise. Buck said his father and brothers should have waited for their relatives -- the Shepherdsons was too strong for them. I asked him what was become of young Harney and Miss Sophia. He said they'd got across the river and was safe. I was glad of that; but the way Buck did take on because he had not killed Harney that day he tried to shoot him -- I ain't ever heard anything like it.

All of a once, bang! bang! bang! goes three or four guns -- the men had moved secretly around through the trees and come in from behind without their horses! The boys jumped for the river -- both of them hurt -- and as they were swimming down the river the men run along the side shooting at them and singing out, “Kill them, kill them!” It made me so sick I almost fell out of the tree. I ain’t a-going to tell all that happened -- it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn’t ever come to land that first night to see such things. I ain’t ever going to get shut of them -- lots of times I dream about them.

I stayed in the tree until it started to get dark, afraid to come down. At times I heard shooting off in the trees; and two times I seen gangs of men ride past the shop with guns; so I believed the trouble was still going on. I was mighty sad; so I said I wouldn’t ever go near that house again, because I believed I was to blame, in one way or another. I judged that that piece of paper was telling Miss Sophia to meet Harney at half-past two and run off; and I judged I should have told her father about that paper and the strange way she acted, and then maybe he would a locked her up, and this awful killing wouldn’t ever have happened.

When I got down out of the tree I went quietly along down the side of the river a piece, and found the two bodies lying in the shallow water, and pulled at them until I got them to land; then I covered up their faces, and got away as fast as I could. I cried a little when I was covering up Buck’s face, for he was mighty good to me.

It was just dark now. I never went near the house, but went through the trees and made for the wet land. Jim weren’t on his island, so I walked off in a hurry to where the raft was hiding and crowded through the trees around it, red-hot to jump on and get out of that awful country. But the raft was gone! My living soul, but I was scared! I couldn’t breathe right for a minute. Then I let out a shout. A voice not twenty-five foot from me says: “Good land! is dat you, honey? Don’t make no noise.”

It was Jim’s voice -- nothing ever sounded so good before. I run along the river a piece and got on the raft, and Jim he reached out and hugged me, he was so glad to see me. He says: "Lord bless you, child, I was right down sure you was dead again. Jack’s been here; he says he thinks you’s been killed, because you didn’t come home no more; so I’s just dis minute a starting de raft down toward de mouth of dis little side river, so as to be all ready for to push off and leave soon as Jack comes again and tells me for sure you is dead. Good Lord, I’s mighty glad to get you back again, honey."

I says: “All right -- that’s mighty good; they won’t find me, and they’ll think I’ve been killed, and my body has gone on down the river -- there’s something up there that’ll help them think so -- so don’t you lose no time, Jim, but just push off for the big water as fast as ever you can.”

I never felt easy until the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we put up our lantern, and judged that we was free

and safe once more. I hadn't had a bite to eat since yesterday, so Jim he got out some corn bread and milk, and salted meat and cabbage and greens -- there ain't nothing in the world so good when it's cooked right -- and while I ate my dinner we talked and had a good time. I was powerful glad to get away from the feuds, and so was Jim to get away from the wet land. We said there weren't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so squeezed up and hard to breathe in, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

Chapter 19

Two or three days and nights went by; I might say they flew, they was so quiet and smooth and nice. Here is the way we put in the time: It was a great big river down there -- sometimes a mile and a half wide; we run nights, but soon as night was almost gone we stopped sailing and tied up -- nearly always in the dead water under a little island; and then cut young trees and covered the raft with them. Then we set out the fishing lines. Next we would get into the river and have a swim, so as to clean up and cool off; then we would sit on the sand on the bottom where the water was about knee deep, and watch the sun come up. Not a sound anywhere -- perfectly quiet -- just like the whole world was asleep, apart from maybe a few frogs at times. The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of grey line -- that was the trees on t'other side; you couldn't make nothing else out; then a light place in the sky; then more light reaching out; then the river would show up softly away off, and it weren't black any more, but grey; you could see little dark spots moving along ever so far away -- business boats, and such things; and long black lines -- rafts.

At times you could hear an oar moving; or mixed up voices, it was so quiet, and sounds come so far; and by and by you could see a line on the water which you know by the look of it that there was a branch sticking up in the movement of water that breaks on it; and you see like a little cloud coming up off of the water, and the east turns red, and the river too, and then you can make out a log cabin looking out through the trees, away on t'other side of the river, often being a timber yard, likely with the cut timber made to look like more than it was by putting pieces on top of each other in a way to leave holes big enough to throw a dog through. Then a nice wind comes up, so cool and clean and sweet to smell on because of the trees and the flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish lying around, and they do get pretty awful; and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song birds just going at it!

By that time our little smoke wouldn't be easy to see, so we would take some fish off of the lines and cook up a hot breakfast. And after, we would watch the big empty river, and kind of lazy along, and by and by lazy off to sleep, then wake up by and by, and look to see what done it, and maybe see a river boat coughing along up the river, so far off toward t'other side you couldn't tell nothing about her only if she was a back wheel or a side wheel; then for about an hour there wouldn't be nothing to hear and nothing to see -- just solid empty.

Next you'd see a raft going by, away off in the distance, and maybe a man on

it cutting timber, because they're most always doing it on a raft; you'd see the axe fly up and come down -- you don't hear nothing; you see that axe go up again, and by the time it's above the man's head then you hear the k'chunk! -- it had took all that time to come over the water.

So we'd put in the whole day, lazying around, listening to the quiet.

Once there was a thick fog, and people on rafts and things that went by was hitting tin pans so the river boats wouldn't run over them. A flat boat or a raft went by so close we could hear them talking and using bad language and laughing -- heard them clear as anything; but we couldn't see no sign of them; it made you feel strange; it was like spirits carrying on that way in the air. Jim said he believed it was spirits; but I says:

"No; spirits wouldn't say, 'Curse the cursed fog.'"

Soon as it was night out we would push off again. When we got her out to about the middle we let her alone, and let her go wherever the river wanted her to; then we smoked the pipes, and put our legs in the water, and talked about all kinds of things -- we was always without real clothes, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us -- the new clothes Buck's family made for me was too good to be comfortable, and besides I didn't go much on clothes, anyway.

Sometimes we'd have that whole river all to ourselves for the longest time. Off in the distance was the sides and the islands, across the water; and maybe the smallest little light -- which was a candle in a cabin window; and sometimes on the water you could see a light or two -- on a raft or a flat boat, you know; and maybe you could hear a violin or a song coming over from one of them. It's great to live on a raft. We had the sky up there, all covered with stars, and we used to lay on our backs and look up at them, and talk about if they was made or only just happened. Jim he believed they was made, but I believed they happened; I judged it would have took too long to make so many. Jim said the moon could a made them; well, that seemed easy enough to believe, so I didn't say nothing against it, because I've seen a fog make almost as many, so that proved it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too, and see them come flying down. Jim believed it was ones that was too selfish and they was being pushed out of the nest.

One or two times each night we would see a river-boat coming along in the dark, and now and then she would cough up a whole world of fire and smoke from out of her chimneys, and the little pieces of fire would rain down in the river and look awful pretty; then she would turn a corner and her lights would wink out and her noise shut off and leave the river quiet again; and by and by her waves would get to us, a long time after she was gone, and move the raft a little, and after that you wouldn't hear nothing for you couldn't tell how long, apart from maybe frogs or something.

After midnight the people went to bed, and then for two or three hours both sides of the river was black -- no more lights in the cabin windows. These

lights was our clock -- the first one that showed again would tell us that morning was coming, so we hunted a place to hide and tie up right away.

One morning just after the sun come up I found a canoe and crossed a channel between the island and the side of the river -- it was only two hundred yards -- and went about a mile up a shallow little side river with a lot of trees on it, to see if I couldn't get some berries. Just as I was passing a place where one could walk across the little river because of shallow water, here comes two men running toward me as fast as they could foot it.

I thought I was a goner, for whenever anyone was after anyone I judged it was me -- or maybe Jim. I was about to take off in a hurry, but they was pretty close to me then, and shouted out and begged me to save their lives -- said they hadn't been doing nothing, and was in trouble for it -- said there was men and dogs a-coming. They wanted to jump right in, but I says: "Don't you do it. I don't hear the dogs and horses yet; you've got time to squeeze through the bushes and get up the river a little ways; then you take to the water and walk down to me and get in -- that'll throw the dogs off the smell."

They done it, and soon as they was in I headed for our island. In five or ten minutes we heard the dogs and the men away off, shouting. We heard them come along toward the side river, but couldn't see them; they seemed to stop and act confused a while; then, as we got farther and farther away, we could only just hear them; by the time we had left a mile of trees behind us and come to the river, everything was quiet, and we went over to the island to hide in the trees where we was safe.

One of these men was about seventy or more, and had no hair and a very grey beard. He had an old knocked about soft hat on, and a dirty blue shirt, and very old blue pants pushed down into the top of his tall shoes, and a knitted rope over one shoulder to hold up the pants. He had an old blue coat with gold buttons over his arm, and both of them had big, fat, dirty bags made from rugs.

The other one was about thirty, and dressed about as poorly. After breakfast we all rested and talked, and the first thing that come out was that these men didn't know one another.

"What got you into trouble?" says the old man to t'other.

"Well, I'd been selling a chemical to take hard dirt off the teeth -- and it does take it off, too, but most of the time it takes some of the tooth along with it -- and I stayed about one night longer than I should have, and was just in the act of leaving when I ran across you on this side of town, and you said they were coming, and begged me to help you to get off. So I told you I was running from trouble myself, and would run off with you. That's the whole story -- what's yours?

"Well, I'd been doing a little preaching there about a week, and the women, big and little, liked me because I was making it mighty warm for the drinkers, I tell you, and taking as much as five or six dollars a night -- ten cents a head,

with children and slaves free -- and business was growing all the time, when one way or another a little story got around last night that I had been doing a little secret drinking myself. A slave warned me this morning, and told me the people was coming together on the quiet with their dogs and horses, and they'd be along pretty soon and give me about half an hour's start, and then run me down if they could; and if they got me they would put tar and feathers on me. I didn't wait for no breakfast -- I weren't hungry."

"Old man," said the young one, "I think we could work together as a team; what do you think?"

"I ain't against it. What's your line -- mostly?"

"I learned to do printing as a boy; make a little of my own medicines; do some acting -- serious parts, you know; take a turn at telling people about themselves from the shape of their head when I can; teach, anything from singing to history, for a change; give talks sometimes -- oh, I do lots of things -- most anything that comes up, so long as it ain't work. What's your thing?"

"I've done a lot in the doctoring way in my time. Laying on of hands is my best trick -- for cancer and people that can't move, and such things; and I can tell a person's future pretty good when I've got someone along to find out things for me. Preaching's my line, too, and missionary work."

Nobody never said a thing for a while; then the young man breathed out loudly and says: "Oh me, oh my!"

"What are you oh mying about?" says the head with no hair.

"To think I should have lived to be leading such a life, and be pulled down into such company." And he started to rub the corner of his eye with a cloth.

"Cook your skin, ain't the company good enough for you?" says the head with no hair, pretty proud like.

"Yes, it is good enough for me; it's as good as I'm worth; for who brought me so low when I was so high? I did it myself. I don't blame you, my friends -- far from it; I don't blame anyone. I had it all coming. Let the cold world do its worst; one thing I know -- there's a hole in the ground waiting for me. The world may go on just as it's always done, and take everything from me -- loved ones, my land, everything; but it can't take that. Some day I'll lie down in that hole and forget it all, and my poor broken heart will be at rest." He went on a-rubbing his eyes.

"Forget your poor broken heart," says the head. "What are you throwing your poor broken heart at us for? We ain't done nothing."

"No, I know you haven't. I ain't blaming you, friends. I brought myself down -- yes, I did it myself. It's right I should go through this -- perfectly right -- I don't make any groans about it."

“Brought you down from where? Where was you brought down from?”

“Ah, you would not believe me; the world never believes -- let it go by -- it’s not important. The secret of my birth -- “

“The secret of your birth? Do you mean to say -- “

“Good men,” says the young man, very seriously, “I will tell it to you, for I feel I may have confidence in you. The truth is that I am a duke!”

Jim’s eyes pushed out when he heard that; and I think mine did, too. Then the head with no hair says: “No! you can’t mean it?”

“Yes. My father’s grandfather, oldest son of the Duke of Bridgewater, ran off to this country about the end of the last century, to breathe the clean air of freedom; married here, and died, leaving a son, his own father dying about the same time. The second son of the duke who died robbed his name and his wealth -- the baby that was the real duke was forgotten. That baby became my grandfather -- I am the true Duke of Bridgewater; and here am I, sad, robbed of my wealth, hunted of men, hated by the cold world, poor, sick, with a broken heart, and brought down to being friends with runaways on a raft!”

Jim felt sorry for him ever so much, and so did I. We tried to make him happy, but he said it weren’t much use, he couldn’t be made happy; said if we was to receive him as a duke, that would do him more good than most anything else; so we said we would, if he would tell us how. He said we should bend over when we spoke to him, and say “My Lord” -- and he would let us call him just “Bridgewater,” which, he said, was more than just a name; and one of us should serve him at dinner, and do any little thing for him he wanted done.

Well, that was all easy, so we done it. All through dinner Jim stood around and served him, and says, “Will my lord have some of dis or some of dat?” and so on, and a body could see he was mighty happy with it.

But the old man got pretty quiet by and by -- didn’t have much to say, and didn’t look very comfortable over all that serving that was going on around the Duke. He seemed to be thinking about something. So, along in the afternoon, he says:

“Look here, Bilgewater,” he says, “I’m a world full of sorry for you, but you ain’t the only person that’s had troubles like that.”

“No?”

“No you ain’t. You ain’t the only person that’s been pulled down wrongly out of a high place.”

“Oh my!”

“No, you ain’t the only person that’s had a secret of his birth.” And truth is, he started to cry.

“Hold! What do you mean?”

“Bilgewater, can I trust you?” says the old man, in a soft crying way.

“To the death!” He took the old man by the hand and squeezed it, and says, “That secret of your being: speak!”

“Bilgewater, I am the son of the king of France!”

You can be sure, Jim and me opened our eyes wide this time.

Then the duke says: “You are what?”

“Yes, my friend, it is too true -- your eyes is looking at this very second on the poor lost Dauphin, Louis the Seventeen, son of Louis the Sixteen and Mary Antoinette.”

“You! At your age! No! You mean you’re his son; you must be six or seven hundred years old, at the very least.”

“Trouble has done it, Bilgewater, trouble has done it; trouble has brought these grey hairs on my face and has taken the hairs from my head. Yes, good men, you see before you, in dirty blue pants and sadness, the lost, forced out, walked-on, and hurting true King of France.”

Well, he cried and took on so that me and Jim didn’t know what to do, we was so sorry -- and so glad and proud we’d got him with us, too. So we did like we done before with the duke, and tried to make him feel happy. But he said it weren’t no use, nothing but to be dead and done with it all could do him any good; but he added that it often made him feel easier and better for a while if people acted toward him as they should, and got down on one knee to speak to him, and always called him “Your Majesty,” and waited on him first at meals, and didn’t sit down when around him, until he asked them.

So Jim and me started majesty-ing him, and doing this and that and t’other for him, and standing up until he told us we might sit down. This done him a lot of good, and so he got happy and comfortable. But the duke kind of turned sour on him, and didn’t look at all happy with the way things was going; still, the king acted real friendly toward him, and said the duke’s father’s grandfather and all the other Dukes of Bilgewater was well thought of by his father, and was free to come to the palace a lot.

But the duke stayed angry a good while, until by and by the king says: “Like as not we got to be together a very long time on this here raft, Bilgewater, and so what’s the use of your being sour? It’ll only make things rough for all of us. I ain’t to be blamed for not being born a duke, and you ain’t to be blamed for not being born a king -- so what’s the use to worry? Make the best of things

the way you find ‘em, says I -- that’s my saying. This ain’t no bad thing that we’ve found here -- more than enough food and an easy life -- come, give us your hand, duke, and let’s all be friends.”

The duke done it, and Jim and me was pretty glad to see it. It took away all the hard feelings and we felt mighty good over it, because it would a been a sad business to have any hard feelings on the raft; for what you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be happy, and feel right and kind toward the others.

It didn’t take me long to learn that these men weren’t no kings or dukes at all, but just low-down empty talk and stories. But I never said nothing, never let on; kept it to myself; it’s the best way; then you don’t have no arguments, and don’t get into no trouble. If they wanted us to call them kings and dukes, I hadn’t no problems with that, as long as it would keep peace in the family; and it weren’t no use to tell Jim, so I didn’t tell him. If I never learned nothing else out of pap, I learned that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way.

Chapter 20

They asked a lot of questions; wanted to know what we covered up the raft that way for, and why we rested days instead of going on down the river -- was Jim running away from his owner?

Says I: “What a foolish question! would a slave run south?”

No, they agreed he wouldn’t. I had to give them some other reason for what we were doing, so I says: “My parents was living in Pike County, in Missouri, where I was born, and they all died off but me and pa and my brother Ike. Pa, he was planning to break up and go down and live with Uncle Ben, who’s got a little one-horse place on the river, forty-four miles below Orleans. Pa was pretty poor, and owed some money; so when he’d squared up there weren’t nothing left but sixteen dollars and our slave, Jim. That weren’t enough to take us fourteen hundred mile, sleeping in the open on a river boat or any other way. Well, when the river come up, Pa had a lucky day; he caught this piece of a raft; so we said we’d go down to Orleans on it. Pa’s luck didn’t hold out; a riverboat boat run over the forward corner of the raft one night, and we all jumped into the water, to swim under the wheel; Jim and me come up all right, but pa was drunk, and Ike was only four years old, so they never come up no more. Well, for the next day or two we had a lot of trouble, because people was always coming out in boats and trying to take Jim away from me, saying they believed he was running away. We don’t run days no more now; nights they don’t come around to question us.”
The duke says: “Leave me alone to work out a way so we can run days if we want to. I’ll think the thing over -- I’ll come up with a plan that’ll fix it. But we’ll not go today, because we don’t want to go by that town we just left when they can see us -- it might not be healthy.”

Toward night it started to turn dark and look like rain; the heat lightning was jumping around low down in the sky, and the leaves was starting to shake -- it

was going to be pretty ugly, it was easy to see that.

So the duke and the king went to looking over our tent, to see what the beds was like. My bed was a bag of dry grass -- better than Jim's, which was a bag of corn leaves; there's always sticks around about in a corn leaf bag, and they stick into you and hurt; and when you move on the bag it sounds like dead leaves; it makes such a noise that you wake up. Well, the duke said he would take my bed; but the king said he wouldn't.

He says: "I should think the difference in where we come from would a shown to you that a corn bed weren't good enough for me to sleep on. Your Lord will take the corn bed yourself."

Jim and me was worried again for a minute, being afraid there was going to be some more trouble between them; so we was pretty glad when the duke says: "It is for me to be always forced into the mud under the iron heel of cruel leaders. Bad luck has broken my once proud spirit; I give in, I will not fight; it is the way things are for me. I am alone in the world -- let me go through the awful pain of it now."

We got away as soon as it was good and dark. The king told us to stand well out toward the middle of the river, and not show a light until we were a long ways below the town. We saw a little group of lights by and by -- that was the town, you know -- and went quietly by, about a half a mile out. When we was more than half a mile below we put up our lantern; and about ten o'clock it come on to rain and blow with a lot of lightning; so the king told us to both stay on watch until the weather got better; then him and the duke climbed into the tent and turned in for the night.

It was my watch below until twelve, but I wouldn't a turned in anyway if I'd had a bed, because a body don't see such a storm as that every day in the week, not by a long piece. My souls, how the wind did blow! And every second or two there'd come an explosion of lightning that would let you see waves on the river for half a mile around, and you'd see the islands looking grey through the rain, and the trees whipping around in the wind; then comes a Bang! -- followed by bum! bum! bumble- umble-um-bum-bum-bum-bum -- and the noise would move away, and quit -- and then bang comes another explosion. The waves almost washed me off the raft sometimes, but I didn't have any real clothes on, and I wasn't worried. We didn't have no trouble about branches sticking up; the lightning was coming so close together that we could see them soon enough to throw her head this way or that and miss them.

I had the middle watch, you know, but I was pretty sleepy by that time, so Jim he said he would stand the first half of it for me; he was always mighty kind that way, Jim was. I squeezed into the tent, but the king and the duke had their legs pointing around so there weren't no show for me; so I rested outside -- The rain wasn't a problem, because it was warm, and the waves weren't running so high now.

About two they come up again, and Jim was going to call me; but then he changed, thinking they weren't high enough yet to be a problem; but he was wrong about that, for pretty soon along come a big one and washed me off the raft. It almost killed Jim a-laughing. He was the easiest black man to laugh that ever was.

I took the watch, and Jim went to sleep and snored away; and by and by the storm let up for good and all; and the first cabin light that showed I got Jim awake, and together we found a hiding place for the raft for the day.

The king got out an old box of cards after breakfast, and him and the duke played seven-up a while, five cents a game. Then they got bored of it, and said they would "plan some action," as they called it. The duke went down into his bag, and brought up a lot of little printed papers and read them out loud. One said, "The well known Doctor Armand de Montalban, of Paris," would "talk on the Science of head shapes" with empty lines for where and when, at ten cents to get in, and "reports on your best qualities at twenty-five cents each." The duke said that was him. In another bill he was the "well known Shakespearian actor, Garrick the Younger, of Drury Lane, London." In other papers he had a lot of other names and done other wonderful things, like finding water and gold with a special stick, breaking the curses of witches, and so on.

By and by he says: "But acting is my best quality. Have you ever walked the boards, King?"

"No," says the king.

"You shall, then, before you're three days older, oh Great One," says the duke. "The first good town we come to we'll rent a meeting house and do the sword fight in Richard III, and something from Romeo and Juliet. What do you think?"

"I'm in, up to my neck, for anything that will pay, Bilgewater; but, you see, I don't know nothing about acting, and ain't ever seen much of it. I was too small when pap used to have them at the palace. Do you think you can learn me?"

"Easy!"

"All right. I'm just freezing for something new, anyway. Let's start right away."

So the duke he told him all about who Romeo was and who Juliet was, and said he was used to being Romeo, so the king could be Juliet.

"But if Juliet's such a young girl, duke, my not having hair and my white beard is going to look very strange on her, don't you think?"

"No, don't you worry; these uneducated people won't ever think of that. Besides, you know, you'll be dressed as a girl, and that makes all the

difference in the world; Juliet's looking out the window at the moon before she goes to bed, and she's got on her night dress and her beautiful night hat. Here are the clothes for the parts."

He got out two or three curtain-cloth suits, which he said was soldiers' uniforms for Richard III and t'other man, and a long white cotton night shirt and a pretty night hat to go with it. The king was happy with that; so the duke got out his book and read the parts over in the most wonderful arms out way, walking around and acting at the same time, to show how it had got to be done; then he give the book to the king and told him to learn his part so he could say it without looking.

There was a little one-horse town about three miles down the bend, and after dinner the duke said he had worked out a plan to run when the sun was out without it being dangerous for Jim; so he said he would go down to the town and fix that thing. The king said he would go, too, and see if he couldn't do something. We was out of coffee, so Jim said I better go along with them in the canoe and get some.

When we got there there weren't nobody up yet; streets empty, and perfectly dead and still, like Sunday. We found a sick slave lying in the sun in a back yard, and he said everybody that weren't too young or too sick or too old was gone to a camp meeting, about two mile back in the trees. The king asked how to get there, and told me he'd go and work that camp meeting for all it was worth, and I might go too.

The duke said what he was after was a printing shop. We found it; a small room, up over a carpenter shop -- carpenters and printers all gone to the meeting, and no doors locked. It was a dirty, messy place, and had ink marks, and papers with pictures of horses and slaves that run off on them, all over the walls. The duke took off his coat and said he was all right now. So me and the king left for the camp meeting.

We got there in about a half an hour with our shirts wet from the heat, for it was a most awful hot day. There was as much as a thousand people there from twenty miles around. The place was full of horse teams and wagons tied to trees, with the horses hitting their feet on the ground to keep off the flies. There was shops made out of sticks and roofed over with branches, where they were selling lemon drinks and sweet biscuits, and watermelons and green corn and other things like that.

The preaching was going on under the same kinds of buildings, only they was bigger and held crowds of people. The benches was made out of half logs, with holes drilled in the round side to push sticks into for legs. They didn't have no backs. The preachers had high places to stand on at one end of the buildings. The women had on sun-hats; and their best dresses. Some of the young men was without shoes, and some of the children didn't have on any clothes but just a rough shirt. Some of the old women was knitting, and some of the young people was secretly looking for friends of the opposite sex.

The first building we come to the preacher was lining out a song. He'd say two lines, then everyone would sing it, and it was great to hear it, there was so many of them and they done it in such an enthusiastic way; then he lined out two more for them to sing -- and so on. The people come alive more and more, and were singing louder and louder; and toward the end some started to moan, and some started to shout. Then the preacher started to preach, and started in all sincerity, too; and went walking first to one side of the stage and then the other, and then a-leaning down over the front of it, with his arms and his body going all the time, and shouting his words out with all his strength; and every now and then he would hold up his Bible and open it out, and kind of pass it around this way and that, shouting, "It's the gold snake in the desert! Look on it and live!" And people would shout out, "Glory! -- Amen!" And so he went on, with the people moaning and crying and saying amen:

"Oh, come to the sinners' bench! come, you who are black with sin! (amen!) come, you who are sick and sore! (amen!) come, you who are crippled and blind! (amen!) come, you who are poor and in need! (a-a-men!) come, all that's tired and dirty and hurting! -- come with a broken spirit! come with a humble heart! come in your old clothes and sin and dirt! The waters that will make you clean is free, the door of heaven stands open -- oh, come in and be at rest!" (a-a-men! glory, glory!) And so on. You couldn't make out what the preacher said by this time, because of all the shouting and crying. People got up all over the crowd, and worked their way to the sinners' bench, with the tears running down their faces; and when all the sinners had got up there to the front benches in a crowd, they would sing and shout and throw themselves down on the ground, just crazy and wild.

Well, the first I knowed the king got a-going, and you could hear him over everyone; and next he went a-running up onto the stage where the other preacher was, and the preacher he begged him to speak to the people, and he done it. He told them he was a pirate -- been a pirate for thirty years out in the Indian Ocean -- and his men was thinned out a lot last year in a fight, and he was home now to take out some new men, and thanks to God he'd been robbed last night and put on land off of a river boat without a cent, and he was glad of it; it was the best thing that ever happened to him, because he was a changed man now, and happy for the first time in his life; and, poor as he was, he was going to start right off and work his way back to the Indian Ocean, and put in the rest of his life trying to turn the pirates into the way of truth; for he could do it better than anyone else, because he knew all pirates in that ocean; and even if it took him a long time to get there without money, he would get there anyway, and every time he brought a pirate to the Lord, he would say to him, "Don't you thank me, don't you give me nothing; it all belongs to them good people in Pokeville camp meeting, spiritual brothers who have reached out to the whole world, and that good preacher there is the truest friend a pirate ever had!"

And then he broke into tears, and so did everyone. Then someone sings out, "Take up some money for him, take it up!"

Well, five or six made a jump to do it, but someone sings out, "Let him pass the hat around!" Then everyone said it, the preacher too.

So the king went all through the crowd with his hat, rubbing his eyes, and blessing the people and saying how good they was and thanking them for being so good to the poor pirates away off there; and every little while the prettiest girls, with tears running down their cheeks, would up and ask would he let them kiss him for to remember him by; and he always done it; and some of them he hugged and kissed as many as five or six times. He was asked to stay a week; and everyone wanted him to live in their houses; said they'd think it was a gift to them if he stayed; but he said as this was the last day of the camp meeting he couldn't do no good there, and besides he was in a hurry to get to the Indian Ocean right off and go to work on the pirates.

When we got back to the raft and he come to count up he found he had collected eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents. And he had carried away a very big bottle of whiskey, too, that he found under a wagon when he was starting home through the trees. The king said, take it all around, it was better than any day he'd ever put in in the missionary line. He said it weren't no use talking; lost souls in Africa aren't near as good as pirates to work a camp meeting with.

The duke was thinking he'd been doing pretty well until the king come to show up, but after that he didn't think so that much. He had set up and printed off two little jobs for farmers in that printing shop -- horse advertisements -- and took the money, four dollars. And he had got in ten dollars' worth of advertisements for the paper, which he said he would sell for four dollars if they would pay then and there -- so they done it. The price of the paper was

two dollars a year, but he lined up three people to take it for half a dollar each if they would pay then and there too. They were going to pay in timber and onions as most did around there, but he said he had just bought the business and knocked down the price as low as he could, and needed the money. He set up a little piece of rhyming, which he made himself, out of his own head -- kind of sweet and sad -- the name of it was, “Yes, destroy, cold world, this breaking heart” -- and he left that all set up and ready to print in the paper, and didn’t ask nothing for it. Well, he took in nine dollars and a half, and said he’d done a pretty square day’s work for it.

Then he showed us another little job he’d printed and hadn’t asked to be paid for, because it was for us. It had a picture of a slave with some clothes tied up on a stick over his shoulder, and “$200 reward” under it.

The reading was all about Jim, and just perfectly fit him. It said he run away from St. Jacques’ farm, forty miles below New Orleans, last winter, and probably went north, and whoever would catch him and send him back he could have the reward and costs.

“Now,” says the duke, “after tonight we can run days if we want to. Whenever we see anyone coming we can tie Jim hand and foot with a rope, and lay him

in the tent and show this paper and say we caught him up the river, and were too poor to travel on a river boat, so we borrowed this little raft from our friends and are going down to get the reward. Handcuffs and chains would look still better on Jim, but it wouldn't go well with the story of us being so poor. Too much like jewelry. Ropes are the right thing -- we must keep it all together, as we say on the boards."

We all said the duke was pretty smart, and there couldn't be no trouble about running days now. We judged we could make miles enough that night to get out of reach of the trouble we believed the duke's work in the printing shop was going to make in that little town; then we could move right along if we wanted to.

We kept low and quiet, and never pushed out until nearly ten o'clock; then we went by, pretty wide away from the town, and didn't put up our lantern until we was well past where they could see us.

When Jim called me to take the watch at four in the morning, he says: "Huck, does you think we gwyne to run across any more kings on dis trip?"

"No," I says, "I don't think so."

"Well," says he, "dat's all right, den. I don't have a problem with one or two kings, but dat's enough. Dis one's powerful drunk, and de duke ain't much better."

I found Jim had been trying to get him to talk French, so he could hear what it was like; but he said he had been in this country so long, and had so much trouble, he couldn't remember it now.

Chapter 21

It was after sun-up now, but we went right on and didn't tie up. The king and the duke turned out by and by looking pretty rough; but after they'd jumped in the river and took a swim it coloured them up better. After breakfast the king he sat down on the corner of the raft, and pulled off his shoes and pushed up his pants, and let his legs hang in the water, so as to be comfortable, and pulled out his pipe, and went to getting his Romeo and Juliet learned well enough to remember.

When he had got it pretty good, him and the duke started to work on it together. The duke had to learn him over and over again how to say every line; and he made him breathe out sadly, and put his hand on his heart, and after a while he said he done it pretty well; "only," he says, "you mustn't shout out Romeo! that way, like a wild buffalo -- you must say it soft and sick and dying like so -- R-o-o-meo! that is the way; for Juliet's a nice sweet child of a girl, you know, and she doesn't talk like a donkey."

Well, next they got out two long swords that the duke made out of timber, and started to work on the sword fight -- the duke called himself Richard III; and the way they ran and jumped around the raft was great to see. But by and by the king fell off the raft, and after that they took a rest, and had a talk about all kinds of adventures they'd had in other times along the river.

After dinner the duke says: "Well, King, we'll want to make this a top drawer show, you know, so I think we'll add a little more to it. We want a little something to do at the end if they ask for more. I'll do a dance from Scotland or one that men do on ocean ships; and you -- well, let me see -- oh, I've got it -- you can do something from Hamlet; the most well known thing that Shakespeare ever wrote. Ah, it's perfect, perfect! Always brings the house down. I don't have it in my book -- I only have the one -- but I think I can piece it out from what I can remember. I'll just walk up and down a minute, and see if I can call it back from inside my head."

So he went to walking up and down, thinking, and making an awful sad face every now and then; then he would lift up his eyebrows; next he would squeeze his hand on the front of his head and take a step back and kind of moan; next he would breathe deeply, and then he'd let on to drop a tear. It was beautiful to see him. By and by he got it. He told us to listen. Then he stands himself in the most wonderful way, with one leg pushed forward, and his arms reaching away up, and his head leaning back, looking up at the sky; and then he starts to talk and shout and squeeze his teeth together; and after that, all through his speaking, he cried, and moved around, and pushed out his chest, and just knocked the spots out of any acting ever I seen before.

Well, the old man he liked that piece, and he mighty soon got it so he could do it real well. It seemed like he was just born for it; and when he had his hand in and was getting to feel it strongly, it was real nice the way he would shout and cry when he was getting it off.

The first time we was able the duke he had some papers printed; and after that, for two or three days as we went along down the river, the raft was full of action, for there weren't nothing but sword fighting and saying their lines going on all the time. One morning, when we was pretty well down the bottom of Arkansas, we could see a little one-horse town in a big bend; so we tied up almost a mile above it, in the mouth of a shallow little side river which was covered over by willows like it was a cave. All of us but Jim took the canoe and went down there to see if it would be a good place for our show.

We was mighty lucky; there was going to be a circus there that afternoon, and the country people was already starting to come in, in all kinds of old wagons, and on horses. The circus would leave before night, so our show would have a pretty good crowd. The duke he rented the court house, and we went around and put up our advertisements. They read like this:

Shakspeare Comes Alive ! ! !
Wonderful Show! For One Night Only!
Two of the world's best actors,

David Garrick the Younger,
of Drury Lane Theatre London,
and
Edmund Kean the Older,
of the King's Haymarket Theatre,
Whitechapel, Pudding Lane,
Piccadilly, London,
in their wonderful show of
the best of Shakspeare,
being a scene from

Romeo and Juliet ! ! !
Romeo.....Mr. Garrick
Juliet.....Mr. Kean
New uniforms, new scenes, new showings! Also:
The emotion filled, expert, and dangerous
Sword fight from Richard III ! ! !
Richard III.....Mr. Garrick
Richmond.....Mr. Kean
Also:
(by special request)
Hamlet's Best Lines ! !
By The wonderful Kean!

Done by him over 300 nights in Paris!
For One Night Only,
Because of important showings in Europe!
Adults 25 cents; children and servants, 10 cents.

Then we went walking around town. The shops and houses was most all old, rough, dried up timber buildings that hadn't ever been painted; they was set up three or four foot above ground on legs, so as to be out of reach of the water when the river was flooded. The houses had little gardens around them, but they didn't seem to grow hardly anything in them but weeds, and sunflowers, and ashes, and old broken shoes, and pieces of bottles, and thrown out clothes, and empty tins. The fences was made of different kinds of boards, nailed on at different times; and they leaned every which way, and had gates that often didn't have but one piece of leather for a hinge. Some of the fences had been white-washed some time or another, but the duke said it was in Columbus' time, like enough. There was often pigs in the garden, and people running them out.

All the shops was along one street. They had a white roof over the footpath, and the country people tied their horses to the vertical logs holding the roof up. There was empty barrels under the roof, and people sitting on them all day long, cutting sticks with their knives; and chewing tobacco, and making sleepy faces -- a mighty rough group. Most of them had on yellow grass hats almost as wide as an umbrella, but didn't wear no coats. They called one another Bill, and Buck, and Hank, and Joe, and Andy, and talked lazy and slow, and used a lot of bad words. There was as many as one lazy person leaning up against each log holding up the roof, and he most always had his hands in his pants pockets, apart from when he brought them out to get a piece of tobacco or to scratch. What a body was hearing between them all the time was:

"Give me a chew of tobacco, Hank."

"Can't; I ain't got but one chew left. Ask Bill."

Maybe Bill he gives him a chew; maybe he lies and says he ain't got none. Some of them do-nothing boys never has a cent in the world, or a chew of tobacco of their own. They get all their chewing by borrowing; they say to a friend, "I wish you'd borrow me a chew, Jack, I just this minute give Ben Thompson the last one I had" -- which is a lie pretty much every time; it don't trick nobody but a stranger; but Jack ain't no stranger, so he says:

"You give him a chew, did you? So did your sister's cat's grandmother. You pay me back the chews you've already borrowed off a me, Lafe Buckner, then I'll let you have one or two wagons full of it, and won't ask you for no back interest, either."

"Well, I did pay you back some of it once."

"Yes, you did -- about six chews. You borrowed shop tobacco and paid back home made."

Shop tobacco is flat black, but these boys mostly chews the leaves coiled up. When they borrow a chew they don't as a rule cut it off with a knife, but put the whole piece in between their teeth, and bite with their teeth and pull at it with their hands until they get it in two; then sometimes the one that owns the tobacco looks sadly at it when it's handed back, and says:

"Here, give me the chew, and you take what's left."

All the streets and lanes was just mud; they weren't nothing else but mud --

mud as black as tar and close to a foot deep in some places. The pigs was walking and lying around wherever you looked. You'd see a dirty old mother pig and a lot of little ones come lazying along the street and drop right down in the way, where people had to walk around her, and she'd lie there and shut her eyes and move her ears while the babies was milking her, and look as happy as if she was being paid for it. Pretty soon you'd hear one of the lazy boys sing out, "Go get her Tiger! Get that pig!" and away the pig would go, making a most awful noise, with a dog on each ear, and more a-coming; and then you would see all the do-nothings get up and watch until they couldn't see it no more, and laugh and look like they was thankful for the noise. Then they'd sit down again until there was a dog fight. There couldn't anything wake them up and make them happy all over like a dog fight -- apart from maybe tying a tin pan to a dog's tail and seeing him run himself to death.

On the river front some of the houses were half out over the river, and they was leaning and bending, and about ready to fall in. People had moved out of them. The side of the river was broken away under only one corner of others, with that corner hanging over, and people lived in them yet. It was dangerous, because at times a piece of land as wide as a house breaks off and falls in. Sometimes a belt of land four hundred yards deep will start in and break along and break along until it all ends up in the river in one summer. Such a town as that has to be always moving back, and back, because the river's always chewing at it.

The closer it got to noon the thicker was the wagons and horses in the streets, and more coming all the time. Families brought their dinners with them from the country, and eat them in the wagons. There was a lot of whiskey drinking going on, and I seen three fights.

By and by someone sings out: "Here comes old Boggs! -- in from the country for his monthly drunk; here he comes, boys!" All the do-nothings looked glad; I'd say they was used to having fun out of Boggs. One of them says: "Who is he a-gwyne to chew up this time. If he'd a-chewed up all the men he's been a-gwyne to chew up in the last twenty years he'd be very well known by now."

Another one says, "I wish Boggs'd say he was gwyne to fight me; then I'd know I weren't gwyne to die for a thousand years."

Boggs come a-racing along on his horse, shouting like an Indian, and singing out: "Clear the way, there. I'm angry, and the price of a funeral is a-gwyne to go up."

He was drunk, and leaning over in his saddle; he was over fifty year old, and had a very red face. Everyone shouted at him and laughed at him and he shouted back, and said he'd fix them and lay them out in turns, but he couldn't wait now because he'd come to town to kill old Sherburn, and his saying was, "Meat first, and spoon food to top off on."

He sees me, and rides up and says: "Where'd you come from, boy? You prepared to die?"

Then he went on.

I was scared, but a man says: "He don't mean nothing; he's always a-carrying on like that when he's drunk. He's the nicest old man in Arkansas -- never hurt nobody, drunk or not."

Boggs stopped in front of the biggest shop in town, and leaned his head down so he could see under the footpath roof and shouts: "Come out here, Sherburn! Come out and meet the man you've robbed. You're the dog I'm after. I'm a-gwyne to have you, too!"

And so he went on, calling Sherburn everything he could put his tongue on, and the whole street filled with people listening and laughing and going on. By and by a proud-looking man about fifty-five -- and he was by far the best dressed man in town, too -- steps out of the shop, and the crowd drops back on each side to let him come. He says to Boggs, very quiet and slow -- he says: "I'm tired of this, but I'll put up with it until one o'clock. Until one o'clock, remember -- no longer. If you open your mouth against me only once after that time you can't travel so far but I will find you."

Then he turns and goes in. The crowd looked pretty serious; nobody moved,

and there weren't no more laughing. Boggs went off saying bad things about Sherburn as loud as he could, all down the street; and pretty soon back he comes and stops before the shop, still keeping it up. Some men crowded around and tried to get him to shut up, but he wouldn't; they told him it would be one o'clock in about fifteen minutes, and so he must go home -- he must go right away. But it didn't do no good. He shouted away with all his strength, and throwed his hat down in the mud and walked the horse over it, and pretty soon away he went a-shouting down the street again, with his grey hair a-flying. Everyone that could get to him tried their best to get him to come off of his horse so they could lock him up away from the drink; but it weren't no use -- up the street he would ride again, and give Sherburn another round. By and by someone says: "Go for his daughter! -- hurry, go for his daughter; sometimes he'll listen to her. If anyone can stop him, she can."

So someone started on a run. I walked down the street a ways and stopped. In about five or ten minutes here comes Boggs again, but not on his horse. He was coming across the street toward me, no hat on, with a friend on both sides of him holding his arms and hurrying him along. He was quiet, and looked scared; and he weren't hanging back any, but was doing some of the hurrying himself. Someone sings out: "Boggs!"

I looked over there to see who said it, and it was that Sherburn. He was standing in one place in the street, and was holding a gun in his right hand -- not pointing it at Boggs, but holding it out with it pointing up toward the sky. The same second I see a young girl coming on the run, and two men with her. Boggs and the men turned around to see who called him, and when they see the gun the men jumped to one side, and the gun come down slowly, to where it was horizontal. Boggs throws up both of his hands and says, "Oh Lord, don't shoot!" Bang! goes the gun and he falls back, reaching at the air -- bang! it goes again, and he falls backward onto the ground, heavy and solid, with his arms out.

That young girl shouts out and comes running, and down she throws herself on her father, crying, and saying, “Oh, he’s killed him, he’s killed him!”

The crowd closed up around them, and shouldered and pushed one another, with their necks sticking out, trying to see, and people on the inside trying to push them back and shouting, “Back, back! give him air, give him air!”

Sherburn he dropped his gun onto the ground, and turned around on his heels and walked off.

They took Boggs to a little medicine shop, the crowd pushing around just the same, and the whole town followed, and I hurried and got a good place at the window, where I was close to him and could see in. They put him on the floor and put one big Bible under his head, and opened another one and put it on his breast; but they pulled open his shirt first, and I seen where one of the bullets went in. He breathed a few time, his breast lifting the Bible up when he breathed in, and letting it down again when he breathed out -- and after that he didn’t move at all; he was dead. Then they pulled his daughter away from him, shouting and crying, and took her off. She was about sixteen, and very sweet and kind looking, but awful white and scared.

Well, pretty soon the whole town was there, pushing to get at the window and

have a look, but people that had the places wouldn't give them up, and people behind them was saying all the time, "Say, now, you've looked enough; it ain't right for you to stay there all the time, and never give nobody a look; other people has their rights as well as you, you know."

There was a lot of talking back, so I left, thinking maybe there was going to be trouble. The streets was full, and everyone was interested. Everybody that seen the shooting was telling how it happened, and there was a big crowd around each one of these people, sticking their necks out and listening. One long, thin man, with long hair and a big white animal skin hat on the back of his head, and a walking stick, marked out the places on the ground where Boggs stood and where Sherburn stood, and the people followed him around from one place to t'other and watched everything he done, and moved their heads to show they understood, and leaned over a little, resting their hands on their legs to watch him mark the places on the ground with his walking stick; and then he stood up straight where Sherburn had stood, with the border of his hat down over his eyes, and shouted out, "Boggs!" and then brought his walking stick down slow to where it was pointing straight out, and says "Bang!" falls backward, says "Bang!" again, and falls down flat on his back. The people that had seen the thing said he done it perfect; said it was just the way it all happened. Then about ten people got out their bottles and give him a drink.

Well, by and by someone said Sherburn should be hanged. In about a minute everyone was saying it; so away they went, angry and shouting, and pulling down every clothes line they come to do the hanging with.

Chapter 22

They moved up toward Sherburn's house, a-shouting and carrying on like Indians, and everything had to clear out or get run over and stepped into the mud, and it was awful to see. Children was heeling it ahead of the crowd, crying and trying to get out of the way; and every window along the road was full of women's heads, and there was black boys in every tree, and young men and women looking over every fence; and as soon as the crowd would get nearly to them they would break and run back out of reach. Lots of the women and girls was crying and taking on, scared most to death.

They crowded up in front of Sherburn's house as thick as they could squeeze together, and you couldn't hear yourself think for the noise. It was a little twenty-foot yard. Some shouted out "Break down the fence! destroy it!" Then there was the sound of breaking, and down she goes, and the front wall of the crowd starts to push in like a wave.

Just then Sherburn steps out onto the roof of his little front porch, with a rifle in his hand, and takes his stand, perfectly relaxed and confident, not saying a word. The noise stopped, and the wave moved back.

Sherburn never said a word -- just stood there, looking down. The quiet was awful strange. Sherburn run his eye along the crowd; and wherever it landed the people tried to look back, but they couldn't; they dropped their eyes and looked guilty. Then pretty soon Sherburn kind of laughed; not the nice kind, but the kind that makes you feel like you're eating bread that's got sand in it.

Then he says, slow and proud: "The thought of you hanging anyone is a laugh. You think you're strong enough to hang a man! Because you're brave enough to tar and feather poor women without anyone to help them, did that make you think you were brave enough to put your hands on a man? Why, a man's safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind -- as long as he can see you and you're not behind him.

"Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and grew up in the South, and I've lived in the North; so I know most people all around. Most people are too afraid to do anything. In the North they let anyone walk over them that wants to, and goes home and prays for a humble spirit to bear it. In the South one man all by himself, has stopped a coach full of men in the light of day, and robbed them all. Your newspapers call you a brave people so

much that you think you are braver than any other people. Truth is, you're just as brave, but no braver. Why don't your courts hang killers? Because they're afraid the man's friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark -- and it's just what they would do too.

"So they always let a killer off; and then a man goes in the night, with a hundred people who are so scared that they wear masks, and hangs the awful man. Your problem is you didn't bring a man with you; that's one thing you did wrong, and the other is you didn't come in the dark and bring masks. You brought part of a man -- Buck Harkness, there -- and if you hadn't had him to start you, you would a just talked.

"You didn't want to come. Most don't like trouble and danger. But if only half a man -- like Buck Harkness, there -- shouts 'Hang him! hang him!' you're afraid to back down -- afraid you'll be found out to be what you are -- too scared to act -- and so you start shouting, and hang yourselves onto that half-a-man's coat-tail, and come racing up here, saying what big things you're going to do. The saddest thing out is a crowd come for a hanging; that's what an army is -- a crowd coming for a hanging; they don't fight because they're brave, no, they borrow their strength from those around them, and from their leaders. But a crowd without any man at the head of it is worse than sad. Now the thing for you to do is to let your tails hang down and go home and climb into a hole. If any real hanging's going to be done it will be done in the dark, the way they do it down here; and when they come they'll bring their masks, and bring a man along. Now leave -- and take your half-a-man with you!" He threw his rifle up across his left arm when he said this.

The crowd moved back quickly, and then broke all apart, and went running off every which way, and Buck Harkness he heeled it after them, looking pretty cheap. I could a stayed if I wanted to, but I didn't want to.

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I went to the circus instead and was hanging around the back until the watchman went by, and then climbed in under the tent. I had my twenty-dollar gold piece and some other money, but I thought it was better to save it, because there ain't no telling how soon you're going to need it, away from home like that. I ain't against spending money on circuses when there ain't no other way, but there ain't no use in wasting it on them.

It was a real good circus. It was the best thing in the world to see them all come riding in, two by two, a man and a woman, side by side, the men just in their underpants and undershirts, and no shoes, and resting their hands on the top of their legs easy and comfortable -- there must a been twenty of them - - and every woman with a nice skin, and perfectly beautiful, and looking just like a gang of real sure-enough queens, and dressed in clothes that cost millions of dollars, and just covered with diamonds. It was more than beautiful; I never seen anything so nice. And then one by one they got up and stood on the back of a horse, and went a-riding around the circle so soft and smooth, the men looking ever so tall and straight, with their heads moving along, away up there under the tent-roof, and every woman's beautiful dress moving softly around her hips, and she looking like the most beautiful umbrella.

And then faster and faster they went, all of them dancing, first one foot in the air and then the other, the horses leaning more and more, and the man with the whip going round and round the centre, hitting his whip and shouting "Hi! -- hi!" and the clown making jokes behind him; and by and by all hands dropped the ropes controlling the horses, and every woman put her fists on her hips and every man folded his arms, and then how the horses did lean over and lead themselves! And so one after the other they all jumped off into the circle, and made the sweetest bow I ever seen, and then ran out, and everybody clapped their hands and went just about wild.

Well, all through the circus they done the most surprising things; and all the time that clown carried on so it most killed the people. The man with the whip couldn't ever say a word to him but he was back at him fast as lightning with the funniest things a body ever said; and how he ever could think of so many of them, and so quickly and so perfectly, was what I couldn't no way understand. Why, I couldn't a thought of them in a year. And by and by a drunk man tried to get into the circle -- said he wanted to ride; said he could ride as well as anyone. They argued and tried to keep him out, but he wouldn't listen, and the whole show come to a stop. The people started to shout at him and make fun of him, and that made him angry, and he started to shout back; so that made the people more angry, and a lot of men started to come down off the benches and crowd toward the circle, saying, "Knock him down! throw him out!" One or two women started to cry out. So, then, the man with the whip he gave a little talk, and said he hoped there wouldn't be no trouble, and if the man would promise to make no more trouble he would let

him ride if he thought he could stay on. So everybody laughed and said all right, and the man got on.
The minute he was on, the horse started to jump and throw itself around, with two circus men hanging on to its ropes trying to hold him, and the drunk man hanging on to its neck, and its heels flying in the air every jump, and the whole crowd of people standing up shouting and laughing until tears come down. At last, sure enough, after all the circus men could do, the horse broke loose, and away he went like he was crazy, around and around the circle, with that poor drunk man lying down on him and hang- ing to his neck, with first one leg hanging almost to the ground on one side, and then t'other one on t'other side, and the people just went crazy. But it weren't funny to me; I was shaking all over to see his danger. But pretty soon he got himself up to sitting on the horse and he took a hold of the ropes, a-leaning this way and that; and the next minute he jumped up and dropped the rope and stood! and the horse a-going like a house on fire too. He just stood up there, a- sailing around as easy and comfortable as if he weren't ever drunk in his life -- and then he started to pull off his clothes and throw them. He took them off so thick they kind of filled the air, and in the end he took off seventeen suits.

And, then, there he was, thin and good looking, and dressed the prettiest you ever saw, and he made that horse almost fly -- and in the end he jumped off, and made his bow and danced off to the dressing-room, and everybody just a-shouting with happiness and surprise.

Then the man with the whip he see how he had been tricked. Why, it was one of his own men who had got up that joke all out of his own head, and never let on to nobody. Well, I felt embarrassed enough to be took in so, but I wouldn't

a been in that whip man's place, not for a thousand dollars. There may be better circuses than what that one was, but I never seen them yet. Anyway, it was more than good enough for me; and wherever I run across it, it can have all of my business every time.

Well, that night we had our show; but there weren't only about twelve people there -- just enough to pay costs. And they laughed all the time, and that made the duke angry; and everybody but one boy who was asleep left before the show was over. So the duke said these Arkansas timber heads couldn't come up to Shakespeare; what they wanted was low laughs -- and maybe something even worse than low laughs, he thought. He said he could size their way of thinking. So next morning he got some big pieces of paper and some black paint, and made some signs and put them up all over the village.

The signs said:

AT THE COURT HOUSE!
FOR 3 NIGHTS ONLY!
The Well known actors

DAVID GARRICK THE YOUNGER!
And
EDMUND KEAN THE OLDER!

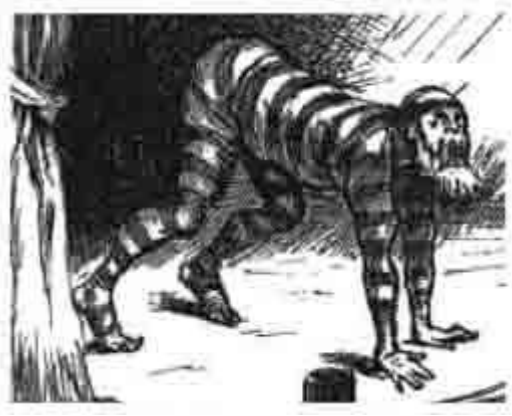
Of the London and Haymarket Theatres,
In
THE KING'S FOOLISHNESS ! ! !

50 cents to get in
Then at the bottom was the biggest line of all, which said:
WOMEN AND CHILDREN CANNOT COME IN.

"There," says he, "if that line don't bring them, I don't know Arkansas!"

Chapter 23

Well, all day him and the king was hard at it, putting up a stage and a curtain and a line of candles for foot lights; and that night the house was full of men in no time. When the place couldn't hold no more, the duke he quit working on the door and went around the back and come up onto the stage and stood up before the curtain and gave a little talk about how good the show was going to be, and said it was the most wild one that ever was; and so he went on a-talking about how good it was, and about Edmund Kean the Older, who was to play the most important part in it; and at last when he'd got everybody's interest up high enough, he pushed up the curtain, and the next minute the king come a-walking out on all fours, without any clothes on; and he was painted all over in stripes, all kinds of colours, as beautiful as a rainbow. And -- but I won't talk about the other things he had on; it was just wild, but it was awful funny. The people almost killed themselves laughing; and when the king got finished dancing around and walked off behind the scenes, they shouted and clapped and stormed and laughed until he come back and done it over again, and after that they made him do it another time. Well, it would make a cow laugh to see the things that old man did.



Then the duke he lets the curtain down, and bows to the people, and says the great show will be done only two nights more, because of big shows waiting for them in London, where people have already paid to see it in Drury Lane; and then he makes them another bow, and says if he has made them happy and taught them something about Shakespeare, he will be deeply thankful if they will talk about it to their friends and get them to come and see it.

Twenty people sings out: “What, is it over? Is that all?”

The duke says yes. Then there was an interesting time. Everybody sings out, “You tricked us!” and gets up angry, and was a-going for that stage and them actors. But a big, nice looking man jumps up on a bench and shouts: “Hold on! Just a word, men.”

They stopped to listen. “We were tricked -- mighty badly tricked. But we don’t want the whole town laughing at us. We'd never hear the last of this thing as long as we live. No. What we want is to go out of here quiet, and talk this show up, and sell the others in town! Then we’ll all be in the same boat. Ain’t that smart?” (“True, it is! The judge is right!” everybody sings out.) “All right, then, not a word about any trick. Go along home, and tell everybody to come and see the show.”

Next day you couldn’t hear nothing around town but how good the show was. House was filled again that night, and we tricked this crowd the same way. When me and the king and the duke got home to the raft we all had a meal; and by and by, about midnight, they made Jim and me back her out and move her down the middle of the river, and bring her in and hide her about two miles below town.

The third night the house was filled again -- and they weren’t new ones this time, but people that was at the show the other two nights. I stood by the duke at the door, and I see that every man that went in had his pockets full, or something pushed up under his coat -- and I see it weren’t nice smells either, not by a long way. I could smell sick eggs by the barrel, and very old cabbages, and such things; and if I know the signs of a dead cat being around, and I think I do, there was sixty-four of them went in. I pushed in there for a minute, but it was too strange for me; I couldn’t take it.

Well, when the place couldn't hold no more the duke he give a man a coin and told him to work the door for him a minute, and then he started around for the stage door, with me after him; but the minute we turned the corner and was in the dark he says: "Walk fast now until you get away from the houses, and then run for the raft like the devil was after you!"

I done it, and he done the same. We reached the raft at the same time, and in less than two seconds we was going down the river, all dark and quiet, and moving toward the middle of the river, nobody saying a word.

I thought the poor king was in for a bad time of it with the crowd, but none of that; pretty soon he comes out from under the tent, and says: "Well, how'd the old thing work out this time, duke?" He hadn't been up to town at all.

We never showed a light until we was about ten miles below the village. Then we put the light up and had a meal, and the king and the duke almost laughed their bones loose over the way they'd served them people.
The duke says: "What stupid people! I knew the first house would keep quiet and let the others get pulled in; and I knew they'd go for us the third night, and think it was their turn now. Well, it is their turn, and they can turn it into a party

if they want -- they brought enough food for it."

Them two took in four hundred and sixty-five dollars in those three nights. I never see money pulled in by the wagon full like that before.

By and by, when they was asleep and snoring, Jim says: "Don't it surprise you de way dem kings carries on, Huck?"

"No," I says, "it don't."

"Why don't it, Huck?"

"Because it's in the blood. I think they're all the same."

"But, Huck, dese kings of ours is like robbers; dat's just what dey is; dey's robbers."

"Well, that's what I'm a-saying; all kings is mostly robbers, as far as I can make out."

"Is dat so?"

"You read about them once -- you'll see. Look at Henry the Eight; this one is a Sunday-school teacher to him. And look at Charles Second, and Louis Fourteen, and Louis Fifteen, and James Second, and Edward Second, and Richard Third, and forty more; they all used to run around so in old times and make like hell. My, you should a seen old Henry the Eight when he was at his best. He was a flower. He used to marry a new wife every day, and cut off her head next morning. And he would do it just as easy as if he was asking for eggs for breakfast. 'Bring up Nell Gwynn,' he says. They bring her up. Next morning, 'Cut off her head!' And they cut it off. 'Bring up Jane Shore,' he says; and up she comes, Next morning, 'Cut off her head' -- and they cut it off. 'Ring for Fair Rosamun.' Fair Rosamun answers the bell. Next morning, 'Cut off her head.' And he made every one of them tell him a story every night; and he kept that up until he had saved a thousand and one stories that way, and then he put them all in a book, and called it the Domesday Book -- which was a good name and said what it was about. You don't know kings, Jim, but I know them; and this old man of ours is one of the cleanest I've seen in history. Well, Henry he starts feeling he wants to get up some trouble with this country. How does he go at it? Does he say so? Does he warn the country? No. Without warning, he throws all the tea in Boston out of the ships, and starts a war. That was his way -- he never give anyone a way to get away. He didn't trust his father, the Duke of Wellington. Well, what did he do? Ask him to show up? No, he drowned him, like a cat. If people left money lying around where he was -- what did he do? He took it. If you had an agreement for him to do a thing, and you paid him, and didn't sit down there and see that he done it -- what did he do? He always done the other thing. If he opened his mouth -- what then? If he didn't shut it up very quickly he'd lose a lie every time. That's the kind of insect Henry was; and if we'd a had him along instead of our kings he'd a tricked that town a lot worse than ours done. I don't say that ours is

lambs, because they ain't, when you come right down to the cold truth; but they ain't nothing to that old goat. All I say is, kings is kings, and you got to make room for that. Take them all around, they're a mighty bad lot. It's the way they're brought up."

"But dis one do smell so, Huck."

"Well, they all do, Jim. We can't help the way a king smells; history don't tell no way."

"Now de duke, he's a good enough man in some ways."

"Yes, a duke's different. But not very different. This one's a little bad for a duke. When he's drunk there ain't no man could tell him from a king."

"Well, anyway, I don't want no more of 'em, Huck. Dese is all I can stand."

"It's the way I feel, too, Jim. But we've got them on our hands, and we got to remember what they are, and make space for that. Times I wish we could hear of a country that's out of kings."

What was the use to tell Jim these weren't real kings and dukes? It wouldn't a done no good; and, besides, it was just as I said: you couldn't tell them from the real kind.

I went to sleep, and Jim didn't call me when it was my turn. He often done that. When I waked up just as the sun was coming up he was sitting there with his head down between his knees, moaning and feeling sad to himself. I didn't let on that I saw it. I knowed what it was about. He was thinking about his wife and his children, away up north, and he was low and sad; because he hadn't ever been away from home before in his life; and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white people does for theirs. It don't seem like that could be true, but I think it is. He was often moaning and feeling sad that way nights, when he judged I was asleep, and saying, "Poor little Elizabeth! poor little Johnny! it's mighty hard; it seems I ain't ever gwyne to see you no more, no more!" He was a mighty good nigger, Jim was.

But this time, one way or another, I got to talking to him about his wife and young ones; and by and by he says: "What makes me feel so bad dis time was because I hear sumpin over on de side of de river like a hit or a slap, a while ago, and it made me think of de time I act so rough toward my Elizabeth. She weren't only about four years old, and she took sick and had a powerful rough time of it; but she got well, and one day she was a-standing around, and I says to her, I says: 'Shut de door.'

"She never done it; just stood dere, kind a smiling up at me. It made me angry; and I says again, mighty loud, I says: 'Don't you hear me? Shut de door!'
"She just stood de same way, kind a smiling up. I was a-burning up! I says: 'I know how to make you do what I say!'

“And wid dat I give her a slap up side de head dat sent her to de ground’. Den I went into de other room, and was gone about ten minutes; and when I come back dere was dat door a-standing open yet, and dat child standing almost right in it, a-looking down and being sad, and de tears running down. My, but I was angry! I was a-gwyne for de child, but just den -- it was a door dat open in -- just den, along come de wind and force it to, behind de child, ker-blam! -- and my land, de child never moved! My breevin’ almost stopped; and I feel so -- so -- I don’t know how I feel. I went quietly out, all a-shaking, and went secretly around and open de door easy and slow, and put my head in behind de child, soft and quiet, and then I says BANG! just as loud as I could shout. She never moved! Oh, Huck, I break out a-crying and take her up in my arms, and say, ‘Oh, de poor little thing! De Lord God forgive poor old Jim, because he never gwyne to forgive himself as long as he lives!’ Oh, she couldn’t hear, Huck, she was deaf, and I’d been a-doing dat to her!”

Chapter 24

Next day, toward night, we stopped under a little island out in the middle, in a place where there was a village on each side, and the duke and the king started to lay out a plan for working them towns. Jim he spoke to the duke, and said he hoped it wouldn’t take but a few hours, because it got very difficult for him when he had to lie all day in the tent tied with the rope. You see, when we left him all alone we had to tie him, because if anyone happened onto him not tied it wouldn’t look much like he was a prisoner. So the duke said it was kind of bad to have to be tied up all day, and he’d work out some way to get around it.

He was very smart, the duke, and he soon found it. He dressed Jim up in one of his acting uniforms -- it was a long dress. -- with white hair and a white beard; and then he took his theatre paint and painted Jim’s face and hands and ears and neck all over solid blue, like a man that’s been drowned nine days. I’ll be... if he weren’t the most awful looking thing I ever did see. Then the duke took and wrote out a sign like so:

Sick Arab -- but safe enough when he's not out of his head.
And he nailed that sign to a stick, and put the stick up four or five foot in front of the tent. Jim was happy with that. He said it was better than lying tied two years every day, and shaking all over each time there was a sound. The duke told him to make himself free and easy, and if anyone ever come looking around, he must run out of the tent, and carry on a little, and give a shout or two like a wild animal, and he believed they would run off and leave him alone. Which was true enough; but you take most people, they wouldn't even wait for him to shout. Why, he didn't only look like he was dead, he looked even worse than that.

These old robbers wanted to try The King's Foolishness again, because there was so much money in it, but they judged it wouldn't be safe, because maybe the news might a worked along down by this time. They couldn't hit no plan that fitted perfectly; so at last the duke said he thought he'd rest and work his brains an hour or two and see if he couldn't put up something on the Arkansas village; and the king he said he would drop over to t'other village without any plan, but just trust in God to lead him the best way -- meaning the devil, I think. We had all paid for shop clothes where we stopped last; and now the king put his on, and he told me to put mine on. The king's clothes was all black, and he did look real smart and straight.

I never knowed how clothes could change a body before. Why, before, he looked like the worst old man that ever was; but now, when he'd take off his new white animal skin hat and make a bow and do a smile, he looked that great and good and holy that you'd say he had walked right out of the Temple, and maybe was old Moses himself.

Jim cleaned up the canoe, and I got my oar ready. There was a big river-boat stopped on the beach away up under the point, about three mile above the

town -- been there two or three hours, taking on boxes and other things.

Says the king: “Seeing how I’m dressed, I think maybe I should arrive down from St. Louis or Cincinnati, or some other big place. Go for the river-boat, Huckleberry; we’ll come down to the village on her.”

I didn’t have to be told more than once to go and take a river-boat ride. I reached the side a half a mile above the village, and then went moving up river in the easy water. Pretty soon we come to a nice-looking young country man sitting on a log rubbing the heat off of his face, for it was powerful warm weather; and he had two big bags by him.

“Run her nose in,” says the king.

I done it.

“Where you going, young man?”

“To the river boat; going to Orleans.”

“Get in,” says the king. “Hold on a minute, my servant will help you with them bags. Jump out and help the man, Adolphus” -- meaning me, I see.

I done so, and then we all three started on again. The young man was very thankful; said it was hard work carrying his bags in such weather. He asked the king where he was going, and the king told him he’d come down the river and landed at the other village this morning, and now he was going up a few mile to see an old friend on a farm up there. The young man says: “When I first see you I says to myself, ‘It’s Mr. Wilks, sure, and he come very close to getting here in time.’ But then I says again, ‘No, I think it ain’t him, or else he wouldn’t be coming up the river in a canoe.’ You ain’t him, are you?”

“No, my name’s Blodgett -- Alexander Blodgett -- Reverend Alexander Blodgett, I must say, as I’m one of the Lord’s poor servants. But still I’m just as able to be sorry for Mr. Wilks for not arriving in time, all the same, if he’s missed anything by it -- which I hope he hasn’t.”

“Well, he don’t miss any wealth by it, because he’ll get that all right; but he’s missed seeing his brother Peter die -- which he may not feel bad about, nobody can tell as to that -- but his brother would a give anything in this world to see him before he died; never talked about nothing else all these three weeks; hadn’t seen him since they was boys together -- and hadn’t ever seen his brother William at all -- that’s the one that can’t hear or talk -- William ain’t more than thirty or thirty-five. Peter and George were the only ones that come out here; George was the married brother; him and his wife both died last year. Harvey and William’s the only ones that’s left now; and, as I was saying, they haven’t got here in time.”

“Did anyone send ‘em word?”

“Oh, yes; a month or two ago, when Peter was first took; because Peter said then that he felt like he weren’t going to get well this time. You see, he was pretty old, and George’s girls was too young to be much company for him, apart from Mary Jane, the red-headed one. He was kind of sad after George and his wife died, and didn’t seem to care much to live. He most truly wanted to see Harvey -- and William, too -- because he was one of them that can’t be worried about making papers for what to do with his wealth after he died. He left a letter behind for Harvey, and said he’d told in it where his money was hiding, and how he wanted the land and other things cut up so George’s girls would be all right -- for George didn’t leave nothing. And that letter was all they could get him to put a pen to.”

“Why do you think Harvey didn’t come? Where's he live?”

“Oh, he lives in England -- preaches there -- hasn’t ever been in this country. He hasn’t had any too much time -- and besides he mightn’t a got the letter at all, you know.”

“Too bad, too bad he couldn’t a lived to see his brothers, poor soul. You going to Orleans, you say?”

“Yes, but that ain’t only a part of it. I’m going in a ship, next Wednesday, for Rio de Janeiro, where my uncle lives.”

“It’s a pretty long trip. But it’ll be nice; wish I was a-going. Is Mary Jane the oldest? How old is the others?”

“Mary Jane’s nineteen, Susan’s fifteen, and Joanna’s about fourteen. Mary Jane's one that gives herself to good works.”

“Poor things! to be left alone in the cold world so.”

“Well, they could be worse off. Old Peter had friends, and they ain’t going to let them come to no bad end. There’s Hobson, the Baptist preacher; and Lot Hovey, and Ben Rucker, and Abner Shackleford, and Levi Bell, the lawyer; and Doctor Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley, and -- well, there’s a lot of them; but these are the ones that Peter was closest to, and used to write about sometimes, when he wrote home; so Harvey will know where to look for friends when he gets here.”

Well, the old man went on asking questions until he close to emptied that young man. I'll be blamed if he didn't ask about everybody and everything in that blessed town, and all about the Wilkses; and about Peter's business -- which was making leather; and about George's -- which was a carpenter; and about Harvey's -- which was a free preacher; and so on, and so on. Then he says:

"What'd you want to walk all the way up to the boat for?"

"Because she's a big Orleans boat, and I was afraid she mightn't stop here. When they're deep they won't stop for a shout. A Cincinnati boat will, but this is a St. Louis one."

"Was Peter Wilks well off?"

"Oh, yes, pretty well off. He had houses and land, and it's believed he left three or four thousand in gold hiding Lord knows where."

"When did you say he died?"

"I didn't say, but it was last night."

"Funeral tomorrow, you think?"

"Yes, about the middle of the day."

"Well, it's all very sad; but we've all got to go, one time or another. So what we want to do is to be prepared; then we're all right."

"Yes, sir, it's the best way. Mum used to always say that."

When we reached the boat she was about finished putting things in, and pretty soon she left. The king never said nothing about getting on her, so I lost my ride, after all. When the boat was gone the king made me push up another mile in the canoe, to a place away from any houses, and then he got off and says:

"Now hurry back, right now, and bring the duke up here, and the new bags.

And if he's gone over to t'other side, go over there and get him. And tell him to get himself up quickly. Move along, now."

I see what he was up to; but I never said nothing. When I got back with the duke we put the canoe in a good hiding place, and then they sat down on a log, and the king told him everything, just like the young man had said it -- every last word of it. And all the time he was a-doing it he tried to talk like he was from Britain; and he done it pretty well, too, for a learner. I can't do it, and so I ain't a-going to try to; but he really done it pretty good.

Then he says: "How are you on not being able to hear or talk, Bilgewater?"

The duke said, leave him alone for that; said he had played such a person on the stage. So then they waited for a river boat.

About the middle of the afternoon two little boats come along, but they didn't come from high enough up; but at last there was a big one, and they called out to her. She sent out her small boat, and we went onto her, and she was from Cincinnati; and when they found we only wanted to go four or five mile they was shouting angry, and called us a few bad names, and said they wouldn't land us. But the king was quiet and easy. He says:

"If men are happy to pay a dollar a mile each to be took on and off in your little boat, a river boat can carry 'em, can't it?"

So they went a little softer and said it was all right; and when we got to the village they sent us to the landing in their little boat. About twenty men crowded down when they see the little boat a-coming, and when the king says: "Can any of you tell me where Mr. Peter Wilks lives?"

They looked at each other, moving their heads, as much as to say, "What did I tell you?" Then one of them says, kind of soft and quiet: "I'm sorry. sir, but the best we can do is to tell you where he did live yesterday evening."

Fast as you can wink that dirty old robber went and fell up against the man, and put his head on his shoulder, and cried down his back, and says:

"Oh no, oh no, our poor brother -- gone, and we never got to see him; oh, it's too, too hard!"

Then he turns around, crying, and makes a lot of stupid signs to the duke on his hands, and I'll be blamed if he didn't drop a bag and break out a-crying too. If they weren't the most low down lot, them two robbers, that ever I saw.

Well, the men come around and tried to make them feel better, and said a lot of kind things, and carried their bags up the hill for them, and let them lean on them and cry, and told the king all about his brother's last days, and the king he told it all over again on his hands to the duke, and both of them took on about that dead leather maker like they'd lost the twelve disciples. Well, if ever I saw anything like it, I'm a slave. It was enough to make a body feel guilty just for being the same animal as them.

Chapter 25

The news was all over town in two minutes, and you could see people coming down on the run from every which way, some of them putting on their coats as they come. Pretty soon we was in the middle of a crowd. The windows and doors was full; and every minute someone would say, over a fence:
"Is it them?"

And someone running along with the gang would answer back and say: “You can be sure it is.”

When we got to the house the street in front of it was filled, and the three girls was standing in the door. Mary Jane was red-headed, but that don’t make no difference, she was most really beautiful, and her face and her eyes was all lighted up like glory, she was so glad her uncles was come. The king he opened his arms, and Mary Jane she jumped for them, and the youngest one jumped for the duke, and there they had it! Almost everyone, the women anyway, cried for happiness to see them meet again at last and have such good times.

Then the king he whispered to the duke secretly -- I seen him do it -- and then he looked around and seen the box with the body in it, over in the corner on two chairs; so then him and the duke, with a hand across each other’s shoulder, and t’other hand to their eyes, walked slow and serious over there, everyone dropping back to give them room, and all the talk and noise stopping, people saying “Shhh!” and all the men taking their hats off and bending their heads down, so you could a heard a needle drop. And when they got there they leaned over and looked in, and took one look, and then they broke out a-crying so you could a almost heard them to Orleans; and then they put their arms around each other’s necks, and put their heads over each other’s shoulders; and then for three minutes, or maybe four, I never seen two men cry the way they done. And everyone else was doing the same;

and the place was that wet I never seen anything like it.

Then one of them got on one side of the box, and t'other on t'other side, both of them down on their knees and rested their heads on the box, and let on to pray all to themselves. Well, when it come to that it worked the crowd like you never seen anything like it, and everybody broke down and went to crying right out loud -- the poor girls, too; and every woman, nearly, went up to the girls, without saying a word, and kissed them, serious like, on the front of their head, and then put their hand on their head, and looked up toward the sky, with the tears running down, and then broke up and went off crying and rubbing their eyes, and give the next woman a show. I never seen anything so sick.

Well, by and by the king he gets up and comes forward a little, and works himself up and gives a talk, all full of tears and foolishness about it being a sore test for him and his poor brother to lose the man, and to miss seeing the dead man alive after the long trip of four thousand mile, but it's a test that has become sweet and wonderful to us by the love and holy tears of the people there, and so he thanks them out of his heart and out of his brother's heart, because they can't do it out of their mouths, words being too weak and cold, and all that kind of crazy talk, until it was just making me sick; and then he cries out a holy goody-goody Amen, and turns himself loose and goes to crying loud enough to explode.

And the minute the words were out of his mouth someone over in the crowd started up a church song, and everybody joined in with all their might, and it just warmed you up and made you feel as good as a church meeting finishing. Music is a good thing; and after all that soul-butter and pig feed from the king I never seen it clean things up so, and make it all sound so honest and good. Then the king starts to work his mouth again, and says him and his brother's daughters would be glad if a few of the best friends of the family would have a meal here with them this evening, and help sit up with the ashes of the one who has died; and says if his poor brother lying over there could speak he knows who he would name, for they was names that was very close to him,

and ones he used often in his letters; and so he would name the same, that is, as follows, Reverend Hobson, and Lot Hovey, and Ben Rucker, and Abner Shackleford, and Levi Bell, and Doctor Robinson, and their wives, and the widow Bartley.

Reverend Hobson and Doctor Robinson was down to the end of the town a-hunting together -- that is, I mean the doctor was sending a sick man to t'other world, and the preacher was pointing him right. Lawyer Bell was away up to Louisville on business. But the others was on hand, and so they all come and shook hands with the king and thanked him and talked to him; and then they shook hands with the duke and didn't say nothing, but just kept a-smiling and shaking their heads like a gang of crazies while he made all kinds of signs with his hands and said "Goo-goo, goo-goo-goo" all the time, like a baby that can't talk.

So the king he went on and on, and was able to ask about pretty much everybody and his dog in town, by his name, and talked about lots of little things that happened one time or another in the town, or that happened to George's family, or to Peter. And he always let on that Peter wrote him the things; but that was a lie: he got every last one of them out of that young big mouth that we canoed up to the river boat.

Then Mary Jane she got the letter her father left behind, and the king he read it out loud and cried over it. It give the house and three thousand dollars, gold, to the girls; and it give the leather yard (which was doing a good business), along with some other houses and land (worth about seven thousand), and three thousand dollars in gold to Harvey and William, and told where the gold was hiding down in the basement.

So these two robbers said they'd go and bring it up, and have everything square and open; and told me to come with a candle. We shut the door to the room behind us, and when the duke and the king found the bag they poured it out on the floor, and it was something to see, all them yellow coins.

My, the way the king's eyes did light up! He slaps the duke on the shoulder and says: "Oh, ain't this great! Why, Billjy, it's better than The King's Foolishness, ain't it?"

The duke agreed that it was. They pushed their hands through them yellow coins, and let them go through their fingers and fall down on the floor; and the king says: “It ain’t no use acting; being brothers to a rich dead man and foreign relatives that’s got money left to them is the line for you and me, Bilge. This here comes of trusting God. It’s the best way, in the long run. I’ve tried ‘em all, and there ain’t no better way.”

Most everybody would a been happy with all that money, and took it on trust; but no, they must count it. So they counts it, and it comes out four hundred and fifteen dollars short.

Says the king: “Blame him, what could he have done with that four hundred and fifteen dollars?”

They worried over that for a while, and looked all around for it. Then the duke says:

“Well, he was a pretty sick man, and likely he got it wrong. I think that’s the way of it. The best way’s to let it go, and keep quiet about it. We can get by without it.”

“Oh, yes, we can get by. I don’t care nothing about that -- it’s the count I’m thinking about. We want to be awful square and open and honest here, you know. We want to carry this here money up the steps and count it before everybody -- then there ain’t nothing secret about it. When the dead man says there’s six thousand dollars, you know, we don’t want to -- “

“Hold on,” says the duke. “Let’s make up the difference,” and he started to pull out gold coins from his pocket.

“It’s a very good plan, Duke -- you have got a pretty smart head on you,” says the king.

“The King’s Foolishness is helping us out again,” and he started to pull out yellow ones and put them on top of each other.

It almost took all they had, but they made up the six thousand clean and clear.

“Say,” says the duke, “I got another plan. Let’s go up there and count this money, and then take and give it to the girls.”

“Good land, duke, let me hug you! It’s the most beautiful plan that ever a man come across. You have truly got the most wonderful head I ever seen. Oh, this is the best game, there ain’t no way around it. Let ‘em bring out their fears about us now if they want to -- this’ll put an end to them.”

When we got up the steps everybody crowded around the table, and the king he counted it and put it in lots of three hundred dollars -- twenty beautiful little lots. Everybody looked hungry at it, and moved their tongues over their lips. Then they pushed it all into the bag again, and I see the king start to build himself up for another talk.

He says: “Friends all, my poor brother that lies over there has done generous by them that’s left behind in such sadness. He has done generous by these here poor little lambs that he loved and protected, and that’s left without a father and mother. Yes, and we that knowed him knows that he would a done more generous by ‘em if he hadn’t been afraid of hurting good William and me. Now, wouldn’t he? There ain’t no question about it in my head. Well, then, what kind of brothers would it be that would stand in his way at such a time? And what kind of uncles would it be that would rob -- yes, rob -- such poor sweet lambs as these that he loved so at such a time? If I know William -- and I think I do -- he -- well, I’ll just ask him.” He turns around and starts to make a lot of signs to the duke with his hands, and the duke he looks at him stupid for a while; then at some point, he seems to catch his meaning, and jumps for the

king, goo-gooing with all his might for happiness, and hugs him about fifteen times before he lets up. Then the king says, “I knowed it; I think that will be enough to tell anyone the way he feels about it. Here, Mary Jane, Susan, Joanna, take the money -- take it all. It’s the gift of him that lies over there, cold but in peace.”

Mary Jane she went for him, Susan and the young one went for the duke, and then such another hugging and kissing I never seen. And everybody crowded up with tears in their eyes, and most shook the hands off them robbers, saying all the time: “You wonderful good souls! -- how sweet! -- how could you!”

Well, then, pretty soon all hands got to talking about the dead man again, and how good he was, and what they had lost in him going, and all that; and before long a big man with a strong face worked himself in there from outside, and stood a-listening and looking, and not saying anything; and nobody saying anything to him either, because the king was talking and they was all busy listening. The king was saying -- in the middle of something he’d started in on -- “ -- they being special friends of the dead man, that’s why they were asked to be here this evening; but tomorrow we want all to come -- everybody; for he loved everybody, and so it’s right that his funeral orgies should be for everyone.”

And so he went a-talking on and on, liking to hear himself talk, and every little while he brought in his funeral orgies again, until the duke he couldn’t stand it no more; so he writes on a little piece of paper, “Obsequies, you stupid old man,” and folds it up, and goes to goo-gooing and reaching it over people’s heads to him. The king he reads it and puts it in his pocket, and says: “Poor William, sick as he is, his heart’s right. Asked me to ask everybody to come to the funeral -- wants me to make ‘em all welcome. But he needn’t a worried -- it was just what I was at.”

Then he goes on again, perfectly easy, and goes to dropping in his funeral orgies again every now and then, just like he done before. And when he done it the third time he says:

“I say orgies, not because it’s what most people say, because it ain’t -- obsequies being what most people say -- but I say it because orgies is the right word. Obsequies ain’t used in England no more now -- it’s gone out. We say orgies now in England. Orgies is better, because it means the thing you’re after more perfectly. It’s a word that’s made up out of the Greek orgo, outside, open, for all; and the Hebrew jeesum, to plant, cover up; as in bury. So, you see, funeral orgies is an open funeral for everyone.”

He was the worst I ever saw. Well, the hard faced man he laughed right in his face. Everybody was surprised and hurt. Everybody says, “Why, doctor!” and Abner Shackleford says: “Why, Robinson, ain’t you heard the news? This is Harvey Wilks.”

The king he smiled enthusiastically, and reached out his hand, and says: “Is it

my poor brother's very good friend and doctor? I -- "

"Keep your hands off of me!" says the doctor. "You talk like an English man, do you? It's the worst English I ever heard. You Peter Wilks's brother? You're a robber, that's what you are!"

Well, how they all took on! They crowded around the doctor and tried to quiet him down, and tried to tell him how Harvey had showed in forty ways that he was Harvey, and knowed everybody by name, and the names of the very dogs, and begged and begged him not to hurt Harvey's feelings and the poor girls' feelings, and all that. But it weren't no use; he stormed right along, and said any man that said he was an English man and couldn't do the language no better than what he did was telling lies. The poor girls was hanging to the king and crying; and all at once the doctor goes and turns on them.

He says: "I was your father's friend, and I'm your friend; and I warn you as a friend, and an honest one that wants to protect you and keep you from being hurt, to turn your backs on that man and have nothing to do with him, this uneducated stranger, with his crazy Greek and Hebrew, as he calls it. He is the thinnest kind of counterfeit. He has come here with a lot of empty names and things which he picked up who knows where, and you take them for proof, and are helped to trick yourselves by these foolish friends here, who should know better. Mary Jane Wilks, you know me for your friend, and for your honest friend, too. Now listen to me; send this awful man away -- I beg you to do it. Will you?"

Mary Jane pulled herself up straight, and my, but she was good looking! She says: "Here is my answer." She took up the bag of money and put it in the king's hands, and says, "Take this six thousand dollars, and use it to make money for me and my sisters any way you want to, and don't give us no papers for it."

Then she put her arm around the king on one side, and Susan and the young one done the same on the other. Everybody clapped their hands and hit their feet on the floor like a perfect storm, while the king held up his head and smiled proud.

The doctor says: “All right; I wash my hands of this. But I warn you all that a time is coming when you’re going to feel sick whenever you think of this day.” And away he went.

“All right, doctor,” says the king, kind of making fun of him; “we’ll try and get ‘em to send for you when they do,” which made them all laugh, and they said it was a very good answer.

Chapter 26

Well, when they was all gone the king he asks Mary Jane how they was off for sleeping rooms, and she said she had one extra room, which would do for Uncle William, and she’d give her own room to Uncle Harvey, which was a little bigger, and she would go into the room with her sisters and sleep on a little fold-up bed; and up above the other rooms was a little room with a mattress of dried grass in it to lie on. The king said the little room would do for his servant -- meaning me.

So Mary Jane took us up, and showed them their rooms, which was simple but nice. She said she'd have her dresses and other things took out if they was in Uncle Harvey's way, but he said they weren't. The dresses was hanging along the wall, and before them was a curtain that went down to the floor.

There was a big old chest in one corner, and a guitar box in another, and a lot of other pretty little things, like girls use to make a room look nice. The king said it was all the better for having these things, and so don't move them. The duke's room was pretty small, but good enough, and so was mine.

That night they had a big meal, and all them men and women was there, and I stood behind the king and the duke's chairs and served them, and the slaves served the others. Mary Jane she sat at the head of the table, with Susan beside her, and said how bad the biscuits was, and how off the fruit was, and how hard the chickens was to chew -- and all that kind of foolishness, the way women always do for to force people to say good things about them; and the people all knowed everything was just right, and said so -- said "How do you get biscuits to brown so nice?" and "Where, for the good of the land, did you get these wonderful apples?" and all that kind of crazy talk, just the way people always does at a meal, you know.

And when it was all done me and the youngest -- Joanna -- had a meal in the kitchen off of the leavings, while the others was helping the slaves clean up the things. Joanna she got to questioning me about England, and I think the ice was getting mighty thin at times.

She says: “Did you ever see the king?”

“Who? William Fourth? Well, I’ll say I have -- he goes to our church.” I knowed he was dead years ago, but I never let on.

So when I says he goes to our church, she says: “What -- all the time?”

“Yes -- all the time. His bench is right over opposite ours -- on t’other side of where the preacher stands.”

“I thought he lived in London?”

“Well, he does. Where would he live?”

“But I thought you lived in Sheffield?” I see I was in a corner. I let on to have a chicken bone in my throat, so as to get time to think how to get out of it.

Then I says: “I mean he goes to our church all the time when he’s in Sheffield. That’s only in the summer.

Next, she says: “Do you go to church, too?”

“Yes -- all the time.”

“Where do you sit?”

“Why, on our bench.”

“Whose bench?”

“Why, ours -- your Uncle Harvey’s.”

“His? What does he want with a bench?”

“Wants it to sit in. What did you think he wanted with it?”

“Why, I thought he’d be up in the front preaching.”

Trapped again. I had forgotten he was a preacher. I see I was in a corner again, so I played another chicken bone and got another think.

Then I says: “Blame it, do you think there ain’t but one preacher to a church?”

“Why, what do they want with more?”

“What! -- to preach before a king? I never did see such a girl as you. They don’t have no less than seventeen.”

“Seventeen! My land! Why, I wouldn’t sit out such a string as that, not if I

never got to heaven. It must take ‘em a week.”

“No, they don’t all preach the same day -- only one of ‘em.”

“Well, then, what does the others do?”

“Oh, nothing much. Lie around, pass the plate -- and one thing or another. But mostly they don’t do nothing.”

“Well, then, what are they for?”

“Why, they’re for looks. Don’t you know nothing?”

“I don’t want to know such foolishness as that. How is servants seen in England? Are they nicer to ‘em than we are to our slaves?”

“No! A servant ain’t nobody there. They look on ‘em worse than dogs.”

“Don’t they give ‘em holidays for special days?”

“Oh, just listen! A body could tell you ain’t never been to England by that. Why, Joanna, they never see a holiday from year’s end to year’s end; never go to the circus, or the theatre, or servant shows, or nowhere.”

“Not to church?”

“Not to church.”

“But you always went to church.”

Well, I was gone again. I had forgotten I was the old man’s servant. But next minute I flew in saying a man’s servant was different from a family servant and had to go to church if he wanted to or not, and sit with his man, because of it being the law. But I didn’t do it well enough, because when I got done I seen she weren’t happy.

She says: “Honest Indian, now, ain’t you been telling me lies?”

“Honest Indian,” says I.

“None of it at all?”

“None of it at all. Not a lie in it,” says I. “Put your hand on this book and say it.”

I see it weren't nothing but a dictionary, so I put my hand on it and said it. So then she looked a little happier, and says: "Well, then, I'll believe some of it; but I hope I'm never stupid enough to believe it all."

"What is it you won't believe, Jo?" says Mary Jane, stepping in with Susan behind her. "It ain't right and it ain't kind for you to talk so to him, and him a stranger and so far from his people. How would you like to be talked to like that?"

"That's always your way, Jane -- always sailing in to help someone before they're even hurt. I ain't done nothing to him. He's told some big ones, I think, and I said I wouldn't believe it all; and that's every last piece of what I did say. I think he can take a little thing like that, can't he?"

"I don't care if it was little or if it was big; he's here in our house and a stranger, and it wasn't good of you to say it. If you was in his place it would make you feel bad; and so you shouldn't say a thing to another person that will make them feel bad."

"Why, Jane, he said -- "

"It don't make no difference what he said -- that ain't the thing. The thing is for you to be kind to him, and not be saying things to make him remember he ain't in his own country and with his own people."

I says to myself, this is a girl that I'm letting that old snake rob of her money!

Then Susan she joined in; and if you'll believe me, she did give Joanna word from the dead!

Says I to myself, and this is another one that I'm letting him rob of her money!

Then Mary Jane she had another go at it, and went in sweet and nice again -- which was her way; but when she got done there weren't much of anything left of poor Joanna.

"All right, then," says the two older girls; "you just ask him to forgive you."

She done it, too; and she done it beautiful. She done it so beautiful it was good to hear; and I wished I could tell her a thousand lies, so she could do it again.

I says to myself, this is another one that I'm letting him rob of her money. And when she got through they all just put themselves out to make me feel at home and know I was with friends. I felt so bad and low down that I says to myself, I'm going to do it; I'll get that money for them or die trying.

So then I left -- for bed, I said, meaning some time or another. When I got by myself I went to thinking the thing over. I says to myself, shall I go to that doctor, secretly, and tell on these snakes? No -- that won't do. He might tell who told him; then the king and the duke would make it warm for me. Shall I go, secretly, and tell Mary Jane? No -- I best not do that. Her face would tell them, sure. They've got the money, and they'd run off and get away with it. If she was to bring in help I'd get mixed up in the business before it was done with, I judged. No; there weren't no good way but one. I got to rob that money, one way or another; and I got to rob it some way that they won't think that I done it. They've got a good thing here, and they ain't a-going to leave until they've played this family and this town for all they're worth, so I've time to find a way. I'll rob it and hide it; and by and by, when I'm away down the river, I'll write a letter and tell Mary Jane where it's hiding. But I better do it tonight if I can, because the doctor maybe hasn't let up as much as he lets on he has; he might scare them out of here yet.

So, thinks I, I'll go and look through their rooms. They were up the steps, where it was dark. I found the duke's room, and started to feel around it with my hands; but I remembered it wouldn't be much like the king to let anyone else take care of that money but himself; so then I went to his room and started to feel around there. But I see I couldn't do nothing without a candle, and it was too dangerous to light one. So I judged I'd need to do the other thing -- wait for them and listen in secretly. About that time I hears their steps coming, and was going to hide under the bed; I reached for it, but it weren't where I thought it would be; but I touched the curtain that covered Mary Jane's dresses, so I jumped in behind that and crowded in between the dresses, and stood there perfectly still.

They come in and shut the door; and the first thing the duke done was to get down and look under the bed to see if anyone was there. I was glad I hadn't found the bed when I wanted it. Yet, you know, it's kind of where anyone goes when they want to hide.

They sat down then, and the king says: “Well, what is it? And cut it short, because it’s better for us to be down there a-crying than up here giving ‘em time to talk us over.”

“Well, this is it, King. I ain’t easy; I ain’t comfortable. That doctor worries me. I wanted to know your plans, because I’ve got one, and I think it’s a good one.”

“What is it, duke?”

“That we better get out of this before morning, and hurry down the river with what we’ve got. Seeing we got it so easy -- given back to us, thrown at our heads, as you may say, when we were thinking to rob it back. I’m for ending it and heading out.”

That made me feel pretty bad. About an hour or two ago it would a been a little different, but now it made me feel bad and sad.

The king cuts in and says: “What! And not sell the other things? Walk off and leave eight or nine thousand dollars’ worth of land and furniture lying around just waiting to be pulled in? -- and all good, easy to sell things, too.”

The duke he complained; said the bag of gold was enough, and he didn’t want to go no deeper -- didn’t want to rob the girls of everything they had.

“Why, how you talk!” says the king. “We won’t rob ‘em of nothing at all but just this money. The people that buys the place is the ones who will be hurting;

because as soon as it's found out that we didn't own it -- which won't be long after we've left -- the land won't be theirs, and it'll all go back to the girls. They'll get their house back again, and that's enough for them; they're young and healthy, and can easily get jobs. They ain't a-going to hurt. Why, just think -- there's thousands and thousands that ain't near as well off. Bless you, they ain't got nothing to complain of."

Well, the king he talked him blind; so at last he give in, and said all right, but said he still believed it was foolishness to stay with that doctor hanging over them. But the king says: "Curse the doctor! What do we care for him? Ain't we got all the stupid people in town on our side? And ain't that a big enough part of any town?"

So they got ready to go down again.

The duke says: "I don't think we put that money in a good place."

That encouraged me. I'd started to think I weren't going to get a sign of no kind to help me. The king says: "Why?"

"Because Mary Jane'll be feeling very sad; and first thing you know the servant that does up the rooms will be told to box these clothes up and put 'em away; and do you think a slave can run across money and not borrow some of it?"

"Your head's done it right again, duke," says the king; and he comes a-reaching under the curtain two or three foot from where I was. I stayed tight to the wall and kept very still, apart from shaking a little; and I was thinking about what they would say to me if they caught me; and I tried to think what I should do if they did catch me. But the king he got the bag before I could think more than about half a thought, and he never knew I was around. They took and pushed the bag through a hole in the mattress that was under the feather bed, and forced it a foot or two up into the dried grass and said it was all right now, because a servant only makes up the feather bed, and don't ever turn over the mattress only about two times a year, and so it weren't in no danger of getting robbed now.

But I knowed better. I had it out of there before they was half-way down the steps.

I felt my way along up to my room, to hide it there until I could find a way to do it better. I judged I better hide it outside the house somewhere, because if they missed it they would give the house a good going over: I knowed that very well. Then I turned in, with my clothes all on; but I couldn't a gone to sleep if I'd a wanted to, I was in such a hurry to get through with the business. By and by I heard the king and the duke come up; so I got off my mattress and moved to the top of the ladder to my room, and waited to see if anything was going to happen down there. But nothing did.

So I held on until all the late sounds had quit and the early ones hadn't started yet; and then I went quietly down the ladder.

Chapter 27

I went up to their doors and listened; they was snoring. So I walked along on my toes, and got down the steps all right.

There weren't a sound anywhere.

I looked through an opening of the door to where the men that was watching the body was, and seen that they was all asleep on their chairs. In another room where the body itself was, there was a candle. The door was open; but I seen there weren't nobody in there but the body of old Peter; so I went on by; but the front door was locked, and the key wasn't there. Just then I heard someone coming down the steps, back behind me. I run in the other room and took a fast look around, and the only place I seen to hide the bag was in the box with the body. The cover was open only about a foot, showing the dead man's face down in there, with a wet cloth over it. I pushed the money-bag in under the cover, just down below where his hands was crossed, which made me feel strange, they was so cold, and then I run back across the room and in behind the door.

The person coming was Mary Jane. She went to the box, very soft, and got down on her knees in front of it and looked in; then she put up a cloth to her eyes, and I see she started to cry. Her back was to me and I couldn't hear her, but I was able to move quietly out the door behind her.

I went up to bed, feeling a little blue, because things had played out that way after I had took so much trouble and faced so much danger doing it. If it could stay where it was, all right; because when we got down the river a hundred miles or two I could write back to Mary Jane, and she could dig him up and get it; but that ain't what's going to happen; the thing that's going to happen is, the money will be found when they come to screw on the cover. Then the king will get it again, and it'll be a long day before he gives anyone another go at taking it. I wanted to go down and get it out, but it was too dangerous. Every minute it was getting earlier, and pretty soon them watchers would start to wake up, and I might get caught -- with six thousand dollars in my hands that nobody hadn't told me to take. I don't wish to be mixed up in no such business as that, I says to myself.

When I got down there in the morning the room with the body was shut up, and the watchers was gone. There weren't nobody around but the family and the widow Bartley and our lot. I watched their faces to see if anything had been happening, but I couldn't tell.

Toward the middle of the day the funeral man come with his helper, and they put the box in the middle of the room on two chairs, and then put all our chairs in lines, and borrowed more from the neighbours until all the rooms was full. I see the cover for the box was the way it was before, but I wasn't brave enough to go and look in under it, with people around.

Then the people started to come in, and those two dogs and the girls took chairs in the front at the head of the body, and for a half an hour the people walked around slow, in a line, and looked down at the dead man's face a minute, and some dropped in a tear, and it was all very quiet and serious, only the girls and the king and the duke holding cloths to their eyes and keeping their heads forward, and crying softly. There weren't no other sound but the rubbing of feet on the floor and blowing noses -- because people always blows them more at a funeral than they do at other places apart from church.

When the place was as full as it could be the funeral man he moved around in his black gloves with his soft ways, putting on the last touches, and getting people and things all right and comfortable, and making no more sound than a cat. He never spoke; he moved people around, he squeezed in late ones, he opened up doors to side rooms, and done it all with movements of his head, and signs with his hands. Then he took his place over against the wall. He was the smoothest, softest, quietest man I ever seen; and there weren't no more smile to him than there is to a piece of meat.

They had borrowed a little piano like instrument that used wind to work -- a sick one; and when everything was ready a young woman sat down and worked it, and it was pretty loud and sickly, and everybody joined in singing, and Peter was the only one that had a good thing, the way I saw it. Then the Reverend Hobson opened up, slow and serious, and started to talk; and straight off the most awful noise broke out in the basement; it was only one dog, but he made a most powerful noise, and he kept it up right along; the preacher he had to stand there, over the body, and wait -- you couldn't hear yourself think. It was right down embarrassing for everyone, and nobody didn't seem to know what to do. But pretty soon they see that long-legged funeral man make a sign to the preacher as much as to say, "Don't you worry -- just trust me." Then he leaned down and started to move along the wall, just his shoulders showing over the people's heads. He moved along, with the noise getting worse and worse all the time; and at last, when he had gone around two sides of the room, he goes down the steps to the basement. Then in about two seconds we heard a loud hit, and the dog he finished up with a most surprised cry or two, and then everything was dead quiet, and the preacher started his serious talk where he left off.

In a minute or two here comes this funeral man's back and shoulders moving along the wall again; and so he went around three sides of the room, and then stood up, and half covered his mouth with his hands, and leaned his neck out toward the preacher, over the people's heads, and says, in a kind of rough whisper, "He had a rat!"

Then he dropped down and moved along the wall back to his place. You could see that the people were glad to hear it, because they all wanted to know what had been going on. A little thing like that don't cost nothing, and it's just the little things that makes a man to be looked up to and liked. There weren't no more liked man in town than what that funeral man was.

Well, the preaching was very good, but poison long; and then the king he pushed in and got off some of his same old foolishness, and at last the job was through, and the funeral man started to come up on the box with his screw-driver. I was worried then, and watched him pretty closely. But he never made any trouble at all; just moved the cover along as smooth as pig fat, and screwed it down tight and fast. So there I was! I didn't know if the money was in there or not. So, says I, what if someone has robbed that bag secretly? -- now how do I know if I should write to Mary Jane or not? What if she was to dig him up and not find nothing, what would she think of me? Blame it, I says, I might get hunted up and put in prison; I'd better keep quiet, and not write at all; the thing's awful mixed up now; trying to better it, I've made it worse a hundred times, and I wish to God I'd just let it alone.

They buried him, and we come back home, and I went to watching faces again -- I couldn't help it, and I couldn't rest easy. But nothing come of it; the faces didn't tell me nothing.

The king he visited around in the evening, and was sweet to everyone; and he give out that his church over in England would be worried about him, so he must hurry and sell up right away and leave for home. He was very sorry he was so pushed, and so was everybody; they wished he could stay longer, but they said they could see it couldn't be done. And he said him and William

would take the girls home with them; and that made everybody happy, because then the girls would be well fixed and with their relatives; and the girls were happy too -- they were so enthusiastic about it that it was like they never had a trouble in the world. They told him to sell out as fast as he wanted, they would be ready. Them poor things was that glad it made my heart hurt to see them getting tricked and lied to so, but I didn't see no safe way to cut in and change the song.

Well, blamed if the king didn't advertise the house and the slaves and all the furniture to be sold two days after the funeral; and anyone could buy before that if they wanted to.

So the next day after the funeral, along about noon, the girls' happiness got the first big kick. Two slave buyers come along, and the king sold them the slaves cheap and away they went, the two sons up the river to Memphis, and their mother down the river to Orleans. I thought them poor girls and them slaves leaving would break their hearts; they cried around each other, and took on so it almost made me sick to see it. The girls said they hadn't ever dreamed of seeing the family separated or sold away from the town. I can't ever stop remembering them poor sad girls and slaves hanging around each other's necks and crying; and I think I couldn't a taken it all, but would a had to break out and tell on our gang if I hadn't knowed the sale weren't true and the slaves would be back home in a week or two.

The thing made a lot of talk in town, too, and a good many come out straight and said it was wrong to separate the mother and the children that way. It hurt those two phonies some; but the old man he pushed right along, against all the duke could say or do, and I tell you the duke was feeling pretty guilty. Next day was sale day. When the sun was well and truly up the king and the duke come up in the top of the house to wake me, and I seen by their look that there was trouble.

The king says: "Was you in my room night before last?"

"No, sir, your lord" -- which was the way I always called him when nobody but our gang was around.

"Was you in there yesterday or last night?"

"No, your lord."

"Tell the truth, now -- no lies."

"Before God, my lord, I'm telling the truth. I ain't been near your room since Miss Mary Jane showed it to you."

The duke says: "Have you seen anyone else go in there?" "No, my Lord, not as I remember, I believe."

"Stop and think."

I studied it for a while and seen my opening; then I says:

“Well, I seen the slaves go in there a few times.”

Both of them gave a little jump, and looked like they hadn’t ever thought of it, and then like they had.

Then the duke says: “What, all of them?”

“No -- at least, not all at once -- that is, I don’t think I ever seen them all come out at once but just one time.”

“Hello! When was that?”

“It was the day we had the funeral. In the morning. It wasn’t early, because I was late getting up. I was just starting down the ladder, and I seen them.”

“Well, go on, go on! What did they do? How’d they act?”

“They didn’t do nothing. And they didn’t act anyway much, as far as I seen. They walked on their toes going away; so I seen, easy enough, that they’d gone in there to do up your lord’s room, thinking you was up; and found you weren’t, and so they was hoping to not get in trouble for waking you up.”

“Great guns, this is a go!” says the king; and both of them looked pretty sick and more than a little foolish. They stood there a-thinking and scratching their

heads a minute, and the duke he broke into a kind of a little scratchy laugh, and says:

“It does surprise me how well the slaves played their hand. They let on to be sorry they was going away from here! And I believed they was sorry, and so did you, and so did everybody. Don’t ever tell me any more that a black man ain’t got any acting ability. Why, the way they played that thing it would a tricked anybody. As I see it, there’s a lot of money in ‘em. If I had the money and a theatre, I wouldn’t want a better team than that -- and here we’ve gone and sold ‘em for a song. Yes, and for now, we can’t even sing the song yet. Say, where IS that song -- that cheque the buyer paid with?”

“In the bank, waiting to be cleared. Where would it be?”

“Well, that’s all right then, thank God.”

Says I, kind of shy-like: “Is something gone wrong?”

The king turns on me and shouts out: “None of your business! You keep your head shut, and look to your own business -- if you got any. Long as you’re in this town don’t you forget that -- you hear?” Then he says to the duke, “We got to just wear it and say nothing: quiet’s the word for us.”

As they was starting down the ladder the duke he laughs again, and says:

“Fast sales and not much to be made by it! It’s a good business -- yes.”

The king turns around angrily on him and says: “I was trying to do what was best in selling ‘em out so fast. If it turns out that we lost on it, am I to be blamed any more than you?”

“Well, they’d be in this house yet and we wouldn’t if I could a got my thinking listened to.”

The king argued back as much as was safe for him, and then changed around and shouted at me again. He give me down the river for not coming and telling him I seen the slaves come out of his room acting that way -- said anyone would a knowed something was up. And then he danced in and argued with himself for a while, and said it all come of him not sleeping in and having a good rest that morning, and he'd be blamed if he'd ever do it again. So they went off a-talking; and I felt very glad I'd worked it all off onto the slaves, and yet hadn't done them no trouble by it.

Chapter 28

By and by it was getting-up time. So I come down the ladder and started for the steps; but as I come to the girls' room the door was open, and I seen Mary Jane sitting by her big old chest, which was open and she'd been putting things in it -- getting ready to go to England. But she had stopped now with a folded dress in her lap, and had her face in her hands, crying. I felt awful bad to see it; anybody would. I went in there and says: "Miss Mary Jane, it hurts you to see people in trouble, and it does me too -- most always. Tell me about it."

So she done it. And it was the slaves -- I just knew it. She said the trip to England was about destroyed for her; she didn't know how she was ever going to be happy there, knowing the mother and the children weren't ever going to see each other no more -- and then she broke out sadder than ever, and threw up her hands, and says:

"Oh, those sweet people, to think they ain't ever going to see each other any more!"

“But they will -- inside of two weeks -- and I know it!” says I.

Rats! It was out before I could think! And before I could move she throws her arms around my neck and told me to say it again, say it again, say it again!

I see I had spoke too fast and said too much, and was in a close place. I asked her to let me think a minute; and she sat there, not being at all patient, her being so filled with interest and looking beautiful, and kind of happy and easy, like a person that’s had a tooth pulled out. So I went to studying it out. I says to myself, I think a body that goes and tells the truth when he is in a tight place is facing a lot of danger, but I ain’t ever done that, so I can’t say for sure; but it looks so to me, anyway; and yet here’s a place where it looks to me like the truth is better and maybe even safer than a lie. I must think it over for a while, it’s so kind of strange and not right for me. I never seen nothing like it. Well, I says to myself at last, I’m a-going to do it; I’ll up and tell the truth this one time, even if it does seem most like sitting down on a barrel of gun powder and touching it off just to see where you’ll go.

Then I says: “Miss Mary Jane, is there any place out of town a little ways where you could go and stay three or four days?”

“Yes; Mr. Lothrop’s. Why?”

“Don’t worry about why just yet. If I tell you how I know the servants will see each other again inside of two weeks -- here in this house -- and prove how I know it -- will you go to Mr. Lothrop’s and stay four days?”

“Four days!” she says; “I’ll stay a year!”

“All right,” I says, “I don’t want nothing more out of you than just your word -- I would take it more than another man’s kiss-the-Bible.” She smiled and turned red very sweetly, and I says, “If you don’t mind it, I’ll shut the door -- and lock it.”

Then I come back and sat down again, and says: “Don’t you shout. Just sit quiet and take it like a man. I got to tell the truth, and you want to be strong, Miss Mary, because it’s a bad kind, and it's going to be hard to take, but there ain’t no help for it. These uncles of yours ain’t no uncles at all; they’re both robbers -- real devils. There, now we’re over the worst of it, you can take the rest pretty easy.”

It surprised her like everything, as I knew it would; but I was over the rough water now, so I went right along and told her every last thing, from where we first met that foolish young man going up to the river boat, clear through to where she threw herself on to the king’s breast at the front door and he kissed her sixteen or seventeen times -- and then up she jumps, with her face burning like the sun, and says: “That animal! Come, don’t waste a minute -- not a second -- we’ll have them tarred and feathered, and thrown in the river!”

Says I: “Sure. But do you mean before you go to Mr. Lothrop’s, or -- “

“Oh,” she says, “What am I thinking about!” and sat down again. “Don’t listen to what I said -- please don’t -- you won’t now, will you?” putting her soft hand on mine in that kind of way that I said I would die first.

“I never thought, I was so worked up,” she says; “now go on, and I won’t do so any more. You tell me what to do, and what you say I’ll do it.”

“Well,” I says, “it’s a rough gang, them two snakes, and I’m fixed so I have to travel with them a while longer, if I want to or not -- Don’t ask me to tell you why; and if you was to blow on them this town would get me out of their claws, and I’d be all right; but there’d be another person that you don’t know about who’d be in big trouble. Well, we got to save him ain’t we? I see you agree. Well, then, we won’t blow on them.”

Saying them words put a plan in my head. I see how maybe I could get me and Jim away from the two of them and get them put in prison. But I didn’t want to run the raft in the light without anyone on it to answer questions but me; so I didn’t want the plan to start working until pretty late that night.

I says: “Miss Mary Jane, I’ll tell you what to do, and you won’t have to stay at Mr. Lothrop’s so long, either. How far is it?”

“A little short of four miles -- right out in the country.”

“Well, that’ll do. Now you go there, and keep low until nine or half-past tonight, and then get them to take you home again -- tell them you’ve thought of something. If you get here before eleven put a candle in this window, and if I don’t turn up until eleven, then it means I’m gone, and out of the way, and safe. Then you come out and pass the news around, and get these men locked up.”

“Good,” she says, “I’ll do it.”

“And if it just happens so that I don’t get away, but get took up along with them, you must say I told you the whole thing before it happened, and you must stand by me all you can.”

“Stand by you! Oh I will. They shall not touch a hair of your head!” she says, and I seen her nose go wide and her eyes light up when she said it, too.

“If I get away I shall not be here,” I says, “to prove these snakes ain’t your uncles, and I couldn’t do it if I was here. I could say they was counterfeits, that’s all, and that’s worth something. But there’s others can do that better than me, and they’re people that will be trusted more than I’d be. I’ll tell you how to find them. Give me a pencil and a piece of paper. There -- ‘The King’s Foolishness, Bricksville.’

“Put it away, and don’t lose it. When the court wants to find out something about these two, let them send up to Bricksville and say they’ve got the men that played The King’s Foolishness, and ask for some witnesses -- You’ll have that whole town down here before you can even wink, Miss Mary. And they’ll come red-hot, too.”

I judged we had got everything fixed about right now. So I says: “Just let the sale go right along, and don’t worry. Nobody don’t have to pay for the things they buy until a whole day after the sale because it is happening so soon after the funeral, and they ain’t going to leave until they get that money; and the way we’ve fixed it the sale ain’t going to count, and they ain’t going to get no money. It’s just like the way it was with the slaves -- it weren’t no sale, and your servants will be back before long. Why, they can’t even get the money for the slaves yet -- they’re in the worst kind of a place, Miss Mary.”

“Well,” she says, “I’ll run down to breakfast now, and then I’ll start straight for Mr. Lothrop’s.”

“I’m afraid that ain’t the ticket, Miss Mary Jane,” I says, “not by a long ways; go before breakfast.”

“Why?”

“Why'd you think I wanted you to go at all for, Miss Mary?”

“Well, I never thought -- and come to think, I don’t know. What was it?”

“Why, it’s because you ain’t one of these leather-face people. I don’t want no better book than what your face is. A body can sit down and read it off like big print. Do you think you can go and face your uncles when they come to kiss you good morning, and never -- “

“There, there, don’t! Yes, I’ll go before breakfast -- I’ll be glad to. And leave my sisters with them?”

“Yes; don’t worry about them. They’ve got to put up with it yet a while. They might think something was up if all of you was to go. I don’t want you to see them, or your sisters, or nobody in this town; if a neighbour was to ask how is your uncles this morning your face would tell it all. No, you go right along, Miss Mary Jane, and I’ll fix it with all of them. I’ll tell Miss Susan to give your love to your uncles and say you’ve went away for a few hours for to get a little rest and change, or to see a friend, and you’ll be back tonight or early in the morning.”

“Gone to see a friend is all right, but I won’t have my love given to them.”

“Well, then, it shall not be.” It was well enough to tell her so -- that wouldn’t hurt no one. It was only a little thing to do, and no trouble; and it’s the little things that smooths people’s roads the most, down here below; it would make Mary Jane comfortable, and it wouldn’t cost nothing. Then I says: “There’s one more thing -- that bag of money.”

“Well, they’ve got that,” says Mary Jane, “and it makes me feel pretty stupid to think how they got it.”

“No, you’re out, there. They ain’t got it.”

“Why, who’s got it?”

“I wish I knowed, but I don’t. I had it, because I robbed it from them; and I robbed it to give to you; and I know where it’s hiding, but I’m afraid it ain’t there no more. I’m awful sorry, Miss Mary Jane, I’m just as sorry as I can be; but I done the best I could; I did honest. I come close to getting caught, and I had to put it into the first place I come to, and run -- and it weren’t a good place.”

“Oh, stop blaming yourself -- it’s too bad to do that, and I won’t let you -- you couldn’t help it; you’re not to blame. Where did you hide it?”

I didn’t want to start her thinking about her troubles again; and I couldn’t seem to get my mouth to tell her what would make her see that dead body lying in the box with that bag of money on its stomach. So for a minute I didn’t say nothing; then I says: “I don’t want to tell you where I put it, Miss Mary Jane, if you can let me off on that one; but I’ll write it for you on a piece of paper, and you can read it along the road to Mr. Lothrop’s, if you want to. Do you think that’ll do?”

“Oh, yes.”
So I wrote: “I put it in the box with your uncle’s body. It was in there when you was crying there, away in the night. I was behind the door, and I was very sorry for you, Miss Mary Jane.”

It made my eyes water a little to remember her crying there all by herself in the night, and them devils sleeping there right under her own roof, tricking her and robbing her; and when I folded it up and give it to her I seen the water come into her eyes, too; and she shook me by the hand, hard, and says: “Goodbye. I’m going to do everything just as you’ve told me; and if I don’t ever see you again, I shall not ever forget you. and I’ll think of you many a time, and I’ll pray for you, too!” -- and she was gone.

Pray for me! I thought if she knowed me she’d a taken a job that was more nearer her size. But I believe she done it, just the same -- she was just that kind. She had the ability to pray for Judas if she believed it was the right thing -- there weren’t no back-down to her, I judge. You may say what you want to, but to my way of thinking she had more spiritual strength in her than any girl I ever seen; as I see it, she was just full of it. It sounds like I’m just flattering her, but I ain't. And when it comes to good looks -- and a good spirit, too -- she has ‘em over them all. I ain’t ever seen her since that time that I see her go out of that door; no, I ain’t ever seen her since, but I think I’ve thought of her a million times, and of her saying she would pray for me; and if ever I’d a thought it would do any good for me to pray for her, blamed if I wouldn’t a done it or died trying.

Well, Mary Jane she ran out the back way, I think; because nobody seen her go. When I met Susan and Joanna, I says: “What’s the name of them people over on t’other side of the river that you all goes to see sometimes?”

They says: “There’s a few; but it’s the Proctors, mostly.”

“That’s the name,” I says; “I couldn’t remember it. Well, Miss Mary Jane she told me to tell you she’s gone over there in a big hurry -- one of them’s sick.”

“Which one?”

“I don’t know; at least I can’t remember; but I thinks it’s -- “

“Lord help us, I hope it ain’t Hanner?”

“I’m sorry to say it,” I says, “but Hanner’s the very one.”

“Oh my, and she so well only last week! Is she took bad?”

“Bad is only the start of it. They sat up with her all night, Miss Mary Jane said, and they don’t think she’ll last many hours.”

“Only think of that, now! What’s wrong with her?”

I couldn’t think of anything good, right off that way, so I says: “Mumps.”

“Mumps your grandmother! They don’t sit up with people that’s got the mumps.”

“They don’t, don’t they? You better know they do with these mumps. These mumps is different. It’s a new kind, Miss Mary Jane said.”

“How’s it a new kind?”

“Because it’s mixed up with other things.”

“What other things?”

“Well, skin spots, and water in the lungs, and vomiting, and yellow eyes, and brain-heat, and I don’t know what all.”

“My land! And they call it the mumps? “

“That’s what Miss Mary Jane said.”

“Well, what in the world do they call it the mumps for?”

“Why, because it is the mumps. That’s what it starts with.”

“Well, there ain’t no good reason for it. A body might hit his toe, and take poison, and fall down the well, and break his neck, and knock his brains out, and someone come along and ask what killed him, and some stupid person would up and say, ‘Well, he hit his toe.’ Would there be any good reason for saying that? No. And there ain’t no good reason in this, either. Is it catching?”

“Is it catching? Why, how you talk. Is a rake catching -- in the dark? If you don’t catch on one tooth, you will on another, won’t you? And you can’t get away with that tooth without bringing the whole rake along, can you? Well, these kind of mumps is a kind of a rake, as you may say -- and it ain’t no little rake either.”

“Well, it’s awful, I think,” says the young one. “I’ll go to Uncle Harvey and -- “

“Oh, yes,” I says like she was stupid, “I would. For sure I would. I wouldn’t lose no time.”

“Well, why wouldn’t you?”

“Just look at it a minute, and maybe you can see. Ain’t your uncles needed in England as fast as they can? And do you think they’d be mean enough to go off and leave you to go all that way by yourselves? You know they’ll wait for you. So far, so good. Your uncle Harvey’s a preacher, ain’t he? Very well, then; is a preacher going to lie to a river boat ticket seller? -- so as to get them to let Miss Mary Jane go on the boat? Now you know he ain’t. What will he do, then? Why, he’ll say, ‘It’s too bad, but my church business has got to get along the best way it can without me; for my brother’s daughter has been near to someone with the awful this-and-that mumps, and so it’s only right for me to sit down here and wait the three months it takes to show on her if she’s got it.’ But go ahead, if you think it’s best to tell your uncle Harvey -- “

“And stay wasting time around here waiting to find out if Mary Jane’s got it or not, when we could all be having good times in England instead? Why, don’t be so foolish.”

“Well, maybe you’d better tell some of the neighbours.”

“Listen at that, now. You do come in first for being stupid. Can’t you see that they’d go and tell? There ain’t no way but just to not tell anyone at all.”

“Well,” I says, “maybe you’re right -- yes, I judge you are.”

“But I think we should tell Uncle Harvey she’s gone out a while, anyway, so he won’t be worried about her?”

“Yes, Miss Mary Jane wanted you to do that. She says, ‘Tell them to give Uncle Harvey and William my love and a kiss, and say I’ve run over the river to see Mr.’ -- Mr. -- what is the name of that rich family your uncle Peter used to think so much of? -- I mean the one that -- “

“Why, you must mean the Apthorps, ain’t it?”

“That’s it; I hate them kind of names, a body can’t ever seem to remember them, half the time. Yes, she said, say she has run over for to ask the Apthorps to be sure and come to the sale and buy this house, because she believed her uncle Peter would want them to have it more than anyone else; and she’s going to stick to them until they say they’ll come, and then, if she ain’t too tired, she’s coming home; and if she is tired, she’ll be home in the morning anyway. She said, don’t say nothing about the Proctors, but only about the Apthorps -- which’ll be perfectly true, because she is going there to speak about their buying the house; I know it, because she told me so herself.”

“All right,” they said, and left to look for their uncles, and give them love and kisses, and tell them what we had agreed on.

Everything was all right now. The girls wouldn’t say nothing because they wanted to go to England; and the king and the duke would be happier to know

Mary Jane was off working for the sale than around in reach of Doctor Robinson. I felt very good; I judged I had done it pretty neat -- I think Tom Sawyer couldn't a done it no neater himself. He would a throwed more quality into it, but I can't do that very well, not being brought up to it.

Well, they held the sale in the centre of town, along toward the end of the afternoon, and it went on and on, and the old man he was on hand and looking as evil as I ever seen him, up there beside the man who was doing the selling, and putting in a Bible verse now and then, or a little goody-goody saying of some kind, and the duke he was around goo-gooing, for he knowed how to get people to feel sorry for him.

But by and by the thing finished, and everything was sold -- everything but a little old piece of land for burying a body. So they'd got to work that off too -- I never did see anyone as greedy as the king for wanting to take everything. Well, while they was at it a river boat landed, and in about two minutes up comes a crowd a-shouting and laughing and carrying on, and singing out: "Here's something to choose from! Here's another two brothers to old Peter Wilks. Bring your money and take your choice over who you'll give it to!"

Chapter 29

They was bringing a very nice-looking old man along, and a nice-looking younger one, with his right arm in a sling. And, my souls, how the people shouted and laughed, and kept it up.

But I didn’t see no joke about it, and I judged it would be difficult for the duke and the king to see any either. I believed they’d turn white with fear. But no, they didn’t. The duke he never let on that he knew what was up, but just went a goo-gooing around, sounding like a bottle that’s pouring out milk; and as for the king, he just looked down sadly on them new-comers like it give him a pain in his heart to think there could be such false men and robbers in the world. Oh, he done it well. Lots of the most important people crowded around the king, to let him see they was on his side. That old man that had just come looked all confused to death. Pretty soon he started to speak, and I see straight off he said his words like a real English man -- not the king’s way, even if the king’s was pretty good for a counterfeit.

I can’t use the new man’s words, and I can’t say it like him; but he turned around to the crowd, and says, about like this: “This is a surprise to me which I wasn’t looking for; and I’ll be honest with you, I ain’t well fixed to meet it; for my brother and me has had some troubles; he’s broke his arm, and our suitcases got put off at a town above here last night in the night by accident. I am Peter Wilks’ brother Harvey, and this is his brother William, which can’t hear or speak -- and can’t even make signs much, now that he’s only got one hand to work them with. We are who we say we are; and in a day or two,

when I get the bags, I can prove it. But until then I won't say nothing more, but go to the hotel and wait."

So him and the new deaf man started off; and the king he laughs, and shouts out: "Broke his arm -- very nice, ain't it? -- and just what you needed, too, for someone who's got to make signs, and ain't learned how. Lost their bags! That's mighty good! -- and mighty smart -- the way things are!

So he laughed again; and so did everybody else, apart from three or four, or maybe five or six. One of these was that doctor; another one was a sharp-looking man, with a bag of the old kind made out of real rug material, that had just come off of the river boat and was talking to him in a low voice, and looking toward the king now and then as they were moving their heads -- it was Levi Bell, the lawyer that was gone up to Louisville; and another one was a big rough man that come along and listened to all the old man from England said, and was listening to the king now. And when the king got done this big man up and says: "Say, look here; if you are Harvey Wilks, when did you come to this town?"

"The day before the funeral, friend," says the king.

"But what time of day?"

"In the evening -- about an hour or two before the sun went down."

"How'd you come?"

"I come down on the Susan Powell from Cincinnati."

"Well, then, how did you come to be up at the point in the morning -- in a canoe?"

"I weren't up at the point in the morning."

"It's a lie."

A few of them jumped for him and begged him not to talk that way to an old man and a preacher at that.

"Preacher be hanged, he's tricking you with lies. He was up at the point that morning. I live up there, don't I? Well, I was up there, and he was up there. I seen him there. He come in a canoe, along with Tim Collins and a boy."

The doctor he up and says: "Would you know the boy again if you was to see him, Hines?"

"I think I would, but I don't know. Why, there he is, now. I know him perfectly easy."

It was me he pointed at.

The doctor says: “Neighbours, I don’t know if the new ones is counterfeits or not; but if these two ain’t counterfeits, I am crazy, that’s all. I think it’s our job to see that they don’t get away from here until we’ve looked into this thing. Come along, Hines; come along, others of you. We’ll take these men to the hotel and talk to them with t’other two, and I think we’ll find out something before we get through.”

The crowd was happy with that, but maybe not the king’s friends; so we all started. The sun was just going down. The doctor he led me along by the hand, and was kind enough, but he never let go my hand.

We all got in a big room in the hotel, and put up some candles, and brought in the other two men.

First, the doctor says: “I don’t wish to be too hard on these two men, but I think they’re not what they say they are, and they may have others helping them that we don’t know about.
"If they have, won’t their helpers get away with that bag of gold Peter Wilks left? It’s not impossible. If these men ain’t tricking us, they won’t have a problem with sending for that money and letting us keep it until they prove they’re all right.”

Everybody agreed to that. So I judged they had our gang in a pretty tight place right from the start. But the king he only looked sad, and says: “Friends,

I wish the money was there, for I ain't got no interest in throwing anything in the way of a good, open, out-and-out study of this awful business; but, sadly, the money ain't there; you can send and see, if you want to."

"Where is it, then?"

"Well, when my brother's daughter give it to me to keep for her I took and put it inside the grass mattress on my bed, not wishing to bank it for the few days we'd be here, and thinking the bed a safe place, we not being used to black people, and thinking they was honest, like servants in England. The slaves robbed it the next morning, after I had went down the steps; and when I sold 'em I hadn't missed the money yet, so they got clean away with it. My servant here can tell you about it, friends."

The doctor and a few others said "Foolishness!" and I could see nobody didn't fully believe him. One man asked if I seen the servants rob it. I said no, but I seen them secretly coming out of the room and running off, and I never thought nothing, as I thought they was afraid they had waked up my master and was trying to get away before he got angry with them. That was all they asked me. Then the doctor turns on me and says: "Are you English, too?"

I says yes. Him and some others laughed, and said, "No way!"

Well, then they sailed in on the general questioning, and there we had it, up and down, hour in, hour out, and nobody never said a word about eating, or ever seemed to think about it -- and so they kept it up, and kept it up; and it was the worst mixed-up thing you ever seen. They made the king tell his story, and they made the other old man tell his; and anybody but a lot of confused empty heads would a seen that the old man from England was telling the truth and t'other one lies. And by and by they had me up to tell what I knowed. The king he give me a left-handed look out of the corner of his eye, and so I knowed enough to talk on the right side. I started to tell about Sheffield, and how we lived there, and all about the English Wilkses, and so on; but I didn't get very far before the doctor started to laugh; and Levi Bell, the lawyer, says: "Sit down, my boy; I wouldn't try too hard if I was you. I think you ain't one who has done much lying, it don't seem to come easy; what you want is to exercise it more. You do it pretty rough."

I didn't think he was so right, but I was glad to be let off, anyway.

The doctor he started to say something, and turns and says: "If you'd been in town at first, Levi Bell -- "

The king broke in and reached out his hand, and says: "Why, is this my poor dead brother's old friend that he's wrote so often about?"

The lawyer and him shook hands, and the lawyer smiled and looked pleased, and they talked right along for a while, and then got to one side and talked low.

At last the lawyer speaks up and says: “That’ll fix it. I’ll take it and send it, along with your brother’s, and then they’ll know it’s all right.”

So they got some paper and a pen, and the king he sat down and turned his head to one side, and chewed his tongue, and wrote something; and then they give the pen to the duke -- and then for the first time the duke looked sick. But he took the pen and wrote.

So then the lawyer turns to the new old man and says: “You and your brother please write a line or two and sign your names.”

The old man wrote, but nobody couldn’t read it. The lawyer looked powerful surprised, and says: “Well, that’s strange - - and pulled a lot of old letters out of his pocket, and looked at them, and then looked at the old man’s writing, and then them again; and then says: “These old letters is from Harvey Wilks; and here’s these two’s writings, and anybody can see they didn’t write them.” (The king and the duke looked pretty foolish, I tell you, to see how the lawyer had tricked them into writing.) “And here’s this old man’s hand writing, and anybody can tell, easy enough, he didn’t write them either -- truth is, the scratches he makes can’t really be called writing at all. Now, here’s some letters from -- “

The new old man says: “If you please, let me say something. Nobody can read my hand but my brother there -- so he writes for me. It’s his hand you’ve got there, not mine.”

“Well! “ says the lawyer, “this is getting more confused as we go. I’ve got some of William’s letters, too; so if you’ll get him to write a line or two we can -- “

“He can’t write with his left hand,” says the old man. “If he could use his right, you'd see that he wrote his own letters and mine too. Look at both, please --

they’re by the same hand.”

The lawyer done it, and says: “I believe it’s so -- and if it ain’t so, they’re more the same than I’d seen before, anyway. Well, well, well! I thought we was right close to fixing this problem, but it’s gone to grass, partly. Anyway, one thing is proved -- these other two ain’t either of ‘em Wilkses” -- and he turned his head toward the king and the duke.

Well, what do you think? That stupid old man wouldn’t give in even then! Said it weren’t no fair test. Said his brother William was the worst joker in the world, and hadn’t tried to write -- he seen William was going to play one of his jokes the minute he put the pen to paper. He warmed up and went singing right along until he was really starting to believe what he was saying himself; but pretty soon the new man broke in, and says: “I’ve thought of something. Is there any here that helped to lay out my br -- helped to lay out the late Peter Wilks for burying?”

“Yes,” says somebody, “Me and Ab Turner done it. We’re both here.”

Then the old man turns toward the king, and says: “Maybe this man can tell me what was printed in ink on his chest?”

Blamed if the king didn’t have to pull himself up mighty fast, or he’d a dropped like the side of a river that the water has cut under, it took him so by surprise. But then it was a thing that was planned to make him drop, to get hit with such a solid one as that without any warning, because how was he going to know what was written on the man’s chest? He turned a little white; he couldn’t help it. It was mighty quiet in there, with everybody bending a little forward and looking at him. Says I to myself, Now he’ll give up -- there ain’t no more use. Well, did he? A body can’t hardly believe it, but he didn’t.

I think he thought he’d keep the thing up until he tired them people out, so they’d some of them go home, and him and the duke could break loose and get away. Anyway, he sat there, and pretty soon he started to smile, and says: “Hmm! It’s a very difficult question, ain’t it! Yes, sir, I can tell you what’s written on his chest. It’s just a small, thin, blue arrow -- that’s what it is; and if you don’t look closely you can’t see it. Now what do you say -- hey?”

Well, I never seen anything like that old wind bag for clean out-and-out lies.

The new old man turns quickly toward Ab Turner and his helper, and his eye lights up like he judged he’d got the king this time, and says: “There -- you’ve heard what he said! Was there any such mark on Peter Wilks’ chest?”

Both of them says: “We didn’t see no such mark.”

“Good!” says the old man. “Now, what you did see on his breast was a small P, and a B and a W, with lines between them,so:P--B--W” – and he marked them that way on a piece of paper. “Come, ain’t that what you saw?”

Both of them spoke up again, and says: “No, we didn’t. We never seen any marks at all.”

Well, everybody was angry now, and they sings out: “The whole lot of ‘em’s counterfeits! Let’s feather ‘em! Let’s drown ‘em!” and everybody was shouting at once.

But the lawyer he jumps on the table and shouts, and says: “Friends -- friends! Hear me just a word -- just one word -- if you PLEASE! There’s one way yet -- let’s go and dig up the body and look.”

That took them.

“Hooray!” they all shouted, and was starting right off; but the lawyer and the doctor shouted out: “Hold on, hold on! Hold all these four men and the boy, and bring them along, too!”

“We’ll do it!” they all shouted; “and if we don’t find them marks we’ll hang the whole gang!”

I was scared, now, I tell you. But there weren’t no getting away, you know. They were holding us all, and pushed us right along, straight for the burying ground, which was a mile and a half down the river, and the whole town at our heels, for we made noise enough, and it was only nine in the evening.

As we went by our house I wished I hadn’t sent Mary Jane out of town; because now if I could give her the wink she’d come out and save me, and blow on our robber friends.

Well, they moved along down the river road, just carrying on like wild cats; and to make it seem worse the sky was darking up, and the lightning starting to wink and jump around, and the wind started shaking the leaves. This was the most awful trouble and the most danger I ever was in; and I was lost for a plan; everything was going so different from what I had planned for; instead of being fixed so I could take my own time if I wanted to, and see all the fun, and have Mary Jane at my back to save me and set me free when the trouble come, there was nothing in the world between me and death but just them marks on old Peter’s chest. If they didn’t find them --

I couldn’t even think about it; and yet, at the same time, I couldn’t think about nothing else. It got darker and darker, and it was a beautiful time to break away from the crowd; but that big rough man had me by the wrist -- Hines -- and a body might as well try to break away from Goliath. He pulled me right along, he was in such a hurry, and I had to run to keep up.

When they got there they all crowded into the burying ground and washed over it like a wave. And when they got to where Peter was buried they found they had about a hundred times as many shovels as they wanted, but nobody hadn’t thought to bring a lantern. But they sailed into digging anyway by the light of the lightning, and sent a man to the nearest house, a half a mile off, to

borrow a lantern.

So they went digging like anything; and it got awful dark, and the rain started, and the wind moved this way and that, and the lightning come faster and faster, and the thunder boomed; but them people never took no interest in that, they was so full of this business; and one minute you could see everything and every face in that big crowd, and the shovels of dirt sailing up out of the hole, and the next second the dark rubbed it all out, and you couldn't see nothing at all.

At last they got out the box and started to take the screws out of the cover, and then such another crowding and shouldering and pushing there was, to get in close and see, as there never was; and in the dark, that way, it was awful. Hines he was hurting my wrist badly pulling so, and I think he wasn't thinking about me at all, he was so interested in the box and the body in it.

Then the lightning let go a perfect explosion of white light, and someone sings out: "By the living lord, here's the bag of gold on his breast!"

Hines let out a shout, like everybody else, and dropped my wrist and give a big push to force his way in and get a look, and the way I run out and headed for the road in the dark there ain't nobody can tell.

I had the road all to myself, and I was almost flying -- at least, I had it all to myself apart from the solid dark, and the now-and-then lightning, and the sound of the rain, and the push of the wind, and the booms of the thunder; and sure as you are born I did race it along!

When I hit the town I see there weren't nobody out in the storm, so I never hunted for no back streets, but ran straight through the middle one; and when I started to get toward our house I looked in that direction. No light there; the house all dark -- which made me feel sorry and sad, I didn't know why. But at last, just as I was sailing by, on comes the light in Mary Jane's window! and my heart filled up enough to almost explode; and the same second the house and all was behind me in the dark, and wasn't ever going to be before me no more in this world. She was the best girl I ever see, and had the most strength.

The minute I was far enough above the town to see I could make the island, I started to look sharp for a boat to borrow, and the first time the lightning showed me one that wasn't chained I took it and jumped in. It was a canoe, and it weren't tied with nothing but a rope. The towhead was still a long way off, out there in the middle of the river, but I didn't lose no time; and when I come on the raft at last I was so tired I would a just fell down to blow and breathe again if I could of. But I didn't. As I jumped on I shouted out: "Out with you, Jim, and cut her loose! Glory be to God, we're free of them!"

Jim stepped out, and was a-coming for me with both arms open, he was so happy; but when I saw him in the lightning my heart jumped up in my mouth and I went over into the water backward; for I hadn't remembered that he was a drowned Arab, and it almost scared the lights out of me.

But Jim fished me out, and was going to hug me and bless me, and soon, he was so glad I was back and we was free of the king and the duke, but I says: "Not now; have it for breakfast, have it for breakfast! Cut loose and let her get going!"

So in two seconds away we went a-moving down the river, and it did seem so good to be free again and all by ourselves on the big river, and nobody to trouble us. I had to run around a little, and jump up and hit my heels together a few times -- I couldn't help it; but about the third jump I heard a sound that I knowed mighty well, and stopped breathing and listened and waited; and sure enough, when the next lightning broke out over the water, here they come! -- and just a-working their oars and making their boat fly! It was the king and the duke.

So I dropped right down on to the boards then, and give up; and it was all I could do to keep from crying.

Chapter 30

When they got on the raft the king went for me, and shook me by the neck, and says: "Trying to get away, was you, you little dog! Tired of our company, are you?"

I says: "No, my lord, we weren't -- please don't, my lord!"

“Be fast, then, and tell us what was your plan, or I’ll shake the insides out of you!”

“Honest, I’ll tell you everything just as it happened, my lord. The man that was holding me was good to me, and kept saying he had a boy about as big as me that died last year, and he was sorry to see a boy in such a dangerous way; and when they was all took by surprise by finding the gold, and moved forward, he lets go of me and whispers, ‘Run now, or they’ll hang you, sure!’ and I took off. It didn’t seem no good for me to stay -- I couldn’t do nothing, and I didn’t want to hang if I could get away. So I never stopped running until I found the canoe; and when I got here I told Jim to hurry, or they’d catch me and hang me yet, and said I was afraid you and the duke wasn’t alive now, and I was awful sorry, and so was Jim, and was awful glad when we seen you coming; you may ask Jim if I didn’t.”

Jim said it was so; and the king told him to shut up, and said, “Oh, yes, as if I should believe that!” and shook me up again, and said he thought he should drown me. But the duke says: “Let go of the boy, you crazy old man! Would you a done any different? Did you ask around for him when you got loose? I don’t remember it.”

So the king let go of me, and started to talk against that town and everybody in it. But the duke says: “You better, by a long way, give yourself a good talking to, for you’re the one that’s most to blame for what happened. You ain’t

done a thing from the start that had any smartness in it, apart from coming out so cool and confident with that blue-arrow mark. That was smart -- it was one of the best things I've ever heard; and it was what saved us. For if it hadn't been for that they'd a locked us up until them two English men's bags had come -- and then -- prison for sure! But that trick took 'em to the burying ground, and the gold done us an even bigger kindness; for if those crazy people hadn't all let go of holding us and pushed forward to get a look we'd be sleeping with ties around our necks tonight -- ties made to last as long as we lived -- and longer too."

They was quiet a minute -- thinking; then the king says, kind of like there weren't any great meaning to it: "Hmm! And to think, we thought the slaves robbed it!"

That made me start shaking a little!

"Yes," says the duke, kind of slow and with a lot of meaning to it, "We did." After half a minute the king says slowly: "At least, I did."

The duke says, the same way: "Not to disagree, but it was I who did."

The king kind of pulls himself up, and says: "Look here, Bilgewater, what are you trying to say?"

The duke comes back quickly with: "When it comes to that, maybe you'll let me ask, what was you trying to say?"

"Maybe I don't know what I'm trying to say!" says the king, not meaning a word of it. "Maybe you was asleep, and didn't know what you was doing."

The duke pulls himself up now, and says: "Oh, stop the foolishness; do you think I'm stupid? Don't you think I know who put the money in that box?"

"Yes, sir! I know you know, because you done it yourself!"

"It's a lie!" -- and the duke went for him.

The king sings out: “Take your hands off! -- let go of my throat! -- I take it all back!”

The duke says: “Well, you just own up, first, that you did hide that money there, planning to leave me one of these days, and come back and dig it up, and have it all to yourself.”

“Wait just a minute, duke -- answer me this one question, honest and fair; if you didn’t put the money there, say it, and I’ll believe you, and take back everything I said.”

“You old robber, I didn’t, and you know I didn’t. There, now!”

“Well, then, I believe you. But answer me only just this one more -- now don’t get angry; didn’t you have it in your head to take the money and hide it?”

The duke never said nothing for a little while; then he says: “Well, I don’t care if I did, I didn’t do it, anyway. But you not only had it in mind to do it, but you done it.”

“I wish to die if I done it, duke, and that’s honest. I won’t say I weren’t going to do it, because I was too; but you -- I mean someone -- got in ahead of me.”

“It’s a lie! You done it, and you got to say you done it, or -- “

The king was having trouble breathing, so he shouts out: “’Enough! -- I did it!”

I was very glad to hear him say that; it made me feel much easier than what I was feeling before. So the duke took his hands off and says: “If you ever

again say you didn't take it, I'll drown you. It's well for you to sit there and cry like a baby -- it goes with the way you've acted. I never seen such an old pig for wanting to eat up everything -- and I a-trusting you all the time, like you was my own father. You should a been feeling mighty guilty to stand by and hear it put onto a lot of poor servants, and you never said a word for 'em. It makes me feel stupid to think I was soft enough to believe such foolishness. I can see now why you was so enthusiastic about making up the difference -- you wanted to get what money I'd got out of The King's Foolishness and one thing or another, and take it all!"

The king says, shyly, and still having trouble breathing: "Why, duke, it was you that said we could make up the difference. It weren't me."

"Dry up! I don't want to hear no more out of you!" says the duke. "And now you see what you got by it. They've got all their own money back, and all of ours but for a coin or two. Go along to bed, and don't you difference me no more differences, long as you live!"

So the king went quietly into the tent and took to his bottle to make himself feel better, and before long the duke took up his bottle; and so in about half an hour they was as close as robbers again, and the drunker they got the lovinger they got, and went off a-snoring in each other's arms. They both got powerful drunk, but I could see the king didn't get drunk enough to argue that he didn't hide the money-bag after that. That made me feel easy and safe. Then, when they got to snoring, we had a long talk, and I told Jim everything.

Chapter 31

We didn't think it safe to stop again at any town for days and days; kept right along down the river. When those two robbers believed they was out of danger, they started to work the villages again. First they done a talk against drinking; but they didn't make enough for them both to get drunk on. Then in another village they started a dancing-school; but they didn't know no more how to dance than a kangaroo does; so the first step they made the village people jumped in and stepped them right out of town. They tried missionarying, and doctoring, and telling the future, and a little of everything; but they couldn't seem to have no luck. So at last they was all out of money, and just sat on the raft as she sailed along, thinking and thinking, and never saying nothing for half a day at a time, and awful sad and hungry.

At last they took a change and started to put their heads together in the tent and talk low and secretly two or three hours at a time. Jim and me got worried. We didn't like the look of it. We judged they was studying up some kind of worse trouble than ever. We turned it over and over, and at last we started to believe they was going to break into someone's house or shop, or was going into the counterfeit money business, or something. So then we was pretty scared, and agreed that we wouldn't have nothing in the world to do with such actions, and if we ever got the least show we would give them the cold shake and take off and leave them behind. Well, early one morning we put the raft in a good, safe place about two miles below a little piece of a poor village named Pikesville, and the king he went off and told us all to stay hiding

while he went up to town and smelled around to see if anyone had got any wind of The King's Foolishness there yet. ("House to rob, you mean," says I to myself; "and when you get through robbing it you'll come back here and want to know what has become of me and Jim and the raft -- and you'll have to take it out in wanting to know.") And he said if he weren't back by noon the duke and me would know it was all right, and we was to come along.

So we stayed where we was. The duke he seemed worried and angry. He shouted at us for everything, and we couldn't seem to do nothing right; he found something wrong with every little thing. Something was up, for sure. I was good and glad when noon come and no king; we could have a change, anyway -- and maybe find a way to get away on top of it. So me and the duke went up to the village, and hunted around there for the king. After hours of hunting we found him in the back room of a little pub, very drunk, and a lot of lazy young men making fun of him for sport, and he shouting angry things at them with all his strength, and so drunk he couldn't walk, and couldn't do nothing to them. The duke he started to shout at him too, and the king started to talk back, and the minute they was going at it with each other I backed off and shook the dust off my back legs, and raced down the river road like a deer, for I see our hope of freedom; and I told myself it would be a long day before they would ever see me and Jim again. I got down there breathing heavily, but full of happiness and shouted out: "Cut her loose, Jim! we're all right now!"

But there weren't no answer, and nobody come out of the tent. Jim was gone! I set up a shout -- and then another -- and then another; and run this way and that through the trees, shouting; but it weren't no use -- old Jim was gone. Then I sat down and cried; I couldn't help it. But I couldn't sit still long. Pretty soon I went out on the road, trying to think what I better do, and I run across a boy walking, and asked him if he'd seen a strange black man dressed so and so, and he says: "Yes."

"Where?" says I.

"Down to Silas Phelps' place, two mile below here. He's a slave that run away, and they got him. Was you looking for him?"

“You can be sure I ain’t! I run across him in the trees about an hour or two ago, and he said if I shouted he’d cut my intestines out -- and told me to sit down and stay where I was; and I done it. Been there ever since; afraid to come out.”

“Well,” he says, “you needn’t be afraid no more, because they’ve got him. He run off from down South, somewhere.”

“It’s a good job they got him.”

“Well, I should think so! There’s two hundred dollars reward on him. It’s like finding money on the road.”

“Yes, it is -- and I could a had it if I’d been big enough; I seen him first. Who nailed him?”

“It was an old man -- a stranger -- he sold his right to him for forty dollars, because he’s got to go up river and can’t wait. Think of it, now! You know I’d wait, if it was seven years.”

“That’s me, every time,” says I. “But maybe his right ain’t worth no more than that, if he’ll sell it so cheap. Maybe there’s something ain’t straight about it.”

“But it is -- straight as a string. I seen the advertisement myself. It tells all about him, to the last word -- paints him like a picture, and tells the farm he’s from, below New Orleans. Oh no, they ain’t no trouble about that one, I’m sure. Say, give me a chew of tobacco, won’t you?”

I didn’t have none, so he left. I went to the raft, and sat down in the tent to think. But I couldn’t come to nothing. I thought until my head was sore, but I couldn’t see no way out of the trouble. After all this long trip, and after all we’d done for them snakes, here it was all come to nothing, everything all broken and destroyed, because they could have the heart to do Jim such a trick as that, and make him a slave again all his life, and with strangers, too, for forty dirty dollars.

At one point I said to myself it would be a thousand times better for Jim to be a slave at home where his family was, if he was going to be a slave at all, and so I’d better write a letter to Tom Sawyer and tell him to tell Miss Watson where he was. But I soon give up that plan for two things: she’d be angry at him for leaving her, and so she’d sell him straight down the river again; and if she didn’t, everybody just hates a black man who is not thankful, and they’d make Jim feel it all the time, and so he’d feel awful and to blame. And then think of me!

It would get all around that Huck Finn helped a black man to get his freedom; and if I was ever to see anyone from that town again I’d be ready to get down and kiss his shoes for being so bad. That’s just the way: a person does a low-down thing, like I done, and then he don’t want to live with the effects of it. Thinks as long as he can hide, it ain’t nothing wrong with it. That was where I was for sure. The more I studied about this the more my conscience went to hurting me, and the more evil and low-down and wrong I got to feeling. And at last, it hit me that here was the hand of God himself slapping me in the face and letting me know my sin was being watched all the time from up there in heaven, while I was robbing a poor old woman’s servant that hadn’t ever done me no wrong, and now he was showing me there’s One that’s always watching, and ain’t a-going to let no such awful doings to go only just so far and no farther, I almost dropped on my knees I was so scared.

Well, I tried the best I could to kind of make it easier on myself by saying I was brought up evil, and so I weren’t so much to blame; but something inside of me kept saying, “There was the Sunday school, you could a gone to it; and if you’d a done it they’d a learned you there that people that acts as I’d been acting about that slave goes to eternal fire.”

It made me shake. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn’t try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I got down on my knees. But the words wouldn’t come. Why wouldn’t they? It weren’t no use to try and hide it from Him... or from me, either. I knowed very well why they wouldn’t come. It was because my heart weren’t right; it was because I

weren’t square; it was because I was playing two sides at the same time. I was letting on to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth say I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to that black man’s owner and tell where he was; but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can’t pray a lie -- I found that out.

So I was full of trouble, full as I could be; and didn’t know what to do. At last I thought of something; and I says, I’ll go and write the letter -- and then see if I can pray. Why, it was surprising, the way I felt as light as a feather just from thinking about it. So I got a piece of paper and a pencil, all glad and feeling good, and sit down and wrote:

Miss Watson, your slave Jim that run away is down here two miles below Pikesville, and Mr. Phelps has got him and he will give him up for the reward if you send. -- HUCK FINN.

I felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life, and I knowed I could pray now. I didn’t do it straight off, but put the paper down and sat there thinking -- thinking how good it was all this happened so, and how near I come to being lost and going to hell.

And went on thinking. And got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me all the time: in the day and in the night, sometimes in the light of the moon, sometimes in storms, and we a-riding along, talking and singing and laughing. But in it all I couldn’t seem to find no places to make me hard against him, but only the other way. I’d see him standing my watch on top of his instead of calling me, so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the wet land, up there where the feud was; and other times like that; and he

would always call me honey, and do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I come to the time I saved him by telling the men we had smallpox on the raft, and he was so thankful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the only one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper.

It was a close place I can tell you. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-shaking, because I had to choose, forever, between two things, and I knowed it. I studied a minute, almost not even breathing, and then says to myself: "All right, then, I'll go to hell" -- and I destroyed the letter.

It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about becoming good. I forced the whole thing out of my head, and said I would take up being evil again, which was in my blood, being brought up to it, and the other weren't. And for a starter I would go to work and rob Jim out of being a slave again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too; because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the whole way.

Then I started thinking over how to get at it, and turned over an awful lot of plans before I come up with a plan that I liked. So then I found a tree-covered island that was down the river a piece, and as soon as it was almost dark I pushed off with my raft and went for it. I found a good hiding place there, and then turned in. I got up before it was light, and had my breakfast, and put on my new clothes, and tied up some other clothes and one thing or another in a big ball, and took the canoe and headed for the side of the river. I landed below where I judged was Phelps's place, and put my clothes in a good hiding place in the trees, and then filled up the canoe with water and rocks and sent her to the bottom where I could find her again when I wanted her, about four hundred yards below a little side river timber yard.

Then I headed up the road, and when I passed the timber yard I seen a sign on it, "Phelps's Timber," and when I come to the farm houses, two or three hundred yards farther along, I kept my eyes wide open. The sun was well up by now, but I still didn't see nobody around. That was good, because I didn't want to see anyone just yet -- I only wanted to get a feel for the place. The way my plan went, I was going to turn up there from the village, not from below. So I just took a look, and moved along, straight for town. Well, the very first man I see when I got there was the duke. He was sticking up an advertisement for The King's Foolishness -- three-nights only -- like that other time. Would you believe them robbers! I was right onto him before I could hide. He looked surprised, and says: "Hel-lo! Where'd you come from?" Then he says, kind of glad and enthusiastic, "Where's the raft? -- got her in a good place?"

I says: "Why, that's just what I was going to ask you, my lord."

Then he didn't look so happy, and says: "What was your reason for asking me?"

“Well,” I says, “when I seen the king in that pub yesterday I says to myself, we can’t get him home for hours, drunk as he is; so I went a-looking around town to put in the time and wait. A man up and promised me ten cents to help him pull a boat over the river and back to get a sheep, and so I went along; but when we was pulling him to the boat, the man left me holding the rope and went behind him to push him along. The sheep was too strong for me and pulled loose and run, and we went after him. We didn’t have no dog, and so we had to run after him all over the place until we tired him out. We never got him until dark; then we brought him over, and I started down for the raft. When I got there and seen it was gone, I says to myself, ‘They’ve got into trouble and had to leave; and they’ve took my black man, which is the only black man I’ve got in the world, and now I’m in a strange country, and ain’t got no wealth no more, or nothing, and no way to make my living;’ so I sat down and cried. I was sleeping under the trees all night. But what did become of the raft, then? -- and Jim -- poor Jim!”

“Blamed if I know -- that is, what’s become of the raft. That stupid old man had done some business and got forty dollars, and when we found him in the pub some of the local boys had tricked him out of every cent but what he’d spent for whiskey; and when I got him home late last night and found the raft gone, we said, ‘That little devil has robbed our raft and shook us, and run off down the river.’”

“I wouldn’t shake my black man, would I? -- the only black man I had in the world, and the only wealth.”

“We never thought of that. Truth is, I think we’d come to think of him as our black man; yes, we did think that -- God knows we had trouble enough for him. So when we seen the raft was gone and we had nothing, there weren’t anything for it but to give The King’s Foolishness another shake. And I’ve been two days now without a drink. Where’s that ten cents? Give it here.”

I had enough other money, so I give him ten cents, but begged him to spend it for something to eat, and give me some, because it was all the money I had, and I hadn't had nothing to eat since yesterday. He never said nothing. The next minute he turns on me and says:

"Do you think that black man would blow on us? We'd skin him if he done that!"

"How can he blow? Ain't he run off?"

"No! The old man sold him, and never give any to me, and the money's gone."

"Sold him?" I says, and started to cry. "He's my black man, and that was my money. Where is he? -- I want my black man."

"Well, you can't get your black man, that's all -- so dry up your crying. Look here -- do you think you'd try to blow on us? I don't think I trust you. Why, if you was to blow on us -- "

He stopped, but I never seen the duke look so ugly out of his eyes before. I went on a-crying, and says: "I don't want to blow on nobody; and I ain't got no time to blow, anyway. I got to turn out and find my black man."

He looked kind of worried, and stood there with his papers in his hands,

thinking, and squeezing up the front of his head. At last he says: “I’ll tell you something. We got to be here three days. If you’ll promise you won’t blow, and won’t let the black man blow, I’ll tell you where to find him.”

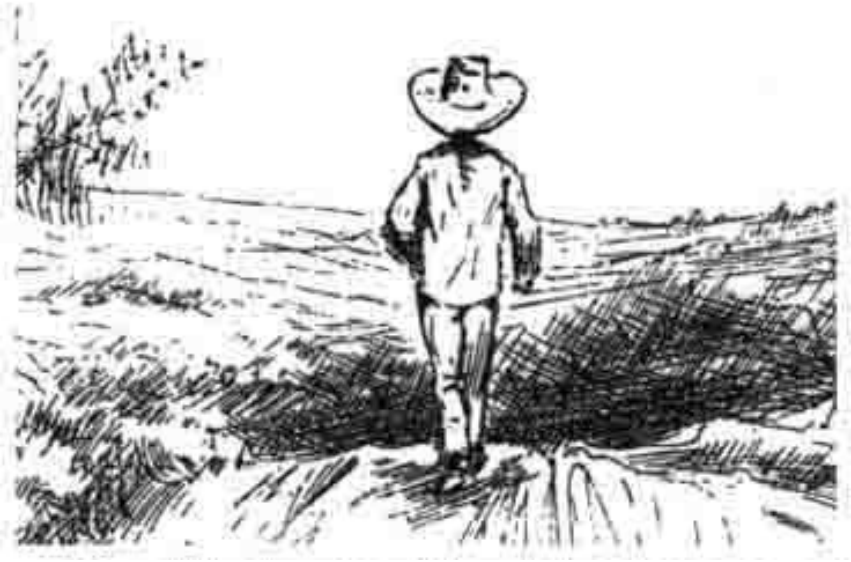
So I promised, and he says: “A farmer by the name of Silas Ph -- -- “ and then he stopped. You see, he started to tell me the truth; but when he stopped that way, and started to study and think again, I believed he was changing his plan. And so he was. He wouldn’t trust me; he wanted to make sure of having me out of the way the whole three days. So pretty soon he says: “The man that has him is named Abram Foster -- Abram G. Foster -- and he lives forty miles back here in the country, on the road to Lafayette.”

“All right,” I says, “I can walk it in three days. And I’ll start this very afternoon.”

“No you won't, you’ll start now; and don’t you lose any time about it, either, or do any talking by the way. Just keep a tight tongue in your head and move right along, and then you won’t get into trouble with us, do you hear?”

That was the rule I wanted, and that was the one I had been playing for. I wanted to be left free to work my plans.

“So move out,” he says; “and you can tell Mr. Foster what- ever you want to. Maybe you can get him to believe that Jim is your black man -- some stupid people don’t ask for papers -- at least I’ve heard there’s such down South here. And when you tell him the advertisement and the reward’s false, maybe he’ll believe you when you tell him why we printed them in the first place. Go along now, and tell him anything you want to; but just don’t work your mouth any between here and there.”



So I left, and headed for the back country. I didn’t look around, but I kind of felt like he was watching me. But I knowed I could tire him out at that. I went straight out in the country as much as a mile before I stopped; then I came back through the trees toward Phelps’s. I knew I needed to start in on my plan

straight off without wasting time, because I wanted to stop Jim's mouth until these two could get away. I didn't want no trouble with their kind. I'd seen all I wanted to of them, and wanted to get perfectly free of them.

Chapter 32

When I got there it was all quiet and Sunday-like, and hot and sunny; the workers was gone to the fields; and there was them kind of soft sounds of flies in the air that makes it seem so empty and like everybody's dead and gone; and if a little wind shakes the leaves it makes you feel sad, because you feel like it's spirits whispering -- spirits that's been dead ever so many years -- and you always think they're talking about you. As a general thing it makes a body wish he was dead, too, and done with it all.

Phelps's was one of those little one-horse cotton farms, and they all look the same. A timber fence around a yard; steps over the fence made out of vertical logs in the ground, like barrels of different lengths, to climb over the fence with; some places in the big yard with a little sick grass growing in it, but mostly just smooth dirt, like an old hat with the soft part rubbed off; big log house for the white people -- with the holes stopped up with mud that had been white-washed some time or another; log kitchen, with a big wide, roofed footpath joining it to the house; log smoke-house back of the kitchen; three little log servant cabins in a line t'other side of the smoke-house; one little room all by itself away down against the back fence, and some other buildings down a piece the other side; box for ashes and a big kettle to make soap by the little room; bench by the kitchen door, with a bucket of water; dog asleep there in the sun; more dogs asleep around about; about three trees away off in a corner; some berry bushes in one place by the fence; outside of the fence a garden and a field of watermelons; then the cotton fields starts, and after the fields the trees.

I went around and climbed over the steps by the box of ashes, and started for the kitchen. When I got a little ways I heard the quiet sound of a spinning-wheel going up and then coming down again; and then I knowed for sure I wished I was dead -- for that IS the saddest sound in the whole world.

I went right along, not fixing up any special plan, but just trusting to God to put the right words in my mouth when the time come; for I'd learned that He always did put the right words in my mouth if I left it alone.

When I got half-way, first one dog and then another got up and went for me, and so I stopped and faced them, and didn't move. And such a lot of noise they made! In a few seconds I was kind of the middle of a wheel, as you may say, with a circle of fifteen dogs pointing at me in the centre, with their necks and noses reaching up toward me, making all kinds of noise; and more a-coming; you could see them sailing over fences and around corners from everywhere.

A black woman come running out of the kitchen with a stick in her hand, singing out, "Stop that you Tiger! you Spot! get out of here!" and she hit first one and then another of them with the stick and sent them running off crying,

and then the others followed; and the next second half of them come back, shaking their tails around me, and making friends with me. There ain't no bad in a dog, no way.

And behind the woman comes a little black girl and two little black boys without anything on but shirts, and they was hanging onto their mother's dress, and looked out from behind her at me, shy, the way they always do. And here comes the white woman running from the house, about forty-five or fifty years old, with a stick in her hand too; and behind her comes her little white children, acting the same way the little black ones did. She was smiling all over so she could hardly stand -- and says: "It's you, at last! -- ain't it?"

I out with a "Yes ma'am" before I thought.

She took me and hugged me tight; and then held me by both hands and shook and shook; and the tears come in her eyes, and run down over; and she couldn't seem to hug and shake enough, and kept saying, "You don't look as much like your mother as I thought you would; but I'm not worried about that, I'm so glad to see you! My, my, it does seem like I could eat you up! Children, it's your cousin Tom! -- tell him hello."

But they dropped their heads, and put their fingers in their mouths, and went behind her. So she run on: "Lize, hurry up and get him a hot breakfast right away -- or did you get your breakfast on the boat?"

I said I had got it on the boat. So then she started for the house,leading me by the hand, and the children coming after. When we got there she sat me down in a chair, and sat herself down on a little box in front of me, holding both of my hands, and says:

“Now I can have a good look at you; and, my, my, I’ve been hungry for it many a time, all these long years, and it’s come at last! We been thinking you would be here for two days and more. What kept you? -- boat go to ground?”

“Yes ma'am -- she -- “

“Don’t say ma'am; say Aunt Sally. Where’d she go to ground?”

I didn’t really know what to say, because I didn’t know if the boat would be coming up the river or down. But I go a good lot on feelings; and my feeling said she would be coming up -- from down toward New Orleans. But that didn’t help me much, because I didn’t know the names of the sand bars down that way. I needed to make up a name, or forget the name, or -- Now I knew what to do and I did it:

“It weren’t the grounding -- that didn’t keep us back but a little. We blowed up a motor.”

“Good Lord! Anyone hurt?”

“No ma'am. Killed a slave.”

“Well, it’s lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt when that happens. Two years ago last Christmas your Uncle Silas was coming up from New Orleans on the old Lally Rook, and she blowed up a motor and crippled a man. And I think he died later. He was a Baptist. Your uncle’s been up to the town every day to meet you. And he’s gone again, not more than an hour ago; he’ll be back any minute now. You must a met him on the road, didn’t you? -- older man, with a -- “

“No, I didn’t see nobody, Aunt Sally. The boat landed just as the sun was coming up. I left my bags there and went looking around town and out a piece in the country, to put in the time and not get here too soon; and so I come down the back way.”

“Who’d you give the bags to?”

“Nobody.”

“Why, child, it’ll be robbed!”

“Not where I put it, I think it won’t,” I says.

“How’d you get your breakfast so early on the boat?”

It was kind of thin ice, but I says: “The driver seen me standing around, and told me I better have something to eat before I landed; so he took me in to where he and the others eat, and give me all I wanted.”

I was getting so worried I couldn’t listen well. I was thinking about the children; I wanted to get them to one side and pump them a little, and find out who I was. But I couldn’t get no show, Mrs. Phelps kept it up and run on so. She made my blood run cold, when she says: “But here we’re a-running on this way, and you ain’t told me a word about my sister, or any of them. Now I’ll rest my mouth a little, and you start up yours; just tell me everything -- tell me all about ‘em all, every one of ‘em; and how they are, and what they’re doing, and what they told you to tell me; every last thing you can think of.”

Well, I see I was up a tree – and up it good. God had stood by me this far all right, but I was hard and tight trapped now. I see it weren’t no use to try to go ahead -- I’d got to throw up my hand. So I says to myself, here’s another place where I got to tell the truth. I opened my mouth to start; but she took hold of me and pulled me in behind the bed, and says: “Here he comes! pull your head down lower -- there, that’ll do; you can’t be seen now. Don’t you let on you’re here. I’ll play a joke on him. Children, don’t you say a word.”

I see I was in a trap now. But it weren’t no good to worry; there weren’t nothing to do but just try and be ready to stand from under when the lightning hit.

I had just one little look of the old man when he come in; then the bed was between me and him. Mrs. Phelps she jumps for him, and says:
“Has he come?”

“No,” says her husband.

“My, my!” she says. “What on earth has become of him?”

“I can’t think,” says the old man; “and I must say it makes me very worried.”

“Worried?” she says; “I’m ready to go crazy! He must a come; and you’ve missed him. I know it’s so -- something tells me.”

“Why, Sally, I couldn’t of missed him along the road – you know that.”

“But oh, my, my, what will my sister say! He must a come! You must a missed him. He -- “

“Oh, don’t trouble me any more than I’m already troubled. I don’t know what in the world to make of it. I’m at the end of what I can do, and the truth is I’m right down scared. But there’s no hope that he’s come; for he couldn’t come and me miss him. Sally, it’s awful -- just awful -- something’s happened to the boat, sure!”

“Why, Silas! Look there, up the road! Ain’t that someone?”

He jumped to the window at the head of the bed, and that give Mrs. Phelps what she wanted. She leaned down quickly at the foot of the bed and give me a pull, and out I come; and when he turned back from the window there she stood, smiling like a house on fire, and me standing shy and scared beside her. The old man looked, and says: “Why, who’s that?”

“Who do you think it is?”

“I ain’t never seen him. Who is it?”

“It’s Tom Sawyer!”

I almost fell through the floor! But there weren’t no time to change knives; the old man took me by the hand and shook, and kept on shaking; and all the time how the woman did dance around and laugh and cry; and then how they both did fire off questions about Sid, and Mary, and the rest of the family.

But if they was happy, it weren’t nothing to what I was; for it was like being born again, I was so glad to find out who I was. Well, they stayed at it for two hours; and at last, when my mouth was so tired it couldn’t hardly go any more, I had told them more about my family -- I mean the Sawyer family -- than ever happened to any six Sawyer families. And I told all about how we blowed a motor up at the mouth of White River, and it took us three days to fix it. Which was all right, and worked well; because they didn’t know but what it would take three days to fix it. If I’d a said a screw fell off it would a done just as well.

Now I was feeling pretty comfortable all down one side, and pretty much the opposite all up the other. Being Tom Sawyer was easy and comfortable, and it

stayed easy and comfortable until by and by I hear a river-boat coughing along down the river. Then I says to myself, what if Tom Sawyer come down on that boat? And what if he steps in here any minute, and sings out my name before I can throw him a wink to keep quiet?

Well, I couldn't have it that way; it wouldn't do at all. I must go up the road and stop him. So I told them I would go up to the town and bring down my bags. The old man was for going along with me, but I said no, I could drive the horse myself, and I didn't want him to take no trouble about me.

Chapter 33

So I started for town in the wagon, and when I was half-way I see another wagon coming, and sure enough it was Tom Sawyer, and I stopped and waited until he come along. I says "Hold on!" and it stopped beside me, and his mouth opened up like a suitcase, and stayed so; and he worked his mouth like a person that's got a dry throat, with no words coming out until he says: "I ain't ever hurt you. You know that. So, then, what you want to come back and follow me for?"

I says: "I ain't come back -- I ain't been gone."

When he heard my voice it righted him up some, but he weren't quite sure yet. He says: "Don't you play nothing on me, because I wouldn't on you. Honest Indian, you ain't a ghost?"

"Honest Indian, I ain't," I says.

"Well, I -- that should be good enough; but I can't seem to understand it no way. Look here, weren't you ever killed at all?"

"No. I weren't ever killed at all -- I played it on them. You come in here and feel of me if you don't believe me."

So he done it; and it was enough for him; he was that glad to see me again he didn't know what to do. He wanted to know all about it right off, because it was a great adventure, and so it hit him right where he lived. But I said, leave it alone until by and by; and I told his driver to wait, and we pulled off a little piece, and I told him the kind of trouble I was in, and what did he think we should do? He said, let him alone a minute, and don't say nothing. So he thought and thought, and pretty soon he says: "It's all right; I've got it. Take my suitcase in your wagon, and let on it's yours, Turn back and go along very slowly, so as to get to the house about the time you should; and I'll go toward town a piece, and take a new start, and get there fifteen minutes after you; and you needn't let on to know me at first."
I says: "All right; but wait a minute. There's one more thing -- one that nobody knows but me. There's a slave here that I'm a-trying to free, and his name is Jim -- old Miss Watson's Jim."

He says: "What! Why, Jim is -- "

He stopped and went to studying. I says: “I know what you’ll say. You’ll say it’s dirty, low-down business; but what if it is? I’m low down; and I’m a-going to rob him free, and I want you to keep quiet and not let on. Will you?”

His eyes opened wide, and he says: “I’ll help you free him!”

Well, I let go all holds then, like I was dying. It was the most surprising thing I ever heard -- and I must say Tom Sawyer dropped a lot in my thinking about him. I couldn’t believe it. Tom Sawyer a slave-robber!

“No way!” I says. “You’re joking.”

“I ain’t joking, either.”

“Well, then,” I says, “joking or no joking, if you hear anything said about a runaway slave, remember that you don’t know nothing about him, and I don’t know nothing either.”

Then we took the suitcase and put it in my wagon, and he went riding off his way and I went mine. But I didn’t remember about driving slow because of being glad and full of thinking; so I got home way too early. The old man was at the door, and he says: “This is wonderful! Who would a thought it was in that horse to do it? I wish we’d a timed her. And she ain’t even breathing heavy. It’s wonderful. Why, I wouldn’t take a hundred dollars for that horse now -- honest; and yet I would a sold her for fifteen before, and thought it was all she was worth.”

That’s all he said. He was the most trusting old soul I ever seen. But it weren’t surprising; because he weren’t only just a farmer, he was a preacher, too, and had a little one-horse log church down back of the farm, which he built himself with his own money, for a church and a school. He never asked nothing for his preaching, and it was worth it, too.

In about half an hour Tom’s wagon come up to the front fence, and Aunt Sally she seen it through the window, because it was only about fifty yards, and says: “Why, there’s some- body come! Who could it be? Why, I do believe it’s a stranger. Jimmy,” (That’s one of the children.) “run and tell Lize to put on another plate for dinner.”

Everybody ran to the front door, because a stranger don’t come every year, and so he brings more interest than the smallpox when he does come. Tom was over the fence and starting for the house; the wagon was driving back up the road to the village, and we was all crowded in the front door. Tom had his good clothes on, and a crowd to talk to -- and that was always good as nuts for Tom Sawyer. With us all watching, it was easy for him to give it his special touch.

He weren't a boy to walk shyly up the yard like a sheep; no, he come relaxed and important, and when he got in front of us he lifts his hat ever so nicely, like it was the top of a box that had butterflies asleep in it and he didn't want to wake them, and says: "Mr. Archibald Nichols, is that right?"

"No, my boy," says the old man, "Nichols's place is down the road three miles more. Come in, come in."

Tom he took a look back over his shoulder, and says, "Too late -- can't even see him."

"Yes, he's gone, son. You must come in and eat your dinner with us; and then we'll take you down to Nichols's."

"Oh, I can't make you so much trouble; I couldn't think of it. I'll walk -- it's no problem."

"But we won't let you walk -- it wouldn't be right to do that. Come on in."

"Oh, do," says Aunt Sally; "it ain't no trouble to us, no trouble at all. You must stay. It's a long, dirty three mile, and we can't let you walk. And, besides, I've already told 'em to put on another plate when I seen you coming; so you mustn't let us down. Come right in and make yourself at home."

So Tom he thanked them very warmly and beautifully, and let himself be talked into coming in; and when he was in he said he was a stranger from Hicksville, Ohio, and his name was William Thompson -- and he made another bow.

Well, he run on, and on, and on, making up things about Hicksville and everybody in it he could make up, and I was getting a little worried, and thinking how was this going to help me out of my troubles; and at last, still talking along, he reached over and kissed Aunt Sally right on the mouth, and then sat back again in his chair comfortable, and was going on talking; but she jumped up and rubbed it off with the back of her hand, and says: “You dirty dog!”

He looked kind of hurt, and says: “I’m surprised at you, ma’am.”

“You’re surpri -- Why, what do you think I am? I should take and -- Say, what do you mean by kissing me?”

He looked kind of humble, and says: “I didn’t mean nothing, ma’am. I didn’t mean to hurt you. I -- I -- thought you’d like it.”

“Was you born crazy!” She took up a stick from the spinning-wheel, and it looked like it was all she could do to keep from giving him a hit with it. “What made you think I’d like it?”

“Well, I don’t know. Only, they -- they -- told me you would.”

“They told you I would? Whoever told you is another crazy person. I never heard anything like it. Who’s they?”

“Why, everybody. They all said so, ma’am.”

It was all she could do to hold in. Her eyes showed anger, and her fingers worked like she wanted to scratch him; and she says: “Who’s ‘everybody’? Out with their names, or there’ll be one less crazy person when I finish with you.”

He got up and looked worried, and played with his hat, and says: “I’m sorry, I weren’t thinking you would take it that way. They all said, kiss her; and said she’d like it -- every one of them. But I’m sorry, ma’am, and I won’t do it no more -- honest.”

“You won’t, won’t you? Well, I should think you won’t!”

“No ma’am, I’m honest about it; I won’t ever do it again -- until you ask me.”

“Until I ask! Well, I never seen anything like it in all my days!”

“Well,” he says, “it does surprise me so. I can’t make it out. They said you

would, and I thought you would. But -- “ He stopped and looked around slow, like he wished he could find a friendly eye somewhere, and finished up on the old man’s, and says, “Didn’t you think she’d like me to kiss her, sir?”

“Why, no; I -- I -- well, no, I believe I didn’t.”

Then he looks on around the same way to me, and says: “Tom, didn’t you think Aunt Sally would open out her arms and say, ‘Sid Sawyer, my boy -- ‘”

“My land!” she says, breaking in and jumping for him, “you little devil, to trick a body so.“ She was going to hug him, but he pushed her back, and says: “Not until you’ve asked me first.”

So she didn’t lose no time, but asked him; and hugged him and kissed him over and over again, and then turned him over to the old man, and he took what was left. And after they got a little quiet again she says: “What can I say? I never seen such a surprise. We weren’t looking for you at all, but only Tom. Polly never wrote to me about anybody coming but him.”

“It’s because it weren’t planned for any of us to come but Tom,” he says; “but I begged and begged, and at the last minute she let me come, too; so, coming down the river, me and Tom thought it would be a good surprise for him to come here to the house first, and for me to by and by come along and drop in, and let on to be a stranger. But it was wrong, Aunt Sally. This ain’t no healthy place for a stranger to come.”

“No -- not bad little boys, Sid. You should of had your mouth hit; I ain’t been so put out since I don’t know when. But I don’t care -- I’d be willing to stand a thousand such jokes to have you here. Well, to think of that act! I have to say, I was almost turned to stone with surprise when you give me that kiss.”

We had dinner out in that wide open walk way between the house and the kitchen; and there was things enough on that table for seven families -- and all hot, too; none of your rubber meat that’s laid on a shelf in a wet room under the house all night and tastes like a piece of an old cold body in the morning. Uncle Silas he asked a pretty long blessing over it, but it was worth it; and it didn’t cool it at all, either, the way I’ve seen them kind of prayers do lots of times.

There was a lot of talk all the afternoon, and me and Tom was watching all the time; but it weren't no use, they didn't happen to say nothing about any runaway slave, and we was afraid to try to work up to it. But at the table, that night, one of the little boys says: "Pa, can Tom and Sid and me go to the show?"

"No," says the old man, "There ain't going to be any; and you couldn't go if there was. That runaway slave told Burton and me all about the show, and Burton said he'd tell the others. They've probably run those snakes out of town by now."

So there it was! -- but I couldn't help it. Tom and me was to sleep in the same room and bed; so, being tired, we said good-night and went up to bed right after eating, and climbed out of the window and down the lightning-rod, and headed for the town; for I didn't believe anyone was going to tell the king and the duke what was up, and so if I didn't hurry up and tell them they'd get into big trouble for sure.

On the road Tom told me all about how it was believed I was killed, and how pap was gone pretty soon after, and didn't come back, and what talk there was when Jim run away; and I told Tom all about our Kings Foolishness devils, and as much of the raft trip as I had time to; and as we come into the town and up through the street -- here come an angry crowd of people with torches, and an awful noise of shouting and banging tin pans and blowing horns; and we jumped to one side to let them go by; and as they went by I see they had the king and the duke sitting on a log -- that is, I knowed it was the king and the duke, but they was all over tar and feathers, and didn't look like nothing in the world that was a living person -- just looked like two giant feathers. Well, it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor devils, it seemed like I couldn't ever feel anything bad against them any more in the world. It was an awful thing to see. People can be awful cruel to one another.

We seen we was too late -- couldn't do no good. We asked some people about it, and they said everybody went to the show looking like nothing was wrong; and stayed that way until the poor old king was in the middle of his foolishness on the stage; then someone give a sign, and the house jumped up and went for them.

So we went slowly back home, and I weren't feeling so good as I was before,

but kind of bad, and humble, and to blame. I knew that I hadn't done nothing, but that's always the way; it don't make no difference if you do right or wrong, a person's conscience ain't got no reason, and just goes for him any way it can. If I had a yellow dog that didn't know no more than a person's conscience does I would poison him. It takes up more room than all the rest of a person's insides, and yet ain't no good, at all. Tom Sawyer he says the same.

Chapter 34

We stopped talking, and got to thinking. By and by Tom says: "Look here, Huck, how stupid of us not to think of it be- fore! I think I know where Jim is."

"No! Where?"

"In that little room down by the box of ashes for making soap. Why, look here. When we was at dinner, didn't you see a servant go in there with some food?"

"Yes."

"What did you think the food was for?"

"For a dog."

"So did I. Well, it wasn't for a dog."

"Why?"

"Because part of it was watermelon."

"So it was -- I remember now. How about that? I never thought about a dog not eating watermelon. It shows how a body can see and not see at the same time."

"Well, the servant unlocked the lock when he went in, and he locked it again

when he come out. He asked uncle for a key about the time we got up from table -- same key, I'd say. Watermelon shows it's a man, lock shows he's a prisoner; and it ain't likely there's two prisoners on such a little farm, where the people's all so kind and good. Jim's the prisoner, all right -- I'm glad we found it out just by using our heads; I wouldn't give dead leaves for any other way. Now you work your mind, and study out a plan to get Jim free, and I'll study out one, too; and we'll take the one we like the best."

What a head for just a boy to have! If I had Tom Sawyer's head I wouldn't give it up to be a duke, or a worker on a river- boat, or a clown in a circus, or nothing I can think of. I went to thinking out a plan, but only just to be doing something; I knowed very well where the right plan was going to come from. Pretty soon Tom says: "Ready?"

"Yes," I says.

"All right -- bring it out."

"My plan is this," I says. "We can easy find out if it's Jim in there. Then get up my canoe tomorrow night, and bring my raft over from the island. Then the first dark night that comes rob the key out of the old man's pants after he goes to bed, and push off down the river on the raft with Jim, hiding days and running nights, the way me and Jim used to do before. Wouldn't that plan work?"

"Work? Why, surely it would work, like rats a-fighting. But it's too simple; there ain't nothing to it. What's the good of a plan that ain't no more trouble than that? It's as weak as goose-milk. Why, Huck, it wouldn't make no more talk than breaking into the soap works."

I never said nothing, because I weren't looking for nothing different; but I knowed mighty well that whenever he got his plan ready it wouldn't have none of them problems with it.

And it didn't. He told me what it was, and I see in a minute it was worth fifteen of mine for quality, and would make Jim just as free a man as mine would, and maybe get us all killed besides. So I was happy, and said we would dance in on it. I needn't tell what it was here, because I knowed it wouldn't stay the way it was. I knowed he would be changing it around every which way as we went along, and bringing in new adventures wherever he was able. And that is what he done.

Well, one thing was dead sure, and that was that Tom Sawyer was sincere about this, and was really going to help rob that black man out of being a slave. That was the thing that was too much for me. Here was a boy that was well brought up; and had a good name to lose; and with family at home that had good names; and he was smart and not leather-headed; and knowing and not stupid; and not mean, but kind; and yet here he was, without any more pride or feeling, than to come down to the level of this business, and embarrass himself and embarrass his family, before everybody. I couldn't understand it no way at all. It was hard to believe, and I knowed I should a just up and told him so; and so be his true friend, and let him quit the thing right where he was and save himself. And I did start to tell him; but he shut me up, and says: "Don't you think I know what I'm about? Don't I most of the time know what I'm about?"

"Yes."

"Didn't I say I was going to help you rob the black man?"
"Yes."

"Well, then."

That's all he said, and that's all I said. It weren't no use to say any more; because when he said he'd do a thing, he always done it. But I couldn't make out how he was willing to go into this; so I just let it go, and never worried no more about it. If he was going to have it so, I couldn't help it.

When we got home the house was all dark and quiet; so we went on down to the one-room shack by the ash-box for to study it. We went through the yard so as to see what the dogs would do. They knowed us, and didn't make no more noise than country dogs is always doing when anything comes by in the night. When we got to the shack we took a look at the front and the two sides; and on the side I hadn't seen before -- which was the north side -- we found a square window- hole, up pretty high, with just one strong board nailed across it. I says: "Here's the ticket. This hole's big enough for Jim to get through if we pull off the board."

Tom says: "It's as easy as one two three, and as easy as missing school. I

should hope we can find a way that's a little more difficult than that, Huck Finn."

"Well, then," I says, "how will it do to saw him out, the way I done before I was killed that time?"

"That's more like it," he says. "It's real secret and dangerous, and good," he says; "but I think we can find a way that's even longer. There ain't no hurry; let's keep on looking around."

Between the shack and the fence, on the back side, was another smaller room made by leaning boards against the first room. The door to it was at the south end, and was locked. Tom he went to the soap kettle and looked around, and come back with the iron thing they lift the top of the kettle with; so he took it and forced out one of the pieces holding the lock. The chain fell down, and we opened the door and went in, and shut it, and scratched a match, and seen the room was only built against the shack and there was no opening between the two. There weren't no floor to this side, and nothing in it but some dirty old tools. The match went out, and so did we, and pushed back in the piece that was hold- ing the lock, and the door was locked as good as ever. Tom was happy. He says: "Now we're all right. We'll dig him out. It'll take about a week!"

Then we started for the house, and I went in the back door -- you only have to pull a leather string to open it, they don't lock the doors -- but that weren't good enough for Tom Sawyer; no way would do him but he must climb up the lightning-rod. But after he got up half way about three times, and fell every time, and the last time almost broke his brains out, he thought he'd got to give it up; but after he was rested he said he would give her one more turn for luck, and this time he made the climb all right.

In the morning we was up with the sun, and down to the servants' cabins to play with the dogs and make friends with the slave that brought the food to Jim -- if it was Jim that he was feeding. The slaves was just getting through breakfast and starting for the fields; and Jim's servant was filling up a tin pan with bread and meat and things; and while the others was leaving, the key come from the house.

This black man had a friendly face that didn't look too smart, and his hair was all tied up in little balls with thread. That was to keep witches off. He said the witches was troubling him awful these nights, and making him see all kinds of strange things, and hear all kinds of strange words and noises, and he didn't believe he was ever witched so long before in his life. He got so worked up, and got to running on so about his troubles, he couldn't remember what he'd been a-going to do. So Tom says: "What's the food for? Going to feed the dogs?"

The black man kind of smiled around slowly with the smile moving out over his face, like when you throw a stone into water, and he says: "Yes, Master Sid, a dog. Strange dog, too. Does you want to go and look at him?"

“Yes.”

I hit Tom, and whispers: “You going, right here in the light? That weren’t the plan.”

“No, it weren’t; but it’s the plan now.”

So we went along, but I didn’t like it much. When we got in we couldn’t hardly see anything, it was so dark; but Jim was there, sure enough, and could see us; and he sings out: “Why, Huck! And good land! ain't dat Master Tom?”

I just knowed how it would be; I just knew it. I didn’t know nothing to do; and if I had I couldn’t a done it, because that servant cut in and says to us: “Why, good Lord! do he know you men?”

We could see pretty well now. Tom he looked at the servant, not doing anything, and says: “Does who know us?”

“Why, dis here runaway nigger.”

“I don’t think he does; but what put that into your head?”

“What put it there? Didn’t he just dis minute sing out like he knowed you?”

Tom says, in a confused kind of way: “Well, that’s mighty strange. Who said anything? When did he sing out? What did he say?” And turns to me, perfectly relaxed, and says, “Did you hear anyone sing out?”

Well, there weren’t nothing to be said but the one thing; so I says: “No; I ain’t heard nobody say nothing.”

Then he turns to Jim, and looks him over like he never seen him before, and says: “Did you sing out?”

“No, sir,” says Jim; “I ain’t said nothing, sir.”

“Not a word?”

“No, sir, I ain’t said a word.”

“Did you ever see us before?”

“No, sir; not as I knows.”

So Tom turns to the servant, who was looking wild and confused, and says, kind of seriously: “What do you think’s wrong with you, anyway? What made you think somebody shouted out?”

“Oh, it’s de blowed out witches, sir, and I wished I was dead, I do. Dey’s

always at it, sir, and dey do most kill me, dey scares me so. Please don't tell nobody about it sir, or old Master Silas he'll come at me; because he say dey ain't no witches. I just wish to God he was here now -- den what would he say! I just know he couldn't find no way to get around it dis time. But it's always just so; people dat's sat, stays sat; dey won't look into nothing and find it out for deyselves, and when you find it out and tell 'em about it, dey don't believe you."

Tom give him ten cents, and said we wouldn't tell nobody; and told him to buy some more thread to tie up his hair with; and then looks at Jim, and says: "Do you think Uncle Silas is going to hang this black man? If I was to catch a black man that was evil enough to run away, I wouldn't give him up, I'd hang him." And while the servant stepped to the door to look at the coin and bite it to see if it was good, he whispers to Jim and says: "Don't ever let on to know us. And if you hear any digging going on nights, it's us; we're going to free you."

Jim only had time to take us by the hand and squeeze it; then the servant come back, and we said we'd come again some time if he wanted us to; and he said he would, more so if it was dark, because the witches went for him mostly in the dark, and it was good to have people around then.

Chapter 35

It would be another hour before breakfast, so we went down into the trees, because Tom said we got to have some light to see how to dig by, and a lantern makes too much, and might get us into trouble. What we must have was a lot of them stones that's called fox-fire, that just makes a soft kind of a light when you put them in a dark place. We found as many as we could carry and put them in the weeds, and sat down to rest, and Tom says, kind of not happy with things: "Curse it, this whole thing is just as easy and stupid as it can be. The most difficult part is just getting up a difficult plan. There ain't no watchman to be drugged -- now there should be a watchman. There ain't even a dog to give a sleeping-mixture to. And there's Jim chained by one leg, with a ten-foot chain, to the leg of his bed: why, all you got to do is to lift up the bed and off comes the chain. And Uncle Silas he trusts everybody; sends the key to that stupid black man, and don't send nobody to watch him. Jim could a got out that window-hole by now, only there wouldn't be no use trying to travel with a ten-foot chain on his leg. Why, hit it, Huck, it's the stupidest thing I ever seen. We got to make up all the problems. Well, we can't help it; so we'll do the best we can with what we've got. Anyway, there's more glory in getting him out through a lot of problems and dangers, where there weren't one of them given to you by the people who it was their job to do it, and you had to make them all out of your own head. Now look at just that one thing of the lantern. When you come down to the cold truth, we really got to let on that a lantern's dangerous. Why, we could work with a parade full of torches if we wanted to, I believe. While I'm thinking of it, we got to hunt up something to make a saw out of the first opening we get."

"What do we want of a saw?"

"What do we want of a saw? Ain't we got to saw the leg of Jim's bed off, so as

to get the chain loose?”

“Why, you just said a body could lift up the bed and pull the chain off.”

“Well, if that ain’t just like you, Huck Finn. You can get up the most baby-school ways of going at a thing. Why, ain’t you ever read any books at all? Who ever heard of getting a prisoner loose in such an old-woman way as that? No; the way all the best writers does is to saw the bed-leg in two, and leave it just so, and eat the powder that comes from the sawing, so it can’t be found, and put some dirt and fat around the sawed place so the very best watchman can’t see no sign of it’s being sawed. Then, the night you’re ready, give the leg a kick, down she goes; pull off your chain, and there you are. Nothing to do but hang your rope ladder out the window, climb down it, break your leg in the moat -- because a rope ladder is nineteen foot too short, you know -- and there’s your horses and your servants, and they lift you up and throw you across a saddle, and away you go to your home country, wherever that is. It’s a real show that way, Huck. I wish there was a moat to this shack. If we get time, the night we break him out, we’ll dig one.”

I says: “What do we want of a moat when we’re going to pull him out from under the shack?”

But he never heard me. He wasn’t hearing me or anything else. He had his head on his hand, thinking. Pretty soon he breathes deeply, shakes his head, then breathes deeply again, and says: “No, it wouldn’t do -- there ain’t enough need for it.”

“For what?” I says.

“Why, to saw Jim’s leg off,” he says.
“
Good land!” I says; “Why, there ain’t no need for that at all. And what would you want to saw his leg off for, anyway?”

“Well, some of the best ones has done it. They couldn’t get a chain off, so they just cut their hand off and left. A leg would be better. But we got to let that go. There ain’t need enough; and, besides, Jim’s a black man, and wouldn’t understand how it’s the way they do it in Europe; so we’ll let it go. But there’s one thing -- he can have a ladder; we can tear up our sheets and make him a ladder easy enough. And we can send it to him in a pie; it’s mostly done that way. And I’ve tasted worse pies.”

“Why, Tom Sawyer, how you talk,” I says; “Jim ain’t got no use for a rope ladder.”
“He has got use for it. How you talk! You should say you don’t know nothing about it. He’s got to have a rope ladder; they all do.”

“What in the world can he do with it?”

“Do with it? He can hide it in his bed, can’t he? That’s what they all do; and

he's got to, too. Huck, you don't ever seem to want to do anything the way it's always been done; you want to be starting something new all the time. Even if he don't do nothing with it, ain't it there in his bed, for them to study, after he's gone? and don't you think they'll want things to study? You know they will. And you wouldn't leave them any? That would be a pretty bad how-you-do, wouldn't it! I never heard of such a thing."

"Well," I says, "if it's in the rules, and he's got to have it, all right, let him have it; because I don't wish to go back on no rules; but there's one thing, Tom Sawyer -- if we go to tearing up our sheets to make Jim a rope ladder, we're going to get into trouble with Aunt Sally, just as sure as you're born. Now, the way I look at it, a ladder made from string bark don't cost nothing, and don't waste nothing, and is just as good to fill up a pie with, and hide in a mattress, as any rope ladder you can start; and as for Jim, he ain't never done this kind of thing before, and so he don't care what kind of a -- "

"Oh, rats, Huck Finn, if I was as stupid as you I'd keep still -- that's what I'd do. Who ever heard of a prisoner making a ladder from string bark? Why, it's perfectly crazy."

"Well, okay, Tom, fix it your own way; but if you'll listen to me, you'll let me borrow something off of the clothes-line."

He said that would do. And that gave him another thought, and he says: "Borrow a shirt, too."

"What do we want of a shirt, Tom?"

"Want it for Jim to keep a diary on."

"Diary your grandmother -- Jim can't write."

"What difference if he can't write -- he can make marks on the shirt, can't he, if we make him a pen out of an old spoon or a piece of old iron?"

"Why, Tom, we can pull a feather out of a goose and make him a better one; and faster, too."

"Prisoners don't have a goose running around to pull pens out of, you air head. They make their pens out of the hardest piece of old metal that they can find; and it takes them weeks and weeks and months and months to shape it, because they've got to do it by rubbing it on the wall. They wouldn't use a goose-feather if they had it. It ain't the way it's done."

"Well, then, what'll we make him the ink out of?"

"Many makes it by rubbing the red powder off of old iron and adding tears; but that's the easy way and it's mostly for women; the best prisoners uses their own blood. Jim can do that; and when he wants to send any little word out to the world, he can write it on the bottom of a tin plate with a fork and throw it

out of the window. The Iron Mask always done that, and it's a very good way, too."

"Jim ain't got no tin plates. They feed him in a pan."

"That ain't nothing; we can get him some."

"Can't nobody read his plates."

"That ain't got anything to do with it, Huck Finn. All he's got to do is to write on the plate and throw it out. You don't have to be able to read it. Why, half the time you can't read anything a prisoner writes on a tin plate, or anywhere else."

"Well, then, what's the point in wasting the plates?"

"Why, blame it all, it ain't the prisoner's plates."

"But it's someone's plates, ain't it?"

"Well, what if it is? What does the prisoner care whose -- " He broke off there, because we heard the breakfast-horn blowing. So we headed back to the house.

"...we heard the breakfast-horn blowing."

Later that morning I borrowed a sheet and a white shirt off of the clothes-line; and I found an old bag and put them in it, and we went down and got the fox-fire, and put that in too. I called it borrowing, because that was what pap always called it; but Tom said it weren't borrowing, it was robbing. He said we

was working for the good of prisoners; and prisoners don't care how they get a thing just so they get it, and nobody don't blame them for it, either. It ain't no sin in a prisoner to rob the things he needs to get away with, Tom said; it's his right; and so, as long as we was working for a prisoner, we had a perfect right to rob anything on this place we had the least use for to get ourselves out of prison with. He said if we weren't prisoners it would be a very different thing, and nobody but a low-down bad person would rob when he weren't a prisoner. So we agreed we would rob everything there was that we could use. And yet he was quite angry, one day after that, when I robbed a watermelon out of the slave garden and eat it. He made me go and give the slaves ten cents without telling them why. Tom said that what he was trying to say was, we could rob anything we needed. Well, I says, I needed the watermelon. But he said I didn't need it to get out of prison with; there's where the difference was. He said if I'd a wanted it to hide a knife in, and secretly give it to Jim to kill the watchman with, it would a been all right. So I let it go at that, but truth is, I couldn't see no point in my working for a prisoner if I got to think over a lot of little differences like that every time I see a good way to get some watermelon.

Well, as I was saying, we waited that morning until everybody was busy, and nobody around the yard; then Tom he carried the bag into the lean-to while I stood off a piece to keep watch. By and by he come out, and we went and sat down on the firewood to talk. He says: "Everything's all right now apart from tools; and that's easy fixed."

"Tools?" I says.

"Yes."

"Tools for what?"

"Why, to dig with. We ain't going to chew him out, are we?"
"Ain't them old crippled shovels and things in there good enough to dig a slave out with?" I says.

He turns on me, looking sad enough to make a body cry, and says: "Huck Finn, did you ever hear of a prisoner having shovels and things in his wardrobe to dig himself out with? Now I want to ask you -- if you got any reason in you at all -- what kind of a show would that give him to be proud of? Why, they might as well hand him the key and be done with it. A shovel -- why, they wouldn't give one to a king."

"Well, then," I says, "if we don't want the shovel, what do we want?"

"Two table-knives."

"To dig the bottom out from under that shack with?"

"Yes."

“That’s foolish, Tom.”

“It don’t make no difference how foolish it is, it’s the right way -- and it’s the way it’s done. There ain’t no other way, that ever I heard of, and I’ve read all the books that gives any teaching about these things. They always dig out with a knife -- and not through dirt, mind you; generally it’s through solid rock. And it takes them for ever and ever. Why, there was a prisoner that got himself out that way; how long was he at it, do you think?”
“I don’t know.”

“Well, try.”

“I don’t know. A month and a half.”

“Thirty-seven years -- and he come out in China. That’s the kind. I wish the bottom of this prison was solid rock.”

“Jim don’t know nobody in China.”

“What’s that got to do with it? That other man didn’t either. But you’re always a-going off on a side argument. Why can’t you stick to the point?”
“Okay. I don’t care where he comes out, so he comes out; and I'd say Jim don’t care either. But Jim’s too old for us to be digging him out with a table-knife. He won’t last.”
“Yes he will last. You don’t think it’s going to take thirty-seven years to dig out through a dirt bottom, do you?”

“How long will it take, Tom?”

“Well, it’s too dangerous to take as long as we should, because it may not take very long for Uncle Silas to hear from down there by New Orleans. He’ll hear Jim ain’t from there. Then his next move will be to advertise Jim, or something like that. So we can’t take as long digging him out as we should. By rights I think we should be two years or more; but we can’t. Things can change so quickly here, what I say is that we dig right in, as fast as we can; and after that, we can let on, to ourselves, that we was at it thirty-seven years. Then we can pull him out and run him away the first time there’s an opening. Yes,

I think that’ll be the best way.”

“Now, there’s good thinking in that,” I says. “Letting on don’t cost nothing; and if it’s any help, I don’t mind letting on we was at it a hundred years. It wouldn’t hurt me none, after I got my hand in. So I’ll get along now, and rob two or three table-knives.”

“Rob three,” he says; “we want one to make a saw out of.”

“Tom, if it ain’t against the rules to say it, there’s a dirty old saw-blade sticking under the boards behind the smoke-house.”

He looked kind of tired and sad-like, and says: “It ain’t no use to try to learn you nothing, Huck. Run along and rob the knives -- three of them.” So I done it.

Chapter 36

As soon as we knew everyone was asleep, we went down the lightning-rod, and shut our-selves up in the lean-to, and got out the fox-fire, and went to work. We moved everything out of the way, about four or five foot along the middle of the bottom log. Tom said we was right behind Jim's bed now, and we'd dig in under it, and when we got through there couldn't nobody in the shack ever know there was any hole there, because Jim's quilt came down almost to the ground, and you'd have to lift it up and look under to see the hole. So we worked and worked with the table-knives until almost midnight; and then we was dog-tired, and our hands was covered in sores, and yet you couldn't see we'd done anything hardly.

At last I says: "This ain't no thirty-seven year job; this is a thirty-eight year job, Tom Sawyer."

He never said nothing. But he breathed deeply, and pretty soon he stopped digging, and then for a good little while I knowed he was thinking. Then he says: "It ain't no use, Huck, it ain't a-going to work. If we was prisoners it would, because then we'd have as many years as we wanted, and no hurry; and we wouldn't get but a few minutes to dig, every day, while they was changing watches, and so our hands wouldn't get sore, and we could keep it up, year in and year out, and do it right, the way it should be done. But we can't do that; we got to hurry; we ain't got no time to waste. If we was to put in another night this way we'd have to knock off for a week to let our hands get better -- couldn't touch a table-knife with them sooner."

"Well, then, what we going to do, Tom?"

"I'll tell you. It ain't right, and it's a sin, and I wouldn't like it to get out; but there ain't only just the one way: we got to dig him out with the shovel, and let on it's

table-knives.”

“Now you’re talking!” I says; “your head gets leveler and leveler all the time, Tom Sawyer,” I says. “Shovels is the thing, sin or no sin; and as for me, I don’t care dirt for the sin of it, anyway. When I start in to rob a slave, or a watermelon, or a Sunday-school book, I ain’t no ways worried how it’s done, just so it’s done. What I want is my black man; or my watermelon; or my Sunday-school book; and if a shovel is the best thing, that’s the thing I’m a-going to dig that black man or that watermelon or that Sunday-school book out with; and I don’t give a dead rat what the experts thinks about it either.”

“Well,” he says, “there’s reason enough for shovels and letting-on in a job like this; if it weren’t so, I wouldn’t agree to it, and I wouldn’t stand by and see the rules broke -- because right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a body ain’t got no business doing wrong when he knows better. It might answer for you to dig Jim out with a shovel, without any letting on, because you don’t know no better; but it wouldn’t for me, because I do know better. Give me a table-knife.”

He had his own by him, but I handed him mine. He threw it down, and says: “Give me a table-knife.”

I didn’t know just what to do -- but then I thought. I scratched around through the old tools, and got a shovel and give it to him, and he took it and went to work, and never said a word.

He was always just that careful to do the thing right.

So then I got a shovel too, and then we made the feathers fly. We stayed at it about a half an hour, which was as long as we could stand up; but we had a good start of a hole to show for it. When I got up the steps to our room I looked out at the window and see Tom doing his level best with the lightning-rod, but he couldn’t come it, his hands was so sore. At last he says: “It ain’t no use, it can’t be done. What do you think I should do? Can’t you think of no way?”

“Yes,” I says, “but I think it ain’t by the rules. Come up the steps, and let on it’s a lightning-rod.”

So he done it.

Next day Tom robbed a spoon and a candle-stick, for to make some pens for Jim out of, and six candles; and I wait- ed around the Blacks’ cabins until I was able to rob three tin plates. Tom said it weren’t enough; but I said nobody wouldn’t ever see the plates that Jim throwed out, because they’d fall in the weeds under the window-hole -- then we could carry them back and he could use them over again. So Tom was happy with that. Then he says: “Now, the thing to study out is, how to get the things to Jim.”

“Take 'em in through the hole,” I says, “when we're done.”

He only just looked angry, and said something about nobody ever heard of such a stupid plan, and then he went to studying. By and by he said he had worked out two or three ways, but there weren't no need to choose any of them yet. Said we'd got to tell Jim what was happening first.

That night we went down the lightning-rod a little after ten, and took one of the candles along, and listened under the window-hole, and heard Jim snoring; so we threw it in, and it didn't wake him. Then we got to work with the shovel, and in about two hours and a half the job was done. We worked our way in under Jim's bed and into the shack, and felt around and found the candle and put a light to it, and stood over Jim. He looked strong and healthy. Softly and slowly we got him to wake up. He was so glad to see us he almost cried; and called us honey, and all the nice names he could think of; and was for having us hunt up something to cut the chain off of his leg with right away, and leaving there without losing any time. But Tom he showed him how wrong it would be, and sat down and told him all about our plans, and how we could change them in a minute any time there was any trouble; and not to be the least afraid, because we would see he got away, sure. So Jim he said it was all right, and we sat there and talked over old times for a while, and then Tom asked a lot of questions, and when Jim told him Uncle Silas come in every day or two to pray with him, and Aunt Sally come in to see if he was comfortable and had enough to eat, and both of them was kind as they could be, Tom says: "Now I know how to fix it. We'll send you some things by them."

I said, "Don't do nothing of the kind; it's one of the most donkeyest plans I ever heard." But he never paid no listen to me; went right on. It was his way when he'd got his plans set.

So he told Jim how we'd have to get in the rope-ladder pie and other big things by Nat, the black man that brought the food in, and he must be on the watch, and not be surprised, and not let Nat see him open them; and we would put small things in uncle's coat pockets and he must rob them out; and we would tie things to aunt's apron strings or put them in her apron pocket, if we could; and told him what they would be and what they was for. And told him how to keep a diary on the shirt with his blood, and all that. He told him everything. Jim he couldn't see no good in the most of it, but he said we was white people and knowed better than him; so he was happy, and said he would do it all just as Tom said.

Jim had a lot of tobacco; so we had a right down good friendly time smoking it; then we climbed out through the hole, and so home to bed, with hands that looked like they'd been chewed. Tom was in high spirits. He said it was the best fun he had ever had in his life, and the most smartest; and said if he only could see his way to it we would keep it up all of our lives and leave Jim for our children to get out; for he believed Jim would come to like it better and better the more he got used to it. He said that in that way it could be pulled out to as much as eighty years, and would be the longest time ever. And he said it would make us -- all that had a hand in it -- known around the world.

In the morning we went out to where the firewood was and cut up the candlestick into the right size pieces, and Tom put them and the spoon in his pocket. Then we went to the slave cabins, and while I got Nat looking off, Tom pushed a piece of candlestick into the middle of corn-bread that was in Jim's pan, and we went along with Nat to see how it would work, and it just worked perfectly; when Jim took a bite of that bread it almost broke all his teeth out; and there weren't ever anything could a worked better. Tom said so himself. Jim he never let on but what it was only just a piece of rock or something like that that's always getting into bread, you know; but after that he never would take a bite of nothing but what he pushed his fork into it in three or four places first.

And while we was a-standing there in the poor light, here comes two dogs pushing in from under Jim's bed; and more kept on coming in until there was eleven of them, and there weren't hardly room in there to breathe. Good lord, we didn't lock that lean-to door!

The black man -- Nat -- he only just shouted "Witches" once, and fell over onto the floor down with the dogs, and started to groan like he was dying. Tom pushed the door open and threw out a big piece of Jim's meat, and the dogs went for it, and in two seconds he was out himself and back again and shut the door, and I knowed he'd fixed the other door too. Then he went to work on the servant, talking nice to him, and asking him if he'd been thinking he saw something again. He lifted himself up, and opened and closed his eyes around, and says: "Master Sid, you'll say I's crazy, but if I didn't believe I seen almost a million dogs, or devils, or someone, I wish I would die right here where I stand. I did, most surely. Master Sid, I felt 'em -- I felt 'em, sir; dey was all over me. Dad blame it! I just wish I could get my hands on one of dem witches just once -- only just once -- it's all I'd ask. But mostly I wish dey'd let me alone, I does."

Tom says: "Well, I tell you what I think. What makes them come here just at this runaway slave's breakfast time? Isn't it because they're hungry; that's the reason. You make them a witch pie; that's the thing for you to do."

"But my land, Master Sid, how's I gwyne to make 'em a witch pie? I don't know how to make it. I ain't ever heard of such a thing before."

"Well, then, I'll have to make it myself."

"Will you do it, honey? -- Will you? I'll worship de ground under your foot, I will!"

"All right, I'll do it, seeing it's you, and you've been good to us and showed us the runaway slave. But you got to be mighty careful. When we come around, you turn your back; and then whatever we've put in the pan, don't you let on you seen it at all. And don't you look when Jim takes out of the pan -- something might happen, I don't know what. And above all, don't you handle the witch-things."

Handle ‘em, Master Sid? What is you a-talking about? I wouldn’t lay de weight of my finger on ‘em, not for ten hundred thousand billion dollars, I wouldn’t.”

Chapter 37

So then we went to the backyard, where they throw old shoes, and cloth, and pieces of bottles, and broken tin things, and we scratched around and found an old tin wash-pan, and stopped up the holes as well as we could, to cook the pie in it, and took it down to the basement and robbed enough flour to fill it and started for breakfast.

We had found a few nails that Tom said would be good for a prisoner to scratch his name and sadness on the prison walls with, and dropped one of them in the pocket of Aunt Sally's apron which was hanging on a chair, and t'other we put in Uncle Silas's hat, which was on a cabinet, because we heard the children say their parents was going to the runaway slave's house this morning. Then we went to breakfast, and Tom dropped the spoon in Uncle Silas's coat pocket. Aunt Sally hadn't come yet, so we had to wait a while.

When she come she was hot and red and angry, and couldn't hardly wait for the blessing; and then she went to pouring out coffee with one hand and hitting the closest child's head with a thimble on the other, and says: "I've hunted high and low, and I just don't know what has become of your other shirt."

My heart fell down with my lungs and intestines and things, and a hard piece of corn-bread started down my throat after it and met with a cough on the way, and flew across the table, and took one of the children in the eye and coiled him up like a fishing-worm. He let out a cry the size of an Indian war shout, and Tom he turned kind of blue. It all added up to a serious problem for about fifteen seconds. I would a sold out for half price if there was anyone wanting to buy. But after that we was all right again -- it was the surprise of it that knocked us so cold.

Uncle Silas he says: "It's most strange, I can't understand it. I know perfectly well I took it off, because -- "

"Because you ain't got but one on. Just listen at the man! I know you took it off, and I know it by a better way than your foggy remembering, too, because

it was on the clothes-line yesterday -- I seen it there myself. But it's gone, that's the long and the short of it, and you'll just have to change to a red one until I can get time to make a new one. And it'll be the third I've made in two years. It just keeps a body on the jump to keep you in shirts; and whatever you do with 'em all is more than I can make out. A body'd think you would learn to take care of 'em at your time of life."

"I know it, Sally, and I do try all I can. But I shouldn't have to take all the blame, because, you know, I don't see them or have nothing to do with them apart from when they're on me; and I don't believe I've ever lost one of them off of me."

"Well, you ain't to blame for not losing one off of you, Silas; because I think you'd a done it if you could. And the shirt ain't all that's gone, either. There's a spoon gone; there was ten, and now there's only nine. The goat got the shirt, I think, but the goat never took the spoon, that's for sure."

"Why, what else is gone, Sally?"

"There's six candles gone -- that's what. The rats could a got the candles, and I think they did; I'm surprised they don't walk off with the whole place, the way you're always going to stop their holes and don't do it. If they was smart they'd sleep in your hair, Silas -- you'd never find it out. But you can't blame the spoon on the rats, and that I know."

"Well, Sally, I'm in the wrong, and you have my confession; but I won't let tomorrow go by without stopping up them holes."

"Oh, I wouldn't hurry; next year'll do.

"Matilda Angelina Araminta Phelps!"

Bang! Down comes the thimble, and the child pulls her fingers out of the sugar-bowl without wasting any time doing it.

Just then the black woman steps inside, and says: "Mrs, dey's a sheet gone."

"Dey's a sheet gone!"

“A sheet gone? Well, for the good of the land!”

“I’ll stop up them holes today,” says Uncle Silas, lookng guilty.

“Oh, do shut up! -- Do you think the rats took the sheet? Where’s it gone, Lize?”

“Honest to God I don’t know at all, Miss Sally. She was on de clothes-line yesterday, but she done gone: she ain’t dere no more now.”

“I think the world is coming to an end. I never seen anything so crazy in all my born days. A shirt, and a sheet, and a spoon, and six can -- “

“Mrs,” says a young girl, “dey’s a candle-stick missing.”

“Clear out from here, you bad girl, or I’ll take a pan to you!” Well, she was just running over with anger. I started to look for an opening; my plan was to hide in the trees until the weather cleared. She kept a-shouting right along, running her war against everyone all by herself, with everyone else all shy and quiet; and at last Uncle Silas, looking kind of foolish, fishes up that spoon out of his pocket. She stopped, with her mouth open and her hands up; and as for me, I wished I was in Jerusalem or somewhere. But not long, because she says: “It’s just as I thought. So you had it in your pocket all the time; and like as not you’ve got the other things there, too. How’d it get there?”

“I really don’t know, Sally,” he says, kind of sorry like, “I was a-studying over the reading for Sunday in Acts Seventeen before breakfast, and I think I must a put it in there, not thinking, meaning to put my Bible in, and it must be so, because my Bible ain’t in there; but I’ll go and see; and if the Bible is where I had it, I’ll know I didn’t put it in, and that will show that I put the Bible down and took up the spoon, and -- “

“Oh, for the good of the land! Give a body a rest! Go along now, the whole lot of you; and don’t come near me again until I’ve got back my peace of mind.”

I’d a heard her if she’d a said it to herself, let alone saying it out loud; and I’d a got up and obeyed her if I’d a been dead. As we was passing through the sitting-room the old man he took up his hat, and the nail fell out on the floor, and he just took it up and put it on the shelf, and never said nothing, and went out.

Tom seen him do it, and remembered about the spoon, and says: “It ain’t no good to send things by him no more, he can’t be trusted.” Then he says: “But he done us a good turn with the spoon, anyway, without knowing it, and so we’ll go and do him one without him knowing it -- we’ll stop up his rat-holes.”

There was a good lot of them down in the basement, and it took us a whole hour, but we done the job tight and good. Then we heard someone on the steps, and blowed out our light; and here comes the old man, with a candle in one hand and a lot of things in t’other, looking as lost as year before last. He went a looking around, first to one rat-hole and then another, until he’d been to them all. Then he stood about five minutes, pulling little pieces of wet wax off his candle and thinking. Then he turns off slow and sleepily toward the steps, saying: “Well, for the life of me I can’t remember when I done it. I could show her now that I weren’t to blame for the rats. But never mind -- let it go. I don’t believe it would do any good anyway.”

And so he went on a-talking to himself up the steps, and then we left. He was a mighty nice old man. And always is.

Tom was pretty worried about what to do for a spoon. He said we had to have it; so he took a think. When he had something worked out he told me how we was to do it; then we went and waited around the spoon-basket until we see Aunt Sally coming, and then Tom went to counting the spoons and laying them out to one side, and I put one of them up my sleeve, and Tom says: “Why, Aunt Sally, there ain’t but nine spoons yet.”

She says: “Go along to your play, and don’t worry me. I know better, I counted ‘em myself.”

“Well, I’ve counted them two times now, Aunty, and I can’t make but nine.”

She looked anything but patient, but still she come to count -- anyone would.

“I can’t believe it; there ain’t but nine!” she says. “Why, what in the world -- devil take the things, I’ll count ‘em again.”

So I secretly put back the one I had, and when she got done counting, she says: “Hang the trouble, there’s ten now!” and she looked angry and worried both.

But Tom says: “Why, Aunty, I don’t think there’s ten.”

“You foolish boy, didn’t you see me count ‘em?”

“I know, but -- “

“Well, I’ll count ‘em again.”

So I secretly took one, and they come out nine, same as the other time. Well, she was in a crying way -- just a-shaking all over, she was so angry. But she counted and counted until she got that confused she’d start to count the basket for a spoon at times; and so, three times they come out right, and three times they come out wrong. Then she picked up the basket and threw it across the room and knocked the cat on its head; and she said to clear out and let her have some peace, and if we come around worrying her again between that and dinner she’d skin us. So we had the extra spoon, and dropped it in her apron pocket while she was a-giving us our talking to, and Jim got it okay, along with her nail, before noon. We was very happy with this business, and Tom said it was worth two times the trouble it took, because he said now she couldn’t ever count them spoons two times the same again to

save her life; and she wouldn't believe she'd counted them right if she did. He said that after she'd about counted her head off, for the next three days he judged she'd give it up and promise to kill anyone that wanted her to ever count them any more.

So we put the sheet back on the line that night, and robbed one out of the cabinet; and kept on putting it back and robbing it again for two days until she didn't know how many sheets she had any more, and she didn't care, and weren't a-going to waste her life worrying about it, and wouldn't count them again not to save her life; she would be happier to die first.

So we was all right now, as to the shirt and the sheet and the spoon and the candles, by the help of the goat and the rats and the mixed-up counting; and as to the candle-stick, it weren't important; it would blow over by and by.

But that pie was a job; we had no end of trouble with it. We fixed it up away down in the trees, and cooked it there; and we got it done at last, and very well, too; but not all in one day; and we had to use up three wash-pans full of flour before we got through, and we got burned pretty much all over, in places, and eyes put out with the smoke. We didn't want nothing but a pie covering for the rope ladder, and we couldn't hold it up right, and it would always collapse in. But we thought of the right way at last -- which was to cook the ladder, too, in the pie. So then we stayed with Jim the second night, tearing up the sheet all in little strings and knitting them together, until, long before the sun come up, we had a very nice rope that you could a hanged a person with. We let on it took nine months to make.

And in the morning we took it down to the trees, but it wouldn't go into the pie. Being made of a whole sheet, that way, there was rope enough for forty pies if we'd a wanted them, and enough left over for soup, or anything you choose. We could a had a whole dinner.

But we didn't need it. All we needed was just enough for the pie, and so we throwed most of it away. We didn't cook none of the pies in the wash-pan -- afraid the soft metal we used to stop the holes would melt; but Uncle Silas he had a beautiful warming-pan which he thought a lot of, because it belonged to one of his family a long time in the past. It had a long timber handle that come over from England in one of them early ships and was hiding away up in the roof with a lot of other old pans and things that was worth a lot, not because you could do anything with them, but just because they were so old. We snaked her out, secretly, and took her down there to the trees.

It didn't work on the first pies, because we didn't know how, but she come up smiling on the last one. We took and covered her with pie mix, and set her in the coals, and then filled her up with sheet rope, and put on a roof of pie mix, and shut down the cover, and put hot coals on top, and stood off five foot, with the long handle, cool and comfortable, and in fifteen minutes she turned out a pie that was a good feeling just to look at. But the person that eat it -- if that rope ladder wouldn't make him sick I don't know nothing what I'm talking about; and give him enough stomach pains to last him until next time, too.

Nat didn't look when we put the witch pie in Jim's pan; and we put the three tin plates in the bottom of the pan under the food; and so Jim got everything all right, and as soon as he was by himself he broke into the pie and put the rope ladder inside of his mattress, and scratched some marks on a tin plate and throwed it out of the window-hole.

Chapter 38

Making pens was a mighty difficult job, and so was the saw; and Jim said be believed the writing which the prisoner has to scratch on the wall was going to be the hardest of all. But he had to have it; Tom said so. There weren't no story of a prisoner not scratching words to leave behind, and his coat of arms.

Jim says: "Why, I ain't got no coat; I ain't got nuffin but dis old shirt, and you knows I got to keep de diary on dat."

"Oh, you don't understand, Jim; a coat of arms is different."

"Well," I says, "Jim's right, anyway, when he says he ain't got no coat of arms, because he ain't."

"I knowed that," Tom says, "but you can be sure he'll have one before he goes out of here -- because he's going out right and there ain't going to be no bad marks in his record."

So while me and Jim rubbed away at the pens on two bricks, with Jim a-making his out of the candle-stick and me making mine out of the spoon, Tom set to work to think out the coat of arms. By and by he said he'd come up with so many good ones he didn't hardly know which to take, but there was one which he thought he would choose over the others. He used a lot of words in saying it… words like a fess, that we didn't understand.

"What are you on about, Tom Sawyer," I says, "what does all that mean?"

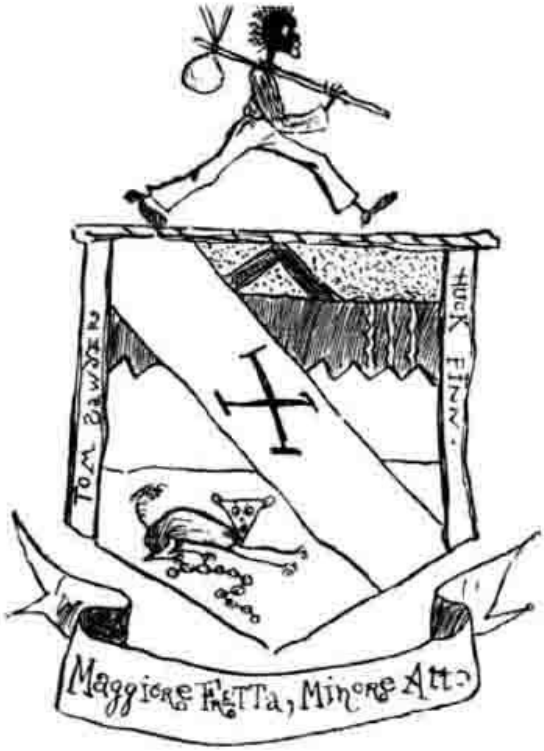
"We ain't got no time to worry over that," he says; "we got to dig in like all get-out."
"Well, anyway," I says, "what's some of it? What's a fess?"

"A fess -- a fess is -- you don't need to know what a fess is. I'll show him how to make it when he gets to it."

"Rats, Tom," I says, "I think you might tell a person. What's a bar sinister?"

"Oh, I don't know. But he's got to have it. All the kings and lords does."

That was just his way. If he didn't feel like giving an answer, he wouldn't do it. You might pump him a week, it wouldn't make no difference.



He'd got all that coat of arms business fixed, so now he started in to plan out a sad line to scratch on the wall -- said Jim got to have one, like they all done.

He made up a lot, and wrote them out on a paper, like so:

Here lies a prisoner's broken heart.

Here a poor prisoner, hated by the world and friends, lived his sad awful life

Here a tired spirit went to its rest, after thirty-seven years in prison.

Here, without a home or friends, died a stranger who was the son of Louis XIV.

Tom's voice was shaking as he was reading them, and he almost broke down. When he got done he couldn't no way make up his mind which one for Jim to scratch onto the wall, they was all so good; but at last he said he would let him scratch them all on. Jim said it would take him a year to scratch such a lot of foolishness onto the logs with a nail, and, besides, he didn't know how to make letters; but Tom said he would draw them out for him, and then he wouldn't have nothing to do but just follow the lines. Then pretty soon he says:

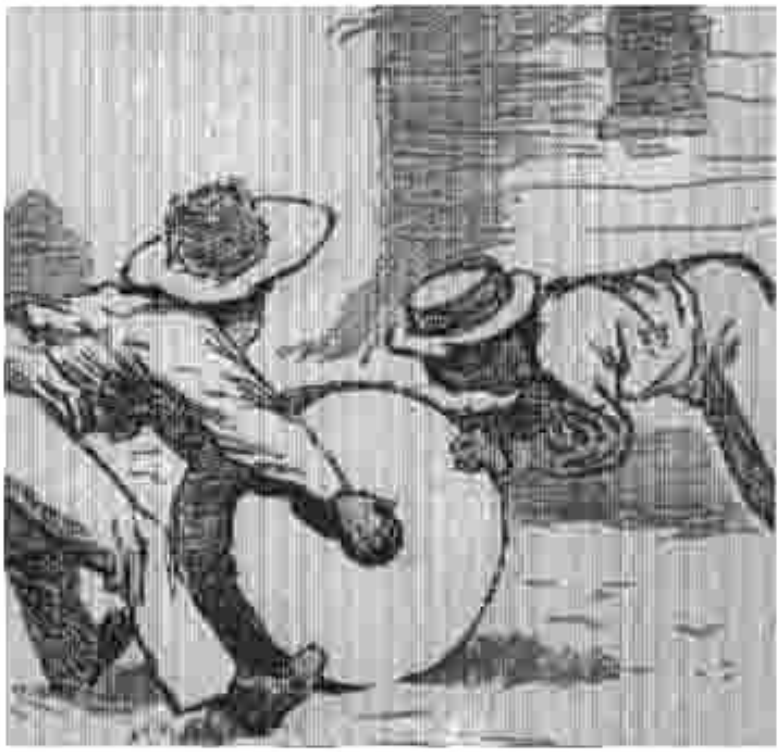
"Come to think, the logs ain't a-going to do; they don't have log walls in a prison: we got to dig the words into a rock. We'll get a rock."

Jim said a rock was worse than logs; he said it would take him such a poison long time to dig them into a rock he wouldn't ever get out. But Tom said he would let me help him do it. Then he took a look to see how me and Jim was

getting along with the pens. It was awful hard, slow work, and didn't give my hands no show to get well of the sores, and we didn't seem to be getting nowhere, hardly; so Tom says: "I know how to fix it. We got to have a rock for the coat of arms and one for the sad writing, and we can kill two birds with that same rock. There's a great big round flat stone that they use to make flour, and we'll borrow it, and dig the lines into it, and make the pens and saw sharp on it, too."

It weren't no little plan; and it weren't no little stone either; but we said we'd try it. It weren't quite midnight yet, so we cleared out for the timber yard, leaving Jim at work.

We got the stone, and started to wheel her home, but it was a most awful job. Do what we could, we couldn't keep her from falling over, and she come mighty close to falling on us every time.



Tom said she was going to get one of us, sure, before we got through. We got her half way; and then we was fully played out, and almost drowning from the heat. We seen it weren't no use; we got to go and get Jim. So he lifted up his bed and pulled the chain off of the bed-leg, and coiled it round and round his neck, and we went out through our hole and down there, and Jim and me took that stone and walked her along like nothing; and Tom was the leader. He could out-lead any boy I ever seen. He knowed how to do everything.

Our hole was pretty big, but it weren't big enough to get the stone through; but Jim he took the shovel and soon made it big enough. Then Tom marked out them things on it with the nail, and set Jim to work on them, with a big piece of metal from things we found in the lean-to, to be used for a hammer on the

nail. Tom told him to work until his candle quit on him, and then he could go to bed, and hide the stone under his mattress and sleep on it. Then we helped him fix his chain back on the bed-leg, and was ready for bed ourselves. But Tom thought of something, and says: “You got any spiders in here, Jim?”

“No, sir, thanks to de good Lord I ain’t, Master Tom.”

“All right, we’ll get you some.”

“But bless you, honey, I don’t want none. I’s afraid of ‘em. I just as soon have rattlesnakes around.”

Tom thought a minute or two, and says:

“What a good plan! And I think it’s been done. It must a been done; it stands to reason. Yes, it’s a very good plan. Where could you keep it?”

“Keep what, Master Tom?”

“Why, a rattlesnake.”

“What you talking about, Master Tom? Why, if dey was a rattlesnake to come in here I’d take and break right out through dat log wall, I would, wid my head.”

“Why, Jim, you wouldn’t be afraid of it after a little. You could make friends with it.”

“Make friends with it?”

“Yes -- easy enough. Every animal is thankful for people being kind and touching them softly, and they wouldn’t think of hurting a person that touches them softly. Any book will tell you that. You try -- that’s all I ask; just try for two or three days. Why, you can get him so in a little while that he’ll love you; and sleep with you; and won’t stay away from you a minute; and will let you coil him around your neck and put his head in your mouth.”

“Please, Master Tom -- don’t talk so! I can’t stand it! He’d let me put his head in my mouth? -- because I want it, is dat it? I think he’d wait a powerful long time before I’d ask him. And more den dat, I don’t want him to sleep wid me.”

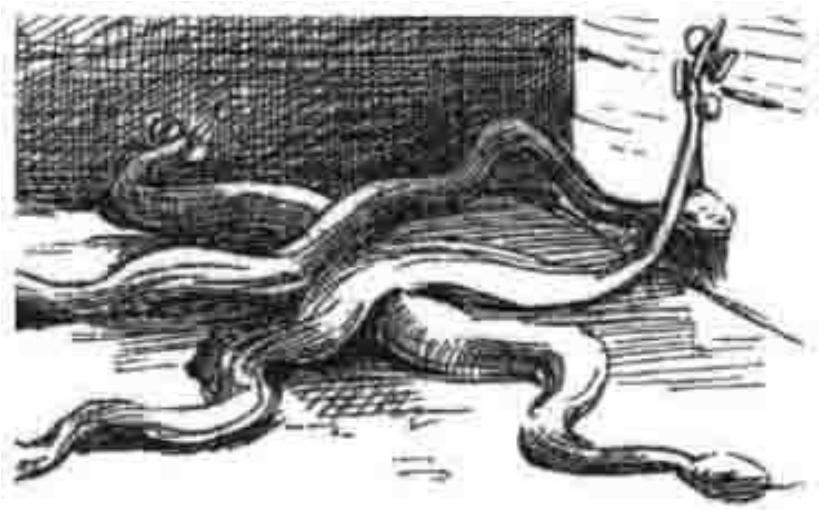
“Jim, don’t act so foolish. A prisoner’s got to have some kind of an animal, and if a rattlesnake ain’t ever been tried, why, there’s more glory to be found in you being the first to ever try it than any other way you could ever think of to save your life.”

“Why, Master Tom, I don’t want no such glory. Snake take and bite Jim’s nose off, den where's de glory? No, sir, I don’t want no such doings.”

“Blame it, can’t you try? I only want you to try -- you needn’t keep it up if it

don’t work.”
“But de trouble all done if de snake up and bite me while I’s a trying him. Master Tom, I’s willing to take on almost anything dat ain’t too foolish, but if you and Huck brings a rattlesnake in here for me to play with, I’s gwyne to leave, dat’s sure.”

“Well, then, let it go, if you’re so strong about it. We can get some garden-snakes, and you can tie some buttons on their tails, and let on they’re rattlesnakes, and I think that’ll have to do.”



“I can stand dem, Master Tom, but I really could get along widout ‘em too, I tell you dat. I never knowed before it was so much worry and trouble to be a prisoner.”

“Well, it always is when it’s done right. You got any rats around here?”

“No, sir, I ain’t seen none.”

“Well, we’ll get you some rats.”

“Why, Master Tom, I don’t want no rats. Dey’s de dad blamedest animals to move around over a body, and bite his feet, when he’s trying to sleep, I ever seen. No, sir, give me garden snakes, if I’s got to have ‘em, but don’t give me no rats; I ain’t got no use for ‘em hardly.”

“But, Jim, you got to have ‘em -- they all do. So don’t make no more arguments about it. Prisoners ain’t ever without rats. There ain’t one time of it. And they teach them, and touch them, and learn them tricks, and they get to be as friendly as flies. But you got to play music to them. You got anything to play music on?”

“I ain’t got nuffin but a comb and paper, and a juice-harp; but I don’t think they’d take no interest in a juice-harp.”

“Yes they would. They don’t care what kind of music it is. All animals like

music -- in a prison they get to where they can't live without it. What they like most is sad music; and you can't get no other kind out of a Jew's harp. It always interests them; they come out to see what's wrong with you. You want to sit on your bed nights before you go to sleep, and early in the mornings, and play your Jew's harp. When you've played about two minutes you'll see all the rats, and snakes, and spiders, and things start to feel worried about you, and come. They'll get all over you, and have a real good time."

"Yes, dey will, I think, Master Tom, but what kind of time is Jim having? Blessed if I can see de point. But I'll do it if I got to. I see it's best to keep de animals happy, and not have no trouble in de house."

Tom waited to think it over, and see if there wasn't nothing else; and pretty soon he says: "Oh, there's one more thing. Could you grow a flower here, do you think?"

"I don't know but maybe I could, Master Tom; but it's pretty dark in here and I don't got no use for no flower, and she'd be a powerful lot of trouble."

"Well, you try it, all the same. Some other prisoners has done it."

"One of dem big cat-tail-looking plants would grow in here, Master Tom, I think, but she wouldn't be worth half de trouble she'd cost."

"Don't you believe it. We'll bring you a little one and you plant it in the corner over there, and grow it. And you want to water it with your tears."

"Why, I got more than enough well water, Master Tom."

"You don't want well water; you want to water it with your tears. It's the way they always do."

"Why, Master Tom, I think I can grow one of them plants two times with well water while another man's just a starting one wid tears."

"You got to do it with tears."

“That ain’t the point. You got to do it with tears.”

“She’ll die on my hands, Master Tom, she surely will; because I don’t hardly ever cry.”

That stopped Tom. But he studied it over, and then said Jim would have to worry along the best he could with an onion. He promised he would go to the slave cabins and drop one, secretly, in Jim’s coffee-pot, in the morning. Jim said he would just as soon have tobacco in his coffee; and he found so much wrong with it, and with the work and trouble of growing the plant, and Jews’s harping the rats, and being friendly with the snakes and spiders and things, on top of all the other work he had to do on pens, and sayings, and diaries, and things, which made it more trouble and worry to be a prisoner than anything he ever did before, that Tom almost give up on him; and said he was just covered with more good openings than a prisoner ever had in the world to make a name for himself, and yet he didn’t know enough to be thankful for them, and they was just about wasted on him. So Jim he was sorry, and said he wouldn’t be like that no more, and then me and Tom went to bed.

Chapter 39

In the morning we went up to the village and bought a wire rat-trap and brought it down, and opened the best rat-hole, and in about an hour we had fifteen of the best in it; and then we took the trap and put it in a safe place under Aunt Sally’s bed. But while we was gone for spiders little Thomas Franklin Benjamin Jefferson Alexander Phelps found it there, and opened it to see if the rats would come out, and they did; and Aunt Sally she come in, and when we got back she was a-standing on top of the bed half crazy, and the rats was doing what they could to keep off the boring times for her.

So she took to us both with a stick. We was as much as two hours catching another fifteen or sixteen for ourselves, thanks to that dirty little child, and they weren't the best, either, because the first lot was the best of the family. I never seen a better lot of rats than that first trap was full of.

We got a wonderful box of mixed spiders, and insects, and frogs, and caterpillars, and one thing or another; and we close to got a wasp nest, but we didn't, because the family was home. We didn't give it right up, but stayed with them as long as we could; because we thought we'd tire them out or they'd tire us out, and they done it. We got some medicine and rubbed on the places where they got us, and was pretty near all right again, but couldn't sit down easily. And so we went for the snakes, and found about twenty garden and house snakes, and put them in a bag, and put it in our room, and by then it was time to eat, and what a good honest day's work it had been.

But there weren't a blessed snake up there when we went back -- we didn't half tie the bag, and it seems they worked out and left. But it wasn't a big problem, because they was still in the house somewhere. So we judged we could get some of them again. There weren't no real problem finding snakes

about that house for a good long while after that. You'd see them hanging from the roof and other places every now and then; and they generally landed in your plate, or down the back of your neck, and most of the time where you didn't want them.

Well, they was beautiful and striped, and there weren't no danger in a million of them; but that never made no difference to Aunt Sally; she hated snakes, be them what they may, and she couldn't stand them no way you could fix it. Every time one of them dropped on her, it didn't make no difference what she was doing, she would just lay it down and run out. I never seen such a woman. And you could hear her shouting to Jericho. You couldn't get her to take a-hold of one of them with a stick even; and if she turned over and found one in bed she would jump out and lift a cry that you would think the house was on fire. She worried the old man so that he said he could almost wish there hadn't ever been no snakes made. After every last snake had been gone clear out of the house for as much as a week Aunt Sally weren't over it yet; when she was sitting thinking about something you could touch her on the back of her neck with a feather and she would jump right out of her socks. It was very strange. But Tom said all women was just so. He said they was made that way for some reason or other.

We got a whipping every time one of our snakes come in her way, and she promised they weren't nothing to what she would do if we ever filled up the place again with them. I didn't mind the whippings, because they didn't come to much; but I was angry about all the trouble we had to get another lot. But we got them, and all the other things; and you never seen a cabin as alive as Jim's was when they'd all come out for music and go to him. Jim didn't like the spiders, and the spiders didn't like Jim; and so they'd go for him, and make it hard for him. He said that between the rats and the snakes and the big stone there weren't hardly no room in bed for him; and when there was, a body couldn't sleep, it was so alive with animals. It was always that way, he said, because they was never all asleep at one time, but took turns, so when the snakes was asleep the rats was on the job, and when the rats turned in the snakes come on watch, so he always had one gang under him, and t'other gang having a circus over him, and if he got up to hunt a new place the spiders would have a go at him as he crossed over. He said if he ever got out this time he wouldn't ever be a prisoner again, not for pay.

Well, by the end of three weeks everything was in pretty good shape. The shirt was sent in early, in a pie, and every time a rat would bite Jim he'd get up and write a little in his diary while the blood was wet; the pens was made, the sayings and so on was all scratched on the stone; the bedleg was sawed in two, and we had eat up the saw-dust, and it give us a most awful stomach-pain. We believed we was all going to die, but didn't. It was the most difficult sawdust to eat I ever see; and Tom said the same.

But as I was saying, we'd got all the work done now, at last; and we was all pretty much tired out, too, but mostly Jim. The old man had written a few times to the farm below New Orleans to come and get their runaway slave, but hadn't got no answer, because there weren't no such farm; so he said he would advertise Jim in the St. Louis and New Orleans papers; and when he said the St. Louis ones it give me the cold shakes, and I seen we hadn't no time to lose.

So Tom said, "Now for the secret letters."

"What's them?" I says.

"Warnings to the people that something is up. Sometimes it's done one way, sometimes another. But there's always someone looking around that gives a warning to the governor of the prison. When Louis XVI was going to get out a servant-girl done it. It's a very good way, and so is the secret letters. We'll use them both. And it's the way for the prisoner's mother to change clothes with him, and she stays in, and he goes out in her clothes. We'll do that, too."

"But look here, Tom, what do we want to warn anyone for that something's up? Let them find it out for themselves -- it's their job."

"Yes, I know; but you can't trust them. It's the way they've acted from the very start -- left us to do everything. They're so trusting and stupid they don't see nothing at all. So if we don't give them word there won't be nobody or nothing to get in our way, and so after all our hard work and trouble this break out'll go off perfectly flat; won't come to nothing -- won't be nothing to it."

"Well, as for me, Tom, that's the way I'd like it."

“Shoot!” he says, and looked angry. So I says: “But I ain’t going to complain. Any way you like is good enough for me. What you going to do about the servant-girl?”

“You’ll be her. You go in, in the middle of the night, and borrow that yellow girl’s dress.”

“Why, Tom, that’ll make trouble next morning; because she probably ain’t got any but that one.”

“I know; but you don’t want it but fifteen minutes, to carry the secret letter and push it under the front door.”

“All right, then, I’ll do it; but I could carry it just as easily in my own clothes.”

“You wouldn’t look like a servant-girl then, would you?”

“No, but there won’t be nobody to see what I look like, anyway.”

“That ain’t got nothing to do with it. The thing for us to do is just to do our job, and not worry about if anyone sees us do it or not. Ain’t you got no conscience at all?”

“All right, I ain’t saying nothing; I’m the servant-girl. Who’s Jim’s mother?”

“I’m his mother. I’ll hook a dress from Aunt Sally.”

“Well, then, you’ll have to stay in the shack when me and Jim leaves.”

“Not much. I’ll fill Jim’s clothes full of dry grass and lay it on his bed to take the place of his mother, and Jim’ll take the black woman’s dress off of me and wear it, and we’ll all leave together.”

So Tom he wrote the secret letter, and I borrowed the yellow dress that night, and put it on, and pushed the letter under the front door, the way Tom told me to.

It said: Warning. Trouble is all around you. Keep a sharp watch. A SECRET FRIEND.

Next night we added a picture, which Tom made in blood, of a head without skin and crossed bones, on the front door; and next night another one of a box for a dead body on the back door. I never seen a family in such a worry over it. They couldn't a been worse scared if the place had been full of ghosts waiting for them behind everything and under the beds and flying through the air. If a door banged, Aunt Sally would jump and say "ow!" if anything fell, she'd jump and say "ow!" if you happened to touch her, when she weren't looking, she done the same; she couldn't face no way and be at peace, because she believed there was something behind her every time -- so she was always a-turning around quickly, and saying "ow," and before she'd got two-thirds around she'd turn back again, and say it again; and she was afraid to go to bed, but afraid to sit up too. So the thing was working very well, Tom said; he said he never seen a thing work better. He said it showed it was done right.
So he said, now for the best part! So the very next morning at the first sign of the sun we got another letter ready, and was thinking about what we should do with it, because we heard them say the night before that they was going to have a servant on watch at both doors all night. Tom he went down the lightning-rod to look around; and the servant at the back door was asleep, and he put it in the back of his neck and come back.

This letter said:

Don't turn on me, I want to be your friend. There is a dangerous gang of killers from over in the Indian lands going to rob your runaway slave tonight, and they have been trying to scare you so as you will stay in the house and not trouble them. I am one of the gang, but have got religion and wish to quit it

and lead an honest life again, and will tell on their evil plans. They will come secretly down from the north, along the fence, right on midnight, with a false key, and go in the slave's shack to get him. I am to be off a piece and blow a tin horn if I see any danger for them; but instead of that I will make a sound like a sheep soon as they get in and not blow at all; then while they are getting his chains loose, you run out and lock them in, and can kill them any time you like. Don't do anything but just the way I am telling you; if you do they will see something is wrong and make all kinds of trouble. I do not wish any reward but to know I have done the right thing.
A SECRET FRIEND.

Chapter 40

We was feeling pretty good after breakfast, and took a lunch and my canoe and went over the river a-fishing.

We had a good time, and took a look at the raft and found her all right, and got home late to dinner, and found them in such a worry they didn't know which end was up, and made us go right to bed the minute we was done eating, and wouldn't tell us what the trouble was, and never let on a word about the new letter. As soon as we was half up the steps and Aunt Sally's back was turned we raced for the food in the basement and got what we needed for a good lunch for the next day and took it up to our room and went to bed. We got up about half-past eleven, and Tom put onAunt Sally's dress that he had robbed and was going to start with the lunch, but says: "Where's

the butter?"
"I took out a piece of it," I says, "on some corn-bread."

"Well, you left it down there, then -- it ain't here."

"We can get along without it," I says.

"We can get along with it, too," he says; "run down to the basement and get it. And then come down the lightning-rod and join me. I'll go and put the dry grass into Jim's clothes to be his mother hiding out in his clothes, and I'll be ready to make a sound like a sheep and run off as soon as you get there."

So out he went, and down to the basement I went. The piece of butter, big as your fist, was where I had left it, so I took up the corn-bread with it on, and blowed out my light, and started up the steps very quietly. I got to the living-room floor all right, but here comes Aunt Sally with a candle, and I put the things in my hat, and put my hat on my head, and the next second she sees me; and she says: "You been down in the basement?"

"Yes ma'am."

"What you been doing down there?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"No ma'am."

"Well, what made you to go down there this time of night?"
"I don't know ma'am."

"You don't know? Don't answer me that way. Tom, I want to know what you been doing down there."

"I ain't been doing nothing, Aunt Sally, Hope to die if I did."
I was thinking she'd let me go now; as a general rule she would; but there was so many strange things going on she was worrying about every little thing that weren't yard-stick straight; so she says, real hard: "You go into that sitting-room and stay there until I come. You been up to something you've no business to, and I promise I'll find out what it is before I'm done with you."

So she went away as I opened the door and walked into the sitting-room. My, but there was a crowd there!

Fifteen farmers, and every one of 'em had a gun. I was most powerful sick, and went and sat down. They was sitting around, some talking in a low voice, and all of them worried, but trying to look like they weren't. I knowed they was, because they was taking off their hats, and putting them on, and scratching their heads, and changing their seats, and playing with their buttons. I weren't easy myself, but I didn't take my hat off, all the same.

I did wish Aunt Sally would come, and get done with me, and whip me, if she wanted to, and let me get away and tell Tom how we'd gone too far with this thing, and what a thundering wasp-nest we'd got ourselves into, so we could stop playing around straight off, and clear out with Jim before these people got tired of waiting for the sheep sound and come for us.

At last she come and started to ask me questions, but I couldn't answer them straight, I didn't know which end of me was up; because these men was in such a hurry that some was wanting to start right now and get those killers, and saying it weren't but a few minutes to midnight; and others was trying to get them to hold on and wait for the sheep sound; and here was Aunty shooting questions at me, and me a-shaking all over and ready to die on the spot I was that scared; and the place getting hotter and hotter, and the butter starting to melt and run down my neck and behind my ears; and pretty soon, when one of them says, "I'm for going and getting in the cabin first, and catching them when they come," I almost dropped; and a line of butter come a-running down the front of my head, and Aunt Sally she sees it, and turns white as a sheet, and says: "Good lord, what is the problem with this child? He's got a brain sickness as sure as you're born, and they're coming out!"

Everybody run to see, and she pulls off my hat, and out comes the bread and what was left of the butter, and she took and hugged me, and says: "What a turn you give me! and how glad and thankful I am it ain't no worse; for luck's against us, and it never rains but it pours, and when I seen that butter I thought we'd lost you, for I knowed by the colour it was just like your brains would be if -- My boy, why didn't you tell me that was what you'd been down there for, I wouldn't a cared. Now clear out to bed, and don't let me see no

more of you until morning!”

I was up to my room in a second, and down the lightning-rod in another, and running through the dark for the lean-to. I couldn’t hardly get my words out, I was so scared; but I told Tom as quickly as I could we must jump for it now, and not a minute to lose -- the house was full of men with guns!

His eyes just come alive; and he says: “No! -- is that so? Ain’t it great! Why, Huck, if we was to do over again, I think I could get two hundred of them to come! If we could put it off until -- “

“Hurry! Hurry!” I says. “Where’s Jim?”

Right at your elbow; if you reach out your arm you can

touch him. He’s dressed, and everything’s ready. Now we’ll get out and give the sheep sign.”

But then we heard men coming to the door, and starting to work with the lock. A man said: “I told you we’d be too soon; they haven’t come -- the door's locked. Here, I’ll lock some of you inside, and you wait for ‘em in the dark and kill ‘em when they come. The others of you move around a piece, and listen to hear ‘em coming.”

So in they come, but couldn’t see us in the dark, and almost stepped on us as we was squeezing under the bed. We got under all right, and out through the hole, quickly but softly -- Jim first, me next, and Tom last, which was the way Tom said to do it. Now we was in the lean-to, and heard steps close by outside. So we moved to the door, and Tom stopped us there and put his eye to the opening, but couldn’t make out nothing, it was so dark; and whispered and said he would listen for the steps to get farther, and when he touched us Jim must go out first, and him last. So he put his ear to the opening and listened, and listened, with the steps a-moving around out there all the time; and at last he touched us, and we went out, and got down low, not breathing, and not making the least noise, and moved quietly toward the fence in a line, and got to it all right, and me and Jim over it; but Tom’s pants caught hard on a sharp piece sticking out of the fence, and then he heard the steps coming, so he pulled loose, which made a noise.

As he dropped in behind us, someone sings out: “Who’s that? Answer, or I’ll shoot!”

We didn’t answer; we just opened up and ran. Then there was a movement, and bang, bang, bang! the bullets were flying around us! We heard them sing out: “Here they are! They’re running for the river! After ‘em, boys; turn loose the dogs!”

So here they come. We could hear them because they was wearing heavy shoes and shouting. We was on the footpath to the timber yard; and when they got close we jumped into the bushes and let them go by, then dropped in behind them. They’d had all the dogs shut up, so they wouldn’t scare off the robbers; but by this time someone had let them out. Here they come, making noise enough for a million; but they was our dogs, so we stopped where we was until they caught up; and when they seen it was us, and no fight to give them, they only just said hello, and ran ahead toward the shouting and running feet. Then we raced along after them until we was nearly to the timber yard, and then went up through the bushes to where my canoe was tied, and jumped in and pulled for our lives toward the middle of the river, but didn’t make no more noise than we was forced to. Then we headed out, easy and comfortable, for the island where my raft was. We could hear them shouting and barking at each other all up and down the side of the river, until we was so far away the sounds got quiet and then died out. When we stepped onto the raft I says: “Now, Jim, you’re a free man again, and I believe you won’t ever be a slave no more.”

“And a mighty good job it was, Huck. It was planned beautiful, and it was done beautiful; and dey ain’t nobody can get up a plan dat’s more mixed-up and wonderful dan what dat one was.”

We was all glad as we could be, but Tom was the most glad of all because he had a bullet in the back of his leg.

When me and Jim heard that, we didn't feel so good as we did before. It was hurting him a lot, and bleeding; so we laid him in the tent and cut up one of the duke's shirts to bandage him, but he says: "Give me the shirt; I can do it myself. Don't stop now; don't play around here, with the adventure going so beautifully; man the oars, and cut her loose! We done it beautifully! -- true we did. I wish we'd a had the job of getting Louis XVI out, there wouldn't a been no 'Son of St. Louis gone up to heaven!' wrote down in his life story; no, sir, we'd a carried him over the border -- that's what we'd a done with him -- and done it easy as nothing, too. Man the oars -- man the oars!"

But me and Jim was talking -- and thinking. And after we'd thought a minute, I says: "Say it, Jim."

So he says: "Well, den, dis is de way it look to me, Huck. If it was Tom dat was being set free, and one of us was to get hurt, would he say, 'Go on and save me, never mind about a doctor for to save dis one?' Is dat like Master Tom Sawyer? Would he say dat? You know he wouldn't! Well, den, is Jim gywne to say it? No, sir -- I don't move a step out of dis place widout a doctor, not if it's forty years!"

I knowed he was white inside, and I knowed he'd say what he said -- so I told Tom I was a-going for a doctor. He disagreed strongly about it, but me and Jim stayed with it and wouldn't move; so he was for going out on his hands and knees and cutting the raft loose himself; but we wouldn't let him. Then he give us a piece of his mind, but it didn't do no good.

So when he sees me getting the canoe ready, he says: "Well, then, if you're going to go, I'll tell you what to do when you get to the village. Shut the door and cover the doctor's eyes tight and fast, and make him promise to be quiet as the dead, and put a bag full of gold in his hand, and then take and lead him all around the back streets and everywhere in the dark, and then bring him here in the canoe, in a round about way through the islands, and look through his pockets and take his chalk away from him, and don't give it back to him until you get him back to the village, or else he will chalk this raft so he can find it again. It's the way they all do."

So I said I would, and left, and Jim was to hide in the woods when he seen the doctor coming until he was gone again.

Chapter 41

The doctor was a very nice, kind-looking man. I told him me and my brother was over on the Island hunting yesterday, and camped on a piece of a raft we found, and about midnight he must a kicked his gun in his dreams, for it went off and hit him in the leg, and we wanted him to go over there and fix it and not say nothing about it, and not let anybody know, because we wanted to come home this evening and surprise our parents.

“Who are your parents?” he says.

“The Phelpses.”

“Oh,” he says.

After a minute, he says: “How'd you say the shooting happened?”

“He had a dream,” I says, “and it put a bullet in his leg.”

“Strange dream,” he says.

So he got his lantern and his saddle-bags, and we started.

But when he saw the canoe he didn’t like the look of her -- said she was big enough for one, but didn’t look safe for two.

I says: “Oh, you needn’t be afraid, sir, she carried the three of us easy enough yesterday.”

“What three?”

“Why, me and Sid, and -- and the guns; that’s what I mean.”

“Oh,” he says. But he put his foot on the side of it and gave it a push. He shook his head, and said he’d look around for a bigger one. But they was all locked and chained; so he took my canoe, and said for me to wait until he come back, or I could go down home and get them ready for the surprise if I wanted. But I said I didn’t; so I told him just how to find the raft, and then he started.

Pretty soon I says to myself, what if he can’t fix that leg in three shakes of a lamb's tail, as the saying is? What if it takes three or four days? What're we going to do? We can’t wait until he lets the cat out of the bag. No, sir. I know what I’ll do. I’ll wait, and when he comes back if he says he’s got to go out there again I’ll get down there, too, if I have to swim; and we’ll take and tie him up, and keep him on the raft, and head down the river; and when Tom’s done with him we’ll give him what it’s worth, or all we got, and then let him get back to land.

So then I found a good hiding place and got some sleep. Next I knew the sun was away up over my head! I raced out of my hiding place and went for the doctor’s house, but they said he’d gone away in the night some time, and weren’t back yet. Well, thinks I, that looks powerful bad for Tom, and I’ll dig out for the island right off. So away I ran, and turned the corner, and nearly banged my head into Uncle Silas’s stomach! He says: “Why, Tom! Where you been all this time, you little rabbit?”

“I ain’t been nowhere,” I says, “only just hunting for the runaway slave -- me and Sid.”

“Why, where ever did you go?” he says. “Your aunt’s been mighty worried.”

“She needn’t,” I says, “because we was all right. We followed the men and the dogs, but they was too fast for us, and we lost them; but we heard them on the water, so we got a canoe and took out after them and crossed over, but couldn’t find nothing; we was too tired to make the crossing a second time, so we tied up the canoe and went to sleep, and never waked up until an hour ago; then we come over to hear the news. Sid’s down the road to see what he can hear, and I’m a-looking for something to eat, and then we’re going home.”

So then we went down the street to get “Sid”; but as I knew it would be, he weren’t there; so we waited a little longer, but Sid didn’t come; so the old man said, come along, let Sid foot it home, when he's finished playing around -- but we would ride. I couldn’t get him to let me stay and wait for Sid; he said there weren’t no use in it, and I must come along, and let Aunt Sally see we was all right.

When we got home Aunt Sally was that glad to see me she laughed and cried both, and hugged me, and give me one of them hits of hers that don’t mean anything, and said she’d serve Sid the same when he come.

The place was full of farmers and farmers’ wives, come to dinner; and so much talk a body never heard. Old Mrs. Hotchkiss was the worst; her tongue was a-going all the time. She says: “Well, Sister Phelps, I’ve gone over that shack and I believe that slave was crazy. I says to Sister Damrell -- didn’t I, Sister Damrell? -- I says he’s crazy -- them’s the very words I said. You all heard me: he’s crazy, I says, everything shows it. Look at that big old stone, says I; want to tell me’that anyone that’s in his right mind is a going to scratch

all them crazy things onto a stone, says I? Here such and such a person broke his heart; and here so and so went along for thirty-seven years, and all that son of Louis somebody, and such eternal foolishness. He's real crazy, says I; it's what I said in the first place, it's what I says in the middle, and it's what I'll say last and for all time -- the man's crazy -- crazy as Nebuchadnezer, says I."

"And look at that there ladder made out of clothes, Sister Hotchkiss," says old Mrs. Damrell. "What in the name of all that's good could he ever want of -- "

"The very words I was a-saying no longer ago than this minute to Sister Utterback; she'll tell you so herself. Look at that there cloth ladder, says she; and says I, Yes, look at it, says I -- what could he a-wanted of it, says I. Sister Hotchkiss, says she -- "

"But how in the world did they ever get that stone in there, anyway? And who made that there hole? and who -- "

"My very words, Brother Penrod! I was a-sayin' -- pass that there cup of sugar, won't you? -- I was a-saying to Sister Dunlap, just this minute, how did they get that stone in there, says I. Without help, mind you -- without help! There's where it is. Don't tell me, says I; there was help, and there was a lot of help, too, says I; there's been at least ten or twelve a-helping that slave, and I'd skin every last slave on this place but I'd find out who done it, says I; and on top of that -- "

"Ten or twelve says you? -- forty couldn't a done everything that's been done. Look at them table-knife saws and things, how carefully they've been made; look at that bed leg sawed off with 'em, a week's work for six men; look at that man made out of dry grass on the bed; and look at -- "

"You may well say it, Brother Hightower! It's just as I was a- saying to Brother Phelps, his own self. Says he, what do you think of it, Sister Hotchkiss, says he? Think of what, Brother Phelps? says I. Think of that bed leg sawed off that a way, says he? Think of it, says I? I can tell you it never sawed itself off, says I -- someone sawed it, says I; that's my thinking, take it or leave it, it may

not be, says I, but such as it is, it's my think- ing, says I, and if anyone can start a better one, let him do it, says I, that's all. I says to Sister Dunlap, -- "

"Why, dog my cats, they must a been a house full of blacks in there every night for four weeks to a done all that work, Sister Phelps. Look at that shirt -- every last inch of it covered over with secret African writing done with blood! Must a been a raft of 'em at it right along, all the time, almost. Why, I'd give two dollars to have it read to me; and as for the blacks that wrote it, I think I'd take and whip 'em until -- "

"People to help him, Brother Marples? Well, I say you'd think so if you'd a been in this house for a while back. Why, they've robbed everything they could put their hands on -- and we a-watching all the time, mind you. They robbed that shirt right off of the line! and as for that sheet they made the rope ladder out of, there ain't no telling how many times they didn't rob that; and flour, and candles, and candle-sticks, and spoons, and the old warming-pan, and most a thousand things that I can think of now, and my new dress; and me and Silas and my Sid and Tom on the watch day and night, as I was a-telling you, and not a one of us could catch a look or a sound of them; and here at the last minute, look and see, they come right in under our noses and tricked us, and not only tricked us but tricked the Indian country robbers too, and got away with that slave safe and sound, and that with sixteen men and twenty-two dogs right on their very heels at that very time! I tell you, it just bangs anything I ever heard of. Why, spirits couldn't a done it better and been no smarter. And I think they must a been spirits -- because, you know our dogs, and there ain't no better; well, them dogs never even got the smell of 'em once! You tell me how that could be, if you can -- any of you!"

"Well, it does go -- "

"Laws alive, I never -- "

"So help me, I wouldn't a been -- "

"House-robbers as well as -- "

"For the love of Pete, I'd a been afraid to live in such a -- "

"Afraid to live! -- why, I was that scared I could hardly go to bed, or get up, or lie down, or sit down, Sister Ridgeway. Why, they'd rob the very -- why, just think what kind of a worry I was in by the time midnight come last night. I hope to die if I weren't afraid they'd rob some of the family! I was just to that point I didn't have no ability to think no more. It looks foolish enough now, in the day; but I says to myself, there's my two poor boys asleep, way up in that room by themselves, and I tell the truth I was that worried that I went up there and locked 'em in! I did. And anyone would. Because, you know, when you get scared that way, and it keeps running on, and getting worse and worse all the time, and your mind gets confused, you get to doing all kinds of wild things, and by and by you think to yourself, what if I was a boy, and was away up there, and the door ain't locked, and you -- "

She stopped, looking kind of confused, and then she turned her head around slow, and when her eye landed on me -- I got up and took a walk.

Says I to myself, I can tell it better how we come to not be in that room this morning if I go out to one side and study over it a little. So I done it. But I couldn't go too far, or she'd a sent for me. And when it was late in the day the people all went, and then I come in and told her the noise and shooting waked up me and "Sid," and the door was locked, and we wanted to see the fun, so we went down the lightning-rod, and both of us got hurt a little, and we didn't never want to try that no more. And then I went on and told her all what I told Uncle Silas before; and then she said she'd forgive us, and maybe it was right enough any- way, and about what boys do, for all boys was a rough lot as far as she could see; and so, as long as no hurt had come of it, she judged she better put in her time being thankful we was alive and well and she had us still, instead of worrying over what was past and done. So then she kissed me, and rubbed my head in a nice way, and dropped into a kind of a brown study; and pretty soon jumps up, and says: "Why, lord have mercy, it's almost night, and Sid not come yet! What has become of that boy?"

I see the opening; so I jumps up and says: "I'll run right up to town and get him."

"No you won't," she says. "You'll stay right where you are; one's enough to be lost at a time. If he ain't here to dinner, your uncle will go."

Well, he weren't there to dinner; so after dinner uncle went.

He come back about ten a little worried; hadn't run across word of Tom. Aunt Sally was a lot worried; but Uncle Silas he said there weren't no reason to be -- boys will be boys, he said, and you'll see this one turn up in the morning all safe and right. So she had to go with that. But she said she'd sit up for him a while anyway, and keep a light burning so he could see it.

And then when I went up to bed she come up with me and brought her candle, and mothered me so good I felt mean, and like I couldn't look her in the face; and she sat down on the bed and talked with me a long time, and said what a good boy Sid was, and didn't seem to want to ever stop talking about him; and kept asking me every now and then if I thought he could a got lost, or hurt, or maybe drowned, and might be lying at this minute somewhere in pain or dead, and she not being by him to help him, and so the tears would start falling quietly, and I would tell her that Sid was all right, and would be home in the morning, for sure; and she would squeeze my hand, or maybe kiss me, and tell me to say it again, and keep on saying it, because it done her good, and she was in so much trouble. And when she was going away she looked down in my eyes so serious and kind, and says: "The door ain't going to be locked, Tom, and there's the window and the rod; but you'll be good, won't you? And you won't go? For me?"

Lord knows I wanted to go bad enough to see about Tom, and was planning to go; but after that I wouldn't a went, not for countries.

But she was on my mind and Tom was on my mind, so I didn't sleep well. And two times I went down the rod away in the night, and around to the front, and seen her sitting there by her candle in the window with her eyes toward the road and the tears in them; and I wished I could do something for her, but I couldn't, only to promise myself that I wouldn't never do nothing to make her sad any more. And the third time I waked up with the sun, and went down,

and she was there yet, and her candle was almost out, and her old grey head was resting on her hand, and she was asleep.

Chapter 42

The old man was up to town again before breakfast, but couldn't get no word of Tom; and both of them sat at the table thinking, and not saying nothing, and looking sad, and their coffee getting cold, and not eating anything. And by and by the old man says: "Did I give you the letter?"

"What letter?"

"The one I got yesterday when I got the mail."

"No, you didn't give me no letter."

"Sorry."

So he fished in his pockets, and then went off somewhere where he had put it down, and brought it, and give it to her. She says: "Why, it's from St. Petersburg -- it's from my sister." I believed another walk would do me good; but I couldn't move. Then, before she could break it open she dropped it and run -- for she seen something. And so did I. It was Tom Sawyer on a stretcher; and that old doctor; and Jim, in her dress, with his hands tied behind him; and a lot of people. I put the letter behind the first thing that come to hand, and hurried out. She threw herself at Tom, crying, and says:

"Oh, he's dead, he's dead, I know he's dead!"

And Tom he turned his head a little, and said something or other, which showed he weren't in his right mind; then she threw up her hands, and says: "He's alive, thank God! And that's enough!" and she took a kiss of him, and flew for the house to get the bed ready, and giving shouts right and left to the servants and everybody else, as fast as her tongue could go, every jump of the way.

I followed the men to see what they was going to do with Jim; and the old doctor and Uncle Silas followed after Tom into the house. The men was very angry, and some of them wanted to hang Jim to teach all the other slaves around there, so they wouldn't be trying to run away like Jim done, and making such a raft of trouble, and keeping a whole family scared almost to death for days and nights. But the others said, don't do it, it wouldn't answer at all; he ain't our slave, and his owner would turn up and make us pay for him, sure. So that cooled them down a little, because the people that's always the most enthusiastic about hanging a slave that ain't done just right is always the very ones that ain't the most enthusiastic to pay for him when they've got their fun out of him.

But they still shouted at Jim a lot, and give him a hit or two up side the head once in a while, but Jim never said nothing, and he never let on to know me, and they took him to the same shack, and put his own clothes on him, and chained him again, and not to no bed leg this time, but to a big piece of metal joined to the bottom log, and chained his hands too, and both legs, and said he weren't to have nothing but bread and water to eat after this until his owner come, or until he was sold because the owner didn't come in a set length of time; and they filled up our hole, and said two farmers with guns must stand watch around about the shack every night, and a mean dog tied to the door in the day-time; and about this time they was through with the job and was moving off with kind of general goodbye bad words, when the old doctor comes and takes a look, and says: "Don't be no rougher on him than you're forced to, because he ain't a bad slave. When I got to where I found the boy I seen I couldn't cut the bullet out without some help, and he weren't in no way for me to leave to go and get help; and he got a little worse and a little worse, and after a long time he went out of his head, and wouldn't let me come near him any more, and said if I chalked his raft he'd kill me, and no end of wild foolishness like that, and I see I couldn't do anything at all with him; so I says,

I got to have help; and the minute I says it out come this black man from somewhere and says he'll help. He done it, too, and done it well. I judged he must be a runaway slave, and there I was! I had to stick right there the whole day and night. It was a problem, I tell you! I had two other sick people I needed to see, but I couldn't, because the slave might get away, and then I'd be to blame; and yet never a boat come close enough for me to call out to. So there I had to stay until the sun was up this morning; but I never seen a black man that was a better or more faithful nurse, and yet he was throwing away his freedom to do it, and was all tired out, too. I liked the man for that; I tell you, men, a black like that is worth a thousand dollars -- and worth some kindness, too. I had everything I needed, and the boy was doing as well there as he would a done at home -- better, maybe, because it was so quiet; but there I was, with both of 'em on my hands, and there I had to stick until about sun-up this morning when some men in a boat come by, and as good luck would have it the slave was sitting by the mattress with his head on his knees sound asleep; so I pointed to him, and they come up on him quietly and took hold of him and tied him before he knowed what he was about, and we never had no trouble. And the boy being only half asleep, we moved the oars quietly in the boat and pulled the raft over very nice and quiet, and the black man never made the least sound from the start. He ain't no bad black, friends; that's what I think of him."

Somebody says: "It sounds very good, doctor, I must say." Then the others went a little softer, too, and I was mighty thankful to that old doctor for doing Jim that good turn. When I first seen him I thought he had a good heart in him and was a good man. They all agreed that Jim had acted very well, and it was right to do something to reward him. So every one of them promised right out that they wouldn't say no more bad words to him.

Then they come out and locked him up. I hoped they was going to say he could have one or two of the chains took off, because they was awful heavy, or could have meat and greens with his bread and water; but they didn't think of it, and I thought it weren't best for me to mix in, but I judged I'd get the doctor's story to Aunt Sally in one way or another as soon as I'd got through the waves that was lying just ahead of me -- things like telling why I didn't remember to say that 'Sid' had been hit in the leg with a bullet when I was telling how him and me put in that awful night going around hunting the runaway slave.

But I had time. Aunt Sally she stayed in the sick-room all day and all night, and every time I seen Uncle Silas going around looking sad I stayed away from him.

Next morning I heard Tom was a lot better, and they said Aunt Sally was gone to get a rest. So I goes to the sick-room, and if I found him awake I thought we could put up a story that would wash with Aunt Sally. But he was sleeping, and sleeping nicely, too; and white, not fire-faced the way he was when he come. So I sat down and waited for him to wake. In about half an hour Aunt Sally comes in, and there I was, up a tree again! She made a movement for me to be still, and she sat down by me, and started to whisper, and said we

could all be happy now, because all the signs were good, and he'd been sleeping like that for ever so long, and looking better and more at peace all the time, and ten to one he'd wake up in his right mind.

So we sat there watching, and by and by he moves a little, and opens his eyes very relaxed, and takes a look, and says: "Hello! -- why, I'm at home! How's that? Where's the raft?"

"It's all right," I says.

"And Jim?"

"The same," I says, but couldn't say it with much confidence.

He never saw that, but says: "Good! Wonderful! Now we're all right and safe! Did you tell Aunty?"

I was going to say yes; but she cut in and says: "About what, Sid?"

"Why, about the way the whole thing was done."

"What whole thing?"

"Why, the whole thing. There ain't but one; how we set the runaway slave free -- me and Tom."
"
Good land! Set the runaway -- What is the child talking about! My, my, out of his head again!"

"No, I ain't out of my head; I know all what I'm talking about. We set him free -- me and Tom. We planned it, and we done it. And we done it well, too." He'd started, and she never pulled him up, just sat and looked with her eyes wide open, and let him go on talking, and I seen it weren't no use for me to put in.

"Why, Aunty, it cost us a power of work -- weeks of it -- hours and hours, every night, while you was all asleep. We had to take candles, and the sheet, and the shirt, and your dress, and spoons, and tin plates, and table-knives, and the warming-pan, and the stone, and flour, and just no end of things, and you can't think what work it was to make the saws, and pens, and writings, and one thing or another. You can't think half the fun it was too. We had to make up the pictures to put under the door, and secret letters from the robbers, and get up and down the lightning-rod, and dig the hole under the shack, and make the rope ladder and send it in cooked up in a pie, and send in spoons and things to work with in your apron pocket -- "

"Mercy!"

" -- and fill up the shack with rats and snakes and so on, for company for Jim; and then you kept Tom here so long with the butter in his hat that you come near destroying the whole business, because the men come before we was

out of the shack, and we had to hurry, and they heard us and started shooting, and I got my bullet, and we jumped out of the footpath and let them go by, and when the dogs come they weren't interested in us, but went for the most noise, and we got our canoe, and made for the raft, and was all safe, and Jim was a free man, and we done it all by ourselves, and wasn't it great, Aunty!"

"Well, I never heard the likes of it in all my born days! So it was you, you little devils, that's been making all this trouble, and turned everybody's brains clean inside out and scared us all almost to death. I've as good a reason as ever I had in my life to take it out of you this very minute. To think, here I've been, night after night -- you just get well once, you young fox, and I'll whip the Old Harry out of both of you!"

But Tom, he was so proud and happy, he just couldn't hold in, and his tongue just went at it -- she a-cutting in, and shooting fire all along, and both of them talking away at once, like a cat party; and she says: "Well, you get all the fun you can out of it now, for if I catch you talking with him again -- "

"Talking with who?" Tom says, dropping his smile and looking surprised.

With who? Why, the runaway slave. Who'd you think?"

Tom looks at me very serious, and says: "Tom, didn't you just tell me he was all right? Hasn't he got away?"

"Him?" says Aunt Sally. "The runaway slave? You can be sure he hasn't. They've got him back, safe and whole, and he's in that shack again, on bread and water, and covered with chains, until his owner comes or he's sold!"

Tom sat square up in bed, with his eyes hot, and the holes in his nose

opening and shutting like the openings on a fish, and sings out to me: “They ain’t no right to shut him up! Go! -- and don’t you lose a minute. Turn him loose! He ain’t no slave; he’s as free as any animal that walks this earth!”

“What does the child mean?”

“I mean every word I say, Aunt Sally, and if someone don’t go, I’ll go. I’ve knowed him all his life, and so has Tom, there. Old Miss Watson died two months ago, and she was feeling guilty that she ever was going to sell him down the river, and said so; she set him free in her will.”

“Then what on earth did you want to set him free for, seeing he was already free?”

“Well, that is a question, I must say; and just like a woman! Why, I wanted the adventure of it; and I’d a walked neck-deep in blood to -- Why, I never -- AUNT POLLY!”

If Tom's Aunt Polly weren’t standing right there, just inside the door, looking as sweet and happy as an angel half full of pie, I wish I may never!

Aunt Sally jumped for her, and almost hugged the head off of her, and cried over her, and I found a good enough place for me under the bed, for it was getting pretty hot for us, it seemed to me. And I looked out, and in a little while Tom’s Aunt Polly shook herself loose and stood there looking across at Tom over her glasses -- kind of chewing him up, you know. And then she says: “Yes, you should turn your head away -- I would, too, if I was you, Tom Sawyer.”

“Oh, my!” says Aunt Sally; “is he changed so? Why, that ain’t Tom, it’s Sid; Tom’s -- Tom’s -- why, where is Tom? He was here a minute ago.”

“You mean where’s Huck Finn -- that’s what you mean! I think I ain’t brought up such a devil as my Tom all these years not to know him when I see him. That would be a pretty big mix-up. Come out from under that bed, Huck Finn.”

So I done it. But not feeling very brave.

Aunt Sally she was one of the mixed-upest-looking persons I ever seen -- all but one, and that was Uncle Silas, when he come in and they told it all to him. It kind of made him drunk, as you may say, and he didn’t know nothing at all for the whole day, and preached things that night that the oldest man in the world couldn’t a understood. So Tom’s Aunt Polly, she told all about who I was, and what; and I had to up and tell how I was in such a tight place that when Mrs. Phelps took me for Tom Sawyer -- she cut in and says, “Oh, go on and call me Aunt Sally, I’m used to it now, and it ain’t no need to change” -- that when Aunt Sally took me for Tom Sawyer I had to stand it -- there weren’t no other way, and I knowed he wouldn’t mind, because it would be nuts for him, and he’d make an adventure out of it, and be perfectly happy (and so it turned out,) and he let on to be Sid, and made things as soft as he could for

me.

And his Aunt Polly she said Tom was right about old Miss Watson setting Jim free in her will; and so, sure enough, Tom Sawyer had gone and took all that trouble and work to set a free black man free! I couldn't ever understood before, until that minute and that talk, how he could help a body set a black man free with his bringing-up, but now I knew.

Aunt Polly she said when Aunt Sally wrote to her that Tom and Sid had come safely, she says to herself: "Look at that, now! I should have known it, letting him go off that way without anyone to watch him. So now I got to go and travel all the way down the river, eleven hundred miles, and find out what that boy is up to this time, as long as I couldn't seem to get any answer out of you about it."

"Why, I never heard nothing from you," says Aunt Sally.

"Well, that's strange! Because I wrote you two times to ask what you could mean by Sid being here."

"Well, I never got 'em, Polly."

Aunt Polly she turns around slow and serious, and says: "You, Tom!"

"Well -- what?" he says, kind of innocent like.

"Don't you what me, you rude thing -- hand out them letters."

"What letters?"

"Them letters. Be tied, if I have to take a-hold of you I'll -- "
"They're in the suitcase. And they're just the same as they was when I got 'em

out of the post office in town. I ain't looked into them, I ain't touched them. But I knowed they'd make trouble, and I thought if you weren't in no hurry, I'd -- "

"Well, you do need skinning, there's truth in that. And I wrote another one to tell you I was coming; and I should think he got -- "

"No, it come in yesterday; I ain't read it yet, but it's all right, I've got that one."

I wanted to lay two dollars to say she hadn't, but I thought maybe it was just as safe not to. So I never said nothing.

Chapter 43

The first time I caught Tom away from the others I asked him what his plan had been if it had all worked out right, and if we had been able to set a black man free that was already free before? And he said, what he had planned in his head from the start, if we got Jim out all safe, was for us to run him down the river on the raft, and have adventures clear to the mouth of the river, and then tell him about his being free, and take him back up home on a river boat, in the best way, and pay him for his lost time, and write word ahead and get out all the slaves around, and have them dance him into town with a torch-light parade and lots of musical instruments, and then he would be known all over, and so would we. But I thought it worked out just as well the way it was.

We had Jim out of the chains in no time, and when Aunt Polly and Uncle Silas and Aunt Sally found out how well he helped the doctor nurse Tom, they said a lot of nice things over him, and fixed him up nicely, and give him all he wanted to eat, and a good time, and nothing to do. And we had him up to the sick-room, and had a high talk; and Tom give Jim forty dollars for being prisoner for us so patiently, and doing it up so good, and Jim was pleased almost to death, and broke out, and says:

“Dere, now, Huck, what I tell you? -- what I tell you up dere on Jackson island? I told you I got hair on my chest, and what’s de sign of it; and I told you I been rich once, and gwyne to be rich again and it’s come true; and here she is! Dere, now! don’t talk to me -- signs is signs, mind I told you; and I knowed just as well that I was gwyne to be rich again as I’s a-standing here dis minute!”

And then Tom he talked along and talked along, and says, let’s all three get out of here secretly one of these nights and get the right clothes, and go for great adventures with the Indians, over in their part of the country, for a week or two; and I says, all right, but I ain’t got no money to buy the clothes, and I think I couldn’t get none from home, because pap’s probably been back before now, and got it all away from Judge Thatcher and drunk it up.

“No, he ain’t,” Tom says; “it’s all there yet -- six thousand dollars and more; and your pap ain’t ever been back since. Hadn’t when I come away, at least.”

Jim says, kind of serious: “He ain’t a-coming back no more, Huck.”

I says: “Why, Jim?”

“Never you mind why, Huck -- but he ain’t coming back no more.”

But I kept at him; so at last he says: “Don’t you remember de house dat was going down de river, and dey was a man in dere, covered up, and I went in and uncovered him and didn’t let you come in? Well, den, you can get your money when you wants it, because dat was him -- your pap.”

***

Tom’s almost well now, and he has his bullet around his neck on a cover for a watch, and is always seeing what time it is. So there ain’t nothing more to write about, and I am dirty well glad of it too, because if I’d a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn’t a started it, and ain’t a-going to no more. But I think I got to head out for the Indian country ahead of the others, because Aunt Sally says she’s going to make me part of her family and teach me, and I can’t stand it. I been there before.


The Mississippi River
The Missouri River
IOWA
OHIO
Hannibal
ILLINOIS
Cincinnati
INDIANA
KANSAS
St Louis
Louisville
MISSOURI
KENTUCKY
Cairo
TENNESSEE
OKLAHOMA
ARKANSAS
Memphis
The Ohio River
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
LOUISIANA
TEXAS
New Orleans
Gulf of Mexico