***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

***Chapter 14:***

***Translation:***

After we woke up, we looked through the loot the gang had stolen from the wreck. We found boots, blankets, clothes, books, a spyglass, three boxes of cigars, and all sorts of other things. Neither of us had ever in our lives been this rich before. The cigars were excellent. We spent the entire afternoon talking in the woods. I read the books, and we had a great time. I told Jim everything that had happened in the wreck and at the ferry. I explained that these were adventures, but he said he didn’t want to have any more adventures. He said that he’d nearly died when I went in the cabin and when he crawled back to the raft and found it gone. He figured he was screwed either way: If no one was around to save him he’d drown, but if someone did save him then they’d turn him in to collect the reward. Then Miss Watson would definitely sell him to someone in the South. Well, he was right, as usual. That’s pretty much what would have happened. He was pretty smart for a n-----. I read to Jim quite a lot about kings and dukes and earls and all. I read about how they dressed flashy, put on airs, and called each other names like your majesty, your grace, your lordship, instead of mister. Jim was so interested that his eyes bugged out. He said: “I didn’t know there were so many of them. I’ve hardly heard of any royalty, except old [King Solomon](javascript:void(0);). That is, unless you count the kings that are in a pack of cards. How much money does a king make?” “Make?” I said. “Why, they can make a thousand dollars a month if they want. They can have all the money they want since everything belongs to them.” “Isn’t that something? And what do they have to do to get that money, Huck?” “What are you talking about?! THEY don’t do anything! They just sit around.”   
“No way! Really?” “Of course. They just sit around, except maybe when there’s a war. Then they go to war. But usually they just sit around being lazy. Or they go hawking and sp…. Sh! Did you hear a noise?” We left our hiding spot and looked around, but the noise turned out to be the flutter of the paddles on a distant steamboat that just coming around the point. So we went back. “Yes,” I said. “And other times, when things get slow and boring, they mess around with parliament. And if the people don’t do exactly what he says, he just whacks off their heads. But usually they just hang out in the harem.” “Hang out where?” “The harem.” “What’s the harem?” “That’s the place where the king keeps his wives. Don’t you know about harems? Solomon had one with about a million wives.” “Yeah, that’s true. I’d completely forgotten about that. A harem is a boarding house, I guess. The nursery is probably pretty noisy. And I bet the wives fight all the time, making it even noisier. And still they say Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived. I don’t believe it. Why would a wise man want to live in the midst of all that craziness? No, he probably wouldn’t. A wise man would build himself a boiler factory where he could go when he wanted to rest.” “Well, whatever. He WAS the wisest man, since that’s what the widow told me so herself.” “He wasn’t a wise man. I don’t care what the widow says. He had the strangest ways of doing things that I’ve ever heard of. You know about that child that he was going to chop in two?” “Yes, the widow told me about that.” “Well there you go! Wasn’t that the craziest thing in the whole world? Just think about it a minute. Let’s say that stump over there was one of the women, and that other one was you. I’m Solomon, and this dollar bill is the child. Both you and the other woman say it’s yours. What do I do? Do I ask all the neighbors to find out which one of you the bill belongs to and then give it safe and sound to the right one? That’s what any person with common sense would do. But, no. Instead, I’d whack the bill in two and give one half to you and one half to the other woman. That’s what Solomon was going to do with the child. Now I ask you: What’s the use of half a dollar bill? You can’t buy anything with it. And what’s the use of half a child? I wouldn’t care for a million of them.” “But, man, Jim. You missed the whole point—missed it by a thousand miles.” “Who? Me? Get outta here. Don’t talk to me about your points. I imagine I know common sense when I see it, and there isn’t any sense in that. The women’s dispute wasn’t about half a child, it was about a whole child. And any man who thinks he can settle a dispute about a whole child by giving a woman half a child wouldn’t be smart enough to know to come inside when it rains. Don’t talk to man any more about Solomon, Huck. I know enough already.” “But I’m telling you you’re not getting the point.” “Damn the point! I know what I know. Besides, the real point is even deeper than that. It all goes back to the way Solomon was raised. For example, take a man who’s got only one or two children. Is that man going to be wasteful with kids? No, he isn’t—he can’t afford to be. He knows the value of a child. But it’s different with a man who’s got about five million children running around the house. HE would just as soon chop a child in two as he would a cat, since he has plenty of other kids. A child or two aren’t that important to Solomon, darn it.” I never saw such a n-----. Once he got an idea in his head, there was no use trying to get it out. He disliked Solomon more than any other n----- I ever knew. So I dropped the topic of Solomon and started talking about other kings. I told him about Louis XVI, who got his head chopped off in France a long time ago. And I talked about his son, the [dolphin](javascript:void(0);), who would have been king if he hadn’t been shut up in jail. Some say he died there. “Poor little kid.” “But others say he escaped and came to America.” “Well that’s good! But he’ll be pretty lonesome here. There aren’t any kings here, are there, Huck?” “No.” “Then he can’t go back to the way of life he’s used to. What’s he going to do?” “Well, I don’t know. Some of them become policemen and others teach people how to speak French.” “What do you mean, Huck? Don’t the French people talk the same way we do?” “NO, Jim. You can’t understand a word the French say. Not a single word.” “Well I’ll be damned! How did that come to be?” “I don’t know, but it’s true. I learned some of their nonsense out of a book. Suppose a man came up to you and said, Polly voo franzy. What would you think about that?” “I wouldn’t think at all. I’d hit him over the head—if he’s not a white man, that is. I wouldn’t allow a n----- to call me a name like that.” “Shucks, Jim. He wouldn’t be calling you a name. He’d only be saying, ‘Do you speak French?’” “Well then why wouldn’t he just SAY that?” “But he IS saying that. That’s the way a Frenchman says it.” “Well, he’s got a pretty ridiculous way of talking then. And I don’t want to hear any more about it. It doesn’t make any sense.” “Look, Jim. Does a cat talk like we do?” “No, a cat doesn’t.” “Well, does a cow talk like we do?” “No, a cow doesn’t either.” “Does a cat talk like a cow? Does a cow talk like a cat?” “No, they don’t.” “Isn’t it natural and proper that they talk differently than each other?” “Of course.” “And isn’t it natural and proper that a cat and cow talk differently from humans?” “Why, of course it is.” “Well then, why isn’t it natural and proper for a Frenchman to talk differently than us? Answer me that.” “Is a cat a man, Huck?” “No.” “Well then, it wouldn’t make any sense for a cat to talk like a man. Is a cow a man? I mean, is a cow a cat?”   
“No, a cow is neither a man nor a cat.” “Well then, a cow’s got no business talking like either one of them. Is a Frenchman a man?” “Yes.” “Well, there you go! Darn it, then why doesn’t a Frenchman TALK like a man? Answer me THAT!” I saw it was no use wasting words—you can’t teach a n----- how to argue. So I quit.

***Summary:***

* Thanks to all the robbers' loot, Huck and Jim are sitting on some major bank. Huck is all fired up and ready for more adventures, but Jim would rather not have any more near-death experiences.
* Part of the loot they got from the steamship was a load of books. Huck reads some of them to Jim and, in doing so, gets into a conversation about dukes and kings and the like.
* He tells Jim about all the pomp and circumstances surrounding these kinds of men. Jim is amazed. He says he's never heard of kings before—except for "Sollermun" (i.e., the biblical [**Solomon**](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Solomon.html)).
* Jim is skeptical that kings can get all the riches they want just by sitting around all day.
* Huck confirms that this is the case. They also hang around their harem, he says, which is like a garage for their thousands of wives.
* Nuh-uh, says Jim. If Solomon really did have a thousand wives, he wasn't actually that smart after all, because he'd have to listen to the women gabbing all the time.
* Besides, what about that really dumb decision about splitting the kid in two?
* (Biblical aside: Solomon was a very wise man who could judge and solve all disputes. One day, two women came to him with a child, both claiming to be the mother. Solomon suggested that they cut the child in half, knowing that the real mother would rather give up her baby than see him split in two. His master plan worked, of course.)
* Surprisingly, Huck actually remembers what the Widow taught him from the Bible and tries to explain that Solomon didn't really want to cut the kid in half.
* Jim can't (or won't) understand. He keeps insisting that Solomon is stupid for wanting to cut a child in half, because half a child isn't good to anybody.
* Probably, he says, Solomon was so wasteful of children because he had about eight million kids himself. If he only had two kids, he wouldn't be so eager to go chopping them in half.
* Next, they talk about language. Huck explains that a Frenchman doesn't speak the same way they do.
* Jim thinks this is ridiculous: all cats talk the same. All dogs talk the same. Why shouldn't all men talk the same?
* … And this is actually a really good point. But Huck misses the fact that Jim is actually incredibly logical and declares that, "you just can't learn a n\*\*\*\*\* to argue."

***Analysis:***

Huck and Jim now have a fortune in booty stolen off the steamboat- including cigars and boots, plenty of books and clothes. Huck reads to Jim about royalty and the royal lifestyle, including conveying to him the concept of a harem, which Jim particularly doesn't like. In the course of the discussion, they discuss the story of Solomon and the two feuding mothers. Jim basically thinks it is idiotic to cut up a child for any reason and doesn't get "the point" of the story.

This chapter really focuses on the extreme practicality and realism of Jim, which is prevalent throughout the entire book. But sometimes, Jim, too, kind of misses things, too. His repulsion at Solomon's story is hilarious.

***Synopsis:***

The next day, [Jim](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/jim) and [Huck](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/huckleberry-finn) go through the spoils they got from the gang on the *Walter Scott*. Huck's excitement about their new treasure is tempered by Jim's fear that they might have been caught or drowned. After listening to Jim, Huck realizes that, as usual, Jim is right.

Among the blankets, clothes, and cigars, Huck finds a few books and reads to Jim about romantic figures like kings, dukes, and earls. When the discussion turns to royalty and King Solomon, Huck and Jim debate Solomon's logic and refuse to agree on his wisdom.

Chapter 14 continues to define Huck and Jim's roles, with Jim constantly proving himself as the more practical and mature person despite Huck's ability to read. Initially, Huck accepts Jim's rationale when he describes why the *Walter Scott*presented so much danger. Huck's admission that" . . . he [Jim] was most always right" is undercut, however, by his statement that Jim " . . . had an uncommon level head, for a nigger." The vulgar label — which, of course, Huck does not recognize as vulgar — shows that Huck still has not accepted Jim as an intellectual or human equal, in spite of the fact that Jim continues to show superior logic, and Huck continues to grow fonder of him.

When the two discuss King Solomon, Jim's practical but single-minded approach cannot convince Huck that Solomon "*warn't*no wise man nuther." Readers, however, are able to see that it is Huck, and not Jim, who misses the point. The real point, as Jim says, "is down furder — it's down deeper." The statement foreshadows the debate of conscience that Huck undergoes later in the novel.

Glossary

**the texas**a structure on the hurricane deck of a steamboat, containing the officers' quarters, etc. and having the pilothouse on top or in front.

**dauphin**the eldest son of the king of France, a title used from 1349 to 1830.

**polly-voo franzy**parlez-vous Francais, "Do you speak French?"

***Critical Analysis:***

Jim and Huck find a number of valuables among the robbers’ bounty from the Walter Scott, mostly books, clothes, and cigars. As they relax in the woods and wait for nightfall before traveling again, Huck reads books from the wreck, and the two discuss what Huck calls their “adventures.” Jim says he doesn’t enjoy adventures, as they could easily end in his death or capture. Huck astonishes Jim with stories of kings, first reading from books and then adding some of his own, made-up stories. Jim had only heard of King Solomon, whom he considers a fool for wanting to chop a baby in half. Huck cannot convince Jim otherwise. Huck tells Jim about the dauphin (whom Huck mistakenly calls the “dolphin”), the son of the executed King Louis XVI of France. The dauphin currently is rumored to be wandering America. Jim refuses to believe that the French do not speak English, as Huck explains. Huck tries to argue the point with Jim but gives up in defeat.

***Critical Study:***

[Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) and [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) go through the booty they got from the robbers and find it is an impressive haul. Afterward Huck is excited and tells [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) about how everything happened. Jim is not as excited; he says the fear he felt made it not worth it. Huck considers Jim's thoughts and finds them to be very rational.

Books are part of the booty, and Huck reads one aloud so Jim can hear. The stories are about kings including Solomon, who Jim believes is a fool for cutting a baby in half. Despite Huck's attempt to explain the story, Jim is not convinced. When the conversation turns to the French language, Jim does not understand why people do not all speak the same language.

While [Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) is happy to experience adventures, [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) is practical and mature. Even during the journey itself, while Huck is also attempting to escape, the stakes are higher for [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim). If he is caught he will be sent back in chains and sold down river. For Jim, making his way to freedom is enough of an adventure.

When Jim says he is not interested in an adventure, Huck praises him: "Well, he was right; he was most always right; he had an uncommon level head, for a nigger." This is a backhanded compliment as it qualifies Jim's intelligence. Despite their time together and his fondness for Jim, Huck remains a product of his Southern upbringing and has not yet come to accept Jim as his equal.

Jim stubbornly holds on to his views about King Solomon and language, but his views make sense when the reader considers his background. Jim views the world differently because of his background and maturity. While Huck has had challenges growing up, he is still part of white society. His life matters. Jim's insistence that chopping the baby in half is cruel and "was[t]eful" shows how much he values life and reminds the reader of a period when black people's lives were not valued.

***Significance:***

Huck and Jim spend some time relaxing and discussing various things. Huck tells Jim all about kings and other aristocratic personages, and Jim is very impressed and interested. However, when Huck mentions King Solomon, Jim starts telling him that Solomon was one of the most foolish men who ever lived. Jim comments that any man who had as many wives as Solomon would go crazy, and that the notion of chopping a child in half in order to figure out which woman is the rightful mother is plain stupid. Jim remarks that the issue was about a whole child, not a half a child, and Solomon would have shown more respect for children if he had not had so many. Huck tries to explain the moral lesson Solomon was trying to teach, but Jim hears none of it.

Next, Huck tries to explain to Jim that Frenchmen speak a different language. Jim is surprised by this and cannot understand why all men would not speak the same language. Huck tries to make the analogy that a cat and a cow do not speak the same language, so neither should an American and a Frenchman. Jim then points out that a cat and a cow are not the same species, but Frenchmen and Americans are. He concludes that Frenchmen should therefore speak the same language he does. At this point Huck gets frustrated and gives up trying to argue with Jim.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

The next day, [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) and [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) enjoy the things they found in the robbers’ skiff, and Huck describes the night before as an “adventure.” But Jim says he doesn’t want any more adventures, because he could have easily drowned or been captured and returned to slavery. Huck concludes Jim has “an uncommon level head” for a black person.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Jim’s realist interpretation of the night’s events convinces Huck that avoiding dangers in the future is reasonable. This is a maturation in terms of his pragmatism, but also in his regard for Jim, whose intelligence he prejudicially dismissed before.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) reads to [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) about kings and noblemen. Huck explains that kings get whatever they want and go to war and “hang round the harem” where they keep their multiple wives. Huck and Jim then discuss King Solomon, whom Jim accuses of being a fool for wanting to chop a baby in two. Huck tells Jim he’s missed the point, but Jim says the deeper point is this: that a man with few children thinks of children as precious, but a man with many children, like Solomon, thinks of children as being expendable as cats. Huck thinks that Jim is being stubborn, but changes the subject to other kings.

***Analysis Part 2:***

In addition to foreshadowing Huck and Jim’s adventures with the duke and king, this passage provides Jim’s critique of wealth as expressed in his critique of Solomon: he thinks that people with little cherish what they have all the more, whereas those with surplus devalue what they have. In addition, Jim here criticizes a Biblical hero as being a fool on the grounds that he is not caring enough, and while Jim may be missing the point he is also not entirely wrong, either.

***Summary Part 3:***

Huck tells Jim about Louis XVI and his young son, who was jailed after his father’s execution. [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) feels sorry for the little prince, and Huck replies that some people think he escaped and came to America. Jim is pleased, but imagines that he must be lonely, given that there are no other kings in America. Huck says that the prince could join the police force or teach French. Jim doesn’t understand: don’t all people speak the same language, he asks. Huck says no, and gives an argument for why that is so, but Jim pokes a hole in the argument, such that Huck is forced to conclude, “It warn’t no use wasting words.” Both Huck and Jim fall silent.