***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

***Chapter 20:***

***Translation:***

They asked us an awful lot of questions. They wanted to know why we were covered up the raft, and why we rested during the day instead of running—wait, was Jim a runaway n-----? I said: “For goodness’s sake! Would a runaway n----- head SOUTH?” No, they said he wouldn’t. I had to find some way to explain all these things, so I said: “My folks were living in Pike County, Missouri, where I was born, but they all died except for pa, my brother Ike, and me. Pa said he’d figured he’d go live with Uncle Ben, who has a small one-horse farm on the river about forty-four miles below New Orleans. Pa was pretty poor and had a lot of debt. When he paid it all off, we didn’t have anything except sixteen dollars and our n----- Jim. That wasn’t going to be enough to take us fourteen hundred miles—not even if by [deck passage](javascript:void(0);). Well, when the river swelled, pa got lucky one day and caught this piece of raft. So we figured we’d float down to New Orleans on it. Pa’s luck didn’t hold out, though. A steamboat ran over the front corner of the raft one night, and we all went overboard. We dove under the wheel, and Jim and I came up okay, but pa was drunk and Ike was only four years old. They didn’t come back up. Well, the next day we had a lot of trouble from people coming out to us in skiffs and trying to take Jim away. They thought he was a runaway n-----. That’s why we don’t float down the river during the day any more. No one bothers us at night.” The duke said: “Leave me sit alone and figure out a way that we can travel during the day if we want to. I’ll think it over and come up with a plan. We’ll let it go for today, because, of course, we don’t want to pass by that town in the daylight—it might not be healthy for us.” As night started to fall, the sky began to get dark, and it looked like it was going to rain. Lightning struck low in the sky, and the leaves of the trees were beginning to shiver—it was easy to see that we were in for an ugly storm. The duke and the king checked out our wigwam to see what the beds were like. My bed was just a straw mattress, but Jim’s was only a mattress made out of corn husks. There’s always a cob or two still hidden in corn husk mattresses, and they hurt when they poke you. And when you roll over in the husks, it sounds like you’re rolling over in a pile of dead leaves. They rustle so loudly that you wake up. Well, the duke said he’d take my bed, but the king said HE would. He said: “I figure that the difference in our rank would have suggested to you that a bed made out of corn husks isn’t fit for me to sleep on. You can take the corn husk bed yourself, Your Grace.” For a minute, Jim and I were worried that there was going to be some serious trouble between them. We were really glad when the duke said: “It is my fate to always be ground into the mud under the iron heel of oppression. Misfortunate has broken my spirit, and I am no longer haughty. You win—I give up—it is my fate. I am alone in the world. Let me suffer, I can take it.” We started out as soon as it was good and dark. The king told us to take the raft out toward the middle of the river and not to light any fires until we’d floated well past the town. Pretty soon we came to a bunch of lights—which was the town—and slid past about a half a mile without incident. When we were three-quarters of a mile past the town, we lit our signal lantern. The storm hit around ten o’clock. It brought rain, thunder, lightning, and wind, and everything else. The king told us both to stay on watch until the weather got better, while he and the duke crawled into the wigwam for the night. I was on watch until midnight, but I wouldn’t have gone to bed even if I had one. A storm like that doesn’t come along every day of the week—not by a long shot. My word, how the wind screamed! And every second or two a flash of lightning would light up the white caps on the surface of the water for half a mile in every direction. You could make out the islands through the pouring rain and see the trees thrashing around in the wind. Then would come a WHACK! Bum! Bum! Bumble-umble-um-bum-bum-bum-bum as the thunder rumbled and grumbled before dying away. And then, RIP, another flash of lightning and another great crash of thunder would come along. The waves almost swept me off the raft a few times, but I didn’t have any clothes on, and I didn’t mind. We didn’t have any trouble running into any snags—the lightning flashed so bright and frequent that we could see them coming in plenty of time to stear around. I had the middle watch, but I was pretty sleepy by that time, so Jim said he’d take the first half of it for me. He was really good about things like that. I crawled into the wigwam, but there wasn’t any room for me because the king and the duke had their legs sprawled. So I lay down outside—I didn’t mind the rain because it was warm, and the waves weren’t very large. They started getting bad again around two o’clock, though. Jim was going to call me, but he changed his mind after deciding they weren’t yet high enough to do any harm. He was mistaken about that, though, because pretty soon a huge wave came along all of a sudden and washed me overboard. Jim nearly died from laughter. He laughed more often than any n----- I’d ever seen. I took the watch, and Jim laid down and started snoring. Pretty soon the storm let up for good. I woke him up when I spotted the first cabin light from the shore, and we found a place to hide the raft for the day. The king pulled out a ratty old deck of cards after breakfast, and he and the duke played seven-up for a while, betting five cents per game. Then they got tired of it, and figured they would “come up with a campaign,” as they called it. The duke dug deep into his carpetbag and pulled of a lot of printed [bills](javascript:void(0);)and read them out loud. One bill said, “The celebrated Dr. Armand de Montalban of Paris” would “lecture on the Science of Phrenology” at such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time. Admission was ten cents, and you could also buy “charts of character” for twenty-five cents apiece. The duke said these bills were of HIM. Another bill advertised the “world-renowned Shakespearean tragedian, Garrick the Younger, of [Drury Lane](javascript:void(0);), London.” Other bills displayed different names and advertisments for other great feats, such as finding water and gold with a “[divining rod](javascript:void(0);),” “dissipating witch spells,” and so on. Eventually he said: “Ah, but the histrionic muse is the best. Have you ever [trod the boards](javascript:void(0);), Royalty?” “No,” said the king. “Well, you will before the next three days are up, my Fallen Royalty,” said the duke. “In the next town we come to, we’ll rent out a public hall and put on the sword fight from Richard III and the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet. What do you think of that?” “I’m up for anything that’ll make us some money, Bilgewater. But, you see, I don’t know anything about acting. I haven’t seen many plays. I was too small when pap used to have them performed at the palace. Do you suppose you can teach me?” “Easily!” “All right. I’m dying for a fresh new scheme anyway. Let’s get started right away.” So the duke told him all about Romeo and Juliet. He said the king could be Juliet since he himself was used to playing the part of Romeo.” “But Juliet’s supposed to be a young girl, duke. My bald head and white whiskers are going to look pretty funny on her, I think.” “You don’t need to worry about that—these country bumpkins won’t even notice. Besides, you’ll be in costume, and that makes all the differene in the world. Juliet’s in a balcony, enjoying the moonlight before she goes to bed, and she’s wearing her nightgown and her ruffled nightcap. Here are the costumes for all the parts.” He pulled out two or three suits made from calico used for curtains. He said one was made to look like medieval armor for Richard III and the guy he fights. He also had a long white cotton nightshirt and a matching ruffled nightcap for the girl. The king was satisfied, so the duke got out his book and read the lines aloud, prancing around and acting them out while he read. Then he gave the book to the king, and told him to memorize his lines. There was a little one-horse town about three miles down around the bend in the river. After dinner, the duke said he’d figured out a way so that we could travel during the day without putting Jim in danger, and that he’d have to go to town to set it up. The king said he would go with him to scout out any good opportunities. We were out of coffee, so Jim said that I should go with them in the canoe and get some more. There wasn’t anyone around when we got to the town. The streets were empty—perfectly dead and still, like it would be on a Sunday. We found a sick n----- sunning himself in the backyard. He said that everyone who wasn’t too young or sick or old had gone to a camp meeting about two miles into the woods. The king got directions from him and said he’d go scam those people for all they were worth. He said I could go come along. The duke said he needed to find a printing office. We found a small one housed above a carpenter’s shop. Both the carpenter and the printer had gone to the meeting and left the doors unlocked. It was a dirty place with lots of junk lying around. There were ink marks and handbills showing pictures of horses and runaway n------ posted all over the walls. The duke removed his coat and said that he’d be okay, so the king and I headed for the camp meeting. It was a really hot day, and we were dripping with sweat after the thirty minutes or so walk it took to get there. There were about a thousand people there who’d come from miles around. The woods were full of horses and wagons hitched up everywhere. The horses were eating out of the wagon troughs and stomping around to keep the flies away. Lemonade and gingerbread were being sold out of sheds made from poles with roofs of branches. Piles of watermelon and green corn and the like literred the ground. There were also much larger sheds where crowds of people gathered to hear the preaching. There were benches made from the outside of sawed logs—they had holes bored into the round side of the log to drive sticks in for the legs. The benches didn’t have any backs. The preachers stood on high platforms at one end of the sheds. The women wore sunbonnets, and some wore [linsey-woolsey](javascript:void(0);)frock, while others had on [gingham](javascript:void(0);)frocks. A few of the young ones had calico frocks. Some of the young men were barefooted, and some of the children were naked except a [tow-linen](javascript:void(0);)shirt. Some of the old women were knitting, and some of the young folk were secretly flirting with each other. In the first shed we came to, the preacher was going over a hymn. He said the first two lines, and everyone sang it back. It sounded kind of grand, because there were so many people, and they sang in such a stirring way. He said two more lines, and they would sing, and so on. The people got more and more into it, singing louder and louder. Toward the end of the hymn, some people began to groan, and some even began to shout. Then the preacher began to preach with a lot of passion. He’d weave to one side of the platform, and then he’d weave to the other. Then he’d lean down over the front with his arms waving and his body moving all the time, while he shouted his words with all his might. Every now and then he’d hold up his Bible and spread it open and pass it around, shouting, “It’s that devilish serpent in the wilderness! Look at it and live!” People would shout out, “Glory! A-MEN!” While the people groaned and cryed and said amen, he continued preaching: “Oh! Come up here to the mourner’s bench! Come all of you, who are black with sin! (AMEN!) Come, all you who are sick and sore! (AMEN!) Come, all you who are lame and crippled and blind! (AMEN!) Come, all of you who are worn out and tired and suffering—come with your broken spirit! Come with your guilty heart! Come in your rags and sin and dirt! The waters that will clean you are free to you! The door of heaven stands open to you! Come in and be at peace! (A-A-MEN! GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH!)” And so on and so on. You couldn’t make out what the preacher was saying after that because of all the shouting and crying. Folks throughout the crowd stood up and fought their way to the mourner’s bench with all their might. Tears were running down their faces. When all the mourners had gotten up to the benches in front, they sang and shouted and flung themselves down on the straw floor, as if they were crazy or wild. Well, before I knew it, the king had jumped in the mix. You could hear his voice over all the others. In no time he was charging up to the platform. The preacher begged him to speak to the people, and he did. He told them he was a pirate—had been a pirate out in the Indian Ocean for thirty years—and that he’d lost most of his crew last spring in a battle. Now he was home to take on some fresh men, but he had been robbed last night and kicked off a steamboat. He was penniless, but he was glad it had happened. It was the most blessed thing that had ever happened to him. Now he was a changed man and happy for the first time in his life. Even though he was poor, he was going to start right away working his way back to the Indian Ocean. He would devote the rest of his life to putting other pirates onto the true path. He said he was more qualified than anyone else to do this because he knew all the pirate crews in that ocean. And he said that even though he was broke and it would take him a long time to get there, he’d still find a way. Every time he converted a pirate, he’d say to him, “Don’t thank me—I don’t deserve the credit. It belongs to those dear people at the Pokeville camp meeting—the kindest white folks in the world live out there—and that dear preacher, who was the truest friend a pirate ever had!” Then he burst into tears, and so did everyone else. Then someone called out, “Take up a collection for him, take up a collection!” Half a dozen people offered to start one, but then someone cried out, “HE should pass the hat around!” Everyone agreed, including the preacher. So the king went through the crowd with his hat, wiping his eyes and blessing the people and praising them and thanking them for being so kind to the poor pirates way out in the Indian Ocean. And every now and then, a really pretty girl would ask him, with tears running down her cheeks, if it would be all right if she kissed him so that he’d remember her. He always said yes, and some of them hugged and kissed him five or six times. He was invited to stay the whole week, and everyone wanted him to live in their house, saying it would be an honor to have him. But he said that he wouldn’t be able to stay, since this was the last day of the camp meeting. Besides, he said, he was in a hurry to get back to the Indian Ocean to get to work converting those pirates. When we got back to the raft, the king counted up the money in the collection. He said he’d gotten eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents. He’d also stolen a three gallon jug of whiskey from under a wagon as we headed through the woods on our way home. The king said that, all in all, this was the biggest haul he’d ever made with a religious scam. He said that talking about wanting to convert Indians and other heathens wasn’t nearly as successful as claiming to want to convert pirates. The duke said that he had thought HE’D done pretty well that day, but he had come to think differently after hearing the king’s story. He’d set up a little scam for farmers and had started by printing some horse bills in the printing office. He’d taken the money, four dollars. And he’d sold ten dollar’s worth of advertisements for the newspaper, which he said he’d accept if they paid four dollars in advance, which they did. A newspaper subscription cost two dollars per year, but he’d taken advance payment of one dollar apiece for three subscriptions. The customers had planned on paying him in firewood and onions, as is usual, but he said he had those things and would prefer cash since he had discounted the price of the subscription as low as he could. He’d written up a little bit of original poetry—three sweet and sad verses that he called “Yes, crush, cold world, this breaking heart”—and he left that all set up and ready to print in the newspaper, free of charge. All in all, he’d taken in nine dollars and fifty cents, and had called it a pretty good day’s work. Then he showed us another little thing he’d printed, free of charge, because it was for us. It had a picture of a runaway n----- with a bundle on a stick slung over his shoulder. It said “$200 reward” under it. The words on the paper were all about Jim, and they described him perfectly. It said he’d run away last winter from St. Jacques’s plantation—which was about forty miles below New Orleans—and had probably gone north. Whoever caught him could send him back to claim the reward and be reimbursed for expenses. “Now,” said the duke. “After tonight we can travel during the day if we want. Whenever we see anyone coming, we can just tie Jim up with a rope, lay him down in the wigwam, and show this handbill indicating that we captured him up the river. We can say that we were too poor to travel by steamboat. We bought this little raft on credit from our friends and are going to claim the reward. It’d look better if we could put handcuffs and chains on Jim, but it wouldn’t fit in with our story about being poor. It’d be like if we claimed to be poor, but had jewelry. Ropes are the best thing—we can preserve continuities, as we say in the theater.” We all agreed that the duke was pretty smart, and that now we’d have no trouble traveling in the daytime. We figured we should travel quite a ways that night to put enough distance between us and the trouble that the duke’s printing scam would likely cause once people figured out they’d been cheated. Then we wouldn’t have to worry. We laid low and kept quiet, and didn’t shove off until nearly ten o’clock. Then we slide out away from the town, and didn’t hang our lantern out until we were out of sight. When Jim called me to take the watch at four in the morning he said: “Huck, do you suppose we’re going to run across any more kings on this trip?” “No,” I said. “I don’t think so.” “Well,” he said. “That’s fine with me. I don’t mind one or two kings, but that’s enough. This one’s pretty drunk, and the duke isn’t much better.” I found out that Jim had been trying to get the king to speak in French so that he could hear what it sounded like. But the king had said he’d been in this country so long and he’d had so much trouble in his life that he’d forgotten it.

***Synopsis:***

[The duke and the dauphin](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/character/the-duke-and-the-dauphin/) ask whether [Jim](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/character/jim/) is a runaway slave. [Huck](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/character/huckleberry-huck-finn/) makes up a story about how he was orphaned and tells them that he and Jim have been forced to travel at night since so many people stopped his boat to ask whether Jim was a runaway. That night, the duke and the dauphin take Huck’s and Jim’s beds while Huck and Jim stand watch against a storm.

The next morning, the duke gets the dauphin to agree to put on a performance of Shakespeare in the next town they pass. They reach the town and find that everyone in the town has left for a religious revival meeting in the woods, a lively affair with several thousand people singing and shouting. The dauphin gets up and tells the crowd that he is a former pirate, now reformed by the revival meeting, who will return to the Indian Ocean as a missionary. The crowd joyfully takes up a collection, netting the dauphin more than eighty dollars and many kisses from pretty young women.

Meanwhile, the duke takes over the deserted print office in town and earns nearly ten dollars selling print jobs, subscriptions, and advertisements in the local newspaper. The duke also prints up a “handbill,” or leaflet, offering a reward for Jim’s capture, which will allow them to travel freely by day and tell anyone who inquires that Jim is their captive. Meanwhile, Jim has been innocently trying to get the dauphin to speak French, but the supposed heir to the French throne claims that he has forgotten the language.

***Synopsis:***

After two or three peaceful days on the raft, [Huck](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/huckleberry-finn) is searching for some berries in a creek when he comes upon two desperate men. The men are obviously being chased, and Huck tells them how to lose the dogs, and they escape. The men, one around 70 and the other around 30 years old, join Huck and [Jim](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/jim) on the raft.

Each man quickly discovers that they both are con artists, and they decide to work together. Shortly after their agreement, the youngest breaks into tears and claims that he is the Duke of Bridgewater and must be treated with respect. After a thoughtful moment, the oldest uses the same tactic and claims to be the Dauphin, the rightful heir to the French throne. Huck believes the men are simple con men but decides not to challenge them in order to keep the peace.

The duke and the king begin scheming, and with new plans, they land the raft below the one-horse town of Pokeville, which is practically deserted because of a nearby camp meeting. When the duke heads off to find a printing shop, the king decides to attend the meeting. At the meeting, the townspeople sing hymns and go up to the pulpit for forgiveness. The king joins the festivities and professes to be an old pirate who has reformed and seen the errors of his past. He burst into tears and passes around his hat and collects $87 dollars and a jug of whisky.

When they return to the raft, Huck and Jim find that the duke has printed a handbill that describes Jim as a runaway slave from New Orleans. The handbill, the duke argues, will allow them to run the raft during the day without intrusion. The next morning, Jim says he can abide one or two kings but no more than that.

Chapter 19 continues to outline the carefree and unaffected environment aboard the raft. The days pass "smooth and lovely," and [Twain](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/mark-twain-biography) uses the opportunity to portray the beauty of the Mississippi and its natural surroundings. During this time, Huck's narrative is filled with calm images of approaching dawn, small breezes, hot breakfasts, and a sky "speckled with stars."

The peaceful environment of the raft is shattered by the arrival of the duke and the king. At this point, the raft, which has been a kind of sanctuary, is invaded by society. The two men symbolize the stark contrast of the river to the shore and once again outline the raft/shore dichotomy. In a larger sense, the duke and the king represent the confidence men that roamed both the urban and rural landscape of nineteenth-century America, always attempting to prey on the gullible and naive. The confidence man of early frontier literature used not only society's vices but also its convictions and trust to employ his schemes, and the duke and the king exemplify the trickster who takes advantage of an ignorant society.

At first, the men appear harmless, and Huck quietly rejects their preposterous claims of royalty. Huck's gesture of kindness is similar to his compassion for the doomed men aboard the *Walter Scott*, but he quickly realizes the danger that the frauds present. His recognition of their true character is important, for he understands that the two pose a particular threat to Jim. Huck's insight, however, is not surprising, for the men are simply exaggerations of the characters that Huck and Jim have already encountered during their journey. Huck has learned that society is not to be trusted, and the duke and the king quickly show that his concern is legitimate.

The inclusion of the camp meeting is a perfect example of the confidence man. Along with its playful burlesque of religion, the camp meeting shows a gullible audience that is swindled because of its faith. The ensuing scene is reminiscent of George Washington Harris' "Sut Lovingood's Lizards" and Johnson J. Hooper's "Simon Suggs Attends a Camp Meeting." Both authors were influential for Twain and reflect a society that is scammed because of its misplaced faith or hypocrisy.

Glossary

**gar**needlefish.

**galoot**[Slang] a person, esp. an awkward, ungainly person.

**carpet-bag** an old-fashioned type of traveling bag, made of carpeting.

**tar and feather**to cover a person with tar and feathers as in punishment by mob action.

**mesmerism**hypnotism.

**bilgewater**water that collects in the bilge of a ship, slang for worthless or silly talk.

**tick**a cloth case covering that is filled with cotton, feathers, or hair to form a mattress or pillow.

**gingham**a yarn-dyed cotton cloth, usually woven in stripes, checks, or plaids.

**calico**a printed cotton fabric.

**camp-meeting**here, a religious revival.

***Summary:***

Huck makes up a story to explain Jim's presence. He's not a runaway slave, he says, but since everyone thinks he is it's just easier for them to travel at night.

The conmen inspect the raft and decide that, being royalty and all, they deserve the best sleeping spots inside the makeshift [wigwam](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/54/Apache_Wickiup,_Edward_Curtis,_1903.jpg/220px-Apache_Wickiup,_Edward_Curtis,_1903.jpg).

That night there's a lightning storm, and Huck and Jim have to sit outside on the raft to keep watch while the "royalty" sleep.

Huck doesn't mind; he likes watching the storm.

And then the duke and the king start planning their con: a series of Shakespearean performances.

Why is it a con? Well, they don't know a thing about "play-actin'" (20.20)—especially the king.

No problem. The duke explains to him all about [Romeo and Juliet](https://www.shmoop.com/romeo-and-juliet/), and they decide that the king will play Juliet and the duke Romeo.

The two cons head into town, telling Huck that they're going to set up a way for them to travel in the daylight without worrying about Jim.

Huck elects to go with them to keep an eye on things.

Not that these guys aren't trustworthy or anything.

The town is almost empty, and the men are informed that everyone is at a "[camp-meeting](http://digitalheritage.org/2010/08/camp-meetings/)" about two miles away.

Huck and the king leave the duke at a printing-office (which is part of the plan to help Jim) and head to this camp-meeting.

When they get there, the preacher is doing his thing with lots of "Amen!" and "Hallelujah!" responses.

The king simply can't resist. He begins preaching and shouting himself, and soon enough he's got everyone worked up in a religious frenzy and taking up a collection on his behalf (because he is a "reformed" and "changed" man, thanks to the Lord, etc., etc.).

And that's how the king returns to the raft with $87.75 , and a three-gallon jug of whisky. (To help for the reformation.)

The duke shows up and for three seconds is all proud of himself for conning about nine bucks–-until he sees the king's score.

But the duke has also printed up a bill for Jim that declares a $200 reward for him as a runaway slave. This way, he says, if anyone stops their raft, they can claim they've already captured him and are bringing him back to capture their reward.

Hey, pretty smart!

That night, Jim tells Huck he hopes they're not going to meet any more dukes or kings—he thinks two is plenty.

Turns out, he's been trying to get the king (of France, remember) to speak French. Unfortunately, "Louis XVII" has been in this country so long he plain old forgot his language.

***Synopsis:***

The con men ask [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) questions, and Huck comes up with another story and denies that [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) is a slave. They want to travel during the day. With rain threatening the con men go into the wigwam and take Huck and Jim's beds. Huck and Jim take turns sleeping outside with the other one dealing with the raft during a ferocious storm.

The next day the duke and the king devise a money-making plan. They are going to perform scenes from two Shakespeare plays. The duke and the king along with Huck go ashore at the next town they see. The town is empty; it turns out the people are at a revival meeting. Huck and the king go to the meeting. A preacher has the large crowd worked up.

The king jumps on stage and makes up a pity story, claiming he's an ex-pirate, robbed of his money but determined to convert other pirates. The people give him more than $87. Meanwhile, the duke goes to an empty print shop and earns ten dollars from print jobs. He also prints up a leaflet advertising a runaway slave matching Jim's description and the $200 reward for his capture. The duke says they can travel during the day now, tie Jim up should they see anyone, and claim that they have caught the runaway and are on their way to pick up the reward.

When the con men ask if [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) is an escaped slave, [Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) replies, "Goodness sakes, would a runaway nigger run *south*?" The question is a legitimate one and the subject of great debate among critics of the book. Many suggest that [Twain](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/author/) had Huck and [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) continue to go South because that is the area of the river he is familiar with. While this is logical, it makes no sense for Huck and Jim to be headed South. Ultimately if they stay in the South, their attempt to escape will surely end in failure.

Despite being con men with zero morals, the duke and the king are above a black man, regardless of the quality of his character. However, the duke and the king take a particular interest in Jim's status. It is easy to imagine that they look at Jim as a potential asset. As con men the duke and the king are only interested in anything as it relates to benefitting them. If Jim is a runaway slave, then turning him in can bring them money.

Just about every person that Huck and Jim meet is corrupt or twisted. While the preacher at the revival meeting does not come into direct contact with Huck and Jim, he may very well be trying to scam the people. The king, though, upstages the preacher and jumps into his scam. Either way the people view it as a religious gathering, and the king has no compunction in taking advantage of the people.

***Critical Study:***

Huck explains to the King and Duke that he is a farmer's son who has lost his father and brother. He tells them that Jim is the last slave the family owns and that he is traveling south to Orleans to live with his Uncle Ben. Huck also says that he and Jim travel at night because they keep getting harassed by people who think Jim is a runaway slave. [The Duke](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#the-duke) tells him that he will figure out a way for them to travel during the daytime.

That night, the Duke and King take over Huck and Jim's beds. A large storm causes the river to become choppy, and Huck watches for danger. Soon Jim takes over and Huck falls asleep until he is washed overboard by a large wave. Jim bursts out laughing at the sight of Huck flailing about in the water.

The next day, the King and Duke brainstorm money making schemes. The Duke decides that they should put on a play where they perform short scenes from Shakespeare and the King agrees. After dinner, they go into a nearby town to see what luck will bring them. The men find the town deserted, as everyone has gone to a revival meeting. The Duke breaks into a printer's shop and takes orders from some farmers. He collects cash and promises to print advertisements in the paper. In his final project, he makes a handbill showing a runaway slave and describing Jim. He tells the others that this handbill will make it seem as if they are taking Jim back to collect the reward.

[The King](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#the-king) goes to the revival meeting with Huck and chances upon a crowd being listening to the preacher. The people get inflamed with the spirit of repentance, and in the middle of all their crying and yelling, the King jumps up onto the stage. He tells the audience that he was once a pirate in the Indian Ocean and that their meeting made him regret the actions of his former life. The King says that he would return to the Indian Ocean to convert his former colleagues, if only he had the money to do so. Immediately, a collection is taken up and the King leaves with over eighty-seven dollars.

These chapters focus on social commentary of the people and places along the Southern Mississippi. Each chapter introduces new characters and adventures that highlight particular prejudices or follies. Huck is also forced to play different roles as he tries to assimilate himself into each new situation. Through each of Huck's roles, the reader receives new insight into his personality and character.

Twain offers social commentary in three separate escapades in the novel. First, two slave-hunters approach Huck's raft and Huck makes them believe his smallpox ridden family is aboard. Desperate to avoid the plague, each man forks over $20 just to keep the raft away from town. While disease is a valid concern, Twain demonstrates the fear with which people treat other sick people who need assistance and support. Rather than offering to help, the two men try to buy off the family and send them elsewhere.

Second, the Grangerford and Shepherdson families participate in a violent, tragic feud. In fact, the happenings reflect a modern day [Romeo and Juliet](https://www.gradesaver.com/romeo-and-juliet) theme, as a Grangerford daughter and Shepherdson son elope, causing a familial massacre. Ironically, the two lovers are the only ones that survive. Huck explains how civilized, wealthy and respected the Grangerford family is, but then shatters this image by detailing the feud's excessive and tragic killings. Here, Twain demonstrates the utter stupidity of even the most educated and respected families, who can destroy themselves through nonsensical behavior and excessive pride.

The last escapade in occurs when the King bilks an entire congregation out of money. His story about being a pirate and wishing to convert his brethren is laughable and silly, but at the revival meeting, everyone is so overcome by the love of God and their fellow man that they believe him and donate to his cause. With this anecdote, Twain is commenting on the gullibility of religious zealots, which is consistent with his attack on religion in the very first pages of the novel, when Huck decides that praying and heaven as described by [Miss Watson](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#miss-watson) as lousy alternatives to having fun. Twain's view of religion is lucidly set forth in this and other novels, and he tends to express that devotion to religion is simply a waste of time.

Throughout these chapters, Huck consistently assumes different characters and roles in order to survive and to protect Jim. At the Grangerfords, he pretends to be an orphan, to the slave-hunters he pretends to be an innocent boy living with a sick family, and to the Duke and Dauphin, he pretends to be an orphan traveling with his only slave. Each of these roles provides great insight into Huck's personality. When Buck is killed, Huck is deeply affected by the entire tragedy and even admits to crying upon pulling his friend's dead body out of the river. He wishes that he had not played a role in causing the death of so many people, and, at the same time, realizes how foolish the feud is.

Remarkably, Huck constantly pretends to be less intelligent or less capable than he really is. It is easy to forget that he is only a boy of fourteen when he and Jim are floating down the river together. But, when they meet other people, Huck's interactions are always at a lower, less mature level. For instance, he tells the slave-hunters he is too weak to drag the raft ashore by himself, when in reality he has handled the raft alone many times. When he and Buck are together, he shows far more maturity than Buck, evidenced by his restraint in matters concerning the feud. [Tom Sawyer](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#tom-sawyer) also comes across as a young child in comparison to Huck's common sense approach to life.

Huck's interaction with the Duke and the King is at first puzzling and later annoying. He and Jim both are quite aware that the two men are con artists, forcing the reader to question why they put up with them. In fact, Huck is afraid of the consequences of crossing either man. He compares the men to [Pap](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#pap) and remarks, "I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way." Thus, Huck and Jim realize that rather then stir up trouble with either of the men, it is best to play along and pretend they have been duped. Jim is unhappy with the situation, commenting at the end of Chapter 20 that he would prefer it if no more kings arrived during the trip. Huck seems to be considering a way out of the situation, but is unable to come up with a good plan. Partially, Huck enjoys watching the two men at work, since their actions create more of an adventure for him.

***Significance:***

The Duke and the Dauphin have both made their living in numerous shady ways, but the Duke is particularly fond of acting. He suggests that when they come to a sizeable town, they should hire a hall and perform scenes from Shakespeare. In the next small town they come to, the Duke sets up a temporary printing press and makes a little money. He also prints a notice describing Jim and offering a $200 reward for him so that if they are ever stopped and asked to explain Jim’s presence, they can pretend they have captured him and are going to claim the reward. Meanwhile, the Dauphin manages to collect the sum of $87.75 by impersonating a reformed pirate at a religious revival meeting. He also steals a three-gallon jug of whiskey, which he finds under a wagon. The Duke and the Dauphin then get very drunk together, leading Jim to hope that they will not be joined by any more aristocracy or royalty on this trip.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The [duke](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) and [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) ask [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) if Jim is a runaway slave. Huck says that Jim’s not and tells a lie, that he is an orphan traveling with a family slave. The pair, Huck goes on to say, has to travel at night, because so many people stop their [raft](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-raft) to ask if Jim is a runaway. The duke proposes to invent a way that the four of them can travel in the daytime. Afterward, the duke and king overhaul the wigwam on the raft and decide to sleep in Huck and Jim’s beds. It begins to storm; Huck and Jim are posted as lookouts while the duke and king sleep.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The duke and king immediately reveal themselves to be selfish and exploitative, taking Huck and Jim’s beds and sleeping while Huck and Jim work. Huck doesn’t trust them, and he lies about his relationship with Jim, presumably to protect him from whatever the duke and king might have in store for him. But Huck’s commitment to non-conflict prevents him from disobeying the duke and king.

***Summary Part 2:***

The next morning, the [duke](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) and [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) scheme as to how to make some easy money. They decide to put on a production of Shakespeare and begin to practice for a performance at the next town they reach. Having reached a little town down the bend, however, they’re surprised to find that no one is around. A sick black person in town tells them that all the townspeople have gathered for a religious revival camp-meeting back in the woods. The duke goes to a printing office in town.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Like Huck, the duke and king are fantastic performers, which requires of them a kind of freedom, the freedom to transform into different characters. The two are also adaptable: though they don’t find an audience to play to, they quickly and productively change their plans. While these are good traits, however, they can be misused, as the duke and king misuse them to selfish ends.

***Summary Part 3:***

With [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) still on the [raft](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-raft) and the [duke](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) at the printing office, [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) and the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) go to the meeting in the woods and find thousands of people there. A preacher and his congregants are singing a hymn, and the preacher soon begins to preach. The crowd goes wild. The king joins the preacher on the platform and proclaims to the congregants that he is a reformed pirate who, if given enough money, will return to the Indian Ocean to convert other pirates to Christianity, at last bursting into tears. A hat is passed through the congregation, and the king makes eighty-seven dollars.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The king turns society on its head. By pretending to represent its values, he really serves what he values, which is solely his own, usually material, interest. Even though the king’s story is wildly improbable, the worshippers give him their money, maybe because they are so zealous in their faith that they fail to see the truth before them, which Huck sees all the time: that people are not trustworthy.

***Summary Part 4:***

Meanwhile, the [duke](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) is in town at the printing office, selling bills and advertisements in, and subscriptions to, a town newspaper, making, in total, nine and a half dollars. He also printed a wanted poster describing [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim), so that he and the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) and [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) and Jim can travel by day; for if anyone were to stop them concerning Jim, they could say that they have captured him and are returning him to his owners. All agree that the duke is pretty smart. ***Analysis Part 4:***

The duke’s plan that enables him and his companions to travel by day subverts labels of freedom and enslavement as they are established by society. It is by pretending that Jim is captured that his freedom can be preserved. To generalize this, the duke and king present a way of life in which playing along with society enables one to be free.

***Summary Part 5:***

That night, as [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) comes up to replace [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) as the lookout, Jim asks Huck if he expects them to run into any more kings on their journeys. Huck says he doesn’t, much to Jim’s relief. Jim says that two kings are bad enough, drunk as they currently are. He also tells Huck that he asked the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) to speak French earlier, and that the king told him that he had been out of his country for so long that he had forgotten his native language.

***Analysis Part 5:***

As good and understanding as Jim is, he recognizes that the duke and king are deeply selfish and, like Pap, debauched. That being said, Jim invests such a pure trust in people, despite knowing how bad they can be, that he accepts the con men as what they claim to be, even though the king himself can’t back up his claim to be French.