***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

***Chapter 29:***

***Synopsis:***

The reaction of the King and the Duke to the deceased Peter Wilks' brothers Harvey and William (who was deaf and dumb) is classic. They didn't change their behavior at all except to definitively and publicly view the new arrivals as frauds. Doctor Robinson is not convinced and asks the crowd to confront the royal couple.

They all meet in a tavern. The King tells them how the money has disappeared and how he believes the slaves had taken it. The Doctor then talks to Huck but laughs at him when he says he's English. They then do handwriting test which the King and Duke fail. Harvey then suggests that Peter has a kind of tattoo on his chest and they all start to head over to the cemetery to check the body. During a wild thunderstorm, they dig up the body and find the bag of gold! Huck takes off to find Jim and together they take off in the raft, only to find that the Duke and the King are close behind in a small boat, rowing as fast as they can.

With the appearance of the two new "brothers," much of Huck's plans come to fruition but not in the way he had intended. The gold appears not because of his letters, but because a crowd of people go and dig up the body to find an identifying tattoo on Peter Wilks' chest. The Duke and King are exposed because of a handwriting test. The wrongs are being righted immediately and for all to see. At the end, Huck is appalled, almost to tears, that the Duke and King are right behind the raft.

### ***Analysis***

The real Harvey Wilks makes a speech—according to [Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck), sounding like a real Englishman—explaining why they were delayed and mentioning his brother's broken arm and their lost luggage.

Since there is some debate over who the real heirs are, the two sets of brothers are taken to a tavern for further questioning. After Huck is questioned people say he is a bad liar and not from England. They have the men sign their names to compare it to letters that were sent to Peter. Nothing is resolved since the real Harvey's signature is indecipherable. Then the real Harvey mentions a tattoo and asks the king to say what it is. Though this looks bad for the king, he answers that the tattoo is a thin, blue arrow. While the mob is ready to kill all four men, they instead dig up the body to check the tattoo.

When they dig up the body they find the money, and the mob goes crazy. During the tumult, Huck escapes and runs to the river. He jumps past the raft and [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) has to save him. They take off alone, but a moment later, they see the duke and the king right behind them. Huck is dejected at the sight of them.

Until this time [Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) has been able to lie his way out of a number of dilemmas with his stories seeming to come so quickly and easily. However, this time the lawyer and doctor easily see through his deception. They even add that he is a poor liar and needs to practice if he wants to fool people. While Huck is surely panicking at this moment, he has gotten out of other close calls. On this occasion, however, he lies to people who are educated and that makes the difference.

The mob, on the other hand, is easily swayed. At first they defend the duke and the king. Later they appear to side with the actual brothers. Finally they are ready to string up everyone. Mob mentality is at play here with people simply following along with what the person next to them does rather than thinking for themselves. Rather than benefitting from being part of the group, the mob is dumbed down. While this mob simply seems hungry for blood, they do nothing. That is similar to the other mobs that have appeared in this book. They have been more talk than action—just like Sherburn said.

***Summary:***

* The duke and the king [double down](http://www.visualthesaurus.com/cm/wordroutes/why-is-everyone-doubling-down/). Instead of folding, they insist the newcomers are the frauds.
* The townspeople, now thoroughly disgruntled and confused, can't tell who to trust.
* Lawyer Levi Bell and a big hulking man with no name grill the newly arrived brothers for a while, but they aren't satisfied either way.
* In the meantime, they say, why don't the duke and king hand over the bag of money until they can figure things out?
* Uh, there is no money. See, the slaves stole it just before they were sold.
* Naturally, no one believes the king and duke. They start questioning Huck, who tries to tell them stories about England and this time fails miserably in his lying.
* They take out some old letters that Peter Wilks had saved; letters from his brother Harvey.
* Now comes a handwriting test. Unfortunately, neither the king nor the real Harvey can match the writing.
* The real Harvey explains that the letters were written by William and therefore not in his own hand. Rather inconveniently, the real William has a broken hand and can't supply a writing sample.
* The real Harvey then has a brilliant idea—he knows what was tattooed on his brother's chest; does the king know?
* Although it is clearly time to fold the hand and leave the table, the king won't give up. He responds that it is a thin, blue arrow.
* The real Harvey says that no, it was actually Peter's initials (P-B-W).
* The guys who buried the body don't recall noticing any ink job, so clearly the only thing to do is dig up the body.
* Everyone marches to the graveyard.
* Of course, the first thing they find when they open the coffin is the bag of gold.
* Huck is all, "Later!" and runs away as fast as he can. While he's sprinting by the house, he sees the light in the window, which means Mary Jane is home and can soon clear up matters.
* He makes it to the raft, where apparently Jim has been hanging out all this time, still dressed as a King-Lear-era Arab.
* They push off. Free at last!
* Aaaand, the duke and king show up moments later in a skiff and join the raft.
* Not cool.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

Despite the arrival of the two men who claim to be Harvey and [William Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters), 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) persist in their fraudulence. After the king cracks a joke at the real Harvey’s expense, most of the townspeople present laugh, but there a few who don’t. One of these is [Doctor Robinson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters); another is a lawyer named [Levi Bell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters), who calls the king a liar. Doctor Robinson suggests that the two sets of men claiming to be Harvey and William be affronted with each other at a tavern so that their real identities can be determined.

***Analysis Part 1:***

At last, when the townspeople’s affection-based trust in the duke and king is called into question by the arrival of the real Harvey and William, the people society wouldn’t listen to earlier, people of reason like Doctor Robinson and Levi Bell, are given the attention that their arguments merit. The townspeople are forced into rationality the hard way.

***Summary Part 2:***

At the tavern, [Doctor Robinson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters) asks the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) to produce the bag of gold so that it can be kept safely till the townspeople determine who is who. The king says that the [Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters)’ slaves stole the gold, but nobody really believes him. The king then tells his story, followed by the old man claiming to be [Harvey Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters), and [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) thinks it’s obvious that the king’s is a liar and the old man a truth-teller. Huck, in giving his story, is interrupted by the doctor, who tells him that it is clear he is a bad liar and shouldn’t strain himself.

***Analysis Part 2:***

It is ironic that when the king tells what he believes to be the truth about where the gold is, the townspeople don’t believe him, but that when he tells what he knows to be a lie, which Huck himself thinks very transparent, the townspeople less readily gainsay him, suggesting how easily mislead society is in its search for the truth. Also, Huck has been a rather proficient liar till now; it seems his strain to lie is due to moral qualms or having to lie about something regarding which he has no knowledge.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Levi Bell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters) begins to speak with the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king), and eventually tricks him, the [duke](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king), and the other old man claiming to be [Harvey Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters) to write something down. Bell then produces from his pocket a letter from Harvey, to find that none of the handwriting given him matches that of the letters. The old man explains that his brother William copies his letter, and Levi concedes that his plan to expose the frauds has succeeded only partially: he knows that the duke and king are frauds, but he is unsure about the other two men.

***Analysis Part 3:***

The duke meets his match in Levi Bell, who tricks the veteran trickster into exposing his own lies. It is strange, though, that the townspeople don’t act on the results of Mr. Bell’s test. Whereas it would be reasonable at this point to jail the duke and king, the townspeople seem not to have followed Mr. Bell’s logic at all, and allow the duke and king a chance to escape later. Society does not act logically.

***Summary Part 4:***The real [Harvey Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters) asks the [king](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-duke-and-king) to reveal what is tattooed onto [Peter Wilks](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters)’s chest. Whitening, the king at last says that it is a pale, blue arrow. The old man says that that’s false, that his tattoo is really of the letters “P.B.W.” But the men who buried Peter Wilks say they saw no such mark. The townspeople become convinced that all four men claiming to be Peter’s brothers are frauds, and, enraged, decide to dig up Peter’s body to see if he has any tattoo at all.

***Analysis Part 4:***

The king’s guess as to Peter Wilks’s tattoo is, so audacious, may be what saves him and the duke from immediate incarceration. Again, it is ironic that the townspeople don’t believe the real Harvey Wilks, and they are so irrationally flammable as to denounce even him as a fraud. Their search for truth is farcical at best.

***Summary Part 5:***After disinterring [Peter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters)’s corpse, the townspeople discover the bag of gold that [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) hid in Peter’s coffin. The man who is holding Huck by the arm to prevent him from running away lets go of the boy to get a look at the bag, and Huck immediately makes a run for it. He meets [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) by the [river](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-mississippi-river), and the two begin to drift away. Suddenly, though, Huck hears a familiar sound, the humming of a skiff. It is 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). Huck sinks to the floor of the [raft](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-raft) and almost cries that the two con men are not yet out of his and Jim’s lives.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Even though Huck is helping the Wilkses expose the duke and king, he is wise enough to know that the townspeople are stupidly unpredictable, so, instead of taking his chances with the mob, he makes a bold bid for freedom. But that freedom is limited by the arrival of the duke and king, whose self-interestedness has come to metaphorically imprison Huck and Jim in a life of fraud and close scrapes.