***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

***Chapter 8:***

***Translation:***

When I woke up, the sun was up so high that I figured it was after eight o’clock in the morning. I lay there in the cool shade and the grass thinking about things. I was feeling rested and rather comfortable and satisfied. Through one or two holes I could see the sun, but mostly I just saw big trees all around, and the gloom in the gaps between them. There were flecks of light on the ground where the sun shone through the leaves. The leaves moved around a little bit, which suggested there was a light breeze blowing. A couple of squirrels sat on a limb, squeaking at me in a friendly way. I was awfully lazy and comfortable, and I didn’t want to get up and cook breakfast. I started dozing off again when I thought I heard a loud “boom!” farther up the river. I got up, rested on my elbows, and listened. Pretty soon I heard it again. I hopped up and went to look through a hole in the leaves. I saw a bunch of smoke over the water a long ways upriver. If drifted next to a ferryboat full people that was floating down the river. I knew what was wrong now. “Boom!” I saw the white smoke squirt out of the ferry’s side. They were firing cannon over the water, trying to make my body rise to the surface. I was pretty hungry, but it wouldn’t make sense for me to start a fire since they might see the smoke. So I sat there and watched the cannon smoke and listened to the boom. The river was a mile wide at that point, and it always looked pretty on a summer morning, so I was enjoying watching them hunt for my remains. If only I had a bite to eat. Just then I happened to remember how people always put [quicksilver](javascript:void(0);)in loaves of bread and set them on the water, because they always go straight to a drowned body and stop. So I told myself I’d keep a lookout and give them a good show if I see any loaves floating by. I moved to the Illinois side of the island to try my luck over there, and I wasn’t disappointed. A big double loaf came along, and I was able to use a long stick to pull it toward me. But my foot slipped, pushing it further away. Of course, I was standing where the current came closest to the shore—I knew enough to know that. Pretty soon another one came along, and this time I got it. I took out the plug, shook out the little dab of quicksilver, and took a bite. It was “baker’s bread”—the kind of bread made from wheat that rich people eat. It wasn’t the cheap stuff, like [corn pone](javascript:void(0);), that the poor folk eat. I settled down in a good place on a log among the leaves, munching the bread and watching the ferry. I was feeling pretty good. And then something struck me. I figured the widow or the parson or someone else prayed that this bread would find me. And it did. So there isn’t any doubt that there’s something to prayer; that is, there’s something to it when a person like the widow or the parson prays. It doesn’t work for me, and I figure it only works for the right kind of people. I lit a pipe and had a good long smoke and kept on watching. The ferry was floating with the current, and I figured it would come so close to where I was sitting, just like the bread had, that I’d have a chance to see who was on board. When it got close, I put out my pipe and went to the spot where I pulled out the bread and laid down behind a log on the bank in a little open place. I could peer through in the spot where the log forked. Pretty soon the ferry came along. It got so close to me that they could have extended a plank and walked to shore. Almost everyone I knew was on board: pap, Judge Thatcher, Bessie Thatcher, Jo Harper, Tom Sawyer and his old Aunt Polly, Sid and Mary, and plenty of others. Everyone was talking about the murder, until the captain interrupted and said: “Look sharp now. The current comes closest to land here, and maybe he has washed ashore and gotten tangled among the brush at the water’s edge. I hope so anyway.” I didn’t hope so. They all crowded around and leaned over the railing until it seemed like they were right up in my face. They kept still, looking with all their might. I could see them perfectly clearly, but they couldn’t see me. Then the captain called out: “Fire!” The cannon let off such a loud blast right in front of me that it made me deaf and almost blind with noise and smoke. I thought I was a dead man. If they’d actually put a cannon ball in there, I imagine they would’ve found the corpse they were looking for. Well, I saw I wasn’t hurt, thank goodness. The boat floated on down the river and disappeared around the shoulder of the island. I could hear the booming now and then but it got farther and farther away. After an hour or so I couldn’t hear it any more. The island was three miles long, and I’d figured they’d reached the foot of it and had given up the search. But, no, they continued for awhile longer. They turned around the foot of the island and used steam power to move up the channel on the Missouri side of the river. They boomed once in a while as they went. I crossed over to that side and watched them. When they reached the head of the isand, they stopped shooting and went over to the Missouri shore to head back to town. I knew I was all right now—no one would be coming looking for me any more. I got my traps out of the canoe and made a nice little camp in the thick woods. I used my blankets to fashion a makeshift tent to put my things under so that the rain wouldn’t get them wet. I caught a catfish and cut it open with my saw. Toward sundown, I lit my campfire and had supper. Then I set up a fishing line to catch some fish for breakfast. When it got dark, I sat by my campfire smoking and feeling pretty good about things. But pretty soon I got kind of lonely, so I went and sat on the bank and listened to the sound of the current. I counted the stars and the driftwood and rafts that floated down the river. Then I went to bed. There’s no better way of passing time when you’re lonely than going to bed. You can’t stay lonely when you’re sleeping, so the feeling soon passes. Three days and nights passed this way. Nothing changed—everything stayed the same. On the fourth day I explored the island. I was boss of the island—it all belonged to me, so to speak, and I wanted to know all about it. Mainly, I just wanted to kill some time. I found plenty of ripe strawberries. I also found green summer grapes. The green raspberries and blackberries were just beginning to show, and I figured they’d ripened soon so I could eat them. I wandered around in the deep woods until I figured I wasn’t too far from the foot of the island. I had my gun with me, but I hadn’t shot anything—I kept it for protection. Maybe I’d kill some game on the way home. Around this time I almost stepped on a good-sized snake. It went sliding off through the grass and flowers, and I chased after it, trying to get a shot at it. I ran along until all of a sudden I came to the ashes of a campfire that were still smoking. My heart jump up into my lungs. I didn’t hesitate a moment, but uncocked my gun and backtracked on my tiptoes as fast as I could. Every now and then I stopped briefly among the thick leaves and listened, but I was breathing so hard that I couldn’t hear anything else. I slunk a little ways further, then listened again. I did this again and again. If I saw a stump, I thought it was a man. If I stepped on a stick and broke it, I lost my breath. I felt like someone had chopped my breath into two uneven pieces and given me the short half. I wasn’t feeling too good about the situation when I got back to my camp. I wasn’t panicking, but I figured this wasn’t the time to take any chances. So I got all my traps into my canoe and made sure they were hidden. I put out the fire and scattered the ashes around to make it look like the remains of an old camp. Then I climbed a tree. I bet I was up in that tree for two hours. I didn’t see or hear anything, but I THOUGHT I saw and heard about a thousand different things. I figured I couldn’t stay up there forever, so I finally got down, but I stayed in the thick woods and kept a close watch all the time. All I had to eat were berries and what was left over from breakfast. I was pretty hungry by nightfall. So before moonrise, when it was still really dark, I slid the canoe out from shore and paddled about a quarter of a mile over to the Illinois bank. I went out in the woods and cooked supper. I’d almost made up my mind to stay there for the night when I heard a PLUNKETY-PLUNK, PLUNKETY-PLUNK sound. Horses are coming, I said to myself, and then I heard people’s voices. I got everything into the canoe as fast as I could, and then crept through the woods to see what was going on. I hadn’t gotten far when I heard a man say: “We better camp here if we can find a good place. The horses are pretty much beat. Let’s look around.” I didn’t wait, but shoved off and paddled away. I tied the canoe up back in the old place on the island, and reckoned I’d just sleep in it. I didn’t sleep much. I couldn’t because I was thinking so much. And every time I woke up I thought someone had be by the neck. So the sleep wasn’t very sound. Pretty soon I told myself that I couldn’t live this way any more. I told myself that I’d find out who was on the island with me. Well, that made me feel better right away. So I took my paddle and slid out from shore just a step or two, then let the canoe drop down among the shadows. The moon was shining, and outside the shadows it made everything almost as bright as day. I drifted along for about an hour. Everything was deathly still and quiet. By this time I’d reach the foot of the island. A cool, fluttering breeze began to blow, which told me that the night was just about over. I paddled the canoe toward the shore. Then I got out my gun and slipped out of the canoe and toward the edge of the woods. I sat down on a log and looked through the leaves. I saw the moon set and darkness blanket the river. It wasn’t too long before I saw a pale streak of light over the tree tops. I knew the day was coming, so I took my gun and headed toward the campfire I’d seen before, stopping every minute or two to listen. I wasn’t having any luckf finding the place. Pretty soon, though, I caught a glimpse of a fire far off through the trees. I went toward it, cautiously and slowly. Eventually I was close enough to be able to look around, and I saw a man on the ground. I almost had a fit. The man had a blanket around his head, which was almost resting in the fire. I sat there behind a clump of bushes about six feet away from him, and didn’t take my eyes off him. The sky was turning grey with daylight now. Pretty soon he yawned and stretched and shoved off the blanket. It was Miss Watson’s slave Jim! I was sure glad to see it was him! I said: “Hell, Jim!” and jumped out from my hiding place in the bushes. He jumped up and stared at me wildly. Then he dropped down to his knees, put his hands together, and said: “Don’t hurt me! Don’t! I’ve never harmed a ghost. I’ve always liked dead people, and done all I could for them. You go and get in the river where you belong, and don’t do nothing to Ol’ Jim, who was always your friend.” Well, it didn’t take long to mke him see I wasn’t dead. I was so glad to see him—now I wouldn’t be lonely. I told him I wasn’t afraid of HIM telling everyone where I was. I talked quite a while, but he only sat there looking at me without saying anything. I said: “It’s full daylight now. Let’s get breakfast. Why don’t you get the fire going again?” “What’s the use making up a campfire to cook strawberries and the like? You don’t have a gun, don’t you? If you had a gun, we can get something better than strawberries.” “Stawberries and stuff,” I repeated. “Is that what you live on?” “I couldn’t get anything else,” he said. “Why, how long have you been on the island, Jim?” “I came here the night after you were killed.” “What? You’ve been here all that time?” “Yes indeed.” “And you haven’t had anything to eat but that kind of junk?” “No sir, nothing else.” “Well, you must be almost starved then, aren’t you?” “I bet I could eat a horse. I really could. How long have you been on the island?” “Since the night I got killed.” “No! What have you been eating? Oh, but you have a gun. Yep, you have a gun. That’s good. Now you go and kill something, and I’ll cook it up on the fire.” So we went over to where the canoe was, and while he built a fire in a grassy opening among the trees, I pulled out some cornmeal, bacon, and coffee. I also grabbed the coffee pot, the frying pan, sugar, and tin cups. Jim was amazed, since he thought I’d gotten all that stuff through magic. I caught a nice big catfish, and Jim cleaned it with his knife before frying it. When breakfast was ready, we lounged on the grass and ate it while it was still smoking hot. Since Jim was half-starved, he set to eating with all his might. Once we were stuffed, he lazed about. Eventually, Jim said: “But look here, Huck. If you weren’t killed in the shanty, then who was?” I told him the whole story, and he said it was pretty smart. He said Tom Sawyer couldn’t have come up with a better plan than that. Then I said: “Why are you here, Jim? And how’d you get here?” He looked pretty uncomfortable, and didn’t saying anything for a minute. Then he said: “Maybe I shouldn’t tell you.” “Why, Jim?” “Well, I have my reasons. But you wouldn’t tell on me if I were to tell you, would you, Huck? “I’ll be damned if I would, Jim.” “Well, I believe you, Huck. I… I ran away.” “Jim!” “But remember, you said you wouldn’t tell! You know you said you wouldn’t tell, Huck.” “That’s right, I did say that. I said I wouldn’t, and I’ll keep my word. Honest to God, I will. People would call me a low-down abolitionist and despise me for not telling, but I don’t care. I’m not going to tell. Besides, I’m not going back home either. So, now, tell me all about it. Well, it happened like this. Old Missus—I mean, Miss Watson—picks on me all the time and treats me pretty rough, but she always said she wouldn’t sell me down to [New Orleans](javascript:void(0);). But then I noticed that there was a n----- trader hanging around the house a lot, and I began to worry. Well, late one night, I crept to the door, which wasn’t quite shut, and I heard old missus tell the widow that she was going to sell me down to New Orleans. She didn’t want to, but she said she could get eight hundred dollars for me, which was too much money that to resist. The widow tried to talk her out of it, but I didn’t wait around to hear the rest. I ran away pretty fast, I tell you. “I booked it down the hill, expecting to steal a skiff along the shore somewhere above town. But there were people around, so I hid inn the old [cooper](javascript:void(0);)’s shop on the bank and waited for everyone to leave. Well, since there was always someone around, I stayed there all night. Skiffs began to go by starting around about six in the morning, and by about eight or nine, everyone was buzzing about how your pap had come to town saying you’d been killed. These last skiffs were full of ladies and gentlemen headed over to see the murder scene. Sometimes they’d pull ashore to rest before starting across the river. Through their conversation I learned all about the murder. I was really sorry to hear you’d been killed, Huck, but I’m not anymore. “I lay under the wood shavings all day. I was hungry, but I wasn’t afraid. I knew the old missus and the widow were heading to a [camp meeting](javascript:void(0);)right after breakfast and would be gone all day. They know that I take the cattle out at around sunrise, so they wouldn’t expect to see me around. They wouldn’t miss me until nightfall. The other servants wouldn’t miss me because they take the day off whenever the widow and missus leave. “Well, when it got dark, I snuck up the river road and went about two miles or more to where there weren’t any houses. I’d made up my mind about what I was going to do. You see, if I kept trying to run away on foot, the dogs would track me down. But if I stole a skiff to cross the river, they’d miss the skiff and would know I’d landed on the other side. Then they would be able to pick up my tracks. So, I said to myself, I need a raft because it won’t leave ANY tracks. “Pretty soon I saw light coming around the point, so I waded out into the river and shoved a log ahead of me to help me swim. I swam more than halfway across the river, so I could mix in with the driftwood. I kept my head down low and swam against the current until a raft came along. I swam to the back of it and grabbed hold. It got really dark and cloudy for awhile, but I climbed on board and laid down on the planks. There were men on board, but they were over by the lantern in the middle of the raft. The river was rising and there was a good current, so I figured I’d be about twenty-five miles down the river by about four in the morning. Then I’d slip back into the water just before daylight and swim ashore to hide in the woods on the Illinois side of the river.” “But I didn’t have any luck. When we were almost at the head of the island, a man with a lantern began to walk toward the back of the raft. I saw that it wasn’t any use to wait, so I slid overboard and started swimming toward the island. I thought I could land anywhere, but it turned out the bank was too steep. I was almost to the foot of the island before I found a good place. I went into the wood and decided not to bother with rafts any more because of the men with lanterns. I had my pipe and some tobacco and matches in my cap. They weren’t wet, so I was okay.” “So all this time you haven’t had any meat or bread to eat? Why didn’t you get some mud turtles?” “How was I supposed to get them? You can’t sneak up on them and grab them. And what was I going to hit them with? A rock? How could anyone do that at night? I wasn’t about to show myself on the bank in the daytime.” “Well, that’s true. You’ve had to stay in the woods this whole time, of course. Did you hear them shooting the cannon?” “Oh yes. I knew they were looking for you. I saw them go by here—I watched them through the bushes.” Some young birds came along and flew in stints about a yard or two before landing on branches. Jim said this was a sign that it was going to rain. He said it was a sign when young chickens flew that way, and he figured it was the same was true for young birds. I was going to catch some of them, but Jim wouldn’t let me. He said it would only bring death. He said his father had been really sick once. After some people caught a few birds, Jim’s granny said his father would die and he did. Jim also said if was bad luck to count the things that you are going to cook for dinner. The same thing would happen if you shook out the tablecloth after sundown. And he said that if a man who owned a beehive died, the bees had to be told about it before sun up the next morning. Otherwise the bees would be so weak that they would quit work and die. Jim said bees wouldn’t sting idiots, but I didn’t believe that because I’d played around with bees lots of times and they never stung me. I’d heard some of these superstitions before, but not all of them. Jim knew about all kinds of signs. He said he knew almost all of them. I said it seemed to me that all the signs were about bad luck, so I asked him if there were any good luck signs. He said: “Only a few—but they aren’t much use to anyone. Why would you want to know when good luck’s coming? So you can keep it away?” Then he said: “If you’ve got hairy arms and a hairy chest, it’s a sign that you’re going to be rich. Well, there is some use in a sign like that because it gives you a glimpse into the distant future. Then you’d know that you were going to be rich even if you had to be poor for a while at first. It might keep you from getting discouraged and killing yourself.” “Do you have hairy arms and a hairy chest, Jim?” “Why ask that question? Can’t you see that I do?” “Well, are you rich?” “No, but I was rich once, and I’m going to be rich again. Once I had fourteen dollars. But I lost it all on bad investments.” “What did you invest in, Jim?” “Well, first I bought some stock.” “What kid of stock?” “Livestock—cattle. I invested ten dollars in a cow. But I’m not going to risk any more money in stock. The cow up and died before it went to market.” “So you lost the ten dollars?” “No, I didn’t lose it all. I only lost about nine of it. I sold the hide and tail for a dollar and ten cents.” “So you have five dollars and ten cents left. Did you invest any more after that?” “Yes. You know that one-legged n----- that belongs to old Mister Bradish? Well, he set up his own bank and said anyone that a dollar investment would return four dollars more at the end of the year. Well, all the n------ put their money in the bank, even though they didn’t have much. I was the only one that had a lot. So I held out for a better interest rate than four dollars and said I’d start my own bank if he didn’t give me more. Of course, that n----- wanted to keep me out of business because he said there wasn’t enough business for two banks. He said if I put in my five he’d pay me thirty-five dollars at the end of the year. “So I did. Then I figured I’d invest the thirty-five dollars initially to keep things moving. There was a n----- named Bob that had caught a wooden [flat](javascript:void(0);)in the river without his master’s knowledge. I bought it off him and told him I’d give him thirty-five dollars at the end of the year. But someone stole the flat that night, and the next day the one-legged n----- said the bank had gone bust. So none of us got our money back.” “So what did you do with the remaining ten cents, Jim?” “Well, I was going to spend it, but I had a dream that told me to give it to a n----- named Balum. His nickname was Balum’s Ass, because he’s a chucklehead, you know. But they say he’s lucky, and I knew I certainly wasn’t lucky. The dream said to let Balum invest the ten cents for me so that I could make a profit. Well, Balum had heard a preacher in church who said that whoever gave money to the poor was lending to the Lord and was bound to get his money back a hundred times over. So he donated the ten cents and then waited to see what would happen.” “And what happened, Jim?” “Nothing. I couldn’t manage to collect that money, and neither could Balum. I’m never going to lend money unless I’m sure it’s safe. Bound to get your money back a hundred times, the preacher said! If I could get ten CENTS back, I’d call us even and would be glad of it.” “Well, it’s okay anyway, Jim, as long as you’re going to be rich again at some point.” “Yes. And I’m rich now when I think about it. I own myself, and I’m worth eight hundred dollars. I wish I had the money. Then I wouldn’t ever want anything else.

***Summary:***

* When Huck wakes up the next morning, everyone is out on the river searching for his body.
* They have all these sophisticated technological methods of carcass-location, such as firing a canon and floating bread across the water.
* The upside is that Huck gets to eat some bread, even if it's a little soggy.
* He sees the body-searching boat with everyone on it: Pap, Judge Thatcher and his family, Tom Sawyer and his Aunt Polly, etc. They're all talking about his murder.
* Huck passes the next three days on Jackson Island, but admits that he's feeling pretty lonesome.
* As time goes by, Huck senses he's not alone on the island, and by "sense" we mean he finds someone else there. Namely Jim, Miss Watson's slave and the man with the magic hairball.
* Jim immediately assumes that Huck is a ghost and begs that he not hurt him.
* Huck convinces him that he's not actually dead, which is harder than it sounds.
* The pair catches a fish and cooks it for dinner, and then Huck wants to know why Jim is on the island. Before he'll say, Jim makes him promise not to tell.
* He's run off.
* Huck is shocked, but knows he has to keep his word to Jim not to tell.
* See, Jim overheard Miss Watson planning to sell him to New Orleans, which would have separated him from his family. So he ran away, on the same night that Huck did so himself.
* Hm, are we seeing some parallels in their situation?
* Also, Jim is the most superstitious guy ever. Birds fly by, so he knows it's going to rain. Catching said birds would mean death. Counting said birds would mean bad luck. Etc.
* Huck asks why there are so many bad luck signs and so few good luck signs.
* Well, there's no reason to know about good luck ahead of time—what do you want to do, avoid it?
* Here's one good luck sign: because Jim has a hairy chest, he's going to be rich someday.
* He tells a story of $10 he once had but, through a series of bad "investments," lost.
* However, he makes the point that, if Miss Watson was going to sell him for $800, he's actually pretty rich already, what with owning himself and all.

***Synopsis:***

The next morning, a ferryboat passes Jackson Island, carrying Pap, Judge Thatcher and his daughter Bessie (known as Becky Thatcher in Tom Sawyer), Tom Sawyer, Tom’s aunt Polly, some of Huck’s young friends, and “plenty more” on board, all discussing Huck’s apparent murder. They shoot cannonballs over the water and float loaves of bread with mercury inside, in hopes of finding Huck’s corpse. Huck, still hiding carefully, catches one of the loaves and eats it. He is pleased that they are using such high-quality bread to search for him, but he feels guilty that his disappearance has upset the Widow Douglas and the others who care about him.

Huck spends three peaceful, lonely days on the island, living on plentiful berries and fish and able to smoke whenever he wishes. He spends his nights counting ferryboats and stars on the tranquil river. On the fourth day, while exploring the island, Huck is delighted to find Jim, who at first thinks Huck is a ghost. Huck is pleased that he will not be alone on the island but shocked when Jim explains that he has run away. Jim says that he overheard Miss Watson discussing selling him for $800 to a slave trader who would take him to New Orleans, separating him from his family. Jim left before Miss Watson had a chance to decide whether or not to sell him. Jim and Huck discuss superstitions—in which Jim is well-versed—and Jim’s failed investments, most of which have been scams. Jim is not too disappointed by his failures, since he still has his hairy arms and chest, which, according to his superstitions, are a sign of future wealth.

***Critical Analysis:***

[Huck](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/huckleberry-finn) wakes up on Jackson's Island to hear a ferryboat firing a cannon. He knows that this will bring a drowned body to the surface and realizes that they must be searching for him. Huck also remembers that another way to find a body is with a loaf of bread filled with quicksilver. He scouts the shoreline and finds a large loaf, then wonders if prayer really works. Someone, after all, had prayed that the bread find his body, and that prayer had worked.

Confident that he is now safe, Huck explores the island until he stumbles upon fresh campfire ashes. Huck climbs a tree for safety but curiosity sends him back to the site, and he discovers Miss Watson's slave, [Jim](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/jim). After convincing Jim that he is not a ghost, Huck learns that Jim has run away because Miss Watson was going to sell him down the river to New Orleans.

During the evening, Jim impresses Huck with his knowledge of superstition.

Huck's contemplation of prayer brims with humor as he tries to fathom the logic of how the quicksilver bread found him. The combination of a superstitious practice (quicksilver bread) and a religious custom (prayer) shows that Huck's beliefs include a portion of both. As reluctant as he is to embrace Miss Watson's religion, he still holds a fearful respect of its power. The same is true for the practice of superstition.

When Huck first stumbles upon Jim, he does not immediately ask why Jim is on the island, nor does he worry that Jim will tell anyone he is alive. Instead, Huck's first reaction is one of joy at the companionship. More important, Jim's reintroduction extends the important theme of freedom and civilization from Huck to Jim, and sets up the circumstances that will lead to their odyssey down the Mississippi.

Huck's continued struggle with society's restrictions and laws now includes the more serious issue of race and slavery. Huck's comment that "people would call me a low-down Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum" shows that his society does not tolerate those who denounce slavery. This is Huck's first important break with society, but a break that would make his return nearly impossible, as he realizes. The stance is similar to [Twain](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/mark-twain-biography)'s own boyhood experience where slavery was an accepted practice in the South. Although Huck has shown the tendency to reject society's beliefs, he cannot immediately dismiss its influence and teachings.

This chapter also serves to establish the relationship between Huck and Jim and their roles in contrast to one another. Whereas Huck's initial representation of Jim was stereotypical, in this chapter, Jim quickly reveals himself as an authority on superstition. Huck's literal nature does not allow him to be impressed easily, but his belief in signs and superstition elevates Jim, who "knowed all kinds." In addition, Twain was fond of using a twin image in order to develop his themes. In some works the image is obvious (for example, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *The Prince and the Pauper*). In others, the image is more subtle. In this work, [Tom](https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/a/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/character-analysis/tom-sawyer) and Huck are twins with differing dominate personality characteristics: Tom, the romantic, and Huck, the realist. Likewise, Jim and Huck are twin-like, each searching for his own kind of freedom, but one black, the other white.

Glossary

**corn-pone**corn meal.

**sand in my craw**courage.

**fan-tods**the nervous fidgets.

**plug er dog-leg**a plug of cheap chewing tobacco.

**taller**tallow, the nearly colorless solid fat extracted from the natural fat of cattle or sheep, used in making candles and soaps.

***Critical Study(Ch5-6):***

[Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) awakens from a nap on Jackson's Island and is ready to go back to sleep when he sees a ferryboat pass carrying people he knows. Cannonballs are shot over the water with the intention of bringing Huck's body up to the surface. Huck knows that sometimes bread is used during a river sweep for bodies and manages to find a loaf to satisfy his hunger. He then feels bad for upsetting those who care about him.

Huck explores the island for the next few days. On the fourth day of exploring he comes across a fresh campfire. He is very scared and returns to his camp, packs up his canoe and climbs a tree to see what is going on. The next morning Huck returns to the area and finds [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim), Miss Watson's slave. Huck is happy to see him, but [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) thinks he's a ghost. Huck tells Jim his story and then Jim explains that he escaped from Miss Watson because he overheard her saying she is going to sell him down river.

Jim and Huck discuss superstitions. Jim also talks about the money he has lost to scams.

The meeting between [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) on the island begins the main part of the story. When Huck and [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) share their reasons for running away, it is instantly clear how much they have in common. Both are on the outskirts of society. Both are escaping the control of others. Both seek to rule their own fate. In many ways they are on the same level.

However, in the pre-Civil War South, the black person is always lower than everyone else. Those in town are using the cannon to look for Huck. They are genuinely saddened by his absence and do all they can to find him—even if it is just his dead body. If they were to find Jim, however, they might turn the cannon on him. Slaves are viewed as subhuman and the property of owners who can do nearly anything they want to them. Huck realizes Jim's position. By not turning Jim in Huck risks being called "a low-down Abolitionist."

However, Huck is willing to risk animosity and worse, as he has broken from society and no longer feels bound by its rules. When Huck gives Jim his word that he will not tell, that is more valuable than the rules of society. Huck is forging his own way.

Jim's reaction to Huck when he first sees him is comical. He comes off as silly and childlike. Yet during the conversation about superstition, Huck is impressed with Jim's knowledge. Jim no longer seems like the silly slave but is instead a knowledgeable man. This is the beginning of Huck's education about slaves and black people. Ultimately he will see Jim as an equal.

***Significance:***

Huck wakes up on Jackson's Island late the next day and hears a cannon being fired. A ferryboat filled with his friends comes down the river firing a cannon in hopes of bringing his dead body to the surface. The search parties have also set loaves of bread filled with mercury afloat, believing the mercury and bread will be attracted to his body. Knowing the loaves will be floating around the area, Huck searches for one and enjoys eating it for lunch.

After a few days, Huck begins exploring the island. While following and hunting a large snake, he accidentally stumbles into a clearing with a still smoking campfire. Out of fear, he retreats to his campsite and paddles over to the Illinois side of the river. However, he soon returns for the night and sleeps poorly as he is overwhelmed with fear for who else might be inhabiting the island.

The next morning Huck decides to find out who else is on the island with him. He paddles his canoe down to the other campsite and hides in the brush. Soon he sees [Jim](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#jim), the slave [Tom Sawyer](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#tom-sawyer) played tricks on. Out of joy for finding a friend on the island, Huck rushes out and greets him. Jim nearly dies of fright when he sees Huck, whom he believes to be dead. Huck tells him the story about how he faked his murder. Jim relates that he overhead [Miss Watson](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/study-guide/character-list#miss-watson) telling the widow that she was going to sell him down the river for a good sum of money. To avoid being sold, Jim ran away, and has been hiding out on Jackson's island.

Jim starts to tell Huck about various superstitious signs which the slaves watch out for. When some birds go hopping along the ground, stopping every few feet, Jim comments that means it will rain soon. He also tells Huck a story about how he lost a large sum of money, fourteen dollars at the time, by speculating. First, Jim bought a cow that died, and then invested with another slave who was setting up a "bank." Unfortunately, the bank lost all its money and poor Jim had nothing left.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) wakes and takes in his surroundings, like a couple squirrels, Huck says, that “jabbered at me very friendly.” Soon Huck hears a “boom!” sound. Looking upstream, he sees a ferry firing a canon, which, Huck figures, is being done to make his own carcass come to the [river](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-mississippi-river)’s surface. Hungry, Huck remembers that people looking for carcasses in the river put quicksilver in loaves of bread and float them down the river, because they always go right to the drowned body and stop there. Huck retrieves such a loaf and is pleased to learn that it tastes better than the “low-down corn-pone” that he usually eats.

***Analysis Part 1:***

After being locked up with the hostile Pap, Huck finds even squirrels to be welcoming. However, this scene is later contrasted with scenes in which nature is very dangerous. Although Huck is free in nature, he could not survive there without human society for very long. It’s ironic, though, that here society provides Huck, albeit unknowingly, with better food to eat when he is presumed dead, than when he is alive.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) thinks that the [Widow](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-widow-douglas-and-miss-watson) or parson must have prayed for a loaf of bread to find his body, and, indeed, one did. He figures that when somebody like the Widow or parson prays, the prayer is answered, but that when someone like him prays, the prayer goes unanswered.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Huck’s thoughts on prayer have changed by this passage: whereas before he puts no stock in prayer, here Huck comes to think that good people’s prayers are answered, and that bad people’s are not. He sees himself as bad, because society has long equated his poverty and wildness with badness, though it is obvious to readers that Huck is not bad at all, revealing society’s hypocrisy.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) hides behind a long near the island’s shore to observe the ferry as it passes. Many people he knows are onboard, including [Pap](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/pap), [Judge Thatcher](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters), and [Tom Sawyer](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/tom-sawyer), all of whom are talking about Huck’s “murder.” The captain tells them to scan the shore of Jackson Island for the corpse, and all of them do so, but none see Huck even though he is very close by. The cannon is fired, and Huck imagines that, had it been loaded, the blast would have killed him. The ferry drifts on downstream.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Huck is maybe too curious about how society thinks about his “murder” for his own good. Overhearing discussions onboard the ferry almost gets Huck wounded, after all, and he could have even been killed. He would do well to enjoy his freedom at a distance from people, at least for now.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) makes a tent, catches a catfish to eat, and puts in more fishing lines to catch breakfast. He begins to feel lonesome, however, and decides to go to bed. Such is his routine for the next three days and nights. He thinks of himself as the “boss” of Jackson’s Island. One day, however, after running across a snake and trying to shoot it, Huck comes across the yet-smoking ashes of a campfire. He nervously returns to his camp and hides his things. He himself hides in a tree. When it gets dark, Huck paddles to the Illinois bank of the [river](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/symbols/the-mississippi-river), prepares supper, and decides to stay put for the rest of the night.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Huck is not as free in nature as would make him comfortable. He has to contend with life-threatening dangers like snakes, and also other people out in nature, like those looking for him who could revoke his freedom, or, even more dangerous, violent fugitives. Huck is in need of people he can trust and who can help him at this point. He will experience difficulties impossible to overcome without friends.

***Summary Part 5:***

Suddenly, [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) hears the sound of horses and human voices. He shoves out in his canoe and ties up back to his old place. There he tries to get some sleep, but can’t, “for thinking.” Restless, Huck goes into the woods with his gun, to re-find the campfire ashes he discovered earlier. Though he has no luck, later he does see a fire. A man is sleeping nearby: it is [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim). Huck greets him, but Jim jumps up, then falls to his knees, begging Huck not to hurt him, for he thinks Huck is a ghost. Huck succeeds in convincing Jim that he is not, in fact, a ghost. Huck also finds that he is no longer lonesome having found Jim.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Just as things become desperate for him, Huck discovers a friend in Jim, with whom he can negotiate the difficulties of nature and of society alike. With characteristic superstition, however, Jim, thinking that Huck was murdered, is afraid that Huck is a ghost.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) learns that [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) came to Jackson’s Island the night after Huck was allegedly killed, and that the runaway slave has been living on nothing but strawberries. Huck sets up camp and brings out his provisions of meal, bacon, and coffee, all of which Jim thinks is done by witchcraft. Huck also catches a catfish, which he and Jim enjoy for breakfast. The two eat till they’re stuffed and laze in the grass.

***Analysis part 6:***

That Jim thinks that Huck summons creature comforts by witchcraft speaks to how poorly Jim has been faring; because the target of racial oppression, Jim can’t eat as well as Huck, and so can’t fathom doing so without magic being the cause. Together, Huck and Jim can live in relative peace.

***Summary Part 7:***

If it wasn’t [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) killed in the cabin, [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) asks Huck, who was killed? Huck then explains his escape to Jim, who praises the plan as being worthy of [Tom Sawyer](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/tom-sawyer) himself. In turn, Huck asks Jim how he came to be on Jackson’s Island. Jim, reticent at first, has Huck swear to silence, which Huck does, and he assures Jim that he will honor his oath even if people call him a “low down Abolitionist.” Jim explains that [Miss Watson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/the-widow-douglas-and-miss-watson) treated him poorly and often threatened to sell him to a slaveholder in New Orleans. One night, Jim overheard Miss Watson say that, even though she doesn’t want to sell him, she could get eight hundred dollars for him, and so has decided to sell. Consequently, Jim fled, doing so by water to avoid being tracked by men and dogs. He eventually swam up to Jackson’s Island.

***Analysis Part 8:***

While it is good of Huck to swear to keep Jim’s secret, it is ironic that he thinks of being called an abolitionist a bad thing. Abolitionists fight for the freedom of the oppressed, which, the novel holds, is better than fighting to oppress. Though Huck doesn’t understand that now, he will later in the novel. This section of the novel also reveals some of the cruelties of slavery as an institution: Miss Watson, who claims to be a Christian, values money more than she does a human who, in Christian belief, has an immortal and infinitely valuable soul. Jim is also treated cruelly, and hunted like an animal.

***Summary Part 9:***

Some young birds fly by [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) and [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn). Jim says that this is a sign that it is going to rain, for chickens flying by signify rain, and so, Jim figures, the same must be the case with young birds. Huck makes to kill one of the birds, but Jim stops him saying that doing so would be death. Jim explains that his father was once very sick, and one of Jim’s relatives caught a bird, and Jim’s grandma said his father would die, and his father did. Jim goes on to list things that bring bad luck, like counting what one is going to eat and shaking a tablecloth after sundown.

***Analysis Part 9:***

In the wild, Huck and Jim need to do whatever they can to survive, but superstitions sometimes get in the way of common-sense survivalist actions, like Jim’s superstition about birds. Huck and Jim could eat the birds, but, because of an irrational, impractical superstition, they refrain from doing so. Jim’s list of superstitions reveals how arbitrary superstitions are.

Summary Part 10:

[Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) asks if there are any good-luck signs. [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) says there are very few, and that they’re not very useful, because there’s no reason to know if good luck is coming one’s way. For example, Jim says, if you have hairy arms and a hairy chest, it’s a sign that you will be rich. Huck asks Jim if he has hairy arms and a hairy chest, which Jim does. Though Jim admits he isn’t rich now, he says he was once rich, recounting how he lost his money speculating in livestock and a bank. But at last, Jim thinks, he is rich now, because he owns himself, and he is worth eight hundred dollars. He wishes he had that money, because then he “wouldn’ want no mo’.”

Analysis Part 10:

Here Jim reveals that underlying his superstition is an expectation that bad luck is always around the corner, which is well founded considering that Jim is socioeconomically and racially oppressed. He expects bad things because he is often afflicted with bad things. Jim also reveals here how a concept like wealth is relative. Even though he is not wealthy by societal standards, he knows that he is wealthy if only because he’s free. Freedom alone makes one sufficiently rich. The concept of Jim getting $800 for himself also, though, highlights the craziness of anyone getting money for selling anyone else. Jim is worth more than $800—he’s worth an infinite amount as a human being. By having Jim value himself according to slavery’s terms, the novel shows how slavery makes no sense.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

THE sun was up so high when I waked that I judged it was after eight o'clock. I laid there in the grass and the cool shade thinking about things, and feeling rested and ruther comfortable and satisfied. I could see the sun out at one or two holes, but mostly it was big trees all about, and gloomy in there amongst them. There was freckled places on the ground where the light sifted down through the leaves, and the freckled places swapped about a little, showing there was a little breeze up there. A couple of squirrels set on a limb and jabbered at me very friendly. (8.1)

***Explanation 1:***

No waking up and rushing off to school or church here: Huck just waits for the sun to wake him up and then just admires the world around him. Even the squirrels recognize him as a friend—he might as well be one of them.

***Quotation 2:***

"No! W'y, what has you lived on? But you got a gun. Oh, yes, you got a gun. Dat's good. Now you kill sumfn en I'll make up de fire." (8.39)

***Explanation 2:***

Check this out: Huck has the gun, and Jim has the fire. Alone, they're useless (although at least Jim would be warm.) But together, they have heat, food, and companionship—everything a guy needs, right?

***Quotation 3:***

Well, I warn't long making him understand I warn't dead. I was ever so glad to see Jim. I warn't lonesome now. I told him I warn't afraid of HIM telling the people where I was. I talked along, but he only set there and looked at me; never said nothing. (8.25)

***Explanation 3:***

Huck may be enjoying his frolic on the island, but he's lonely. Is he glad to see Jim because he already considers Jim a friend—or is he just glad to see anyone?

***Quotation 4:***

"But mind, you said you wouldn' tell—you know you said you wouldn' tell, Huck."

"Well, I did. I said I wouldn't, and I'll stick to it. Honest INJUN, I will. People would call me a low-down Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don't make no difference. I ain't a-going to tell, and I ain't a-going back there, anyways. So, now, le's know all about it." (8.52, 8.53)

***Explanation 4:***

Huck vs. the World, and it doesn't involve any [do-overs](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0446029/). Meeting Jim thrusts him right into conflict with the ethical system he's used to… and kudos to Huck for standing up for the right.

***Quotation 5:***

"Well, I b'lieve you, Huck. I—I RUN OFF."

"Jim!" (8.45, 8.46)

***Explanation 5:***

Pot, meet Kettle. Huck is outraged that Jim has run off, because apparently Huck doesn't remember that he's also run off. Why is it okay for Huck to escape an abusive situation and not Jim?

***Quotation 6:***

And there was the ferryboat full of people floating along down. I knowed what was the matter now. "Boom!" I see the white smoke squirt out of the ferryboat's side. You see, they was firing cannon over the water, trying to make my carcass come to the top. (8.2)

***Explanation 6:***

Huck and Jim’s superstitions are the result of their environment; such beliefs are the norm, not the exception.

***Quotation 7:***

"Doan' hurt me – don't! I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos'. I alwuz liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em. You go en git in de river agin, whah you b'longs, en doan' do nuffn to Ole Jim, 'at 'uz awluz yo' fren'." (8.24)

***Explanation 7:***

Jim and Tom are similar in their reaction to seeing Huck after his supposed death.

***Quotation 8:***

So we went over to where the canoe was, and while he built a fire in a grassy open place amongst the trees, I fetched meal and bacon and coffee, and coffee-pot and frying-pan, and sugar and tin cups, and the n\*\*\*\*\* was set back considerable, because he reckoned it was all done with witchcraft. (8.40)

***Explanation 8:***

Jim’s superstitious beliefs are powerful enough to contend with what he sees with his own two eyes.

***Quotation 9:***

Some young birds come along, flying a yard or two at a time and lighting. 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 reckoned it was 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 laid mighty sick once, and some of them catched a bird, and his old granny said his father would die, and he did. (8.64)

***Explanation 9:***

Jim’s superstitions range from small predictions to events of huge importance.

***Quotation 10:***

And Jim said you mustn't 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 sundown. And he said if a man owned a beehive and that man died, the bees must be told about it before sun-up next morning, or else the bees would all weaken down and quit work and die. Jim said bees wouldn't sting idiots; but I didn't believe that, because I had tried them lots of times myself, and they wouldn't sting me. (8.65)

***Explanation 10:***

Huck is skeptical of Jim’s many superstitions – he sees them as ridiculous and arbitrary nature in some circumstances. You might wonder why Huck is skeptical of Jim's superstitions, but not of his own.

***Quotation 11:***

"Mighty few – an' DEY ain't no use to a body. What you want to know when good luck's a-comin' for? Want to keep it off?" And he said: "Ef you's got hairy arms en a hairy breas', it's a sign dat you's agwyne to be rich. Well, dey's some use in a sign dat, 'kase it's so fur ahead. You see, maybe you's got to be po' a long time fust, en so you might git discourage' en kill yo'sef 'f you didn' know by de sign dat you gwyne to be rich bymeby." (8.67)

***Explanation 11:***

Jim uses superstition the way others use religion – to comfort himself.