***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

***Chapter 9:***

***Translation:***

I wanted to go and look at a spot in the middle of the island that I’d found while exploring. We set out and, since the island was only three miles long and a quarter of a mile wide, we got to it in no time. This place I wanted to go back to was a long, steep hill or ridge that was about forty feet tall. We had a tough time climbing to the top because the sides were so steep and the bushes so thick. We hiked and climbed all over it until we found a large cave in the rocks at the top on the side that faces toward Illinois. The cave was about the size of two or three rooms, and Jim could stand up straight in it. The temperature was cool inside. Jim wanted to put our traps in there right away, but I said we didn’t want to be climbing up and down the hill all the time. Jim said that if we hid the canoe well and put all the traps in the cave, we could hide there if anyone came to the island. No one would ever find us unless they had dogs. Besides, he reminded me that those little birds had said it was going to rain and asked if I wanted everything to get wet. So we went back and got the canoe and paddled to a spot below the cave. Then we lugged all the traps up. Then we looked for a place in the willows nearby where we could hide the canoe. We took some fish off the fishing lines, baited the lines again, and started to get ready for dinner. The door of the cave was big enough to roll a hogshead in. The floor stuck out a little bit on one side of the door. It was flat and made a good place to build a fire on, so we built it there and cooked dinner. We spread the blankets inside the cave to use as a carpet and ate our dinner in there. We put everything else in the back of the cave where we could get to it easily. Pretty soon it got dark and began to thunder and lightning. It was a real summer storm. So I guess the birds were right. Then it began to rain furiously. I’d never seen the wind blow so hard. It got so dark that it looked all blue-black outside. It was lovely in a way. The rain would thrash along so heavy that the trees a little way off in the distance looked dim and the branches like spider webs. A blast of wind would come that would bend the trees down, exposing the pale underside of the leaves. And then an enormous gust of wind would follow and stir up the branches so that the trees looked like they were waving their arms wildly. And then, just when the sky was bluest and blackest—bang! It would be as bright as if the heavens opened up, and you’d catch a glimpse of the tree tops falling down in the storm way off in the distance, hundreds of yards further than you coul see before. In another second, it’d be dark as hell, and you’d hear the thunder clap with an awful crash before rumbling, grumbling, and tumbling all the way from the sky to the underside of the world. It sounded like barrels rolling and bouncing down a long flight of stairs. “Jim, this is nice,” I said. “I don’t want to be anywhere else but here. Pass me another hunk of fish and some hot cornbread.” “Well, you wouldn’t be here if it hadn’t been for Jim. You’d have been down in the woods without any dinner and getting soaked, too. Yep, you sure would, man. Chickens know when it’s going to rain and so do the birds, kid.” The river kept rising for ten or twelve days until it had finally flowed over the banks. The water was three or four feet deep on the lower parts of the island and on the Illinois side of the island. It was several miles wide on the Illinois side, but it was the same distance across as it normally was on the Missouri side—about half a mile—because the Missouri shore was nothing but high bluffs. During the day we paddled all over the flooded island in the canoe. It was pretty cool and shady in the deep woods, even when the sun was blazing. We’d paddled in and out among the trees. Sometimes the vines were so thick that we had to back up and find another route. You could see rabbits and snakes and other animals on every old, broken down tree. When the island had been flooded for a day or two, hunger would make the animals so tame that you could paddle right up to them and put your hand on them if you wanted too. Well, not the snakes and turtles—they’d just slide off into the water. The ridge our cave was in was full of them. We could have had tons of pets if we’d wanted them. One night we caught a small portion of a log raft made out of some fine pine planks. It was twelve feet wide and about fifteen or sixteen feet long, and the top rose above the water about six or seven inches to make a solid, level floor. We could see boards like these float by sometimes during the day, but we’d let them go because we didn’t ever show ourselves in the daylight. Another night when we were up at the head of the island just before dawn, a frame house came floating down the river on the west side of the island. It was a two-story house that was tilted over to one side. We paddled out to it and climbed in through an upstairs window. But it was still too dark to see anything, so we hid the canoe and sat inside to wait for daylight. Daylight began to creep in before we reached the foot of the island. We looked in through one window and could make out a bed, a table, two old chairs, some clothes hanging against the wall, and lots of things scattered on the floor. There was something that looked like a man lying on the floor in the far corner. Jim said: “Hello there!” But it didn’t budge. So I yelled again, and then Jim said: “That man isn’t asleep—he’s dead. You hold the canoe still, and I’ll go and see.” He went over to the man, bend down and looked, and said: “It’s a dead man. Yes, indeed. He’s naked too. He’s been shot in the back. I reckon he’s been dead two or three days. Come on in, Huck, but don’t look at his face—it’s too ghastly.” I didn’t look at the man at all. Jim threw some old rags over him, but he didn’t need to because I didn’t want to see him. There were piles of old, greasy cards scattered all over the floor along with old whisky bottles and a couple of masks made out of black cloth. And the stupidest kinds of words and pictures were written all over the walls in charcoal. There were two old, dirty calico dresses, a sun bonnet, and some women’s underclothes hanging against the wall along with some men’s clothing. We put all of this stuff into the canoe, since it might come in handy. There was a boy’s old speckled straw hat on the floor, and I tookt hat too. There was a rag stopper for a baby to suck and a bottle that had once had milk in it, which we would have taken had it not been broken. There was also a worn out old chest and and old hair trunk with broken hinges. They stood open, but there wasn’t anything of value left in them. The way everything was scattered around made us think that the people had left in a hurry and were unable to take most of their stuff. We got an old tin lantern, a butcher knife that didn’t have a handle, some tallow candles, a tin candlestick, a hatchet, some nails, a fishline as thick as my little finger that had some giant fishhooks on it, a roll of buckskin, a leather dog collar, a horshoe, some vials of unlabeled medicine, a gourd, a tin cup, a ratty old bed quilt off the bed, and a brand new Barlow pocket knife that would sell for twenty-five cents at any store. We also got a handbag that had needles, pins, beeswax, buttons, thread, and a bunch of other stuff in it. And just as we were leaving I found a good [curry-comb](javascript:void(0);), and Jim found a ratty old bow-fiddle and a wooden leg. The straps were broken off it, but other than that, it was a decent leg even though it was too long for me and not long enough for Jim. We looked all over the place, but we couldn’t find the other one. All in all, we made a good haul. By the time we were ready to shove off, we had floated a quarter of a mile below the island. It was a fairly clear day, so I made Jim lie down in the canoe, underneath the quilt. People would notice that he was a n----- if he were sitting up. I paddled over to the Illinois shore and drifted downstream about a half a mile in the process. I paddled slowly through the still water under the riverbank. I didn’t get into any accidents or see anybody. We got home safe.

***Summary:***

* Serious issues of slavery and morality aside, Huck is a kid on an island, which means some exploring is clearly in order.
* He and Jim head toward the middle of an island and find a cavern. After hiding their canoe and supplies, they hide out during a storm and eat dinner.
* This is actually pretty awesome, and Huck and Jim have a little mutual admiration moment.
* Things go on this way for a while. Problem is, they can't go out in daylight, lest someone spot them.
* One night, the two dudes happen upon a makeshift house floating down the river, which was apparently flooded and dislodged in the storm.
* They climb in, and Jim finds a dead body. He tells Huck not to look at the man's face, as it's "too gashly."
* After taking supplies from the house, they head back to Jackson's Island.

***Synopsis:***

Jim and Huck find a cavern on the island where they decide to stash their belongings and make a secure hiding place. They eat dinner there in the midst of a furious lightening storm, which Jim predicted after watching some birds make curiously, abridged flights. Meanwhile, the river continues to rise for days on end.

One night, a frame house floats right by them in the middle of the night and they paddle over there in the canoe and decide to get some salvage. Besides old furniture and things, they find a dead body, shot in the back with the "ignorantest kind of words and pictures" on the wall. They scoop us a lantern and a broken butcher knife, tallow candles, needle and threat and a fishline and other odds and ends, returning safely home.

Among other things, Huck and Jim are sharing adventures on the river, which have a high component of danger. A house floating by on the river holds evidence of murder- with a dead body, some black masks and whisky bottles and playing cards. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is replete with adventures, always under the shadow of capture- for both Huck and Jim are renegades, Jim being one of the main suspects in Huck's death and a runaway slave.

***Critical Analysis:***

In order to make a hiding place should visitors arrive on the island, Jim and Huck take the canoe and provisions into a large cave in the middle of the island. Jim predicts that it will rain, and soon a storm blows in. The two safely wait it out inside the cave. The river floods, and a washed-out house floats down the river past the island. Inside, Jim and Huck find the body of a man who has been shot in the back. Jim prevents Huck from looking at the “ghastly” face. Jim and Huck make off with some odds and ends from the houseboat. Huck has Jim hide in the bottom of the canoe so that he won’t be seen, and they make it back to the island safely.

***Critical Study:***

[Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck) and [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) explore the island and find a cave on a hill. They stay in the cave, as it is a good place to hide if anyone comes on the island. It also allows them to escape the rain, which [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) predicts. The rains go on for days and leave the island flooded.

After the storm has passed Huck and Jim go out on the canoe and explore the river. They find a large raft floating down the river and take it for themselves. Later a house floats down the river and Huck and Jim enter it and take whatever they can. They also find a man who is dead from a shot in the back. Jim looks at the man but insists Huck not look at the face.

Later on it is revealed that the dead body in the floating house is [Pap](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Pap), [Huck](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Huck)'s father. Why doesn't [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/symbols/#Jim) reveal this to Huck, who would surely want to know? [Jim](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Adventures-of-Huckleberry-Finn/character-analysis/#Jim) comes to rely on Huck for help with his escape and appreciates his company. If Huck knew his father were dead, Jim reasons that Huck would have no reason to escape. Were Huck to leave and go back to society, it might come out that he has seen and spent time with Jim.

With the passing of Pap, Jim takes on the role of surrogate father for Huck. Jim looks out for Huck in times of trouble, teaches him various things (such as superstitions), and plays the role of protector (including not letting Huck see his actual father's face). Jim also shows a certain tenderness toward Huck that Pap never did. While Huck is going through a coming-of-age process, it is Jim who acts as his guide. Through their relationship Huck will gain a greater understanding of himself and the world.

***Significance:***

Jim and Huck explore the island together and discover a cavern atop a hill in the middle of the island. They paddle their canoe to the base of the hill and then haul their equipment into the cave in order to keep it dry. The storm Jim predicted arrives that night, and the river rises for more than twelve days straight.

Huck and Jim go out on the river at night to pick up drifting logs and other objects that happen to float downstream. One night, they capture a large raft which they will later use to navigate the river after they leave the island. Later on, they see a whole house floating downstream and climb into it to salvage some of the goods. Jim finds Huck's Pap lying dead on the floor of the house, but refuses to let Huck see the man's face and does not reveal that it is Pap. Jim sees Pap was shot in the back while obviously attempting to rob the house.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

In the morning, [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) wants to find the middle of the island, so he and [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) set out and find it. This place is a high hill or ridge with a cavern in its side. [Jim](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/jim) convinces [Huck](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-adventures-of-huckleberry-finn/characters/huckleberry-finn) that the two of them should hide their gear in the cavern in case people come looking for them. He also convinces Huck to hide the canoe nearby. Having hidden everything, Huck and Jim eat in the cavern.

***Analysis Part 1:***

While freedom is very important to Huck, it is all the more so for Jim, who faces severe punishment if he is caught, and a life of enslavement and separation from his beloved family. For this reason, Jim is all the more protective of his freedom and so takes extra precautions, like hiding the gear in the cavern.

***Summary Part 2:***

Outside, it begins to rain fiercely. Huck is very content, however, and Jim points out that Huck wouldn’t be in the cavern were it not for him, that Huck would be out in the woods drowning in the rain. During subsequent days, Huck and Jim paddle all over the flooded island in their canoe. Animals abound, meek with hunger. Jim and Huck see saw-logs drift by, but leave them for fear of being discovered. Indeed, the pair never goes out in daylight.

***Analysis Part 2:***

At the beginning of the novel, Huck is racist and has little respect for the intelligence of black people. However, Huck is forced to acknowledge his own prejudice as Jim proves again and again that he is just as reasonable and practical as his white companion. He saved Huck from the storm, and his cautiousness protects Huck too.

***Summary Part 3:***

One night a two-story cabin floats by. Though [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) board the cabin through a window, it is too dark to see anything, so they lash their canoe to the cabin and wait to explore till morning. At dawn, the two look into the cabin. They see furniture and what Jim identifies as a dead man, shot in the back, whose face, Jim tells Huck, is too “gashly” to look at. Also on the floor of the cabin are cards, whisky bottles, black masks; and on the walls there are words scribbled in charcoal. Jim and Huck take some men and women’s clothing from the house into the canoe, along with other supplies. Huck and Jim then shove off from the house, Jim lying down in the canoe and covered with a quilt to avoid discovery, and the pair drifts safely downriver.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Though it is not revealed here, the corpse that Jim discovers is that of Huck’s father, Pap. Jim, shows a kind of parental care for Huck by refusing to reveal this to Huck, to protect Huck from the scene of his father’s brutal murder. The evidence Jim and Huck discover in the cabin suggests that Pap was drunk, maybe cheated at cards for personal gain, and was murdered by the men whom he cheated, who wore masks to commit their crime. Pap was vicious to the end. Despite the gory scene, Huck and Jim are resourceful enough to take from the cabin what they can use.

***Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

And so, take it all around, we made a good haul. When we was ready to shove off we was a quarter of a mile below the island, and it was pretty broad day; so I made Jim lay down in the canoe and cover up with the quilt, because if he set up people could tell he was a n\*\*\*\*\* a good ways off. (9.21)

***Explanation 1:***

Here's something to think about: Huck has a lot more leeway than Jim, because he can lie. But Jim's body always speaks the truth: he's a slave. Jim couldn't lie the way Huck does even if he wanted to.

***Quotation 2:***

"It's a dead man. Yes, indeedy; naked, too. He's ben shot in de back. I reck'n he's ben dead two er three days. Come in, Huck, but doan' look at his face—it's too gashly." (9.18)

***Explanation 2:***

Jim knows that this is Huck's dad, but he doesn't want Huck to see—so he lies. Is it right for Jim to lie? Or should he have told Huck?