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Dramatic Publishing

Huckleberry Finn

A Comedy in Three Acts, from the Book
by Samuel Clemens, Dramatized

by
JANE KENDALL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(HUCKLEBERRY FINN)

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Huckleberry Finn

A Comedy in Three Acts

FOR SIX MEN AND EIGHT WOMEN

This version of "Huckleberry Finn" was originally produced by Letitia V. Barnum at the Michiana Shores Theatre, New Buffalo, Michigan, August 22, 1942, under the direction of Ruth M. Rossiter, with the following cast:

HUCKLEBERRY FINN, *himself* Lincoln Lewis
TOM SAWYER, *his pal* Paul Mikota
AUNT SALLY PHELPS, *Tom's kind-hearted aunt* . . . Lois Baker
MATILDA, *her young daughter* Maxine Cooper
MARY JANE WILKS, *a pretty guest* Bernardine Robin
SUSAN WILKS, *her imperious sister* Betty Lamberty
JOANNA WILKS, *her practical sister* Marjorie Kreeger
DR. BEN ROBINSON, *a good friend* Larry Garibaldi
THE KING, *a rascalion* Barney Brauch
THE DUKE, *another rascalion* Phil Kenneally
MRS. HOTCHKISS, *a talkative neighbor* Ruby Morris
GLORY BELLE, *her "delicate" daughter* Emma Rust
JIM, *a runaway slave* Bernie Martin
LIZE, *a superstitious Negro maid* Ruth Quinn

PLACE: *The Louisiana village of Pikesville, near the Mississippi River.*

TIME: *Summer. About 1850.*

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE: *The dining-living-room of Aunt Sally's home. Afternoon.*

ACT TWO, *Scene One: The same. The next morning.*
Scene Two: The same. Late that night.

ACT THREE: *The same. The following morning.*

NOTE: Helpful hints on play production in general, and specific suggestions on producing "Huckleberry Finn" will be found in the Director's Manual at the end of the play.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

MATILDA: She is a mischievous, long-legged child of eleven, dressed in a calico dress a little too short for her. Her hair hangs in two braids down her back. In Act Two, Scene One, she may wear a different dress, and a bonnet. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears a high-necked, long-sleeved nightgown. For Act Three she is dressed the same as in Act One.

LIZE: She is an attractive colored girl of seventeen. She wears a calico dress and an apron throughout. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears an old-fashioned nightgown, and has a blanket around her shoulders.

JOANNA: She is a lively, energetic girl of fourteen. She has her hair in braids. She wears a calico dress, and in Act Two, Scene One, she wears a bonnet. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears an old-fashioned nightgown. If desired, she might speak with a slight lisp.

SUSAN: She is fifteen, pretty and imperious. She wears a pretty dress, and in some scenes she may wear a bonnet. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears a nightgown and a robe and slippers. Her hair is put up in curl papers.

MARY JANE: She is a sweet and pretty girl of nineteen. She wears a becoming dress, and at the beginning of Act One, she wears a bonnet. In Act Two, Scene One, she wears an apron over her dress. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears a nightgown and a robe and slippers. In Act Three, she has an apron over her dress.

DR. ROBINSON: He is a good-looking young man in his late twenties, capable of handling almost any situation, but rather

inarticulate with Mary Jane. He wears a business suit throughout the play.

AUNT SALLY: She is about forty-five, goodhearted and excitable. She wears a print dress, and at the beginning of Act One, a bonnet. In Act Two, Scene Two, she wears an old-fashioned nightgown, and has a shawl about her shoulders.

TOM SAWYER: He is a mischievous and imaginative boy of about twelve. At the beginning of Act One he wears a good suit and a hat. Later, he removes his coat. In Act Two, Scene Two, he wears old clothes. He wears the same clothes in Act Three.

THE KING: He is a confidence man, about sixty years old. His head is almost bald, and he wears gray side whiskers. The King's manner is oily and smooth, and he assumes the leadership in the undertaking. He wears a good business suit. He affects an English accent in front of the others, but reverts to his own speech in front of Huck and The Duke.

THE DUKE: He is a confidence man in his twenties, handsome and prepossessing. When he is pretending to be deaf and dumb, he makes ridiculous signs with his hands. He wears a good business suit and a bowler hat.

HUCK FINN: He is an adventurous, practical boy who has always been accustomed to look out for himself. He wears a suit at the beginning of Act One, and later takes off his coat. In Act Two, Scene Two, he wears old clothes. Later in Scene Two, he wears a girl's calico dress and bonnet.

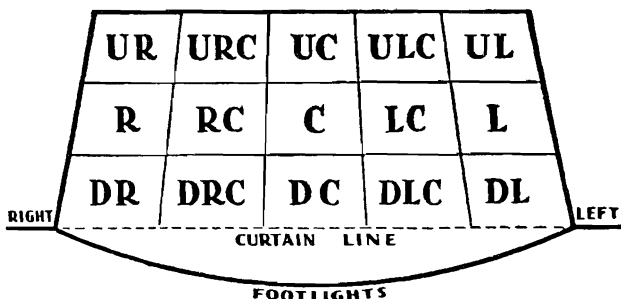
MRS. HOTCHKISS: She is a talkative, determined little woman in her forties. She wears a neat cotton print dress and a bonnet.

GLORY BELLE: She is eighteen, a tall, heavily-built girl, good-humored and agreeable. She wears a frilly dress and bonnet, utterly unsuited to her type. In Acts One and Two she allows herself to be dominated by her mother. In Act Three, she has completely broken away from her mother's domination, and wears loud, flashy clothes.

JIM: He is a goodhearted and loyal young colored man in his early twenties. He wears old, tattered clothes, and his toes stick out of one shoe. At the end of Act Two he is draped in a sheet, and wears a tall, pointed hat with yellow rope-curls dangling from the side of it.

NOTE: Since the locale of the play is Mississippi, a slight Southern accent may be used to add color to the dialogue. This, of course, is taken care of in the dialogue of the Negro characters.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

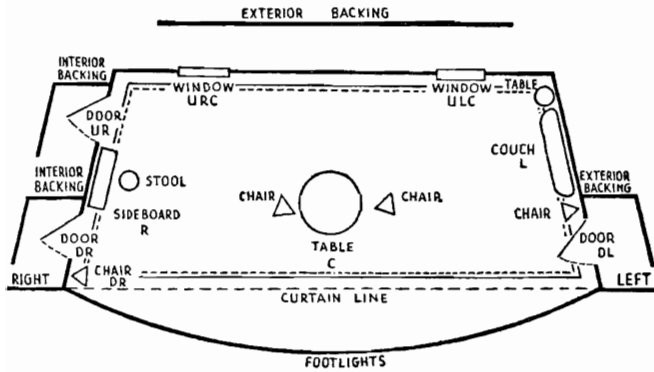


STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

STAGE CHART



ACT ONE

SCENE: *The action takes place in the dining-living-room of Aunt Sally Phelps's home. It is a big log house, and the joining of the logs is clearly marked with whitewash. There are two windows in the upstage wall, one left of U C and the other right of U C. A door U R leads to a little lean-to room. A door D R leads to the rest of the house. At D L is a door to the outside. There is a big table at C, covered with a checked tablecloth that reaches almost to the floor. A sideboard is against the R wall, between the doors. On it are two pewter candlesticks and a clock. A split-bottomed chair is D R, and a low stool is slightly up left of the sideboard. Against the L wall is a couch covered with an Indian blanket, and gay with home-talent cushions. A sewing box and a vase of flowers are on a little table upstage of it. Two plain wooden chairs are at either side of the table C, and another chair is downstage of the couch. The room is plain, but bright and clean.]*

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: *It is early afternoon in summer, and the sun streams in through the windows. MATILDA PHELPS is standing by the window U L C, looking out. She is a mischievous, long-legged child of eleven, dressed in a calico dress which is a little too short for her. Her brown hair hangs in two braids down her back. LIZE, an attractive colored girl of seventeen, is clearing the remaining things from the table. She wears a calico dress and a white apron. She is singing as she works, and every now and then her feet do a little dance step. The song she sings is a very lively Negro spiritual. She sings a line of her song, and reaches across the table for a plate.]*

MATILDA. I heard the steamboat whistle half an hour ago. Ma ought to be back.

[LIZE sings another line of her song, and then pauses.]

LIZE [*right of the table*]. What say, honey chile?

MATILDA [*coming over to the table*]. If Ma don't hurry, the Wilks girls'll be here afore she is. [*She eyes the sugar bowl thoughtfully.*] Lize, look at that big bumblebee!

[MATILDA points to the ceiling. When LIZE looks up, MATILDA grabs a piece of sugar from the bowl and pops it into her mouth. LIZE looks down in time to see her.]

LIZE. Foolin' pore Lize! [*She speaks emphatically.*] Chile, you know yore ma don't want you hookin' no sugar!

MATILDA. When my cousin Tom gets here, I reckon she'll let him have all the sugar he wants.

[MATILDA reaches for some more, but LIZE quickly moves the sugar bowl to her own side of the table. In doing so, she knocks over the salt cellar.]

LIZE [*dismayed*]. Lawsy, looky what you done made me do! Spill de salt! [*She throws some salt over her left shoulder and turns around three times.*]

MATILDA [*interested*]. What you doing that for?

LIZE. To keep off de bad luck. [*She adds quickly.*] Don't you tell yore ma I done it, 'cause she don't hold wit' witches, and like dat.

MATILDA. Do you?

LIZE. Does I? Chile, nobody but me knows de witch-trouble I's had lately.

MATILDA. Oh, my! [*She curls up on the couch.*] How come, Lize?

LIZE [*piling up the dishes as she talks*]. All on account I shook de tablecloth after sundown. Dat's powerful bad luck.

MATILDA. Isn't there some way you could keep it off?

LIZE. I tries, but don't nothin' seem to help. [*She eyes the sewing box on the table by the couch.*] If'n I had a piece of thread, I could tie it to my hair.

MATILDA [*surprised*]. How could *that* do any good? [*She opens the box, takes out a spool, and breaks off a piece of thread.*]

LIZE. It scares de witches away. Leastwise, dat runaway nigger we got in dere—[*She points to the door U R.*]—he say so.

MATILDA. Come over here and I'll fix it for you.

[*LIZE walks over and kneels down beside MATILDA. She begins to tie a piece of thread to a lock of LIZE'S hair.*]

MATILDA. But I don't see how the runaway nigger can know so much.

LIZE. Jim has had a powerful lot of 'sperience wit' witches. Dey done rode him 'round de world on a broomstick one night.

MATILDA. I don't believe it! [*She gives the thread a little pat.*]
There!

LIZE [*getting up*]. He got proof. When he woked up, a broomstick was right alongside him.

MATILDA [*impressed*]. Oh, my! Aren't there any good luck signs?

LIZE [*going back to the table*]. Mighty few, and *dey* ain't no use to a body. What you want to know when good luck's a-coming' for? Want to keep it off?

MATILDA. No, I reckon not. [*She continues bossily.*] Lize, if you don't hurry and red that table, the Wilks girls will be here, and Ma'll be back with my cousin Tom, and then you *will* have bad luck! [*She crosses back to the window.*]

LIZE [*leisurely*]. I's workin' my fingers to de bone, honey chile. Powerful good of yore ma to take in dem Wilks girls, ain't it?

MATILDA. Ma's good to everybody. She took on terrible when

she heard they've been all alone in that big house since their pa died. Dr. Robinson, he said he'd help fetch over their bags.

LIZE. Fetch Miss Mary Jane's bags, I 'spect he mean.

[LIZE begins to sing again. Almost immediately, JIM, offstage U R, plays an accompaniment on a jew's-harp or a comb. After a moment, LIZE breaks off and tosses her head.]

LIZE. Lissen at dat no-account Jim flirtin' wit' me!

MATILDA. How do you mean?

LIZE. Does I start to sing, he starts to play on dat air juice-harp.

[LIZE starts to sing again, and JIM plays. She does a few dance steps, a pile of dishes held high in one hand.]

MATILDA. Dr. Robinson's wagon is stopping out front!

LIZE [breaking off her song]. Lawsy me, and de table not red up!

[LIZE hurries out D R with the dishes.]

MATILDA [loudly]. Joanna's getting out, and Susan—My, she's got all her finery on! Dr. Robinson's helping Mary Jane out, now. Like as if he thought she'd break if she took a step by herself.

[LIZE hurries in again D R.]

MATILDA. You run out and help them with their things, Lize.

LIZE. Yassum, Miss Matilda.

[LIZE hurries out D L. MATILDA continues to watch from the window a moment. Then she returns to the table, pops two lumps of sugar into her mouth, and puts some more into her pockets. JOANNA and SUSAN WILKS come in D L. JOANNA is a lively, energetic girl of fourteen. She wears her hair in braids. She has on a calico dress and is carrying a coat and a

carpetbag. SUSAN follows her, giving careful attention to a large vase filled with flowers. SUSAN is fifteen, pretty and imperious. She gives herself airs and graces, and is rather spoiled. She wears a very pretty dress and bonnet, and her hair is up.]

SUSAN. Hello, Matilda, honey. I brought these flowers along because they were too pretty to leave behind.

JOANNA. Where's your ma?

MATILDA. She drove down to the steamboat landing to meet my cousin Tom.

SUSAN. I'm afraid she's going to be just awfully crowded, with so many of us here at once. [*She sets the vase of flowers on the little table above the couch.*]

MATILDA. We got lots of room.

SUSAN [*walking back to the door D L*]. What's keeping that lazy Lize?

JOANNA [*sitting on the stool at R stage, the carpetbag down-stage of her*]. I reckon she's busy piling up your things. You got more useless possessions than Mary Jane and me put together.

SUSAN. I have not, Joanna Wilks! I *value* my things, that's all. [*She opens the door and looks out.*] Here she comes now, the slowpoke!

[*LIZE comes in D L. The reason for her delay is evident. With one hand she is balancing two hatboxes on her head. Over that arm is draped a coat. Under the other arm is a long box, and in her hand, a carpetbag and a parasol.*]

LIZE. Yassum, I's a-comin'! Fast as I kin.

SUSAN. I declare, your feet must be made of lead.

LIZE. Yassum. [*She starts D R.*]

MATILDA. The witches could sure play tricks on you now, couldn't they?

[*Calmly, MATILDA takes another piece of sugar from the bowl. LIZE turns quickly.*]

LIZE. You, Miss Matilda! You know what yore ma say about all dat sugar-hookin'.

MATILDA [*innocently*]. What you talking about, Lize? You better hurry upstairs with those bags.

LIZE [*sighing*]. Yassum. [*She takes a step backward and trips over JOANNA'S carpetbag. All the boxes go down on top of her in a heap.*] Oh, lawsy me, I's kilt!

JOANNA. I can see I've got to take charge of things if they're to get done. [*She begins to pick up the boxes as LIZE struggles to her feet.*] Come on, Lady Susan. Help.

SUSAN [*languidly, moving D R.*]. I'll carry my parasol.

[*SUSAN picks up the parasol. Between JOANNA and LIZE, everything is picked up.*]

JOANNA. Where do we go?

MATILDA. Lize will show you your rooms.

JOANNA. Come on, Lize.

[*JOANNA, SUSAN, and LIZE go out D R. MARY JANE WILKS and DR. BEN ROBINSON come in D L. MARY JANE is a sweet and pretty girl of nineteen. She wears a becoming dress and bonnet. DR. ROBINSON carries her carpetbag and coat. He is a young man in his late twenties, capable of handling almost any situation, but rather inarticulate with MARY JANE. He wears a business suit.*]

MATILDA. Ma'll be back directly, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE. Your dear, good mother's an angel for having us over here. Isn't she, Dr. Robinson?

DR. ROBINSON [*setting down the bag and coat on the couch*]. Miss Sally's heart's as big as a church.

JOANNA [*calling from offstage D R*]. Ma-tilda! Who's to have the single bed—Susan, or Mary Jane?

MARY JANE. They're at it already!

MATILDA [*going D R*]. Mary Jane's the oldest!

[*MATILDA goes out D R.*]

DR. ROBINSON. Miss Mary Jane . . .

MARY JANE. Yes?

DR. ROBINSON. I reckon I'll see you quite often, now that you're staying with Miss Sally.

MARY JANE [*teasingly*]. Really, Dr. Robinson, I'm *never* sick!

DR. ROBINSON. You know I don't mean it that way. [*He clears his throat.*] Er—Miss Mary Jane, we've known each other a long time.

MARY JANE. And I'm very grateful for all you did for poor Pa. When my uncles from England get here, I'm sure they'll be grateful, too. [*She sits left of the table C.*]

DR. ROBINSON. Now, about these uncles of yours—

MARY JANE. Uncle Harvey Wilks is a minister. And poor Uncle William is deaf and dumb.

DR. ROBINSON. They'll see to it that your sisters are well looked after, and I thought maybe you and I—well, I've been meaning to speak to you for some time.

MARY JANE. Why, Dr. Robinson, how you talk!

DR. ROBINSON. The fact is, about you and me, I mean—

[*AUNT SALLY PHELPS comes hurrying in D L. She is about forty-five, goodhearted and excitable. She wears a print dress and a bonnet.*]

AUNT SALLY. I'm so mortified I wasn't here to welcome you, Mary Jane! [*She crosses to MARY JANE.*]

MARY JANE [*rising and kissing her*]. As if that matters! We're very happy to be here.

AUNT SALLY [*taking off her bonnet*]. Terrible hot, ain't it, Dr. Robinson? I declare, I don't know what's become of my nephew, Tom. I didn't see hide nor hair of him at the steamboat landin'. [*She crosses above the table c to right of it.*]

DR. ROBINSON. Are you sure the boat came in?

AUNT SALLY. Afore I got there. Only way I could of missed Tom is if he got a ride out with somebody. Gracious sakes, I do wish Silas was home. He'd know what to do.

MARY JANE. Maybe Tom did get a ride.

AUNT SALLY. Then where is he now? Comin' all the way from Missouri, poor little tike, and me not there on time to meet him. I declare, I think I'll go crazy, all I got on my mind. Havin' to hold that runaway slave till Silas hears from New Orleans about the reward——

DR. ROBINSON. What's that about a runaway?

AUNT SALLY [*sitting down right of the table c and fanning herself with her bonnet*]. Silas met up with a couple of strangers who had captured him. Didn't have time themselves to wait for the two hundred dollars' reward from New Orleans, so Silas bought out their interest for forty dollars.

DR. ROBINSON. How do you know there is a reward offered for him?

AUNT SALLY. They gave Silas the handbill tellin' all about him. Me, I'd not of bothered with it. He's likely to bust out of that lean-to—[*She points U R.*]—and murder us all in our beds.

MARY JANE. Now, Aunt Sally, the heat's got you all tuckered out.

AUNT SALLY. I wouldn't mind so much if Silas hadn't had to go away jest now. Leaves me to do all the worryin'.

DR. ROBINSON [*moving behind the table c to AUNT SALLY*].

If there's any worrying to be done, you let *me* do it. [*He pats her shoulder.*]

AUNT SALLY. You're a good boy, Ben Robinson, though powerful slow in some ways. [*She looks directly at MARY JANE.*]

MARY JANE [*hastily*]. I thought maybe my uncles would come in on this steamer. You didn't see any sign of them?

AUNT SALLY. Nary a sign. Takes quite a spell for a letter to reach England. But I reckon they'll come soon.

MARY JANE. I hope so.

AUNT SALLY. Set your mind at rest, Mary Jane. You're welcome to stay here jest as long as you like.

MARY JANE. Thank you.

DR. ROBINSON [*starting D L*]. I have to make a call up the road, but I'll stop in again before I go home.

AUNT SALLY. Do that. We're havin' fried chicken for supper.

DR. ROBINSON [*smiling*]. You won't be able to keep me away!

[DR. ROBINSON *goes out D L.*]

AUNT SALLY. Finest young man in these parts, Mary Jane, and you'd better make up your mind to take him afore Glory Belle Hotchkiss snitches him.

MARY JANE [*walking D L, with her nose in the air*]. If he wants Glory Belle, I shan't stop him!

AUNT SALLY. Gracious sakes, I didn't say *he* wanted *her*. But you mark my words, Mrs. Hotchkiss is got her heart set on livin' in that nice house of the doctor's, and she'll get Glory Belle married to him if'n she has to throw her into his arms.

MARY JANE [*laughing*]. I reckon nobody could *throw* Glory Belle very far! [*She picks up her coat and her carpetbag.*] You mind if I go upstairs now? I'd like to hang up my things.

AUNT SALLY. Your room's right up at the head of the stairs.

MARY JANE [*crossing D R*]. You sit still awhile and take it easy.

[MARY JANE goes out D R. AUNT SALLY continues to fan herself. There is a knock on the door D L.]

AUNT SALLY [*rising*]. Land sakes, who next?

[AUNT SALLY opens the door D L. TOM SAWYER stands there. He is a mischievous and imaginative boy of about twelve. He wears his good suit and hat and carries a carpetbag.]

TOM [*taking off his hat*]. Mrs. Archibald Nichols, I presume?

AUNT SALLY. No. Nichols' place is down the road.

TOM [*looking out D L*]. I'm afraid my driver has gone on.

AUNT SALLY. Never mind. I'll have Matilda show you.

TOM. Oh, I can't make you so much trouble!

AUNT SALLY. No trouble at all. Set right down and make yourself at home.

[AUNT SALLY stares D R. TOM starts after her, and, before she realizes what he is about, kisses her on the cheek. MATILDA comes in D R at just that moment.]

AUNT SALLY. You owdacious puppy!

MATILDA. Oh, my!

TOM [*hurt*]. I'm surprised at you, ma'am.

AUNT SALLY. I've a good notion to take and——

TOM [*humbly*]. I didn't mean nothing, ma'am. I—I thought you'd like it. They—they told me you would.

AUNT SALLY. Who's *they*?

TOM. Why, everybody.

AUNT SALLY. Who's everybody?

TOM [*fumbling with his hat*]. They all said, kiss her, and she'll like it. But I'm sorry, and I won't do it no more. I won't—honest.

AUNT SALLY. Well, I should reckon you won't!

TOM. No'm. I won't ever do it again—till you ask me.

AUNT SALLY. Till I *ask* you! Well, I never see the beat of it in all my born days! I lay you'll be the Methusalem-numbskull of creation afore ever I ask a strange boy to kiss me.

TOM [*looking at MATILDA*]. Matilda, didn't *you* think Aunt Sally'd open out her arms and say, "Tom Sawyer——"

AUNT SALLY [*reaching for him*]. My land! You impudent young rascal, to fool a body so!

[AUNT SALLY *is about to hug him, but TOM pulls away.*]

TOM. No—not till you've asked me first.

AUNT SALLY. Matilda, did you ever see the beat of it? [*She turns to TOM.*] All right, I ask you. [*She kisses him on the cheek.*] What happened to you?

TOM. You weren't there when I got off the boat, and I started to walk the wrong way first. Then I got a ride out with a farmer.

AUNT SALLY. Land sakes! Say "hello" to your cousin Tom, Matilda.

MATILDA [*shyly*]. Hello. [*She sits D R, primly.*]

TOM [*bashfully*]. Hello.

AUNT SALLY. You have a nice trip down the river?

TOM. Middling. [*He sits on the couch.*]

AUNT SALLY [*sitting left of the table c*]. How's your Aunt Polly, and Mary and Sid?

TOM. Everybody's fine, and they sent their love. Where's Uncle Silas?

AUNT SALLY. He's away for a few days. But we got the house full of pretty girls to keep you company. The Wilks girls—their pa died and left them all alone, poor things—though with scads of money, I've heard tell. They're stayin' here till their uncles come from England.

TOM [*not much interested*]. Is that right!

AUNT SALLY [*rising*]. I'll go up and see about a place for you

to sleep. We're a mite crowded, but we'll tuck you in some-place. [*She starts D R.*] Come on, Matilda. Give me a hand.

[*MATILDA rises. AUNT SALLY pauses at the door D R.*]

AUNT SALLY. Jest make yourself to home, Tom.

[*AUNT SALLY goes out D R. MATILDA looks over at TOM, smiles, and then hurries out D R, giggling. TOM looks about him, tosses his hat up and catches it a couple of times, and then rises. LIZE hurries in D R, with a tray. She takes the remaining dishes from the table, leaving only the sugar bowl and the salt and pepper shakers. TOM turns as she comes in.*]

LIZE [*muttering as she comes in*]. Lize, pick up de dishes! Lize, fix de beds! Lawsy me, if'n de witches ain't pickin' on me, I don't know who is.

TOM [*interested*]. Do you believe in witches?

LIZE [*pausing*]. I knows dey is! You jest ask dat runaway nigger in dere—[*She points U R.*—and he'll tell you stuff about witches dat make yore hair stan' on end.

TOM. They got a runaway nigger locked in there? [*He points U R.*]

LIZE. Dey sure has! Name of Jim. [*She gives a start.*] And lawsy me, he done asked me for some water more'n an hour ago—and I done forgot to get it!

[*LIZE hurries out D R, with the tray. TOM starts U R. In passing the window U R C, he gives a start, as he sees somebody outside.*]

TOM [*letting out a yell*]. Huck!

[*TOM motions for the person to come on in, motioning in the general direction of the door D L. Then he hurries D L and opens the door.*]

TOM [*calling out D L*]. Huckleberry Finn!

[*HUCK enters D L. He is an adventurous, practical boy who has always been accustomed to look out for himself. He wears a good suit, and for once in his life he is neat and clean.*]

HUCK [*just as surprised*]. Tom Sawyer! What you doing here!

TOM. I'm visiting my Aunt Sally. But what are you doing down here?

HUCK. Miss Watson was bent on civilizing me, and I couldn't stand for that. So I got me a raft and hid out on Jackson Island. And Miss Watson's Jim, he run away and hid over there, too, and we run into each other.

[*As they talk, HUCK and TOM sit. TOM sits left of the table C, and HUCK sits on the couch.*]

TOM. Jim was heading for Ohio to be free?

HUCK [*nodding*]. A couple of rapscallions got aboard our raft, and they made me and Jim do like they said. Took all our things like they owned them, and wanted to be waited on all the time.

TOM. Honest?

HUCK. The young fellow, he spun a yarn about he was the Duke of Bridgewater, done out of his rightful lands, and we had to call him "your Grace" all the time.

TOM. He must of been crazy!

HUCK. Then the old guy, he got jealous and said *he* was the lost Dauphin, and the rightful King of France. We had to call *him* "your Majesty."

TOM [*his eyes lighting up*]. The Duke and The King! Gee—what adventure!

HUCK. Down river yesterday, a young chucklehead told us about the Wilks girls expecting their uncles from England. When

they heard that there was money in it, these rapsCALLIONS planned to come here and pose as the Wilks girls' uncles.

TOM. The scoundrels!

HUCK. That ain't all. They needed money for new clothes, so they faked a handbill saying Jim was a runaway slave from New Orleans, and they sold out their chance in him to Silas Phelps—that lives here.

TOM. But Silas is away! What can we do?

HUCK. Jim's in this house—someplace—and when I find him — [*He gets up and walks over to TOM.*] Tom, you may look down on me as a low-down abolitionist if you want to, but—I'm gonna steal Jim out of here!

TOM. You mean you're actually going to steal a nigger off of people that ain't never done you no harm?

HUCK. You won't blow on me, Tom?

TOM [*surprised*]. Blow on you? Land, *I'm* going to *help* you steal him! [*He rises.*]

HUCK [*amazed*]. *You!*

TOM. Sure! But you got to let me handle this. We can make an adventure out of it, and maybe fix these rapsCALLIONS at the same time.

HUCK. I'm game. We haven't much time. The Duke and The King are down by the stile. They sent me up here to sort of look around. But first, we got to find where they keep Jim.

TOM. I already found him. [*He points to the door U R.*] He's in there.

HUCK [*joyfully*]. Jim is? [*He starts over to the door.*]

TOM [*barring the way*]. Hold your horses! *I'm* handling this adventure.

HUCK. What you want me to do?

TOM. You come on back after those rapsCALLIONS arrive—and I'll tell you my plans.