

# Huckleberry finn



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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn People often celebrate the mirth and ebullience of youth; however, the dilemmas of youth best frame the struggles of morality. Morals are what someone falls back on when faced with a problem or a difficult decision.

Some think morals come from childhood while others feel they are similar to natural instincts. Most often accepted is the theory that morals are developed through real life situations. The innocence and untainted nature of a child is the only valid source of honest morals.

In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we are introduced to Huck as a distressed, racist boy living a life with little meaning. Despite Huck's initial racist nature, we first witness Huck's moral development through his interactions with other characters. Due to Huck's young, innocent character, he is forced to mature throughout his dangerous journey. Huck's first major wakeup call is when Pap unexpectedly returns. Huck knows his father has come around just to claim his wealth. Pap, an abusive alcoholic, goes on many drunken sprees, and eventually kidnaps Huck and takes him to the forest. There he is locked up in Pap's cabin. Huck quickly realizes he is not safe when Pap chased me round and round the place with a clap-knife (29).

Afterwards Huck states that he must rid himself of such an evil presence. (31) At this point in the novel, Huck truly understands his father is not a qualified guardian and he must escape in order to protect his own life. By Huck deciding it would be best for Pap's influence not to be present, he is taking the first big step in his moral development. This is an

important moment for Huck because he learns through his own experience what is right and wrong.

He also realizes that Pap is not the father figure he needs as a young adult. Huck, laying his fear aside, manages to find a saw and cut a hole in the cabin. This scene in the novel further supports Huck's maturity and self sufficiency as he takes matters into his own hands. As he steps out of the cabin, Huck notices his father passed out on the floor with a rifle lying next to him. Huck picks the rifle up and points it at his unconscious father's head. By doing this, Huck gives himself the opportunity to change his future and rid himself of one more problem. After pondering the situation, Huck decides not to harm his abusive father.

In doing so, one can see the good nature of Huck's conscience which he often hides from Miss Watson. Due to the uncivilized nature of Pap, Huck is able to grow from his experiences, strengthening him for his road ahead. Huck's initial perspective of the King and Duke changes throughout the novel, altering his outlook on others. Over the course of the story, it becomes relevant that the King and Duke are obvious scam artists and put on excellent displays of what is bad and unacceptable. In addition, it takes Huck little time to realize their corruption and lack of morals. Their inconsiderate characteristics do not bother Huck at first because he also was a rebel and lacked respect for authority and rules. However, by the end of Huck's so-called companionship with these two thugs, he develops a horrible feeling of remorse for even associating himself with the King and the Duke. When Huck witnesses their scandal involving the impersonation of the Wilks brothers he is appalled at their actions.

The King and Duke allege to be brothers of a man who has recently passed away with the hopes of claiming his inheritance money. The wrongness of their scam first sinks in, when Huck notices the affect it has on the family. Huck comes across Mary Jane, the sister of the Wilks brothers, mourning the thought that someone would rob them of their inheritance. In addition Huck declares to help Mary Jane and not allow the death of her loved one to be tainted. He goes forth and informs Mary Jane about the scandal.

This was hard for Huck to do because the King and Duke reminded him of himself in the past. Furthermore, this was a crucial step for Huck to forget his past and grow on his mistakes. Therefore, Mary Jane proves the King and Duke to be frauds when she asks what tattoo the dead man had on his arm. Mary Jane thanks Huck saying, ??? I thank you ever so much I hope we may see each other again??? (242). At this point in the story Huck has matured greatly compared to the Huck portrayed living with Miss Watson.

As Huck is boarding his raft with Jim, he happens to see the King and Duke frantically running towards the raft. At this point, Huck was so physically and emotionally overwhelmed, so ??? I wilted down onto the planks then, and give up; and it was all I could do to keep from crying (205). By leaving the King and Duke behind, Huck chooses who should influence him, once again taking control of his surroundings. Through Huck??™s companionship with the King and Duke he overcomes his rebel ways and develops concern for others. Throughout their journey together Huck and Jim develop a unique relationship, similar to that of a father and son. We see an example of this strong bond when Huck pretends to be injured out on the raft. Jim, worried to

death becomes frantic only to realize Huck is joking. Jim is greatly upset with Huck's humor, showing that he truly cares for his well being.

Huck feels guilty for what he has done and says to Jim he would kiss his feet (143) to make it up to him. The fact that a white boy would kiss the feet of a slave depicts that his racist thoughts are behind him. As their journey together continues their bond only grows stronger. Towards the end of the novel, Jim is captured and enslaved by Mr. Phelps. Although Huck has doubts about contacting Miss Watson, he begins to write a letter alerting her of Jim's circumstance.

However, when Huck thinks back on all the memories they shared he has second thoughts. Huck remembers how Jim has been like a father to him, helping him along his difficult journey. Huck struggles with the decision to send the letter but concludes; "I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath. All right, then, I'll go to hell" and tore it up (214). At this moment, Huck finally reaches his epiphany of moral development, because he decides for himself that what others accept is not always right. The socially correct thing for Huck to do is for him to turn Jim in. However, Huck decides that Jim is not only a human being but also his friend; therefore, he will not allow him to become a slave again.

Huck with the help of Tom is able to free Jim from the containment of the Phelps family. During the process Tom is shot and Jim carries him back to the Phelps's house in search of a doctor. By doing this, Jim gives up his freedom to help a friend. Huck is aware of Jim's kind act and says "He is truly a white man" (334). With this statement Huck implies that he does

not see Jim any differently due to his color. Furthermore, Huck sees Jim as one of his own.

Due to the strong bond Huck and Jim hold, Huck looks to Jim as a mentor and further concludes his moral development. Through his hands-on experiences with people and the presence of Jim, Huck is able to grow from a young rebel into a responsible friend. In addition, Huck's transformation occurs due to the people around him.

Although Pap, the King, and the Duke, may not display a great deal of morals, they open Huck's eyes to the real world. Huck at first is a carefree sarcastic boy, until Pap arrives and his priorities are changed. Thanks to the actions of the King and Duke, Huck grows concerned for complete strangers. On the other hand, Jim acts as an example for Huck to follow and reflect upon. If Jim had not been able to escape slavery from Miss Watson would Huck have made such a positive change? Would he have any morals at all or would he end up alongside the King and Duke?