

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

By Mark Twain

Discussion Questions

Chapters 13-18

1. How does the episode with the murderers and the attempt to save them develop Huck's sense of morality? What is his current code? From whom or what has he developed this code thus far?
2. What role does Huck play in discussions with Jim? What has Huck learned in school, from reading, or from Tom Sawyer that he has retained and found useful? How and when does Huck compliment and denigrate Jim?
3. What lessons from Pap does Huck remember and evaluate during his moral dilemmas with Jim?
4. How do both Grangerfords and Shepherdsons exhibit religious hypocrisy? Explain Twain's use of the families' feuding as satire of Civil War mentality.
5. Discuss Jim's interactions with the Grangerford slaves, including his assessment of their abilities. What do these slaves know about the underground railroad and ways for runaways to elude capture?
6. A frequent habit of Huck's is to blame his failures on his upbringing. This is still popular with those who don't want to take responsibility for personal choices. How do you think Jim and Huck have been affected by both nature (genetic or inborn traits) and nurture (environment or upbringing)?
7. The elopement of Harney and Sophia is reminiscent of the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. What other characters and elements of this episode resemble Shakespeare's play? The feud has been called a satire of the Civil War as well; argue for or against the effectiveness of this satire.
8. "I ain't a-going to tell all that happened—it would make me sick again if I was to do that. I wished I hadn't ever come ashore that night to see such things. I ain't ever going to get shut of them—lots of times I dream about them." In this quote, Huck exhibits symptoms of what is now called PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Argue for or against this diagnosis, considering how many deaths Huck has encountered by Chapter 18.