



New Adventures Planned

TOM'S AND HUCK'S MONEY WAS A GREAT WONDER IN THE POOR LITTLE village. The reader may be sure of that. It was not easy to believe that the money was real. People talked and talked about it.

People went hunting for more money. Boys went, and men went, also. They hunted in every old, lonely house.

All watched Tom and Huck and listened to them. Every word they spoke had become important. The village newspaper had a story about them.

Mrs. Douglas put Huck's money in a bank. Judge Thatcher did the same with Tom's. Each boy had money to spend now. He had almost a dollar for every day of the year. In those days, a dollar and a quarter a week was enough to buy a boy's food and clothes, and to pay for his schooling.

Judge Thatcher had a good opinion of Tom. He said that only a very wise boy could have brought Becky out of the cave safely. He expected Tom to become a great man.

Huck Finn's life had changed. His sufferings were almost too great for him. Mrs. Douglas had taken him to her home. She kept him

clean. He must sleep every night in a clean bed. He must eat like a gentleman. He must go to church.

He suffered for three weeks, and then the next day he was gone. Mrs. Douglas and all the people in the village tried to find him. They were afraid that he had drowned in the river.

Early on the third morning Tom Sawyer went to an old building outside the village. He found Huck. Huck had been sleeping behind the building. He was lying there now, happily smoking. He was covered with dust. His hair was wild. He was wearing his old clothes.

Tom asked him to go home to Mrs. Douglas.

Huck's face became sad. He said, "Do not talk about it, Tom. I tried it. It is not for me. She is good to me, and friendly. But I can't live with her. I must get up at the same time every morning. I must wash. I must sleep in a bed. I must wear those good clothes. I can't move in those clothes. I can't sit down, I can't lie down, I can't roll on the ground in them. I must go to church. I must wear shoes on Sunday."

"We all live like that, Huck."

"Tom, I am different. I can't live like that. It is easy to get food. Mrs. Douglas won't let me smoke. And she prays all the time. I had to leave, Tom, or I would die. And when school begins, I would have to go to school.

"Tom, being rich is no good. I wish I was dead all the time. I like these old clothes. I like this place to sleep. This is what I want. Tom, I give you my share of the money. You can give me ten cents when I need it. But not often. I do not like what is easy to get. And you go now and explain to Mrs. Douglas."

"Oh, Huck, you know that I can't do that. And if you try longer, you will like it."

"Like it! Yes, I will like it as I would like a burning coal if I sat on it. No, Tom, I won't be rich, and I won't live in a house. I like the forest, and the river, and a place like this for sleeping. But now we are rich and all our games like being pirates are destroyed."

"Listen, Huck. Being rich won't change that."

"Is that true, Tom?"

“It is true. But if you want to join me and the other boys, and belong to my **club**, you must live like us.”

“Tom, is that friendly?”

“I want you to join us, Huck. But all the boys who join Tom Sawyer’s Club must have good characters.”

Huck was quiet. There was a battle in his mind. After a while he said, “I will return to Mrs. Douglas for a month. I will try, if you will let me belong to Tom Sawyer’s Club.”

“I agree, Huck. Come with me now. And I promise to ask Mrs. Douglas to change a little, Huck.”

“Will you, Tom? That is good. When will you start your club?”

“Oh, soon. This evening, perhaps, we can have the first meeting.”

“What will we do at the meeting?”

“We will promise always to help each other, and promise never to tell what we plan to do, and promise to kill any person who hurts one of us.”

“I like that, Tom. I like it.”

“And we must make those promises in the middle of the night, in a lonely place. And sign with blood.”

“This is better than being a pirate, Tom. I will stay with Mrs. Douglas. And we will have adventures that will make the whole village talk about us. And then Mrs. Douglas will be proud because she took me into her home.”