



## A Night Surprise

THE BOYS PLAYED IN THE WATER AND ON THE SHORE. BUT THE NEXT day Joe was very sad. Would he ever be happy again? It did not seem possible. Huck also was sad. Tom was not happy, but he tried to seem happy. He had something interesting to tell them, but he was not yet ready to speak. However, if they did not feel better soon, he would be forced to tell it.

He said, trying to seem happy, "I think there have been pirates on this island before. How would you like to find an old box full of money? We should go and hunt for it."

But the other boys were not interested.

Joe said, "Boys, I want to go home. It is very lonely here."

"Oh, no, Joe. You will feel better soon," said Tom. "Think of the good fishing here."

"I am not interested in fishing. I want to go home."

"But, Joe, this is the best swimming place."

"I do not want to swim. I want to go home."

"Baby! You want to see your mother."

"Yes, I do want to see my mother. And you would want to see

your mother, if you had a mother. I am not a baby.”

“But you like it here, Huck? You want to stay? You and I will stay?”

Huck said, “Y-e-s.” He did not seem very sure.

“Let Joe go, if he wants to go,” Tom said. “We do not need him.”

Joe began to walk into the water to start swimming toward the shore where the village was.

Tom looked at Huck. Huck looked away. Then Huck said, “I want to go, Tom. We can go, Tom, can’t we?”

“I won’t! You can go. But I am going to stay.”

Huck started to walk sadly away. Tom felt a strong desire to follow. He hoped that they would stop, but they went slowly forward. Suddenly, Tom knew that it had become very lonely and quiet.

He ran after the other boys, shouting, “Wait! Wait! I want to tell you something.”

They stopped and turned, and he began walking into the water toward them. They listened to him without an answering word or smile. But after a while they began to understand. Then they shouted with joy. They said that he should have told them his plan sooner.

That night, after eating, Tom wanted to learn to smoke. Joe wanted to try, also. With Huck’s help, they began.

Tom said, “This is easy. I could have learned long ago.”

“This is nothing,” said Joe. “I could smoke all day. I do not feel sick.”

Tom said, “I wish that the other boys could see us now. Listen. We won’t tell them. And some time when they are with us, I will say, ‘Joe, I want to smoke.’ And you will say, ‘My tobacco is not very good.’ And I will say, ‘It does not need to be good if it is strong enough.’ And then we will both start smoking and surprise them.”

“That will be good, Tom! I wish we could do it *now*!”

“And we will tell them that we learned to smoke when we were pirates. And they will wish that they had been here!”

The talk continued. But after a little time, there was less talk. Joe said, “I have lost my knife. I am going to find it.”

Tom said, “Let me help you. You go that way and I will go this

way. No, do not come, Huck. We can find it.”

Huck sat down again and waited an hour. Then he was lonely, and he went to find his friends. Both were very white, both were asleep. But he knew that what had troubled them was gone now.

That night they did not talk much. When Huck began to smoke, they said no, that something they had eaten made them feel a little sick.

In the middle of the night Joe opened his eyes and called to the other boys. There was a strange heaviness in the air, and it made them all afraid. The night was very hot, but they moved near to each other and near to the fire. Sitting like that, they waited.

A sudden light filled the sky. It turned night into day, and then it was gone. A fearful noise rolled across the sky and slowly ended far away. A breath of cold wind passed. The sudden light appeared and went away again, and the noise that followed came sooner and was more fearful each time. A little rain began to fall.

“Quick, boys, run for cover!” Tom shouted.

They jumped up and ran, each toward a different place. A strong wind rushed through the trees. The bright light appeared and went away, appeared and went away again. The fearful noise seemed never to stop. And now a heavy rain came down and ran in streams over the ground. The boys shouted, but their voices were lost in the storm. After some time they came to the place where the old sail was and pulled it over them.

It was a wild night for these boys. The wind caught the old sail and carried it away. Trees fell. The storm increased until they feared that it might carry the island away.

But the storm grew weaker and weaker and peace returned.

The boys found that their fire was not quite dead. They put more wood on it, making it burn brightly again. They found some of their meat and cooked it. Then they sat by their fire until morning, talking of the night’s adventure, because there was no dry place for them to sleep.

When the sun began to shine, they rested in its warm light, near the shore. There they remained, sleeping, until the sun became too hot.

Then they had something to eat again.

The desire for home was now strong in all of them. Tom tried to find a new game to interest them.

He found one. They were not pirates now. They were Indians and had many fierce battles. However, when the day ended, they smoked together, as Indians always did to show that they were at peace. And two of them learned joyfully that now they could smoke a little tobacco without being sick.