

Monologues from Big River

Huck: The sky looks ever so deep when you look up in the moonlight. Everything was dead quiet, and it looked late, and smelt late-you know what I mean. Just me and the drift logs and the moon. When I got to Jackson's Island, I was tired and sort of lonesome. There ain't no better way to put in time when you are lonesome than sleep. You can't stay so; you soon get over it. So I slept for the better part of three days.

I was woke up by this deep boom. Through my spyglass I seen the ferryboat crossing the river. They were firing off a cannon to make my body rise to the top, and floating loaves of bread loaded with quicksilver'cause that's supposed to go right to a drowned carcass and stop. Then I knowed my plan had worked and they thought I was dead. There's Pap... and judge Thatcher... and the widow and Miss Watson . . . and Ben Rogers and Jo Harper, and there's Tom Sawyer! (Laughs.) The look on their faces!

But when they were gone, I felt almost lonely again. So I started exploring the island. I was the boss of it; it all belonged to me, so to say. And I was thinking: here was a place where a body didn't have to be nobody but himself.

Jim: Those are my children, and I spec I'll never see 'em no more! S'funny, but I can hardly sleep now, Huck, for thinking about them. Last night, I hear somebody slam a door way over on the other shore. It remind me of when my Elizabeth was four years old, and just got over a rough spell of scarlet fever. One day I says to her, "Shut the door." But she just stands there, kind of smiling at me. So I says again, might loud, "Do you hear me? - Shut the door." She done me the same way. I was a-boiling, so I says, "I lay I make you mind!" And I fetch her a slap upside the head that sent her flying.

I go in the other room, and when I come back ten minutes later, she still standing there, tears streaming down her face. Before I could hit her again, long come the wind and slam the door to, blam! And my Lord, the child never move. My breath hopped right out of me. Oh, Huck! I burst out cryin' and grab her. Lord God Almighty forgive Jim, I says, 'cause he ain't never going to forgive himself as long as he live! That fever left her deaf and dumb, Huck. Plumb deaf and dumb. And I'd been treating her so.