



## A S a d R o y a l E n d i n g

I TOOK A HORSE AND WAGON AND STARTED DOWN THE ROAD TO THE town. As I had expected, I soon saw Tom Sawyer riding in a wagon coming toward me.

He jumped with fear and surprise when he saw me. "I never did you any harm when you were alive, Huck. Why do you return from the dead to frighten me now?"

"I'm not a ghost. I never died."

When Tom heard my voice, he seemed less frightened. But he still was not quite ready to believe me.

"You're not playing a trick on me, are you? If I were dead, I'd never return to play a trick on you. I don't understand. I thought that you had been murdered."

"No, I wasn't murdered. I played a trick to make it *look* like I was murdered. If you touch me, you'll know that I'm not a ghost."

Tom touched my hand and that satisfied him. He was very happy to see me again. He wanted to know all about what I had been doing and all that had happened to me. He thought that I must have had a grand adventure. Tom loved a mystery more than anything in the world

and he loved a good story.

Tom asked the man who was driving him in the wagon to wait a few minutes, and he climbed into my wagon, and we drove off a short distance so that we could talk without being heard. I told him about Aunt Sally and how she thought that I was Tom Sawyer and asked his advice on how to manage this difficult situation.

Tom thought and thought and finally said, "I have a good plan. Take my bags with my clothes and put them in your wagon. Pretend that they are your clothes. I'll return to the town and wait. Then I'll come out to Aunt Sally's house and time my visit so as to arrive thirty minutes after you. Pretend that you don't know who I am."

"Wait. I need to tell you one more fact—a fact that no one knows but me. There's a black man that I'm trying to steal out of slavery. His name is Jim—old Miss Watson's Jim."

"What! But Jim is—"

I stopped him before he could finish. "I know what you're thinking. You think that I shouldn't be helping a runaway slave. I don't care what you think. I plan to steal him and I need you to help. Will you?"

Tom looked very excited. "I certainly will help."

I couldn't believe what I had heard. I had always thought very highly of Tom and never dreamed that he would help a runaway slave. I never dreamed that he would be an **Abolitionist**.

"Are you joking, Tom?"

"No I'm not joking, Huck."

"Remember, then, if you hear anyone talking about a runaway slave act as though you know nothing about him. I'll also act as though I know nothing about Jim."

Tom put his bags into my wagon and returned toward the town while I returned to the Phelps's house.

About a half hour later, Tom's wagon arrived at the Phelps's house. Aunt Sally saw it through the window and said, "I wonder who that could be? He appears to be a stranger."

Everyone ran toward the front door. Tom was on the front porch and watched the man turn his wagon around and return toward the

town. Tom was wearing his best clothes and I could sense that he was planning an act of some kind. He lifted his hat and bowed toward Silas Phelps and said, "Mr. Archibald Nichols, I assume."

"No," said Mr. Phelps, "I'm sorry that your driver brought you to the wrong house. Mr. Nichols lives three miles from here. But come into the house."

Tom looked down the road. "It's too late to call my driver. He's gone."

"Yes, he's gone. But please come inside and eat your dinner with us. Then I'll drive you to the Nichols's farm."

"Please come in," said Aunt Sally. "We've already put an extra plate on the table. There's plenty of food."

Tom thanked them in a grand fashion and came into the house. He told them that his name was William Thompson and that he was from Hicksville, Ohio. He told them many stories about Hicksville and his family there. Suddenly, he leaned toward Aunt Sally and kissed her on her mouth.

She jumped up in surprise, wiped her mouth, and shouted, "How dare you!"

He looked sad and said, "I'm surprised that you did not like my kiss. I expected you to want me to kiss you."

"What made you think that I would like it, you fool?" And she picked up a wooden spoon and I was certain that she was going to hit him with it.

"But they told me that you would want me to kiss you."

"*Who* told you? Tell me their names before I hit you with this spoon."

"I'm sorry that I kissed you. But everyone said that you would like a kiss. I won't kiss you again, though, until you ask me to."

"Until I ask you! What makes you think that I'll ever ask you?"

Then he turned to me and said, "Tom, was I wrong to expect Aunt Sally to open her arms and say to me, 'Sid Sawyer—' "

Hearing those words, Aunt Sally jumped up and said, "You bad boy. I had no idea." And she attempted to kiss him.

“No kisses. Not until you ask me first.”

She quickly asked his permission. “My sister Polly told me that only Tom would be coming. She never said that she would be sending you, also.”

“She never intended for both of us to come. I had to beg and beg her for permission, and only at the last minute did she allow me to come. While traveling on the boat, Tom and I thought that it would be a great joke for him to arrive at your house first, and for me to arrive later and act as though I were a stranger. But that was a mistake. This is not a good place for a stranger to come.”

“Not a place for strangers with bad manners. I’ve not been so upset by anyone in years as I was by your unexpected kiss. But I don’t mind. I’m so very happy to have you visit with us.”

We ate a large dinner—there was enough food on the table for seven families—and all the food was hot and tasty, the best food that I had ever eaten.

Later that afternoon, one of the Phelps children said, “Pa, can Tom and Sid and I go to the show?”

“No,” said Mr. Phelps. “There won’t be a show. The runaway slave told me how they had tricked men in other towns. I told Mr. Burton this, and he said that he would tell other men in town and I’m certain that they have caught those two men by now.”

I felt very sad when I heard this. I knew that I had to warn the king and duke. Tom and I said that we were tired and would go to bed early. As soon as we could, we climbed out of the bedroom window and jumped to the ground. We were soon walking quickly down the road to the town.

As we walked, Tom told me how my friends thought that I had been murdered, and how my Pap disappeared soon afterward and was never seen again. I told Tom about the king and the duke and about their foolish play. When we reached the town, we saw a crowd of people rushing down the street, shouting and screaming and making loud noises by hitting sticks against large pans. We jumped to the side of the road to allow them to pass, and as they moved past us, I could see the

duke and the king in the center of this angry crowd. They were covered with feathers and a sticky black substance called tar. They didn't look human. I felt sick to see them. I was sorry for them even though I knew how cruel they had been. It was awful to see them in this condition. Human beings can be very cruel to one another.

We were too late. I knew that we couldn't help them. We asked some people what had happened. They told us that everyone who had gone to the show had been told in advance about the trick the king and the duke would try to play. When the king was doing his little dance naked on the stage, someone gave a signal and all the men ran onto the stage and seized them.

We slowly returned to the Phelps's house. We were both feeling very sad after what we had seen. I was feeling guilty, for some reason, though I had done nothing wrong. It seemed to make little difference to me whether I did right or wrong; I always felt guilty. I wished that I could get rid of that part of me that was forever trying to decide what was right and what was wrong. It filled a big space inside of me, but was of little use to me.