

**CHAPTER 11**  
  
"COME in," says the woman, and I did. She  
says: "Take a cheer."

I done it. She looked me all over with her little  
shiny eyes, and says:

"What might your name be?"

"Sarah Williams."

"Where 'bouts do you live? In this neighbor-  
hood?'

"No'm. In Hookerville, seven mile below. I've  
walked all the way and I'm all tired out."

"Hungry, too, I reckon. I'll find you something."

"No'm, I ain't hungry. I was so hungry I had to  
stop two miles below here at a farm; so I ain't hungry  
no more. It's what makes me so late. My mother's  
down sick, and out of money and everything, and I  
come to tell my uncle Abner Moore. He lives at the  
upper end of the town, she says. I hain't ever been  
here before. Do you know him?"

"No; but I don't know everybody yet. I haven't  
lived here quite two weeks. It's a considerable ways  
to the upper end of the town. You better stay here  
all night. Take off your bonnet."

"No," I says; "I'll rest a while, I reckon, and go  
on. I ain't afeared of the dark."

She said she wouldn't let me go by myself, but her  
husband would be in by and by, maybe in a hour and  
a half, and she'd send him along with me. Then she  
got to talking about her husband, and about her rela-  
tions up the river, and her relations down the river,  
and about how much better off they used to was, and  
how they didn't know but they'd made a mistake  
coming to our town, instead of letting well alone --  
and so on and so on, till I was afeard I had made a  
mistake coming to her to find out what was going on  
in the town; but by and by she dropped on to pap  
and the murder, and then I was pretty willing to let  
her clatter right along. She told about me and Tom  
Sawyer finding the six thousand dollars (only she got  
it ten) and all about pap and what a hard lot he was,  
and what a hard lot I was, and at last she got down to  
where I was murdered. I says:

"Who done it? We've heard considerable about  
these goings on down in Hookerville, but we don't  
know who 'twas that killed Huck Finn."

"Well, I reckon there's a right smart chance of  
people HERE that'd like to know who killed him. Some  
think old Finn done it himself."

"No -- is that so?"

"Most everybody thought it at first. He'll never  
know how nigh he come to getting lynched. But  
before night they changed around and judged it was  
done by a runaway slave named Jim."

"Why HE --"

I stopped. I reckoned I better keep still. She run  
on, and never noticed I had put in at all:

"That slave run off the very night Huck Finn was  
killed. So there's a reward out for him -- three hun-  
dred dollars. And there's a reward out for old Finn,  
too -- two hundred dollars. You see, he come to town  
the morning after the murder, and told about it, and  
was out with 'em on the ferryboat hunt, and right  
away after he up and left. Before night they wanted  
to lynch him, but he was gone, you see. Well, next  
day they found out the slave was gone; they found  
out he hadn't ben seen sence ten o'clock the night the  
murder was done. So then they put it on him, you  
see; and while they was full of it, next day, back  
comes old Finn, and went boo-hooing to Judge  
Thatcher to get money to hunt for the slave all over  
Illinois with. The judge gave him some, and that  
evening he got drunk, and was around till after mid-  
night with a couple of mighty hard-looking strangers,  
and then went off with them. Well, he hain't come  
back sence, and they ain't looking for him back till  
this thing blows over a little, for people thinks now  
that he killed his boy and fixed things so folks would  
think robbers done it, and then he'd get Huck's money  
without having to bother a long time with a lawsuit.  
People do say he warn't any too good to do it. Oh,  
he's sly, I reckon. If he don't come back for a year  
he'll be all right. You can't prove anything on him,  
you know; everything will be quieted down then, and  
he'll walk in Huck's money as easy as nothing."

"Yes, I reckon so, 'm. I don't see nothing in the  
way of it. Has everybody guit thinking the slave Jim  
done it?"

"Oh, no, not everybody. A good many thinks he  
done it. But they'll get ‘im pretty soon now,  
and maybe they can scare it out of him."

"Why, are they after him yet?"

"Well, you're innocent, ain't you! Does three  
hundred dollars lay around every day for people to  
pick up? Some folks think the runaway ain't far from  
here. I'm one of them -- but I hain't talked it around.  
A few days ago I was talking with an old couple that  
lives next door in the log shanty, and they happened  
to say hardly anybody ever goes to that island over  
yonder that they call Jackson's Island. Don't any-  
body live there? says I. No, nobody, says they. I  
didn't say any more, but I done some thinking. I  
was pretty near certain I'd seen smoke over there,  
about the head of the island, a day or two before that,  
so I says to myself, like as not that slave's hiding  
over there; anyway, says I, it's worth the trouble to  
give the place a hunt. I hain't seen any smoke sence,  
so I reckon maybe he's gone, if it was him; but  
husband's going over to see -- him and another man.  
He was gone up the river; but he got back to-day,  
and I told him as soon as he got here two hours ago."

Do a little web searching and find out about how much the modern day equivalent of $300 in 1850.

I had got so uneasy I couldn't set still. I had to do  
something with my hands; so I took up a needle off of  
the table and went to threading it. My hands shook,  
and I was making a bad job of it. When the woman  
stopped talking I looked up, and she was looking at  
me pretty curious and smiling a little. I put down the  
needle and thread, and let on to be interested -- and I  
was, too -- and says:

"Three hundred dollars is a power of money. I  
wish my mother could get it. Is your husband going  
over there to-night?"

"Oh, yes. He went up-town with the man I was  
telling you of, to get a boat and see if they could  
borrow another gun. They'll go over after midnight."

"Couldn't they see better if they was to wait till  
daytime?"

"Yes. And couldn't the runaway see better, too?  
After midnight he'll likely be asleep, and they can slip  
around through the woods and hunt up his camp fire  
all the better for the dark, if he's got one."

"I didn't think of that."

The woman kept looking at me pretty curious, and  
I didn't feel a bit comfortable. Pretty soon she says"

"What did you say your name was, honey?"

"M -- Mary Williams."

Somehow it didn't seem to me that I said it was  
Mary before, so I didn't look up -- seemed to me I  
said it was Sarah; so I felt sort of cornered, and was  
afeared maybe I was looking it, too. I wished the  
woman would say something more; the longer she set  
still the uneasier I was. But now she says:

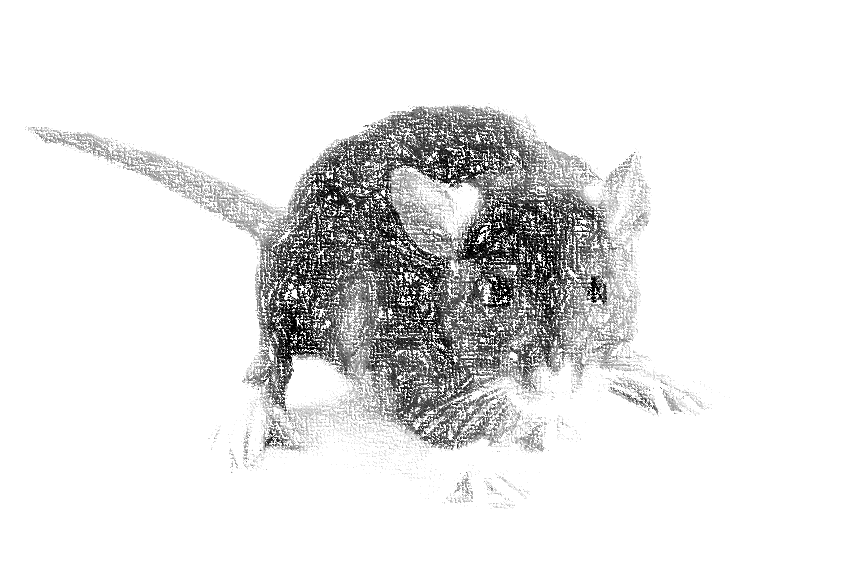
"Honey, I thought you said it was Sarah when  
you first come in?"

"Oh, yes'm, I did. Sarah Mary Williams. Sarah's  
my first name. Some calls me Sarah, some calls me  
Mary."

"Oh, that's the way of it?"

"Yes'm."

I was feeling better then, but I wished I was out of  
there, anyway. I couldn't look up yet.

Well, the woman fell to talking about how hard  
times was, and how poor they had to live, and how the  
rats was as free as if they owned the place, and so  
forth and so on, and then I got easy again. She was  
right about the rats. You'd see one stick his nose out  
of a hole in the corner every little while. She said she  
had to have things handy to throw at them when she  
was alone, or they wouldn't give her no peace. She  
showed me a bar of lead twisted up into a knot, and  
said she was a good shot with it generly, but she'd  
wrenched her arm a day or two ago, and didn't know  
whether she could throw true now. But she watched  
for a chance, and directly banged away at a rat; but  
she missed him wide, and said "Ouch!" it hurt her  
arm so. Then she told me to try for the next one. I  
wanted to be getting away before the old man got  
back, but of course I didn't let on. I got the thing,  
and the first rat that showed his nose I let drive, and  
if he'd a stayed where he was he'd a been a tolerable  
sick rat. She said that was first-rate, and she reckoned  
I would hive the next one. She went and got the  
lump of lead and fetched it back, and brought along a  
hank of yarn which she wanted me to help her with.  
I held up my two hands and she put the hank over  
them, and went on talking about her and her husband's  
matters. But she broke off to say:

"Keep your eye on the rats. You better have the  
lead in your lap, handy."

So she dropped the lump into my lap just at that  
moment, and I clapped my legs together on it and she  
went on talking. But only about a minute. Then  
she took off the hank and looked me straight in the  
face, and very pleasant, and says:

"Come, now, what's your real name?"

"Wh -- what, mum?"

"What's your real name? Is it Bill, or Tom, or  
Bob? -- or what is it?"

What three clues tipped the lady off that Huck was not a girl?

I reckon I shook like a leaf, and I didn't know  
hardly what to do. But I says:

"Please to don't poke fun at a poor girl like me,  
mum. If I'm in the way here, I'll --"

"No, you won't. Set down and stay where you  
are. I ain't going to hurt you, and I ain't going to  
tell on you, nuther. You just tell me your secret, and  
trust me. I'll keep it; and, what's more, I'll help  
you. So'll my old man if you want him to. You  
see, you're a runaway 'prentice, that's all. It ain't  
anything. There ain't no harm in it. You've been  
treated bad, and you made up your mind to cut.  
Bless you, child, I wouldn't tell on you. Tell me all  
about it now, that's a good boy."

So I said it wouldn't be no use to try to play it any  
longer, and I would just make a clean breast and tell  
her everything, but she musn't go back on her promise.  
Then I told her my father and mother was dead, and  
the law had bound me out to a mean old farmer in the  
country thirty mile back from the river, and he treated  
me so bad I couldn't stand it no longer; he went away  
to be gone a couple of days, and so I took my chance  
and stole some of his daughter's old clothes and  
cleared out, and I had been three nights coming the  
thirty miles. I traveled nights, and hid daytimes and  
slept, and the bag of bread and meat I carried from  
home lasted me all the way, and I had a-plenty. I  
said I believed my uncle Abner Moore would take care  
of me, and so that was why I struck out for this town  
of Goshen.

"Goshen, child? This ain't Goshen. This is St.  
Petersburg. Goshen's ten mile further up the river.  
Who told you this was Goshen?"

"Why, a man I met at daybreak this morning, just  
as I was going to turn into the woods for my regular  
sleep. He told me when the roads forked I must take  
the right hand, and five mile would fetch me to  
Goshen."

"He was drunk, I reckon. He told you just ex-  
actly wrong."

"Well,,he did act like he was drunk, but it ain't no  
matter now. I got to be moving along. I'll fetch  
Goshen before daylight."

"Hold on a minute. I'll put you up a snack to eat.  
You might want it."

So she put me up a snack, and says:

"Say, when a cow's laying down, which end of her  
gets up first? Answer up prompt now -- don't stop  
to study over it. Which end gets up first?"

What are 3 questions to ask someone to determine whether or not he had actually lived in Bowling Green?

1.

2.

3.

"The hind end, mum."

"Well, then, a horse?"

"The for'rard end, mum."

"Which side of a tree does the moss grow on?"

"North side."

"If fifteen cows is browsing on a hillside, how  
many of them eats with their heads pointed the same  
direction?"

"The whole fifteen, mum."

"Well, I reckon you HAVE lived in the country. I  
thought maybe you was trying to hocus me again.  
What's your real name, now?"

"George Peters, mum."

"Well, try to remember it, George. Don't forget  
and tell me it's Elexander before you go, and then get  
out by saying it's George Elexander when I catch you.  
And don't go about women in that old calico. You  
do a girl tolerable poor, but you might fool men,  
maybe. Bless you, child, when you set out to thread  
a needle don't hold the thread still and fetch the needle  
up to it; hold the needle still and poke the thread at  
it; that's the way a woman most always does, but a  
man always does t'other way. And when you throw  
at a rat or anything, hitch yourself up a tiptoe and  
fetch your hand up over your head as awkward as you  
can, and miss your rat about six or seven foot. Throw  
stiff-armed from the shoulder, like there was a pivot  
there for it to turn on, like a girl; not from the wrist  
and elbow, with your arm out to one side, like a boy.  
And, mind you, when a girl tries to catch anything in  
her lap she throws her knees apart; she don't clap  
them together, the way you did when you catched the  
lump of lead. Why, I spotted you for a boy when  
you was threading the needle; and I contrived the  
other things just to make certain. Now trot along to  
your uncle, Sarah Mary Williams George Elexander  
Peters, and if you get into trouble you send word to  
Mrs. Judith Loftus, which is me, and I'll do what I  
can to get you out of it. Keep the river road all the  
way, and next time you tramp take shoes and socks  
with you. The river road's a rocky one, and your  
feet'll be in a condition when you get to Goshen, I  
reckon."

What does she mean by “you do a girl tolerable poor”?

I went up the bank about fifty yards, and then I  
doubled on my tracks and slipped back to where my  
canoe was, a good piece below the house. I jumped  
in, and was off in a hurry. I went up-stream far  
enough to make the head of the island, and then  
started across. I took off the sun-bonnet, for I didn't  
want no blinders on then. When I was about the  
middle I heard the clock begin to strike, so I stops  
and listens; the sound come faint over the water but  
clear -- eleven. When I struck the head of the island  
I never waited to blow, though I was most winded, but  
I shoved right into the timber where my old camp used  
to be, and started a good fire there on a high and dry  
spot.

Then I jumped in the canoe and dug out for our  
place, a mile and a half below, as hard as I could go.  
I landed, and slopped through the timber and up the  
ridge and into the cavern. There Jim laid, sound  
asleep on the ground. I roused him out and says:

"Git up and hump yourself, Jim! There ain't a  
minute to lose. They're after us!"

Jim never asked no questions, he never said a word;  
but the way he worked for the next half an hour  
showed about how he was scared. By that time every-  
thing we had in the world was on our raft, and she was  
ready to be shoved out from the willow cove where she  
was hid. We put out the camp fire at the cavern the  
first thing, and didn't show a candle outside after that.

I took the canoe out from the shore a little piece,  
and took a look; but if there was a boat around I  
couldn't see it, for stars and shadows ain't good to see  
by. Then we got out the raft and slipped along down  
in the shade, past the foot of the island dead still --  
never saying a word.