

Chapter 25

In Chapter 25, a dramatic encounter unfolds as Huck bears witness to the harsh realities of slavery and cruelty. Awakened abruptly by the Duke's harsh voice, Huck finds himself lying in hay, with the King standing behind the Duke. They call for a slave named Easter, who enters and displays confusion when the Duke demands to know how Jim was freed from his chains. Huck reveals that he let Jim go, saying it simply "slipped off." The Duke's fury escalates, and he prepares to lash out at Easter, affirming that the slave had been wrongly kept chained.

As tensions rise, Huck instinctively refuses to cooperate with the Duke's wishes, which draws their attention, particularly from Easter, who is visibly terrified. The Duke then shifts his focus to Huck, commanding the King to bind him, before he punishes Easter with a whip. The cruel crack of the whip draws the attention of a large, imposing man named Wiley, who rushes in and is horrified to find Easter injured. He confronts the Duke about his actions, asserting his ownership of Easter and expressing outrage at the unprovoked beating.

In an attempt to regain control, the Duke implicates Huck as responsible for Jim's escape, insisting the boy is a friend of the runaway slave. Huck speaks up, revealing that Jim is actually his slave. Wiley, appearing confused yet angry, demands to know what right the Duke has to harm Easter, and he examines Easter's injury, lamenting about the potential loss of his labor.

Despite the Duke's feeble apologies, Wiley stands firm, declining to let Huck or the Duke take Easter away. The Duke, realizing the escalating situation, suggests they leave but warns Huck not to run away. As the chapter closes, Huck stands resolutely next to Jim, affirming his loyalty despite the Duke's threats, while Wiley shows compassion towards the injured Easter, indicating that Huck and Jim's fates remain uncertain amidst the complexities of manipulation and moral stands against slavery.