



# Character Analysis for *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Alyia A.

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Honors English 10A

Ms. Graham

# Mrs. Judith Loftus

## Introduction



Huck first sees Mrs. Loftus through the window of a house that was abandoned before he left. She invites him inside and seems to be a kindly, prattling old woman. As the chapter moves on, however, it quickly becomes apparent that she is much smarter than we were led to believe and once the chapter ends she is completely dismissed.

**Thesis: Mrs. Loftus is a complex character who is talkative, smart, kind, and reliable, but is dismissed by Huck.**

# Mrs. Judith Loftus: Talkative

- Mrs. Loftus speaks a lot during her conversations with Huck. While he is anxious about being in her presence, she is perfectly comfortable yammering on about her troubles.
- “Then she got to talking about her husband, and about her relations up the river, and her relations down the river ... and so on and so on, till I was afeared I had made a mistake coming to her to find out what was going on in the town;” (Twain 71)
- This keeps Huck occupied for quite some time and delays him a fair amount. His original intentions, to find someone that could tell him about what was going on in the town, were waylaid as he ended up learning much more about Mrs. Loftus’ personal life in the beginning than anything interesting to him in particular.

# Mrs. Judith Loftus: Smart

- While Mrs. Loftus is talking about Jim, the widow's runaway slave and Huck's traveling companion, she mentions how she noticed smoke coming off the island where Huck and Jim are camped.
- "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;" " (Twain 73)
- It's implied that she's the only person who notices this and comes to the correct conclusion that Jim is on the island. This proves that earlier assumptions of her being absent minded were incorrect and she is actually very sharp-witted.

# Mrs. Judith Loftus: Kind

- At many points in the chapter Mrs. Loftus offers Huck food and shelter out of kindness and hospitality. One of the more obvious examples of this kindness is her allowance of Huck into her home so late at night.
- “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.” (Twain 76)
- At first she seems easy to fool. However, after she deduces that Huck is not actually a girl she assumes he’s a runaway apprentice and states she will gladly assist him. Her character, and in turn the chapter, is heavily built on her kindness.



Image source: “Come In.”

# Mrs. Judith Loftus: Reliant

- There are many instances in which Mrs. Loftus refers her husband for certain jobs, from escorting Huck to where he needs to go to searching for Jim on Jackson's Island.
- "...her husband would be in by and by, maybe in a hour and a half, and she'd send him along with me." (Twain 71)
- Though she seems to be very smart and able to care for herself well, she still relies on her husband to do what was considered 'men's jobs' in that time period.

# Mrs. Judith Loftus: Dismissed

- The last mention of Mrs. Loftus is the three sentences following this quotation:
- “I told Jim all about the time I had jabbering with that woman;” (Twain 81)
- After that the character, like many others, is largely discredited and left simply as an aid to Huck’s adventures. Though her only main role in the plot is to move the story along and inadvertently warn Huck to get off the island, she is quite a dynamic character for one so small and early in the book.



# Mrs. Judith Loftus

## Conclusion

Mrs. Loftus is a very dynamic character for the short time she appears in the book. The reader learns much from direct and indirect characterization as the chapter progresses. However, she is not mentioned in the rest of the book. She is smart, kind, and goes largely unnoticed after her appearance.





# Works Cited

- ▶ Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Scholastic Book Services, 1962.
- ▶ Image source: "Come In. First Edition Huck Finn Illustrations, *Mark Twain in His Times*, [twain.lib.virginia.edu/huckfinn/huckpix/huckpix.html](http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/huckfinn/huckpix/huckpix.html). Accessed 5 Oct. 2020.