

Adam Nelson's 'Huckleberry Jim' Named Semi-Finalist in 2026 William Faulkner–William Wisdom Novel Competition

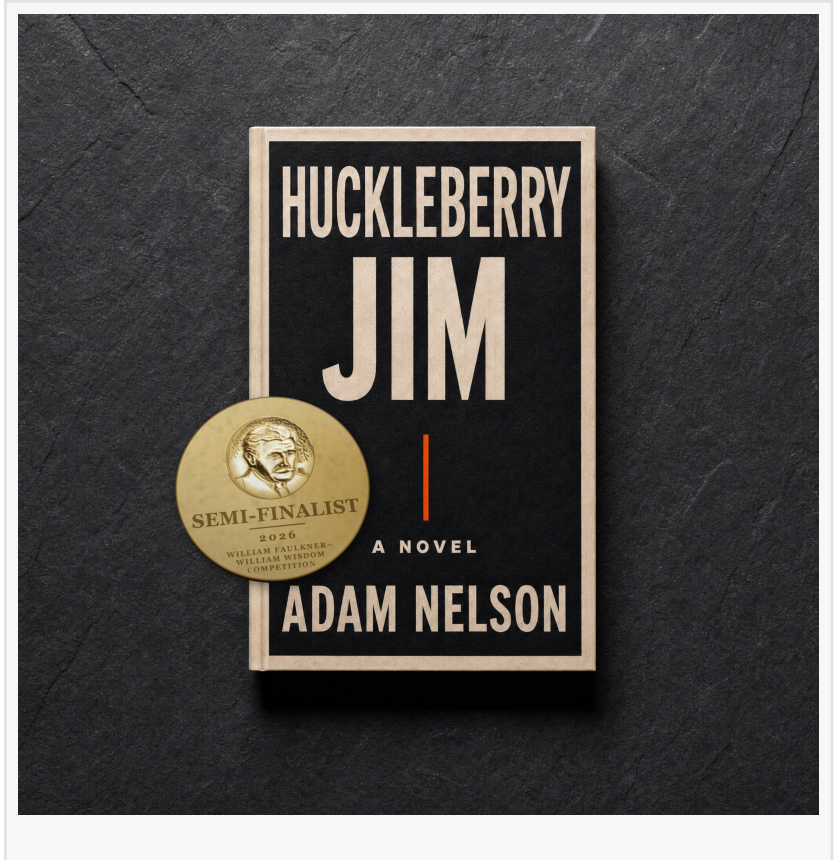
Recognition follows Publishers Weekly Editor's Pick and Masters Review longlisting ahead of Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum Launch Oct. 10, 2026

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 10, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Less than a month before publication, Adam Nelson's debut literary novel "[Huckleberry Jim](#)" has added the name William Faulkner to a growing list of pre-publication honors.

The Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society has named "Huckleberry Jim" a Semi-Finalist in the Novel Category of the 2026 [William Faulkner–William Wisdom Creative Writing Competition](#), advancing Nelson's debut from a field of novels submitted from 20 states and four countries. The competition, in continuous operation since 1992, is among the longest-running literary competitions in the United States.

"Both preliminary readers and final round judges were impressed with the broad range of imaginative concepts represented by the entries in this category," said Rosemary James, Co-Founder of the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society.

The Faulkner recognition arrives amid an unusual run for a novel still weeks from publication. "Huckleberry Jim" has been named a Publishers Weekly BookLife Editor's Pick, was longlisted for The Masters Review Novel Excerpt Prize among the top three percent of submissions, has received favorable advance notices, and will be released simultaneously in unabridged audio by Blackstone Publishing.



Publishers Weekly BookLife called Nelson's novel: "Adam Nelson's incisive, provocative, and robustly American debut... honors the fathoms-deep American divisions that Twain marked and urges us to look closer rather than away."

For a novel born from an argument with Mark Twain, recognition from an institution bearing Faulkner's name carries particular resonance.

"To be recognized in a competition that carries William Faulkner's name is a genuine honor," Nelson said. "Faulkner made the American South write itself into a mirror, and refused to look away from what it saw. "Huckleberry Jim" was written inside that same tradition — the American reckoning that Twain opened, that Faulkner deepened, and that a novel written today still has to answer for. The Society's recognition, on the eve of the novel's publication during Banned Books Week, makes the honor especially significant to me."



Set in 1991 and inspired by real events, "Huckleberry Jim" follows Axel Emerson, a twenty-two-year-old white actor fresh out of conservatory, and Moses Morton, a fifty-five-year-old Black actor with a lifetime of stages behind him, as they tour a stripped-down two-man production of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" through schools in upstate New York and Appalachia.

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*Adam Nelson, Author,
"Huckleberry Jim"*

It is the America of Rodney King, Anita Hill, Desert Storm and the culture wars. Moving from school gymnasiums to motel rooms and roadside restaurants, the two actors carry Twain's story into communities fighting over race, language, history and what American children should be

allowed to read. The road between them becomes its own reckoning with race, performance, fatherhood, guilt and the stories America tells about itself. The novel arrives 35 years later to find that argument still unfinished. That timing places "Huckleberry Jim" at an unusual intersection of American history: it publishes during Banned Books Week, in the 250th year of the United States and the 150th anniversary year of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.

On October 6, Blackstone Publishing will simultaneously release the unabridged audiobook of Huckleberry Jim, narrated by Leon Nixon, produced by senior audio producer Grover Gardner,

and featuring an introduction recorded by Nelson.

Blackstone Chief Sales Officer Anne Fonteneau has called the book:

"A sharp, darkly funny, and deeply relevant novel that takes on race, identity, and the stories America tells about itself."

The audiobook will receive wide retail and library distribution across more than 150 digital partners, including Audible, Amazon, Spotify, Apple, Libro.fm, Chirp, Audiobooks.com, OverDrive and Hoopla.

The novel will also travel internationally during publication week, with foreign rights offered at the Frankfurt Book Fair, October 7–11, where Workhouse Editions will be represented through the Independent Book Publishers Association cooperative program.

Four days after publication, the journey comes full circle. On Saturday, October 10 at 5 PM, Nelson will officially launch "Huckleberry Jim" at the [Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum](#) in Hannibal, Missouri — 150 years after "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" first transformed Twain's boyhood town into one of the defining landscapes of American literature. The literary geography is difficult to miss. Twain began the argument. Faulkner refused to let America forget it. Now "Huckleberry Jim" enters it.

Publishers Weekly BookLife — Editor's Pick:

"Adam Nelson's incisive, provocative, and robustly American debut... honors the fathoms-deep American divisions that Twain marked and urges us to look closer rather than away."

BlueInk Review:

"At the story's core is an interesting and convincing relationship. Nelson is adept at character development... At its best it's a revealing evolution of an improbable relationship."

Foreword Clarion Reviews:

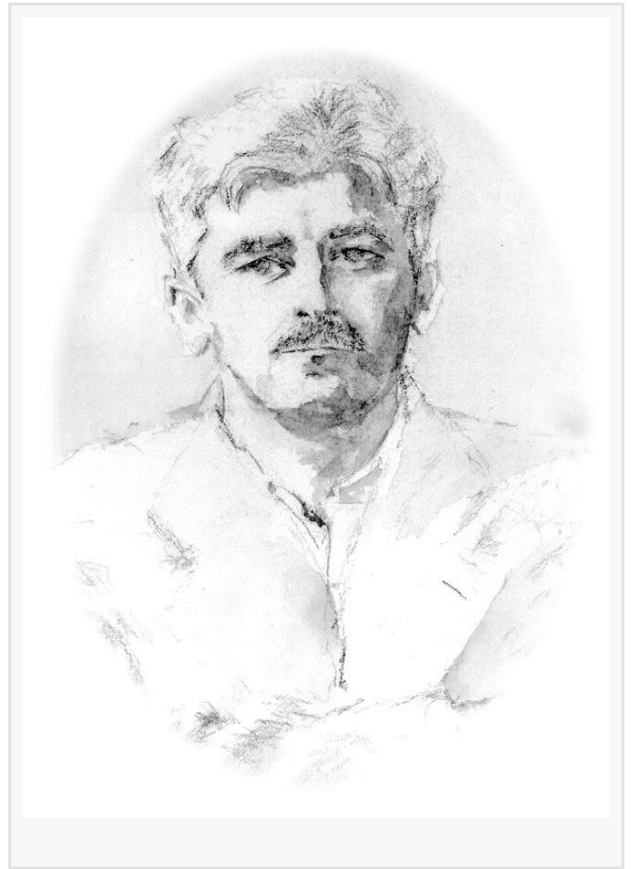
"A blunt historical novel about the power — and limitations — of the arts to educate, connect, effect change, or create an escape. A thorny discussion about book censorship ... is a discomfiting highlight."

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Huckleberry Jim by Adam Nelson

Workhouse Editions · October 6, 2026

Hardcover · \$28.00 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-3-8



Trade Paperback · \$18.99 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-0-7

Ebook · \$11.99 · ISBN 979-8-9963450-1-4

Audiobook · Blackstone Publishing · Narrated by Leon Nixon · Produced by Grover Gardner
Distributed by Ingram. Available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org and independent booksellers nationwide.

A limited first edition of 200 individually numbered signed hardcovers is available exclusively through HuckleberryJimBook.com while supplies last.

Adam Nelson has lived at the intersection of performance and American storytelling for more than three decades as an actor, filmmaker, communications executive and educator. Founder of Workhouse, the New York public relations agency he has run since 1999, Nelson is also an instructor with the New Jersey Film Academy, a merit winner of the Writer's Digest International Screenplay Competition, and co-founder of Socko! Magazine.

Founded in New Orleans in 1990, the Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society is a nonprofit literary and educational organization. Its William Faulkner–William Wisdom Creative Writing Competition has operated continuously since 1992 and seeks to identify writers, develop their work, connect them with literary agents and help bring their work to publication.

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