

EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION:

Excerpt Adapted From Mark Twain's

THE PRINCE and the PAUPER

The novel is set in London, England, during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The story begins with the birth of two boys on the same day. The first is Tom Canty, who is born into a very poor family that does not welcome his birth. The second is Edward Tudor, Prince of Wales, who is born into the lap of luxury. All of England celebrates the birth of little Edward. As a boy, Tom lives with his family in filth and poverty, in a room on the third floor of a rickety old building in crowded London. Tom's father, a thief, forces Tom to be a beggar. From a kind priest living in the same

building on Offal Court, Tom learns right from wrong; he also learns to read, write, and speak a little Latin. His time spent reading and listening to the priest's stories of royal princes and enchanted castles causes Tom to begin acting and speaking like a prince himself. His wisdom and princely manners earn him the respect and admiration of his peers and even their elders. Tom's greatest desire—what he dreams about as he lies hungry on his bed of straw at night—is to one day lay eyes on a real prince.

CHAPTER 1**Tom's Meeting With the Prince**

- 1 One day, his thoughts busy with the shadowy splendors of his night's dreams, Tom wandered here and there in the city. He went farther than he had ever traveled. By and by he idled down a quiet, lovely road, past a great stately palace, and then toward a far more mighty and majestic palace beyond—Westminster. Tom stared in wonder at the vast pile of masonry, the great bastions and turrets, the huge stone gateway, with its gilded bars and magnificent display of colossal granite lions. Was the desire of his soul to be satisfied at last? Here, indeed, was a king's palace. Might he not hope to see a prince of flesh and blood, if Heaven were willing?
- 2 At each side of the gilded gate stood a living statue—an upright, stately, and motionless man-at-arms, clad from head to heel in shining steel armor. At a respectful distance were many country folk and people from the city waiting for any chance glimpse of royalty. Splendid carriages with splendid people in them and splendid servants outside were arriving and departing by several other noble gateways that pierced the royal enclosure. Poor little Tom, dressed in his customary rags, approached, moving slowly and timidly past the watchmen, with a beating heart and a rising hope. Then all at once, he caught sight through the golden bars of a spectacle that almost made him shout for joy. Within was a boy, whose clothing was of lovely silks and satins, shining

with jewels; at his hip a little jeweled sword and dagger; dainty leather boots on his feet, with red heels; and on his head a dashing crimson cap, with drooping plumes fastened with a great sparkling gem. Several gorgeously dressed gentlemen—his servants, no doubt—stood near. Oh! He was a real, living prince, without the shadow of a question! The prayer of the pauper-boy's heart was answered at last.

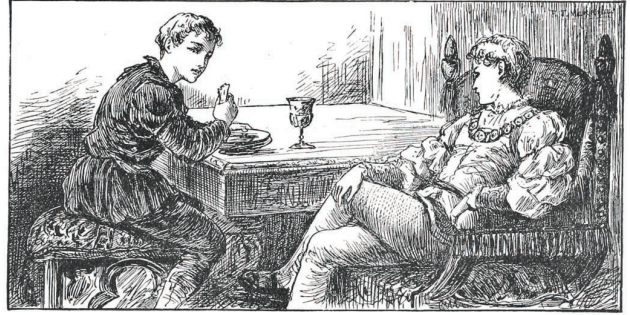
- 3 Tom's breath came quick and short with excitement, and his eyes grew big with wonder and delight. Everything gave way in his mind to one desire: to get close to the prince and have a good, devouring look at him. Before he knew what he was about, Tom had his face against the gate-bars. The next instant, one of the soldiers snatched him rudely away, and sent him spinning among the gaping crowd of country gawks and London idlers. The soldier said, "Mind thy manners, thou young beggar!"



Continue reading.

The crowd jeered and laughed, but the young prince sprang to the gate with his face flushed and his eyes flashing with indignation. He cried, "How darst thou treat a poor lad like that? How darst thou treat the King my father's lowliest subject so? Open the gates, and let him in!"

- 4 The soldiers held up their weapons in salute, opened the gates, and presented their swords again as the little Prince of Poverty passed in, in his fluttering rags, to join hands with the Prince of Limitless Plenty. Edward Tudor said, "Thou lookest tired and hungry; thou hast been treated ill. Come with me."
- 5 Edward took Tom to a rich apartment in the palace. By his command a meal was brought such as Tom had never seen before. The prince sent away the servants, so that his humble guest might not be embarrassed by their critical presence; then he sat nearby and asked questions while Tom ate.
- 6 "What is thy name, lad?"
- 7 "Tom Canty, sir."
- 8 "Where dost thou live?"
- 9 "In the city, sir. Offal Court, off of Pudding Lane."
- 10 "Tell me of this Offal Court. Hast thou a pleasant life there?"
- 11 "In truth, yes, sir, except when I am hungry. There are puppet shows, and monkeys—oh such antic creatures, and so splendidly dressed! And there are plays wherein the actors do shout and fight, and 'tis so fine to see, and it costs only a farthing—albeit 'tis hard to get the farthing, your worship."
- 12 "Tell me more."
- 13 "We lads of Offal Court strive in races, sir, to see who of us shall be fleetest."
- 14 "That I would like also. Speak on."
- 15 "In summer, sir, we wade and swim in the canals and in the river, and each doth duck his neighbor, and splatter him with water, and dive and shout and tumble and—"
- 16 "It would be worth my father's kingdom just to enjoy it once! Please go on."
- 17 "We dance and sing around the Maypole in Cheapside; we play in the sand, each covering his neighbor up; and sometimes we make mud pastry—oh the lovely mud, it hath not its like for delightfulness in all the world!—we do fairly wallow in it, sir."
- 18 "Oh, please, say no more, 'tis glorious! If only I could clothe me in **raiment** like thine, and strip my feet, and revel in the mud once, just once, with none to rebuke me or forbid me, I feel that I could forgo the crown!"
- 19 "And if only I could clothe me once, sir, as thou art clad—just once—"
- 20 "Oho, would you like that? Then so shall it be! Take off thy rags, and don these splendors! It is a brief happiness, but it will be not less keen for that. We will have it while we may."
- 21 A few minutes later the little Prince of Wales was robed in Tom's fluttering odds and ends, and the little Prince of Pauperdom was tricked out in the showy plumage of royalty. The two went and stood side by side before a great mirror, and lo, a miracle: there did not seem to have been any change made! They stared at each other, then at the glass, then at each other again.
- 22 At last the puzzled princeling said, "Thou hast the same hair, the same eyes, the same voice and manner, the same form and stature, the same expression that I bear. If we were to go forth naked, there is none could say which was you, and which the Prince of Wales. And now that I am clothed as thou wert clothed, it seems that I should be able to better feel as thou didst when that brute soldier—" The prince gasped and pointed to Tom's arm, "Is this a bruise upon your hand?"
- 23 "Yes; but it is a slight thing—"
- 24 "Peace! It was a shameful, cruel thing!" cried the prince, stamping his bare foot. "Stir not till I come again! It is a command! He snatched up and put away an article of national importance and was out the door, bullying through the palace grounds in his bannered rags, his face hot and eyes glowing. Upon reaching the great gate, he seized the bars, shouting, "Unbar the gates!"



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- 25 The soldier that had mistreated Tom obeyed promptly. As the prince burst through the portal with royal wrath, the soldier fetched him and sent him whirling to the roadway. He said, "Take that, thou beggar's spawn, for what thou got'st me from his Highness!" The crowd roared with laughter. The prince picked himself out of the mud and made fiercely at the sentry, shouting, "I am the Prince of Wales, my person is sacred; thou shalt pay for laying thy hand upon me!"
- 26 The soldier saluted and said mockingly, "All hail your gracious Highness." Then angrily, "Be off, thou crazy rubbish!"
- 27 The jeering crowd closed round the poor little prince and hustled him far down the road, hooting and shouting, "Make way for his Royal Highness! Make way for the Prince of Wales!"



EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:
THE PRINCE and the PAUPER

Answer the following questions about the adapted excerpt from *The Prince and the Pauper*.

- 1. Based on the excerpt, which statement best expresses a theme of the story?
 - A. It is only through hard work and perseverance that one can achieve great things in life.
 - B. When you look hard enough, it is possible to see good in all people.
 - C. It is wrong to judge people by their outward appearances and perceived social status.
 - D. When someone mistreats you, it is best to turn the other cheek and ignore it.
- 2. Reread the summary at the start of the passage, and then read the historical background information below before answering the question that follows.

King Henry VIII of England was the second monarch of the House of Tudor. Henry longed for a male heir who would inherit the throne from him as he had inherited it from his own father in 1509. After years of trying, Henry finally had a son with his third wife, Jane Seymour, in 1537. That son was Edward Tudor. The little prince's birth caused much rejoicing throughout all of England. In 1547, Prince Edward became King Edward VI at the age of nine.

Describe how Twain uses and/or changes history to establish the setting in this fictional novel.

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Keep going. Answer the following questions about adapted excerpt from *The Prince and the Pauper*.

3. Choose **two** adjectives from the options below that best describe Prince Edward's character as revealed by his behavior in paragraphs 3–5. Explain your choices, citing specific text evidence for each chosen adjective.

compassionate humble cruel commanding loyal humorous

Adjective 1: _____

Adjective 2: _____

4. Read the excerpt from paragraph 4.

*“The little **Prince of Poverty** passed in, in his fluttering rags, to join hands with the **Prince of Limitless Plenty.**”*

What effect does the author’s word choice have on the reader’s understanding of the characters and the story?

5. Review the conversation between Tom and the prince in paragraphs 6–20. What does the dialogue reveal about both characters’ points of view? Select all that apply.

- A. Both boys desire to experience the other's life, even if just for a day.
- B. Both boys are very unhappy with the circumstances into which they were born.
- C. Both boys wish that they could permanently switch their identities.
- D. Both boys think that Tom's life is a pleasant one in many ways.
- E. Both boys are angry about the way Tom had been treated by the guard.

6. **Part A:** Write a synonym for the word “raiment” as it is used in paragraph 18: _____

Part B: Describe what context clues helped you understand the meaning of the word “raiment.”

EXTENDED READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:
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Keep going. Answer the following questions about adapted excerpt from *The Prince and the Pauper*.

Read the short passage about historical sumptuary laws before answering questions 7 through 9.

Sumptuary laws are rules that restrict what types of goods—such as food, furniture, and clothing—people can possess, based on their social status. During the reign of the Tudor monarch King Henry VIII, there were laws about the materials and colors that people of specific ranks could wear. For example, only the king and his immediate family could wear purple silk or gold. Only people above a certain status could wear satin, velvet, imported wool, or the colors crimson or blue. Such rules kept people in their place and made their social status easily identifiable.

7. In paragraph 2, how does Tom know—just by looking—that the boy on the other side of the gates is a prince? Cite specific evidence from the story and the above passage about sumptuary laws to support your answer.

8. Review paragraphs 25–27. Based on the information in the text and the historical context provided above, why are the soldier at the gate and the people watching unafraid to mistreat the prince?

9. How does Twain use historical facts about sumptuary laws to develop the theme in the story?

10. Which of the following plotlines are used in the novel? Choose **two**, and then provide evidence to support your choices.

- Rags to Riches Overcoming a Monster Mistaken Identity Death and Rebirth

Plotline 1: _____

Plotline 2: _____