

**PinkMonkey® Literature Notes on . . .**

### **Sample MonkeyNotes**

**Note: this sample contains only excerpts of the booknote sections and does not represent the full contents of the booknote. This sample will give you an idea of the layout and overall content of the full summary.**

# *The Prince and the Pauper*

by

**Mark Twain**



MonkeyNotes Edited by Diane Sauder

PinkMonkey.com, Inc. Copyright ©1997-1999, All Rights Reserved  
No further distribution without the written consent of PinkMonkey.com, Inc.

## KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

### SETTING

The novel is set in sixteenth-century England, during the reign of King Henry VIII. A cruel, autocratic ruler, Henry VIII was intolerant of religious freedoms and imposed harsh and unjust punishments .....

### CHARACTERS

#### Major Characters

**Tom Canty** - the "pauper" of the novel, a poor lad who lives in poverty with his family. Tom's dream of becoming a prince comes true when he exchanges roles with Edward Tudor.

**John Canty** - the drunkard father of Tom. Canty is a cruel man who forces his son to beg.

**Edward Tudor** - the "prince" of the novel. Edward, the Prince of Wales and the son of Henry VIII, learns about the lives of his people when he exchanges roles with Tom.

**Miles Hendon** - the dispossessed heir to the Hendon estate and Edward's friend, guide, and protector in his adventures.

#### Minor Characters

**Henry VIII (the King of England)** - an insensitive ruler, but an indulgent father.

**Lord Hertford** - the prince's uncle and advisor. Hertford helps the "mad" prince, Tom Canty, learn how to behave as a ruler. ....(Many more characters listed).....

### CONFLICT

**Protagonists** - Both Tom Canty and Edward Tudor are the protagonists of the novel. Tom Canty, ill-treated by his drunken father, drifts towards the palace and has a chance .....

**Antagonist** - John Canty, the antagonist, is cruel to both Tom and Edward. He forces Tom.....

**Climax** - The climax occurs in chapter thirty-two, at the coronation ceremony at .....

**Outcome** - After a brief period of confusion, Edward is recognized and is crowned the.....

### PLOT (Synopsis)

The novel opens with the announcement of the birth of Tom Canty, a pauper, and Edward Tudor, the Prince of Wales. The two boys grow up in different surroundings and are unaware of each other's existence. Tom lives in Offal Court, one of the poorest localities of London, where his drunken father forces him to beg in the streets. However, he finds time to learn Latin and read the books of Father Andrew. The old legends and histories he reads haunt his mind, and he starts visualizing himself as the prince. One day, after wandering about the streets, he walks towards the royal palace. The guards, catching him gazing through the gates, accost him, but the prince comes to the boy's rescue. He takes Tom to his chambers and inquires about his family. When Tom expresses a desire to wear princely clothes, he and the boy exchange their clothes. The striking resemblance between them surprises the two boys. Then, on an impulse, Edward .....

## THEMES

**Major Theme** - The major theme of the novel is "appearance and reality" or "image and identity." The protagonists of the novel fail to establish their identities and are.....

**Minor Themes** - Two other themes are also present in the novel, "environmental determinism" and "progressiveness of history." Mark Twain firmly believed that environment was responsible for the behavior of a person and that with the progress of time individuals and society changed for the better.

Edward is born a prince and Tom a pauper. However, when they are forced by circumstances to.....

## MOOD

The prevailing mood of the novel is serious, as the story is set in sixteenth-century England, under.....

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Samuel Langhorne Clemens (he later took the pen name Mark Twain) was born on November 30, 1835, in the village of Florida, Missouri. His father, John Marshall Clemens, a magistrate and shopkeeper in Florida, was highly intelligent, but a strict disciplinarian. Twain's mother, Jane, was a compassionate woman with a natural sense of humor. Twain had irregular schooling, and, after his father's death in 1847, he took on a series of odd jobs, before becoming a printer's apprentice. When his brother Orion founded the *Hannibal Journal*, Twain went to work for him as a compositor and began writing comic pieces for the paper. At the age of seventeen he wrote a comic story, "The Dandy Frightening the Squatter," which was published in the Boston humor magazine, *The Carpet-Bag*.

In 1853, Twain, always restless, began traveling around America, doing odd jobs in printing, occasionally rejoining his brother, who had moved to Iowa, before setting out again. In 1857, while on assignment to write a series of humorous travel letters for the Keokuk, Iowa, *Daily Post*, Twain met.....

## LITERARY/ HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Mark Twain began writing *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1877. His inspiration from the novel came from Charlotte M. Yonge's *The Little Duke*, set in tenth-century France, in which the young Richard of Normandy becomes a more compassionate and wise ruler after his father is murdered and he experiences a series of harrowing adventures in the world. Initially, Twain's intention was to set the story in the.....

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES

### Chapter 1: The Birth of The Prince And The Pauper

#### Summary

On "a certain autumn day in the second quarter of the sixteenth century," two infants are born to two families, respectively, in two different parts of London. One infant is Edward Tudor, the Prince of Wales, while the other is Tom Canty, the pauper, the son of a poor family. The prince is welcomed into the world with rejoicing, while the pauper is ignored because he is an unwelcome guest to his family.

#### Notes

In the fashion of a children's classic, Mark Twain introduces the protagonists of the novel in the first chapter.

Edward Tudor, the Prince of Wales, and Tom Canty, the pauper, are born on the same day. In this brief chapter, Twain provides a striking contrast between the status of the two infants.

Edward Tudor, the heir to the English throne, is ushered into the world with pomp and show. Not just the royal family, but the whole of England celebrates his birth. He is pampered by the family members and the lords and ladies who come celebrate his birth. Tom Canty, on the other hand, lies uncared for in his poor dwelling. While Edward Tudor is considered a boon to his family, Tom Canty is regarded as a burden. The only similarity in the situations of the two infants is that they both are blissfully unaware of the reactions caused by their birth.

Twain's direct and simple style is highly suitable to the narration of a children's classic. He chronicles the events and states the reactions to it in short, simple sentences. The importance of the royal birth is highlighted through a detailed account of the event, while the insignificance of a pauper's birth is conveyed through a single sentence.

## **Chapter 2: Tom's Early Life**

### **Summary**

A number of years have passed since the birth of Edward Tudor and Tom Canty. Tom lives in a small, congested house in Offal Court, near London Bridge, with his two sisters, his parents, and grandmother. While the parents sleep on a bed, the children and their grandmother occupy the floor. Tom's father is a thief and his grandmother is a beggar and both of them are drunkards. However, the children inherit their mother's goodness. Father Andrew, who stays in the neighborhood, instills in them the value of good morals. He also teaches Tom reading and writing and familiarizes him with the Latin language and ancient legends. Tom's mind is thus filled with visions of princes and palaces. With time, he starts behaving like a prince and comes to be considered as one by the children of Offal Court.

### **Notes**

Mark Twain concentrates on Tom's early life in this chapter. Tom lives in Offal Court, a dismal pocket in the neglected part of London, where drunkenness and fighting are common. His house is congested and he is poorly treated by his father and grandmother, who force him to beg, beat him regularly, and give him scraps to eat. Yet he is not unhappy because he has no knowledge of any other kind of life.

Tom stands out from the inmates of Offal Court through his love of reading and his moral sense, instilled in him by Father Andrew. The old legends and ancient tales he reads fire his imagination, and he escapes into a dream world in which live princes, courtiers, and lords. Often he imagines himself to be a prince, dispensing with judgments in a royal court. Twain portrays Tom as a boy endowed with little means but possessed with the ability and desire to lead a royal life. This chapter thus sets the stage for Tom's encounter with the prince.....

## **OVERALL ANALYSES**

### **CHARACTERS**

**Edward Tudor** - Mark Twain portrays Edward Tudor as a prince who goes through the experience of a pauper in order to emerge as a worthy king. In the novel, Edward travels from the security of Westminster to the dingy confines of a prison cell. As he progresses in his journey, he transforms himself from an innocent and impulsive child-prince to a mature and enlightened young man ready to wisely rule a country.

As a prince, Edward is pampered and protected. His father, Henry VIII, showers him with affection, and the palace staff attend to all his needs and wants. After a chance encounter with .....

**Tom Canty** - Tom Canty, the son of a drunkard, is unlike his father in his nature and behavior. Born a pauper, he dreams of becoming a prince. Though driven to the streets by John Canty, he hates to extend his hand to beg. Instead, he loves to read and, under the tutelage of a kind old priest, even learns Latin. He also.....

**John Canty** - John Canty is the uneducated and uncultured father of Tom Canty. He is a ruffian and a drunkard who begs and steals for a living and mistreats his wife and children. He forces .....

**Miles Hendon** - Miles Hendon is the lovable protector and champion of the otherwise friendless Edward. Handsome, chivalrous, just, and capable, he has all the qualities of a hero. He rescues Edward.....

## **PLOT (Structure)**

Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* is not just a children's classic but a historical novel, echoing moral truths. Though the novel deals with the reversal of roles of two children and their adventures in a strange world, it particularly focuses attention on the England during the sixteenth century, a period of tremendous religious upheavals and despotic rule. Henry VIII was an insensitive ruler who punished his subjects severely for petty crimes. The laws of the land were harsh and superstition prevailed, clouding rational thinking. Through his novel, Mark Twain exposes the hypocrisy and inhumanity of aristocracy. He also.....

## **THEMES**

The major theme of the novel is "image and identity." Twain shows that in most circumstances, one's image is — or becomes — one's identity, because people respond to images, in this case clothes, rather than essences. Not only the protagonists but also Miles Hendon face doubtful identities in the novel due to the disparity between who they are and who they appear to be.

When Tom enters the palace and exchanges clothes with Edward, he observes that he resembles the prince. So when the image and identity of the prince is reversed by his putting on of Tom's clothes, confusion arises. The guard outside the palace mistakes the prince for the pauper and pushes him outside the palace. At Offal Court, John Canty and his family members recognize the image of the pauper in Edward and.....

## **STUDY QUESTIONS**

1. Why is *The Prince and the Pauper* called a children's classic?
2. How can the novel be called historical? .....

**End of Sample MonkeyNotes for *The Prince and the Pauper***