

MACMILLAN READERS

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

MARK TWAIN

The Prince and the Pauper

Retold by Chris Rose



MACMILLAN

The Birth of the Prince and the Pauper

Nearly five hundred years ago in London, two baby boys were born on the same day. One family wanted their baby very much. This baby wore beautiful, expensive clothes. His family and lots of servants took care of him. He was Edward Tudor, the future King of England.

Everybody in England wanted this baby. When he arrived, the country was very happy. There was a holiday, and everybody had big parties. People kissed each other and danced in the streets.

The other baby boy's family were very poor and they did not want another baby. This baby was called Tom Canty. Nobody danced for him. He was a pauper and he wore rags.



For nine years, Tom Canty lived in a small house near London Bridge. About one hundred thousand people lived in the old city of London then, perhaps more. Some parts of London were very rich but London Bridge was very poor. The houses were made of wood and they had small, dark windows. The streets were narrow and dirty and there were too many people. There was always a horrible smell because people threw rubbish on the streets.

Tom lived in a house in Offal Court. Many poor families lived in that house and it was often a noisy and dangerous place to live. Every night people shouted and argued. There were always lots of fights.

Tom's family lived in one room on the third floor of the house. He lived with his mother, father, sisters and grandmother. They all dressed in rags. Tom's mother and father slept in a bed and the others slept on the dirty floor.

Tom had twin sisters, Nan and Bet. They were both fifteen years old. His mother and his sisters were not clever people but they were kind and friendly. Tom loved them but he was frightened of his father and his grandmother. They often hit Tom, his sisters and his mother.

Tom's father was called John Canty. He did not work. He stole money and told Tom and his sisters to steal, too. Tom said he did not want to be a thief but his father hit him. The family was very poor and hungry. Tom and his sisters begged for money in the streets. Some people gave them money. Other people laughed and shouted at them.

But little Tom Canty was happy. He thought that everybody was poor and hungry like his family. He sometimes played with his friends. They went swimming in the river or they played in the mud.

A man called Father Andrew lived in Offal Court. Father Andrew was a good man. He taught Tom to read and

write. Tom loved listening to Father Andrew's stories about princes and palaces. He read Father Andrew's books about kings and queens. When he read, he dreamt of a different life. Tom's big dream was to see a real prince.

Tom sometimes pretended he was a prince. He walked and talked like a prince. He had a royal court and people asked him for help. These people thought Tom was a very clever boy, like a real prince!

Tom wanted to see a prince very much. He thought about it all the time. One night, Tom dreamt about being a prince. He lived in a beautiful palace and he was loved by many people. When he woke up, he knew it was a dream. He looked at the small, dirty, cold room and he cried.

2

Tom Meets the Prince

The morning after his dream, Tom felt sad and hungry. He left his home and he walked and walked. Tom thought about princes and palaces. After a long time, he arrived at the royal palace in Westminster. It was very far from Offal Court.

Tom was amazed. He thought the palace was beautiful. It was a large building, with lots of tall towers and big windows. Outside the palace gates, people from all over the country waited. Everybody wanted to see the Royal Family.

Tom saw fine carriages with white horses go into the palace. Rich, important people were sitting in the carriages. They did not look at the poor, dirty people outside. Two strong guards stood at the gates to stop ordinary people from entering.