

The Prince and the Pauper Study Guide

The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain

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Plot Summary

The Prince and the Pauper is a fable or fairy tale for young readers written in the 19th century by Samuel Clemens, under the pen name of Mark Twain. It tells the story of two boys in 16th century England who were born on the same day and look identical, but are unrelated. One, named Edward Tudor, is a prince and the other, named Tom Canty, is a pauper. Edward Tudor was a real person in history, but Tom was invented by Twain. Through unusual circumstances, Edward and Tom meet and exchange clothing, which leads to everyone confusing the identities of the two boys.

Edward makes the mistake of leaving the palace while wearing the rags of Tom. A sentinel, thinking Edward is a pauper, throws him off the palace grounds, and a period of privation, humiliation, and danger ensues for Edward. Meanwhile, the people at court see Tom dressed in Edward's finery and are convinced that he is the prince. Tom tries to tell them that he is not Edward, but the courtiers think he has gone temporarily mad. Even his father, King Henry VIII, thinks this is the case. In the slums of London, Edward likewise tries to tell everyone he is the prince, and he gets nothing but jeers and beatings in return. The story moves back and forth between the adventures of these two main characters. Tom's new life causes him fright and guilt that gives way to tedium and homesickness, and then to increasing appreciation of his incredible luck and the benefits of being rich, famous, and powerful. Edward's troubles seem to deepen as the story goes on. He is pursued by Tom's evil father, who thinks Edward is his son and the boy is dragged into a gang of thieves and beggars who roam the countryside, harassing the people. A kindly soldier named Miles Hendon takes the boy under his wing and helps him out of one scrape after another, but Miles has his own troubles, trying to get back title to his ancestral lands, which were stolen from him by his younger brother, who also forced married Miles' sweetheart to marry him while Miles was away at war. After Henry VIII dies, the palace prepares, amid great pomp and circumstance, for the coronation of Tom as the next king. Meanwhile, Miles and Edward find themselves in jail, and then get separated, and Tom's father renews his pursuit of Edward. When Tom sees his mother, who recognizes him in a royal procession, he denies that he knows her. This immediately causes him such remorse that he can no longer take pleasure in being a false prince. Edward finally gets back to the palace, and Tom quickly helps him to prove that he is the true prince. Edward is crowned, and he rewards everyone who helped him, including Tom and Miles, while punishing those he met during his adventures who were evil. Mark Twain ends the story by describing the fates of all the principal characters and a number of supporting characters in the years following Edward's coronation. As in real life, Edward dies of illness while still a youth, but Twain's invented characters, Tom and Miles, have happy lives.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary

The Prince and the Pauper, by Mark Twain, tells a story set in the 1500s of two unrelated boys who look exactly like each other and who accidentally switch identities, confusing everyone but themselves. One boy is poor, from a family of beggars and thieves, and the other is Prince of Wales, heir to the throne of England. In a note before the first chapter, Twain suggests that this tale has been passed down through generations, and might or might not have happened. In Chapter 1, "The Birth of the Prince and the Pauper," he sets the story in London around the middle of the sixteenth century, and describes the birth of a child named Tom to a poor family named Canty, who did not want him. He compares this to the birth on the same day of Edward Tudor, the real Prince of Wales, to universal joy. In Chapter 2, "Tom's Early Life," the author skips forward in time to when the boys are perhaps nine or ten. He describes London as a great city for its day, but dirty and cramped in the poor sections such as Offal Court near London Bridge, where Tom and his family live. They have a floor in a decayed and rickety house shared with several other wretchedly poor families. Tom lives with his 15-year-old twin sisters, Bet and Nan, and his mother, all of whom are kind to him, but his father and grandmother are drunken, angry people, who beat him regularly. His father is a thief and his mother begs for a living. The children sleep on straw and rags on the floor. Also in the house is a good priest named Father Andrew, who teaches Tom to read and write, and a little Latin.

Tom thinks his life is all right, because he knows no other life. He begs only enough to save himself, because the laws against it are harsh. His father and grandmother thrash him every night for not bringing home enough money. Tom reads and dreams about the princely life, begins to speak in the flowery manner of books, and even forms a mock court with his friends, in which he plays the prince. He develops a burning desire to one day look upon a real prince. In Chapter 3, "Tom's Meeting with the Prince," he awakens from a dream about being a prince and begins absently wandering through the city, hardly noticing when he passes outside its walls and enters the country. After a while, he arrives in Westminster, at the king's palace, which he does not recognize as the center of the English court. Through the gate, he sees a beautifully dressed boy, but the sentinel jerks Tom away. The royal boy sees this rough treatment and commands that Tom be let in, as the crowd of commoners cheer for Edward, Prince of Wales. Edward takes Tom to an apartment in the palace, has food brought to him, and questions him about his family and background. Edward also tells Tom about his family, including his older sister, the Lady Mary, his 14-year-old sister, the Lady Elizabeth, and his cousin, the Lady Jane Grey. Edward is outraged to hear about Tom's mean father and grandmother, but he says he would love to play the games Tom describes the boys playing in Offal Court. They decide to try on each other's clothes, to imagine what it would be like to change places. When they do this, they see that they look so much alike as to be interchangeable. Edward then sees a bruise on Tom's hand, which was caused by the sentinel. Edward quickly picks up an article of national importance that



lies on a table, puts it away, and then rushes out to berate the soldier who injured Tom. The sentinel, confusing Edward with Tom, boxes him on the ear and bars him from entering the palace again. Edward protests angrily that he is the prince, but the surrounding crowd hoots and laughs.

Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Before Mark Twain begins his tale, his indication that it might or might not have actually happened is a way of suggesting that the facts themselves are secondary. What counts most, the author implies, are the truths to be found behind the events. In Chapter 1, he immediately makes apparent the huge gap between nobility and the peasantry in 16th century England by simply stating that Tom's family did not welcome his birth, while the entire country rejoiced at the arrival of Prince Edward. Setting up this contrast between the circumstances of the two boys is Twain's principal goal at the outset. In Chapter 2, he focuses on Tom's conditions, beginning with a powerful description of the dreariness of London's poorer quarters, and then giving a close-up view of Tom's miserable accommodations and his vicious father and grandmother.

Cleverly, the author gives Tom the gift of reading, writing, and a foreign language through the priest who teaches him, which sets Tom apart from those around him. Twain intensifies this difference by showing Tom at play with his friends, speaking in well-turned phrases, and pretending to be royalty, while they play his courtiers. Twain then foreshadows a meeting between Tom and Edward by planting in Tom's mind the persistent thought that he would love to see a real prince. Already, the dramatic situation has been constructed of a desperately poor boy who has improved himself, and now wants nothing more than to see for his own eyes what he has experienced only in his imagination. It is not surprising that Tom should wander in Chapter 3 toward Westminster, or that he should spot Prince Edward through the palace gates, but Twain's creativity takes flight when he contrives for the boys to go together to Edward's room, where they talk, eventually try on each other's clothes, and then are mistaken for one another by everyone else. The most significant aspect of this novel's start is the economy of Twain's approach of how he establishes a situation, sets up a major change in the lives of the two main characters, and makes it happen, all quite believably, in three short chapters.



Chapters 4-6

Chapters 4-6 Summary

In Chapter 4, "The Prince's Troubles Begin," the prince is pursued and persecuted by the crowd for hours, until they finally seek amusement elsewhere. He is lost, but he wanders to a church that he recognizes, because his father, King Henry VIII, dedicated it as a foster home for poor children, and renamed it Christ's Church. He approaches boys playing there, who laugh when he says he is the Prince of Wales, and then become angry and beat him after he says he will have them hung for their insolence. Bruised and bleeding, he searches for Offal Court, and is found by Tom's father, John Canty, who drags him home, thinking he is Tom. Chapter 5, "Tom as a Patrician," goes back to Tom, who is admiring himself in the prince's clothes until he begins to wonder why the prince has been gone so long. He is afraid to leave the room, because he will be discovered and punished. When he is visited by his cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, he falls at her feet and denies he is the prince, which sends her away in fright and starts a rumor in the palace that he has gone mad. He is commanded to visit Henry VIII, whom he does not realize at first is the king. Tom again denies he is the prince. The king, trying to determine the extent of his son's madness, questions him in Latin, which he can answer, but not in French, which Tom never learned.

The king declares that his son is not permanently mad, and that, in any case, he will succeed to the throne. He sends Tom away to play, telling him not to tax himself with studies. In Chapter 6, "Tom Receives Instructions," Tom is taken to another room in the palace, where the Lord St. John and the Lord Hertford explain that the king has commanded them to help the boy recover from his madness. The Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Jane Grey arrive and try to have a normal conversation with Tom, who keeps forgetting to play the part of the prince. After a while, though, he warms to the two girls, who are kind to him. When they leave, he asks to rest in his room. His two guardians, now alone, reflect that the king is ill and the prince is mad. St. John hints that he doubts the boy really is the prince, but Hertford declares this treasonous, and St. John quickly retracts. When St. John leaves, Hertford begins to wonder if the boy could be an impostor, but then he reflects that the child denies being the prince, which no impostor would do. It must mean that the prince has gone mad, he decides.

Chapters 4-6 Analysis

When Edward is cast out from the palace, the common people are far from embracing a boy who looks like a pauper but claims to be a prince and therefore is deranged. They scorn and pester him mercilessly. Through this reaction, Twain displays the power of convention, or the group mind, which keeps everyone in their allotted places in society. The commoners think Edward is crazy and so they taunt him, because his mental illness makes him weaker than they are, and lower in station. They ridicule him because they can, and because their own lives are subject to such overwhelming control by their



"betters." When Edward stumbles across Christ's Church, which he recognizes as a home for poor boys established by his father, he might be forgiven for hoping that here, his protestations that he is the prince will fall on receptive ears. Again, he is wrong, which shows that the people do not revere the king for whatever scraps he throws their way, nor do they appreciate a commoner pretending to be royalty. When Tom threatens them with punishment, the joke has gone too far in the eyes of the boys, who know only too well the pains of punishment by those who dominate their lives. John Canty dragging Edward away is further evidence that the world of the poor is governed by aggression and domination.

In stark contrast, Chapter 5 shows Tom trying on fine clothes and admiring himself in the mirror. His only fear is that he will be unmasked as a fake and punished. Instead, it is decided that he is mentally ill and, rather than suffering the ridicule Edward is facing for such apparent illness, Tom is coddled. He is given guardians to help him, and told by his father not to study, but to play. Pretty maidens engage him in pleasant conversation, everyone scrapes and bows, and the very thought that he might not actually be Prince Edward is considered treasonous. Twain shows us two boys thought to be mentally ill: the supposed pauper is scorned, while the supposed prince is guaranteed to inherit the kingdom.



Chapters 7-9

Chapters 7-9 Summary

Tom is resigned to being dressed by servants for dinner at the opening of Chapter 7, "Tom's First Royal Dinner." He is conducted to an ornate room where a table is set for one, and is surrounded by courtiers who stand in his presence as he eats. Everyone has been drilled to show no sign of surprise if the prince acts mad, so nobody reacts when Tom eats with his fingers, or won't use his napkin because it is too pretty to soil, or puts nuts in his pocket for later, or drinks from the finger bowl meant for washing his hands. At last, he is conducted back to his private room and left alone. He tries on some armor, cracks some nuts, and then finds a book on English court etiquette, which he enthusiastically reads. In Chapter 8, "The Questions of the Seal," Henry VIII awakes from a nap, troubled by bad dreams, and then admits to his chamber the Lord Chancellor, Hertford, who says the Duke of Norfolk's execution has been confirmed by the House of Lords. This delights the king, who needs only to imprint the Great Seal on Norfolk's death warrant, but his mind is weak with sickness, and he cannot remember where the seal is. Hertford reminds him that he gave it to the prince, but when Hertford goes to get it, he returns empty-handed, explaining that the prince is too ill to remember where it is. Hertford is commanded by the irritable king to take his small seal that he uses when traveling, and appoint tomorrow for the beheading of Norfolk.

In Chapter 9, "The River Pageant," the entire riverfront of the palace is blazing with light at night as 40 or 50 state barges decorated with bells and flags go by. An elaborately dressed, advance guard appears from the palace and, as music plays, the guards form two lines and a carpet is rolled down the palace steps between them. Officers, knights, judges, and courtiers proceed from the palace in their finest livery, followed by the French ambassador and his entourage, and several great English nobles. After a flourish of trumpets, the prince's Uncle Hertford appears, and then Tom, magnificently clothed in white satin, diamonds, and ermine. It is a ceremony to present the soon-to-be-king to the people. Wherever light falls upon him, the jewels Tom wears respond with blinding flashes.

Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Tom's initial worries about being mistaken for the prince are beginning to abate, which is understandable because excuses are given for every mistake he makes. Rather than being routinely beaten up by his father and grandmother no matter what he does, he now is in the opposite situation of never being criticized or even contradicted by anyone, even though they think he is insane. In Chapter 8, Twain introduces a plot complication. He does not bother to explain why the Duke of Norfolk has been condemned to death by Henry VIII, because his focus is on the whereabouts of the Great Seal. A good novelist does not insert such a detail without reason, and it is clear that the disappearance of the seal is an issue that will recur, to play a role in future events.



Twain uses Chapter 9 to depict the majesty and spectacle of a court pageant. His goals in elaborately describing the pomp and finery of the procession are to impress upon the reader the remarkable esteem in which the future king is held, and to make the point that the position itself is, in many ways, more important than the individual who holds it. The jewels in which Tom is draped are blinding in the light, yet also symbolically blind others to the boy as a false prince.



Chapters 10-12

Chapters 10-12 Summary

Chapter 10, "The Prince in the Toils," returns to John Canty dragging the rightful prince back to Offal Court with a delighted mob at his heels. The prince continues to struggle, and when Canty tries to hit him with a club, a man intervenes. Outraged, Canty hits the man on the head, knocking him down. Canty drags the prince into the house, demanding that he tell Canty's wife and daughters who he says he is. Insulted, Edward declares again that he is the Prince of Wales. Mrs. Canty is stunned and thinks that he is crazy. Edward gently tells her he does not recognize her. Canty cuffs Edward, and the grandmother helps him to beat the boy, after which he is sent to sleep on the floor. Mrs. Canty thinks there is something different about the child, and she decides that a good test of his identity would be to startle him, to see if raises his hands to his eyes, a characteristic gesture of Tom's ever since he was little. She startles him awake, but he does not raise his hands. She tries this three times, with the same result each time, and yet she cannot believe he is not Tom. The prince dreams he is back at the palace, but awakens to the reality of Offal Court. A knock comes on the door and someone yells to John Canty that the man he hit with the cudgel was the priest, Father Andrew, whom he has killed. Canty gets everyone up and says they must all run away, but when they encounter the celebration of the presentation of the prince to the people, Edward escapes in the confusion.

Chapter 11, "At Guildhall," shows the royal barge as it goes down the Thames, carrying Tom, Elizabeth, and Jane Grey. It stops at the Barge Yard in the center of London. They get out and walk to Guildhall, where they are met by the Lord Mayor and the Fathers of the City for a banquet. The revelry, music, and dancing extend throughout the night. Meanwhile, Edward is trying to convince the unruly mob around him that he is the prince. Suddenly, he is helped by a man named Miles Hendon, who hits the rioters with the flat of his sword. As the king's messenger gallops by, Hendon carries the prince to safety. The scene shifts back to Guildhall, where the messenger arrives to announce that Henry VIII has died. When Tom hears this, he issues his first command, to save the life of the Duke of Norfolk, and the people cheer. In Chapter 12, "The Prince and His Deliverer," Edward is taken to Miles Hendon's modest room at an inn alongside London Bridge, but just before they arrive, John Canty intercepts them. He tries to take Edward, but Hendon fends him off. Inside, the boy falls asleep while Hendon orders food from a servant. The boy awakens and Hendon notes that he still thinks he is the prince, and will not let Miles sit in his presence. Miles decides to humor him, because he is unwell. As the boy eats, Miles explains that his father is a wealthy baronet. Miles was soldiering for three years and then was imprisoned by the enemy for seven years, and has just escaped. He has a treacherous younger brother, Hugh, who manufactured charges of bad conduct against Miles that made their father send him into the army. His mother died long ago, and he has a cousin named Edith whom he wants to marry when he returns. Miles asks a "favor" of the prince, to be allowed to sit in his presence, as a reward for saving him. Edward agrees, and even takes Hendon's sword to knight him.



Chapters 10-12 Analysis

The author introduces another plot complication into the story near the start of Chapter 10, when John Canty uses a cudgel to hit a man who tries to help the beleaguered Edward. When Edward tells Mrs. Canty that he is the prince and he does not know her, she devises a test based on deep knowledge of her son. Rather than questioning him about anything, her attempt to elicit a characteristic gesture of surprise from him shows her awareness that the superficial aspects of speech, clothing, and even outward appearance cannot conceal the essence of a person from someone who really knows that person. Even so, such superficial disguises are powerful, leading Mrs. Canty to doubt her own conviction that this child is not hers. Next, Twain's plot complication comes to fruition when it is revealed that the man Canty hit was Father Andrew, who has been killed by the blow. When Canty escapes with his family, and then Edward escapes Canty, the movements of these characters are suddenly wide-open and unpredictable.

In Chapter 11, Twain begins to move back and forth between the stories of Tom and Edward, having now firmly established their situations and their characters in the reader's mind. Tom's charmed existence continues, while Edward's troubles only deepen, until he finally gets help from Miles Hendon. Just as this brave soldier rescues the boy, Tom reacts to news of the king's death by issuing a command to rescue the Duke of Norfolk from execution. Again, the contrast between Edward's helplessness and Tom's power is forcefully made. Chapter 12 is largely devoted to the "back story" of Miles Hendon, establishing what has happened in his life and what he plans to do next. The other most important aspect of this chapter is the kindness with which Miles tends the apparently deranged boy, even going so far as to treat him like royalty to help soothe his troubled mind. Miles intuits the deep sense of honor and personal strength in Edward, which he realizes is special, and which makes the boy precious to him. The way Miles solves the problem of not being able to sit in the presence of royalty is a clever piece of plotting by Twain, based on a true historical event. It shows how research can help fiction that is set in the past, by giving the author ideas that can be incorporated in the plot.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

Chapter 13, "The Disappearance of the Prince," begins with Edward commanding Miles to sleep across the door before the little king falls asleep in the only bed. Miles, who has grown very fond of the boy, complies. Miles gets up early, measures Edward quietly, and then slips outside to buy a used suit of clothes for him. When he returns, the boy is gone. A servant enters with breakfast, and the distraught Miles learns from him that a youth had come for the boy, telling him that he had to meet Miles. The servant saw the two heading for the village of Southwark, followed by a ruffian-looking man. Miles sets out after them. Chapter 14 has the French title, "Le Roi Est Mort—Vive Le Roi," which means, "The King is Dead—Long Live the King." It begins with Tom Canty awakening at daylight the same morning. He falls asleep again and dreams of a magical dwarf who tells him where to dig in a field to get 12 new pennies every day, so he will never be hungry again. When he wakes, he is sad to see that he is still a captive and a king. With his servants, he goes through the elaborate process of being dressed, has breakfast, and is escorted to the throne room to do business. With Hertford and others, Tom learns about the funeral plans for Henry VIII, examines current accounts, and listens to the reading of many petitions and other papers of public business. He spends an enjoyable hour with Elizabeth and Jane Grey, and then meets Humphrey Marlow, his whipping boy, whose job it is to take blows for Edward when he does poorly in his lessons, because the royal personage may not be struck.

Tom tells the whipping boy that his memory is faulty these days, and he uses Humphrey to "remind" him of many details regarding the court. An hour later, Hertford is happy to see that the young king's memory has much improved. He asks Tom where he put the Great Seal, but Tom does not know what it is, which again worries Hertford. In Chapter 15, "Tom as King," it is the next day, and Tom receives the foreign ambassadors. He finds his duties tedious, except for an hour he spends with Humphrey, learning more about the court. The next couple of days pass in similar fashion, except when he sees a crowd outside the palace gates. They are following a man, woman, and girl who are being sent to execution. Tom commands that the criminals be brought to him, and he recognizes the man, who is accused of murder. When Tom hears the evidence, he realizes the murder was on the same day that Tom saw the man save a drowning boy in another village, so he acquits the man. He then hears the case of the two females, who are accused of selling themselves to the devil. They supposedly can make storms occur by pulling off their stockings. Tom tells them to do so, on the pain of death, but they cannot, which he takes as proof of their innocence.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

The author picks up the action again in Chapter 13 by getting Miles out of his quarters to buy clothing for Edward, which leaves the boy unprotected long enough for someone



to lure him away. Having established the commitment to Edward's welfare that Miles has rapidly developed, Mark Twain can send the soldier in search of the boy without fear of harming the reader's belief that Miles would traipse after a young pauper. Twain deftly ends the chapter at a point when Miles has begun his search, which leaves the reader wondering about the identity of the ruffian who took Edward away, and what will happen when and if Miles catches them. In Chapter 14, Twain switches back to Tom, continuing the alternation of parallel plots that the reader has come to expect. Tom's dream about being magically granted twelve pennies per day is a symbolic way of pointing out that Tom's needs are modest. He does not long for the riches of a king, he simply wants enough pennies to avoid the grinding poverty that is the cause of so much misery in his life. Being dressed by others and attending to matters of state are not pleasant for him, but he does enjoy the company of the other young people, which again emphasizes his uncomplicated nature. Tom is bright, though, and his sense of duty makes him want to learn more about court life, to please the palace officials and avoid embarrassment. He quickly sees the value of Humphrey, the whipping boy, as a source of information, but when Tom cannot tell Hertford the whereabouts of the Great Seal, Twain signals that to gather second-hand knowledge is not the same as being the true prince. This incident also continues to foreshadow the importance of the seal in determining who the real prince is.

The tedium to Tom of being thought the heir to the throne extends to Chapter 15, broken only by the intellectual and social pleasure he gets from talking to Humphrey again about court life. Twain suggests that this state of boredom might have gone on indefinitely, had not Tom recognized almost by accident that he had the power to change people's lives with a word. His initial interest in the prisoners he sees from the palace windows is just curiosity, but then he realizes that he can command them to come before him and hear about their cases. In giving Tom personal knowledge of the man who was accused of murder, Twain shows how wrongheaded the justice of that time (and perhaps justice in general) can be. Tom not only converts this personal knowledge into evidence of the man's innocence, but he quickly applies the principal to the two females. He realizes that finding out as much as possible about their case is the best way to determine their guilt or innocence, and his careful examination of their situation shows that good judgment, and even wisdom, are not the sole province of either royalty or adults.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary

In Chapter 16, "The State Dinner," Tom's servants prepare him for a great banquet that will be attended by a large company of citizens. The author quotes an "ancient chronicler," who describes the gorgeous banquet room, the food, and royalty in attendance. Tom, who had earlier been worried about the prospect of dining in public, is now more relaxed and happy, and he gets through the ceremonious meal flawlessly. In Chapter 17, "Foo-Foo the First," Miles is on the trail of the missing Edward in Southwark, but he cannot find him. Miles decides the boy might have gotten away from his captors, and could be heading for safety at Hendon Hall. The scene shifts to Edward, who is with the youth but does not know that the ruffian is following them. They go through Southwark to a woods beyond it, where the ruffian joins them, revealing himself as John Canty. The youth is Canty's friend, Hugo. Canty says he has changed his name to John Hobbs, to avoid the law, and the boy will now be called Jack. They go to a barn, where Edward falls asleep. When he awakens, he sees motley company of men and women around a campfire on the floor of the barn. The gang's chief, called the Ruffler, talks to Canty about thieves they know who have been killed or captured, and about farmers who have been driven off their land by landowners who are now raising sheep, a more profitable business. One of the men, Yokel, describes himself as a former family man and farmer who was branded as a slave, and has been forced into thievery.

Edward approaches the group, and when they ask who he is, he says is king of England. Everyone laughs and taunts him, and a tinker cries he should be called, "Foo-Foo the First, King of the Mooncalves." They crown him with a tin basin and robe him in a tattered blanket, much to Edward's shame. In Chapter 18, "The Prince with the Tramps," the gang sets off at dawn, terrorizing and stealing from anyone they encounter. They reach a village, but can find nothing to steal. Hugo tells Edward he must beg, but when they meet a man, Edward immediately exposes Hugo as a thief. Hugo runs away, leaving Edward free to escape. That night, he finds a barn in which to sleep. Something touches him in the dark and he fearfully reaches out to discover what it is, but it is only a calf. He snuggles against its back, and the calf keeps him warm during the frigid night, which the young king passes in comparative comfort and peace.

Chapters 16-18 Analysis

Mark Twain introduces a new technique in Chapter 16, through a quoted voice that he identifies only as the "ancient chronicler." Much of the chapter is devoted to setting down details of a royal banquet in 16th century England, which clearly required much research by the author to attain authenticity. It is as if Twain decided that the enriched sense of place these details provide to the story were important enough to include them, but that if his usual narrator in the novel were to give this volume of information, it would



seem out of character. He solves the problem by introducing an authority from the past, whose exact identity is not revealed or created, because it is outside the progress of the plot, and therefore irrelevant to the story. Once Tom gets through his public meal without mishap, Twain shifts back to Miles in Chapter 17. First, he picks up the thread of the search by Miles for Edward, and then he turns his attention to the prince, revealing that his companions are John Canty and a friend named Hugo. The prince finds that he is in the company of a gang of thieves and beggars, but Twain interjects a note of social concern by having Ruffler discuss farmers who have been forced off their property by landowners eager to enter the more profitable sheep business. One of the men, Yokel, describes the oppressive political and economic conditions that forced him into a life of crime. Even so, these people are roughnecks, and they react to Edward's claim that he is the prince by humiliating the boy.

Chapter 18 deepens the trouble into which Edward has fallen. Twain depicts the gang terrorizing the countryside, although they do confine their misdeeds to nothing worse than theft and bullying. Some of them even beg rather than steal, but Edward's noble upbringing prevents him from participating in any way. The author is making a subtle point here about the influence of education and training on our behavior. He is suggesting that good breeding instills a horror of bad behavior, but he also is pointing out that extreme poverty, which often derives from oppression of the poor and the powerless by the rich and the powerful, can leave people with no choice but to behave badly if they are to survive. When Edward runs away and cuddles up to a calf in a barn for warmth, the experience is symbolic of his return to the nurturing embrace of Nature as a substitute, however plain and simple, for the elaborate protections and privileges of royalty.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary

At the start of Chapter 19, "The Prince with the Peasants," Edward awakens in the barn to find a rat sleeping with him, but he doesn't mind, and it scampers away. He meets two girls and when he tells them he is the king, they believe him, much to his relief. While their mother cooks breakfast for them, Edward talks so eloquently about fine food that she thinks he must have been a helper in the king's kitchen. She asks him to cook something, and leaves the room, but he burns the breakfast, at which she scolds him. Even so, he is so pleased at the family's kindness that he does not command them to stand while he eats, and the mother feels so sorry about the tongue-lashing she gave that she lets him sit at the table instead of in the corner, where she customarily feeds tramps. Neither knows of the other's favor. After breakfast, the woman has Edward do a number of chores, which astonishes him. When she asks him to drown kittens, he leaves, which is also just when he sees Canty and Hugo arriving.

In Chapter 20, "The Prince and the Hermit," Edward goes deep into the forest to evade his pursuers. He continues until darkness, but cannot find a way out of the woods, and then he sees a hut. He looks in a window and sees an old man praying, so he goes to the door and announces that he is the king. The hermit welcomes him, but after a while, he tells Edward that he is an archangel. Edward realizes the old man is crazy, but the hermit is nice to him, they have supper, and Edward goes to sleep in a small bedroom. The hermit tells Edward that his father, Henry VIII, threw him out of London, but Edward is asleep. The hermit sharpens a knife, but then decides that a passerby might hear if he kills Edward, so he ties him up with rags and binds his jaw closed as the boy sleeps. In Chapter 21, "Hendon to the Rescue," Edward awakens and is startled to see the knife, but he can do nothing. Dawn comes, and just when the hermit is kneeling over Edward with the knife, there's a commotion outside the cabin, followed by the sound of retreating footsteps, and someone pounds on the door. It is Miles, who says he has chased away Edward's pursuers and he wants to know where the boy is. The hermit, who has closed the bedroom door, says Edward has gone on an errand. Miles says he will wait, but he grows impatient and leaves. The hermit goes with him, but a moment later, the door of the hut opens, and Canty and Hugo appear, who take Edward into the forest.

Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Twain continues to depict the nurturing benefits of the simple, honest life when Edward awakens in Chapter 19. The boy is not even disturbed to find that a rat has been seeking shelter and warmth by him, just as Edward did with the calf. The girls he meets are the first people to believe him when he tells them he is the prince. Their mother is kind and feeds him, but when he burns the breakfast, her scolding is Twain's way of pointing out that the simple life is also a hard one. Food cannot be wasted, and the



many tasks the mother sets for Edward demonstrate that everyone is expected to work hard for the blessings of meals and shelter. Edward shows his pluck by swallowing his customary pride and doing the chores, but he balks at drowning the kittens, which is a necessity in a time when people cannot afford to feed non-working pets, but is not a responsibility the pampered Edward is willing to accept. The arrival of Hugo and Canty provides the perfect opportunity for the author to let Edward run away from his benefactors without seeming ungrateful or foolish.

In Chapter 20, Edward's flight deep into the forest symbolizes the reverse side of Nature, which is its ever-present potential for danger. It is interesting that the hermit thinks of himself as a holy man, yet is angered by how Henry VIII thwarted the hermit's ambition. In retaliation, the hermit wants to kill the king's son and, because the hermit is crazy, he has no trouble believing that Edward is the prince. Twain seems to be making a point that religion, like Nature, has two sides. It can be nurturing or it can produce dangerous behavior. Just when there seems to be no escape for Edward, he is saved by the arrival of Miles. The author uses this plot twist to keep the action going. Instead of Miles taking Edward away from trouble, the soldier does not realize Miles is tied up in the next room. Miles and the hermit go away together, which leaves the opportunity for Canty and Hugo to come and regain control of Edward. This prolongs the chase by Miles, and leaves the reader wondering what will happen next to the prince.



Chapters 22-24

Chapters 22-24 Summary

In Chapter 22, "A Victim of Treachery," Edward is once again roving with Ruffler's outlaws, most of whom like him for his pluck, although Hugo and Canty give him as much trouble as they can. Hugo picks a fight with him using staves, but Edward has been well-trained in combat and easily defeats him, which prompts the admiring men to stop calling him King Foo-Foo the First and rename him King of the Game-Cocks. Nobody can get Edward to help the group, and he is always trying to escape. His days are miserable, but each night he dreams of being king. Hugo tries to get revenge for his defeat in the fight, but Yokel, the former farmer, intervenes. Ruffler decides that Edward should stop begging and be a thief, which pleases Hugo, who takes a bundle from a woman and shoves it into Edward's hand, hoping to get him arrested. The prince throws down the bundle and Hugo runs away. Just then, Miles arrives. In Chapter 23, "The Prince a Prisoner," a constable arrives to take Edward to court, along with Miles and the woman who was robbed. A dressed pig was in the bundle, and the justice of the peace asks the woman its value. She tells him, and the justice says for that amount the punishment is hanging. Mortified, the woman readjusts the amount downward.

The woman leaves, followed by the constable, and when Miles goes after them, he overhears the constable forcing the woman to sell him the pig for the lower price she stated. Back in court, the justice gives Edward a short jail sentence. In Chapter 24, "The Escape," the constable is taking Edward to jail when Miles tells him to let the boy escape. He says the pig that the constable bought so cheaply may cost him his neck, if Miles tells the justice what happened. The constable says he was only kidding, but Miles, makes up Latin phrases to convince the constable that his is a hanging offense. Terrified, the constable agrees to give the pig back to the woman, and lets Edward go, saying that he will explain to the judge that Miles broke down the rickety jail door and took the boy away. Miles agrees, recognizing that the judge had no desire to punish the child, anyway.

Chapters 22-24 Analysis

Just when it was beginning to look like Edward would be rid of Canty and the other ruffians, he is recaptured. It seems as if he would have no choice but to join in their illegal doings, yet he absolutely refuses to participate. Twain's point is that when a sense of honor and destiny is deeply instilled in a person from birth onward, it has the potential power to influence that person against any diversions. Still, such training can only be effective in directing someone's behavior when that person is at heart brave and relentlessly true to his self-image, as Edward is. These qualities, combined with his royal instruction in hand-to-hand combat, cause the gang to admire him, although not enough that Ruffler would let Edward continue to do nothing. Instead, he "promotes" him from beggar to thief, giving Hugo the chance to successfully frame Edward. The



author gives a glimpse of justice in action, which contrasts to the justice meted out by Tom as prince in an earlier chapter. This instance shows the judge handcuffed by the laws, which prompts him to induce the woman to lie about the amount she paid for the pig. In turn, that gives the constable an opportunity to cheat the woman, and his failure to get away with it is only because Miles blackmails him. In other words, one manipulation follows another in this form of justice, which depends on who has the power of information to wield over whom. In the end, Miles manages to get Edward free of jail, but the price is that he must accept punishment, even though he, like the prince, is innocent.



Chapters 25-27

Chapters 25-27 Summary

In Chapter 25, "Hendon Hall," Miles and Edward make a three-day journey by mule and donkey to Hendon Hall, where the family of Miles lives in a house with 70 rooms and 27 servants. When they reach the estate, Miles sees his younger brother, Hugh, who looks momentarily surprised, but then draws back, and says he does not recognize Miles. He says he received a letter that his brother Miles died in battle. When Miles asks to see his father and his older brother, Arthur, he is told by Hugh that both are dead. Miles asks to see his cousin Edith, and Hugh agrees. Miles also asks to see the servants, but is told that only five remain, all of whom, Miles knows, are villains. None of the 22 good servants remain. When the beautiful Edith enters the room, she looks unspeakably sad. She claims not to recognize Miles, and then Miles learns that Edith is now married to Hugh. The five servants all claim not to recognize Miles, either. Miles accuses Hugh of writing the letter himself that said he was dead, and of stealing Edith. Hugh commands the servants to seize Miles, but he frightens them off, and says he is not leaving Hendon Hall. In Chapter 26, "Disowned," Edward is more concerned about nobody missing him as the king than he is about the plight of Miles. Edward decides to write a letter in Latin, Greek, and English, which Miles will bring to London and give to the lord Hertford, who will recognize that Edward wrote it.

Miles tries to humor Edward, but also wants to stay at Hendon Hall. Miles is so concerned about his situation that when Edward gives him the written letter, he stuffs it into his pocket without looking at it. The lady Edith enters and tries to warn Miles that Hugh is powerful and dangerous, and Miles must leave. Miles demands that she say if she recognizes him, but she denies it. Just then, officers burst in and take Miles and the king to prison. Chapter 27, "In Prison," shows the two in a crowded detention room, where they pass a troubled night. They remain there for a week, and then the jailer brings an old man named Blake Andrews, whom Miles recognizes as one of his father's former servants. The jailer asks if Blake recognizes Miles, but he says no. Later, Blake tells Miles if he had identified him, Blake would have been killed. Blake visits regularly, and becomes a good source of information for Miles, telling him that the late king will soon be buried, and that Hertford is the Lord Protector until the new king comes of age. Two women are thrown in the jail for being Baptists, which is against the law. Edward likes them, but they are taken away the next day. The prisoners are then led into a courtyard, where the two women are tied to a stake. As a crowd watches, the women are burned to death, even as their children try to save them. Edward is appalled. He later talks to several prisoners he thinks are innocent, and vows to save them one day when he is on the throne.



Chapters 25-27 Analysis

The treachery of Hugh Hendon was foreshadowed in an earlier chapter, when Miles described his brother to Edward as devious and greedy. That treachery now comes to fruition, when Hugh claims not to recognize Miles. When the servants and Edith agree with Hugh, it is clear to Miles that his brother wrote the letter that supposedly came from the authorities announcing the death of Miles. Once again, Twain has injected a plot twist. No sooner does Miles arrive at his destination, Hendon Hall, than he learns that everything he expected to find has changed. The attitude of Edward toward all this, which is one of almost total indifference because of his focus on his own plight, is both funny and disturbing. The author's point is that Edward's single-mindedness is admirable, because it helps to keep him brave and determined, but such a strong ego also can lead to lack of concern for other people's problems. Those born to royalty, and to the belief that their lives are of higher importance than those of common people, are particularly prone to this flaw. Miles, on the other hand, continues to try to humor the boy, even though Miles is consumed with his own pressing troubles. The arrival at the prison of Blake Edwards is a plot device that allows the author to give Edward the information that the king will soon be buried, and that Hertford is the prince's Lord Protector. This adds urgency to Edward's mission to get back to the palace. The horror of the two women being burned at the stake simply because they profess a religion not approved by the king gives Edward an unforgettable lesson in the importance of tolerance as a ruler, which Henry VIII did not have.



Chapters 28-30

Chapters 28-30 Summary

In Chapter 28, "The Sacrifice," Miles is finally tried, and sentenced to sit for two hours in the pillory, which outrages him. When someone hits Miles with an egg as he sits in the stocks, Edward confronts the officer in charge. Hugh arrives and suggests that Edward should get six lashes for insubordination. Miles offers to take the lashes for the boy, which he does, silently, after which Edward picks up the scourge and uses it to dub Miles an earl. Miles is touched by the mad child's kindness, and the crowd, impressed by the bravery of Miles, no longer chides him. In Chapter 29, "To London," the two friends ride away when the punishment of Miles is finished. Edward wants to go to London, to claim the throne, and Miles knows that an old friend of his father named Sir Humphrey Marlow is at court. He thinks maybe Sir Humphrey could get him an audience with the boy king to plead his right to Hendon Hall.

They arrive at London Bridge the night before the coronation. Everyone is celebrating on the bridge, but the festivities turn into a melee, and Miles and the king are separated from each other in the turmoil. Chapter 30, "Tom's Progress," describes how Tom had been growing into his role as king even as the real king struggles. He now easily issues commands, enjoys sitting on the throne in council, loves his splendid clothes, and has tripled the number of his personal servants to 1,200. His first days had been troubled with worries about the real prince, but gradually, these thoughts have faded away, as has his longing to be with his mother and sisters. Now, the idea of going back to the slums is abhorrent. As Tom goes to sleep in his sumptuous chamber the night before the coronation, Edward, clothed in rags and shreds, is wedged among a crowd of people watching workmen as they stream in and out of Westminster Abbey, making the final preparations for the coronation.

Chapters 28-30 Analysis

In accepting lashes meant for Edward, Miles demonstrates a spirit of sacrifice and honor that is among the best of human traits and also is representative of the highest aspirations of royalty. Accordingly, Edward rewards him by making him an earl, while the common people show their respect for Miles by ceasing to taunt him. Once Miles gets out of the stocks, he thinks about his father's friend in court, Sir Humphrey Marlow. Through this device, the author gives Miles a motivation to go to London that matches Edward's desire. This is necessary to the plot, because otherwise, Miles would have to take Edward to the palace knowing (in Miles' mind) that the trip is futile, because Edward is not the real prince, he is deranged. No sooner do they arrive in London than they are separated in the celebrations that turn into a riot. Again, Twain continues the process of joining, separating, and rejoining Edward with his protector and his captors, which is the fundamental driver of action in the plot thread that involves the real prince. Concerning Tom, the plot is largely about his changing emotional reactions to being



mistaken for the prince. Slowly, he has become more accustomed to his new position, even though it is based on a misconception, and now he is growing so comfortable with the splendors of his new life that going back to his old ways seems almost unimaginable to him. This shows the power of luxury and ease to quell the sense of urgency to redress wrongs, which contrasts to the real prince's continuing education among the common people about injustice and the ravages of poverty. The complete reversal of the boys' roles is emphasized by Tom sleeping in ease the night before his coronation, while Edward stands in rags outside the gates of Westminster.



Chapters 31-32

Chapters 31-32 Summary

Chapter 31, "The Recognition Procession," depicts Tom awakening and again becoming the chief figure in a floating pageant down the Thames to the Tower, from which fireworks and smoke emit when he arrives. Splendidly arrayed, he mounts a white steed and is accompanied by the Kings Guard and other officers on a ride past cheering throngs throughout London. Once in a while, he throws coins to the crowd, as is the custom. The author's "chronicler" describes the spectacle. Tom is thrilled, and then he sees his mother in the crowd. Involuntarily, his hands go to his eyes in the old gesture she recognizes. She embraces his leg, but he denies knowing her as the guards pull her away. The procession moves on, but now Tom is filled with remorse, and can no longer take pleasure in pretending to be royalty. He becomes so despondent that the crowd notices, and Hertford approaches to encourage him to smile. He does so dutifully, but tells Hertford the woman was his mother and Hertford is certain the boy has gone mad again. Chapter 32, "Coronation Day," goes back a few hours to 4 a.m. on Coronation Day. In Westminster Abbey, people already have assembled in the dark to await the event. Ten hours go by, and the galleries and balconies have long been packed. Finally, dignitaries begin to arrive and then booming artillery announces that the king is near. At last, the Archbishop of Canterbury lifts the crown over Tom's head, as all the nobles in the gallery simultaneously lift their coronets over their heads. At that instant, Edward arrives, forbidding the archbishop to crown Tom.

Everyone is astonished, but Tom immediately swears loyalty to Edward and declares that is the king. Nobody knows what to believe, and Hertford finally tests Edward by asking where he put the Great Seal. Edward quickly tells him it is in a secret compartment in his room, but when the lord St. John checks, it is not there. The situation looks lost for Edward, but Tom commands that Edward be left untouched by guards whom Hertford has commanded should take him away. Tom asks for a description of the seal, and once he knows what they're talking about, he reminds Edward that he had put the seal away just before he left the room wearing Tom's rags. Edward then remembers that he put it inside an arm of the suit of armor, and St. John retrieves it. The boys explain how they exchanged garments on that day, and Edward is proclaimed the true king. He prevents Hertford from throwing Tom in the Tower. Edward asks how Tom remembered where the seal was, and Tom says it was easy, because he used it to crack nuts. Everyone laughs, and Edward finally is crowned.

Chapters 31-32 Analysis

The grand pageant in which Tom is the main figure is the culmination of his transformation from pauper to prince. The tradition of throwing coins to the crowd is a lovely reversal of Tom's earlier dream about having enough pennies to scrape through each day and thereby relieve the misery of his life. Having all the luxuries, fame, money,



and love one could possibly want is indeed a wonderful dream come true for him, but it all explodes when he sees his mother. She recognizes him from the characteristic gesture that was foreshadowed in an earlier chapter, which shows that no matter what trappings of royalty surround him, Tom is still her son. His rejection of her causes him immediate remorse, and brings him back to who he really is. Ironically, Hertford takes this return to sanity as evidence that Tom's insanity has returned. In Chapter 32, a telling moment is when all the royals in attendance at the coronation lift their own coronets above their heads just when Tom is about to be crowned. This show of solidarity and common purpose among the ruling class is a powerful reminder of the divide between them and everyone else. In Twain's characteristic cliffhanger style for this book, he brings Edward onstage at the last second before Tom becomes king. Tom's immediate support of Edward shows that his essential goodness and honesty have remained intact, and were merely submerged by the overwhelming forces of convention. Even now, Hertford and the other royals do not believe that Edward is the real prince. The question of the Great Seal's whereabouts, which had been foreshadowed more than once earlier in the novel, returns now to allow Edward to prove his claim to the throne. Twain drops a cheeky joke at the end of this chapter when Tom, the commoner, admits that he was using the seal of royalty to crack nuts.



Chapter 33 and Conclusion

Chapter 33 and Conclusion Summary

Chapter 33, "Edward as King," begins with Miles escaping the riot on London Bridge in which he lost touch with Edward, and tramping for hours in search of the boy. He walks all night and half the day, then sleeps, and when he awakes, he decides to find Sir Humphrey Marlow at the palace, because he needs to borrow money. Late that night, outside the palace, the whipping boy sees Miles and stares at him, thinking he exactly fits the king's description of his friend. Miles feels the boy staring at him and turns to ask if he knows Sir Humphrey Marlow. The boy thinks to himself that Sir Humphrey is his deceased father, but to Miles, he only says that he knows him. The boy says he will bring word back to Miles and asks him to wait on a stone bench outside the palace. Miles sits, but he is promptly arrested by officers who regard him as a suspicious character. They search him, finding only the letter that Edward had written in several languages to Hertford, which Miles had forgotten. The officer brings the letter to the king while the other men seize Miles, but the officer returns and conducts Miles to the court. Miles sees Edward on the throne, but cannot believe it. As a test, Miles takes a chair and sits down. The guards grab him to pull him up, but the commotion attracts Edward's attention, and he commands that they let Miles remain seated.

The king explains that Miles has the right to sit in his presence, and that he has made him a knight and an earl. Miles cannot believe the king is his young friend. He drops to his knees and swears allegiance. Hugh and the lady Edith are in court, and the king orders Hugh to be locked up. The king then addresses Tom, saying he has learned that Tom has been faithful and honest, and he appoints him the King's Ward, dressed in clothing that befits his station, and destined to become head of the Christ's Church for homeless boys when he comes of age. In the Conclusion, titled, "Justice and Retribution," Hugh Hendon confesses that he had told Edith he would kill Miles if she did not repudiate him. Hugh is not prosecuted, because his wife is not allowed by law to testify against him, and his brother will not do so. Hugh deserts Edith and goes overseas, where he soon dies. Eventually, Miles marries Edith. Tom Canty's father is never heard from again. Edward pardons many of the prisoners he had met while he was in jail and throughout his life, he is fond of telling the story of his adventures. He lives only a few more years, but Miles and Tom are favorites of him for the rest of his life. Tom lives to be an old man, and is respected all his days. The author concludes that the reign of Edward VI, although brief, was merciful for those harsh times, which should be remembered as the reader leaves the king.

Chapter 33 and Conclusion Analysis

Letting no thread of his plot be left unanswered, Twain brings Miles to the palace after arduous wanderings in search of Edward. It makes sense that Miles would not expect to see Edward at the palace, because nobody would let a pauper boy inside the grounds,



but the author already has given a motivation to Miles to go to Westminster and see his father's friend. Once he gets there, the letter that Edward wrote comes into the play in the plot, when Miles is searched and the letter is brought to court. Yet another device Twain had introduced earlier, the permission to sit in the king's presence that Edward had given to Miles, is reintroduced as a way of bringing the friends face-to-face, and as an entry point to the explanations Edward now gives to the court about his relationship with Miles and the honors he has bestowed upon him. The author then deals with the villain, Hugh, and with his hapless victim, Edith. In this book, the Conclusion is that part of a story called the denouement, after the action has come to its main climax, and loose pieces of plot are tied up. In recounting what happens to principal and minor characters after the crowning of Edward, Twain ends this carefully-crafted fable by answering every question that the reader might have.



Characters

Tom Canty

Tom Canty is a boy born in the first half of the sixteenth century in London to an extremely poor family who do not want him, because they cannot afford him. He knows no other life than that of a beggar whose father is a thief. Sleeping on the floor of a filthy tenement, beaten daily by his drunken father and grandmother, Tom nevertheless thinks his life is quite acceptable. When a priest who lives in the multiple-family dwelling teaches Tom to read and write, and to understand a little Latin, the boy begins to speak in flowery language, which leads to creating a fantasy court, with Tom as prince and his friends as courtiers. He develops a passion to see a real prince, and that leads him to Westminster, where he meets Prince Edward. When the two accidentally switch identities, Tom's natural modesty and honesty prevent him at first from accepting the reality that everyone now believes he is Prince Edward. When the real prince, who seems to have disappeared, does not return, Tom's longing to see his kind mother and sisters is replaced by the excitement and comfort of his pampered position. His initial concern about the fate of Prince Edward is slowly replaced by a desire to remain in his own guise as prince. When Tom sees his mother in a crowd and she recognizes him as her son, he quickly rejects her, but just as quickly becomes so full of remorse that his life as a pretend prince is ruined. When the real prince returns, Tom immediately embraces him, and helps Edward to prove that he is the heir apparent. These changes in Tom's loyalties and emotions throughout the book show that he is a straightforward boy with a powerful imagination who cannot help but be thrilled by his good luck, but who recognizes that he must be honest and loyal to his loved ones if he is to have peace of mind.

Edward Tudor

Edward Tudor, the Prince of Wales and heir to the throne of England, is a boy who was born in London on the same day as Tom Canty. He and Tom bear a remarkable physical resemblance, which is why the two boys become mistaken for each other through a series of circumstances. Raised to be king, Edward has been schooled in several languages and the arts of self-defense, but he also expects to be treated like royalty by everyone. When he unwillingly assumes the life of Tom for a while, Edward creates difficulties for himself by continuing to insist he is the prince, even when people laugh and jeer at him, or even beat him. On the other hand, his royal bearing and insistence on his station in life are also a big help to him in braving the trauma of being considered a peasant by everyone, even those who are not cruel to him. If Edward had not been trained throughout his young life to act with dignity, and to show strength and command, he might have given up hope when it seemed that nobody would ever again believe he was Prince of Wales, but he remains steadfast against all obstacles that one day he again will be recognized. Bravery and a sense of entitlement are Edward's two most prominent characteristics. His insistence that everyone should kowtow to him seems



haughty and annoying to people raised in democracies, but it is understandable and perhaps forgivable in a monarchy. After Edward finally ascends to the throne, he shows a developed sense of justice by rewarding those who helped him during his accidental exile, and by punishing those responsible for misdeeds that he witnessed when everyone thought he was a pauper.

Miles Hendon

Miles Hendon is a soldier who has just returned from England after three years of fighting a foreign war, followed by seven years of imprisonment by the enemy. He happens to witness Edward being harassed by a crowd who think he is a peasant trying to pretend he is a prince, and Miles immediately displays bravery and chivalry by defending the boy. Miles is a little naïve however, because he allowed his younger brother to manipulate their father into sending Miles into military service as punishment for untrue charges of misbehavior. Miles also is unusually softhearted, as indicated by his willingness to pretend that Edward is a prince, because he feels sorry for the boy, who he thinks is deranged. When he takes Edward with him to his father's mansion in the country and learns that his father has died, the identity of Miles is repudiated by his brother, by the servants, and even by his former fiancé, who has married the brother. Miles again displays a stouthearted nature in refusing to leave the estate, and after he is taken away by the authorities, he continues on his quest to restore his rightful place as head of the family. Miles is not a complicated man, but he is brave, loyal, kind, and loving, an appealing combination of characteristics that makes him the perfect adult helper for Edward. At the end, Miles is rewarded for his unwavering loyalty to Edward by becoming a knight and an earl, casting out his evil brother, marrying his beloved fiancé, taking control of his inheritance, and forging a lifelong friendship with the young king.

John Canty

John Canty, the drunken and thieving father of Tom, is the villain in the story. From the novel's outset, he displays no traits that are anything but loathsome. He beats young Tom every night, apparently because the boy does not bring home enough pennies from begging, but the reader recognizes that this is an excuse for his cruelty. John is mean when he gets drunk. He hates his poverty-stricken life and takes it out on his son. He did not want the child and resents having him in the family. At the same time, John regards Tom as a possession, and does not intend to give him up or let him go his own way. Mistaking Edward for his son, John diligently pursues him throughout much of the story, and captures him a couple of times. When he is confronted by Miles Hendon, John displays cowardice that seems in keeping with his brutality. When someone else objects to his vicious treatment of the boy, John hits the man with his cudgel, killing him, which forces John to change his name to John Hobbs and go on the run with a gang of thieves and beggars. When John eventually disappears from Tom's life, it is clearly a blessing.



Hugo

Hugo is a young ruffian who helps John Canty in his efforts to capture Edward, who they think is Tom Canty. He lures Edward away from the lodgings of Miles Hendon by pretending that he is a messenger from Miles, who has asked Edward to meet him in the woods. Hugo displays his deceitful nature on several other occasions, when he tricks people to get their money or goods. When Edward is forced to travel with the gang to which Hugo and John Canty belong, those two men are the only ones who really dislike Edward. Hugo is annoyed that the boy refuses to help him to beg or steal, and he taunts Edward. Finally, he goads the boy into a fight with staves, which Edward easily wins, because of his training in the martial arts. This only increases Hugo's enmity toward Edward, and he arranges a trap by which the boy will be arrested for theft. Like John Canty, Hugo displays no traits that lighten his villainy.

The Earl of Hertford

The Earl of Hertford is the uncle of Edward Tudor. He also is Lord Chancellor of the realm, and becomes Lord Protector of the young king. As such, the earl is tasked with helping young Edward to make good decisions and rule wisely. Throughout most of the novel, the earl is actually helping Tom, who he thinks is Edward. He also thinks the prince has lost his wits, because Tom does not know many things about the court that he should know, and Tom even declares sometimes that he is not the prince. The earl displays loyalty, but also shows that he can be quick to issue harsh penalties on anyone who he thinks could bother the young prince in any way. Mostly, though, the earl is portrayed as a useful friend to the prince, with an unwavering allegiance to the monarchy.

Henry VIII

Henry VIII is the King of England and Edward Tudor's father. He is described as a fearsome monarch, although in the novel, he is ill and close to death. Indeed, he dies before the book is finished, which leaves Edward to take the throne. Henry voices love and commitment to his son, even when he thinks Edward has lost his senses. Henry is so determined for Edward to succeed him as king that he commands that after Henry's death the boy should be crowned even if he is insane. This shows that at least part of Henry's affection for his child is because he sees Edward as an extension of his own ego. If Henry cannot rule forever, then at least his son will rule.

Mrs. Canty

Mrs. Canty is Tom's mother. Unlike Tom's father, she is warm and gentle with him. She is unable, however, to stand up to her husband, or stop him from beating their son. Her only way to help is to smuggle a few bits of food to the boy at night, after he has been beaten and sent to sleep without dinner. The family has so little to eat that Mrs. Canty



must give Tom her own food. After Tom is mistaken for the Prince of Wales, his mother sees him in a royal procession. When she recognizes him by a characteristic, involuntary gesture of his, Tom denies that he knows his mother, which immediately causes him grief, but she later does not seem to hold it against him. Mrs. Canty is simple, quiet, humble person who loves her children.

Father Andrew

Father Andrew is a priest who lives in the large, rundown building at Offal Court in which Tom's family occupies one floor. He teaches Tom to read and write, and teaches him some Latin. After the identities of Tom and Edward become confused, Father Andrew tries to prevent John Canty from abusing Edward, who everyone thinks is Tom. The priest is hit on the head with a cudgel by John Canty, and the death of Father Andrew from the blow sends John into hiding.

The Lady Jane Grey

The Lady Jane Grey is Edward's cousin, of the same age as him. Edward enjoys her company, and describes her to Tom as a beautiful and gracious person. Tom later concurs, when he has the opportunity to talk with her and Elizabeth on several occasions during the time that everyone thinks Tom is the prince. Indeed, the occasional hour he spends with Jane Grey and the Lady Elizabeth are among Tom's favorite times during his short period as the false prince.

The Lady Elizabeth

The Lady Elizabeth is Edward Tudor's fourteen year-old sister, whom the boy likes. Tom also enjoys her company.

The Lady Mary

The Lady Mary is an older sister of Edward, whom he describes as being gloomy. He tells Tom that Mary forbids her servants to smile, because the sin of it would condemn their souls. Tom does not spend time with her.

Gammer Canty

Tom's grandmother, whom he occasionally calls Gammer Canty, is as bad as her son, John Canty. She gets drunk as often as possible, and joins John in beating Tom. She curses and fights with anyone at any time. The author describes her, like John, as a fiend.



Bet and Nan

Bet and Nan are fifteen year-old twins and Tom's big sisters. Like their mother, they are kind to Tom, and he loves them. They have no speaking roles in the novel, and seem to exist principally to show that not everything is bleak in Tom's life as a pauper.

Hugh Hendon

Hugh Hendon is the younger brother of Miles Hendon. A devious and treacherous person, he is beloved only by his father, who believes him when Hugh creates false charges of wrongdoing against Miles. After Miles is sent away, Hugh manufactures evidence that Miles has died in a foreign war, and then he forces his cousin Edith to marry him, so he can get his hands on her fortune. When Miles returns, Hugh claims that Miles is an imposter. His treachery is finally exposed, he deserts his wife, and goes to another country, where he dies.

The Lady Edith

The Lady Edith, the cousin of Hugh and Miles Hendon, is the love of Miles' life. She is forced by Hugh to marry him after she thinks Miles has died. When Miles returns, Edith is forced by Hugh to deny that she recognizes Miles, or else the powerful Hugh will have his brother killed. Eventually, she is reunited with Miles and marries him after Hugh dies.

The Lord St. John

The Lord St. John assists the Lord Hertford as a guardian of the Prince of Wales. He is appointed to the task by the king after Tom and Edward switch identities, and the king thinks his son has gone mad. At one point, St. John suggests to Hertford that perhaps Tom is not the prince, but when Hertford responds that such an idea is treasonous, St. John quickly retracts. He appears to be a political animal, but is not a bad person.

Humphrey Marlow

Humphrey Marlow is the Prince of Edward's whipping boy. His job is to take beatings for the prince when the prince fails to perform well at his studies. Humphrey becomes a confidant of Tom, who he thinks is the prince. Thinking that he is helping the prince to regain his lost senses, Humphrey tells Tom much about how the court functions, which is very useful to Tom.

The Ruffler

The Ruffler is the leader of the gang that John Canty joins after he kills Father Andrew and goes into hiding. The Ruffler displays a warped sense of honor, as he prizes the



skills and bravery of his gang of thieves and beggars. When Edward, who everyone thinks is Tom, refuses to be a beggar in the gang, the Ruffler decides to "promote" him to a thief. The Ruffler seems to have leadership abilities and cunning, which make him a somewhat likeable bandit.

The Duke of Norfolk

The Duke of Norfolk, the top-ranking nobleman in the kingdom, has incurred the wrath of Henry VIII for reasons unexplained in the novel, and is condemned to death by beheading. When Tom is informed that Henry and he will become king, Tom's first order is that the Duke of Norfolk be released from the Tower.

Yokel

Yokel is a member of the Ruffler's gang of thieves and beggars. Once a prosperous farmer, Yokel lost his lands when they taken over for raising sheep. His mother was burned at the stake as a witch, and when Yokel and his family became beggars, his family died or became lost, and Yokel was sold as a slave. After Edward becomes king, he restores Yokel to a comfortable living.

The Hermit

The Hermit is a crazy man that Edward stumbles upon deep in the woods after he escapes from John Canty. The hermit, who thinks himself to be an archangel, is one of the only people Edward meets who actually believes him when he says he is Prince of Wales. The hermit also believes, however, that he was meant to be pope and was stopped only by Henry VIII, the prince's father. He therefore attempts to kill Edward in his sleep, but Edward is rescued at the last moment by the arrival of Miles Hendon.

Blake Andrews

Blake Andrews is a former servant at Hendon Hall who encounters Miles Hendon and Edward when they are in jail. Blake becomes a good source of information for the two, telling them that the king has died and that Hertford will be the Lord Protector of the new young king.

Sir Humphrey Marlow

Sir Humphrey Marlow is the father of the prince's whipping boy, Humphrey Marlow. Miles Hendon's father was a friend of Sir Humphrey Marlow, and Miles hopes to get help from him when he goes to the palace at Westminster where Sir Humphrey works, but he already has died.



Objects/Places

London

London is the city in England where the two main characters, Tom Canty and Edward Tudor, were born. The author describes it as a nice place for the time, which was the mid-1500s, but it is dirty and has narrow streets and many slums. On the other hand, it also is home to rich merchants and nobility, who live in sumptuous mansions. The city is surrounded by a wall for protection against enemies.

Offal Court

Offal Court is at the end of Pudding Lane in a very poor part of London where Tom lives. It is a place full of drunken brawls and rioting, where many people are beggars and thieves. Tom's house is a small and run-down tenement filled with many families crammed together in abject poverty.

Westminster

Westminster is the palace where King Henry VIII lives with his son, Edward Tudor. The palace is a short way into the countryside, beyond the walls that form the limits of London proper. The palace, set in verdant surroundings, is protected by gates and sentinels. Everyday people like Tom often stand outside Westminster's gates, hoping for a glimpse of royalty.

London Bridge

London Bridge, which crosses the Thames, is not far from Tom's house in Offal Court. The bridge is packed with stores and shops on both sides, extending from one bank of the river to the other. Above these buildings are housing for the families who operate the businesses. In a sense, London Bridge is a village all to itself, with everything people need to live, and many of those who work and abide there in the 1500s rarely, if ever, leave the bridge.

The Thames

The Thames is the river that flows through London. It fills with barges and boats during celebrations that precede the coronation of the young king. It also is the river spanned by London Bridge.



Hendon Hall

Hendon Hall is the ancestral home of Miles Hendon. The estate has seventy rooms, and before Miles left it ten years earlier, it had twenty-seven servants. It is near a village in countryside graced with orchards and pastures between the cottages. This is the estate Miles was supposed to inherit, which was stolen from him by his younger brother, although Miles eventually gets it back.

Christ's Church

Christ's Church, also called Christ's Hospital, is the ancient Grey Friars' Church in London that was taken from monks by Henry VIII, who made it a home for poor orphan children. When Edward is wandering in the city after being pursued and harassed by people who do not believe he is the prince, he stumbles upon the church and recognizes it. The children there mistreat him, but once he is crowned king, he funds the home generously, appoints Tom as the King's Ward and has him live there until he comes of age, after which he becomes its chief governor.

Cheapside

Cheapside is a village near Tom's home where he goes to the fair sometimes, and engages in activities around the Maypole, and occasionally sees a military parade in which someone is being carried to the Tower for punishment.

Smithside

Smithside is another village near Tom's home, where he once saw four people who were accused of witchcraft burned at the stake.

Charing Village

Charing Village is a lovely place Tom finds during his walk to Westminster. He has a beautiful palace owned by a cardinal and a majestic cross erected by a king long ago.

Southwark

Southwark is a village toward which Hugo and John Canty go as they lure young Edward away from the protection of Miles Hendon. In a barn within a forest beyond Southwark, Hugo and John reveal their deceit as they take Edward into captivity.

The Great Seal

The Great Seal is a device to stamp the king's insignia on documents to make them official. Henry VIII needs the seal for the paperwork that authorizes execution of the Duke of Norfolk, but Edward put the seal somewhere in his room before his identity became confused with that of Tom. Edward's memory of where he hid the Great Seal ultimately becomes the proof he needs that he is the rightful heir to the throne.



Themes

The Meaning of Equality

From the title of this novel onward, *The Prince and the Pauper* examines inequality and unfairness. Wisely, Mark Twain does not attempt to rail against the class system in feudal England. His focus is not on redressing societal wrongs, either then or now, but rather on probing aspects of human nature that transcend such inequalities. What he finds is nothing new to contemporary readers, but it is a powerfully presented reminder of what the true riches in life are. Tom Canty, a modest and unassuming pauper, wishes he could see a prince. He does not yearn for anything so extraordinary as to meet a prince, but simply wants to set eyes on one. Instead, through a misunderstanding, he actually becomes a prince for a while. Tom's initial reaction to this strange occurrence is fear of punishment when people find out he is a fake, coupled with an inability to realize that anyone could believe he was a prince. Slowly, however, he begins to enjoy the pleasures of wealth and power, and he looks forward to being crowned king. Not until he sees his mother in a crowd and denies that he knows her, does his essential honesty return through shame at his conduct toward her. He is then longer able to take pleasure in his false existence.

Meanwhile, Prince Edward never falters in his conviction that the power and heritage due to him will be restored. Having been raised as a royal, he is incapable of seeing himself in any other light. His self-image as a prince and the future king never wavers, and he plans rewards and punishments for many people he meets during the time he is mistaken as a pauper. Later, he carries out those rewards and punishments. Twain's message is that while society is a task-master, schooling us all concerning our positions in life, we nevertheless are ultimately equal in the most important ways. Goodness and honor are not traits bestowed by station or by accolades. They are determinants of character that transcend money or power. Both boys in this book are good people, one poor, one rich. Even when their conditions in life are reversed, they remain true to the best attributes within them, although the luxuries of royalty make Tom falter for a while. Twain shows us that in the inestimable realms of character, these two representatives of opposite ends of the societal spectrum are equals.

Appearances Can Deceive

The power of appearances is addressed in several well-known sayings, such as "clothes make the man" and "don't judge a book by its cover." In literature, this theme is often called "disguise and deception," although usually the disguises are donned purposely by characters to deceive others. In this book, Mark Twain tweaks that theme by having the two main characters exchange their clothing innocently, without the intention of deceiving anyone, and yet, they end up confusing everyone. If the faces and forms of Tom and Edward were not identical, this confusion could never occur, which is why the author quickly establishes their remarkable likeness, and then drops that



subject. What interests him is not their physical appearance, which is an accident of Nature, but the aspects of their appearances that are influenced by society. Specifically, clothing and the manners and knowledge provided by education are the appearances with which Twain concerns himself in this novel. What society teaches or does not teach people in the time in which this story is set, differs remarkably depending on one's class. This is why Twain had to overcome the problem that paupers usually could not read, write, or understand a foreign language, by giving Tom special coaching in those subjects by Father Andrew. Given that Tom could speak in the flowery language used by rich people of the day, it became believable that he could be mistaken for Edward. Of course, Tom still knew little about the court and was extremely deficient in manners, but the power of his clothing and his whereabouts in the palace left nobody in real doubt that he was Edward. Whatever Tom did not know was simply explained away as temporary madness and he soon acquired enough information to be quite convincing as Edward. Mark Twain's point is that how a person looks can produce expectations and conclusions that might be utterly unlike who the person really is. Learning to look beneath appearances is never easy, but it is a process that can reveal the real person beneath them.

The Nobility of Loyalty

The trait most responsible for defining characters in this novel is loyalty. Those who have it are heroes and those who do not have it are villains. Even the villains who have it, such as Ruffler, the leader of the gang of thieves and beggars, seem less villainous because of their loyalties. The worst of the villains, John Canty and Hugh Hendon, are loyal to nobody but themselves. They have associations with others, and even rely on help from others, but only to advance their own cause. In contrast, the loyalty of Miles Hendon to Edward is complete, and makes Miles probably the most admirable character in the book. Similarly, Edward's loyalty never wavers to the crown and by extension to England, which makes him a young man truly fit to be king. On a personal level, Edward returns the loyalty he gets from Miles and from Tom by using his power to reward them. Tom's loyalties waver a bit during the course of the story. The luxury and power of being the prince turn his head for a while, but when he commits an act of disloyalty to his mother by denying that he knows her, Tom is immediately repentant. He realizes that such disloyalty will make him miserable, even with all the riches of England. Loyalty is the crowning glory in this book. Without it, love is not possible, and the very order of society threatens to collapse. Anyone has the capacity for loyalty, from any level of society, which means that this most important aspect of character is not determined by birth or breeding. Even so, the highest and best aspirations of royalty are to define what is best in humanity and to celebrate and encourage those traits. In that sense, the ultimate sign of nobility among commoners and kings is loyalty.



Style

Point of View

This novel, narrated by a voice indistinguishable from that of the author, is told from a viewpoint of limited omniscience. The author goes into the minds of the two main characters, Tom Canty and Edward Tudor, providing their thoughts and feelings to the reader, but he does not enter the minds of the other characters. Instead, the emotions of the supporting characters are portrayed through conversation, the expressions on their faces, and their actions. This choice of viewpoint allows the author to concentrate on fully developing the thoughts of the two main characters as they encounter the strange turns of events in their lives after their identities are accidentally swapped. It seems to be a smart decision on the part of Mark Twain, because whatever other thoughts or feelings might be generated in other characters by these mistaken identities, they would not be as intense or odd as are the experiences of the two boys. Twain revels in the situation he has created of an heir to the throne who temporarily becomes a pauper while a beggar boy briefly becomes the Prince of Wales. Edward's outrage, consternation, shame, and determination to recover what is rightfully his is a complex of emotions matched in their intensity and conflicts by Tom's modesty, homesickness, growing delight, fear of being discovered, and wholehearted effort to help Edward regain his throne. Much of the drama in the novel is generated by this depiction of how the two boys' emotional states fluctuate, while at the same time they both retain core characteristics of forthrightness and honor that do not change.

Setting

The story is set in England, with action taking place in London, at Westminster, and in a number of locations around the English countryside. The significance of setting as an indicator of the powerful class distinctions in 16th century England is evident at the start of the novel and continues throughout it. The descriptions in the first chapter of the sordid living conditions among the poor are soon contrasted to the splendors enjoyed by the rich merchants, clergy, and nobility. Mark Twain creates such vivid word-pictures of the cramped, dirty, and hard existences of the common people that it becomes almost impossible to read about the refinements of the titled and wealthy without being struck by the unfairness of it. This is a classic case of the author showing rather than telling his message to the reader. To describe the huge disparities between the lives of rich and poor in those days is a far more powerful way to point out inequities than to compose a lecture about them. The book's settings also help to create moods. For example, when Edward wanders around the ruined streets of London's slums, the description of the filth and chaos he encounters does much to heighten the horror felt by the reader at the risk to the young prince's physical and mental health. Similarly, when Edward roams with the gang of thieves that take him prisoner, and when he meets the insane hermit, the deep woods that surround him are symbolic of the deep trouble in which he finds himself. For Tom, the pomp and circumstance of court often confuse and intimidate him. Those



opulent settings underscore how out-of-place a pauper is among royalty. In this novel, all Twain's settings make statements about the story, even as they enrich its texture.

Language and Meaning

This novel uses the diction of Early Modern English, which many readers will recognize as from the same historical period as the works of William Shakespeare. It employs many now-obsolete words and contractions, such as *thou*, *ye*, *'twould*, and *'tis*. Generally, the speech of the characters is more flowery and indirect than that of contemporary English, but it also has more nuance and lyricism. Conversation that was eloquent and entertaining was a prized skill in the 16th century. It was also a marker of high breeding and good education. When Father Andrew teaches Tom to read and write, as well as a little Latin, it is a benefit few of the poor in those days enjoyed. In the novel, Tom's education also is essential to the plot. If he had not learned to speak with fluency and a dash of poetry, he never could have passed for royalty. His guardians think that his inability to speak or understand French is a result of his mental illness, but they are reassured that he at least can still understand Latin. Another interesting aspect of Tom's language skills is that the acquisition of them leads him to daydreaming about meeting a prince, and playing elaborate games in which he pretends to be royalty. The two boys look so much alike that when they switch clothing, all that is left to distinguish them from each other is language, and what it can convey. In these ways, the author uses language to reinforce his central message that humans are essentially the same, underneath our many elaborate exteriors. He also makes practical use of language in that his Early Modern English constantly reminds the reader of the far distance in time between then and now.

Structure

This book has 33 chapters followed by an unnumbered Conclusion. All numbered chapters and the Conclusion have individual titles, such as, "The Birth of the Prince and Pauper" for Chapter 1 and "Justice and Retribution" for the Conclusion. The story is preceded by a paragraph, which is not introduced by the author as a Foreword or in any other way, and that leaves open the question of whether or not the story is true. The first chapter is preceded by a quote from William Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, but no other quotes appear in the book. The structure of the storyline is a weave. It begins with the story of Tom Canty, the pauper, only mentioning at the outset that Prince Edward was born on the same day as Tom. The author uses two chapters to develop Tom and his life of poverty before the boy first encounters the prince in Chapter 3. After the two boys swap clothes and are mistaken for each other, their much different adventures are visited in alternation by the author, but not in any strictly defined way. Four or five chapters might be devoted principally to Tom, followed by several focusing on Edward, followed by a few chapters on Tom and four or five on the prince. Occasionally, a chapter is broken into parts that show what is happening to each of the two main characters, but for the most part, the chapters separate their experiences until the two boys come together again in the final chapters. This structure has the

advantage of keeping the reader engaged in two story lines that separate near the beginning of the novel and come together again near the end, in a manner that is predictable and yet aesthetically satisfying.



Quotes

"When he came home empty handed at night, he knew his father would cruse him and thrash him first, and that when he was done the awful grandmother would do it all over again and improve on it; and that away in the night his starving mother would slip to him stealthily with any miserable scrap or crust she had been able to save for him by going hungry herself, notwithstanding she was often caught in that sort of treason and soundly beaten for it by her husband" (Chapter 2, "Tom's Early Life," pg. 12.)

"Tom's breath came quick and short with excitement, and his eyes grew big with wonder and delight. Every thing gave way in his mind instantly to one desire: that was to get close to the prince, and have a good, devouring look at him" (Chapter 3, "Tom's Meeting with the Prince," pg. 17.)

"As night drew to a close that day, the prince found himself far down in the close-built portion of the city. His body was bruised, his hands were bleeding, and his rags were all besmirched with mud" (Chapter 4, "The Prince's Troubles Begin," pg. 25.)

"The whisper, for it was whispered always, flew from menial to menial, from lord to lady, down all the long corridors, from story to story, from saloon to saloon, 'The prince hath gone mad, the prince hath gone mad!'" (Chapter 5, "Tom as Patrician," pg. 29.)

"His cudgel crashed down upon the meddler's head: there was a groan, a dim form sank to the ground among the feet of the crowd, and the next moment it lay there in the dark alone" (Chapter 10, "The Prince in the Toils," pg. 55.)

"The splendors of the scene delighted his eye and fired his imagination, at first, but the audience was long and dreary, and so were most of the addresses—wherefore, what began as a pleasure, grew into weariness and homesickness by and by" (Chapter 15, "Tom as King," pg. 95.)

"A bright fire was burning in the middle of the floor, at the other end of the barn; and around it, and lit weirdly up by the red glare, lolled and sprawled the motliest company of tattered gutter-scum and ruffians, of both sexes, he had ever read or dreamed of" (Chapter 17, "Foo-Foo the First," pg. 112.)

"By and by they invaded a small farm house and made themselves at home while the trembling farmer and his people swept the larder clean to furnish a breakfast for them" (Chapter 18, "The Prince with the Tramps," pg. 119.)

"The hermit sprang noiselessly to the bedside, and went down upon his knees, bending over the prostrate form with his knife uplifted" (Chapter 20, "The Prince and the Hermit," pg. 137.)

"The former relations were resumed; Hendon stood behind he king's chair, while he dined, and waited upon him; undressed him when he was ready for bed; then took the



floor for his own quarters, and sleep athwart the door, rolled up in a blanket" (Chapter 25, "Hendon Hall," pg. 157-158.)

"The king was furious over these inhumanities and wanted Hendon to break jail and fly with him to Westminster, so that he could mount his throne and hold out his scepter in mercy over these unfortunate people and save their lives" (Chapters 27, "In Prison," pg. 177.)

"Whilst the true King wandered about the land poorly clad, poorly fed, cuffed and derided by tramps one while, herding with thieves and murderers in jail another, and called idiot and impostor by all impartially, the mock King Tom Canty enjoyed quite a different experience" (Chapter 30, "Tom's Progress," pg. 186.)

"A sudden idea flashed in his eye, and he strode to the wall, gathered up a chair, brought it back, planted it on the floor, and sat down in it!" (Chapter 33, "Edward as King," pg. 211.)

"Miles Hendon and Tom Canty were favorites of the king, all through his brief reign, and his sincere mourners when he died" (Chapter 34, "Justice and Retribution," pg. 216.)



Topics for Discussion

Does it seem believable to you that merely by exchanging their clothing, Tom and Edward would make everyone think that their identities were reversed? What explanation could you give for why Henry VIII would not realize that Tom was not the true prince or that Mrs. Canty would not be convinced that Edward was not her son?

Why do you think Miles Hendon is so kind to Edward? After all, he thinks this is a pauper boy suffering from the mad delusion that he is the Prince of Wales. Why is Miles so determined to help this beleaguered child against all enemies?

Why are all the common people so mean to Edward, just because he insists he is the prince? It is understandable that they would not believe him, but why do so many of them taunt, ridicule, and even beat him when he makes this claim?

What happened to John Canty and his grandmother? The author describes them as fiends. They are drunken, vicious, deceitful people. Evil is not easily explained, but based strictly on what the novel tells, what is your theory about what might have caused these two people to become so horrible, even to their own families?

One of Mark Twain's concerns in this story is to address the difficult economic, social, and political conditions that created misery for many people in 16th century England. Describe those conditions and the problems they created.

Remarkably, Edward Tudor never gives up faith in himself or in his fate, to become King of England. How could a young boy remain so optimistic in the midst of all the troubles he has in this story? What is the source of his amazing reserves of self-confidence?

Tom's mother thinks hard about how to determine if the boy in her home is her son. She decides on the plan of eliciting a characteristic gesture from the boy. If he reacts in that expected way, it must be Tom. Describe this plan and what it means in terms of how to get to the heart of who someone really is.