

# THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

an adaptation of the Mark Twain classic  
dramatized by Dan Neidermyer

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

An exciting American classic about two very different English youths: one a prince, the other a pauper; one accustomed to royal finery, the other knows only rags; one has many servants, the other is a beggar in the streets.

Yet both are the same age, same height, same build, same hair color, even very similar temperaments. In fact, so much alike are the two, both boys laughingly decide to try on each other's clothes and for a few moments find themselves daydreaming about "being the other."

For a fun moment, the pauper makes believe he's the prince and the prince, the pauper. Suddenly, the unthinkable happens! The prince, dressed as the pauper, is rather unceremoniously thrown out of the palace by the zealous guards charged to protect him!

Now on the streets of London, the prince fights to prove he's not a pauper while back in the palace, the pauper tries to prove he's not the prince as the "pauper-prince's" impending coronation as "King of England" comes closer and closer everyday!

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(10M, 7F plus as many extras as desired)*

**TOM CANTY** - A kindly young beggar from the streets of London who dreams of being a prince

**EDWARD TUTOR** - The strong and most determined young Prince of Wales who dreams of spending one day as a common youth

**SARAH** - Shrewish hag who troubles Tom daily

**BET** - A sister to Tom and twin of Nan

**LORD HERTFORD** - Lord Protector of the future king of England

**JOHN CANTY** - Tom's harsh and mean father

**LADY JANE GREY** - Young and gracious cousin of Edward

**LADY ELIZABETH** - Edward's sister and true friend

**MILES HENDON** - The valiant rescuer of Edward

**GUARD** - The man-at-arms of the king's palace

**TOWN CRIER** - The herald and chief means of spreading news throughout medieval London

**PEASANT** - An honest poor soul with a grievance for the new king

**LOUIS** - A street ragamuffin

**CHELSEA** - A street urchin who hangs with Louis and Gina

**GINA** - Another of the countless children of the streets

**HERMIT** - An aged and very weird subject of the king

**ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY** - crowns the kings of England

NOTE: All roles with the possible exception of Tom Canty, Edward Tutor, Miles Hendon, and the Archbishop of Canterbury can be played by women. Doubling is also possible.

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**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

TIME: Mid-1500s

PLACE: Throughout medieval London

**ACT ONE**

Scene 1: A street in London

Scene 2: Private gardens encircling the palace of  
King Henry VIII

Scene 3: A street in London

Scene 4: A room in the palace

Scene 5: Near Pudding Lane, Offal Court, London

Scene 6: A street in London

**ACT TWO**

Scene 1: Private gardens encircling the palace of King  
Henry VIII

Scene 2: A street in London

Scene 3: A grand cathedral

**PROPS**

Sarah - broom

Miles - rope

Hermit - some sort of weapon

Guard - satin pillow, Great Seal of England

Archbishop - crown

**SOUND EFFECTS**

Trumpet fanfare

Trumpet fanfare

**ACT I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: A street in London. From the rear of the house, a ragged TOM CANTY moves among the audience, begging.)*

TOM: Please, sir...please, ma'am...a penny, just a farthing.  
Please, sir...please, ma'am...a penny, just a farthing. My mother, my two sisters, my grandmum, we're not doing very well...please, sir...please, ma'am...a penny, just a far--

SARAH: *(Enters, broom in raised hand.)* Get away from here, beggar! What'd'ya think ye're doing here? Disturbing everyone I see.

TOM: I'm only asking--

SARAH: Begging, that's what you're doing! Begging!

TOM: I'm hungry.

SARAH: Begging's against the law! No matter what. You know that, you little street urchin.

TOM: Is being hungry against the law too?

SARAH: *(Brandishing her broom)* It is around here. Now away from my doorstep!

TOM: Please--

SARAH: *(Hurrying toward HIM, swinging HER broom.)* Off with you!

TOM: No! No! *(A chase ensues.)*

SARAH: I'll teach you a lesson, you little beggar! Always yelling 'nd shouting 'nd begging around my house! Ye're a disgrace! That's what ye are!

TOM: I was only trying to get something to eat!

SARAH: Work for it!

TOM: Where?

SARAH: Why should I care?

*(BET enters.)*

BET: Tom! Tom Canty! Get you home!

TOM: But I've got nothing!

BET: Then ye'll get a beating for sure tonight.

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TOM: Some life! I'm beat now for begging something. I'm  
beat later for coming home with nothing.

SARAH: Get away from here! NOW!

BET: Get you home, Tom! NOW!

*(The chase continues for a few moments. TOM is cornered  
by both SARAH and BET several times, but escapes running  
offstage.)*

SARAH: Get back here! You little scoundrel!

BET: Get back here! Brother! *(As SARAH and BET rush  
offstage, TOM enters from another area. To Audience:)*

TOM: Some life, isn't it? Can't win for trying! Not even one  
day. I mean what am I supposed to do? My father, such  
as he is, throws me out of the house early every morning,  
growling, "Tom, I'm warnin' ya, ya better bring home  
somethin' for yer sisters, yer mother, yer grandmum, 'nd  
me to eat tonight, or ye won't be sittin' down much for the  
next two weeks." I go looking for jobs, little jobs a kid my  
age could do, but--'nd I won't go a-thievin' 'cause no way  
am I a thief of any kind, of anything. So, no little jobs, no  
thievin', there's only--*(SARAH and BET rush on-stage.)*

SARAH: Think you can run away from me, do ya?

BET: Father's in a terrible fit, Tom! He's lashing out at  
everyone!

TOM: I can't go home empty-handed! 'Nd I can't stay here!  
*(Runs off)*

SARAH: Life will not go well with you, ya little dirty-faced  
imp! Now stay away from here!

BET: Father's making life terrible for everyone at home!  
Hurry, Tom, find us some food! *(SARAH and BET follow  
HIM, offstage.)*

**End of Scene 1**

## **End of Freeview**

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