

# Clothing and mannerisms in the prince and the pauper



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The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain tells the story of a prince, named Edward, and a pauper, named Tom, who switch identities out of curiosity. Both living in 16th century England, the lifestyles they had lived were very different. Tom grew up in a small part of the country named Offal Court, where people would beg all along the streets and wore rags. On the other hand, Edward was born in a large castle, where many were dressed in robes and silk. When the boys switched places, they soon realized their lifestyles were very different. The life of a pauper was very different from the life of a king, from the clothing to the way they act in general. When they first switched, they wanted to go back home and told many their true story. Many times in the book, Edward and Tom were not believed when they told their true story. The main reason for this is their clothing. In this time period, clothing was a big part of how you were seen, as portrayed in the book. How you were brought up and how you acted also played a big part in how people saw you.

In the novel, many times Edward and Tom were not believed when they told their true identity. Although it happens more with Tom than with Edward, they both share the same situations, even with their own family members. When Tom was talking to Lady Jane Grey, he was down on his knees begging her to see the prince and to talk him back to Offal Court, but she just thought he was mad. While she proclaimed it to the rest of the castle, everyone believed her and were extremely concerned. ““ Ah, be merciful thou! In sooth I am no lord, but only poor Tom Canty of Offal Court in the city. Prithee let me see the prince, and he will of his grace restore to me my rags and let me hence unfurt. Oh, be thou merciful and save me!’ By this time the boy was

on his knees and supplicating with his eyes and uplifted hands as well as with his tongue. The young girl seemed horror-stricken. She cried out, (LJG) ' Oh my lord, on thy knees? And to me!' Then she fled away in fright and Tom, smitten with despair, sank down, murmuring, (T) ' There is no help, there is no hope. Now will they come and take me.' Whilst he lay there benumbed with terror, dreadful tidings were speeding through the palace. 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 salon to salon, ' The prince hath gone mad, the prince hath gone mad!' Soon every saloon, every marble hall, had its groups of glittering lords and ladies, and other groups of dazzling lesser folk, talking earnestly together in whispers, and every face had in it dismay." (Mark Twain) In the book, this is what was stated about that scene. When Tom was saying he was someone else, no one believed him, solely because the clothes he was wearing. To them, the only rational idea was that he was " mad".

This scene is shown many times in the book in different variations, including the time Tom was talking to the king. The king was deeply concerned with the condition of his " son", because he was saying he was someone else. Tom was telling his true story, and nobody believed him, even the king. The king's first reaction, like the others, was just to assume he was mad, and not analyze the situation. "' Thou the KING? Then am I undone indeed!' This speech seemed to stun the King. His eyes wandered from face to face aimlessly, then rested, bewildered, upon the boy before him. Then he said in a tone of deep disappointment- (K) ' Alack, I had believed the rumour disproportionate to the truth; but I fear me 'tis not so.' He breathed a heavy

sigh, and said in a gentle voice, (K) ' Come to thy father, child: thou art not well.'" (Mark Twain 34) Another mention in the book was when Edward met John Canty. Although Edward had said he was the king, John Canty points out that he was wearing rags, so he could never be a prince. " Suddenly a great drunken ruffian collared him and said- " Out to this time of night again, and hast not brought a farthing home, I warrant me! If it be so, an' I do not break all the bones in thy lean body, then am I not John Canty, but some other." The prince twisted himself loose, unconsciously brushed his profaned shoulder, and eagerly said- " Oh, art HIS father, truly? Sweet heaven grant it be so-then wilt thou fetch him away and restore me!" " HIS father? I know not what thou meanest; I but know I am THY father, as thou shalt soon have cause to-" " Oh, jest not, palter not, delay not!-I am worn, I am wounded, I can bear no more. Take me to the king my father, and he will make thee rich beyond thy wildest dreams. Believe me, man, believe me!-I speak no lie, but only the truth!-put forth thy hand and save me! I am indeed the Prince of Wales!" The man stared down, stupefied, upon the lad, then shook his head and muttered-" Although Edward had clearly stated he was the king. This situation clearly shows how clothing affects how people see you. Clothing was very important in this society, and many people used it to define who you are.

Although clothing had played a very big part in this book, manners were also a demonstration of social classes. Mark Twain tends to make a point many times in this book that the manners were over extreme, and points out the great difference between the social classes. For example, when Tom has his first royal dinner, his manners and what he thought he should do were very

different from what should actually happen. At the end of Tom's meal, he is given a bowl of rose water to wash his hands in. Instead of doing so, Tom proceeds to drink the rose water, assuming that it is his drink. The servants are all appalled that the " prince" would do such a thing, but have to contain their feelings on this situation. " His meal being ended, a lord came and held before him a broad, shallow, golden dish with fragrant rosewater in it, to cleanse his mouth and fingers with; and my lord the Hereditary Diaperer stood by with a napkin for his use. Tom gazed at the dish a puzzled moment or two, then raised it to his lips, and gravely took a draught. Then he returned it to the waiting lord, and said- ' Nay, it likes me not, my lord: it hath a pretty flavour, but it wanteth strength.' This new eccentricity of the prince's ruined mind made all the hearts about him ache; but the sad sight moved none to merriment." Including that situation, Tom had fairly poor manners during the dinner, which did surprise many. Poor Tom ate with his fingers mainly; but no one smiled at it, or even seemed to observe it. " He inspected his napkin curiously, and with deep interest, for it was of a very dainty and beautiful fabric, then said with simplicity- ' Prithee, take it away, lest in mine unheedfulness it be soiled.' The Hereditary Diaperer took it away with reverent manner, and without word or protest of any sort." Tom had eaten very poorly and stuffed nuts in his pockets, but even asked to take the napkin away so it would not get dirty. Although Tom did so because he thought the napkin was too pretty to make dirty, he, therefore, had nothing to wipe his face with after he ate, which was very much frowned upon. As a pauper, Tom was very much used to the simple lifestyle of eating, and in the end the manners he portrayed greatly affected the way people saw him in the castle.

Clothing meant a lot in this era, which is shown by the laws and how people dressed in general. Higher classes wore more extravagant clothing and accessories, while lower classes wore very simple clothing. There were status symbols that portrayed who you were in the spectrum of social classes. There were even laws that would state how you could dress according to your status symbol. " Cloth of gold and silver, tinselled satin, woollen cloth embroidered with gold and silver, sables and other furs... the clothes worn by the rich make any fashionista's mouth water. But that list was taken from one of a series of Proclamations against ' excess of apparel'. Who was allowed to wear what was supposed to be strictly controlled. It was essential that the Queen's subjects should know their place, and dress accordingly, so that no one could be misled." (Clothing in Elizabethan England.) " The 1597 Proclamation went into minute detail. Only earls could wear cloth of gold, or purple silk. No one under the degree of knight was allowed silk ' netherstocks' (long stockings) or velvet outer garments. A knight's eldest son could wear velvet doublets and hose, but his younger brothers couldn't. A baron's eldest son's wife could wear gold or silver lace, forbidden to women below her in the pecking order." These were the laws that were at the time. Although there were many laws regarding what you could wear depending on your social class, many people put standards on what you had to wear to show your ranking. For example, Queen Elizabeth wore extravagant clothing to show her status as queen. " Elizabeth's portraits show her wearing a staggering amount of jewellery, especially pearls. She bought the six ropes of pearls that had belonged to Mary Queen of Scots. New ones were coming in by the chestful from the New World, and needed only boring and polishing to be ready to wear. Diamonds needed <https://assignbuster.com/clothing-and-mannerisms-in-the-prince-and-the-pauper/>

careful cutting, and were never so prized. Other stones might be worn as charms. Sapphires and unicorn's horn averted the plague, coral was useful against witchcraft. A bezoar protected against poison, but was hardly attractive; the best came from the intestines of Persian goats." Throughout this era, there were many times when clothing made you who you are.

As Mark Twain demonstrates throughout the book, who you are is demonstrated by your clothing and manners in 16th century England, which is not how it should be. At the time, many people believed these materialistic items defined who you were on the inside, which is absolutely not true. Mark Twain throughout the book put irony onto these situations, because to him this was unreasonable. Clothing should not describe who you are, which is demonstrated throughout the book by him. In conclusion, the Prince and the Pauper portrays the idea of clothing and manners throughout the whole book.