

Chapter 2 The Pauper

Ten years later, a boy ran down a dark little street, somewhere near London Bridge. He had no shoes. His clothes were old. He was thin and dirty. He stopped at an old house and ran up the stairs to the top.

This was Tom Canty and he lived with his family – his father, mother, two sisters and his grandmother. They lived in one room. Tom's father slept in a bed; the others slept on the floor. They were paupers.

John Canty, Tom's father, had no money because he didn't work. And he didn't work because he didn't want to work. Because he didn't want to work, the children had to work. Every day the two girls, Bet and Nan, went out with Tom into the streets. They had to stand by the road for hours and beg for money.' Please give a halfpenny to a poor child,' they said.

Often it rained. Sometimes it snowed. Usually it was very cold. It was a hard life, but they didn't know anything different.

Some days nobody gave Tom money. When he came home on those days, his father hit him. Then his grandmother hit him. She was worse than his father. After that, they sent him to bed without food. His mother usually woke him in the night and gave him a little bread. Then his father hit his mother and Tom cried.

An old man, a churchman, lived in another room in the same house. His name was Father Andrew and he was very clever. Tom visited Father Andrew every day and listened to his stories about kings and princes.

Tom wanted to be a prince. 'I want to speak well and eat nicely,' he said. 'I want to learn Latin and French because princes speak Latin and French.'

'I can teach you these things,' said Father Andrew.' I can teach your sisters too.'

'We'd like to learn,' Bet said, 'but our friends will laugh at us.'

Tom's friends laughed at him, but they liked him. They played kings and princes with him. Some of his friends were his soldiers and he gave them orders. Some of them were lords and he gave them orders too. They

pauper	קבצן, עני	room	חדר
later	לאחר מכן	streets	רחובות
bridge	גשר	beg	לבקש, להתחנן
clothes	בגדים	often	לעתים קרובות
thin	רזה, דק	snowed	ירד שלג
top	(קומה) עליונה		

hit	הכה	visited	ביקר
worse	גרועה יותר	well	יפה, כהלכה
churchman	כומר	nicely	יפה
father	כומר ("אב")	orders	פקודות
clever	חכם		