

Tudors

RICH AND POOR BY MICHAEL COLEMAN

- BARNEY:** In Tudor England, there was a massive gap between the rich and poor. If you were poor, you were very poor. You owned hardly anything. If you were rich, though, you were very rich. You owned just about everything around - including lots of poor people! So for the rich and poor, life was very different. Dinner times, for example...
- ASSISTANT:** Welcome to Speedy-Feedy's. We have lots of specials for you today. Rich menu or poor menu?
- RICH GIRL:** Rich. My daddy owns a castle.
- POOR BOY:** Poor. My daddy cleans the poo out of the moat round her daddy's castle.
- ASSISTANT:** Right, then. Meat for the rich first. On four legs we've got beef and pork and mutton and venison. If you want two legs there's an even bigger choice. Swan, seagull, lark - not to mention the p's: partridge and peacock.
- RICH GIRL:** Yummy!
- POOR BOY:** What about the poor menu? Are there p's on that?
- ASSISTANT:** Yep. Nice green peas. And cabbage and turnips.
- POOR BOY:** No, I meant the meaty p's.
- ASSISTANT:** Poor menus don't have meat. They have bread.
- RICH GIRL:** What about pudding? What does the rich menu have?
- ASSISTANT:** Jelly - we've got about twenty different types - then there's fruits and pies and fruit pies...
- POOR BOY:** I fancy a pie! Any pies on the poor menu?
- ASSISTANT:** Nope. More bread. I might be able to find a hard biscuit if you're lucky. So, how long have you got for dinner?
- RICH GIRL:** Ooh, hours and hours.





- POOR BOY: With only bread and turnips to eat? I'm going to eat it up as fast as I can!
- BARNEY: So Tudor diets were very different for the rich and poor. But many things were. You could tell how much money somebody had from what they were wearing. Clothes for the rich and poor were completely different. If TV had been around in those days, it would have been the perfect subject for a programme...
- JAN GLAM: Welcome to the Rags-to-Riches Makeover Show - with me, Jan Glam...
- LUKE COOL: ...and me, Luke Cool.
- JAN GLAM: Tonight we're going to turn this poor, scruffy child into a rich and elegant Tudor youngster.
- LUKE COOL: We'll start with those feet! Wooden shoes, with metal bars on the bottom? Ugh! Hard-wearing, but oohh so drab! Replace them with something soft, leather and pointy-toed.
- JAN GLAM: Now off with those dirty woollen shorts and leggings. Just looking at them makes me feel itchy! Pop on a nice smooth pair of stockings and padded hose.
- LUKE COOL: They're padded shorts, for those of you watching on radio. They can be padded with anything. Feathers are good, horse-hair is acceptable...
- JAN GLAM: No more woolly shirts, either! You're rich, so you want the smooth feel of a satin or velvet blouse against your skin.
- LUKE COOL: And now, the perfect accompaniment: a ruff around your neck.
- JAN GLAM: Made from beautiful, scrunched-up lace, stiffly starched and so wide that you need an extra-long spoon for your soup!
- LUKE COOL: Perfect. Look at yourself in the mirror, scruffy child. What do you think?
- URCHIN: I think I look like a total idiot!
- JAN GLAM: Another success!
- LUKE COOL: Thank you - and good night!



- BARNEY: Yes, the rich wore clothes to look good. The poor wore clothes to keep warm. They had to be hard-wearing, too - because they were lived in for months on end! Mind you, padded hose must have their uses too. Warm padding was nice during the winter. And, funnily enough, it might also have been a good thing for a boy to wear at a Tudor school...
- FATHER: Hello, my boy! How was school today?
- SON: Horrible. We had arithmetic - and I was beaten for playing dice.
- FATHER: Yes, I hated arithmetic myself.
- SON: Then, after break, we had Latin - and I was given a beating for losing my school cap.
- FATHER: How awful. Latin was my worst subject.
- SON: After lunch we had English Literature and Religious Instruction - and I was beaten for taking my cricket bat to school.
- FATHER: English and RI! What boring subjects they were! You have had a hard day's learning, my boy.
- SON: But what about all the beatings?
- FATHER: The beatings? Oh, you just have to put up with them. All schools are the same. Look on the bright side. You're being educated. And once you're educated, you can become a school master yourself.
- SON: I get it. Then I'll be the one doing the beating!
- BARNEY: That was one of the bad things about being...rich! Yes, only wealthy families sent their boys to school. Poor boys might get a few lessons from a local teacher, but usually they had to go to work as soon as they were old enough.
- GIRL: What about us poor girls, then?
- BARNEY: Do you want to be a rich girl or a poor girl?
- GIRL: Rich, of course.
- BARNEY: Then you didn't go to school
- GIRL: Great!



- BARNEY: And you didn't go to work.
- GIRL: Brilliant!
- BARNEY: You got married to somebody your parents chose for you.
- GIRL: What! I'd prefer to be poor.
- BARNEY: Fine. You can help your mother with cooking and ironing and washing and sewing and wood-gathering and...
- GIRL: Agh! I don't want to be a Tudor anything! I'd rather die!
- BARNEY: Sadly, dying was the one thing rich and poor had in common. They were both equally likely to catch something horrible.
- SICK BOY: I don't feel well!
- BARNEY: There were no toilets like we have today. Whether you lived in a castle or a shed, your poo and pee didn't get flushed away but ended up in your moat or in a hole you'd dug. There were germs everywhere.
- SICK BOY: I feel ill! I've got a pain!
- BARNEY: If a rich person fell ill, they could pay a physician. A poor person could only call on a local healer. Others could visit a barber...
- BARBER: Good day, young man. What style do you want? Mohican, skinhead..
- SICK BOY: I don't want a haircut! I've got a pain.
- BARBER: Good job I'm a dentist as well then, isn't it? So which tooth is causing the problem?
- SICK BOY: It's not my tooth! I've got a stomach ache!
- BARBER: Then it's a good job I'm your surgeon as well as your barber and your dentist! Now you make yourself comfortable while I find my knife. I was cutting bread with it only a minute ago. Ah, here it is.
- SICK BOY: Can't you give me some medicine?



- BARBER: Sorry, I'm operations. It's Wendy the Witch you need for medicines. She'll probably get you to drink blood from a black cat's tail mixed with cream. That'll give you an even worse stomach ache! No, it's an operation you need. Right, let's have that shirt off...
- SICK BOY: Oh, no. Help... (belches loudly).
- BARBER: Pardon you.
- SICK BOY: It's gone! My stomach ache's gone! I'm cured!
- BARBER: But I've sharpened this knife all ready.
- SICK BOY: Then I'll have a haircut, please!
- BARNEY: No wonder most people died before they were thirty-five years old. Both rich and poor became equal then, of course. Neither of them could take their money with them!