

The Emperor's New Clothes

A Play

By Christopher Vened

Based On

The Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tale Of The Same Title

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

<u>Narrator:</u>	A story teller who is also a master of ceremony
<u>The Emperor:</u>	He loves to dress in beautiful new clothes
<u>Weaver One:</u>	A swindler who pretends to be a weaver
<u>Weaver Two:</u>	A swindler who pretends to be a weaver
<u>Prime Minister:</u>	A good-natured old man on the surface, but unscrupulous underneath
<u>The Emperor's Councilor:</u>	A cunning and calculated man
<u>The Emperor's Courtiers:</u>	Two/Four ostentatious flatterers
<u>The Emperor's Dresser One:</u>	A court master tailor
<u>The Emperor's Dresser Two:</u>	A court master tailor
<u>The Emperor's servants:</u>	Four train and canopy carriers
<u>The Master of Ceremony:</u>	He directs the parade
<u>A Little Child:</u>	He is innocent and honest
<u>His Father:</u>	He listens to his son
<u>The Town Folk:</u>	All the available actors

Scenes

The Emperor's Clothes Closet
The Emperor's Council Chamber
The Weavers's Workshop
The Town Street

Time

The XVIII Century (Rococo)

PROLOGUE

SET UP: An Empty Stage

THE NARRATOR speaks directly to the audience.

NARRATOR

Many, many years ago there was an emperor who loved to wear beautiful clothes, and spent a lot of time trying them on in front of the mirror.

SCENE 1

SET UP: The Emperor's Clothes' Closet

THE EMPEROR tries on clothes in front of a mirror.

TWO DRESSERS assist him.

THE EMPEROR

How does it fit?

COURTIER

Perfectly well, Your Majesty.

THE EMPEROR

How do I look?

COURTIER TWO

You look splendid, Your Highness.

The Emperor regards himself in the mirror.

THE EMPEROR

Indeed.

The Emperor kisses the imaginary mirror.

THE EMPEROR

I love it!

The Emperor parades himself in front of the mirror; his Courtiers admire him.

COURTIER THREE

You look magnificent, Your Majesty!

COURTIER FOUR

Admirable.

The Narrator steps in and with one magical gesture makes everybody freeze into a tableau.

NARRATOR

Look at that: this is a tableau of vanity: an emperor dressing himself in new clothes and admiring himself in the mirror for hours. He is only in love with himself, like Narcissus. The emperor is supposed to be with his ministers in his council chamber, not with his dressers in his clothes closet. But he does not care about his soldiers, or attending the theater, or even going for a drive in the park, unless it is to show off his new clothes. He has an outfit for every hour of the day. And he spends all his money on his new attire. Vanity is a vice that can ruin the country! And it must not go on endlessly unpunished. There is a consequence to all of our actions, even the most trivial ones. Look what happens next:

The Narrator gestures toward the wings, and two swindlers, who pretend to be WEAVERS, enter the stage.

NARRATOR

One day two swindlers came to town and pretended to be weavers.

WEAVERS

We can make the most extraordinary cloth in the world.

NARRATOR

When the Emperor heard that rumor, he became intrigued, and invited them to the palace.

The Emperor sits on the throne; the Weavers enter the chamber.

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Your Majesty, the weavers who recently came to town are waiting for your reception.

THE EMPEROR

Bring them in.

MASTER OF CEREMONY

Come forth, weavers, and bow to the Emperor.

The Weavers come forth and bow.

WEAVERS

(they bow)

Your Majesty, your humble subjects.

THE EMPEROR

Humble?

WEAVER ONE

Yes, Your Highness.

THE EMPEROR

Nothing bores me more than humble people.

WEAVER TWO

We are also proud weavers, Your Highness.

THE EMPEROR

What could you weave for me?

WEAVER ONE

We could weave for you the most beautiful cloth in the world.

THE EMPEROR

All weavers say that.

WEAVER TWO

Your Majesty, nothing compares to our cloth: its colors and the patterns are not only the most beautiful, but also the cloth has the strange quality of being invisible to anyone who is unfit for his office or unforgivably stupid.