

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES INTRODUCTION

By Tracy Hanson

The Emperor's New Clothes is a folktale written by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen and was first published April 7, 1837. The tale has been translated into over 100 languages. The phrase "emperor's new clothes" has become an [idiom](#) meaning to go against popular opinion. It is interesting that, although nobody was able to see the cloth, they didn't want to seem dumb. Rather than speaking up and stating the [obvious](#), they'd rather go with the perception of the group...except the child! Why do you think Andersen used a child to reveal the truth? The [idiom](#), "Out of the mouth of babes" may better help us answer this question.

Normally when developing a script, it is the narrators who move the story along between dialogs. For this script, I chose to use "[jesters](#)" Instead. Often referred to as "court jesters" during the [medieval](#) and [Renaissance](#) periods, they are similar to what we call clowns today. Their job was to entertain members of the [royal court](#) and their guests.

Have you ever been with large group of people who choose to act in a way that was obviously wrong? Did you follow along because you felt pressured or just found it easier to do so? While in a group, we all may do things that as an individual we would not normally do. There is a branch of [social psychology](#) devoted to studying this phenomenon referred to as "crowd" or "mob" psychology. Major Western theorists in crowd psychology include [Gustave Le Bon](#), [Gabriel Tarde](#), [Sigmund Freud](#), and [Steve Reicher](#). My friend, Janet shared this [video](#) with me. What do you think you'd do?

You can read the story as it is [narrated](#) or watch this [cartoon](#) version.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen
Script by Tracy Hanson

EMPEROR	MINISTER	OFFICIAL	CHILD	TOWN PERSON
JESTER 1	JESTER 2	JESTER 3	WEAVER 1	WEAVER 2

JESTER 1: Many years ago, there was an Emperor, who was so excessively fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on [attire](#).

JESTER 3: He did not trouble himself in the least about his soldiers; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or the hunt, unless it gave him opportunities for displaying his new clothes.

JESTER 2 He had a different suit for each hour of the day.

JESTER 3: Any other king or emperor, it would be said, "he is sitting in council." But with this Emperor, it was always said, "The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."



JESTER 2: Time passed merrily in the large town which was his capital; strangers arrived every day at the court.

JESTER 1: One day, two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance.

JESTER 3: They spread the word around town that they knew how to weave materials with beautiful colors and [elaborate](#) patterns.

WEAVER 1: The clothes made from the materials had a unique property.

WEAVER 2: The clothes will be invisible to everyone who is unfit for the office he held, or who was extraordinarily simple in character.

EMPEROR: These must be splendid clothes! Had I such a suit, I would find out what men in my [realms](#) are unfit for their office, and also be able to

distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately.

JESTER 2: He ordered large sums of money to be given to the weavers in order that they might begin their work right away.

JESTER 3: So the two *pretended* weavers set up two looms, and looked to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all.

JESTER 1: They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread; put both into their own knapsacks; and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.



EMPEROR: I would like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth.

JESTER 2: Than he remembered that a simpleton, or one unfit for his office, would be unable to see the cloths

EMPEROR: Minister, I wish you to go and see how the cloth looks.

JESTER 3: The Emperor knew his minister to be a man of sense and that no one was more suitable for his office than he was.

JESTER 2: So the faithful old minister went into the hall where the weavers were working with all their might.

MINISTER: (to himself) What can be the meaning of this? I cannot discover the least bit of thread on the looms.

JESTER 1: However, he did not express his thoughts aloud.

WEAVER 2: Come nearer to the looms.

WEAVER 1: Do the designs please you?

WEAVER 2: Are not the colors very beautiful?

MINISTER: (to audience) Is it possible that I am a simpleton? I have never thought so myself; and no one must know it now if I am so. Can it be that I am unfit for my office?

JESTER 1: He could not discover anything on the looms.

JESTER 2: (laughing) And for a very good reason! There was nothing there.

MINISTER: I will never confess that I could not see the woven cloth.

WEAVER 2: Well, Sir Minister! You do not say whether this pleases you!

MINISTER: Oh, (stammering) it is excellent! This pattern, and the colors, yes, I will tell the Emperor without delay, how very beautiful they are.

WEAVER 2: We shall be much obliged to you.

WEAVER 1: But we need more silk and gold to finish the cloth.

JESTER 3: Like before, they put all that was given them into their knapsacks and continued to work with as much apparent diligence as before at their empty looms.

JESTER 2: Later that day when the minister had not returned,

EMPEROR: I will send another officer of court to see how the men are getting on and to find out whether the cloth will be ready soon.

JESTER 1: The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready.

JESTER 3: The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms he couldn't see anything.

WEAVER 1: "Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?"

OFICIAL: "I know I'm not stupid, so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though."

JESTER 2: So he praised the weavers for the beautiful material he did not see.

EMPEROR: How is it?

OFICIAL: "The colors are beautiful, the pattern exquisite. It held me spellbound."

EMPEROR: "I must see this glorious material for myself. Come."

JESTER 1: The Emperor went to see the splendid cloth. With him were a group of chosen members of his court.

JESTER 2: He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

OFICIAL: "Magnificent! Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!"

EMPEROR: (To himself) "What's this? I can't see anything. This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people!"



WEAVER 1: What do you say, Emperor?"

EMPEROR: Oh! It's *very* pretty. It has my highest approval."

JESTER 1: One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming,

OFICIAL: "Oh! It's *very* pretty,"

Minister: Your highness, you must wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth to lead the great procession.

JESTER 3: Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes.

WEAVER 1: Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him!

JESTER 2: The weavers raised their hands as if they were holding something.

WEAVER 2: "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle." "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."

WEAVER 1: "If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off, we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

JESTER 2: The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another.

JESTER 1: They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something - that was his train-as the Emperor turned round and round before the looking glass.

OFICIAL: "How well Your Majesty's new clothes look. Aren't they becoming!"

Minister: "That pattern, so perfect! Those colors, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit."



JESTER 3: Then the minister of public processions announced:

Minister: "Your Majesty's canopy is waiting outside."

EMPEROR: "Well, I'm supposed to be ready"

JESTER 1: Checking himself out in the mirror.

EMPEROR: "It is a remarkable fit, isn't it?"

JESTER 3: The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle.

JESTER 2: Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn't dare admit they had nothing to hold.

JESTER 3: So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said,

TOWN PERSON: "Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!"

JESTER 1: Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

CHILD: "But he hasn't got anything on,"

****Everyone but Emperor:** (mumbling) "He hasn't anything on. A child says he hasn't anything on."

CHILD: "The Emperor hasn't got anything on!"



JESTER 2: The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right.

EMPEROR: The procession must go on.

JESTER 3: So he walked more proud than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.

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