

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**Copyright Protection.** This play (the "Play") is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

**Reservation of Rights.** All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

**Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments.** Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. ("Playscripts"). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website ([www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

**Restriction of Alterations.** There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, the cutting of music, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

**Author Credit.** Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

**Publisher Attribution.** All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.  
([www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com))**

**Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying.** Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

**Statement of Non-affiliation.** This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

**Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works.** This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work *not included in the Play's score*, or performance of a sound recording of such a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)), ASCAP ([www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com)), BMI ([www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com)), and NMPA ([www.nmpa.org](http://www.nmpa.org)) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

## The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, cut any music, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author(s) and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

*For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.*

## Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that authors are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the author, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—whether or not you charge an admission fee. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

**Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law.** Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office ([www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)) for more information.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

**Playscripts, Inc.**  
450 Seventh Ave, Suite 809  
New York, NY 10123

toll-free phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY  
email: [info@playscripts.com](mailto:info@playscripts.com)  
website: [www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)

## Cast of Characters

EMPEROR, a vain and silly mama's boy

### *The Maids:*

FIRST MAID, the leader

SECOND MAID, the sarcastic one

THIRD MAID, the youngest

FIRST CITIZEN, also known as CONNIE, the leader

SECOND CITIZEN, also known as JIP, the follower

BARONESS, Emperor's mother

CHAMBERLAIN, Emperor's top advisor

### *The Dressers:*

RUSSIAN, a fashion maven? (DA!)

FRENCH, a style maker? (OUI!)

ITALIAN, a trend setter? (SI!)

### *Citizens:*

OLD CITIZEN, an elder

MILITARY CITIZEN, an officer

TEACHER CITIZEN, an educator

POOR CITIZEN, Child's mother

CHILD, a truth teller

OTHER CITIZENS

SERVANTS

## **Casting Notes**

The playwright suggests the following cast division for a cast of 5 Females, 2 Males, 9 Either and plenty of Ensemble, and recommends Connie is played by an actress and Jip by a smaller actor.

ACTRESS #1, #2, #3, Maids  
ACTRESS #4, Baroness  
ACTRESS #5, Poor Citizen (Jane)  
ACTOR #1, Emperor  
ACTOR #2, Chamberlain  
EITHER #1, Connie  
EITHER #2, Jip  
EITHER #3, Child  
EITHER #4, Old Citizen  
EITHER #5, Military Citizen  
EITHER #6, Teacher Citizen  
EITHER #7, Russian Dresser  
EITHER #8, French Dresser  
EITHER #9, Italian Dresser

## **Production Notes**

### ***Props:***

3 Laundry baskets (Maids)  
Tiny bell (Chamberlain)  
Bags of gold (Servants)  
Food and drink (Servants)  
Two sacks of valuables (Connie, Jip)  
Pennants/Banners (Citizens)  
Ring (Emperor)  
Hand mirror (Emperor)  
“Applause” sign (Maids)

### ***Set Props:***

Stools, table, throne, rug, loom etc. to signify Emperor’s chamber and workroom  
The Chamberlain wears glasses  
The Maids should be dressed identically until their final glam-orous appearance

## Acknowledgments

*The Emperor's New Clothes* opened at Sellersville Theater on July 4, 2003, presented by Theatre Arts Center. It was directed by Robert Laconi, with sets and costumes by Robin Damuth, vocal arrangements and musical direction by Neal Tracy and choreography by Kristine Lewis. Production Assistants were Jasmine Bloch, Hannah Damuth, Juliet Fox, and Kate Theisen. The cast was as follows:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| EMPEROR .....  | Spencer Blevins                                     |
| MAIDS .....  | Ilana Bucholtz, Caitlin DeMerlis,<br>Alyssa Denning |
| CONNIE / FIRST CITIZEN.....  | Dana Walsh  |
| JIP / SECOND CITIZEN .....   | Abbie Jones   |
| BARONESS.....  | Alexandra Parisi                                    |
| CHAMBERLAIN.....   | Christopher Hutton                                  |
| THE DRESSERS.....  | Ilana Kruger, Maria Lehman,<br>Erin Stealey         |
| OLD CITIZEN .....  | Alycia Platz  |
| MILITARY CITIZEN.....  | Renee Platz   |
| TEACHER CITIZEN.....   | Tara Leomporra                                      |
| POOR CITIZEN.....  | Sarah Rae   |
| CHILD.....   | Cayce Kolodney or Gabrielle Fraivillig              |
| SERVANTS, CITIZENS: Alysha Balog, Natalie Choinski,<br>Elena Coleman, Jennifer Connor, Elizabeth Damuth, Anya<br>DeFeo, Kristina DeMora, Jade Hebling, Kelsie Hermance,<br>Miles Jackson, Nora Krupp, Violet Kupersmith, Ella Mul-<br>likin, Emily Oppenheim, Marissa Petterutti, Rebecca<br>Purdy, Sydney Rose, Micaeli Rourke, Lindsey Stendero-<br>wicz, Corey Totten, Julia Weeks, Amanda Witzer, Emily<br>Worth |   |

# THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

## adapted by John O'Hara

FROM THE STORY BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

*(Setting: The court of the EMPEROR, Nathaniel the Nineteenth of Naradonia.)*

*(At Rise: CITIZENS are going about their daily chores. CHAMBERLAIN enters and takes a prominent position.)*

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Hear ye! Hear ye! Citizens of the Empire of Naradonia!

*(CITIZENS gather around.)*

Today is the most special of all the days. And do we know why? Do we know what day it is?

**OLD CITIZEN.** Is it a holiday?

**TEACHER CITIZEN.** A school day?

**CHILD.** Saturday? *[Or whatever day it is.]*

**CHAMBERLAIN.** No, my dear citizens. Today is a very special day because today is the day when our beloved Emperor –

*(CITIZENS lean in.)*

goes shopping. Places, please!

*(CITIZENS become vendors as EMPEROR enters with BARONESS three MAIDS. As CITIZENS attempt to sell clothes, EMPEROR rejects everything and tosses them about. MAIDS scramble about to pick up clothes. EMPEROR stops with an item of clothing and the ENSEMBLE is silent.)*

**EMPEROR.** *(Tossing clothing item with a sigh:)* I...am not happy. *(Almost bumping into POOR CITIZEN before exiting:)* Excuse me.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** All hail the Emperor...

*(BARONESS pulls CHAMBERLAIN offstage.)*

Go about your business.

(ENSEMBLE *leaves except for MAIDS who are cleaning up.*  
FIRST and SECOND CITIZEN *approach the audience formally.*)

**FIRST CITIZEN.** If clothes make the man —

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Do women make the clothes?

**FIRST MAID.** And wash them?

**SECOND MAID.** And mend them?

**THIRD MAID.** And fold them in rows?

(SECOND CITIZEN *joins* SECOND and THIRD MAID *in*  
*silly clapping game.*)

**MAID 2 & 3 / SECOND CITIZEN.** We wash them. We mend them.  
We fold them in rows. We wash them. We mend them. We fold them  
in rows. We wash them. We mend them —

**FIRST CITIZEN / FIRST MAID.** Stop that...

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Sorry.

**FIRST CITIZEN.** Back to the story. (*Formally:*) In this great empire of  
Naradonia that we call home —

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Clothes are everything —

**SECOND MAID.** And everywhere!

**FIRST CITIZEN.** Especially for —

(EMPEROR *has returned with his entourage. He is checking out*  
*his latest outfit as if the audience is a mirror.*)

**MAIDS.** The Emperor!

**CHAMBERLAIN.** His Royal Highness, the Emperor Nathaniel the  
Nineteenth of Naradonia.

**BARONESS.** Natty, I call him. Isn't he cute?

**EMPEROR.** Mother! You're standing in front of my mirror!

**BARONESS.** Oh!... Sorry, *Nathaniel*. (To MAIDS:) That's my boy. My precious little boy emperor.

(BARONESS *squeezes* EMPEROR's *cheek*.)

**EMPEROR.** Mother!

**BARONESS.** I can't help it. Just look at him. He's *so* perfect.

**FIRST MAID.** That's the Baroness.

**THIRD MAID.** The Emperor's mother.

**FIRST MAID.** She's very proud of her son.

**SECOND MAID.** Maybe *too* proud.

**BARONESS.** Why shouldn't I be? Emperor Nathaniel the Nineteenth of Naradonia may be the most fashionable emperor of all time.

(Some CITIZENS *applaud* and 'ooh'.)

**OLD CITIZEN.** But what of his ability to govern?

(Other CITIZENS *ad-lib* reactions.)

**EMPEROR.** What's that?

**OLD CITIZEN.** Governing. *What do you know about gover—ning?*

**EMPEROR.** Gover—ning... Is that a new fabric?

**FIRST MAID.** *Governing* is making those hard decisions that affect your people.

**MILITARY CITIZEN.** What about the military?

**TEACHER CITIZEN.** Education?

**POOR CITIZEN.** (With CHILD:) Feeding the poor?

**EMPEROR.** Madame, you seem to be a lovely woman.

(CHILD *nudges* POOR CITIZEN to respond.)



**POOR CITIZEN.** Thank you.

**EMPEROR.** But what about fashion? Fabric? Style?

*(EMPEROR reacts to the amazed reactions of POOR CITIZEN and CHILD.)*

Mama...

**BARONESS.** Oh, pish-tosh...Chamberlain!

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Yes, my lady.

*(CHAMBERLAIN ushers CITIZENS away. CHILD tries to be heard and is quieted by POOR CITIZEN.)*

**BARONESS.** Did you wish to say something?

**CHILD.** Yes!

**POOR CITIZEN.** No! Forgive me, your ladyship. My child is full of spirit and mischief and doesn't know when to be silent.

**BARONESS.** *(Glaring at CHILD:)* Well that is something your child must learn.

*(CHILD makes a face at BARONESS as she turns away.)*

My son is much too busy with his wardrobe to be bothered with such unimportant things.

**ALL CITIZENS.** Unimportant?

**SECOND MAID.** Unimportant...

**BARONESS.** *Unimportant.* For, as we all know...

*(FIRST and SECOND CITIZEN become court scribes.)*

My son, Emperor Nathaniel the Nineteenth of Naradonia is the best-dressed...

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Best-attired...

**FIRST CITIZEN.** Best-clothed...

**EMPEROR.** (*Looking in 'mirror':*) Mother! What do all those badly dressed people want? I'm not really listening.

**FIRST / SECOND CITIZENS.** Smartest?

(*EMPEROR is humming as MAIDS adjust his outfit.*)

**SECOND MAID.** (*Sarcastically:*) Best-dressed...

(*FIRST MAID quiets her as THIRD MAID giggles.*)

**BARONESS / CHAMBERLAIN.** Emperor in all of the Nine Empires.

**EMPEROR.** *Now*, Mother. I'm ready for something new.

**BARONESS.** (*Clapping hands:*) Very good. Time for the Selection of the New Royal Dressers.

(*BARONESS signals to CHAMBERLAIN to ring tiny bell. DRESSERS ad-lib their qualifications as royal dressers. FIRST and SECOND CITIZEN vie to be chosen, but EMPEROR picks the DRESSERS.*)

**EMPEROR.** I choose you, you and you! Chamberlain! Ladies!

(*EMPEROR leaves with a flourish. SECOND MAID imitates him and FIRST MAID corrects her. Other CITIZENS exit. DRESSERS congratulate each other for being selected. FIRST and SECOND CITIZENS try to enter with them but BARONESS stops them.*)

**BARONESS.** My son, the emperor, will be seeing only three dressers today. Come back next year.

**SECOND CITIZEN.** But...but...

**FIRST CITIZEN.** We are poor, Madame, and we need work.

(*SECOND CITIZEN nods head.*)

**BARONESS.** HA! Be gone with you! Chamberlain, send them away.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** As you wish, my lady. This way.

(MAIDS *act as guards*. BARONESS *sweeps out*. CHAMBERLAIN *follows her like a puppy*.)

SECOND CITIZEN. It's not fair.

FIRST CITIZEN. Shhh...

FIRST MAID. You'd better do as she says.

SECOND MAID. She makes all the decisions around here.

THIRD MAID. Her and the Chamberlain.

SECOND MAID. Her secret boyfriend. (*Imitating BARONESS to THIRD MAID's 'Chamberlain':*) Chamberlain, sendddd them away!

THIRD MAID. As you wish, *my lady!*

(SECOND and THIRD MAIDS *giggle*. FIRST MAID *shushes them*.)

FIRST MAID. I don't believe that.

THIRD MAID. It's true.

SECOND CITIZEN. It's still not fair. The emperor acted like we weren't even there.

FIRST MAID. We know what that feels like.

FIRST CITIZEN. The fools. We're not invisible. (*An idea:*) I have an idea! Come, friend. Farewell, ladies.

FIRST MAID. Goodbye.

FIRST CITIZEN. Until another time.

SECOND MAID. Maybe...

THIRD MAID. (*Shyly:*) Bye.

SECOND CITIZEN. (*Shyly:*) Bye.

(SECOND MAID and FIRST CITIZEN *separate* THIRD MAID and SECOND CITIZEN.)

**SECOND MAID.** They're the bad guys.

**THIRD MAID.** Oh. I get it.

**SECOND MAID.** Good. Go ahead.

**FIRST MAID.** (*Glaring at SECOND and THIRD MAIDS:*) Today was a very special day. It was exactly the hour of noon —

**SECOND MAID.** On the ninth day —

**THIRD MAID.** Of the ninth month —

**FIRST MAID.** Of the ninth year of the reign of —

(*BARONESS and CHAMBERLAIN return with CITIZENS and DRESSERS.*)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Emperor Nathaniel the Nineteenth of Naradonia!

(*CITIZENS applaud. DRESSERS take their places as BARONESS and CHAMBERLAIN make sure everything is perfect.*)

**FIRST MAID.** Today, the Emperor would view the most beautiful fabrics and dressing from all over the world and select his next Royal Dresser.

**THIRD MAID.** More clothes?

**SECOND MAID.** More clothes.

**MAID 2 & 3.** To wash and mend and fold into rows.

**FIRST MAID.** That's right!

(*EMPEROR enters majestically in new outfit. CITIZENS bow their heads in respect.*)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Hear ye! Hear ye! Citizens of the Empire. Come forward to offer your wares to the Emperor.

**EMPEROR.** (*Grandly:*) Citizens of Naradonia!...

**CHAMBERLAIN.** (*Interrupting EMPEROR:*) Forgive me, your highness. (*Grandly:*) As the Emperor's most trusted advisor —

**BARONESS.** And as the Emperor's most loving mother —

**CHAMBERLAIN.** I, the Chamberlain —

**BARONESS.** And I, Baroness Natasha Nerine Nicoletta Norvelle of Naradonia —

**CHAMBERLAIN / BARONESS.** Will select the royal dressers for the coming year —

**EMPEROR.** But I thought I would —

**BARONESS.** Nonsense, Natty. We will do it.

**EMPEROR.** But I wanted to —

**BARONESS.** (*Sharply:*) Ye — ess?

**EMPEROR.** (*Sighing:*) Go ahead.

**BARONESS.** What is the current dressing style, dear Chamberlain?

(DRESSERS *pose as they are named*. CITIZENS 'ooh,' 'ah,' and 'ooh-la-la' appropriately.)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** (*Touched by BARONESS' directness:*) My dear Baroness —

(EMPEROR *clears his throat.*)

And your majesty, your choice of dressing is Russian, French, or Italian.

(CHAMBERLAIN *claps hands and DRESSERS appear.*)

**EMPEROR.** Russian Dressing? French Dressing? Italian Dressing?

**BARONESS.** I prefer them on the side.

(DRESSERS *cross stage as one.*)

**EMPEROR.** No, Mother. Let's hear what they have to say. (*To RUSSIAN DRESSER:*) You, sir.

(RUSSIAN DRESSER *marches stiffly and clicks heels.*)

**RUSSIAN DRESSER.** To be de besht dressht, vun moost dresh like Russian. (*Shows off furry outfit:*) Dis is goot clothink, da? Goot for Russian vinter!

(RUSSIAN DRESSER *chants gibberish Russian song.*)

**EMPEROR.** Well...

**ITALIAN DRESSER.** Thassa no good. Russian, ha! I giva you me— The Italian Dresser. I makea good suit, we eata da pasta, we drinka de vino...Issa the way to be, no?

**EMPEROR.** No!

**ITALIAN DRESSER.** No?

**FRENCH DRESSER.** Non, ma chere. French Dressing is ze height of fashon. Look at my beret. It eez — magnifique, oui?

**EMPEROR.** We?

**FRENCH DRESSER.** Oui, oui!

**EMPEROR.** Not we, we. It's me, me, *me!* ...It's always about me. Please! I am so bored with these choices.

**BARONESS.** Natty?

**EMPEROR.** Everything's old-fashioned and dull. (*Referring to one Dresser's outrageous outfit:*) Look at this outfit. Any peasant in the nine empires could wear something like this.

**DRESSERS.** (*With appropriate bad accents:*) Oh, but your highness...

**EMPEROR.** I want something *new*. Something *different*. Something *unique*.

(ENSEMBLE *gasps at this outburst, or perhaps it because the EMPEROR has pronounced the last word as 'you-neek-wah.'*)

**FIRST MAID.** There was something new.

**THIRD MAID.** Someone new.

**SECOND MAID.** There were two.

**FIRST MAID.** Two who had never been seen before.

(FIRST *and* SECOND CITIZEN *enter in disguise*. SECOND MAID *is skeptical*.)

**SECOND MAID.** Or so they said.

(SECOND CITIZEN *waves to* THIRD MAID. FIRST CITIZEN *jabs him in the ribs*.)

**FIRST MAID.** They stepped forward.

**FIRST CITIZEN.** If you please, your highness.

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Your highness, if you please.

**FIRST CITIZEN.** We are honest laborers who are prepared to make you the finest wardrobe you have never—I mean, ever seen.

**EMPEROR.** I see nothing.

**SECOND CITIZEN.** That's the point!

(FIRST CITIZEN *quiets* SECOND CITIZEN.)

**FIRST CITIZEN.** It is—how shall I put this?—something *new*. Something *different*. Something *unique*.

(FIRST CITIZEN *pronounces 'unique' in the same manner as* EMPEROR.)

**EMPEROR.** This is amazing. Who are you?

**BARONESS.** That's what I'd like to know.

**SECOND CITIZEN.** Who are we?

**EMPEROR.** That's what I said.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** They look like con men.

**FIRST CITIZEN.** Well...Sir...Madame... My name is Con—nie. They call me Connie. And his name is Jip!

**JIP.** (*Accepting the name:*) Jip. (*Offering his hand:*) How are ya?

**CONNIE.** And we plan to make you clothes out of the greatest fabric in the world.

**EMPEROR.** What is so wonderful about this fabric?

**JIP.** It's magic!

(ENSEMBLE oohs.)

**EMPEROR.** It is?

**JIP.** (*Answering with a memorized response:*) Yes, your highness. This fabric has great powers that are unseen to the human eye.

**CONNIE.** Do you want to hear more?

**EMPEROR.** I do.

**CONNIE.** Then we must speak alone.

(BARONESS and CHAMBERLAIN react simultaneously.)

**BARONESS.** Oh, Natty, do you really –

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Your Highness, I really must insist –

**EMPEROR.** Mother! Please... Chamberlain... Citizens... All of you. I want you to go. This is the decision of the Emperor.

**BARONESS / CHAMBERLAIN.** But...but...

**EMPEROR.** Now!

(BARONESS, CHAMBERLAIN, DRESSERS, and CITIZENS exit. THIRD MAID starts to leave.)

**FIRST MAID.** Not us. We're telling the story.

**THIRD MAID.** Oh...I get it.

**SECOND MAID.** Good.

**EMPEROR.** Tell me about your special fabric. Is it made from spun gold or gossamer silk or perhaps butterfly wings?

**CONNIE.** (*Stalling:*) Ah!



**JIP.** Ah.

**EMPEROR.** Ah...

**CONNIE.** Well!

**JIP.** Well.

**EMPEROR.** Well...

**JIP.** *(To audience:)* Well?

**EMPEROR.** You're so mysterious. Tell me more!

**JIP.** We can't!

**EMPEROR.** You can't?

**CONNIE.** What he's trying to say is that if we reveal the mysterious mystery of the mystery cloth, than it won't be a mystery any more, will it?

**EMPEROR.** *(Hypnotized:)* No.

*(CONNIE laughs and gets EMPEROR to join in. JIP overdoes the laughter. MAIDS are forced to laugh as well.)*

**EMPEROR.** I like you two. Connie. Jip. You understand what I'm looking for. Finally, someone who speaks my language. I hereby dub you my new favorite Royal Dressers. My Birthday Parade is in exactly one week. I want to dazzle my people by showing them the real me. Perhaps then, they will forget all of this silly nonsense about 'governing.' Can you do it?

**CONNIE.** Oh, your majesty. I think you'll be amazed by what we can do.

**EMPEROR.** Be gone then. And start making magic.

**CONNIE.** There are things that we need.

**EMPEROR.** Like what?

**JIP.** Like what?

**CONNIE.** A room — with a loom  
A bed or two for sleeping.

**JIP.** Food and drink. And I think —

**CONNIE.** Some bags of gold for keeping.

**EMPEROR.** Gold? For what?

**CONNIE.** Oh, your highness. To make cloth of such quality, we must buy the finest threads and spin it and spin it and spin it —

*(CONNIE and JIP have been spinning EMPEROR.)*

**EMPEROR.** Stop! Chamberlain!

*(CHAMBERLAIN rushes on. EMPEROR takes off his ring and gives it to CONNIE.)*

Sell this first. And as for you, Chamberlain, give them what they need. Now!

**CHAMBERLAIN.** But sir —

**EMPEROR.** Silence! Their magic weavings will tell me if I am surrounded by fools — and I don't like being surrounded by fools, do I?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** No, your majesty.

**EMPEROR.** *(To MAIDS:)* Do I?

**MAIDS.** *No!*

**SECOND MAID.** Your majesty...

**EMPEROR.** *(To CONNIE and JIP:)* Do not disappoint me. I will not look foolish. *(Still dizzy from the spinning:)* Where am I going?

**SECOND MAID.** This way, your majesty.

*(SECOND MAID helps EMPEROR exit as CHAMBERLAIN returns with SERVANTS, who are carrying food, drink and bags of gold.)*

**FIRST MAID.** The emperor's ring was worth a lot of money, but they wanted more. More food —

**SECOND MAID.** More gold.

**THIRD MAID.** More everything.

*(BARONESS and EMPEROR enter. BARONESS watches the parade of SERVANTS.)*

**BARONESS.** I wonder how your new friends are doing with your special wardrobe for the parade.

**EMPEROR.** You can't rush genius, Mother.

**BARONESS.** But Nathaniel, aren't you spending an awful lot of money to make them comfortable?

**EMPEROR.** It's magic, Mother. Magic...

**BARONESS.** What kind of magic?

**EMPEROR.** *(Looking in a hand mirror:)* Only those who are blessed with great intelligence and wit can see the clothes.

**BARONESS.** Ah, that would be quite useful for a man in your position. You don't want to be surrounded by people who are not as smart as you.

**EMPEROR.** *(Preoccupied:)* Did you say something, Mother?

**BARONESS.** Chamberlain!

**CHAMBERLAIN.** *(Reappearing:)* Yes, my lady.

**BARONESS.** Where are the two strangers?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** The two strangers are hard at work in the east wing of the palace. Nine floors down and ninety steps up.

*(Tired SERVANTS enter as CHAMBERLAIN massages his feet.)*

The servants and I have just returned from bringing them more food, more drink and more gold.

**BARONESS.** Did you see the clothes?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Oh, no, my lady. I didn't dare.

**BARONESS.** Now you can dare. Go. Go!

*(SERVANTS exit with EMPEROR and BARONESS. MAIDS surround CHAMBERLAIN as he makes the long return trip to Connie and Jip's quarters.)*

**SECOND MAID.** So, once again, the Chamberlain went down the nine floors —

**THIRD MAID.** And walked up the ninety steps —

**FIRST MAID.** Until he came to the workroom of the mysterious tailors, Connie and Jip. They had been eating and drinking and hiding the gold in their knapsacks, but when they knew he was coming, they returned to their labors —

*(CONNIE and JIP ignore FIRST MAID.)*

*I said, they returned to their labors.*

*(Suddenly, CONNIE and JIP act as if they are hard at work at the loom with the imaginary thread.)*

**CONNIE.** Welcome, Chamberlain.

**JIP.** How are ya?

**CONNIE.** Are you here to view the beginning of our magnificent creations?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** *(Staring at the loom:)* Why, yes...I am...

**CONNIE.** It's only the thread, Chamberlain, but isn't it amazing? Look how lightly it flutters over the loom. Like the wings of song-bird in flight through a sunny sky.

*(JIP makes a bird sound as CHAMBERLAIN cleans his glasses.)*

Thankfully, you are one of the wisest men in our country and can view the thread before it becomes the most wonderful attire fit for our emperor. Would you like to touch it?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Why, yes... Certainly...

**CONNIE.** *(Moving CHAMBERLAIN's hand:)* Over here, Chamberlain.

**CONNIE.** Ooooooh...

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Ooh?

**JIP.** (*Overly enthusiastic:*) OOH!

**CONNIE.** (*Calming JIP down:*) Ooh-ooh.

**JIP.** (*Apologetic:*) Ooh-ooohoooh...

(CONNIE and JIP freeze as CHAMBERLAIN crosses to the MAIDS.)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** I didn't see anything.

**FIRST MAID.** We know, Lord Chamberlain.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** But if I say that, the Emperor will think I'm a fool.

**SECOND MAID.** We know, Lord Chamberlain.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** So, I must keep the Emperor happy — and save my own neck — by telling the Emperor that I saw —

(EMPEROR and BARONESS return to form Emperor's 'chamber.')

The finest — The best — The most *wonderful* clothes I have ever seen.

**EMPEROR.** What did I tell you, Mother? Those two are magicians.

**BARONESS.** My goodness, Chamberlain. Were you impressed by their work?

**CHAMBERLAIN.** (*Dryly:*) I couldn't believe my eyes.

**BARONESS.** Very good, Chamberlain.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** My lady.

(CHAMBERLAIN exits. MAIDS continue the story.)

**FIRST MAID.** Time passed —

**THIRD MAID.** And the Emperor was waiting.

**SECOND MAID.** (*Posing by BARONESS:*) And the ladies in waiting — were waiting and waiting.

**FIRST MAID.** Meanwhile, the maids would wash the clothes.

**THIRD MAID.** And mend the clothes.

**SECOND MAID.** (*Tossing something in the air:*) And fold them all in neat little rows.

(*FIRST MAID gives her a look and she picks it up.*)

Sorry.

(*CHAMBERLAIN enters quickly and rouses the MAIDS.*)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** They need *more* gold. *More* food. *More* drink. *More everything!*

(*CHAMBERLAIN claps his hands for SERVANTS. MAIDS join the parade. FIRST MAID has to prompt SECOND MAID to get up.*)

**EMPEROR.** I wonder how my new friends are doing with my special wardrobe for the parade.

**BARONESS.** You can't rush genius, son.

(*EMPEROR notices SERVANTS crossing with food, drink and bags of gold.*)

**EMPEROR.** But, Mother, I'm spending so much money to make them comfortable.

**BARONESS.** It's magic, son. Magic...

**EMPEROR.** I know. I know.

**BARONESS / EMPEROR.** Only those truly blessed with great intelligence will be able to see them.

**EMPEROR.** Blah-blah-blah. I know. I know!

**BARONESS.** Besides, the Chamberlain saw the clothes and pronounced them —

(CHAMBERLAIN *appears as if in flashback.*)

**CHAMBERLAIN.** The finest... The best... I couldn't believe my eyes.

(CHAMBERLAIN *freezes.*)

**BARONESS.** Do you see?

**EMPEROR.** I see, but perhaps the Chamberlain can't.

**BARONESS.** What do you mean?

(EMPEROR *and* BARONESS *act as if* CHAMBERLAIN *is invisible. CHAMBERLAIN is frozen like a statue.*)

**EMPEROR.** The Chamberlain is old, Mother, and his eyeglasses are not to be trusted. Why, just last week, I saw him staring at you as if he was trying to memorize your face.

**BARONESS.** Did you see that?

**EMPEROR.** What I see is that I need you to go visit Connie and Jip and check on their progress.

**BARONESS.** Why don't you go?

**EMPEROR.** I want to be surprised. Please, Mama. Do it for your little Natty.

**BARONESS.** Well...

**EMPEROR.** I promise to tell you that I think you are the most wonderful, prettiest and smartest mama in the whole wide empire if you go. Will you go?

**BARONESS.** Alright, Natty. I could never say no to you. I will walk down the nine floors and up ninety steps to see that—

(EMPEROR *exits—and* CHAMBERLAIN *'statue' exits stiffly. CONNIE and JIP are revealed in their work room. CONNIE is measuring an imaginary robe on JIP.*)

And here we are!

**CONNIE.** Good morning, Baroness.

JIP. Morning.

CONNIE. You have arrived just in time to see me put the finishing touches on the Emperor's cape.

BARONESS. Oh?...

CONNIE. (*Miming the magic cloth:*) Isn't the sheen of the fabric amazing? It sparkles in the morning light as if it was a sunbeam. (*'Draping' it on BARONESS:*) And feel the elegance. It's so delicate. It's as if it wasn't there.

BARONESS. (*Carefully 'removing' the cloth:*) Oh, yes. I see that. Quite clearly.

CONNIE. It brings such elegance to the line.

(CONNIE 'drapes' the cloth on JIP.)

Look at my little friend here. Why, this clothing is so amazing, that when he wears it, I believe that Jip could be anything. A prince. A king. And oh, yes. Even an emperor!

How wonderful that you are a lady of such intelligence and style that you are able to report back to your son about our excellent work.

BARONESS. (*Mumbling:*) Oh, yes...of course.

JIP. And our need for *more* gold.

(BARONESS' answers are getting more unintelligible.)

BARONESS. Oh, yes...of course. More gold.

CONNIE. Very good. Until tomorrow, your majesty.

(CONNIE and JIP bow grandly and exit, holding back laughter.  
MAIDS cross to BARONESS.)

FIRST MAID. You didn't see anything, did you?

(BARONESS is stammering.)

SECOND MAID. But these two promise that they are making clothes.



(BARONESS *mumbles.*)

**THIRD MAID.** Even the Chamberlain saw the clothes. He's very smart.

**BARONESS.** Ah, yes. The Chamberlain. My good and faithful Chamberlain. He was staring at me, wasn't he? Why, the impertinence. Of course, he is a fine specimen of a man. Almost as fine as my late husband, Emperor Nathaniel the Eighteenth of Naradonia.

(FIRST and THIRD MAID 'frame' SECOND MAID as she dons bad costume piece to pose as the portrait of the late emperor. BARONESS does a doubletake.)

I wouldn't want him to think I was a foolish old woman, would I?

**THIRD MAID.** Of course not.

**FIRST MAID.** Not at all.

**SECOND MAID.** (*Deep voice:*) No way. (*Normal voice:*) Of course not.

**BARONESS.** Thank you, Nathaniel.

(*The 'frame' disappears. FIRST MAID notices SECOND MAID retains her disguise and gives her a look that makes her remove it.*)

And of course I saw the clothes. The fabric. It was a sort of red... wasn't it?...and a yellow greenish blue and —

(EMPEROR and CHAMBERLAIN reappear in Emperor's chamber.)

The colors were amazing. Every color in the rainbow. The finest. The best. The most wonderful clothes I have ever seen.

**EMPEROR.** Really?

**BARONESS.** Really.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Really?

**BARONESS.** Really!

(EMPEROR, BARONESS, and CHAMBERLAIN exit. MAIDS are left alone.)

**SECOND MAID.** You know – if they let us inside that chamber, we'd be able to tell the truth.

**FIRST MAID.** But they don't, do they?

**THIRD MAID.** No.

**FIRST MAID.** We're the servants. The maids. The ladies-in-waiting.

**SECOND MAID.** And waiting and waiting.

**FIRST MAID.** We just tell the story.

**EMPEROR.** (*Entering:*) What story is that?

(MAIDS react nervously and bow.)

Who are you talking to?

**FIRST MAID.** Well, I –

(THIRD MAID shrugs. SECOND MAID takes control.)

**SECOND MAID.** Your majesty, it must be quite clear to a man of your intelligence and breeding that we are talking to –

(SECOND MAID gestures to the audience.)

your subjects.

**EMPEROR.** (*Amazed:*) Are all of these people here to see me and my new clothes?

**SECOND MAID.** (*Sarcastically:*) Yes, your majesty. That must be it.

**THIRD MAID.** (*Producing a program:*) It says right here that they've all come to see *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

**EMPEROR.** So it does. Hmmm... A magical book.

**FIRST MAID.** (*Snatching program:*) I'll take that magic book.

**EMPEROR.** (*To audience:*) You're very lucky. My dear mother and my trusted advisor have promised me that my new wardrobe has to be seen to be believed. (*Referring to his outfit:*) Do you like this outfit?

(MAIDS *prompt applause with sign.*)

I know. It is beautiful. But just you wait until my Birthday Parade when everyone sees me get what I deserve.

**SECOND MAID.** I can't wait.

(CITIZENS *cross with pennants and banners.* EMPEROR *stops* CHILD.)

**EMPEROR.** You there. Child! What's all the noise?

**CHILD.** Time for the parade, sir. Time for the parade!

(POOR CITIZEN *retrieves* CHILD *and does a double take at seeing* EMPEROR.)

**POOR CITIZEN.** (*Bowing:*) Forgive me, your majesty.

**CHILD.** (*Running off:*) Mama! We're going to be late.

(POOR CITIZEN *waves and exits.*)

**EMPEROR.** (*Staring after* POOR CITIZEN:) I must get ready. I must look my best. Ladies!

**MAIDS.** (*Knowing what is coming:*) Yeee—ees?

**EMPEROR.** Wash me. Tend me. Clean up my toes. Wash me. Tend me. Powder my nose.

(FIRST *and* THIRD MAID *repeat the chant as they usher* EMPEROR *off to his bath.* SECOND MAID *is reluctant.*)

**SECOND MAID.** I can't do this anymore. Look at me. Look at this uniform. What am I doing here?

**FIRST MAID.** (*Returning:*) Come on. The faster we get him ready, the faster we can go to the parade.

**THIRD MAID.** The parade. The *parade!*

**SECOND MAID.** I'm a maid who is mad and my mood is getting muddy. I wasn't made to be a servant for this silly fuddy-duddy.

**FIRST MAID.** You're talking nonsense.

**SECOND MAID.** Aren't we better than this?

**FIRST MAID.** Maybe.

**SECOND MAID.** Definitely.

**THIRD MAID.** Of course we are. We're special. We're not just maids. We have dreams... Don't you agree... Wait a second...

**FIRST MAID.** Yes?

**THIRD MAID.** I don't know what to call you.

**SECOND MAID.** That's right. What is your name?

**FIRST MAID.** You know my name. It's Ashley\*. [*Real name of actress.*]

**SECOND MAID.** (*Aware of audience:*) No—not your real name. Your name in the play.

**FIRST MAID.** Let me check the magic book. (*Checking program:*) Ah...

**THIRD MAID.** Ah?

**SECOND MAID.** Ah.

**FIRST MAID.** I'm the first maid. See it says right here. **FIRST MAID.**...

**SECOND MAID.** No, no. Your character's first name.

**FIRST MAID.** Oh...

**SECOND MAID.** So?

**FIRST MAID.** My name is Maid—ie. Maidie the Maid. That's my name.

**THIRD MAID.** That's nice.

**SECOND MAID.** That's weird.

**FIRST NAME.** What's your name?

**SECOND MAID.** Well...

**THIRD MAID.** Well?

**SECOND MAID.** It's Sadie. Sadie the Maid. So?

**THIRD MAID.** (*Overcome by laughter:*) 'Maidie and Sadie washing all the clothes. Maidie and Sadie —'

**FIRST MAID.** Enough of this nonsense.

**SECOND MAID.** Yeah. What do they call you?

**THIRD MAID.** Adelaide.

**MAID 1 & 2.** ADELAIDE?

**THIRD MAID.** Sure. It's a nice name, don't you think? Just like yours. Maidie and Sadie and —

**MAID 1 & 2.** Adelaide

**SECOND MAID.** Sounds like a singing group.

**MAID 2 & 3.** (*Harmonizing:*) 'We're the Maaaaa...ids.'

(MAIDS *high five each other.*)

**FIRST MAID.** That's it!

**THIRD MAID.** What's it?

**FIRST MAID.** We can be a singing group.

**THIRD MAID.** I would like that.

**SECOND MAID.** I would love that. But not dressed like this.

**FIRST MAID.** Of course not. But I have an idea —

(BARONESS, CHAMBERLAIN, and CITIZENS *set up for parade.*)

Just wait until after the parade. Come on, girls!

(MAIDS exit like would be divas. CHAMBERLAIN opens another proclamation.)

**OLD CITIZEN.** Where's the Emperor?

(CITIZENS mumble.)

I said, WHERE'S THE LITTLE EMPEROR?

**TEACHER CITIZEN.** Counting his money?

**MILITARY CITIZEN.** Planning a conquest?

**CHILD.** Where is he, Mama?

**POOR CITIZEN.** I don't know.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** (*Nervously looking offstage:*) If you'll be patient, we will celebrate the Emperor's entrance at any moment.

(BARONESS enters smiling nervously. She gestures to CHAMBERLAIN to proceed.)

And now, presenting his royal majesty, the Emperor of Emperors, Nathaniel the Nineteenth of Naradonia. And let us remember that he is wearing the magic clothes produced by a pair of geniuses—who don't seem to be with us today.

(CONNIE and JIP exit on the side of the stage with sacks of gold and valuables. CHILD tries to get POOR CITIZEN to notice, but she shushes CHILD.)

These clothes can only be seen by the smartest and wisest—and... smartest among us, so without further ado— Let us bow our heads and raise our voices to greet our Emperor on his birthday—wearing his birthday suit!

(*The MAIDS enter first with sly smiles on their faces—followed by EMPEROR—who is wearing boxers and a sleeveless T-shirt and a crown. He carries a scepter. He waves at the crowd—who are shocked into silence.*)

Aren't his clothes beautiful?

(ENSEMBLE overact 'oohs' and 'ahs'. EMPEROR gains confidence and starts to enjoy parading.)

**CHILD.** But he isn't wearing anything!

**POOR CITIZEN.** Shhh...

**EMPEROR.** What did the child say?

**CHILD.** (*To a shocked POOR CITIZEN, who is hiding a giggle:*) The Emperor. He has no clothes.

**SECOND MAID.** (*Faking a 'Citizen' voice:*) Listen to the child.

**FIRST MAID.** (*Faking a 'Citizen' voice:*) The child speaks the truth.

**THIRD MAID.** Yeah!

(*FIRST and SECOND MAIDS give her a look. THIRD MAID fakes a really low 'CITIZEN' voice.*)

I mean— Yeah!

(*Other CITIZENS bravely ad-lib reactions to the Emperor's lack of clothes.*)

**BARONESS.** Don't listen to the little brat, Natty.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** You look wonderful, your majesty.

**EMPEROR.** Mother. Chamberlain. (*Gaining strength:*) BE QUIET!

**BARONESS.** (*Shocked:*) Help me, Chamberlain.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Yes, Natasha. I mean... As you wish, my lady.

**SECOND MAID.** I told you he liked her.

**FIRST MAID.** Shhh... (*To EMPEROR:*) Your majesty?

**EMPEROR.** I'm not wearing anything, am I?

**MAIDS.** No, your majesty.

**EMPEROR.** (*To POOR CITIZEN:*) I look pretty silly, don't I? The truth.

# **THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

*[www.playscripts.com](http://www.playscripts.com)*