

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

THE  
EMPEROR'S NEW  
CLOTHES

Tales From The Fractured Side

by

E. Gray Simons III

*Adapted from the story by Hans Christian Anderson*



Newport, Maine

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**THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES**

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**CHARACTERS** - 2m, 2f, 10either (doubling possible)

**REPORTER (m or f)**

**STAGE CREW 1 (m or f)**

**EMPEROR (m)**

**DEFENSE MINISTER (m or f)**

**HEALTH MINISTER (m or f)**

**WEAVER (m)**

**EMPRESS (f)**

**COMMONER 1 (m or f)**

**COMMONER 2 (m or f)**

**COMMONER 3 (m or f)**

**CHILD (f)**

**STAGE CREW 2 (m or f)**

**HOST (m or f)**

**MODEL (m or f)**

DOUBLING: 1m, 1f, 4 either

**ACTOR 1** — Reporter, Host (m or f)

**ACTOR 2** — Stage Crew 1, Defense Minister, Commoner 2 (m or f)

**ACTOR 3** — Emperor (m)

**ACTOR 4** — Health Minister, Commoner 1, Child (m or f)

**ACTOR 5** — Weaver, Commoner 3, Stage Crew 2, Model (m or f)

**ACTOR 6** — Empress (f)

Scene 1 — *The Royal Fashion Preview*, noon, 1 week before the Fashion Show

Scene 2 — *Emperor's Meeting Hall*, later that afternoon

Scene 3 — *Emperor's Chambers*, a short time later

Scene 4 — *Emperor's Meeting Hall*, next morning

Scene 5 — *The Village*, noon

Scene 6 — *The Weaver's Shop*, later that afternoon

Scene 7 — *Set of a Talk Show*, the next morning

Scene 8 — *The Weaver's Shop*, later that day

Scene 9 — *The Village, The Weaver's Shop*, next several days

Scene 10 — *The Weaver's Shop*, eve of the Fashion Show

Scene 11 — *The Royal Fashion Show*, the next say

**THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES** (Adapted from the story by Hans Christian Andersen) by E. Gray Simons III *TYA* 2m, 2f, 11either (1m, 1f, 4 either with doubling) About 55 minutes. Everyone in the Empire is getting ready for the big event. There will be TV coverage. The Ministers need more funds for projects other than new clothes. The Weaver is promising an unforgettable garment. The Emperor is almost beside himself with anticipation. What could go wrong? Part of the **TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE** Series. **Order #3209**

Playwright **E. Gray Simons III** has worked for fourteen years as an Artist-in-Residence at BTF. In 2000, he became Artistic Director of BTF PLAYS! and has since written and directed more than a dozen original plays, among them *Aesop's Network*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Mystery Sideshow 2: Strange Waves*, and *Mystery Sideshow 3: Way Out West*.

Simons made his BTF directorial debut in 2000 with *The Wind in the Willows* and in 2001 he became director of the *Summer Performance Stories*, *The Odyssey*, *The Magic Flute*, *Arabian Nights*, and *Monkey*. Other directorial credits include *The Wizard of Oz*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Oliver!* and *Peter Pan*(2009) on BTF's Main Stage, *Where Has Tommy Flowers Gone?* and *Holiday Memories* in the Unicorn Theatre, *Robin Hood* at the Berkshire Museum, *The Who's Tommy* at Brandeis University with co-director Eric Hill, and *Big Love* at Brandeis University. His BTF acting credits include *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Peter Pan*, *Moby Dick-Rehearsed*, and *Wilder, Wilder*.

Berkshire Theatre Festival's year-round education program, BTF PLAYS! serves area students from kindergarten through high school. At the heart of BTF PLAYS! is a passionate commitment to bring live theatre and all its inherent excitement and creativity to children in our region. Each year, more than 10,000 students in underserved rural and inner city schools throughout Berkshire Country are reached through in-school residency programs, vacation camps, and our touring production. Over the course of the summer, BTF PLAYS! hosts vacation camps for students from grades K-6, providing opportunities to learn about acting, improvisation, storytelling, and working behind the scenes in the theatre.

**TALES FROM THE FRACTURED SIDE** is a series of plays by E. Gray Simons III that premiered at the Berkshire Theatre Festival (BTF) TYA Summer Touring program. This series contains: *Alice In Wonderland*, *Arabian Nights*, *Cinderella*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *Hansel and Gretel's Grimm Tale*, *Just So Stories*, *The Magic Flute*, *Monkey*, *Nursery Rhyme Café*, *Pinocchio*, *Robin Hood*, *The Wind in the Willows*.

**SCENE 1**

*SETTING: ROYAL FASHION PREVIEW, NOON, ONE WEEK BEFORE ROYAL FASHION SHOW*

*(Stage Crew 1 enters wearing a communication headset. Stage Crew 1 places a sign reading "ROYAL FASHION PREVIEW" and exits. The sign is set in front of several walls of colorful, billowy fabric and luridly patterned wardrobe screens. Stage Crew 1 re-enters with a clipboard.)*

**STAGE CREW 1:** *(Calls to stage manager)* Start pre-show music!

*(Pre-show music plays softly in the background. Reporter enters looking into a mirror. Reporter checks hair, straightens clothes, etc...)*

**REPORTER:** How do I look?

**STAGE CREW 1:** Looking good!

**REPORTER:** Just good?

**STAGE CREW 1:** Did I say good?

**REPORTER:** Yes.

**STAGE CREW 1:** Sorry, I meant dazzling. You look dazzling.

**REPORTER:** Are you sure?

**STAGE CREW 1:** Undeniably

**REPORTER:** Are you just telling me what I wanna hear?

**STAGE CREW 1:** Well... yes. But it's true.

**REPORTER:** Ok, then.

*(STAGE CREW 1 hands Reporter a microphone. REPORTER continues to fuss with clothes and hair as crew member turns to the audience)*

**STAGE CREW 1:** *(Directly addressing the audience in a brisk, business-like manner)* All right people, we're gonna be "live" in a couple minutes, so be ready. If you see a sign anytime during the show that says "CLAP!" – applaud, loudly for three seconds. If you see a sign that says "BOO" – boo like you mean it for three seconds. If you see a sign that says "blow your nose" – make sure you have a tissue...

and then let it rip for three seconds. Got it? Let's try it out just to make sure. Remember only three seconds. Ready...

*(Holds up sign that says "CLAP!". Audience claps. If not, Stage Crew 1 encourages.)*

You people are smart. How about his one?

*(Holds up sign that says "BOO!". Audience boos. If not, Stage Crew 1 encourages.)*

You're smarter than my pet turtle. Here's a new one...

*(Holds up a sign that says "CHEER!". Audience cheers. If not, Stage Crew 1 encourages.)*

You're like the superheroes of smart. Just remember, three seconds. If you go over three I'll hold this sign up...

*(Holds up "SHHH!" sign. Audience says "shhh!". If not, Stage Crew 1 encourages)*

This sign should automatically return you to a polite and attentive silence. Good.

*(Turns back to Reporter)*

Ten seconds to go time. Get ready...

**REPORTER:** I don't have to get ready. I stay ready.

*(Reporter hands Stage Crew 1 the mirror. They do a brief yet elaborate handshake)*

**STAGE CREW 1:** *(Turns to stage manager)* And we are going "live" in...

*(Holds up five fingers and then puts them down as he counts.)*

Five! Four! Three!

*(Two and one he just counts silently with his fingers. When Stage Crew 1 finishes countdown, points at stage manager music plays and a model enters and struts down stage center as if on a catwalk. The model is dressed in a glamorous robe and crown and carrying a scepter. After a brief spell of strutting, the model moves upstage. Music fades.)*

**REPORTER:** Good day, good people! This is News of the Realm, reporting live from the location of next week's royal fashion show! The Emperor has graciously given us a sneak-peek of the new line of lavish robes and crowns he will be unveiling in full next week at his fashion extravaganza. As you can see, our model is smartly dressed in high-fashion, high-function royal apparel.

*(Model makes several turns and poses and then exits.)*

Now we are just waiting for His Majesty, the Emperor, to appear and give us a word about his fabulous clothing design.

*(A flourish of music is heard and the Emperor enters blowing kisses and waving. Like the model, he is wearing a robe and crown and carries a scepter.)*

And here he is, gracing the stage at this very moment to greet his adoring subjects! The Emperor!

*(Stage Crew 1 holds up "CLAP!" sign)*

**EMPEROR:** Oh, hello! Hello! My goodness, thank you! You are too kind! Oh, thank you!

**REPORTER:** Your Majesty! Would you mind answering a few questions about your upcoming fashion event?

**EMPEROR:** Certainly! I love to talk about fashion.

**REPORTER:** Can you describe your most recent line of clothing?

**EMPEROR:** With pleasure...

*(Emperor claps and model enters and moves downstage)*

As you can see, I have gone with a quite traditional ensemble. Notice the robe, the crown and the scepter... fairly standard dress for nobility.

**REPORTER:** Yes, I’d say it’s “throw-back” royal... very old school.

**EMPEROR:** However, in order to set this fairly ordinary look apart, I have utilized extremely fine fabric.

**REPORTER:** Mmm, yes, yes... exquisite cloth.

**EMPEROR:** Indeed. I am all about using the finest materials, no matter what the financial cost.

**REPORTER:** Speaking of financial cost, your majesty, your unwavering dedication to stylish attire has led to rumors that some members of your administration believe you are not spending enough time attending to the other responsibilities in your kingdom. What is your response to these claims?

**EMPEROR:** To those who worry that I spend too much time on my wardrobe, I would ask them... What could be more important than looking good? If you look good, you feel happy. And who, I ask you, doesn’t like to feel happy?

**REPORTER:** Too true, your majesty. Everyone likes to feel happy.

*(Stage Crew 1 holds up “CHEER!” sign)*

**EMPEROR:** You see.

**REPORTER:** Right again, your majesty! And I’m sure everyone is looking forward to you looking good and feeling happy about you feeling happy.

**EMPEROR:** What could be happier?

**REPORTER:** It’s the happiest! Well, thank you for your time, your majesty. And we’ll see you next week right here for the big royal fashion event. This has been a live report on location with News of the Realm.

*(Music plays briefly and Stage Crew 1 holds up "CLAP!" sign.)*

**STAGE CREW 1:** *(As music fades)* Okay, were off the air! Great show everyone!

**REPORTER:** Terrific work, your majesty!

**EMPEROR:** Thank you. I wish I could see the show and how it all looked.

**REPORTER:** Well, today's show was recorded live, but it'll be re-aired.

**EMPEROR:** Really?

**REPORTER:** Oh, sure. You can watch it later as part of the News of the Realm's Evening Report.

**EMPEROR:** Wonderful!

**REPORTER:** Thank you again, you majesty.

**EMPEROR:** Oh, it has been a delight.

*(Reporter hands microphone to Stage Crew 1 and exits)*

**STAGE CREW 1:** Great show, your majesty!

**EMPEROR:** Excuse me; may I have a word with you?

**STAGE CREW 1:** Of course, your majesty.

**EMPEROR:** I'm just wondering where I might get some of the signs you were holding up.

**STAGE CREW 1:** The signs for the audience?

**EMPEROR:** Yes, I have a meeting with my ministers later today and I would like to take a few signs with me.

**STAGE CREW 1:** Well, I can have our people make some up for you, no problem. Just follow me back stage.

**EMPEROR:** Thank you, you are too kind.

*(Stage Crew 1 exits followed by the Emperor)*



**SCENE 2**

*SETTING: THE EMPEROR'S MEETING HALL, LATER THAT AFTERNOON*

*(The Minister of Defense enters, followed closely by the Minister of Health)*

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** It's obvious that my demands must be met first!

**HEALTH MINISTER:** How can you say that your policies are more important?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Because, if it weren't for my policies, your programs would not matter at all.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** What could be more important than the health of the kingdom?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** In order for the kingdom to be healthy, it must be defended!

**HEALTH MINISTER:** But your defenders cannot defend if they are not healthy!

*(The Minister of Defense and the Minister of Health continue arguing, loudly. The Emperor enters.)*

**EMPEROR:** Hello, hello! I see you two have already started the meeting without me.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER:** Good afternoon, Emperor.

**EMPEROR:** But must you do so much yelling? I find yelling upsets the stomach and I've heard that it will eventually lead to the wrinkling of the skin, dreadful.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** I apologize, your majesty. We were just having a spirited debate about the need for more funds

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And where they should be administered...

**EMPEROR:** Well, I could have guessed that. What else do you ministers argue about other than administering of funds?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Yes, and as your Defense Minister, I cannot stress enough the importance of supporting the protection of your kingdom's borders.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And as your Minister of Health, I cannot stress enough the importance of supporting the health and well-being of your subjects.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** I must stress defense!

**HEALTH MINISTER:** I must stress health!

*(Ministers begin to argue again)*

**EMPEROR:** Ministers, Ministers! I would prefer that you both do a lot less stressing. It would make these meetings ever so much less... stressful.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Pardon, me your majesty, but have you reviewed my proposals and would you consider expanding the defense budget?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And have you evaluated my plans and would you deem them worthy of increased health financing?

**EMPEROR:** Honestly, I have not had the time to consider either of your reports because of my busy schedule with my impending fashion spectacular.

**MINISTERS:** But Emperor—

**EMPEROR:** However, I have appointed a new minister that will help provide a simple and stress free way of settling these little debates. Allow me to introduce to you the Audience Minister.

*(Audience Minister enters carrying several signs)*

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Audience Minister?

**EMPEROR:** Yes, I think an Audience Minister will be a wonderful addition to our weekly assembly.

*(Audience Minister holds up "CLAP!" sign.)*

And you see... it appears that everyone else thinks so too.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Well, what about expanding my defense budget?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And increased health financing?

*(Audience Minister holds up "BOO!" sign)*

**EMPEROR:** I believe popular opinion dictates that we should hold off on excessive health and defense spending. At least until next week's fashion show is past.

*(Audience Minister holds up "CLAP!" sign.)*

And of course, I'll need to find income to pay our new Audience Minister.

*(Audience Minister holds up "CHEER!" sign.)*

And you wouldn't want the money to come out of your budgets would you?

*(Defense and Health Ministers shake their heads.)*

I didn't think so. That will be all, Ministers.

*(Ministers exit.)*

Thank goodness that is over. Oh!

*(Emperor checks his watch)*

And just in time to watch the replay of this morning's fashion preview! Where's television remote?

*(After a brief search, he finds remote)*

Found it!

*(EMPEROR pretends to turn on television and an electronic "power-on" sound is heard. This is followed by music. A curtain is pulled back on the opposite side of the stage to reveal an ancient loom-like structure that looks old and worn and appears to be adorned with unusual glyphs and writings from an unknown language. The loom is empty and the smartly dressed WEAVER stands in front of it.)*

**WEAVER:** Good day, good people!

**EMPEROR:** Ugh! Commercial.

**WEAVER:** If you have the time I would like to ask you a very important question.

**EMPEROR:** Oh, hurry up...

**WEAVER:** Do you think a lot about what you wear?

**EMPEROR:** Yes. Yes I do.

**WEAVER:** Do you have recurring dreams set in color-saturated, high-style, custom textile landscapes?

**EMPEROR:** Always...

**WEAVER:** Do you fantasize about walk-in closets the size of airplane hangars?

**EMPEROR:** I just built one!

**WEAVER:** If so, you must be passionate about fashion.

**EMPEROR:** Obviously!

**WEAVER:** Well, then, you will probably want to focus all your attention on what I am about to show you because it will assuredly be the most significant experience of your life.

**EMPEROR:** You have me, undivided.

*(Weaver moves beside the loom)*

**WEAVER:** This! Is a remarkable and wondrously magical loom  
Unearthed from an ancient Egyptian tomb  
Just south of the Nubian city, Khartoum  
It weaves fabric more beautiful than flowers in bloom.

*(Emperor gasps)*

So, if textile perfection is what you pursue  
My craft is a marvel you simply must view  
For it's not just a matter of pulling a lever  
I spin fabric of fabulous dreams... I'm the Weaver!

*(Music fades up as the Weaver covers the loom with the curtain and exits. The Emperor turns off the television, after which a "power-off" sound is heard)*

**EMPEROR:** Oh, my goodness! I must meet this Weaver and see his magnificent cloth! Perhaps he would be willing to weave me some of this amazing material for my fashion show... Wait! Of course he will! I am the Emperor and I shall pay him whatever is necessary! I must have it! I will have it!

*(Calling off stage)*

**Ministers!**

*(Ministers enter)*

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Your majesty, what is it?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Is everything all right?

**EMPEROR:** Yes, everything's fine. In fact, everything's wonderful. I just need to tell you that I have reconsidered our previous meeting and I have changed my mind about the health and defense budgets.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Excellent!

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Splendid!

*(Audience Minister holds up "CLAP!" sign)*

**EMPEROR:** I'm going to lower the defense budget.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** What?

**EMPEROR:** And I'm going to lower the health budget.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Really?

**EMPEROR:** And you...

*(Points to the Audience Minister)*

are fired.

*(Audience Minister holds up "BOO!" sign)*

**EMPEROR:** It's all for the good of the Kingdom.

*(Audience Minister holds up "CHEER!" sign)*

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** But your majesty, how do you propose we do our jobs with so little to spend?

**EMPEROR:** In difficult financial times, we all must find a way to persevere.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** What you are asking is going to be very difficult.

**EMPEROR:** Well, if you are diligent enough, I'm sure you'll find a way. And if you don't, I'm sure I can find someone who might be more productive in your ministerial positions. Now, I must be off!

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** But your, Majesty—

**EMPEROR:** You must, excuse me.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Where are you going?

**EMPEROR:** I must secure the services of a brilliant weaver!

*(King exits. Ministers stare dumbfounded.)*

**HEALTH MINISTER:** What are we to do?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** It's time to set up a meeting with the queen.

*(They nod in agreement and exit)*

**SCENE 3**

*SETTING: THE EMPEROR'S CHAMBERS, A SHORT TIME LATER*

*(An elegant drafting table is set off center. The Emperor enters and places several roles of parchment. He unravels one and studies it, occasionally making notes with a feather quill. The Weaver enters.)*

**WEAVER:** Your Most Royal Highness!

**EMPEROR:** Ah, my good Weaver!

**WEAVER:** I came as soon as I received your summons.

**EMPEROR:** Yes, yes! Thank you for your swift response.

**WEAVER:** How may I be of service?

**EMPEROR:** I saw your commercial earlier today and I must say I am intrigued by your claims. Is it true that you weave incomparably beautiful fabric?

**WEAVER:** Yes, your Highness. By the skillful manipulation of my ancient and magical loom I can create no less than the most perfect cloth imaginable. I guarantee the world has never seen the like.

**EMPEROR:** May I see a sample?

**WEAVER:** Well, I would love nothing more than to show you, but I cannot.

**EMPEROR:** Why?

**WEAVER:** The fabric, which indeed is fabulously beautiful, is also astoundingly expensive. To weave it, requires the finest silk thread along with a considerable amount of pure gold and precious gems.

**EMPEROR:** Gold and Gems?

**WEAVER:** Yes! It's all woven delicately into the cloth more beautifully than the sparkling stars in an evening indigo sky...

**EMPEROR:** Charming!

**WEAVER:** The intricate detail work glimmers like the reflected sun off the shimmering surface of a gently rippling river.

**EMPEROR:** Delightful!

**WEAVER:** It flows like the soft and supple sea grass in a peaceful turquoise tidal pool.

**EMPEROR:** Enchanting! I must have it. What will it cost to make?

**WEAVER:** May I?

*(The Weaver points to the Emperor's quill)*

**EMPEROR:** By all means.

*(The Emperor hands the quill to the Weaver and the Weaver moves to the drafting table and writes a figure on the open piece of parchment. The Emperor picks up the paper and looks at the amount)*

Oh, my goodness! It will cost a fortune!

**WEAVER:** And fortune it will bring you, Your Highness.

**EMPEROR:** What do you mean?

**WEAVER:** Aside from the textile's exquisite beauty, the cloth will also give you a marvelous insight.

**EMPEROR:** How so?

**WEAVER:** Beyond my skill as a weaver, there is a power in the ancient loom that lends a magical quality to the fabric, so that whosoever is especially foolish or is unfit for his or her office will not be able to see it.

**EMPEROR:** So the cloth would be invisible to some individual who has little intellect or is not worthy of his position?

**WEAVER:** Precisely!

**EMPEROR:** Ah, then would I be correct to assume that I could show this fabric to, say... my Ministers and if one of them could not see it, I would know that person is incompetent?

**WEAVER:** Indeed you would!

**EMPEROR:** Marvelous! I will pay your price. How soon can you start work?

**WEAVER:** I will begin immediately.

**EMPEROR:** Excellent!

**WEAVER:** I'll just need money to buy several large rolls of silk and a supply of gold and jewels to get started.

**EMPEROR:** Of course, just come with me to the treasury. This is very exciting. You know I have a keen interest in fashion.

**WEAVER:** Oh, really? I hadn't heard...

*(They exit)*

#### **SCENE 4**

*SETTING: THE EMPEROR'S MEETING HALL, THE NEXT MORNING*

*(Defense Minister enters and paces. Soon after Health Minister enters.)*

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Has the queen agreed to meet with us?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** She has. She should be here any minute.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Do you think she'll do anything about changing the Emperor's decision to cut our budgets?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** I think she'll be more likely to listen to reason than the Emperor. He's lost his senses.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** I think your right. He said he would find someone else to do our jobs if we don't show proper capability.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** It's preposterous. Hopefully, the queen will recognize the absurdity of it all.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** I don't know... she can be a bit whimsical as well.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** True, she can be somewhat... flighty, but she must see the madness.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Well... she and the Emperor are often of the same mind.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Yes, but it's not as if she and the Emperor are the same person dressed in different garments.

*(There is a flourish of music and the EMPRESS enters)*



**EMPRESS:** Good day, good ministers!

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER:** Good morning, your Grace.

**EMPRESS:** I understand you need a word with me?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Indeed, your Grace, it's the Emperor's latest fascination—

**HEALTH MINISTER:** We are concerned with his economic administration—

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** He has proposed a most unsuitable allocation—

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And intends to reroute resources with little regard for financial necessitation—

**EMPRESS:** Ministers! I understand your frustration.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER:** Thank you, your Grace.

**EMPRESS:** However, I'm afraid I can do little to resolve your remonstrations. The Emperor has not only cut your various funding, but he has also reduced my shopping allowance.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Your allowance?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** For shopping?

**EMPRESS:** Has been reduced, yes! I warned him that such action could cause dissent, but the Emperor has deemed it necessary to hire a very expensive weaver to create a marvelous fabric.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Fabric?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** What for?

**EMPRESS:** Well, his fashion show, of course. I've never seen him more fixated and I don't think there's anything to do, but wait until it passes.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** But what about the defense of the kingdom?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And the health of its people?

**EMPRESS:** I suppose all of that will have to be put on hold. The Emperor has also informed me that he would like both of you to pay a visit to the Weaver's shop and evaluate his progress.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Why us?

**EMPRESS**: Apparently the cloth that the Weaver is making has a magical property. Only those fit for his or her profession or those not desperately brainless can see it.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Desperately brainless?

**EMPRESS**: I suppose the Emperor feels that the both of you are qualified and will have no issues.

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: Of course, we are qualified.

**HEALTH MINISTER**: Issues? Never!

**EMPRESS**: He's very anxious to hear of the Weaver's progress and would like you to check right away.

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: By all means, Your Grace.

**HEALTH MINISTER**: Right away, Your Grace.

**EMPRESS**: Good day, good ministers.

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: Your Grace, what happens if rumors of the Emperor's exorbitance spread throughout the kingdom?

**HEALTH MINISTER**: Your Grace, are you at all worried about the reaction of the commoners?

**EMPRESS**: Oh, no. I have no doubt the Emperor will give his subjects a chance to see the beautiful cloth and judge for themselves.

*(EMPRESS exits and after a nervous look toward each other, the MINISTERS exit)*

## **SCENE 5**

**SETTING: THE VILLAGE, NOON**

*(The WEAVER enters, carrying several bags of money and an ornate basket full of gold and gems. After briefly examining his new wealth, WEAVER pulls back a curtain to reveal his loom. He remains upstage and establishes his "weaving" movement which is somewhat dance-like. REPORTER enters holding a microphone and moves downstage.)*

**REPORTER:** Good day, good people! This is News of the Realm broadcasting live from the Village streets with a late breaking news story. As many of our viewers know, the excitement has been building this week toward the Emperor's upcoming fashion fest. However, our palace insider has revealed that His Most Royal Highness has recently made a very costly investment, which will further divert money away from public programs. The Emperor has hired a Weaver to create a precious fabric for his fashion show that could deplete public funds. This game-changing move by his Royal Highness is sure to impact the lives of many and we are here in the field to reap opinions from those commoners who might be most directly affected.

*(Commoner 1 enters.)*

Excuse me, but what do you think of the Emperor's latest wave of extravagant spending on his wardrobe?

**COMMONER 1:** Oh. I don't like it. I think the Emperor has enough fabric and fashion.

**REPORTER:** If you could speak face-to face with the Emperor, what would you say?

**COMMONER 1:** I would say that he should start providing new clothes for us commoners instead of hiring fancy weavers.

**REPORTER:** Assuming this current climate continues, what do you see for the future?

**COMMONER 1:** If this goes on and no one but the Emperor is provided with new clothes, I would guess that people will soon be walking naked in the streets.

**REPORTER:** Thank you very much for your perspective.

*(Commoner 1 nods and exits)*

So, according to the views of one concerned citizen, there is no doubt this kingdom is teetering on the verge of a shocking outbreak of widespread nudity. Earlier today, we had a chance to interview the reputed Weaver, hired by the Emperor.

*(Weaver, who has been working at his loom, turns toward the audience and moves downstage)*

In an exclusive interview, we asked him about the huge investment made by the Emperor to procure his services and he had this comment...

**WEAVER:** It's really the cost of the materials that comprise most of the expense. I make very little money from my work. I am simply a humble servant to his Most Royal Majesty's wishes. Although on a personal level, I'm excited to see him looking his best. What could be more pleasing than a smartly dressed monarch?

*(Weaver turns back to his loom closes the curtain and exits)*

**REPORTER:** In a follow up interview we received a statement from the Emperor, likely designed to deflect the imminent deluge of negative reaction from his subjects...

**EMPEROR:** I know the good people of my realm can at times be troubled by my impulsive behavior, but I intend to invite every single one of my subjects free of charge to the event in order to foster a climate of goodwill. Also, my wife, the Queen will be appearing on the topical talk show “Conversation Nation” to make a special announcement that I think will be exciting for everyone.

**REPORTER:** The Emperor could not be convinced to divulge the subject of the Queen’s special announcement, but he did go on to remark...

**EMPEROR:** I feel the investment will result in a windfall for everyone. In paying the Weaver to not only create the perfect cloth, but also to craft from it a wondrous garment, we will draw curious sightseers from beyond the kingdom and likely increase tourism revenue throughout our realm.

**REPORTER:** No doubt people will want to see this fabric... Or at least hope to see this fabric. As many of you may already have heard, this fabric is rumored to be visible only to those who are not fit for their employment or those are not unreasonably dimwitted.

*(Child enters carrying a doll, which has small accessories)*

I imagine everyone, young and old alike, will be thrilled to at least have a chance to look at this marvelous, mystical material and what kind of clothing is made from it. Excuse me, young lady! Good day! Would you like to say a word about the Emperor’s new clothes?

**CHILD:** Sure!

**REPORTER:** You must be excited.

**CHILD:** Oh yeah, I love fashion of all kinds. I hope someday to be a clothing designer!

**REPORTER:** Yes, I see you are paying close attention to your doll’s clothes. And I assume that you are very much hoping to be able to see the clothes that the Emperor’s will be wearing.

**CHILD:** Well, I don’t work yet, so I guess I can’t be deemed unfit for my job. I just hope I’m smart enough to see it. I imagine it’ll be like nothing anyone has ever seen.

**REPORTER:** Most assuredly it will be and I’m sure you’ll see fine, young lady. Thank you for your comments.

**CHILD:** Thanks! Bye!

*(Child exits)*

**REPORTER:** For fashion fanatics and casual observers alike, it’s the question that will be crossing everyone’s mind. Will I be able to see the Emperor’s new clothes or am I blithering fool?

*(Commoner 2 enters)*

Perhaps we can get a few answers from a few more people on the streets.

*(Calls to Commoner 2)*

You there!

**COMMONER 2:** Who? Like... me?

**REPORTER:** Yes, I'd like to get a comment from you about the big fashion event.

**COMMONER 2:** Hey! You're, like... that TV, reporter dude.

**REPORTER:** Yes, I am.

**COMMONER 2:** So I'm, like, on TV? Like, for real?

**REPORTER:** It isn't "like" real. It is real.

**COMMONER 2:** Like... awesome.

**REPORTER:** What do you think about the big fashion event and how do you feel about the Emperor inviting everyone in the realm?

**COMMONER 2:** Oh, dude, it's like so cool he's like inviting us commoners. Like, it's my dream to go to like a royal party. You know, I go to like a lot of like parties and stuff, but like a royal party would be like, all like royal and stuff... like... yeah.

**REPORTER:** Okay. Thank you for your insight.

**COMMONER 2:** Like, no problem, dude.

*(As Commoner 2 drifts away, Commoner 3 enters wearing sunglasses and carrying a basket full of sunglasses)*

**COMMONER 3:** Get your special glasses here! Guaranteed to allow you to see the Emperor's new clothes! These handy specs will go fast, so make sure you have a pair before the Emperor's big fashion show!

*(To Reporter)*

Hey, you wanna buy some glasses?

**REPORTER:** Oh no, I don't think those will be necessary for me.

*(Pointing to Commoner 2)*

But that gentleman may be interested.

**COMMONER 3:** Hey, buddy! Wanna buy some glasses? They'll help you see the Emperor's new clothes

and as well as other things that might not otherwise be there.

*(Commoner 2 and Commoner 3 meet and Commoner 2 picks up a pair of glasses)*

**COMMONER 2:** Oh, wow, like... so cool.

**REPORTER:** Well, that's all for now from down in the Village streets. Make sure you tune in tomorrow morning to see the Queen on "Conversation Nation"! You won't want to miss our exclusive coverage of her special announcement. Until then, this has been a live report with News of the Realm!

*(Commoners and Reporter exit)*

## **SCENE 6**

**SETTING:** *THE WEAVER'S SHOP, LATER THAT AFTERNOON*

*(A curtain is drawn back to reveal the loom. The loom is moved to center. The Weaver enters and continues his weaving, which resembles the dance from previous scenes. After a few moments, the Ministers of Defense and Health enter and the Weaver stops "weaving" when he notices them.)*

**WEAVER:** Good day, good Ministers!

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Good day, good Weaver.

**WEAVER:** I'm so pleased you have come to observe my work thus far.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** So your weaving goes well?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And you have a sample we might see?

**WEAVER:** It's right in front of you!

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Where?

**WEAVER:** Why on the loom, of course.

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Oh!

**WEAVER:** You can see it, I hope...

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Oh, yes! Without a doubt! Indeed, indeed! Etc...

**WEAVER**: That's a relief. I'm not sure if you've heard, but those who cannot see the fabric would be deemed totally lacking in both intelligence and the capacity to perform their jobs.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Really? We had not heard! What a surprise to discover! Etc...

**WEAVER**: So you can imagine my concern had it not been visible to you. I would be dismayed to think Ministers of your standing would be incompetent.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Oh, no! We see very clearly! We're quite qualified! Etc...

**WEAVER**: Excellent! So what do you think?

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Of what?

**WEAVER**: The fabric.

**DEFENSE MINISTER** and **HEALTH MINISTER**: Oh!

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: I have never seen... such a beautiful... example of... weaving.

**HEALTH MINISTER**: Mmm-hmm, mmm-hmm, I agree! It's the loveliest... pattern of... intertwining... finery.

**WEAVER**: And do you notice the delicate intermingling of the gold and jewels?

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: Oh yes, the gold is so... shiny!

**HEALTH MINISTER**: My, my! How the jewels... twinkle!

**WEAVER**: My intention was to effectively reproduce a multi-colored field of...

**DEFENSE MINISTER**: Flowers!

**WEAVER**: Exactly! And I hoped to accurately reflect the delicate gleam of spring...

**HEALTH MINISTER**: Showers!

**WEAVER**: Precisely! The weight of the cloth will ideally emulate the lightness of gentle summer...

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Breezes!

**WEAVER:** Indeed! And the feel of the textile on the skin, should be as soft as a newborn baby's...

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Sneezes!

**WEAVER:** Something like that... Well, do you feel I have succeeded?

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Oh, absolutely! Profoundly so! It's beyond compare!  
Etc...

**WEAVER:** Thank you, good ministers. I'm sure the Emperor would be pleased to hear such adept remarks from members of his administration.

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** We hope so! We're merely here to serve! You're too kind! Etc...

**WEAVER:** Unfortunately, I fear the Emperor's dream of having the most perfectly magical cloth in the world fashioned into the most fabulous clothing ever may not be possible.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Not Possible?

**HEALTH MINISTER:** Whatever do you mean?

**WEAVER:** As you can see I have used the initial payment of money, gold and jewels to great effect...

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** Very much so! The opulent detail! The glorious drape! Etc...

**WEAVER:** However, I'm afraid I will need more funds to complete my work. Since you have now clearly seen the fruits of my labor, perhaps you would encourage the Emperor to increase his investment...

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** I, for one, will advocate for further spending.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** As will I! It would be a shame to deny the completion of such an imaginative marvel.

**WEAVER:** Thank you, good ministers. You are not only skilled, but also genuinely clever.

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER:** We hope so! We're merely here to serve! You're too kind! Etc...



**WEAVER:** I appreciate you taking the time to visit, but if you will excuse me, I must get back to my work.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Yes, we must return to the palace and speak to the Emperor about sending you more money.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** We're sure he wouldn't want to cause a delay and keep you from finishing your work.

**WEAVER:** Yes, His Royal Highness is quite thoughtful and generous. You know, I watched the News of the Realm this morning and I heard he is inviting the entire kingdom to his fashion show free of charge.

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** Yes, and tomorrow the Queen will be appearing on the talk show "Conversation Nation" to make the official invitation.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** And to make a special announcement.

**WEAVER:** A special announcement?

**DEFENSE MINISTER:** We can't tell you what she's going to say.

**HEALTH MINISTER:** It's supposed to be a surprise.

**WEAVER:** I see. Well, I'm sure it will be a wise and charitable gesture. Good day, good Ministers!

**DEFENSE MINISTER and HEALTH MINISTER::** Good day, good Weaver.

*(The Ministers exit and soon after the Weaver moves his loom upstage, sets it behind a curtain, and exits)*

**14 more pages to the end**