

A RETELLING OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES
by: Brandy Woldstad

Cast:

Narrator	Emperor's Group (2-3 people)
Emperor	Swindle 1
Advisor	Swindle 2
Audience Member who is sent to prison	Child
Treasurer	Mom

NARRATOR: Many, many years ago... Before my mom was even alive... There lived a very fashion conscious Emperor.

EMPEROR: Don't you just loove my new suit? [To audience member] Do you think this color looks good on me?

[Audience member shakes head no.]

EMPEROR: NO! Off to the dungeon with you!
[Guards come and escort audience member off.]

EMPEROR: How about you? [Points to another audience member.] Do you think this color looks good on me?

ADVISOR: Excuse me your majesty.

[Emperor ignores advisor and continues to poll the audience.]

ADVISOR: Ah.... Your majesty?

[Emperor ignores advisor and continues to poll the audience.]

ADVISOR: YOUR MAJESTY!!!

EMPEROR: [Sighs] What? Can't you see I'm in the middle of my fashion show?

ADVISOR: You have a meeting with townspeople in five minutes.

EMPEROR: Oh no! I can't go looking like this! I need to change!

ADVISOR: Wait! Your majesty! You look fine.

NARRATOR: Finding the perfect outfit was nearly impossible.
[Emperor tosses clothes over his shoulder many of which land on Advisor.]

EMPEROR: Nope. Too dull.... Too bright.... Too showy... Ugh. I have nothing to wear!

ADVISOR: You look fine. Let's goooo.

[Meeting Area/Throne Room]

TREASURER: As treasurer, I'm happy to report that our kingdom is running within the projected budget. A rarity, but quite wonderful. Don't you agree your majesty?

EMPEROR: [Snores]

ADVISOR: Wake up, your majesty.

EMPEROR: Oh, what? Sorry the talk of the kingdom's finances is so dull.

ADVISOR: But it's important.

EMPEROR: [sighs] I suppose, but not as important as fashion! ATTENTION EVERYONE!

[Group: Sings announcement song?]

EMPEROR: If your issue has nothing to do with fashion, please leave now. We'll deal with your concerns later.

ADVISOR: But your majesty-

EMPEROR: Yes. Yes. Why do today what you can do tomorrow? It's a great way to live.

[Everyone leaves except the advisor, the Emperor, and the Swindles. The Swindles bow.]

EMPEROR: [looks surprised] Please, state your business.

SWINDLE 1: Your majesty I'm _____ Swindle and this is my brother/sister _____ Swindle.

SWINDLE 2: We are skilled fabricators.

SWINDLE 1: [gives SWINDLE 2 a quick angry look then turns back to the Emperor] What he/she means is that we are very skilled in fabrics. Fashion is our specialty.

EMPEROR: Really? Tell me more.

SWINDLE 2: For a small fortune-

SWINDLE 1: Ah, for a really small price, we can create for you an outfit that is more beautiful-

SWINDLE 2: truly lovely

SWINDLE 1: Than you have ever imagined.

EMPEROR: This sounds wonderful!

SWINDLE 1: The fabric is so fine.

SWINDLE 2: You won't feel it. [This is said with a laugh or in amusement.]

SWINDLE 1: [glares as SWINDLE 2] It's so fine the outfit will feel like you are wearing nothing at all.

EMPEROR: I love the sound of this. Tell me, what color would it be?

SWINDLE 1: Well, your majesty. That is the best part. This fabric is magical.

SWINDLE 2: [Pretends to wave a magic wand.] Poof!

SWINDLE 1: The fabric is all the colors combined in a truly stunning pattern.

SWINDLE 2: red, green, purple, aqua marine, gold

EMPEROR: I love gold!

SWINDLE 1: The magic part is the fabric will be invisible to anyone unfit for their position or stupid.

SWINDLE 2: Which means not very smart.

SWINDLE 1: People all over your empire will talk of your outfit for months.

SWINDLE 2: Months? NO! *Years!*

SWINDLE 1: You'll become part of history.

EMPEROR: I must have this outfit. Please, show me your designs.

NARRATOR: So the Swindle siblings negotiated their terms. The finest room in the castle, the finest cloth and silks, gold-

SWINDLE 2: lots and lots of gold.

NARRATOR: And, of course, the best food in the empire.

[Scene shifts to the Swindle's "work" room.]

SWINDLE 1: Would you care for more chocolate mousse?

SWINDLE 2: Yes, please. Would you like a Turkish delight?

NARRATOR: Whenever the Swindles heard someone approach their room they went to work.

[Advisor knocks on the door. The Swindles scramble around and make it look like they are weaving just as Advisor opens the door.]

ADVISOR: Excuse me for interrupting. The Emperor wanted me check on your progress. [Peers at the Swindle 2's hand motions.] How is everything going?

SWINDLE 1: Marvelous!

SWINDLE 2: Delicious! [Swindle 1 scowls at Swindle 2] I mean delightful!

SWINDLE 1: So what do you think of the colors?

ADVISOR: I-I'm...

SWINDLE 1: Speechless?

SWINDLE 2: Lost for words?

NARRATOR: The advisor panicked. He saw nothing, but if he said so everyone would know that he wasn't fit for his position.

ADVISOR: Yes. Your fabric is so... amazing... no words can describe it.... [Looks again trying to see something.] I will... ah... report back to the Emperor.

[The advisor leaves.]

SWINDLE 1: I think he liked it.

[SWINDLE 1 and SWINDLE 2 high five.]

SWINDLE 2: Yeah, I think he did.

NARRATOR: The advisor hurried back to the Emperor to report on the Swindle's progress. He wasn't sure what to tell the Emperor. A man in his position couldn't tell a lie... could he?

EMPEROR: Well, what did you think?

ADVISOR: It was quite... astonishing. The Swindles are weaving the fabric.

EMPEROR: What did it look like?

ADVISOR: The fabric is more beautiful than words. The colors are breathtaking.

EMPEROR: This is exciting. Please schedule a parade in three days so I can show off my *astounding* outfit.

NARRATOR: The Emperor was relieved that his advisor was the right person for the job. The next day the Emperor sent the treasurer to check on the Swindles.

[Show Swindles lounging and drinking. When the knock on the door happens they leap to action pretending to cut fabric.]

TREASURER: I'm here to check on the status of your work.

SWINDLE 1: Wonderful! As you can see we are cutting the fabric.

SWINDLE 2: I have to cut slowly so the fabric doesn't rip.

SWINDLE 1: Come closer and take a peek.

NARRATOR: The treasurer's heart sank. He couldn't believe that after all these years of doing math – he was stupid. As far as he could tell, the Swindles were working on nothing.

TREASURER: Hmm.

SWINDLE 1: What do you think of the pattern?

TREASURER: Well... the pattern is unlike anything I have ever seen. The wispieness reminds me of clouds.

SWINDLE 2: Or maybe a rainbow?

TREASURER: Yes. It certainly is astonishing. I will report back to the Emperor.

SWINDLE 1: Please do. And can you send us more gold? We're running a bit low.

SWINDLE 2: And chocolates!

NARRATOR: The treasurer hurried to the Emperor fretting about his intelligence the entire way.

EMPEROR: Ah, treasurer, tell me the good news.

TREASURER: Your majesty, the Swindles are beginning to cut the fabric.

EMPEROR: Excellent! How does it look?

TREASURER: The colors are light and airy. The pattern is so unusual it reminds me of a rainbow or clouds in the sky.

NARRATOR: The Emperor was relieved to hear that the treasurer was the right person for the job.

EMPEROR: I think tomorrow I will plan to see this fine piece of workmanship.

NARRATOR: The next day, the king and the rest of his advisors paid a visit to the Swindles.

[Show same scamper scene.]

SWINDLE 1: Your Majesty! It is a pleasure to see you.

SWINDLE 2: An honor!

NARRATOR: As the Swindles resumed their sewing, the Emperor felt as if his head were on the guillotine. As far as he could see, there was nothing to sew.

SWINDLE 1: Please tell us what you think of this robe.

EMPEROR: Well... it is definitely... imaginative.

NARRATOR: What else could the Emperor say? He had been Emperor for years. If people found out he was unfit for his position, he'd be humiliated.

[SWINDLE 1 slips the robe on the Emperor.]

SWINDLE 1: [Turns to the group of advisors.] What do you think? Isn't it magnificent?

GROUP: [Each person compliments while looking uncertain and nervous.] Lovely. Incredible. The patterns are one of a kind. Your outfit is remarkable.

SWINDLE 2: What are your thoughts, your majesty?

EMPEROR: Well. It definitely is lightweight. I'm blown away by the delicacy of the colors.

SWINDLE 1: Excellent. Your outfit will be ready for you for tomorrow's parade.

EMPEROR: I look forward to it. There is nothing I love more than a fashion parade.

NARRATOR: The next morning, the king went to the Swindles room to put on his outfit of the century.

SWINDLE 1: Let me help you dress, your majesty.

[Emperor puts on his "new" suit and stares in the mirror for a long time.]

SWINDLE 2: Is everything okay?

EMPEROR: [Rubs his eyes and peers at his reflection.] I see! It's magnificent.

SWINDLE 1: You're definitely going to leave everyone speechless.

ADVISOR: Your majesty. It's a bit cool out. I think you may need a jacket.

SWINDLE 1: Have no worries. We made a jacket.

SWINDLE 2: Here it is.

EMPEROR: Thank you. I love it.

NARRATOR: Whether it was grogginess from a restless sleep or the desire to truly see what wasn't there the Emperor left believing that he was wearing an incredible, magical outfit. In just a few moments, he'd find out who in his empire was clever and who was stupid.

[Emperor parades around in outfit waving at everyone he passes.]

EMPEROR: Advisor, have you noticed how quiet the crowd appears.

ADVISOR: Quite unusual, your majesty.

EMPEROR: I love that I have left everyone lost for words.

NARRATOR: The attendees were surprised. Word had spread about the magic of his outfit. No one wanted to admit that they couldn't see his suit.

[Emperor's parade goes behind wagon. Then the puppet appears in underwear. He shows off.]

CHILD: Mommy, why doesn't the Emperor have any clothes on?

MOM: Shh!

EMPEROR: What? Who said that?

ADVISOR: I believe it was that little boy/girl next to the lady in _____.

EMPEROR: What did you say?

CHILD: You aren't wearing any clothes.

EMPEROR: What?

CHILD: You have no clothes on!

EMPEROR: What?

CHILD AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS: You have no clothes on!

[Emperor looks down and disappears with embarrassment.]

NARRATOR: As predicted, the Emperor's new clothes were talked about for centuries. The Swindle brothers disappeared with all their riches. As for the child who spoke the truth, he/she was hired as the chief fashion advisor. The Emperor wouldn't wear anything until the child had *seen* it.

