The Emperor’s New Clothes

Tutor: I’ve been reading one of Hans Christian Anderson’s stories.

*Student: Hans Christian Anderson?*

Yes. Danish bloke. From Denmark.

*That’s right!*

He wrote stories for children.

*Some very famous ones, too.*

Yes indeed.

*He wrote “The Princess and the Pea”.*

And “The Ugly Duckling”.

*And “The Emperor’s New Clothes”.*

That’s the story I’ve just been reading.

*Have you?*

Yes.

*It’s very well known.*

Maybe.

*It’s a well known saying, too.*

Well, yes, it is.

*Let’s hear the story, then.*

You must know it already!

*Tell me about it all the same.*

OK then.

*Start with “Once upon a time”.*

Mmmmm?

*I like stories that start with “Once upon a time”.*

I’m not sure it does start like that really.

*Never mind!*

OK. Once upon a time there was an Emperor.

*A very vain Emperor.*

A very vain Emperor indeed.

*A very silly Emperor, too.*

He thought about his looks, all day long.

*Spent hours in front of the mirror.*

He never thought about being a proper Emperor.

*But he did have some very nice clothes!*

Of course he did.

*Always something new.*

He always wore the latest fashion.

*And everybody had to admire him.*

Tell him how lovely his clothes were.

*How good he looked.*

How smart he was.

*All day long.*

Day in, day out.

*He was very vain.*

Very vain and very silly.

*But what about the story?*

Well, one day two very, very clever people turned up.

*They were very, very clever people.*

But tricksters. Very, very clever tricksters.

*Yes. And they tricked the Emperor.*

Tricked him big time.

*Big time.*

And he paid them loads of money to do it!

*Remind me how they did it.*

They spun the Emperor a story.

*A really good story!*

A fantastic story.

*About fantastic cloth. I remember now. More or less.*

It was not like any other cloth.

*No.*

It cost a fortune, but was very, very special.

*Or so they said.*

Yes. So they said.

*And he fell for this story.*

Hook, line and sinker.

*What did they say was so special about this cloth?*

Well, for one thing it was amazingly light.

*It was as light as a spider’s web.*

So light you couldn’t tell it was there at all.

*You couldn’t tell you were wearing it.*

You couldn’t feel it at all.

*That wasn’t all, was it?*

No, no, no. It was much more beautiful than any other cloth.

*Yes, but it was even more special than that.*

Yes. It was.

*It could only be seen by good people.*

And clever people.

*Yes.*

Nobody else could see it at all.

*Silly nonsense, of course.*

Absolute nonsense.

*But they were very, very clever.*

And the Emperor fell for it.

*Hook, line and sinker.*

Hook, line and sinker.

*He told them to make him some clothes.*

From this very special cloth.

*Expensive!*

Very expensive.

*Even for an Emperor.*

Even for an Emperor.

*They set up a loom in the palace.*

Pretended they were weaving cloth.

*And sewing clothes.*

But the loom was empty.

*There was no thread in it.*

Just an empty loom.

*And they sewed without thread.*

Well, they said it was invisible thread.

*Of course it was invisible!*

It wasn’t there at all.

*There was nothing there at all.*

It was a trick.

*Just a trick.*

They pretended to weave cloth.

*Cut it.*

And sew it.

*They worked hard.*

Weaving nothing.

*Sewing nothing.*

They worked day in, day out.

*Morning, noon and night.*

And everyone knew about it.

*It was big news in town.*

People could hardly wait to see the Emperor’s new clothes.

*Made from such wonderful cloth.*

So light that you couldn’t feel it.

*And invisible.*

Unless you were clever and good.

*Yes.*

The Emperor asked people to check on it from time to time.

*Of course he did.*

They always came back and said it was coming along fine.

*Of course they did.*

They told the Emperor the cloth was very beautiful.

*They didn’t want to admit that they couldn’t see it at all.*

They must have got a shock when they first saw it.

*Well, they couldn’t see it at all.*

They saw nothing at all.

*Nothing at all.*

They saw the two tricksters, weaving and sewing.

*But no cloth at all.*

Well, of course not.

*There was nothing there to see!*

They couldn’t say that, though.

*No.*

They had to pretend to see the cloth.

*Yes.*

Otherwise people would say they were stupid.

*Or bad.*

So they told the Emperor how beautiful it was.

*Ridiculous!*

But that’s what they felt they had to do.

*And then, one day, the tricksters said they were done.*

The big day had arrived.

*Time for the fitting.*

Time for the Emperor to try on his new clothes.

*And so he came to try them on.*

And got a terrible shock.

*A terrible shock.*

He couldn’t see them at all!

*Not a thing!*

He could see the two tricksters.

*Holding his new clothes up for him.*

Well, they were holding nothing at all, of course.

*But it looked as if they were holding up a set of clothes.*

And everyone was saying how wonderful they were.

*Everyone was saying how beautiful the cloth was, and so on.*

It was absolutely ridiculous!

*Nobody wanted to admit that they couldn’t see anything at all.*

People were pretending to touch the cloth.

*Saying how lovely the colours were.*

How well cut the clothes were.

*How beautiful they were.*

How light they were.

*So light you hardly knew they were there at all.*

Which was true, of course.

*They weren’t there at all.*

But the Emperor tried them on.

*He took off his old clothes.*

All of them.

*And put on his new clothes.*

The tricksters helped him.

*Helped him into the jacket.*

Pulled it a bit over the shoulders, perhaps.

*Brushed it down a bit, maybe.*

Stepped back and had a look.

*Then the Emperor looked in the mirror.*

He pretended he saw his new clothes.

*Turned this way and that.*

Everyone admired them very much.

*Everyone said how good he looked.*

And there was a procession through the town that very day.

*Yes.*

And the Emperor would be at the head of it, of course.

*And the whole town would come to watch.*

And now, he had his wonderful new clothes to wear.

*And that’s what he did.*

He wore his new clothes.

*Which he couldn’t see.*

And which were too light to feel.

*So light you couldn’t feel them.*

Not at all. So light …

*It was as if they weren’t there.*

Which they weren’t, of course.

*The Emperor had no clothes on at all.*

Not a stitch.

*But everyone said how wonderful his new clothes were.*

How beautiful the colours were.

*How good he looked in them.*

All of them did!

*The Emperor was very proud.*

Walking at the head of the procession.

*He was as proud as a peacock!*

His new clothes were wonderful!

*So easy to wear!*

So light!

*He walked along proudly.*

And the crowds all admired his wonderful clothes.

*To begin with, anyway.*

Nobody wanted to say they couldn’t see them at all.

*No, of course not.*

None of them wanted to offend the Emperor.

*You should never offend an Emperor.*

No!

*So everyone clapped and cheered.*

But then the Emperor walked past a little boy.

*A little boy standing in the crowd.*

A little boy who had not heard about the fantastic cloth.

*He just saw the Emperor without any clothes on.*

He was amazed.

*And said so.*

He saw what he saw.

*Then he told it the way he saw it.*

As little children do.

*He could see that the Emperor had no clothes on.*

Not a stitch.

*So he said so.*

Like little kids do.

*Very loud and very clear.*

He shouted “Look! The Emperor has no clothes!”

*“The Emperor has no clothes!”*

And, suddenly, everyone could see that it was true.

*Because the little boy had seen it.*

And told it.

*As children do.*

Soon everyone was laughing at the Emperor.

*“The Emperor has no clothes! The Emperor has no clothes!”*

He must have felt ridiculous.

*Absolutely ridiculous.*

Well, he was.

*I suppose he had to keep walking.*

Oh yes. There was no going back now!

*So that’s what he did.*

He walked all the way through town.

*Without any clothes on.*

With people laughing at him all the way.

*And lots of important people walking with him.*

All feeling absolutely ridiculous.

*It must have been a sight to see!*

I suppose the tricksters had long gone?

*I suppose so!*

They would have enjoyed it.

*I suppose they would.*

More than most, I guess.

*I guess so!*

But they must have been long gone.

*With the Emperor’s money in their pockets.*

Loads of it.

*Yes. Loads of it.*

Laughing all the way.

*Laughing all the way to the bank!*