



Learn English Through Stories

A1 Stories

Elementary Level

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The Emperor's New Clothes

By Hans Andersen

This is a story about an emperor. He loved new clothes, and he had different clothes for every hour of the day.

One day two men visited him. They liked money, but they did not want to work for it.

'We can make wonderful cloth,' they said. 'It's very beautiful cloth, so only clever people can see it.'

'I like it,' the emperor thought. 'Make this cloth - then make me some clothes,' he said to the men. 'Some people won't see them, but they're stupid people!' He gave a lot of money to the two men.

Every day the men asked the king for more money. 'We're working hard,' they said. But they did not make any cloth.

The emperor waited and waited. He wanted his new cloth, but he did not want to visit the two men. And he was afraid. 'Perhaps I won't see the cloth,' he thought. 'Then everybody will know that I'm not a clever man.'

He called a servant. 'Go and look at the new cloth. Ask them: "When will it be ready?"'

The servant went to the men's house, but what did he see? Nothing! There was no cloth. 'What are they doing?' the servant thought.

'Come nearer,' one of the men said. 'Do you like our cloth? Isn't it beautiful?'

The servant looked and looked, but he saw nothing. 'I don't understand,' he thought. 'Am I stupid? I can't tell anybody about this.' He spoke to the men: 'Oh, it's very good - very good,' he said. 'The cloth is beautiful. I'll tell the emperor.'

The emperor waited for two more weeks, then he called another servant. 'When will the cloth be ready?' he cried. 'Find those two men. Ask them!'

This servant went to the two men. They showed him the cloth, but he couldn't see anything.

'Isn't the cloth beautiful?' one of the bad men said. 'The other servant liked it.'

The man thought, 'I can't see the cloth! I'm stupid! But I don't want anybody to know.' He went back to the emperor and said, 'The cloth is wonderful!'

After two or three days, the people in the city started to talk about the beautiful cloth. 'It's very beautiful, but stupid people can't see it,' they said.

Now the emperor really wanted to see the cloth. He took his servants with him and went to the men's house.

'Isn't the cloth beautiful?' said the two men. 'Please look at it. Isn't it pretty? Touch it.' And they put out their hands and showed him.

'I can see nothing,' the emperor thought. 'This is very, very bad. Am I stupid? A stupid man can't be emperor.'

He looked at the men's hands and said to his servants, 'Oh, the cloth is beautiful. I like it.'

The servants looked and looked. But they saw nothing.

'Beautiful! Lovely! Very pretty!' they said. 'The men will make some clothes from this cloth now.'

The emperor happily gave the two men more money.

That night the two men did not go to bed. There were lights in every room in the house.

'The emperor and his people think we're working,' they thought.

Next morning, they went to the palace. 'The emperor's new clothes are ready,' they cried.

The emperor went to their house with his servants. The two bad men put out their arms.

'Here are your clothes,' the men said. 'Put them on.'

'Yes, yes!' said the servants. But they could not see the clothes.

The emperor took off his old shirt and trousers. The two men walked round him and touched his arms and legs.

'We can't see any clothes,' the servants thought. But they said nothing.

'You look wonderful in your new clothes!' everybody cried. 'They are clothes for an emperor!'

'I am ready now. I will walk through the streets,' the emperor said. He looked at his arms and legs. 'These new clothes feel very good. They aren't too big or too small.'

He walked through the streets with his servants and the great men of the country. People stood outside their houses or looked out of the windows. 'Oh, our emperor's new clothes are very beautiful!' they cried. But they thought: 'We can't see any clothes. Are we stupid?'

Then a little child spoke: 'The emperor has no clothes!'

'Be quiet!' his father said. But it was too late.

'The emperor has no clothes!' a man near the child repeated to the woman next to him. She told her friend: 'The emperor has no clothes!'

'The emperor has no clothes!' the people cried. And they started to laugh.

The emperor was angry. 'The people are right,' he thought. 'But I have to walk through the streets.' He walked and walked. His servants and great men followed him, but they knew, too. The emperor had no clothes!