



The Chinese Emperor's New Clothes

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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In this reworking of Hans Anderson's amusing tale we meet Ming Da; a very different kind of ruler. Becoming emperor at only nine year's old, Ming Da's greedy, selfish ministers decide to take advantage of him and steal from the treasury, meaning he is unable to help the people of his kingdom who are poor and hungry. Ming Da is determined to do something about this and hatches a plan with the court tailors. Dressed in rough sacking painted with ink and vegetable juice, the young emperor convinces his foolish ministers he is dressed in finest silks and persuades them to have similar clothes made to wear at the New Year's parade. Each of the vain ministers wants to have the most magnificent costume and pays the tailors with gold, jewels and rice to make their outfit the most splendid. At the parade the crowd roar with laughter when they see the Emperor and his ministers wearing old sacks. Realising they have been tricked, the corrupt officials run away and Ming Da now has the money and food to look after his citizens so that they no longer suffer.

This is a well told story with a clever twist on the original tale. The author's note at the back of the book provides an insight into her own experiences growing up during the Cultural Revolution and her inspiration for the story. Roberts' attractive, stylised illustrations evoke the designs of ancient China and add to the humour, the parade scene is particularly stunning. This would be a great story to share at Chinese New Year and the inclusion of instructions for how to make your own New Year parade costume is a nice touch.

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