Product Code MY550-A

Threads—
The Musical!

An Original Musical Adaptation of the Classic Tale
“The Emperor’s New Clothes”

Book & Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman
Music by Sari Miller

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

EMPEROR; the vain and foolish ruler of the land
EMPRESS; his wise and lovely wife
HYSTER; the court jester prone to panic attacks
GONEV; a sly, flattering thief posing as a “weaver”
GONEVET; his flirtatious female accomplice
SIR EGGED; the pompous advisor to the Emperor
LYNETTE, CELESTE, AGNES; women who work at the marketplace (Vendors)
SIMON, THOMAS, GILBERT; men who work at the marketplace (Vendors)
THE EMPEROR & EMPRESS’S CHILDREN (Ranging in age from 4-12);
    ARTHUR, the oldest
    ELIZABETH
    VICTORIA
    ERIC
    GWEN
    RICHARD
NANNY; the young and saucy caretaker of the royal children
PERFORMERS IN CROWD SCENES (Mostly peasants);
    CHILD #1
    CHILD #2
    CHILD #3
    CHILD #4
    CHILD #5
    CHILD #6
    MOTHER

NOTE: In the marketplace scene, more children can be added to play and dance.

STREET PERFORMERS/PARADE SCENE (Optional);
    DANCERS
    ACROBATS
    JUGGLERS
    MIMES

SETTING
A long time ago, in the Emperor’s palace and in the street outside
SCENES

ACT ONE SCENE 1: Marketplace/Town Square
ACT ONE SCENE 2: Palace - Emperor’s chambers
ACT ONE SCENE 3: Palace - Weaving room
ACT TWO SCENE 1: Palace - Emperor’s chambers
ACT TWO SCENE 2: Town Square – parade

MUSICAL NUMBERS*

ACT ONE SCENE 1: Marketplace/Town Square

MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE?

ACT ONE SCENE 2: Palace - Emperor’s chambers

WHERE DID YOU GO?
HANG ON
THE THINGS WE’LL DO FOR YOU

ACT ONE SCENE 3: Palace - Weaving room

I SEE IT

ACT TWO SCENE 1: Palace - Emperor’s chambers

LOOK AT ME

ACT TWO SCENE 2: Town Square – parade

ONLY HIS UNDERWEAR
EYES WIDE OPEN

*VOCAL SCORE INCLUDING PIANO CHORDS AND MUSICAL NOTATIONS AT END OF SCRIPT
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ACT ONE: SCENE 1

SCENE: The Marketplace/Town Square.

AT RISE: VENDORS arriving at the marketplace, preparing to place their wares on display. CHILDREN are running around and playing. LYNNETTE, CELESTE, and AGNES enter, carrying baskets filled with various goods.

LYNNETTE
Good morning, Celeste!

CELESTE
Good morning to you, Lynnette!

AGNES
Let’s hurry and get our goods out there and make them appealing. You never know who might come today.

LYNNETTE
(Placing her wares on a table) And what royal presence might you be expecting this morning, Agnes?

CELESTE
Surely you don’t think…

LYNNETTE
Think what? Think who?

CELESTE
It’s been years. He’s not who he was.

LYNNETTE
Who’s not who? And if who’s not who, then who is he?

AGNES
(Ignoring her) There once was a time, but no more.

LYNNETTE
No more time for what? For he that’s not him? Him that’s not who?
AGNES
The Emperor, child, the Emperor.

There’s a sudden hush throughout the marketplace. Even the CHILDREN stop playing as ALL look around cautiously.

ALL
The Emperor!

LYNNETTE
The Emperor? He’s coming here today?

CELESTE
Of course not! (Turns to AGNES) He’s not, is he?

AGNES
(Laughs) Why would he come down from his mighty palace to mingle with the likes of us? Him with his fancy talk and his fancy clothes?

CELESTE
He didn’t used to be like that.

AGNES
No, there was a time we mattered. But that time is in the past. Come now…

SIMON, THOMAS, and GILBERT, carrying heavy loads walk by. As soon as they see the three WOMEN, they stop, put their wares down and bow. The WOMEN curtsy in return.

SIMON
(Bowing again, pointedly to CELESTE, with a flourish) Good morning. What a pleasing sight to see such lovely ladies on such a lovely day.

AGNES
You’re flirting up the wrong tree, young pup! We have work to do here.

SIMON
Perhaps your protest rolls too quickly off your tongue, sweet lady. And the name is Simon. These two rogues are Thomas and Gilbert.

SIMON and CELESTE smile at each other. AGNES watches them and shakes her head.

AGNES
To work! It’s time to get to work, all of you before the rest of the village awakens to find nothing to buy but sweet words and longing looks!
THOMAS grabs AGNES’s hand and spins her around.

THOMAS
But my lady, without sweet words and the promise of love, what would there be to live for?
(Winks at LYNETTE)

AGNES
(Snorts) My lady? Isn’t that a fine joke!

GILBERT
(Bows to AGNES until almost touching the floor) Not at all – my lady.

A group of CHILDREN runs past them, laughing.

My lady! Her?

GILBERT
Hold your tongue, child!

THOMAS
Don’t you know a lady when you see one?

CHILD #1
I wouldn’t know. Never seen a lady myself.

CHILD #3
So if we’d see one, we wouldn’t know one, you know?

CHILD #1
What does a lady look like, anyway?

CHILD #2
I think she should be very tall.

CHILD #3
I think she should be very kind.

CHILD #2
I think she should smile a lot.

CHILD #3
I think she should be very beautiful.

CHILD #1
I think if she’s a real lady, she should sneak extra food to us!
CELESTE
Why don’t you shoo now and just go play?

CELESTE and SIMON smile longingly at each other. The children surround them. CELESTE and SIMON make shooing motions at the CHILDREN, who finally scatter.

The three MEN grab various items from the vendor tables, including pieces of cloth, hats, fruit, etc. They hand the items to the WOMEN while singing,

PIANO IN: “MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE”

Note: At the beginning of the song, the MEN hold out pieces of fabric to the WOMEN, who hold the other end as they dance. Also, when the BOYS start singing, they sing to each other, lightly mocking the way the young MEN sing to the WOMEN. But after the second line – My lady is it really you – the GIRLS step in and the BOYS are forced to sing/dance with the GIRLS.

“MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE”

SIMON
(Holds out his hand to Celeste)

MY LADY, MY LADY, YOU’VE GOT ME IN A TRANCE

THOMAS
(Holds out his hand to Lynnette)

MY LADY, MY LADY PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE

GILBERT
(Holds out his hand and shoves it at Agnes)

MY LADY CAN YOU TELL I’VE GOT ON NEW PANTS

SIMON, THOMAS & GILBERT, Together

MY LADY MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE
CELESTE

(Taking Simon’s hand)

KIND SIR
ONE DANCE WITH YOU WOULD BE QUITE PLEASANTLY
ENJOYABLE I DO SUPPOSE

LYNNETTE

(Taking Thomas’s hand)

KIND SIR
THE WORDS YOU SPEAK WILL MAKE ME SO AGREEABLE TO
JUST ANYTHING THAT YOU PROPOSE

AGNES

(Staring at Gilbert’s hand before grudgingly taking it)

KIND SIR
I DO NOT DANCE BUT IF I DID I’M CERTAIN THAT YOU’D END
UP STOMPING ON MY TOES

CELESTE, LYNNETTE & AGNES, Together

WE’LL END UP SAYING YES ALTHOUGH WE’RE PRETTY SURE
YOU’RE JUST A BUNCH OF HANDSOME GIGOLOS

(The Couples begin to dance, sweeping through the marketplace to the rhythm of a waltz.)

THOMAS

MY LADY, MY LADY ONE LOOK FROM YOU ENCHANTS

SIMON

MY LADY, MY LADY THIS COULD BE TRUE ROMANCE

GILBERT

MY LADY MIGHT I FINALLY LEAD PERCHANCE

SIMON, THOMAS & GILBERT, Together

MY LADY MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE
LYNNETTE

KIND SIR
I DO BELIEVE YOU’VE WON ME OVER I’M SO VERY GLAD
THAT I’M THE ONE YOU CHOSE

CELESTE

KIND SIR
YOU’VE GOT MY HEART A-FLUTTERING FROM ALL
OF YOUR BON MOTS

AGNES

KIND SIR
IT’S NICE TO SEE TODAY YOU’RE ACTUALLY WEARING
SOMewhat DECENT CLOTHES

CELESTE, LYNNETTE & AGNES, Together

WE’VE CHANGED OUR MINDS ABOUT YOU ALL JUST BEING
FANCY GIGOLOS

(Waltz music gets louder as they sweep around the marketplace. Several young boys
approach several young girls who are watching. The boys do an exaggerated bow to the girls.
The girls do an exaggerated curtsy in response.)

YOUNG BOYS, Together

MY LADY IS IT TRUE
MY LADY IS IT REALLY YOU
MY LADY THERE’S BEEN A SWITCHEROO
AND WE’VE NO IDEA WHO’S WHO

YOUNG GIRLS, Together

KIND SIR THIS DANCE IS PEACHY KEEN
KIND SIR IT’S NICE TO SEE YOU CLEAN
KIND SIR WILL YOU STOP JUMPING LIKE A JELLY BEAN
BECAUSE WE’RE FEELING JUST LIKE A QUEEN
ALL SINGERS

IT’S SO LOVELY TO JUST DANCE ON AIR
AS IF WE ALL HAVEN’T GOT A CARE
FEELING LIKE OUR TROUBLES ARE BUSY ELSEWHERE
SWEET MOMENTS LIKE THESE ARE BEYOND COMPARE

SIMON, THOMAS & GILBERT

MY DEAREST, MY DEAREST PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE
MY DEAREST, MY DEAREST YOU’VE PUT ME IN A TRANCE
MY DEAREST THIS COULD BE OUR ONE TRUE ROMANCE
MY DEAREST MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE

SIMON, THOMAS, GILBERT, CELESTE, LYNNETTE, & AGNES

MY DEAREST THIS MAY BE OUR ONE TRUE ROMANCE
MY DEAREST MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE.

(Th e couples stop and stare at each other and move in slow motion. But then the children break the spell, laughing and chasing each other. Agnes claps her hands and slowly backs away from Gilbert. She motions for everyone to get back to work. Slowly, reluctantly, they all get back to stocking the marketplace.)

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

ACT ONE: SCENE 2

SCENE: The Palace; inside the Emperor’s chambers

AT RISE: The EMPEROR standing in front of a mirror, admiring himself. He is wearing a terribly ostentatious robe. HYSTER, his aide and court jester, is nervously fussing about, trying to help but only making matters worse.

EMPEROR

Well, what do you think?

HYSTER

It’s marvelous! It’s fantastic! It’s really you!

EMPEROR

I despise it.
HYSTER
It’s awful. It doesn’t do you justice at all. Whoever suggested that you buy it should be hung.

EMPEROR
You suggested that I buy it, you numbskull!

HYSTER
Oh, well, if I did, and of course I did since you say I did, it must have been during one of my periods of temporary night-blindness when I had to decide by touch. (Closes his eyes and gropes around the room) Like this. (Touches the robe with his eyes still closed) You see, it felt so nice and smooth like silk at the time. (Begins tugging the EMPEROR’s hair) But I admit that I was mistaken because now I can tell that it has a rather coarse, greasy feel to it.

HYSTER opens his eyes and jumps back in a panic, realizing his mistake.

EMPEROR
(Glaring) What do you think you’re doing?

HYSTER
Nothing! Just trying to show you…oh-oh! I feel it coming on again!

What’s coming on?

EMPEROR
One of my periods of temporary jumping junipers. Everything makes me jump - you see? (Jumps towards the door) I can’t stop myself!

The door opens and the EMPRESS enters just as HYSTER jumps towards the door and he is so startled by her entrance that he jumps backwards, almost knocking the EMPEROR down.

EMPEROR
Out of my sight, you lamebrain!

HYSTER
Immediately, your Majesty. I jump at your command!

HYSTER jumps out of the room

EMPERESS
What’s the problem, my dear?
I’m surrounded by buffoons.

 Didn’t Hyster like your new robe?

 Of course he did (Pause), and then he didn’t … and then he started pulling my hair and jumping around the room like a hyena!

 How strange. But you shouldn’t let it get you hopping mad. Anyway, I’m here to speak of more important matters.

 Ah, yes, my new outfit for the grand parade next week.

 No, my dear. More important than that.

 More important? What could possibly be more important than what I’m going to wear?

 The people of our land have been waiting to speak to you for many weeks. Many have no jobs and cannot feed their families. They need your help. You are their emperor.

 Yes, yes, some other time. Now what has been done about finding me a new tailor?

 Don’t you care about your own people?

 Of course I do! I wish them all the luck in the world finding jobs and food. Now tell me who we can find to weave me a magnificent new costume.

 (Aside to the Audience) What we need to find is someone who can weave him a magnificent new heart, suited for a leader of the people. (To the EMPEROR) I’ll see what I can do.

 How I despise this coat. Hyster! Come back here you jackrabbit!

 The EMPEROR exits and the LIGHTS CHANGE.
EMPRESS

(To the Audience) Hello. I’m sorry it’s taken us so long to get acquainted, but I wanted to give you some idea of the way things used to be. Deep, deep down, my husband was a good man. But first you had to peel off all those layers of fine clothing to even find the man! He neglected his kingdom, he neglected his friends, he neglected his children. All he cared about was clothes, clothes and more clothes. Only what was on the outside. I tried everything I could think of to get him to change, but I was ready to give up. Until one day…Well, I’ll let you see for yourselves.

PIANO IN: SONG; “WHERE DID YOU GO?”

“WHERE DID YOU GO?”

EMPRESS

(Intro)

CLOTHES, CLOTHES, CLOTHES, CLOTHES
THESE DAYS YOUR ONLY CARE
ALL YOU EVER THINK ABOUT
IS WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO WEAR....

IT’S ALL ABOUT THE LOOK
THE STRUTTING AND THE STYLE
THAT’S ALL YOU EVER SEE
THE GLITTER AND THE GUILE.

THERE WAS A TIME YOU CARED
YOU DIDN’T JUST PLAY A PART
WHAT’S HAPPENED TO YOUR SOUL
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HEART?

WHERE IS THE MAN I USED TO LOVE
THE MAN WHO COULD SEE INSIDE
THE MAN WITH A GRIN
THE MAN WHO TUNED IN
THE MAN WHO WAS ALWAYS ON MY SIDE?

WHY DID THINGS CHANGE
WHEN DID YOU CEASE TO FEEL
WHO WAS IT
WHAT WAS IT
THAT MADE LOOKS YOUR IDEAL?
EMPRESS, Continued

YOUR PEOPLE NEED YOU NOW
THEY NEED YOUR GUIDING HAND
THEY LOOK TO YOU FOR HELP
THEY PRAY YOU’LL UNDERSTAND.

WHERE IS THE MAN I USED TO LOVE
THE MAN WHO COULD SEE INSIDE
THE MAN WITH A GRIN
THE MAN WHO TUNED IN
THE MAN WHO WAS ALWAYS ON MY SIDE?

TRY NOW TO CHANGE
IT’S TIME THAT YOU FEEL
WHO YOU ARE
WHAT YOU ARE
TO YOUR TRUE SELF I APPEAL.

(Instrumental)

THE MAN WITH A GRIN
THE MAN WHO TUNED IN
THE MAN WHO WAS ALWAYS ON MY SIDE.

At end of song, the EMPRESS exits; LIGHTS RESTORE. The EMPEROR storms back into the room followed by a cringing HYSTER.

EMPEROR
If you don’t stop your incessant babbling I’ll have you hanged by your thumbs, you drivelng, blithering…

HYSTER starts gagging, pointing at his mouth.

EMPEROR
What is it now?

HYSTER
Aaah…aaah…

EMPEROR
Spit it our already or I’ll hang you by your tongue!
HYSTER
(As if released from a spell) Oh! Oh! I was going through one of my periods of temporary tongue-tiedness! It was all knotted up, my tongue was. But you’ve cured me and I will be eternally grateful to you, sire!

EMPEROR
And I will be eternally cursed with having to put up with you!

PIANO IN: SONG; “HANG ON”

“HANG ON”

EMPEROR

I’LL HANG YOU BY YOUR NOSE
I’LL HANG YOU BY YOUR TOES
I’LL HANG YOU BY THE BELTS AND BUCKLES DANGLING ON YOUR CLOTHES.

WHEN WILL YOUR BABBLING STOP
I’M GOING TO BLOW MY TOP
FROM WATCHING HOW YOUR THOUGHTS FIRST FLIP AND AFTER HOW THEY FLOP.

OH HOW MY HEAD WILL SPLIT
AND THEN I’LL HAVE A FIT
IF YOUR INCESSANT BELLYACHING DOESN’T QUIT!

YOU’RE A WILD BUFFOON
YOU’RE GOING TO MAKE ME CRAZY SOON
WITH YOUR DAFT AND JUMPY, LOONY WAYS.
YOU ALWAYS MAKE ME NUTS
EVEN UNDERWATER YOUR MOUTH NEVER SHUTS
THIS IS NOT WHAT I WOULD CALL A PHASE.

HYSTER

MY TONGUE IS IN A KNOT
MY FACE IS VERY HOT
I THINK RIGHT NOW MY DARLING EMPEROR REALLY LOVES ME NOT.

I’M PARTIAL TO MY NOSE
ENAMORED OF MY TOES
ATTACHED TO ALL THE BELTS AND BUCKLES THAT ADORN MY CLOTHES.
HYSTER, Continued

I WISH THAT HE COULD SEE
I’M NOT SOME PESKY FLEA
A JESTER’S WHO I AM AND WHO I’LL ALWAYS BE

HE SAYS I’M A WILD BUFFOON
HE THINKS I’LL MAKE HIM CRAZY SOON
BECAUSE I’VE GOT SO MANY SILLY WAYS.
IT’S FUN TO MAKE HIM NUTS
HOW CAN HE BE MAD WITH A LAUGH IN HIS GUTS
I’M HIS LAPDOG HOPING FOR SOME PRAISE.

EMPEROR

I’LL SAY ON YOUR BEHALF
YOU ALWAYS MAKE ME LAUGH

HYSTER

JUST MAKE SURE THAT’S WRITTEN CLEARLY ON MY EPITAPH.

YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND
I ASK FOR NOTHING GRAND
YOU ALWAYS HAVE ME EATING FROM YOUR ROYAL HAND.

EMPEROR

YOU MAY BE A BUFFOON

HYSTER

I’LL HAVE YOU CHUCKLING VERY SOON

EMPEROR

YOU LIKE TO MAKE ME NUTS
BUT MY LAUGHTER SHAKES MY GUTS

HYSTER

\MY JOKES CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY AS YOU SEE.

EMPEROR

YOU’RE MY JESTER AND THAT’S WHO YOU’LL ALWAYS BE.
HYSTER

I’M YOUR JESTER AND THAT’S WHO I’LL ALWAYS BE.

HYSTER & EMPEROR

(Singing at the same time)

EMPEROR

YOU’RE MY JESTER AND
THAT’S WHO YOU’LL ALWAYS BE

HYSTER

I’M YOUR JESTER
AND THAT’S WHO I’LL ALWAYS BE

HYSTER, Spoken, sotto voce

AND I’M NOT A PESKY LITTLE FLEA!

At end of song, there is a KNOCK at the door.

EMPEROR

Enter!

A man (GONEV) and a woman (GONEVET) enter. They are wearing plain working people’s clothes, but there is something very sly and sneaky about them.

GONEV

Aaah, your graciousness, so good to make your acquaintance.

GONEVET

Yes, your imperialness, it is an honor above all honors.

EMPEROR

(Confused, yet flattered) And who, may I ask, are you?

GONEV

(Approaching the EMPEROR) Aaah, excuse me, Sire, my eternal apologies for such a lack of manners. (Pushing HYSTER aside) I am Gonev, at your service. And this lovely creature accompanying me… (Motions for GONEVET to approach)…is Gonevet.

GONEVET winks at the EMPEROR who is startled, yet pleased. GONEV motions more animatedly for GONEVET to approach the EMPEROR.

GONEVET

(Curtsying almost to the ground) Oh, Sire, I could live the rest of my life at your feet.
HYSTER

He’s already got a dog for that.

EMPEROR

Silence, you fool! *(Turns to GONEV and GONEVET)* Please, excuse this brainless unfortunate soul. He will be hung up by his thumbs in the morning.

HYSTER

*(Shaking like a leaf)* Hung…hung…hung…hung…

EMPEROR

By your thumbs.

HYSTER

Bbbbbbbbut….

GONEV

Poor fellow, can’t speak without spitting either. Please don’t string him up on our account.

EMPEROR

We’ll see.

*HYSTER clings to the EMPEROR’S feet, but the EMPEROR’s glare finally forces HYSTER to sheepishly stand up again.*

EMPEROR

I still don’t know what your business is with me.

GONEV

Aaah, clumsy oaf that I am. A thousand pardons, your Emperorness, for the oversight. We are but poor, average, humble weavers who thought perhaps you might be in need of our services, hoping we might possibly weave something, anything that might be of the slightest interest to you.

EMPEROR

Well, I am looking for a new tailor to make a magnificent costume for the parade next week for me, but I don’t know if average weavers can fill the bill.

GONEV

Average? Did I say average?

HYSTER

Average. That’s what you said all right.
GONEV
(Muttering) I see that you have once again found your tongue. (Turning to the EMPEROR) Aaah, but what I meant to say, your Imperial Clothestorseness…

EMPEROR
What?

GONEVET
What he meant to say, Sire, is we’re the best in town. Gonev sometimes gets a little too modest for his own good.

GONEV
Yes, quite right. You see, your Majesterialness, we weave the most wonderful cloth in all the world.

EMPEROR
The most wonderful cloth?

GONEVET
In all the world.

GONEV
The colors are of such incredible richness, they would put a peacock to shame.

EMPEROR
A peacock?

GONEVET
To shame.

GONEV
The pattern is of such stunning complexity and originality, it would take another weaver centuries to try to duplicate it.

EMPEROR
Centuries?

HYSTER
(Jumping in) To be duped.

GONEV and GONEVET scowl at HYSTER.

GONEV
But…there is one thing that makes our cloth truly the most fantastic in the world.
EMPEROR

And that is?

GONEV

It can only be seen by the honest and wise. It is invisible to anyone who is incredibly stupid… (Nods pointedly at HYSTER) …or someone not suited for his position.

GONEVET

But of course, your handsomeness, you’ve got nothing to worry about. You’re so wise and so…well-suited for your position, you’ll be very pleased with your gorgeous new clothes.

PIANO IN: SONG; “THE THINGS WE’LL DO FOR YOU”

“THE THINGS WE’LL DO FOR YOU”

GONEVET

OH, MISTER EMPEROR, THE THINGS WE’LL DO FOR YOU
YEAH, MISTER EMPEROR, YOU HAVEN’T GOT A CLUE
WOW, MISTER EMPEROR, WE’LL MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE
THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN’T DO.

GONEV

(Gonevet nudges him to say something)

OH, MISTER EMPEROR, THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN’T WEAVE
YEAH, MISTER EMPEROR, YOU’LL HOPE WE NEVER LEAVE
WOW, MISTER EMPEROR, WE KNOW YOU’RE NOT NAIVE
SEE, THERE’S NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE,

GONEV & GONEVET

GIVE US A PIECE OF FABRIC AND:

WE’LL TWIST IT AND TURN IT
WE’LL ROCK IT AND ROLL IT
WE’LL MAKE AN OUTFIT LIKE NOTHING YOU’VE EVER SEEN

WE’LL SHAPE IT AND MOLD IT
WE’LL FLIP IT AND FOLD IT
ALL YOUR SUBJECTS WILL OOH AND AAH AND THEN THEY’LL TURN GREEN

THEIR EYES WILL BE ROLLING
THEIR HEADS WILL BE LOLLING
YOU’LL HAVE TO QUICKLY PUT THEM IN QUARANTINE
GONEVET

OH, I’LL BE YOUR BRAND NEW FRIEND

GONEV

SHE WOULD SURELY NOT PRETEND

GONEVET

ALL YOUR DOUBTS YOU SHOULD SUSPEND

GONEV

AS LONG AS YOU’VE GOT GOLD TO SPEND.

GONEV & GONEVET

WE’LL TWIST YOU AND TURN YOU
WE’LL ROCK YOU AND ROLL YOU
WE’LL MAKE YOU WEAR THINGS LIKE NOTHING YOU’VE EVER SEEN
WE’LL SHAPE YOU AND MOLD YOU
WE’LL FLIP YOU AND FOLD YOU
UNTIL YOU OOH AND YOU AAH AND THEN YOU’LL TURN GREEN
YOUR EYES WILL BE ROLLING
YOUR HEAD WILL BE LOLLING
YOU’LL END UP QUICKLY PUT INTO QUARANTINE.

GONEVET

OH, MISTER EMPEROR, THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN’T MAKE

GONEV

YES, MISTER EMPEROR, YOUR PRIDE WE WON’T FORSAKE

GONEV & GONEVET

OH, MISTER EMPEROR, ON THIS DEAL NOW LET US SHAKE

OH, MISTER EMPEROR, THE THINGS WE’LL DO FOR YOU
YEAH, MISTER EMPEROR, YOU HAVEN’T GOT A CLUE
WOW, MISTER EMPEROR, WE’LL MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE
AND THERE’S NOTHING WE CAN’T DO.

At end of song, the EMPEROR continues.
EMPEROR
Yes, yes! I must have my costume made from this wondrous cloth. Then I will be able to discover who in my kingdom is fit or not fit for his office - and I will be able to tell the wise from the stupid. And, of course, I’ll look fantastic, too. You must begin at once!

GONEV
Of course, your emperorship. Now, there is just the teensy weensy matter of...money.

Now we get down to business.

HYSTER

EMPEROR
(Waving his hand in the air) I will pay you whatever you wish.

GONEV
Well, we will need the finest looms, the finest silks, the finest gold thread, and...well...that’s all I can think of for now.

GONEVET
Gonev, sweetie, aren’t you forgetting one more itsy bitsy thing?

(Rubs his chin) I don’t think so.

GONEVET
The gold?!

GONEV
Aaah, yes, there is the small matter of the gold – operating expenses, you know.

EMPEROR
Yes, yes, you will be paid handsomely for your work.

HYSTER
(Aside to the audience) A handsome price for a handsome fool.

GONEV
Well, Sire, if you’ll excuse us, we’ll go to work right away.

GONEVET
See you later, your Highnessness.

GONEVET smiles at the EMPEROR. GONEV and GONEVET exit.
EMPEROR
What a wonderful pair of weavers that is.

HYSTER
They’re a wonderful pair of something—I don’t know if it’s weavers.

EMPEROR
Watch your tongue, you impudent rascal. I still haven’t decided whether or not to have you hung by those thumbs.

Hung…hung…hung…hung...

BY THE THUMBS.

HYSTER
By the thumbs.

EMPEROR
But Sire…Oh! Oh! Oh!

HYSTER
What is it now?

EMPEROR
Oh! I’m going through one of my periods of temporary knock-kneedness! They just keep knocking and knocking! Knock-knock!

There is a loud KNOCK at the door as HYSTER says, “Knock-knock.”

EMPEROR
Who’s there?

HYSTER
Sincha.

EMPEROR
Sincha who?

HYSTER
Sincha don’t know, I’m not gonna tell you!

EMPEROR
You lamebrain! The door! Open the door!

HYSTER opens the door and the EMPRESS enters.
HYSTER
Excuse me, your majesties, but it’s my knees - the noise must be deafening with all of that knocking. If you’ll just excuse me…

*HYSTER edges towards the Audience.*

EMPEROR
Get back here, you yellow-bellied bumbler! *(To the EMPRESS)* Excuse me, my dear, I’ll be right back. Hyster! Get back here or you won’t have any knees left to knock!

*The EMPEROR chases HYSTER through the Audience.*

*LIGHTS CHANGE.*

EMPRESS
*(To the Audience)* And so the weavers went to work - or so they said. They did set up two weaving looms, and they did order a great deal of the finest silk thread. And they did work from dawn ‘til dusk… but, I’ll let you be the judges.

*The EMPRESS exits as LIGHTS FADE OUT.*

**ACT ONE: SCENE 3**

*SCENE: The Palace; the weaving room.*

*AT RISE:* GONEV and GONEVET busily at work at their empty looms.

GONEVET
Gonev, I’m getting awfully tired of sitting here making noise at this loom all day. Why can’t I just sit here and read a magazine or something?

GONEV
Because, my simple beauty, first of all, the printing press hasn’t been invented yet! Second of all, it must sound as if we’re working so that everyone will think that we’re working. And today is going to bring our first big challenge.

GONEVET
What’s that, honey?

GONEV
The Emperor is sending his most trusted advisor, Sir Egged, to check out our work.

GONEVET
Today?
Today. What’s the big deal? We can pull it off.

But I’m not even half done!

What?

I’ve got a lot more to do here before anyone can see it.

See what?

See the…oh…I see what you mean.

There is a loud KNOCK at the door. GONEV and GONEVET work busily at their looms as SIR EGGED enters.

(Does not turn around) Who’s there?

It is I—Sir Egged.

Oh, sir, so good of you to come.

Yes, well, the Emperor has sent me to be the first to view the wondrous cloth. (Looks at the two empty looms) Now where is it?

Where is it?

Where is it?

Where is it?

(Chuckles) Ha-ha-ha! Sir Egged, I must say that I do enjoy your sense of humor!
GONEVET
(Giggling) And I thought all you minister types were all stuffy old men with no sense of fun. But you, sir, you’re a crackup! Why, the cloth is right here on our looms - as if you didn’t know.

SIR EGGED
Heh-heh. As if I didn’t know.

SIR EGGED walks closer to the looms. He walks around the looms, sticking his face practically into the looms. He takes off his spectacles and wipes them clean, then puts them back on and stares at the looms once again. LIGHTS CHANGE.

SIR EGGED, Continued
(To the Audience) Could it be that I’m stupid? Horror of horrors, it can’t be that I’m unfit for my position! No, no, the ultimate responsibility for the resolution of the solution must lie with my new spectacles!

SIR EGGED approaches a CHILD in the Audience.

SIR LEGGED, Continued
Could you please clean these for me? I don’t seem to have done a very successful job. Oh, thank you for your overwhelming kindness. (Puts the spectacles back on) What?! I still can’t see any cloth on those looms! But I can’t let on that I can’t see anything or the Emperor will think I’m not suited for my position!

LIGHTS RESTORE.

GONEV
Sir Egged, what is your opinion of our work?

SIR EGGED
Magnificent! Truly a tribute to our trusty, tantamounty terrific tyrant – oops, I mean leader!

GONEVET
(Pretends to hold the cloth) Don’t you just love the blending of the colors?

SIR EGGED
Oh yes, a formaibly confounding confabulation of...red and blue?

GONEV
Gold and silver.

SIR EGGED
Gold and silver! That’s what I said, isn’t it?
And what about the unusual design we did around the border?

Yes, yes. I have always been infatuated with a border of... *(Looks to the Audience for help)*...diamonds?

Snowflakes.

Snowflakes? Oh, you’re quite right, quite right, now that I’ve gotten a closer look.

Sir Egged, honey, maybe you should get yourself new glasses or something. It doesn’t seem like you’re seeing things too well.

Yes, yes, my dear, perhaps you’re right.

You know, my most favorite part of the whole thing is the design right here in the middle. Isn’t it wonderful? Come here and touch it!

*SIR EGGED walks over to GONEVET and tries to touch the cloth.*

Not there, silly, right here in the middle! You must be working too hard or something. Maybe you should ask the Emperor for some time off.

Oh, you mean right here! Yes, it does have quite a magnificently opalescent opulence to it.

(To GONEVET) What did he just say?

That it feels good. But Sir Egged, what do you think of the design itself? I ask you, have you ever seen anything quite like it in your entire life?

No, no, I honestly can’t say that I have.

*There is a KNOCK at the door. HYSTER enters.*
GONEV
What do you want?

HYSTER
Her Majesty has sent me to view the cloth.

GONEV
Well, Jester, what do you think?

HYSTER walks around the loom, repeating the path that SIR EGGED took. Since he doesn’t wear spectacles, he keeps rubbing his eyes, trying to clear his vision, hoping to see the cloth.

HYSTER
(To the Audience) What is this? I know that I’m not stupid. Could this mean that I’m unfit for my position? Oh, horror of horrors, it can’t be! And there’s that swell-head, Sir Egged, admiring the cloth! How is it that he can see it and I can’t? Oh, please don’t tell them that I can’t see anything or I’ll lose my job! I’ll just have to pretend that I can see it, too.

GONEV
Well, clown, what do you think of our wondrous cloth? Or, can’t you see it?

HYSTER
Of course I can see it. What do you think of it, Sir Egged?

SIR EGGED
Why, it’s simply the most surprisingly satisfying stitchery I’ve ever seen! Don’t you agree?

HYSTER
Anything you say.

SIR EGGED
Don’t you just love the blending of the colors?

HYSTER
Oh, yes! Green and orange are my favorite colors.

SIR EGGED
Gold and silver.

HYSTER
That’s what I said, gold and silver!

SIR EGGED
No you didn’t!
HYSTER
I know what I said, liar, liar pants on fire!

GONEV
Gentlemen, please!

SIR EGGED
And what do you think of the unusual design around the border?

HYSTER
Oh, it’s just wonderful. I’ve always loved… (Looks to the audience for help)…circles?

SIR EGGED
Diamonds.

GONEV
Snowflakes.

SIR EGGED
Snowflakes, that’s what I said.

HYSTER
No you didn’t, that’s what I said!

SIR EGGED
I know what I said!

GONEV
Gentlemen!

SIR EGGED
Come over here and look at the design right in the middle. Come feel the fabulously fantastic flaxen fabric. You’ll be flabbergasted.

HYSTER
What did he say?

GONEV
That you’ll like it.

HYSTER
Where should I touch it?

SIR EGGED
Right here in the middle.
HYSTER
*(Pretending to touch the cloth)* Oh, it’s wonderful! The softest thing I’ve ever touched. The Emperor will be so pleased. It’s softer than a bunny! Softer than a cotton ball! Softer than a baby’s…

SIR EGGED
You’re touching the edge, fool! I said the center!

HYSTER
I know what I’m touching!

SIR EGGED
I bet you can’t even see it, Jester!

HYTER
I bet you can’t even see it, fathead!

GONEV
Gentlemen!

GONEVET
Excuse me, but you haven’t even said what you think of the intricate design in the center.

SIR EGGED
*(Excessively polite)* You first.

HYSTER
*(Same tone as Sir Egged)* Oh, no Sir, I couldn’t. After you.

I insist!

SIR EGGED
And I persist! No, Sir, a sir must go first.

HYSTER
Well, I must say, it is genuinely the grandest, most grandiose, glittering…er…geranium I’ve ever seen!

GONEV
It’s not a geranium.

HYSTER
Of course it’s not a geranium! My dear Sir Egged, you should really get your spectacles cleaned. No, it’s quite a work of art. You are both to be congratulated.
SIR EGGED

For what?

HYSTER

For what? Why, easy for you to say. For the most lovely...er...lion that I’ve ever seen!

SIR EGGED

Lion! That’s a laugh! Lion! Ha-ha! You should get your eyes examined! Lion! (Stops laughing and turns to Gonev) It’s not a lion, is it?

GONEV

Why, I’m surprised that neither one of you has guessed what it is. Gonevet, my dear, you tell them.

GONEVET

Me? Why me? Oh well, it’s a ...ah...it’s...ah...ah...ah...peacock!

SIR EGGED & HYSTER, Together

A peacock?

GONEV

A peacock? Aaaah yes, of course, a peacock. And a truly magnificent one at that, wouldn’t you say?

HYSTER

Why, it’s wonderful!

SIR EGGED

Outrageously outstanding ostentatiousness! I must offer you my congratulations.

PIANO IN: SONG; “I SEE IT”

“I SEE IT”

HYSTER

I SEE IT
I SEE IT
I REALLY GUARANTEE IT
I SEE IT
I SEE IT
I REALLY REALLY DO.
HYSTER, Continued

THE CIRCLES
SO ROUND
THEY REALLY LEAVE ME SPELLBOUND
THEY’RE CURVY
AND SWERVY
THEIR BEAUTY DOES ASTOUND.

SIR EGGED

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU PERCEIVE
TELL ME SOMETHING THAT I CAN BELIEVE
IT’S QUITE CLEAR THAT YOUR TRUE PURPOSE IS
TO NOW DECEIVE

THEY’RE DIAMONDS
THEY GLITTER
THEY MAKE ME ALL A-TWITTER
THEY SHIMMER
AND GLIMMER
SO BEAUTIFULLY FROUFROU

THE MIDDLE
HAS FLOWERS
WITH ALL THEIR LOVELY POWERS
THE GERANIUM
FILLS MY CRANIUM
ROYAL COLORS THROUGH AND THROUGH

HYSTER

WHY IS IT THAT YOU PERSIST
CONTINUING TO INSIST
THAT YOU’RE CERTAIN THERE IS SOMETHING THAT
I MUST HAVE MISSED

THERE’S LIONS
THEY’RE SCARY
THEY’RE REALLY REALLY HAIRY
THEY’RE WILD BEASTS
THEY LOVE FEASTS
OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE ME.

I SEE IT
SIR EGGED

NO, I DO

HYSTER

YOU’RE NUTTY LIKE A CASHEW

SIR EGGED

YOU’VE NO BRAIN

HYSTER

YOU’RE A ROYAL PAIN

SIR EGGED

YOUR INSULTS I ESCHEW

HYSTER & SIR EGGED

I SEE IT
I SEE IT
I REALLY GUARANTEE IT
I SEE IT
I SEE IT
I REALLY REALLY DO.

JUST A DREAM COME TRUE
RIGHT HERE IN FULL VIEW
ALL I KNOW IS THAT I REALLY SEE IT MORE THAN YOU.

At end of song, there is a KNOCK on the door. The EMPRESS enters with her ROYAL CHILDREN, ranging in age from approximately four to twelve years old. They are ARTHUR, ERIC, RICHARD, ELIZABETH, GWEN and VICTORIA. They are also accompanied by an extremely harried NANNY.

GONEV
Aah, your beauteousness, welcome to our humble working conditions.

GONEVET
What an honor, your Empressness.
ARTHUR, ERIC, RICHARD, ELIZABETH, GWEN and VICTORIA break free of their NANNY’s hold and begin racing around the room, chasing each other, running back and forth between the looms, knocking down tables and causing general havoc.

GONEV

(Staring haughtily at the CHILDREN) What wonderful…aaah…little ones you have my lady.

ARTHUR runs up to GONEV and stomps him on the toe.

ARTHUR

I am not little! I am Arthur and I am twelve!

GONEV

(Hopping around on his good foot) So sorry for misspeaking.

VICTORIA

And I am six, but I’m not little neither!

VICTORIA runs up to GONEV and stomps on his other toe. He doubles over. ELIZABETH and GWEN knock over one of the weaving looms.

GONEVET

Oh my gosh! Look what you’ve done to my beautiful creation, you little…you little… (Looks up to see the EMPRESS staring at her) …you little darlings! Don’t worry, I’ll have it fixed in a jiff.

ELIZABETH

Sorry.

GWEN

Me, too.

GONEV

(Jumps in swiftly) No harm done. We’ll just dust off the cloth and it will be as good as new.

ERIC

What cloth?

GWEN

Yeah, what cloth? You mean all this gold stuff? (Picks up gold thread)
ELIZABETH
It’s not really cloth, is it then?

GONEVET
(Grabs the gold thread from her hands) Uh, little girl, can I have that back please? We’re in the middle of making a beautiful costume for your daddy.

RICHARD
Stop calling us little!

GONEVET backs away from him, afraid RICHARD will stomp her toes, too.

NANNY
Children, please behave yourselves! You promised your mother you would be good if she let you see what the weavers were working on.

ERIC
All I see is a bunch of thread.

GWEN
Yeah. And some looms.

ELIZABETH
And those tables.

VICTORIA
And these silly weavers.

NANNY
Victoria, hush child!

ERIC
But, Nanny, she’s right.

RICHARD
Yes, Nanny, they are being awfully silly, pretending…

GONEVET
(Pleadingly addressing the EMPRESS) Your graciousness, what a delightful surprise, gracing us with the presence of your absolutely adorable offspring. I could never have asked for so much joy in one day.

GONEVET
(Rolling her eyes) Neither could I.
HYSTER sidles up to NANNY and gives her a wink. She blushes and turns away, but the CHILDREN have noticed and begin to giggle.

SIR EGGED
Children, you are being rambunctiously and ridiculously rude.

HYSTER kisses the air as he stares at NANNY and the CHILDREN laugh even harder.

GONEV
But is it really fair to such…aaah, active young souls to keep them inside on such a glorious day as we have today?

NANNY
Your majesty, perhaps I should take the children outside so they can unleash their joy outdoors away from tables and looms.

EMpress
(Nods in agreement) Perhaps you are right, Nanny. Fresh air will do them some good.

NANNY tries not to look at HYSTER who is now winking and making kissing motions toward her simultaneously.

NANNY
Come, children. Perhaps we can run races and the swiftest one will get the lion’s share of the sweet candy I have in my bag here.

HYSTER
(Unable to control himself) Ooooh! Ooooh! Me! Me! I can run fast! I can run like a rabbit! Candy, candy, candy!

SIR EGGED
Control yourself you nattering nincompoop!

NANNY
(Flirtatiously to HYSTER) I will save you a piece of candy myself, Jester, if you wish to join us when you are done here.

HYSTER
I will run like the wind!

SIR EGGED
Just be sure not to trip over your own tongue, fool.
HYSTER glares at SIR EGGED and puts up his fists as if preparing to fight when the EMPRESS shakes her head and turns toward her CHILDREN.

EMPRESS
OK, my angels, off you go. Arthur, Eric, Richard, Elizabeth, Gwen and Victoria, you listen to Nanny now and don’t give her any trouble, do you understand?

THE CHILDREN
(Simultaneously) We promise, Mother. We’ll be good.

ARTHUR
We’ll be very, very good for our darling Nanny, won’t we?

ELIZABETH
Very, very, very good!

The CHILDREN nod their heads and continue to giggle as they race out of the room.

NANNY
Come along now. You have done enough mischief for one day!

NANNY turns back to smile at HYSTER as she flounces out of the room. GONEV sighs with relief as he straightens out the work area.

GONEV
(Sighing) Such lovely, lovely children. Aaah, your loveliness, to what do we owe this high and mighty honor?

EMPRESS
I have come to see the cloth.

GONEV
Yes, it is right here, your imperialness, on the loom. These two fine gentlemen here have been admiring its wondrous beauty.

EMPRESS
Have they? What have you to say, Sir Egged?

SIR EGGED
Well, your majesty, I must say that never in my life have I seen anything quite like it.

EMPRESS
And you, Hyster?
HYSTER
What he said.

GONEV
Your majesty, if you come closer, you’ll be able to see the intricate workmanship we’ve done.

SIR EGGED
The blending of the colors is remarkable.

EMPRESS
Is it?

HYSTER
The black and blue blend together so nicely.

GONEV, GONEVET & SIR EGGED, Together
Gold and silver!

GONEV
And the design around the border is so unusual.

EMPRESS
I hadn’t noticed.

HYSTER
Oh, but your majesty, look at all the…uh…all the …uh…uh…

SIR EGGED
Diamonds.

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Snowflakes!

EMPRESS
Is that what they are? What a strange choice for a border design.

GONEVET
If you please, your Empressness, it’s the best thing we could come up with on such short notice.

GONEV
(Nervously) Aaaah, your Royalness, please come here and examine our most incredible achievement— the design in the center.

EMPRESS
Why don’t you just describe it to me? (Waits for someone to speak) Well, gentlemen?
SIR EGGED
Why, your majesty, it’s such an astonishingly astounding artistic achievement…I just can’t find words for it.

HYSTER
(Aside) Could’ve fooled me!

EMPRESS
And you, Hyster? Can you find the words to describe the design of this “miracle cloth?”

HYSTER
Well, your majesty, it’s so incredible that I’m tongue-tied. See?

HYSTER shows the EMPRESS his tongue.

EMPRESS
The problem is that I seem to be having some trouble making out the design. What is it exactly supposed to be?

SIR EGGED
Why, it’s a…

HYSTER
You see, it’s a …

SIR EGGED
Geranium!

HYSTER
Lion!

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Peacock!

EMPRESS
A peacock, is it? No one seems to be too sure about it. (To the Audience) Do you see a peacock there? (To GONV and GONEVET) Now, where exactly did you say that design was?

GONEV
(Wiping the sweat from his brow) Right here, your majesty, in the center.

EMPRESS
(Walking over to GONEV & GONEVET at the loom) The center, you say? Well, I must be exceedingly slow today but I really am having trouble finding the center. Why don’t you place my hand on it so I can see it more easily?
GONEV and GONEVET each take one of the EMPRESS’s hands and place them at opposite ends of the loom. Realizing their mistake, they try to rectify the situation by moving the EMPRESS’S hands again, but end up criss-crossing her arms and getting very tangled up. Finally, the EMPRESS pulls herself free.

EMPRESS
Is the design at the center so small that you can’t even find it?

GONEV
Aaah, your Highnessness, please forgive all the confusion. It’s just that we’re so nervous having someone of your great importance and astounding beauty in our humble chambers…

EMPRESS
How you do flatter me! All the same, you all seem to be having great difficulty in remembering what the design looks like when it’s right here in front of you. I find that rather strange, don’t you? Sir Egged, Hyster, how do you account for this?

SIR EGGED
Why, your majesty, it must be my new spectacles. I must need a new prescription because I am in a peculiarly pathetic plight posed by my sight…or lack of it, so to speak.

GONEV, GONEVET, HYSTER & EMPRESS, Together
(To the Audience) What did he say?

SIR EGGED
I’m having trouble seeing, you see.

EMPRESS
And you, Hyster?

HYSTER
Well, your Majesty, you see, I can’t, ah, ah, oh, oh!

EMPRESS
What is it?

HYSTER
It’s one of my periods of temporary lame-brainedness!

GONEV
Temporary? Ha!

EMPRESS
Oh, you poor dear.
HYSTER is mugging for sympathy. He drops his head all the way to the side and then pushes it up with his hand so it is only slightly tilted.

HYSTER
Oh, yes, your majesty, poor me. When my brain goes lame I must hold my head with my hand since there are no canes for brains.

GONEV
It seems to me the Emperor would be doing you a favor if he had you hung by your thumbs.

HYSTER’s head snaps into an upright position once again.

EMPRESS
Oh, dear Hyster, I’m so glad to see that you’ve recovered.

GONEV
Looks like miracles still happen.

EMPRESS
I have a question I wish to pose to you.

GONEV, GONEVET, SIR EGGED & HYSTER, Together
Yes, your majesty?

EMPRESS
Do any of you feel that I am lacking in brains?

ALL
Oh, no your Majesty!

EMPRESS
Well then, do any of you feel that I am not suited to be Empress?

ALL
Oh, NO your Majesty!

EMPRESS
So far so good. That leaves me with one more question. If I am not stupid… (ALL shake their heads emphatically) …and if I am well-suited to be Empress, why is it that I don’t see any cloth? No gold and silver, no snowflakes, no peacock?

ALL stand there, looking at the floor.
EMPRESS, Continued
Sir Egged, I ask you, could it be that the reason you are so confused over what the cloth looks like be because you really can’t see anything at all?

SIR EGGED
Well, I, uh…

EMPRESS
The truth, please.

SIR EGGED
No, your Majesty, I can’t see the cloth.

HYSTER mugs for the Audience, thinking he has triumphed over SIR EGGED.

EMPRESS
And, Hyster, I now ask you the same question.

HYSTER
Well, uh, I, er… (Falls to his knees) …I love my job!

Hyster?

EMPRESS
No, your Majesty, I can’t see the cloth.

EMPRESS
Thank you. Now, for my next question—if I can’t see the cloth and Sir Egged can’t see the cloth and Hyster can’t see the cloth and my children couldn’t see the cloth…is it that we’re all incredibly stupid and unfit for our positions? Or is it that there really isn’t any cloth at all?

SIR EGGED and HYSTER brighten. GONEV & GONEVET are visibly panicked.

GONEV
Aaaah, well, your Majesterialness, you see…

EMPRESS
You know that if there is no cloth, and I don’t think there is, you have tried to deceive the Emperor of this land and all of his people—all for gold. Do you have any idea what the punishment is for such a terrible offense as yours?

GONEVET
A train ticket out of town to a nice out-of-the-way place in the country?
EMPERESS
The punishment would be …for you both to be …hung by your thumbs.

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Hung…hung…hung…hung…

HYSTER
By those pretty little thumbs!

*HYSTER sticks out his tongue and puts his hands behind his ears, waving his fingers at GONEV and GONEVET who fall to their knees and cling to the EMPRESS.*

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Oh, your Majesty, please spare us!

GONEV
Have pity! We meant no harm. We just thought we could make some easy money.

GONEVET
You and your bright ideas.

GONEV
What do you mean, my idea? It was your idea, you little…

EMPERESS
That’s enough of that! Now get up, both of you! I think that you have learned your lesson.

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Oh, yes your Majesty!

EMPERESS
I’m thinking that I might spare you.

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Oh YES, your Majesty!

EMPERESS
Under one condition.

GONEV
Just name it, your Compassionateness.

EMPERESS
That you don’t tell the Emperor that there isn’t any cloth. Let him go to the parade thinking that he is wearing his magnificent new costume.
GONEV
But, your Highnessness, he’ll only be wearing…

HYSTER
His underwear!

EMPRESS
That’s right.

GONEV
He’ll have us killed for sure!

EMPRESS
No, I won’t let that happen. He needs to be taught a lesson and this is my last hope. Now not a word to anyone about this - it must remain a secret just between us.

ALL
Yes, your Majesty.

EMPRESS
Good. Now off with you.

ALL exit except for the EMPRESS, who addresses the Audience.

EMPRESS, Continued
Well, what do you think of my little plan? This is the only way we’ll ever teach the Emperor how foolish he has been, only caring for his clothes and not his people. It’s almost time for the grand parade. We must let him think at first that he is wearing clothes, although we know better, don’t we? But when the time comes to tell him how foolish and silly he has been…well, I’ll need your help. Excuse me, but I must get ready.

As EMPRESS exits, LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE
ACT TWO: SCENE 1

SCENE: The Palace; the Emperor’s chambers.

AT RISE: The EMPEROR in front of his mirror wearing nothing but his crown and his long johns. There is a KNOCK at the door.

EMPEROR

Enter!

HYSTER

(Entering nervously) Excuse me, Sire, but the weavers are here.

EMPEROR

It’s about time—the parade is about to begin. Well, numbskull, don’t just stand there…show them in!

GONEV and GONEVET enter, trying not to show how nervous they are. They are pretending to carry the costume. The EMPEROR’S back is to them.

EMPEROR

Well, you’ve come just in the nick of time. Let me see my magnificent new costume!

The EMPEROR turns around and his eyes bulge, seeing nothing in their hands.

GONEV

Aaaah, your Imperialness, here is your costume to end all costumes.

Where?

EMPEROR

GONEV

Right here, Sire. Let us help you get dressed since there isn’t much time. We had a few last minute…aaah…alterations to make so it would be even finer.

GONEVET

Your Majesterialness, you’re not saying a word. Don’t you like it?

EMPEROR

Why, why, of course I do! It’s even more astonishing than Hyster or Sir Egged described.
HYSTER
I bet you’ve never seen anything like it before, eh, your majesty?

EMPEROR
There’s a great deal of truth to that.

GONEV
(Pretending to hold pants) Here are the pants, your Foolishness.

EMPEROR
What was that?

GONEVET
(Giving GONEV a dirty look) The pants, your Emperorness…why don’t you step into them?

GONEV holds his hands out and the EMPEROR pretends to step into the pants.

GONEV
Aaaah, they fit you like a glove, Sire!

EMPEROR
(Looking into the mirror) They’re not bad at all, you know?

GONEV
And here’s the shirt—magnificent, isn’t it? The cloth is as light as a shadow…you can barely feel it at all.

EMPEROR
Yes, barely at all. Well, help me get into it.

GONEV helps him. The EMPEROR has his arms out, pretending he’s getting into the shirt.

GONEV
Oh, your Majesty, hold still for a moment. I can’t seem to get the collar on over your head!

EMPEROR
(Gasping for air and falling to his knees) Hurry! I’m suffocating in this shirt!

GONEV gives a great pretend tug and then helps the EMPEROR to his feet.

GONEV
There we go, Sire!
EMPEROR
Oh, that’s better. That shirt almost strangled me! But it is quite beautiful—and I’ve never had one that fit me better.

*There is a KNOCK at the door and SIR EGGED enters.*

SIR EGGED
Excuse me, Sire, but Her Majesty asked me to tell you that she still isn’t ready. She said for you to proceed in your pompous plans for the parade and she will promptly meet you there.

EMPEROR
Fine, fine. Tell me, Sir Egged, what do you think of my costume?

SIR EGGED
A marvelous melee of magnificent munificence, truly, Sire.

EMPEROR
Oh. But do you like it?

SIR EGGED
A spectacle of spectacular significance!

GONEV
*(Pretending to hold a cloak in his hands)* Excuse me, your Highnessness, but now, for the finishing touch. The cloak.

EMPEROR
*(Straining to see)* Remarkable! A work of art! I salute you for your superb craftsmanship.

GONEV & GONEVET, Together
Thank you, your majesty.

GONEV
*(Pretends to carry the cloak while GONEVET joins him and pretends to fasten it around the EMPEROR’S neck.)*

Ah, Sire, you are truly a specimen to behold.

EMPEROR
Why, thank you.

*PIANO IN: SONG; “LOOK AT ME”*
“LOOK AT ME”

EMPEROR

WHEN I WAS JUST A BOY, A SMALL AND TENDER SPROUT
SELF-CONFIDENCE IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY.
BECAUSE MY OLDER BROTHER WAS THE FAVORITE SON
THE GOLDEN APPLE OF MY PARENTS’ EYE.

I IMAGINED AND ATTEMPTED TO BE JUST LIKE HIM
DREAMING OF RECEIVING GREAT RENOWN
BUT WITH ALL THAT TRYING ALL I MANAGED TO RECEIVE
WAS MY BROTHER’S WORN-OUT DIRTY HAND-ME-DOWNS

ONE DAY I DECIDED THAT I HAD TO CHANGE MY WAYS
IF I TRULY WISHED TO BE A STAR
SO I WATCHED AND LEARNED AND WAITED ‘TIL THE RIGHT
TIME CAME
THEN TO MY OLD WAYS, I UTTERED AU REVOIR.

LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME
BRIGHT AS THE NOONDAY SUN
WHO COULD EVEN TAKE THEIR EYES FROM SUCH A SIGHT
DAZZLING LIKE A COMET STREAKING THROUGH THE NIGHT
IN HIGH FASHION I’M ALWAYS NUMBER ONE.

TODAY I FINALLY GET TO WEAR THESE VERY FANCY CLOTHES
CUSTOM MADE FOR A RULER SUCH AS I
MY SUBJECTS SOON WILL GASp
FOR ME THEIR HANDS WILL CLASP
ON THIS DAY MY BRILLIANCE NO ONE WILL DENY.

IT’S MY TURN, IT’S MY TIME
MY MOMENT NOW TO SHINE
MY SUBJECTS WILL ADMIRE
MY PEOPLE WILL ASPIRE
TO BE ME AND TO HAVE EVERYTHING THAT’S MINE.

AT THIS MOMENT I DON’T NEED TO ISSUE A DECREE
TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE WILL SEE
IT’S ME THEY’LL WISH TO BE
THE ONE ON THE MARQUEE
THERE WON’T BE A SOUL WHO CAN LOOK AWAY FROM ME
EMPEROR, Continued

LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME
BRIGHT AS THE NOONDAY SUN
WHO COULD EVEN TAKE THEIR EYES FROM SUCH A SIGHT
DAZZLING LIKE A COMET STREAKING THROUGH THE NIGHT
IN HIGH FASHION I'M ALWAYS NUMBER ONE
LOOK AT ME
LOOK AT ME

At end of song, GONEVET continues.

GONEVET
We’d really like to stick around and see how your parade goes and everything, your emperorship, but we’ve kind of got to run.

EMPEROR
Oh, are you sure you can’t stay?

GONEV
Aaaah, so kind of you to ask, but alas, we’ve got other engagements…and a long way to travel.

GONEVET
A long, long way.

EMPEROR
Wait.

GONEV & GONEVET look at the EMPEROR nervously.

EMPEROR, Continued
I owe you some money.

GONEVET
(Edging toward the door) Oh no you don’t, your Highnessness. It’s OK. Just forget it…we’ve got to go.

GONEV
(Edging toward the EMPEROR) Of course we could stick around another minute or two…

GONEVET yanks GONEV out the door.

GONEV, Continued
(From Off) But we’ve really got to run! Bye!
EMPEROR

(To Sir Egged and Hyster) Well, let’s go. Each of you take an end of my cloak so it doesn’t drag on the ground. Off to the parade!

*The EMPEROR, HYSTER, AND SIR EGGED exit as LIGHTS FADE OUT.*

**ACT TWO: SCENE 2**

**SCENE:** The Town Square. PARADE MUSIC; CROWD cheering.

*AT RISE: CROWD cheering, eager to see EMPEROR. OPTIONAL DANCERS, ACROBATS, JUGGLERS, MIMES, Etc. entertain the CROWD. The EMPEROR enters, still wearing only his long johns and crown. SIR EGGED and HYSTER follow, pretending to carry the back of the cloak.*

As the EMPEROR parades past the CROWD, a group of CHILDREN begin pointing and laughing. Their PARENTS try to quiet them, but begin laughing, too as they watch the EMPEROR strut through the streets.

EMPEROR

How they love me—and why not?

*The EMPEROR waves and blows kisses to the CROWD, including the Audience.*

EMPEROR, Continued

You know, I can’t tell if they’re cheering for me or for my beautiful new costume. It must be the combination. (Approaches the Audience) I bet you’ve never seen anything like this in your life have you? Or you? What about you?

*The EMPRESS enters.*

EMPEROR

Oh, my dear, I’m so glad you made it. Listen to them cheer for me!

EMPRESS

Is that what they’re doing?

EMPEROR

And how they love my new costume!
EMPRESS
Ah, your new costume. Perhaps we should listen more closely to hear what they are saying about your costume.

_The LAUGHTER gets more boisterous as each member of the CROWD points at the EMPEROR and laughs._

CHILD #4
Look how silly he looks!

MOTHER
Hush, child, he’ll hear you!

CHILD #5
Well, Mother he does look like a fool!

EMPEROR
What’s that they’re saying? That my costume looks cool?

MOTHER
Quiet, I tell you. He’ll hear you and that will be the end of us all.

CHILD #4
He can’t hear us. He’s too busy admiring himself!

CHILD #5
He’s not paying any attention to us, don’t worry!

CHILD #6
But what’s that he has on?

MOTHER
His new royal outfit, you know that!

CHILD #4
I don’t think so, Mother.

CHILD #5
I’ve never seen a royal outfit that looks like that!

MOTHER
That’s not for us to judge. I’m sure as he approaches we’ll see more detail.

CHILD #4
I think we’re seeing too much detail!
CHILD #5
Way too much detail!

MOTHER
What in the world are you two talking about?

CHILD #6
Mother, he’s just standing there in his underwear!

CHILDREN
His underwear! He’s standing there in his underwear!

CROWD
His underwear! He’s standing there in his underwear!

*PIANO IN: SONG; “ONLY HIS UNDERWEAR”*

“ONLY HIS UNDERWEAR”

PEOPLE IN THE CROWD

*(To be sung by various people in the crowd at the Director’s discretion)*

*THE PARADE HAS STARTED*
*DO YOU THINK HE’S HERE*
*CAN YOU SEE OUR EMPEROR*
*HE SHOULD SOON APPEAR*

*TIME TO WATCH THE JUGGLERS*
*CAN YOU SEE THE CLOWN*
*THE ACROBATS ASTONISHING*
*WALKING UPSIDE DOWN.*

*WE LOVE TO WATCH AMAZING FEATS*
*EXCITEMENT FILLS THE AIR*
*BUT THE CROWNING JEWEL OF THIS PARADE*
*WILL BE BEYOND COMPARE*

*I THINK THAT I CAN SEE HIM NOW*
*THE RUMORS MUST BE TRUE*
*WHAT HAVE THOSE ROYAL WEAVERS DONE*
*IT’S TIME WE GET A VIEW*

*THERE HE IS, IT MUST BE HIM*
*WE’RE TRYING NOT TO STARE*
*OH MY IT SEEMS, NO IT CAN’T BE*
(Boy Shouts)

HE’S IN HIS UNDERWEAR!

MOTHER

HUSH MY CHILD
THAT CAN’T BE RIGHT
YOU SURELY DO MISSPEAK

ANOTHER CHILD

HE’S RIGHT, IT’S TRUE
HIS EYES DON’T LIE
OH, MOTHER TAKE A PEEK.

ALL CHILDREN

THE EMPEROR’S IN HIS UNDERWEAR
RIGHT HERE IN THE OLD TOWN SQUARE
HOW CAN HE BE UNAWARE
IT’S QUITE EXTRAORDINAIRE

ALL SINGERS

THE EMPEROR’S IN HIS UNDERWEAR
RIGHT HERE IN THE OLD TOWN SQUARE
HOW CAN HE BE UNAWARE
IT’S QUITE EXTRAORDINAIRE

ONLY HIS UNDERWEAR
OH, HIS CLOTHES MUST BE ELSEWHERE
HE MUST THINK HE’S DEBONAIR
IN JUST HIS UNDERWEAR

ONLY IN HIS UNDERWEAR
OH, HIS CLOTHES MUST BE ELSEWHERE
HE MUST THINK HE’S DEBONAIR
IN JUST HIS UNDERWEAR

A BOY

AND I SEE HIS DERRIERE!

The EMPEROR looks down frantically searching for any sign
of his costume. He looks pleadingly at the EMPRESS.
EMPEROR
My underwear? Nonsense! How can I be in the middle of a parade in my underwear?

*The EMPRESS motions to the AUDIENCE.*

EMPRESS
Tell him, please. Is he standing before you in his underwear?

*The EMPRESS waits for AUDIENCE response. The truth finally dawns on the EMPEROR and he frantically tries all sorts of contortions in order to cover himself up. SIR EGGED has inched his way into the crowd during this exchange and HYSTER tries to follow.*

EMPEROR

(Roaring) Hyster!!!!

HYSTER
Yyyyyyes, yyyyour Majesty?

EMPEROR
Why did you let me come out here in my underwear?

HYSTER
Wwwell, I, uh–oh–ah–oh!

*HYSTER clutches his chest, falls down, gets up, falls down, gets up, etc.*

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

VOCAL SCORE
INCLUDING PIANO CHORDS & MUSICAL NOTATIONS
FOLLOWS
Threads—
The Musical!

VOCAL SCORE*
Including Piano Chords & Musical Notations

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

*Note to Producing Organizations:
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May I Have This Dance

Waltz
Intro.

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

My lady, my lady you've
got me in a trance My lady, my
lady please give me a chance My
lady can you tell I'm wearing new
pants My lady may I have this
Where Did You Go

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machliss Rechtman

Where is the man I used to love
The man who could see in

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Hang On

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

[2-3] Emperor: I’ll

hang you by your nose
I’ll hang you by your toes
I’ll hang you by the belts and buckles

dangling on your clothes
When will your babbling stop
I’m going to blow my top

watching how your thoughts first flip and after how they

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The Things We'll Do For You

Intro. - 50's Ballad

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechman

C Am F G

A

Gonevet:

5 C Am Dm F\%\%G

Oh mis-ter Em-per-or  the things we'll do for you___

Yeah mis-ter Em-per-or you ha-ven't got a clue

13 F Fm\textsuperscript{6}

Wow mis-ter Em-per-or  we'll make your dreams come true____

17 C Am\textsuperscript{7} Fm\textsuperscript{6} G\textsuperscript{7(sus4)}

There's no-thing we can't do

B

Gonevet:

21 C Am Dm F\%\%G

Oh mis-ter Em-per-or there's no-thing we can't weave

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I See It

Intro.
Quick and bouncy

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

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Look At Me

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Moschlis Rechtman

Intro.  moderate - block chords

When I was just a boy, a small and tender sprout Self-confidence in very short supply

Because my older brother was the favorite son The golden apple of my parents' eye I imagined and attempted to be

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Only His Underwear

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

Trumpet Fanfare

Snare drum marching beat-pulsing octave A quarter notes

The parade has started Do you think he's here

Can you see our emperor He should soon appear

Time to watch the jugglers Can you see the clown

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Eyes Wide Open

Intro. over B flat
Pedal Point

Music by Sari Miller
Lyrics by Nancy Machlis Rechman

Emperor sings
(instrumental continues)

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