



The Emperor's  
New Clothes  
*by Lee Shackelford*

**STUDY GUIDE**



**PROVIDED BY BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S THEATRE**

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# Performance Dates & How to Use This Guide

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**“The Emperor’s New Clothes”**  
by Hans Christian Anderson  
Adapted by Lee Shackelford  
Directed by Carlton V. Bell II

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Performance Dates Available  
October 5 - 28, 2022  
Tuesdays - Fridays @ 9:30am at the BJCC  
in the Wee Folks Theatre  
*Great for ages: 5 - 10*

Visit [www.bct123.org](http://www.bct123.org) for more information or to book a field trip today!

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This classroom guide for “The Emperor’s New Clothes” is designed for Alabama students in Kindergarten to 4th Grade.

Use this guide to prepare for your trip to the theatre.

After the show, further the experience with activities that can be integrated into your current classroom curriculum.

*(A list of State Standards covered can be found on page 7)*

Lastly, we would love to hear from you! Please have your students fill out the “Post Show Response” form.

*(All worksheets can be found in the “Study Guide Printables” packet provided)*

# Your Role as the Audience

Dear Audience Members,

In honor of our 75th anniversary, Birmingham Children's Theatre is excited to have you in our Wee Folks Theatre for the show that started it all back in 1947! As a member of our audience for *The Emperor's New Groove*, we have a few expectations to ensure a smooth performance.

Rules we want to make sure everyone is aware of:

- **Masks on!** (for anyone 2 years or older) When the CDC COVID Data Tracker classifies Jefferson County as a HIGH status county on their Community Transmission Scale, BCT's mask policy will be Masks Required in our Wee Folks Theatre. Our organization will continue to monitor community transmission rates for Jefferson County and update schools with any changes to this status. BCT's full Care Commitment can be found at <https://www.bct123.org/care-commitment>
- **Cell phones off!** And put away - this is an immersive show that asks its audiences to be engaged in the storytelling

In theatre, the audience is an extremely important part of our storytelling, and we need your help to make this the best show possible for you and your fellow audience members!

## **While the show is happening, DO**

- Give your full attention to the actors and the story
- Feel free to laugh, gasp, and applaud!

## **And to make sure everyone can enjoy the show, we ask that you DON'T**

- Talk to your friends and neighbors
- Wave, shout, or disrupt the performance

Adapted from the classic Hans Christian Andersen tale, Birmingham playwright Lee Shackleford has penned an updated version to the story of two opportunistic weavers who make a fool of a vain king and his entourage. While speaking the truth and doing what is right is not always easy, lying to hide vulnerabilities can leave people rather exposed.

We hope you enjoy the show!

See you soon,

Birmingham Children's Theatre

# About the Playwrights



## LEE ERIC SHACKLEFORD

Lee is a writer for stage, screen, and radio with more than 200 produced scripts to his credit. He has written for network, cable, syndicated, and web-based drama series and created more than two dozen original full-length works for the stage.

As a playwright, his best-known script is probably *Holmes & Watson*, which was produced off-Broadway in 1990 with Lee in the role of Sherlock Holmes.

His adaptation of Karel Capek's 1920 play *R.U.R.* ran off-Broadway in 2013. Both plays were premiered at Theatre UAB.

As an Associate Professor in the Theatre Department, Lee teaches a variety of creative writing courses.

Instrumental in creating UAB's film program, Lee has successfully moved all of their scriptwriting courses online, where more students can be taught in each semester than ever before.

Lee has produced UAB's immensely popular Festival of Ten-Minute Plays since its inception in 2003. The Festival features scripts created in his playwriting classes and then expanded, edited, and polished over the following year. The result has been more than 100 entirely new and original short plays, often performed for standing-room-only audiences.

Many of UAB's touring productions for young audiences feature Lee's adaptations of works of literature, such as *The Amazing Traveling Aesop Show*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, *The Ransom of Red Chief*, *The Legend of Robin Hood*, and *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Lee's adaptation of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* has gone on to be his most widely-produced work, with more than a hundred performances since its premiere at UAB.

Radio drama has long been a passion of Lee's, and he channeled that love as Head Writer and Post-Production Supervisor for UAB's four-year-long radio drama serial *Bodylove* and its sequel *Keeping Up with the Walkers*. Since then he has collaborated with the UAB School of Public Health and inmates at the Donaldson Correctional Facility to create the radio drama series *Corrections*. All three of these series used character-based drama as a means of teaching audiences about healthy behaviors related to diabetes, high blood pressure, and other risk factors of being overweight. Lee currently writes and stars in the science fiction radio-drama serial *Relativity*.

Lee is well-known to UAB's Deans, Provost, and President as the Announcer for UAB's Doctoral Hooding Ceremonies. Twice a year, Lee introduces candidates for a Doctoral degree with correct pronunciation of each name and of each often-complex dissertation title.

# meet the Director



**CARLTON V. BELL II**

**C**arlton V. Bell II, “C.J” (they/them) - a Black queer southern artistic facilitator & cultural worker. Seen most recently in CNN’s Docuseries “Blind Angels”.

With a primary focus in directing, producing, and writing theatre/film CJ is thrilled to back at Birmingham Children’s Theatre as a Resident Artist for their 75th season in their 7th BCT Production!

In addition to their work as an artist Carlton is avid member of community centered liberation justice practices as a DEI/EDI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) Consultant, Cultural Intimacy Professional, & Gender-Justice Movement Worker. Carlton is also an ordained minister, and Aborisa of the Lucumi Practice.

**Organizations:** Stage Directors & Choreographer Society Member, South Eastern Theatre Conference (SETC) LGBTQIA in Theatre Committee Co-Chair, City of Birmingham’s LGBTQIA+ Advisory Board to the Mayor of Birmingham, Theatrefolk Advisory Board, Alabama Council of Theatre’s DEI Committee, & Third Wave Fund Advisory Board.

**Recognitions:** Sipp Culture “Next Up Artist” 2021/2022, Center for Cultural Power’s 2021 “Artist Disruptor”, 2021 Southern Healer w/ the Campaign for Southern Equality. 2020 Broadway World Director of the Decade, 2018 Broadway World Best Director of a Play. Named AL.com’s #2 Entertainer of the Year of 2019.

**Rep’d By:** Genia Nooks at Gill Talent | [www.carltonvbell.com](http://www.carltonvbell.com)

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In conceptualizing this specific piece I was instantly inspired by the actual children of Birmingham. I wanted to create a world my nieces would love to play in (Hey Whitley, Willow, and Chloe <3) I also wanted to tell a classic story with a modern urban-twist that put me in the mindset of the “Saturday Morning Cartoon” area. In the rehearsal room we drew inspiration from all of the best elements of our favorite cartoons and childhood morning shows to create a world, with our incredible designers, that was celebratory of the rich culture of our city.

My entry point to this show was deeply based in the throughline this play has to offer about standing up for what’s right, empowering our audiences both “children” and “adults” that it’s never the wrong time to stand up for the truth.

I hope you enjoy this show as much as we did building it for you and I am thrilled to bring the “revival” of this story back to the Birmingham Children’s Theatre stage after so many years. This is my 7th production at BCT and I am honored to be a Resident Artist in this incredible season! Don’t forget the next show I am directing this spring - Miss Fancy: Elephant Queen of the Zoo.

# About the Play

## SYNOPSIS

*The Emperor's New Clothes* is a fairy tale written by Hans Christian Andersen, adapted for the stage by Lee Eric Shakleford, about an emperor who is so afraid to look foolish, he pretends he is wearing clothes that don't exist.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ASCOT, loud, vain, and imperious  
DOGBONE, patient and wise  
BELLYACHE, short-tempered, easily offended  
SPIDERWEB, cunning, a trickster

## KEY THEMES

- Truth & Lies, Seeing Clearly
- Flattery & Admiration, Hypocrisy
- Self-Perception, How Others See Us, Point of View
- Following the Crowd - Standing Up for One's Views, Going Against the Majority
- Courage, Integrity

These are life skills and themes students deal with in both primary and secondary school, and they also come up in school subjects like Civics, Moral Education, Social Studies, History, Literature, and National Education.

## VOCABULARY

- Parade - show off something or a procession of people
- Flaunting - showing off
- Trickster - cheats, liars
- Extraordinary - amazing
- Summoned - summoned
- Loom - big frame to weave fabric on
- Swindling - lying, cheating
- Intricate - detailed
- Downhearted - sad
- Craftsmanship - skill, talent
- Procession - parade, march
- Applauded - clapped
- Craftsmanship - skill, talent
- Procession - parade, march
- Applauded - clapped

# State Standards

Students will:

- R1. Utilize active listening skills during discussion and conversation in pairs, small groups, or whole-class settings, following agreed-upon rules for participation.
- R2. Use knowledge of phoneme-grapheme correspondences and word analysis skills to decode and encode words accurately.
- R3. Expand background knowledge and build vocabulary through discussion, reading, and writing.
- R4. Use digital and electronic tools appropriately, safely, and ethically for research and writing, both individually and collaboratively.
- R5. Utilize the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writings in various genres.
  - 17. With guidance and support, orally utilize new academic, content-specific, grade-level vocabulary and relate new words to prior knowledge.
  - 18. Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately.
  - 19. Ask and answer questions about unfamiliar words in discussions and/or text.
    - a. Describe the relationship between words, including relating them to synonyms and antonyms.
  - 20. Name and sort pictures of objects into categories based on common attributes while relating vocabulary to prior knowledge and building background knowledge.
  - 21. Use new and previously-taught vocabulary to produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
    - a. Use previously-taught vocabulary words, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives, in speaking and writing.
    - b. Use new words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to text.
  - 22. Use content knowledge built during read-alouds of informational texts by participating in content-specific discussions with peers and/or through drawing or writing.
  - 23. With prompting and support, manipulate words and/or phrases to create simple sentences, including declarative and interrogative, to help build syntactic awareness and comprehension at the sentence level.
  - 24. With prompting and support, identify common types of texts and their features, including literary, informational, fairy tale, and poetry.
  - 25. With prompting and support, identify the topic of texts, using titles, headings, illustrations, and text clues.
  - 26. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.
  - 27. Identify and describe the main story elements in a literary text.
    - a. With prompting and support, retell a text orally, including main character(s), setting, and important events in logical order.
  - 28. With prompting and support, use text clues to determine main ideas and make predictions about an ending in a literary text.



# Activities

## MUSIC LESSON

Imagine you're in charge of music for the Emperor's parade.  
Which music style works best?  
Make up your own music for the parade!

## HANDS ON ACTIVITY

Explore different fabrics and decide which ones are best for the emperor. Use fabrics like wool, cotton, velvet, leather, Lycra and denim for a good variety. Stick fabric swatches to our Fun with Fabrics Sheet found in the "Study Guide Printables" packet, page 2, then rate them based on:

- a. Color (too bright, too patterned, too plain and boring?)
- b. Feel (is it soft, warm, comfortable, scratchy, hard, thick, thin?)

Give each fabric a mark out of five. Fashion designers also have to consider who they are designing for and what fabrics they will use.

Think of five ways to describe the invisible cloth using exciting adjectives.

## NEWS REPORT!

Pretend you are a newspaper reporter at the parade.  
Create a headline and write about what you saw using the worksheet in the "Study Guide Printables" packet, page 3.

## TELL A TALE!

Write an alternative ending to the story. What happens to the weavers? Maybe the emperor gets embarrassed or angry or even says sorry to his people - you decide!  
Tell your tale using the worksheet in the "Study Guide Printables" packet, page 4.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Additional worksheet, craft, and coloring page can be found in the "Study Guide Printables" packet provided.



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## **THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

Questions? Contact Education & Engagement Coordinator,  
**Tramelle Shambray** at [tramelle@bct123.org](mailto:tramelle@bct123.org)

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