

Introduction

Hans Christian Andersen wrote lots of books and plays. But he is most famous for his wonderful fairy tales. Fairy tales have magic in them. Strange things happen. People get their wish.

Andersen said that he wrote about his own life in his stories. His stories are often about unhappy people and animals. They are unhappy because others are unkind to them. They do not have good friends or family. But they are brave and good.

In *The Ugly Duckling*, the duckling has no friends. The other birds and animals are unkind. They chase him away. But this story has a happy ending. When Andersen was young, he had no friends. He thought that he was ugly. He wanted to be good-looking. He wanted people to love him. In this story, he gets his wish.

In this book, we meet many more interesting people, animals and things. We meet an emperor who loves clothes. Other stories introduce us to a one-legged tin soldier and a magic tinderbox. We also meet a princess that finds it hard to get a good night's sleep and a grey bird with a beautiful voice.

About Hans Christian Andersen

Hans Christian Andersen was born on 2 April 1805. He lived in Odense, near Copenhagen in Denmark. His family was very poor. He did not like school. He was too tall and thin. He had a long, funny nose. The other children laughed at him. He was different. He did not

like their games. He liked to sing and read stories.

When he was eleven years old, his father died. Andersen left school and got a job. He made cloth. Then he worked for a tailor and made clothes. Later he worked in a factory. But he really wanted to be an actor or singer or dancer. He had a wonderful voice. In 1819 he went to Copenhagen. He got a job as a singer at the theatre.

But his voice changed when he grew older. He had to leave the theatre. He went back to school at the age of seventeen. In 1828 he went to Copenhagen University. There he began to write books. He wrote travel books, poems and plays. Then he began to write fairy tales. He travelled a lot and met many famous people, including lots of kings and queens. He died in 1875. There is a statue of Andersen in Copenhagen. There is also a statue of the Little Mermaid, from one of his stories.

1

The Emperor's New Clothes:

Part One

Dream cloth

Long ago there lived an emperor. He lived in a wonderful golden city. Most emperors are clever. They are good soldiers. They can ride horses and fight with swords. But this emperor was not clever. He could not ride a horse. He could not fight with a sword. He was not good at anything. But he loved nice clothes. He wanted to be the world's best-dressed emperor. He had fifty rooms filled with clothes. He changed his clothes many times each day. 5

People from all over the world visited the city. One day, two men came to the city. They wanted to sell the Emperor new clothes. Unluckily they had no clothes to sell. They did not have any cloth. They did not even know how to sew. But they had an idea. 10

They went to the palace and knocked at the door. 15

'Who's there?' asked a soldier.

'The world's best tailors,' they answered. 'We make beautiful cloth. We sew wonderful clothes. We have the world's most beautiful cloth. We want to show the Emperor.' 20

The soldier opened the door. He saw two men with bags on their backs. 'Where's your cloth?' he asked.

'Here it is. We've only brought a small piece. It costs too much to make a lot. If he likes it we'll make more,' answered the men. 25

'I can't see anything,' said the soldier.

The two men looked at each other. They shook their heads. 'You can't see anything! That's sad,' said one.