A character’s qualities can influence the events in a story. This is the case in “The Emperor’s New Clothes” by Hans Christian Andersen. The emperor is so foolish, vain and superficial that he is easily tricked by two swindlers pretending to be talented weavers.

In the beginning of the story the two swindlers visit the lively city where the very fashionable emperor lived. They claimed that they could weave the finest cloth imaginable and that “the clothes made of this material possessed the wonderful quality of being invisible to any man who was unfit for his office, or who was hopelessly stupid.” (Andersen 137) The emperor was so foolish that he gave these swindlers a lot of money to begin work immediately on his new clothes.

Curious about the swindlers progress, the vain emperor sent his honest old minister and another honest official to check on the sly swindlers. The emperor was a little uneasy because he knew “that whoever was not fit for his office could not see it.” (Andersen 138) Both of the honest officials were fit for their office, so surely they would be able to report on the progress of the two swindlers. When the emperor finally does go to check on the swindlers progress he is shocked that he cannot see the magnificent fabric that everyone had been raving about. The emperor is so vain that he lies and raves about how beautiful the fabric is even though there is nothing visible on the loom.
Finally, after working through the night, the swindlers announced that the clothes were ready. Being the superficial man that he was, the emperor let the clever swindlers dress him in the clothing that they claimed was so light he wouldn’t feel like he was wearing anything at all. Even though the emperor could clearly see that he was naked he said, “Well, I am quite ready. Doesn’t my suit fit me beautifully?” (Andersen 140) Then he proceeded to march in the procession under his canopy. Even after the child declared that the emperor had nothing on at all he still held his head high and continued with the procession.

The emperor’s unfavorable character traits allowed the swindlers to easily take advantage of him. Had the emperor of been smart he would have quickly seen through the swindlers claim that they could weave the finest cloth that would be invisible to those unfit for office. Again, if the emperor had been humble and not so concerned with clothing he could have avoided the completely embarrassing situation of parading through town naked.
Works Cited
