



The Emperor's Seed

Readers Theatre

A Chinese Folk Tale



Seven Characters:

- Narrator 1
- Emperor
- Ling's
- Friend 1
- Narrator 2
- Ling
- Mum
- Friend 2

Narrator 1: Once there was an Emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day.

Emperor: It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next Emperor. I have decided to choose one of you!

Narrator 2: The children were shocked!

Emperor: I am going to give each one of you a seed. One seed! It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant this seed, water it and come back here in one year from today with what you have grown. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next Emperor of the entire kingdom!

Narrator 1: All the children were excited!

Narrator 2: The Emperor gave each of the children one seed. They went back to their homes, and found a plant pot to put their seeds into. They planted the seed and watered it every day.

Narrator 1: There was one boy called Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot, the best planting soil they could find, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully.

Narrator 2: After about three weeks, some of the other children began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.

Friend 1: Hi, Ling! How tall has your plant grown? Mine is huge!

Ling: Ahhhh... Mine hasn't started growing at all yet.

Friend 1: Not grown? What? That isn't very good! Looks like you won't become Emperor!

Ling: I'm trying! *(Ling lowers his head in shame)*

Narrator 1: Every day, Ling went home and eagerly checked his seed, but nothing ever grew.

Ling: Why won't it grow? I don't understand! I have done everything I can to nurture this seed to grow into the most beautiful plant it can be! But nothing is happening.

Narrator 2: A year went by and all the children from the kingdom brought their plants to the Emperor for his inspection.

Ling: Mum, I don't think I will take my seed to the Emperor. He will be very cross. My plant has not grown in the slightest! All I have to show him, is an empty pot, and all the other children have grown magnificent plants! I feel so ashamed.

Mother: Ling, you have tried your hardest and done everything you can to turn your seed into a flourishing plant. I have brought you up to understand that no matter what happens, you always tell the truth. Go to the Emperor, and tell him what happened. He will respect you for it.

Ling: If you think I should!

Mother: I know you should. Now, go!

Narrator 1: Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He picked up his empty pot, and he took it to the palace.

Narrator 2: When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other children. They were beautiful, in all shapes, sizes and colours. Ling put his empty pot on the floor.

Friend 1: Is that it?

Friend 2: What did you do to your seed? It hasn't even sprouted!

Ling: I did my best.

Narrator 1: Ling felt dreadful. Then the Emperor arrived. Ling tried to hide at the back of the group of children, so the Emperor could not see him and his empty pot.

Emperor: My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have all grown! Today, one of you will be appointed as the next Emperor!

Narrator 2: Then, the Emperor spotted Ling's pot.

Emperor: Guard, bring that boy to me!

Narrator 1: The Guard dragged Ling and his pot out from the back, and took him to the Emperor. Ling was terrified.

Emperor: What is your name, boy?

Ling: My name is Ling, Sir.

Emperor: Behold your new Emperor. His name is Ling!

Narrator 2: Ling could not believe his ears. All the children were shocked! How could this be true? Ling's pot was EMPTY!

Emperor: Last year, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take that seed, to plant it, water it and bring it back to me today. What you did not know, is that I gave you all boiled seeds. Seeds that I knew would not grow into anything. All of you, except for Ling, have brought me trees, plants and flowers; meaning that when your seed I gave you was not growing, you replaced it with another seed. Ling is the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me an empty pot with MY seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the next Emperor.