

# THE PREZ'S NEW CLOTHES

*Adapted by Stephen Murray*

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## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Washington, D.C. is the capitol of the United States, but 1600 Pennsylvania Ave is not exactly a fashion capitol, especially since absent-minded President William Lee is running the country. He's too busy with domestic and international politics to worry about whether his striped tie clashes with his plaid pants and argyle socks. Even his devoted wife and First Lady, Holly Preston-Lee, is forgiving of her husband's forgetfulness and sloppy appearance, knowing it's what's inside that really counts.

But members of the press sure take stabs at the chief-of-state's wardrobe, as does his election opponent, Horace Grinchley, and Horace's overly-ambitious campaign manager, Myrna Snerd. Myrna appoints a couple of staff members, Dewey, Cheatem and Howe, to pose as wardrobe consultants to strip President Lee down to his "bare" essentials, and have him deliver a nationally televised debate in an "invisible" suit. The new suit is allegedly only visible to honest, trustworthy and loyal constituents.

Add to the campaign fever a salami-hoarding terrorist, Yesiah Minsain; Vice President Green, an environmental fanatic; plus a patriotic, chaotic chorus of reporters, White House staff, and secret service agents, and you have a comedy that is sure to rank high in the audience polls.

*(A musical version of this play, "The President's New Clothes," is available through the publisher. Visit [www.histage.com](http://www.histage.com) for further information.)*

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 m, 11 w, 7 flexible)*

**WILLIAM LEE:** President of the United States.  
**HOLLY PRESTON-LEE:** First Lady.  
**ROBERTA/ROBERT DAVIS:** White House Chief-of-Staff.  
**OLIVIA/OLIVER NELSON:** Campaign Director.  
**GEN. SEMICOLON HOWELL:** Armed Forces Chairman.  
**G. I. LUVMONEY:** Treasury Secretary.  
**JULIA KIDD:** White House Chef.  
**ADAM 12:** Secret Service agent.  
**HEINZ 57:** Secret Service agent.  
**BETTY GREEN:** Vice President and environmentalist.  
**HORACE GRINCHLEY:** Presidential candidate.  
**DELBERT DORK:** Grinchley's running mate and spy.  
**MYRNA SNERD:** Grinchley's campaign director.  
**DORIS DEWEY:** An evil tailor.  
**GLADYS CHEATEM:** An evil tailor.  
**HENRIETTA HOWE:** An evil tailor.  
**DONNA SAMUELSON:** Reporter.  
**KATIE COWLICK:** Reporter.  
**CONNIE CHANG:** Reporter.  
**BARBARAWATERS:** Reporter.  
**DANA LATHER:** Reporter.  
**THE FATLADY:** (played by a man or woman).  
**YESIAH MINSAIN:** Evil dictator of Meanistan, an island nation.

**Time:** November, just before a presidential election.

**Place:** Washington, D.C.

## **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

Scene 1: The White House.  
Scene 2: Grinchley campaign headquarters.  
Scene 3: The White House.  
Scene 4: Grinchley campaign headquarters.  
Scene 5: The White House.

## **SETTING**

A large open area that can double for the location of press conferences at the White House as well as the Grinchley campaign headquarters. Tables and chairs should be easy to move about as needed. Additional pieces include a podium and recycling bin. Posters and bunting also must be set and struck with ease when changing back and forth between the locations. A more detailed set description can be found at the end of the script.

## **PROPS**

ON THE SET: Rubber stamp and phone on desk.

PRESIDENT LEE: Car air freshener, business card, "Harry Potter" book, brightly-colored boxer shorts, T-shirt and socks.

LUVMONEY: Wad of bills.

GENERAL: Report.

NELSON: Campaign speech.

WHITE HOUSE STAFF: Kazoos, newspapers.

GREEN: "Kick Me" sign on back.

HOLLY: Football uniform, gym bag containing a woman's pink, fuzzy bathrobe.

HEINZ 57 and ADAM 12: Dark sunglasses, earpieces, toy guns.

DEWEY, CHEATEM and HOWE: Tape measures.

PRESS CORPS: Newspapers, pads and pens, tape recorders, microphones.

GRINCHLEY and STAFF: Newspapers.

DORK: Broom, business card.

MISCELLANEOUS: Spear and helmet.

## THE PREZ'S NEW CLOTHES

### Scene 1

*(AT RISE: The White House. Chief of Staff DAVIS is busily at work. DORK, disguised as a janitor, pretends to work while listening to every conversation that happens in the office. The PHONE RINGS.)*

DAVIS: *(Answering phone.)* White House, Davis here. Yes, Senator, the bills will be on the President's desk today. I'm quite sure he will sign them. Good. Thank you, Senator. Good-bye. *(The PHONE RINGS again.)* White House, Davis here. No, I'm not the President's secretary, I am the Chief of Staff. The President has a press conference in a few minutes and the rest of the staff is preparing for it. Yes, the President will address the chapped lips benefit next week. The President is committed to lick chapped lips. Thank you. Good-bye. *(DAVIS hangs up.)* Where is the staff? The press conference is in 5 minutes and we've got to prepare. *(DAVIS picks up phone and dials an extension.)* Nelson? Yeah, it's Davis. Can you get the staff together to meet with me right away? Thanks. *(DAVIS hangs up.)* It's like I'm the only one working around here. *(PHONE RINGS. DAVIS answers.)* White House, Davis here. No, the President is very happy with his long distance company. Good-bye.

*(NELSON enters.)*

NELSON: The staff's on their way in, Bobby. The First Lady is coming, too.

DAVIS: Great. How do the poll numbers look for the re-election campaign?

NELSON: Not great.

DAVIS: What about job approval ratings?

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NELSON: They've dropped a few points. The public seems to think that the President doesn't look "presidential."

DAVIS: How can he not look presidential? He's the President!

NELSON: The image consultants believe it's the way he dresses. His appearance has kind of declined.

DAVIS: Have you read the papers lately? The economy is in trouble, Meanistan is threatening war, and there's an election coming up. The man has been working 18 and 20-hour days. He doesn't have time to pick just the right jacket.

NELSON: I'm just telling you what the polls and the consultants say. The President has to upgrade his image or he's got no chance of being re-elected.

*(The White House Staff, HOWELL, LUVMONEY, and KIDD enter along with VICE PRESIDENT GREEN and HOLLY LEE, the First Lady.)*

DAVIS: *(Addressing STAFF.)* Thanks for coming in, everyone. The election is only a week away. President Lee is behind in the polls, we have major problems with the economy and the threat of war with Meanistan. On top of that, we have a national security emergency.

ALL: What is it?

DAVIS: The copying machine is broken!

ALL: Oh, no!

NELSON: Don't panic, don't panic! As campaign director it is my job to keep spirits up, overcome all obstacles, and keep this campaign going no matter what happens.

DAVIS: Thank you Mr./Ms. Nelson. Madame First Lady, do you have anything to say to the staff?

HOLLY: I just want to say that my husband needs your help, and I hope we can count on your support.

JULIA: Don't worry, Mrs. Lee. I won't let you down. I owe my career to your husband. Four years ago when I was a cook at McDonald's, I must have made 3 or 4 Happy Meals a week for Mr. Lee. And now I'm the White House Chef! Sometimes I still slip a little prize in with his lunch.

## **End of Freeview**

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