The Emperor’s Nightingale

by Bo Wilson

Based on the classic story by Hans Christian Andersen

The Emperor’s Nightingale is presented in support of English and Language Arts learning standards for grades K-5.

Additional Resources:

The Nightingale (English translation)
The Hans Christian Andersen Center at the University of South Denmark

http://www.andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/TheNightingale_e.html

Online Gallery: Hans Christian Andersen
British Library

http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/andersen/homepage.html

The Emperor and the Nightingale by Fiona Waters, Paul Birkbeck

The Emperor’s Nightingale and Other Feathery Tales by Jane Ray

The Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen by Hans Christian Andersen and Noel Daniel

The Nightingale by Pirkko Vainio

Theatre IV’s modern adaptation of the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen incorporates elements of both Japanese and Chinese traditional theatre. In the story, Tommy’s grandparents use the allure of the ancient Chinese game of Mah Jong to pull Tommy away from his glowing computer screen and into a fantastical world of the Emperor and his nightingale. In the end, Tommy learns that, sometimes, “the old ways are the best ways.”

Know Your Genre: Fairy Tale

A fairy tale is a fictional story that can feature fantastic forces and beings (fairies, wizards, and goblins)—called also fairy story; a story in which improbable events lead to a happy ending.
Move Over Mah Jong: Make Your Own Game

Mah Jong is derived from an ancient Chinese tile game. It is complex and played differently throughout various regions of China. The version of Mah Jong that exists in the United States is more similar to Rummy and has changed throughout the years. In *The Emperor's Nightingale*, Tommy is playing yet another new version - a computer version - of Mah Jong. His grandparents’ older game set included magical tiles that told fantastical stories, including that of the nightingale.

Work in small groups. Look at the game board templates below. Use one of them (or one that your group creates) to make a NEW game. Think: Will your game use cards, tiles, dice, number, letters, symbols, or something else altogether? How will a player “advance” in the game and win?

Option #1

Option #2

Option #3

Option #4

Extension - Write Rules for Your Game:

It’s only fun if everyone plays fair! Think about the game you just created. You may want to play a bit with your group to get used to it. Make a list of rules that all players must follow to keep your game fair and fun!
In the play, *The Emperor’s Nightingale*, the inventor was described in this way “Inventing new kinds of machines was how he made his money, and he knew that the Emperor had a lot of money. All he had to do was figure out what sort of machine the Emperor might want.”

People depend on inventions to meet our changing needs (and wants). Our economy depends on it, and some would argue our lives depend on it. Inventions have changed how we travel, what we eat, how long we live, and how we spend our days.

**Inventions Through Time**

With a partner, number the following inventions according to when you think they were invented. Use the internet to check when each was invented to see if your predictions were correct. Then, discuss what invention (it can be any invention, not just one from this list) you think has made the biggest change in the way people live. In the space below, write a paragraph about the invention you chose, and justify why you think it made the biggest change in the way people live.

1. __________
2. __________
3. __________
4. __________
5. __________
6. __________

FOR DISCUSSION
Are new inventions always better?
In the play, the characters argue about using a “stick” vs. a “plow” to farm the land.

Can you think of a time when a “stick” could be better than a “plow?” Explain.
Theater Etiquette

Clap, but know when to do so.
You should clap after a play, act, or song, or right before intermission. If you loved the show, you can give a “standing ovation” at the end. That’s when you stand up while applauding.

It’s quiet time (sort of).
If the play makes you laugh or cry, that is fine, but you can chat with your friends afterwards. Be respectful and quiet so the actors can focus on their roles. Being quiet allows the rest of the audience to concentrate on the play.

Behind the Curtains

Many people with different skills and talents work together to make a production such as The Emperor’s Nightingale come to life. Can you match these theater jobs with their descriptions?

set designer
a person who plays a role or character in stage plays, motion pictures, television broadcasts, etc.

playwright
a person who creates the look of each character by designing clothes and accessories the actors will wear in performance.

stage manager
this person’s job is to pull together all the pieces and parts of a play – the script, actors, set, costumes, lighting and sound, and music to create a production.

actor
this job focuses on using light to create effects that match the mood of various scenes in a performance.

costume designer
this person is a writer of scripts for plays. The script tells a story through the actions and words of the characters.

lighting designer
this person creates the physical surroundings of a play, including any scenery, furniture, or props used throughout the play.

director
this person helps the director and helps organize the actors, designers, stage crew, and technicians throughout the production of a play.