

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN THE R DAWG,
HIP HOP MINSTREL
By Bobby Keniston**

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RUMPELSTILTSKIN THE R-DAWG, HIP-HOP MINSTREL

by Bobby Keniston

SYNOPSIS: In this fairy tale with a modern flair, Rumpelstiltskin desperately wants to be a hip-hop star. If only his overbearing mother and bratty sister, Rumplina, would give him some peace to work on his rhymes, life would be great. Meanwhile, Jack, of the beanstalk fame, has squandered all his money on bad investments in hopes of inventing the folding chair and impressing Stacy, the beautiful young storyteller in the village. Stacy finds her own trouble when her father tells the obnoxious Prince that she is able to spin straw into gold! Throw in a frazzled mother who lives in a shoe, a group of royal cheerleaders, a crazy music agent, a shallow teenager, and a bunch of bratty kids, and you have popular stories interwoven with modern attitude that will entertain children of all ages and adults alike.

DURATION: 80 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(15 females, 10 males, 1 either, 5-10 extras)
(Slight doubling and combinations possible)*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (m).....	Our narrator. He is dressed like hip-hop star, and only wants to be work on his rhymes. Gifted chemist, thinks he's tough. <i>(66 lines)</i>
MAMMA RUMPELSTILTSKIN (f).....	Rumpelstiltskin's mother. She rules with an iron fist and thinks Rumpelstiltskin's rhymes are a waste of time. <i>(45 lines)</i>
RUMPLINA (f).....	Rumpelstiltskin's bratty younger sister. Delights in being mean to Rumpelstiltskin. <i>(18 lines)</i>
INNKEEPER (m/f).....	Kindly person, also a justice of the peace. <i>(18 lines)</i>

- PRINCE (m) An obnoxious monarch. Cares only for gold. Unkind to all. (38 lines)
- QUEEN (f)..... The Prince's mother. Very kind. Embarrassed by her son. (21 lines)
- STACY (f) A lovely young lady and a storyteller. In love with Jack. (85 lines)
- SHERRY (f)..... The old woman who lives in a shoe. Very frazzled. (72 lines)
- MARY (f) Sherry's eldest child. Very shallow and self-centered. (55 lines)
- SCARY (f)..... Sherry's second eldest. Wants more freedom and independence. (22 lines)
- SHERRY'S CHILDREN:** Bratty and always getting into trouble.
- TERRY (m) (7 lines)
- LARRY (m)..... (9 lines)
- CHERRY (f)..... (7 lines)
- BARRY (m) (3 lines)
- PERRY (m) (8 lines)
- MILLER (m)..... Stacy's father. He is very proud of her and brags about her a great deal. Neglects his son, Jud. (65 lines)
- ELENORE (f)..... The Miller's wife. Loves her children, but is troubled by her husband's bragging about Stacy. (34 lines)
- JUD (m) Neglected son of the Miller. Wants to impress his dad. (12 lines)
- JACK (m)..... Of the "beanstalk" fame. A dreamer, with plenty of ideas, but not always the best at following them through. In love with Stacy. (89 lines)

- WANDA (f)..... Jack's mother. Frustrated by her son's bad investments, but she tries to be supportive. *(53 lines)*
- CRAZY MIRANDA (f)..... A crazy old woman. She is also a music agent. *(7 lines)*
- RONALD (m)..... Sherry's husband. He is a carpenter with an interest in making shoe-shaped houses. *(22 lines)*

ROYAL CHEERLEADERS: They follow the Prince around and cheer about him. In truth, they don't like him.

- MARGIE (f)..... *(10 lines)*
- LIBBY (f)..... *(8 lines)*
- TANYA (f)..... *(8 lines)*
- RACHEL (f)..... *(7 lines)*

PROPS

- Two Plates of Food (INNKEEPER)
- Knitting Materials (WANDA AND SHERRY)
- Pom-Poms (Optional, ROYAL CHEERLEADERS)
- Coins (PRINCE)
- Sewing Materials (ELENORE)
- Bag of Storytelling Props (STACY)
- Folding Chair (JACK)
- Spinning Wheel (set by ROYAL CHEERLEADERS)
- Contracts and Quill (RONALD)
- Case Labelled “Alchemy Set” with gold tinsel inside (RUMPELSTILTSKIN)
- Towel (SHERRY)
- Green Wig (SCARY)
- Hand Mirror (SHERRY)
- Shackles (MILLER)
- Beanstalk Folding Chairs (WEDDING GUESTS)

PRODUCTION NOTES

This is a very simple play to produce. It has been produced at SeDoMoCha Middle school to great success. The success lies in the storytelling and energy of the performers, and can be staged with very simple sets and lighting. The most important element to the success of the show, is to keep it moving fast and without too many pauses. You will find the laughs keep on coming if the flow of the show is smooth and swift, running approximately 80 minutes.

As noted in the script, Rumpelstiltskin can perform his scenes in front of the curtain. If you do not have a curtain, or very little room in front of your curtain on the stage, his scenes can be performed without the curtain, with the rest of the cast set behind him frozen in tableau. Rumpelstiltskin's raps should be performed with energy, and the rhythm should accentuate the rhymes.

The stage contains three locations in each scene that will take focus at different times. This can be achieved by simple lighting, or, if lights are unavailable, this can be achieved by having the actors set in the other locations frozen in tableau when their scene is not playing. In terms of the sets, in the initial production, the middle school performers created the simple sets out of cardboard: There were colorful sets that were representational of a fairy tale world. By using simple props and furniture, the audience will believe that they are in the Miller's house, the Prince's stables, etc. The final scene requires no sets, but several folding chairs.

Turning the straw into gold: Rumpelstiltskin brings his "Alchemy Set" to the Prince's stables. The straw does not "turn" to gold in full view of the audience. What we did in the initial production was stash some gold tinsel in the "Alchemy Set" and when the action shifted to a different part of the stage, the actors playing Jack, Stacy, and Rumpelstiltskin, silently, with lights dimmed on them, switched the tinsel from the alchemy set with the "straw" on stage. If you cannot dim the lights, they may do this with their backs to the audience, slowly so as not to distract from the other scene. If you cannot find an actual spinning wheel to use in the production, I would recommend building a simple facsimile out of cardboard, as it does not have to be functional.

In terms of casting: I have made each character unique with his or her own quirks. However, it is possible to combine some roles if necessary. I made several bratty kids who lived in the shoe: Terry, Scary, Larry, Cherry, Barry, Perry. It is possible to make any of these characters male or female, with a simple change of name and a few lines (example: "Perry's a boy!"). If you do not have enough actors to cover these smaller parts, you may combine lines amongst just a few of the kids. The same is true of the Royal Cheerleaders: though Tanya, Libby, Margie, and Rachel have distinct personalities.

DO NOT COPY

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT START: *RUMPELSTILTSKIN enters in front of the Curtain. HE is dressed in typical hip-hop fashion, complete with a baseball cap set askew, baggy pants, and perhaps even a gold chain. HE addresses the audience directly with a rap.*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN:

Yo, yo, yo! Listen up, listen up!
Listen up all to this little story,
It's not a fable or a myth or an allegory,
But a tale about love and time.
So settle on down while I bust my rhyme.
I've been chillin', hangin' in the glen
And you'll never guess my name is....

FEMALE VOICE: (O.S.) Rumpelstiltskin!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (talking) Oh, man. That's my mom, and yes, Rumpelstiltskin is my real name. But you can call me R-Dawg.

MAMMA: (O.S.) Rumpelstiltskin! Where are you!?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'm over here, mom! Come on, give me a break, will ya?

MAMMA RUMPELSTILTSKIN enters, followed by RUMPLINA. MAMMA is a no-nonsense mother, and RUMPLINA is a bratty little sister.

MAMMA: There you are! And what, may I ask, do you think you are doing?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mom, you are totally interrupting me right now.

MAMMA: Well excuse me! Perhaps I wouldn't have to interrupt you if you came home when you're supposed to.

RUMPLINA: Yeah! (*SHE sticks her tongue out at RUMPELSTILTSKIN*)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mom, I'm 250 years old. I think I've outgrown a curfew.

MAMMA: (to audience, rolling her eyes) Adolescents!

RUMPLINA: Mommy, he told me he was going to come down here to the glen so he could work on his hip-hop rhymes.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Rumplina, you said you wouldn't tell...

RUMPLINA: So I had to do all of his chores! All by myself! *(SHE makes a pitiful face to her mother)*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I gave you eight dollars!

MAMMA: You left little Rumplina to do all your chores? How could you? And what have I told you about your raps? Hmmm? If you want to be a minstrel, you have to learn to play the lute. And you have to sing!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I don't want to be a typical minstrel. I'm working on something new and fresh.

MAMMA: I'll say you're being fresh all right!

RUMPLINA: Yeah! You're being fresh! *(SHE makes a face at him)*

MAMMA: Now I want you to come home this instant!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mom, you are totally ruining my tough guy image.

MAMMA: Oh, boo-hoo.

RUMPLINA: Besides, you're not a tough guy. You're just a wannabe poseur!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'll be home in ten minutes, all right?

MAMMA: It better be ten minutes on the dot!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: It will be. Can you go now, please?

MAMMA: Give your mother a kiss first.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Oh, mom, come on.

MAMMA: *(pointing to her cheek)* I won't leave until my little cuddly-wuddly gives his mother a kiss.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(sighs and kisses her cheek)* There. Happy now?

MAMMA: Ten minutes! And don't say "totally" so much. Come, Rumplina.

THEY begin to exit. When MAMMA is offstage, RUMPLINA turns and makes a face at RUMPELSTILTSKIN.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Come on, beat it!

RUMPLINA: Loser, loser, loser! *(SHE skips merrily after her mother)*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(to audience)* Sorry about that. You can pick your friends, but... ANYWAY! LET'S KICK IT!

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT START: *There is no break in action. The scenes are labeled strictly for rehearsal purposes. The curtain opens as RUMPELSTILTSKIN makes a dramatic gesture with his arms. We are now in the town square. Stage right is an outdoor cafe, a table and few chairs, where the PRINCE, an obnoxious young man, sits with the QUEEN, his mother, who looks embarrassed. The INNKEEPER, a kindly person, is offering him some food, while the PRINCE looks disgusted. Stage Left, STACY, a young lady, is telling a story to TERRY, SCARY, LARRY, CHERRY, BARRY, and PERRY, all little brats. MARY, their eldest sibling sits with them, obviously bored. Also watching STACY is the MILLER, her proud father, ELENORE, the miller's wife, and JUD, the miller's youngest child. Center Stage, WANDA and SHERRY rest on stumps. THEY are older women, SHERRY being the mother of the brats. EVERYONE is frozen in tableau while RUMPELSTILTSKIN raps the following.*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN:

A'IGHT, NOW! LISSEN' UP! YO, YO, YO!

Over here we got the Prince, and his mom the Queen,

The Prince is used to getting ev'ry little thing

That he wants---never done a day of work

And to be real honest, he's kind of a jerk.

Yeah, he's needy and oh-so-greedy

His actions are best described as seedy.

But that's what you get with royalty

This fool ain't nothin' like you and me.

Now over here we got the Miller and his daughter,

Her name is Stacy, she's a cool drink of water.

Yeah she's sweet and keen pristine

And that's what we need to set this scene.

(shouting) Peace out!

HE exits. As HE does, the CHARACTERS on stage unfreeze.

PRINCE: Mother, why must you speak to the commoners as if they are actual human beings?

QUEEN: Son, remember your manners.

INNKEEPER: I'm sorry if your majesty is not satisfied with your meal.
Perhaps I could bring you something else?

QUEEN: Don't go to any trouble.

PRINCE: How about bringing me something edible this time, hmmm?

INNKEEPER: I shall do my best, your majesty.

PRINCE: Well let's hope it's good enough.

INNKEEPER: *(trying to control his temper)* YES. SIRE. *(exits)*

QUEEN: I do wish you would be more polite, son.

PRINCE: Mother, how many times must I tell you. The only way to get good service is to demand it! These people are here to serve us. Don't forget that.

QUEEN: But son, you must remember that if you want your subjects to remain loyal, you must treat them with kindness and respect.

PRINCE: Blah, blah, blah. Not when I'm king.

QUEEN: Oh, son. *(SHE shakes her head)*

The action shifts now to STACY, unfrozen, who begins telling her story to the CHILDREN.

STACY: All right, children, do you want a story about romance, about magic, or about feats of daring?

CHILDREN and MILLER: All three! All three! All three!

MARY: Would you stop shouting, please! There's no need for it. *(to MILLER)* Sorry, Mr. Miller. I didn't mean you. I was talking to my army of siblings here.

SHERRY: *(from her center stage stump)* Quiet down, Mary!

MARY: I'm not the one shouting, Mother. Why don't you tell Perry, Scary, Terry, Cherry, Barry and Larry to quiet down?

SHERRY: Just let Stacy tell her story, and give me some peace.

STACY: All right. Let us begin. It all happened long ago, in this very village. A young man named Jack lived with his mother in a tiny cottage on the outskirts of town. Now Jack and his mother were very poor...

MARY: Not another story about poor people! I listen to stories to escape reality, not relive it.

SHERRY: Hush, Mary!

STACY: So one day, Jack's mother decided to send Jack into the village to sell their last cow...

CHERRY: What was the cow's name?

MILLER: *(like a kid)* Yeah, what was the cow's name?

STACY: The cow's name was RJ, and a gentler cow you will never see.
So Jack, with a heavy heart, led RJ the cow into the village.

STACY continues her story in pantomime as the action shifts back to the PRINCE and the QUEEN. The INNKEEPER enters with a plate of food.

INNKEEPER: I hope you find this more to your liking, your majesty.

PRINCE: Took you long enough.

INNKEEPER: I am sorry for the delay.

PRINCE: I won't chop off your head this time.

QUEEN: Thank you, kind Innkeeper. You've done a wonderful job.

INNKEEPER: Your majesty. *(bows and exits)*

QUEEN: How many times have I told you not to talk about chopping off heads? It's very rude.

PRINCE: Mother, it is a common, basic truth for a monarch that it is better to be feared than loved. So just deal, all right?

The action shifts back to STACY telling her story.

STACY: And the giant said, "Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman." Jack found this very confusing since Jack didn't speak with an English accent.

BARRY: Pardon me, but what would the literal translation of Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum be?

PERRY: And what is the country of origin?

LARRY: I, personally, have never heard such a dialect.

CHERRY: Nor I.

SCARY: I have!

PERRY: You have not!

SCARY: Wanna bet?

LARRY: All right, Scary, why don't you tell us where you've heard it?

SCARY: I don't want to.

CHERRY: How convenient.

MARY: Quiet, all of you! Could you be any more embarrassing?

BARRY: If you give us a minute, I'm sure we could work something out.

STACY: Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum is an expression used only by giants. Shall we continue?

STACY continues her story in pantomime, while the action shifts to SHERRY and WANDA center stage on their stumps. THEY knit and chat, BOTH being somewhat weary mothers.

SHERRY: Another story about your son, Jack. You must be so proud of him, Wanda.

WANDA: Sometimes.

SHERRY: Surely you're being modest, Wanda. It must be heaven to have a son who is so brave, and now, so very rich. I wish I could believe my little monsters are going to provide for me in my old age.

WANDA: The truth, Sherry, is that we've fallen upon hard times again.

SHERRY: How can that be? What about the goose and the golden eggs?

WANDA: A fluke, I guess. After about a month, it just stopped laying. Then Jack, out of the best of intentions of course, invested what money we had into different projects that went belly-up. That boy does not have a good head for business, bless his stupid little heart.

SHERRY: Oh, no. I'm so sorry, Wanda. I had no idea.

WANDA: Don't you worry, now. We make ends meet by renting out our self-playing harp. What about you, Sherry, dear? How's everything with the children and Ronald?

SHERRY: Fine, I suppose. Life is a constant struggle, but we manage. It's strange how difficult it is to keep a giant shoe tidy, though. Especially with all of the children.

WANDA: I imagine.

SHERRY: Yes. Ronald was so sure that the shoe idea would catch on once everyone saw our house. Ha. He hasn't had a single carpentry job in almost a year. I don't like to complain, but a SHOE? I don't understand it. And now Mary is of a marrying age, and only ever thinks about getting out of the shoe-house. She hates taking care of her brothers and sisters. All she ever talks about is the Prince.

WANDA: The Prince?

SHERRY: Yes, the Prince this, the Prince that. I suppose after all this time living in a shoe, she dreams of what it would be like to live in a castle.

WANDA: I can't blame her for that. Sometimes I wish life were a fairy tale.

SHERRY: Me too.

The action shifts back to STACY who is finishing her story.

STACY: And Jack and his mother lived happily ever after.

MARY: That's not what I've heard.

STACY: The end.

The children all applaud. The MILLER stands up and applauds with embarrassing exaggeration.

MILLER: Whoooo! That was terrific, sweetheart! You see that, everybody? My daughter is the best storyteller in the entire world!

STACY: (*embarrassed*) Thanks, daddy.

SHERRY: (*rising from her stump*) Now children, I want you to thank Stacy for telling you such a fine story.

CHILDREN: (*except MARY*) Thank you!

STACY: You're welcome. It was my pleasure.

MILLER: Don't be modest, Stacy. You are the finest storyteller who has ever lived!

STACY: That's not true, daddy.

SHERRY: Come, children. Let's go home.

The CHILDREN, except MARY, begin to follow SHERRY.

SHERRY: Come along, Mary. I need your help.

MARY: But mother, the Prince is right over there. I wish to speak to him.

SHERRY: You can't just go marching up to the Prince. It's not done that way.

MARY: But mother...

SHERRY: I need your help this afternoon.

MARY: How is the Prince ever going to fall in love with me and marry me if I never meet him?

SHERRY: Darling, I'm very sorry. The truth is, it's nice to have dreams. But you're a poor girl. I'm afraid you'll never be the wife of the Prince. Now please come along.

MARY: It's not fair!

SHERRY: (*staring offstage*) No, it's not. (*yelling offstage*) Larry! Perry! Terry! Scary! Stop throwing rocks at that old woman.

CRAZY MIRANDA, a crazy, rich old woman, enters with PERRY and BARRY by the ears.

CRAZY MIRANDA: What is the meaning of this!?

SHERRY: I'm very sorry, Miss Miranda, it won't happen again.

CRAZY MIRANDA: It had better not. I'm important. I'm an agent for musicians! I have a lawyer! I'll sue you down to the sole of that stupid shoe house of yours! I'm crazy! Understood?

SHERRY: Yes, ma'am. I am truly sorry.

CRAZY MIRANDA: Just keep a better eye on your ruffians! (*SHE exits*)

SHERRY: How many times have I told you children? If you're going to throw rocks at people, make sure they're not rich enough to have a lawyer. Now let's go!

SHERRY, MARY, and all the CHILDREN leave.

ELENORE: Will you be helping me with the sewing this afternoon, Stacy?

STACY: You bet, mom. I have another gig for a birthday party right now, but I'll be home later this afternoon.

ELENORE: Thanks, sweetheart. (*to the MILLER*) Are you coming, dear?

MILLER: I'm going to speak to the innkeeper. I'll be along.

JUD: Can you show me how to mill today, dad?

MILLER: Some other time, Jud. I have to go tell the innkeeper how great my daughter is.

JUD exits dejectedly, followed by ELENORE. The MILLER crosses to the Inn area. STACY is hunched over, collecting some things, when JACK, a young dreamer, enters. HE is a handsome lad. HE trips right over STACY as HE enters.

JACK: Oh, I'm sorry.

STACY: It's all right. Hi Jack.

JACK: (*shy around STACY*) Uh...hi. Doing are you how?

STACY: What?

JACK: I mean...how are you doing?

STACY: I'm doing very well. I just told a story about you.

JACK: Really? A story about me little old? I mean... a story about little old me? Well, thanks. That's very nice of you.

STACY: You're welcome. I have to get going. I hope I see you later, Jack.

JACK: Yeah, I hope so, because when you see me, I see you, and it's like we're seeing each other, because we both are in the realm of sight and... uh... you know, have eyes.

STACY: (*smiling*) Okay. Bye, Jack.

STACY exits. JACK stares off after for a few moments, then looks around until HE spots WANDA, who is knitting on her stump. HE approaches her.

JACK: There she is! And how is the most fantabulous mother in the world doing?

WANDA: Hello, Jack.

JACK: I've been looking all over for you. I have some great news!

WANDA: I just came into town to get out of the house for a little while and hear Stacy's story.

JACK: Well, that's good. Fresh air is good for all of us. Anyway...

WANDA: Stacy's story was about you.

JACK: Yeah, she was telling me about that.

WANDA: Such a nice girl. You like her, don't you?

JACK: Who told you? I mean... uh, what do you mean?

WANDA: I just mean that you like her.

JACK: Well, yes, but there's a big difference between liking someone and liking *liking* someone.

WANDA: Yes, I suppose you're right. So, you like *like* her, don't you?

JACK: (*changing the subject*) So, dearest mother, would you like to hear the incredible news your genius son has for you?

WANDA: (*changing the subject*) I just spoke with Sherry. You know, the old woman who lives in the shoe? The poor dear has so many children, she doesn't know what to do.

JACK: That's interesting. Anyway, back to the incredible news...

WANDA: I was thinking of having her over some night this week to hear the harp. It's so relaxing.

JACK: Mother, I really have something important to talk to you about.

WANDA: (*sighing*) All right, dear boy, what is it?

JACK: You remember that great idea I had?

WANDA: Which one?

JACK: About the chairs. You know, the...

WANDA: Yes, I know, the chairs that you can fold up. I remember.

JACK: Well, today I sold the harp so I could get some start-up capital to design and mass produce my chairs. Isn't that great?

There is a long pause as WANDA stares at him. JACK, still enthusiastic:

JACK: Isn't that great!?

Another long pause. JACK deflates.

JACK: What's the matter, Mother?

WANDA: Nothing, Jack. It just sounded like you said you sold the harp, our only source of income. I'm sure my ears were just playing tricks on me.

JACK: No, mother, you heard me correctly. I sold it.

WANDA: (*trying to control herself*) I see. You sold the harp.

JACK: Yes. You know that girl Rapunzel? Long hair, doesn't get out much? Her mother bought it off of me. Strange lady.

WANDA: All right. Why, pray tell, did you sell our harp, Jack?

JACK: I just told you. To design and mass produce my idea of the folding chair. I'm thinking of calling my company "Beanstalk Chairs". It's got a nice ring to it, don't you think?

WANDA: I don't want to answer too quickly, Jack, for fear of being overly sharp with you. Just give me a moment to collect myself.

JACK: Mother, don't you understand? I did this to secure a future for us.

WANDA: (*Losing patience*) No, Jack, I do not understand. How do you figure it? How is selling our only source of income a way to secure a future for us? And what about our agent, Crazy Miranda?

JACK: I haven't told her yet. She's crazy.

WANDA: Oh, Jack, what have you done? We have nothing else. What will we do?

JACK: But my idea...

WANDA: You always have ideas, Jack. Don't get me wrong, I like it, I really do. You are very creative.

JACK: Thank you.

WANDA: But you don't always follow through, Jack.

JACK: This one is different, mom. I promise.

WANDA: I know you want to believe that, son. But let's look at some of your other investments. Square wheels? Stone windows? Deep frying vegetables?

JACK: Okay, you're right. I've made a few mistakes.

WANDA: Why do you think these folding chairs will be any different?

JACK: Because they're chairs! That fold! Think of it. Let's say you're having friends over, but you don't have enough real chairs. Do some people have to sit on the floor? No. You just go to the closet, take out some folding chairs and BINGO! You're all set. When you're friends leave, do you have to deal with moving heavy furniture? No! You just fold up the chairs and put them back in the closet, easy as that.

WANDA: I see what you mean.

JACK: Or remember the village carnival last year with the minstrel show? People were complaining about having no place to sit. Those kind of events would be perfect for a folding chair.

WANDA: Oh, Jack, I just don't know about you sometimes.

JACK: Mom, people have to take risks in order to succeed in this life. What if I had told that guy there was no way I'd sell RJ for magic beans? Look how far that got us.

WANDA: I know, Jack.

JACK: Sometimes I wish you had a little more faith in me.

WANDA: I'm sorry, Jack. I do believe in you. I really do. I just worry about things, that's all.

JACK: Trust me, mom. I won't let you down.

WANDA: All right, son. We've been through some pretty tough times. It takes a whole lot to keep us down. Let's go home.

THEY exit together. The MILLER and the INNKEEPER unfreeze. The PRINCE and the QUEEN unfreeze and continue eating.

MILLER: And how is my good friend the Innkeeper?

INNKEEPER: I am well, my good friend, the Miller. And how is business, my friend?

MILLER: It is going very well.

INNKEEPER: Excuse my ignorance, but what is it you do again?

MILLER: I am a miller. I mill.

INNKEEPER: And what is that exactly?

MILLER: Milling is... well, milling.

INNKEEPER: I see.

Pause.

MILLER: It's complicated.

Pause.

INNKEEPER: Well, at any rate, how is your family?

MILLER: I am glad that you asked. My eldest daughter is a marvel. So gifted at telling a story. A genius with a needle. Oh, and yes, you should see that girl at the spinning wheel. She can spin and spin. Such a gifted girl.

INNKEEPER: You sound very proud of her.

MILLER: I am indeed. Very much so.

INNKEEPER: And your son?

MILLER: (*Dismissive*) Oh, I think he's fine, I suppose. (*excited*) Why, just the other day, my amazing daughter managed to spin a few strands of straw right into gold. Before my very eyes. I tell you true, I had never seen such a marvel!

INNKEEPER: Are you telling me that your daughter spun straw into gold?

MILLER: Pretty neat, huh?

INNKEEPER: I'll say. Are you sure your eyes weren't playing tricks on you?

MILLER: I am certain.

INNKEEPER: Then I would say a girl like that would be fit for royalty!

The PRINCE, who has been listening in on this conversation, rises.

PRINCE: I agree.

MILLER: Oh, my! It's...it's the...

PRINCE: Yes, it is I, your Prince. (*claps his hands*) Royal cheerleaders!

The ROYAL CHEERLEADERS enter with a flourish. THEY are MARGIE, LIBBY, TANYA, and RACHEL. THEY are all young and energetic, dressed as cheerleaders, with a "P" on their shirts.

CHEERLEADERS:

Two, four, six, eight!

The monarch that you love to hate!

The Prince! The Prince! The Prince!

WHOOOO!

THEY jump around and clap. MARGIE comes forward. The OTHERS clap in rhythm for her cheer.

MARGIE:

My name is Margie,

I'm here to say:

Our friend the Prince

Will make your day!

MARGIE goes back to the ranks. LIBBY comes forward.

LIBBY:

My name is Libby

And you can guess

I think the Prince

Is just the best!

LIBBY goes back, TANYA comes forward.

TANYA:

My name is Tanya
As you can see,
We all just love
The monarchy!

TANYA goes back, RACHEL comes forward.

RACHEL:

My name is Rachel
I hate my job!
I think the Prince
Is just a slob!

All the CHEERLEADERS “who” and hop around, waving their pom-poms.

PRINCE: Thank you, Royal Cheerleaders. You may go now.

CHEERLEADERS: Thank you, your majesty. *(THEY exit, grumbling about how much THEY dislike the PRINCE.)*

MILLER: Wow. That was... something.

PRINCE: Yes. My mother here wanted me to have some guy with a big trumpet follow me around.

QUEEN: It's called a Herald, my dear.

PRINCE: Blah, blah, blah. I prefer the cheerleaders. *(almost as a cheer)* They don't like me, but that's okay, I think they're stupid anyway!

MILLER: Well, your majesty, it was nice meeting you, but I should get going...

PRINCE: Is it true your daughter spins straw into gold?

MILLER: *(Regrets his bragging)* Uh... well, yes, sire, it is true.

PRINCE: In that case, bring her by the royal stables this evening after the dinner hour. I have buildings full of straw. And I can always use more gold.

QUEEN: Now, son, why don't you leave this kind man alone? We have plenty of gold.

PRINCE: No mother. I want to see if this braggart is telling the truth. *(to the MILLER)* You will bring her then?

MILLER: Of course, your majesty.

PRINCE: If she can do as you say, you both shall be greatly rewarded. If, on the other hand, you have lied... Well, let's hope for your daughter's sake that you haven't lied. Good day.

The PRINCE throws a few coins on the table and exits with the QUEEN.

INNKEEPER: Did you hear that? Your daughter has an audience with the Prince! How exciting!

MILLER: *(laughs nervously)* Yes. How wonderful. Can't wait to tell her.

HE rushes off, nervous. The curtain closes.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT START: *There is no break in action between the scenes, for as soon as the curtain closes, RUMPELSTILTSKIN enters in front of the curtain and addresses the audience.*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(rapping)*

Yo, yo, yo! Here we go, here we go!
Now you see that the Miller sings a bragging song
Puffin' up his daughter, like she can do no wrong,
But now he's gotta go home and try to explain
Everything to Stacy, which is gonna be a pain.
And...

MAMMA: *(offstage)* STOP!

MAMMA enters with RUMPLINA following.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mom, I am in the middle of telling a story.

MAMMA: No, you're in the middle of shouting out these rhymes, that no one really wants to listen to.

RUMPLINA: Yeah!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: That's not true, ma. These people are listening to every word I say.

MAMMA: *(to audience)* I always wanted him to be an alchemist. Such a head for science, this boy, and he throws it all away for his “rhymes.”

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Ma, please don't start in on all that science stuff again.

MAMMA: The best in the lab, that's what everyone said. He just had a natural gift for chemistry.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mother, I'm not trying to be rude, but can you and the munchkin please leave? I have to finish up what I'm doing.

RUMPLINA: Don't call me a munchkin. I'm almost as tall as you.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: In your dreams, pipsqueak.

MAMMA: That's enough! Rumpelstiltskin, go to your room!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: But...

MAMMA: Not another word, mister!

RUMPLINA laughs and makes a face at her brother.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I have to finish...

MAMMA: Don't worry, Rumplina and I shall finish up here.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: But it's my job! I'm supposed to...

MAMMA: Less talking, more walking! Go!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(resigned)* Fine. I'll go. *(to the audience)* I have to go home now, I guess. See ya later. *(HE exits)*

MAMMA: I'm sorry about that, Ladies and gentlemen. How I hate making a scene. But children need discipline!

RUMPLINA: That's right, mom!

MAMMA: Very well. Shall we continue?

The curtain opens. The stage has been divided into three parts, indicated by simple props or even by lighting. Stage left is the MILLER's house, perhaps represented by a dining room table. Upstage center is SHERRY's house. Stage right is JACK's work area.

MAMMA: You shall hear none of that silly rhyming from me, thank you very much. Now over here we have the Miller's house, where he lives with his wife Elenore and his two children.

RUMPLINA: Back here is where Sherry lives with her bratty kids.

MAMMA: That's right, dear. And over here is where Jack the dreamer, much like my son, lives with his poor mother, who is much like me, only without the iron fist. They shall all be home soon, so I suppose we should be leaving, Rumplina.

RUMPLINA: All right, mom. Let's go.

THEY exit just as ELENORE sits down at her table, working on sewing. The MILLER enters.

MILLER: Hello, honey.

ELENORE: Hi. Did you have a nice conversation with the innkeeper?

MILLER: It was all right. *(laughs nervously)* Is Stacy home?

ELENORE: Yes. She's gathering some things from her room.

MILLER: Good. I need to speak to her.

ELENORE: Before you do, there's something I think we should talk about regarding Stacy.

MILLER: I really need to speak with her. This is important.

ELENORE: So is this.

MILLER: All right. What is it?

ELENORE: I know that you are very proud of Stacy, and that's a good thing. It's important for both of us to encourage her.

MILLER: Yup. Anything else?

ELENORE: It's just that sometimes you overdue it a bit.

MILLER: What?

ELENORE: You brag about her so much. I think it embarrasses her.

MILLER: I don't know what you're talking about. Honestly, honey, you're not making any sense.

ELENORE: What I mean, dear, is that you put her on such a high pedestal. I think she's afraid of letting you down.

MILLER: She could never let me down. I'm her father. I love her no matter what.

ELENORE: I know that. I'm not so sure Stacy knows that. And another thing--- you hardly ever pay any attention to Jud.

MILLER: Who?

ELENORE: Jud! Our son!

MILLER: Oh. Oh, right! I thought you said something else.

ELENORE: Jud works so hard to make you proud of him.

MILLER: Yeah, yeah, that's nice. I really have to speak with Stacy.

JUD enters.

JUD: Dad, you're home! I thought I heard you come in.

MILLER: (*distracted*) Hi son. How are you?

JUD: I've been out in the shed all day, practicing my milling. I think I'm getting pretty good at it.

MILLER: (*not really listening*) Sure, yup, that's nice.

JUD: Do you want to come see?

MILLER: What? I'm sorry, what?

ELENORE: Your son was asking you to go and see all of the milling he's done today.

MILLER: Oh. Yeah, I'm sure it's fine. I need to talk to Stacy. (*exits*)

ELENORE: I'm sorry, honey. I'm sure he'll go out and see it later.

JUD: (*shrugs his shoulders*) Whatever. (*HE exits, dejected*)

ELENORE looks as her SON exits. SHE sighs and goes back to her sewing. Lights dim on her, as lights go up on SHERRY's space. SHERRY enters her area and sits down, obviously exhausted. As soon as SHE looks the least bit comfortable, SCARY enters.

SCARY: Mom, I need to talk to you.

SHERRY: Lucky me. What is it, Scary dear?

SCARY: Since I'm the second oldest, I think that I should have a little more freedom.

SHERRY: Is that so?

SCARY: Yes. So I was wondering, as part of this new freedom, if I could, say... dye my hair pink?

SHERRY: No.

SCARY: Why not? You didn't even think about it.

SHERRY: You would regret it.

SCARY: No I wouldn't.

SHERRY: Scary, this conversation is over.

SCARY: I'm just going to keep asking until you say yes.

SHERRY: Go right ahead.

SCARY: Can I dye my hair pink?

SHERRY: No.

SCARY: Can I dye my hair pink?

SHERRY: No.

SCARY: Can I dye my hair pink?

SHERRY: No.

SCARY: Can I dye my hair pink?

SHERRY: NO.

SCARY: Can I pierce my belly button?

SHERRY: What?!

SCARY: If I can't dye my hair, can I at least pierce my belly button?

SHERRY: Why on Earth would you want to do a thing like that?

SCARY: Because.

SHERRY: "Because" is not an answer. "No", however, is an answer.
Now go away and leave me alone.

SCARY storms off, mad. Just as SHE does, PERRY, LARRY and TERRY enter, mid-way through a fight.

PERRY, LARRY, and TERRY: MOM!

SHERRY: Oh, dear, can't I get a moment's peace? What is the problem?

TERRY: Larry and Perry are picking on me!

PERRY: Nuh-uh. Terry's the one who started it!

LARRY: Yeah! Perry and I were just minding our own business when Terry tried to tie our hair together. *(beat)* With wire.

SHERRY: Is that true, Terry? Did you try to tie Larry and Perry's hair together?

TERRY: I don't see how that's relevant.

SHERRY: Did you or didn't you?

TERRY: I just wanted it to look nice.

PERRY: Yeah, right. I bet.

LARRY: Liar!

TERRY: I'm not the liar, you're the liar!

SHERRY: That's enough! Go to your rooms, all of you!

PERRY, TERRY, and LARRY: That's not fair!

SHERRY: I'm through being the referee today! Rooms! Now!

LARRY, PERRY, and TERRY exit, grumbling, just as MARY is passing by.

SHERRY: Where are you going?

MARY: I'm going to see Stacy.

SHERRY: I didn't know you two were friends. You always say mean things about her.

MARY: We're not friends. But she doesn't have to know that.

SHERRY: Should I even ask what you're talking about?

MARY: It's quite simple, really. I need Stacy to lend me that pretty dress she made last year for her storytelling festival.

SHERRY: What do you need her fancy dress for?

MARY: Well, I'm never going to attract the Prince if I wear peasant clothes. But when he sees how pretty I look in a fancy dress, he's sure to take notice and talk to me.

SHERRY: Honey, the Prince, quite frankly, is not a very nice person. Do you really want to be married to someone who only notices you because of the outside, and not who you are on the inside? Don't you think that's shallow?

MARY: Of course it's shallow.

SHERRY: Then why would you want to marry him?

MARY: Duh! To live in the castle and not have to watch over four bratty kids all the time. See? I'm shallow too.

SHERRY: Fair enough. Just be home in time for supper.

MARY: I will. With a pretty dress to wear.

MARY exits. SHERRY, at her limit, rests her head on the table. Over at the MILLER's, STACY enters, followed by the MILLER. SHE is obviously upset. In JACK's area, JACK enters at some point through the following to work on his invention.

STACY: Mom, did dad tell you what he's done?

MILLER: Now, Stacy, just calm down.

STACY: Calm down? Calm down? I can't believe this! What am I going to do?

ELENORE: What's going on?

MILLER: It's not that big of a deal.

STACY: Not only am I supposed to be the world's greatest storyteller, or the world's best seamstress, but I'm expected to perform an impossible task? What were you thinking dad?

MILLER: First off, nothing is impossible.

STACY: That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

ELENORE: I want someone to tell me what happened.

STACY sits down next to her MOTHER.

STACY: Go ahead, dad. Tell mom what you've done.

MILLER: All right. I think you're going to laugh about this, honey.

ELENORE: I'm not so sure.

MILLER: Well... I was talking to the Innkeeper, and... he says hi, by the way.

ELENORE: Go on.

MILLER: Right. Well, I was talking to the Innkeeper, and I sort of said that Stacy could... well... I said that Stacy could spin straw into gold.

ELENORE: What? How could you say such a thing? That's outrageous even for you!

STACY: Wait, mom. It gets better.

ELENORE: There's more?

STACY: Oh yes. The best part has yet to come.

ELENORE: Well? Go on.

MILLER: It's not my fault! I didn't even know he was there!

ELENORE: Who?

STACY: The Prince! The Prince was sitting right there!

MILLER: I didn't know!

STACY: So instead of telling the Prince he was exaggerating, he agrees to have me go over to the Prince's stable tonight, and spin all of his straw into gold!

ELENORE: Oh, no! You didn't!

MILLER: Stacy, you're a bright girl. I'm sure you'll think of something.

ELENORE: Oh, honey, how could you?

MILLER: You're both acting like this is a negative thing. You know how many young ladies would love to be personally invited to have an audience with the Prince? Think about it.

STACY: I don't think he'll be too happy when he realizes that I can't do what he's been told I can do.

MILLER: There, I knew it! You are deliberately taking a negative attitude toward this whole ordeal.

STACY: How is there any way I can take a positive attitude?

MILLER: Who knows? Maybe you'll figure out a way to do it. You're limiting yourself, honey.

STACY: I can't talk about this right now. I need some time to myself.

STACY exits. The MILLER looks at ELENORE sheepishly.

ELENORE: I hope you're happy with yourself!

MILLER: Maybe this will all work out?

The action focuses on JACK, who has just finished inventing his folding chair.

JACK: I did it! I did it! *(HE folds the chair open and sits in it)* It works!
(HE pops up) Mom! Mom! Come here!

WANDA enters.

WANDA: What is it?

JACK: *(sitting back down)* Just look what I'm sitting in.

WANDA: Yes. It's a chair.

JACK: It's not just a chair, mom. It's THE CHAIR. My invention. A folding chair. Look.

HE stands up and folds the chair. HE is beaming. WANDA isn't very impressed, but SHE tries her best.

WANDA: Well. Isn't that something?

JACK: Yeah, I know. It's awesome.

WANDA: I suppose there is some awe, indeed.

The action shifts back to the MILLER's house. STACY is standing outside by herself as MARY approaches.

MARY: Stacy! So nice to see you!

STACY is a little taken aback by MARY's friendly demeanor, largely because it is very phony.

STACY: Hi Mary.

MARY: I have to tell you, I think your story was incredible today. Just incredible. I was talking about it all afternoon.

STACY: Really?

MARY: Why, of course!

STACY: Oh. I just thought it seemed like you were a little bored.

MARY: Oh no! Not at all! Not in the least bit! It was my brothers and sisters. Every time I just try to relax and enjoy myself, they ruin it for me.

STACY: Oh. That must have been it.

MARY: Anyway, I was just stopping by to tell you how much I liked your story.

STACY: Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

The action shifts to JACK and WANDA.

WANDA: I suppose you should get started selling them.

JACK: What I was thinking was that I could start a business with someone who's good at making things. You know, someone for the practical side of production, so I could just keep the books and manage the sales.

WANDA: I wonder if Ronald the carpenter would be interested. He's a bit hung up on shoes, but we could ask him anyway.

JACK: That's an idea. *(HE becomes distracted)* Maybe... if this is a success... *(HE trails off, in dream land)*

WANDA: Hello? Earth to Jack... Come in, Jack.

JACK: *(snapping out of it)* Huh? What?

WANDA: What were you thinking about?

JACK: Nobody! I mean... uh... nothing.

WANDA: *(Smiling)* Maybe you could go show your invention to Stacy. She might like it.

JACK: Why would I do that?

WANDA: *(still smiling)* I have no idea.

WANDA exits, smiling. JACK thinks a moment, then exits with his chair folded up. The focus returns to STACY and MARY.

STACY: Sure, I guess you can borrow my dress. Why not?

MARY: Thank you, Stacy. You're an absolute doll.

STACY: You have a crush on the Prince, huh?

MARY: Sure. Doesn't every young maiden?

STACY: I don't.

MARY: Really? Different strokes, I guess.

STACY: I kind of like a guy who can dream. The Prince doesn't have any dreams. He already has everything he ever wanted. There's nothing more to dream for after that.

MARY looks at her as if SHE's crazy.

MARY: Whatever. I prefer someone with a whole lot of money and a whole lot of power.

STACY: Can I tell you a secret? You have to promise not to tell anyone.

MARY: My lips are sealed.

STACY: I kind of have a crush on... (*SHE sees JACK enter*) Jack!

MARY: YOU LIKE...

STACY: Shhh. Never mind, it's nothing.

JACK: Hi Stacy. Hi Mary.

MARY: Hi Jack. We were almost just talking about you.

STACY: (*laughs too loudly to cover*) We were just talking.

JACK: Oh. Okay.

MARY: So, Stacy, can I get that dress?

STACY: Yeah, I'll go get it. Wait! I just had a perfect idea.

MARY: What?

STACY: I have to go to the Prince's stables in a little bit...

MARY and JACK: What?

STACY: I'll tell you later. Long story short, my dad said something stupid, the Prince overheard, and I have to go to his stables.

JACK: I was hoping we could hang out later. I want to show you my invention.

STACY: What I was thinking was that Mary, you could stop by the stables later tonight in the pretty dress. That way the Prince could see you. Kind of give you a foot in the door.

MARY: You'd do that for me?

STACY: Sure. We're friends now, right?

MARY: Uh... Absolutely!

STACY: And Jack, you wait here while I get a few things, then you can walk me to the stables and I'll tell you the whole story.

JACK: Sounds like a plan. I'll be right here.

STACY: Okay. I'll be right back.

STACY rushes off. There is an awkward silence between JACK and MARY.

JACK: How are you today, Mary?

MARY: Is there a reason you're talking to me?

JACK: Oh, sorry... never mind.

THEY freeze. RUMPELSTILTSKIN enters.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*rapping*)

Now we're all set up, lookin' sweet as cake,
So the curtain's gonna close and we'll have a little break!

Curtain.

END OF ACT ONE

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