

RUMPELSTILTSKIN AT THE DOWNTOWN SEVEN-ELEVEN

By Jerry Rabushka

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SYNOPSIS

The Seven-Eleven at Pine and 17th in downtown St. Louis, Missouri has seen its share of shadiness, and now it's the perfect setting for a new take on the old tale of Rumpelstiltskin. When he agrees to help a mortgage-poor married couple make their house payment by spinning wheat into gold, he starts them on a cycle of dependency—until he demands their first child as payment. All this goes down in a dangerous neighborhood complete with incompetent criminals, corrupt police, meddling social workers, and smarmy salespeople. Bring your laughs and keep your wallet secure for a new “spin” on an old tale!

CHARACTERS

(Flexible cast of 4m, 2f, 3e—can also be 2m, 1f, 6e)*

NARRATOR (m or f)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Or is that really his name?

MOTHER (SALLY MAE)

An employee of Seven-Eleven

FATHER (ELMER)

An irresponsible home owner

CREIGHTON

An incompetent thug

MISS DARCY DOLEOUT

A social worker

BIX BLIGHTON (BIXIE if female)

Police officer on the downtown beat.

CASH SPOTTER (m or f)

A bank worker who likes to foreclose

SALESPERSON (CARL OR CARLA)

From an electronics store

FLEXIBLE CASTING

*Narrator, Cash, and Salesperson can be played by M or F. Creighton, Miss Doleout and Bix, while written for specific genders, can be cast as either M or F by changing gender references.

DURATION

Approximately 25 minutes

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NARRATOR: *(as a newscaster, engaging the audience from the start!*

OTHER CAST MEMBERS can react with extreme concern to these initial questions.) Are your children safe? Is your mortgage affordable? Is your coffee fresh? Can you survive the hustle and bustle of inner-city living? All this and more, in our production of... *Rumpelstiltskin at the Downtown Seven-Eleven.*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(scandalized!)* Shhhh! Quiet!

NARRATOR: What? I'm talking here.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(trying not to let anyone else hear)* My name's supposed to be a secret.

NARRATOR: That too bad, since it's in the TITLE OF THE PLAY.

MOTHER: *(hasn't been paying much attention)* What's that?

NARRATOR: I said, "And now, the tale of—"

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Never mind. *(loud to drown out NARRATOR)* La la la la la! *(still talking loud to keep NARRATOR from finishing)* Nobody cares about titles anymore! They're too confining.

MOTHER: Okay, I'll go back to watching Star Jones. *She* tells it like it is.

NARRATOR: She doesn't, but whatever.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(to NARRATOR, exasperated)* Why not just give away the ending? Like all the people who die in *Harry Potter*?

NARRATOR: *(disappointed and hurt)* I... I.... haven't seen that yet.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: So I just saved you three and a half hours.

NARRATOR: May I begin?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: What's stopping you? Other than common sense. Now skip the title and get to the meat.

NARRATOR: *(prepares to formally begin the story)* Once upon a time there was a middle class married couple that was stretched out well beyond its financial means.

MOTHER: *(finally paying attention!)* We can't afford our mortgage.

FATHER: We can't afford our big screen TV payment.

MOTHER: Our cable bill...

FATHER: Cabin in the woods.

MOTHER: Manicurist—weekly standing appointment. Though I sit for it.

FATHER: But mostly the mortgage.

MOTHER: We want our children to grow up in a nice neighborhood.

NARRATOR: Except for one problem...

MOTHER and FATHER: *(whiny)* We don't have any children.

MISS DOLEOUT: *(brusque)* Like you could afford children. Planning to let the state foot the bill?

FATHER: Excuse me, but who are you, and more importantly, who do you *think* you are?

MISS DOLEOUT: I'm Miss Darcy Doleout, St. Louis area social worker. I look out for children's welfare—and for children *on* welfare. You're not ready for children, and our taxpayers aren't excited about the prospect of you having them either. As for who I *think* I am, that's an entirely different story unfit for this audience.

FATHER: (*to audience*) We wanted to live on government handouts, but we're too rich.

MOTHER: So I took a job at a Seven-Eleven to make ends meet.

NARRATOR: Unfortunately, on a diet of Slurpees and doughnuts...

MOTHER: I'm borderline diabetic, but now I'm addicted. (*more conversational*) You meet the most interesting characters at a Seven-Eleven. Like this one: (*prepares to assist a customer*) May I help you?

NARRATOR: Who ever says "may I help you" at a Seven-Eleven?

MOTHER: You're right... let's try again: (*surly*) What do you want? Is that all?

CREIGHTON: (*HE is a street thug and a robber, but not very competent at either*) May I have all the money in the cash register? Please?

MOTHER: No.

CREIGHTON: (*more insistent*) Give me the money!

MOTHER: I said no!

CREIGHTON: Give it to me or die.

MOTHER: (*SHE means business!*) And I said no. Do not make me tell you a fourth time. Do you need a time-out in the beer cooler?

CREIGHTON: (*after a tense pause*) Okay.

MOTHER: (*to everyone, proud*) You don't mess with mama!

CREIGHTON: Sorry... mama.

MOTHER: And that's in fact where we met Rumpelstiltskin.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Shhhh!

MISS DOLEOUT: Who?

MOTHER: (*louder*) Rumpelstiltskin.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I said shhhh!

MOTHER: Do I look like I care? I'm already working at Seven-Eleven at Pine and Seventeenth in downtown St. Louis. So you don't scare me. Nothing scares me... (*scary!*) anymore.

NARRATOR: Rumpelstiltskin, although his true name was then known to none, was a elfish dwarfish gnome-like creature with an ugly face and pinched features.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: That's not true.

(*MOTHER silently agrees with NARRATOR.*)

NARRATOR: (*gloating*) Pinched!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Stop making fun of me.

NARRATOR: No one's making fun of you. You're just pinched.

CREIGHTON: I remember holding you up. Pinched.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: And I didn't give you any money either.

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CREIGHTON: I couldn't look at you any longer. *You* should have worn the mask, not me.

NARRATOR: The officer on the beat looked the other way.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: (*introducing himself*) Bix Blighton, St. Louis police, There's more important crime on the corner of Pine and 17th. Robbery? Not worth our time.

MISS DOLEOUT: So what happened?

MOTHER: Rumpelstiltskin—or DeVon, as he called himself... asked for a cup of coffee.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Can I have a cup of coffee? (*telling a big lie*) Oh, by the way, my name's DeVon.

MISS DOLEOUT: Sure it is.

MOTHER: And as if I care. Give me the money and pour it yourself.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I can't reach the pot. I'm kind of short.

MOTHER: You're as short as my mortgage payment at the end of the month. At least my bank has free coffee.

CREIGHTON: (*realizes what's going on*) So *that's* why you're not giving me any money.

MOTHER: I'm already skimming off the cash register to pay the house note. I can't steal for two.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: You both need to go to jail.

MOTHER: You said it yourself. There's more important crime at 17th and Pine.

NARRATOR: That's when Rumpelstiltskin...

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*interrupts, annoyed*) That's when *who*???

NARRATOR: —er... that's when... DeVon... made a most interesting offer.

MISS DOLEOUT: What was that? You know he's delusional.

MOTHER: I said to him—if only I could do something magical. Like spin wheat into gold. Then I could pay the house note and all the other stuff we've accumulated that we can't afford.

FATHER: I feel so guilty watching my big screen TV knowing we're so deeply in debt.

NARRATOR: DeVon said he could help

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I *can* spin wheat into gold.

CREIGHTON: Then how come when I held you up you didn't give me anything? Selfish.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I was saving the wheat for some whole-grain baked goods.

MISS DOLEOUT: Wheat into gold? How do you do that?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: It's a secret. An ancient Chinese one. Then the Chinese forgot it so I'm the only one left who knows how.

NARRATOR: Even our fairy tales are made in China.

MISS DOLEOUT: I'm sorry, DeVon, but I don't believe you.

MOTHER: (*real chatty*) Me either, but can you help a poor girl out?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: All right. Fine. I'll do it if you give me the TV.

NARRATOR: This didn't go over well at home.

FATHER: (*angry and surprised*) You agreed to what?

MOTHER: (*skimming past it*) Just give him the TV.

FATHER: Why don't we sell the TV ourselves rather than get a third party involved in our financial woes? Can't we just go on a reality show where they pay our bills?

MOTHER: If he's spinning wheat into gold, we'll be rich! All for the price of a TV.

FATHER: OK. We'll give him the TV and use the gold to buy a better one.

MISS DOLEOUT: (*judgmental*) You'd think they'd use the gold to pay the mortgage.

SALESPERSON: Shhhh! Don't give them ideas.

NARRATOR: Now who are *you*?

SALESPERSON: I'm Carl [or Carla] Cavendish, the TV sales associate. Be quiet or I'm out of business. If they become financially responsible, I'll be foreclosed next.

CASH: (*like a huckster*) My name is Cash Spotter, bank vice president and credit repair officer! Bad credit? No credit? Stolen credit? (*a slogan!*) We give credit where credit *isn't* due! If you need credit, we can help!

FATHER: Can you get me a TV?

CASH: Sorry, can't help.

MOTHER: Pay our house note?

CASH: Sorry, can't help.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: The thugs on my beat could use come credit counseling.

CASH: Sorry, can't help.

MISS DOLEOUT: What do you do then?

CASH: When we don't give credit, we take it away! I've been foreclosing houses randomly for years. I accidentally foreclosed my own and now I'm squatting in the old Greyhound station at Cass and 20th. You need to squat there, because you dare not sit down on anything.

NARRATOR: So DeVon put on some disco,

(*EVERYONE sings a few bars of a disco song such as "We Are Family."*)

...spun the night away, gave the couple enough gold to pay its house note, and carted off the TV. Other people tried to get their share of the booty.

CREIGHTON: Hey, give me that TV!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: No, it's mine!

CREIGHTON: I said give it to me!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Or what?

CREIGHTON: (*losing confidence*) Just give it to me. I'm not good at this.

NARRATOR: Rumpelstiltskin's face became even more pinched with rage. Since he was elfish and gnomelike, it was very hard for him to run off with a big screen TV, particularly at the corner of Pine and 17th.

MOTHER: We all watched from the window of the Seven-Eleven as he had to give the TV to the robber. Meanwhile, my husband bought a new one.

SALESPERSON: It's bigger, better, more expensive, and comes with a three-year optional warranty because it's built to fall apart!

CASH: Financial irresponsibility!

MISS DOLEOUT: Makes me sick. I live in a hovel on the east side while you live in luxury you don't deserve and can't afford.

FATHER: Poor Miss Doleout. But at least now we've got a way to pay our mortgage—should we choose to do it.

NARRATOR: Of course, next month, same story, same problem.

MOTHER: And, I'm having a baby.

NARRATOR: Shhhh! No one can keep a secret around here.

MOTHER: Don't you want to share in my joy?

NARRATOR: This is a fairy tale. You know the minute you deliver a baby someone's going to snatch it up. Rapunzel, anyone?

MISS DOLEOUT: Children in fairy tales—stolen, left in the woods, eaten by witches. Don't get me started! It's a hard knock life. It keeps a social worker very busy.

MOTHER: Not to mention...

MISS DOLEOUT: Evil stepmothers everywhere. (*very conversational*) Like this one day I was at a Seven-Eleven—and we're in the nice end of town even—and this woman was berating her children and I'm like "stop it, these are *children* and they deserve your love and understanding" and they're like "she's our step mom" and I'm like "I figured," so I scooped up the children and took them into Family Services, where they've been driven like bumper cars through the foster care system ever since. Living a fairy tale life isn't fun for a child. I don't know why everyone aspires to the fairy tale lifestyle. It wasn't such a picnic for Susan Boyle, now was it? (*to audience*) And men, stop marrying these bitter nasty hags who hate and berate your children!

(*EVERYONE is surprised at her outburst.*)

NARRATOR: Are you finished?

MISS DOLEOUT: For now.

NARRATOR: The couple was still boiling in a hot cauldron of its own making.

FATHER: (*panicking*) We can't pay the house note!

MOTHER: (*nonchalant*) What's on TV?

FATHER: (*happier*) Everything—and in high definition!

MOTHER: If we lose the house, where will be put the TV? My mother only has five rooms. Plus, in case you haven't heard, we're having a baby.

FATHER: What does that have to do with anything?

MOTHER: We'll have to pay for it.

FATHER: You should talk to DeVon.

MOTHER: He's creepy. And pinched.

NARRATOR: Nonetheless, DeVon came in every day with the same agenda.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Coffee, please.

NARRATOR: And every day the same response.

MOTHER: Get it yourself.

CREIGHTON: I'll take that. I'm thirsty.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Petty theft.

CREIGHTON: I'm homeless. The bank foreclosed my house.

CASH: Robotically! It saves us from listening to pleas for mercy.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: That doesn't give you the right to help yourself to DeVon's coffee.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(to NARRATOR)* See? No one would know my name if you hadn't opened your big mouth.

NARRATOR: I'm a narrator. It's my nature.

CREIGHTON: Like I steal. By nature.

FATHER: Like I spend. By nature.

CASH: Like I lead people on with false promises, by nature.

MISS DOLEOUT: Like I protect children. Because I couldn't afford law school.

(EVERYONE looks to SALESPERSON to say something.)

SALESPERSON: I really don't do anything but offer high priced appliances that don't contribute to anyone's quality of life but mine.

MOTHER: So, now what?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(gloating and sarcastic)* I see you've come crawling back to me again after weeks of making me pour coffee that I can't reach.

NARRATOR: Pinched!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Stop that!

NARRATOR: Pinched, pinched, pinched. I'd much rather deliver a tale about high school football or Miss Teen America.

MOTHER: So... uh... DeVon... that spinning wheat into gold thing...

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Yep?

MOTHER: Can you do it one more time? My husband blew our money on luxury items. And we're having a baby we can ill afford.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: It's hard to spin wheat into gold. It's not something I can do every day.

MOTHER: *(aggressive and frustrated)* I'm not asking you to do it every day. Just once a month. Or I won't restock that amaretto creamer you like.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You drive a hard bargain. Tell you what. I'll spin for your mortgage and you give me the baby.

MOTHER: *(that makes no sense to her)* Are you out of your mind?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: No. I want the baby.

MOTHER: What are you going to do with it? It's *my* baby.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I can spin enough wheat into gold to give it a good upbringing. You can't even afford a pack of diapers.

MOTHER: I could love it.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You middle class folks are so cute like that. *(threatening)* Give me the baby or...

CASH: My bank will foreclose.

FATHER: You'd really do that to us?

CASH: And just in time for winter. So, which is it, the house or the baby?

NARRATOR: Hmm... house, baby... baby, house... what would you do?

MISS DOLEOUT: If they have to decide, they better keep the house.

MOTHER: I can always have another baby. But a house like this is a steal.

CREIGHTON: Did someone say steal?

FATHER: *(to CREIGHTON)* We have an extra room you could rent. If you can pay your way it might help us make ends meet.

MOTHER: I can drive you into the city with me so you can keep stealing from people to make rent. Plus, with no baby to take care of...

CREIGHTON: Thanks, but I couldn't. You don't meet my ethical standards.

NARRATOR: Of course, DeVon kept spinning wheat into gold in his one-bedroom downtown apartment.

(Again, EVERYONE can sing a few bars of the same song THEY sang last time.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: This is pretty easy once you get the knack. I should live a lot better than I do.

MISS DOLEOUT: And with no baby to worry about...

FATHER: I just bought more high ticket items.

SALESPERSON: *(proudly)* You're now a Jones that everyone wants to keep up with!

CASH: Getting further and further into debt.

NARRATOR: Until one day...

EVERYONE: *(imitating a newborn baby, first THEY all make a loud slap then THEY cry)* Waaaahhhh!

MOTHER: *(overcome with joy)* My baby!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Oh sorry, that would be... *my* baby!

MOTHER: It's mine!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mine!

MOTHER: Mine!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Mine!

CREIGHTON: While they were fighting over it, I just took it and ran.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You took my baby! I want my baby back.!

MOTHER: Me too!

MISS DOLEOUT: That's a very popular baby.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'll teach it to spin wheat into gold.

MOTHER: I want it back. Can you help, Miss Doleout?

MISS DOLEOUT: I'm not sure. Once you give it up we're hard pressed to return it to a financially irresponsible environment. At least DeVon here is planning for its future.

MOTHER: *(loud)* I want my baby.

MISS DOLEOUT: Sure you do. *(mocking and sarcastic)* Everybody wants their baby! That's why you swapped it out for a house payment. Maybe we can arrange for visitation.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'm not sure about that. She won't pour my coffee, after all. Who's to say she'll fill the bottle? Ok you... robber-guy, if you give me back the baby, I'll give you a portion of the gold I spin the wheat into.

CREIGHTON: Well, we could raise it together.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You'd steal his formula and sell it on the corner. And at Pine and 17th there's a lot of takers.

CREIGHTON: OK. Take it. I can't afford to steal for two.

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, our middle class friends were sinking deeper and deeper into depression.

FATHER: We should have kept the baby.

MOTHER: I feel horrible. What's on TV?

FATHER: Good point. How can we raise a child without a TV?

NARRATOR: As news of her baby-selling went viral, she became the villain of social networking sites the world over and began to have second thoughts.

SALESPERSON: Nancy Grace is none too happy with you. And neither is Star Jones. She tells it like it is. And it isn't pretty.

MOTHER: OK, I'll ask for it back. *(more to herself)* Can't do anything these days without becoming an internet sensation.

MISS DOLEOUT: I can help.

MOTHER: I have to do this on my own.

MISS DOLEOUT: Good luck with that.

NARRATOR: Things at the 7-11 got complicated.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: I'll say. I wasn't sure who to put in jail. I'd take in the whole lot, but the city can't afford to support you all. Bread and water is so expensive these days.

NARRATOR: Devon would go in to order coffee as if nothing had happened.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Coffee, please.

MOTHER: That will cost you one child and 35 cents.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Here's... *(catches on)* wait a minute!

MOTHER: Sorry, I don't baby my customers.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: But... but..

MOTHER: *(to EVERYONE!)* This man stole my baby!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: That's not true! I got it fair and square. She sold it to me for a house payment.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: *(scandalized)* You what?

MISS DOLEOUT: *(scandalized)* You what? *(thinks it over)* Who knew house payments were so easy! I've got plenty of children needing a good home. I'll be set for years!

SALESPERSON: And I thought I was underhanded. I'd sell a TV, but a baby? I had no idea there was such a market!

NARRATOR: Soon, the child's mother was a pariah at the Seven-Eleven.

MOTHER: May I help you?

CREIGHTON: *(rude)* Baby-swapper.

MOTHER: How about you?

MISS DOLEOUT: (*rude*) Child-seller!

MOTHER: Anyone want my help?

OFFICER BLIGHTON: No, you trafficker of human flesh.

MOTHER: Well, that makes my job easier. Look, DeVon, I might have *sold* it, but you *bought* it. So who's taking advantage of people in a situation of dire need? They only way I could provide for my child was to give it to you. But now since I don't have it, I think I'll spend the money I saved on riverboat gambling.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I feel ya.

MOTHER: So give it back.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Give me back my gold.

FATHER: Can't do that. Spent it on riverboat gambling.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Something shady is going on. I'll have to investigate.

MISS DOLEOUT: Me too. Let's investigate.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Last time I worked with Family Services, children all over the state went to the wrong families.

MISS DOLEOUT: It keeps me employed. I create a mess, blame the food stamp office, and then clean it up. My record is spotless. And I'm never hungry.

MOTHER: Will you all stop fighting and get me back my baby?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Well... okay. You can have the baby back.

EVERYONE: YAYYYYYY! (*again, feel free to sing "We Are Family"*)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*holding up his hand to stop the song*) If... you can guess my name in the next three days.

MISS DOLEOUT: That's a stupid idea. Where did you come up with that?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I always do it when I'm in a pinch.

NARRATOR: You said it, not me.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: In any event, three days, or the baby stays.

NARRATOR: (*to the audience, and the cast*) So... uh... here's where our title comes in.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You really need to be quiet.

NARRATOR: Had anyone paid attention, all the following anxiety could have been avoided.

SALESPERSON: Easy. It's DeVon.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: But it's not so easy. DeVon is a code name.

NARRATOR: Because DeVon's real name was as pinched as his features.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: That's mean.

NARRATOR: Mean but true. Pinched.

MOTHER: Well now what?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: If I were you, I'd start guessing.

MISS DOLEOUT: I'll help.

CASH: Me too. We'll pool our resources. I'll guess names for five dollars a pop.

FATHER: That's extortion, Cash.

CASH: Can you put a price on a baby?

FATHER: Well, it seems like they go for a mortgage payment, give or take.

MISS DOLEOUT: I'll start. Bob, Tom, Joe, Mike, Tony...

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: If it was that easy...

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Aiden, Caden, Jaden, Baden.

(Pause, RUMPELSTILTSKIN shakes his head.)

Hayden?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Sorry, officer. Doesn't end with d-e-n.

MOTHER: Connor. Skye, Duncan, Guillaume... Do you watch soaps?

That would narrow it down into unrealistic names given to unrealistically handsome men. *(giggles annoyingly)* Oh, never mind.

NARRATOR: Given DeVon's three day time frame, this went on well into the night.

CREIGHTON: Caligula?

SALESPERSON: Nero?

FATHER: Tiberius?

CASH: Euripides!

MOTHER: Hot Thunder!

NARRATOR: DeVon laughed at their feeble attempts.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Excuse me, but I need to feed my baby. I guess I'll get some formula at the Seven-Eleven. When *(points to MOTHER)* her shift is over.

NARRATOR: And he started back to his apartment across the street on Pine and 16th to take care of the child.

MISS DOLEOUT: Who's been watching it while you're downstairs with us?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: My cat. She's had 37 babies, Miss Doleout. She knows what to do.

MOTHER: What's his name? It's *my* baby. I should know his name.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *His* name is DeVon!

MOTHER: Than what's yours?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: It's— *(laughs)* Ha haaaa you almost caught me.

NARRATOR: And up the elevator he went.

(EVERYONE makes a wooshing sound like an elevator going up.)

MOTHER: Officer Blighton, can't you just go up there and get it?

OFFICER BLIGHTON: It's not that easy. *(a bit embarrassed)* I'm afraid of cats.

MISS DOLEOUT: I'd go, but I'm evaluating your fitness as a parent. You're losing.

MOTHER: If that was the case, none of us would ever be allowed to keep our children. You'd be stuck with all of them. So get over yourself, Miss Darcy Doleout.

NARRATOR: Suddenly they heard some really loud music coming out of DeVon's window.

FATHER: *(trying to name that tune)* Is that..

MOTHER: Justin Bieber?

FATHER: Michael Bolton?

CREIGHTON: It's Jay Ferguson. "Shake Down Cruise."

SALESPERSON: That song's so old. What was it, 1979 or something?

What an old elf.

MOTHER: (*SHE hears something unusual*) Listen!

NARRATOR: De'Von was singing a bizarre rhyme over the music to "Shake Down Cruise."

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *Today I brew, tomorrow I baste;*

A middle class child I took in haste.

For no one knows my little game

That Rumpelstiltskin is my name!

NARRATOR: He sang it over, and over, and (*annoyed*) over.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Kind of repetitive. You'd think it was disco, but it's not really danceable.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *Today I stew, tomorrow I pray;*

Then their mortgage I must pay;

I'll keep the child and take the blame

For Rumpelstiltskin is my name!

NARRATOR: Okay everyone. What's this play called? (*silence*) Who's been paying attention? (*more insistent*) The name of the play! (*to audience*) Anyone have a program?

MISS DOLEOUT: (*excited*) Oh, I remember! *Rumpelstiltskin at the Downtown Seven-Eleven!*

NARRATOR: Ok, is there anyone here so far whose name is Rumpelstiltskin?

MISS DOLEOUT: Not really.

NARRATOR: And who's the person whose name we don't know?

FATHER: Well, his. Mine too, come to think. But I'm Elmer.

SALESPERSON: And the robber. We don't know *his* name.

CREIGHTON: My name's Creighton.

FATHER: Well nice to meet you, Creighton. I'm Elmer.

NARRATOR: But who's the main character? (*treating EVERYONE like they're stupid*) Title of the play, main character? Put it together, people! How hard is this?

MOTHER: I think *I'm* the main character. I'm pretty sure I have the most lines. And I don't even have a name. (*thinks for a bit*) Call me Sally Mae. Because this whole experience makes me feel devalued.

NARRATOR: (*really frustrated!!*) It's Rumpelstiltskin! His name is Rumpelstiltskin! What is wrong with all of you?

MOTHER: (*after a pause*) What the heck kind of name is that?

MISS DOLEOUT: That was easy! Next time maybe he won't sing with the window open.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: He's disturbing the peace. I'll issue a ticket.

MOTHER: Babies are bought and sold under your nose and you're issuing a noise ordinance violation.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Loud baby, open window, darn tootin'! Plus, the fine is bigger.

NARRATOR: So the next day, DeVon... I mean Rumpelstiltskin, came down to the street with barely an hour to spare before his deadline. They toyed with him for awhile...

MOTHER: It's Carter. I know it is.

SALESPERSON: I say Joe. Simple. So simple we'd walk past it.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Sorry, no Joe, no go. I guess the child is mine.
(*laughs*)

NARRATOR: He laughed so hard his pinched features became even more pinched.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*stops laughing*) You're on my last nerve with that pinched thing.

NARRATOR: So DeVon started to go inside when Sally Mae said...

MOTHER: (*gruff and aggressive*) Hold it right there, Rumpelstiltskin!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*shocked*) What did you call me?

MOTHER: You heard me...

EVERYONE: (*calling to him*) ...Rumpelstiltskin!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*acts "caught" then looks calculatingly bemused*)
Where did you get idea that my name was Rumpelstiltskin?

MOTHER: You were singing last night. With the window open. "Irene Cara starred in *Fame*, and Rumpelstiltskin is my name."

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Speaking of which, here's a ticket for disturbing the peace. You did it after 10 p.m.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*after a short pause*) It's not my name.

MOTHER: What do you mean it's not your name?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I just did that to throw you off. I mean, like who would name their kid Rumpelstiltskin? I know bullying is wrong, but that'd be walking your child into a lion's den and telling the big cats not to bite.

FATHER: That's so wrong of you to lead us on.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*a little bit contrite*) I know. But I really want that baby.

MOTHER: But why? It's not yours to want.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Look at me! No one's going to marry me and have kids. I'm pinched, you know.

NARRATOR: Really? I hadn't noticed. Elaborate, please.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: So I had to get one by hook or by crook. Hook wasn't working, so I chose crook. Anyway, at the end of the day I have a baby and you don't, so if I were you I'd get off your high horse about who's right and who's wrong. Just because I'm sorry about it doesn't mean I'm giving it back. Sometimes in life you just have to steal.

CREIGHTON: I could have helped.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: You're petty theft, Creighton. Coffee, TV, very very petty. Kidnapping, not so much.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: So what *is* your name?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: It's Ed. Ed Smith... Junior. My dad's a car dealer.
(*proudly advertising*) Ed Smith Automotive up on the corner of Chambers and Halls Ferry. "Priced so low it hurts to sell." (*proud*)
That's our slogan.

MOTHER: Well Ed, your game is up, and your name is up. Give me the baby.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: And then you're all going to the station for booking.

MISS DOLEOUT: For what?

OFFICER BLIGHTON: Child endangerment. Child selling. Child buying. Child trafficking. Lying to an officer. Disturbing the peace.

Embezzlement. Illegal foreclosure. Deceptive sales practices. Stale coffee. I'm surrounded by liars, thieves, and criminals. Thanks so much for adding to my workload.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: What if I just give her the baby and we call it a day?

OFFICER BLIGHTON: It's not that simple.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Yes it is. See? "Here's a baby. It's a day." Easy.

NARRATOR: So Ed Smith gave the baby back to Sally Mae.

SALESPERSON: And we called it a day. It's Tuesday. *(to OFFICER, amazed)* It is that simple.

OFFICER BLIGHTON: I really need to arrest someone. It's the end of the month and I need to make my quota. Who wants to take one for the team?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'll tell you what. I'll spin wheat into gold for everyone if you promise to keep us out of jail.

MOTHER: I like that.

CREIGHTON: Me too.

FATHER: I'm down.

MISS DOLEOUT: It's bribery but..

OFFICER BLIGHTON: *(thinks for awhile, EVERYONE waits for his decision)* I'll get the wheat.

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