

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

By Mike Steele

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RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Based on the Classic Fairytale

A One Act Comedy

by Mike Steele

SYNOPSIS: It's the familiar story of a secret romance between a royal prince and a housekeeper. When news breaks that Prince Derek and Gertrude the maid have been hiding a year-long fling, there's quite a commotion in the palace. King Leonard doesn't have much to say (he's too concerned with napping to worry about anything else), but the ever-opinionated Queen Ann is less than thrilled. That is, until she learns that Gertrude has the special ability to transform ordinary straw into gold. Gertrude finds herself fighting for her job and her love until she discovers that the palace is inhabited by a mischievous, magical little man who can provide just the help she needs... for a price. Based on the classic fairytale by the Brothers Grimm, this adaptation of *Rumpelstiltskin* will entertain both children and adults until happily ever after.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 females, 3 males, 2 either, 2-10 extras)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (m)	A mischievous, magical little man. <i>(106 lines)</i>
GERTRUDE (f)	20s to 30s; A confident, optimistic, hardworking maid at the royal palace who is in love with Prince Derek. <i>(178 lines)</i>
PRINCE DEREK (m)	20s to 30s; A meek but kindhearted heir to the throne who is in love with Gertrude. <i>(103 lines)</i>
QUEEN ANN (f)	40+; A demanding ruler who is unafraid to speak her mind. <i>(127 lines)</i>
KING LEONARD (m)	40+; A man who would rather nap than rule the land. <i>(59 lines)</i>

- KID IN AUDIENCE (m/f)..... 5-12 years old; An audience member who surprisingly becomes part of the story. (6 lines)
- OFFSTAGE VOICE (m/f)..... Delivery person. (1 line)
- BIRDS (m/f)..... The unspeaking but tweeting friends of Gertrude. (12 lines)

DURATION: 45 Minutes.

TIME: Once upon a time.

SETTING: The royal palace of a faraway land.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

SCENE ONE: The throne room in the royal palace. Evening.

SCENE TWO: The room they never go into in the royal palace. Immediately following.

SCENE THREE: The nursery in the royal palace. Daytime. One year later.

SCENE FOUR: A hallway in the royal palace. Immediately following.

SCENE FIVE: The nursery in the royal palace. Immediately following.

PROPS

- Feather Duster
- Crown
- Piles of Straw
- Key
- Gold Coins
- Baby Wrapped in a Blanket
- Baby Cradle

SOUND EFFECT

- Ticking clock to indicate passage of time

COSTUMES

RUMPELSTILTSKIN – Might wear an elf-like costume. He has a fondness for jewelry so he might be decked out in jewels.

GERTRUDE – Might wear a maid's uniform when she enters in Scene One and princess like attire beginning with Scene Three. She wears a bracelet on her wrist and a necklace around her neck until giving them to Rumpelstiltskin in Scene Two.

PRINCE DEREK – Might wear princely attire.

QUEEN ANN – Might wear queenly attire.

KING LEONARD – Wears pajamas when he first enters in Scene One. He might wear kingly attire when he re-enters later in Scene One. He wears a ring on his finger.

KID IN AUDIENCE – Might wear everyday street clothes.

BIRDS – Might wear bird costumes complete with feathers and beaks.

SET

Though scenes take place in various different rooms within the royal palace, all of the action can be staged in front of the same basic set with pieces brought on and off to dress each room uniquely. There is a doorway DR, a secret passageway DL and a window UL. In Scene One, a pair of thrones sit next to each other CS with a side table next to one of the thrones. In Scene Two, a spinning wheel and stool sit CS. In Scene Three and Scene Five, a cradle sits CS. Scene Four can be staged in front of the basic set with no additional pieces.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A director can really have some creative fun staging the scenes with the birds. These characters may be depicted by actors, puppets or a host of other inventive ideas. The birds only appear onstage with the characters of Rumpelstiltskin and Gertrude so doubling is possible. Kid in Audience is an actor planted in the audience who enters the stage to become a part of the action. This is an especially fun aspect of the play when kept a secret from the rest of the audience. You may not want to list this role in the program so the character remains a surprise. The Offstage Voice may be pre-recorded, voiced by the actor playing Rumpelstiltskin (*who is not onstage when this characters speaks*) or by an entirely different actor.

Rumpelstiltskin often makes his entrances and exits via a secret passage. If there is no option to create a hidden door in the set's wall, he can easily slide onstage from behind columns, between flats or even slowly tiptoe onstage from the wings. The key is for him to be sneaky and unnoticed by the other characters.

Though Rumpelstiltskin is a magical little man, the play requires few illusions. Rumpelstiltskin spins straw into gold coins multiple times, but the bulk of these tricks take place during blackouts when stagehands can easily make the swap unseen by the audience. Rumpelstiltskin spins one piece of straw into a gold coin in front of the audience's eyes. This can easily be staged by having the actor hide a coin in the palm of one hand. After choosing a piece of straw and pretending to feed it through the spindle with the opposite hand, he can spin the wheel and quickly palm the piece of straw. If he opens the palm of his hand containing the coin directly under the spindle, the audience will believe the piece of straw turned into a coin that fell into his hand.

SCENE ONE

AT RISE: *Lights up on the throne room in the royal palace. A pair of thrones sit next to each other with a side table next to one of the thrones. RUMPELSTILTSKIN - a mischievous, magical little man - is sprawled across one of the thrones, snoring. He wears a crown on his head.*

KING LEONARD: *(Offstage.)* Has anyone seen my crown? I can't find my crown!

QUEEN ANN: *(Offstage.)* When were you last wearing it?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN wakes up and listens to offstage conversation.

KING LEONARD: *(Offstage.)* This morning, when I was napping on my throne.

QUEEN ANN: *(Offstage.)* Then check the royal throne room.

KING LEONARD: *(Offstage.)* Good idea!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Crud!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN tosses crown on seat and hurriedly hides behind one of the thrones. KING LEONARD - a man who would rather nap than rule the land - enters DR. He wears pajamas and a ring on one of his hands.

KING LEONARD: My wife always has good ideas. Or so she tells me. *(Searches for crown. Sing-song.)* Yoo hoo...! Crown...! Where did I leave you...?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(Sing-song from behind throne.)* Check where you plant your heinie...!

KING LEONARD: *(Confused about the mysterious voice, looks at his rear end before noticing crown on seat of throne. He places crown on his head and sits.)* Now that that's settled, time to resume my favorite royal activity.

KING LEONARD falls asleep. RUMPELSTILTSKIN comes out from behind throne and notices ring on KING LEONARD's hand. He begins trying to pry it off. KING LEONARD does not notice. PRINCE DEREK - a meek but kindhearted heir to the throne - enters DL with GERTRUDE - a confident, optimistic, hardworking maid at the royal palace. GERTRUDE wears a bracelet on one of her wrists and a necklace around her neck. She carries a feather duster. Neither notice RUMPELSTILTSKIN.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Crud!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN, unsuccessful at attaining the ring on KING LEONARD's hand, hurriedly hides behind one of the thrones.

GERTRUDE: *(To PRINCE DEREK.)* And so then I chased that dragon right out of the yard and slammed the gate behind him and shouted, *(Shouts.)* "You'll keep your fiery breath away from my mint chocolate chip ice cream if you know what's good for you!"

PRINCE DEREK: See, that's what I love about you, Gertrude.

GERTRUDE: My ability to project?

PRINCE DEREK: No, your ability to stand up for yourself. You're so confident.

GERTRUDE: You learn how to take care of yourself when you've been on your own as long as I have.

PRINCE DEREK: I wouldn't last ten minutes out in the real world. I'm used to servants looking after me or my mother telling me what to do.

GERTRUDE: I learned to survive on my own when my parents passed away. You'll be able to fend for yourself, someday, too. I've got faith in you, Derek.

PRINCE DEREK: And that's another thing I love about you. Your optimism.

GERTRUDE: Wanna know what I love about you?

PRINCE DEREK: What?

GERTRUDE: *(Teasing.)* You're a hunk. *(Beat.)* And I guess you're pretty kindhearted, too. You always see the good in people.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(Peeks out from behind throne.)* Gag!

PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE, confused about the mysterious voice, look around and notice KING LEONARD. RUMPELSTILTSKIN returns to hiding.

GERTRUDE: King Leonard's asleep on his throne. Again.

PRINCE DEREK: If Father doesn't squeeze in a nap or four every day, he's a real grump.

GERTRUDE: I'll just dust around him, I guess.

PRINCE DEREK: Always hard at work. Imagine if you never landed your job here at the palace.

GERTRUDE: I'd never have fallen in love with a royal prince.

PRINCE DEREK: And I'd never have fallen in love with a royal maid. Good thing you noticed me that day you were scrubbing the royal swimming pool.

GERTRUDE: It's hard not to notice a royally cute guy in his even more royally cute swim trunks. Glad I had the nerve to ask you out.

PRINCE DEREK: You know, next Thursday's our one-year anniversary.

GERTRUDE: *(Places feather duster on table.)* That's right. Three hundred and sixty-something days, and you still haven't told your mother and father that we've been dating behind their backs. How long are we going to keep lying?

PRINCE DEREK: It's not exactly lying. It's just not telling the whole truth.

GERTRUDE: That's still lying. Don't you think it's time to come clean?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN comes out from behind throne and notices bracelet on GERTRUDE'S wrist. He begins trying to pry it off. GERTRUDE and PRINCE DEREK do not notice.

PRINCE DEREK: Maybe.

GERTRUDE: Maybe?

PRINCE DEREK: Probably.

GERTRUDE: Probably?

PRINCE DEREK: It's not as easy as you make it seem. Father will be trilled, but Mother's hard to please.

GERTRUDE: Queen Ann should be happy to hear that her son is in love with a confident, optimistic, hardworking woman like me.

PRINCE DEREK: Well, when you put it that way...I'll tell my parents as soon as I get a chance.

QUEEN ANN: *(Offstage.)* King Leonard! King Leonard!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Crud!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN, unsuccessful at attaining the bracelet on GERTRUDE'S wrist, hurriedly hides behind one of the thrones.

GERTRUDE: *(To PRINCE DEREK.)* Looks like you're about to get a chance.

QUEEN ANN: *(Enters DR, searches for KING LEONARD.)* King Leonard!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN peeks out from behind throne, picks up feather duster from table and uses it to smack KING LEONARD. KING LEONARD wakes up and grabs the feather duster. RUMPELSTILTSKIN returns to hiding.

QUEEN ANN: *(Notices KING LEONARD.)* There you are.

KING LEONARD: *(To QUEEN ANN.)* Were you looking for me, Ann?

QUEEN ANN: Why are you in your pajamas?

KING LEONARD: What else are you supposed wear when you're sleeping?

QUEEN ANN: How silly of me. Of course. You're wearing your pajamas because you were sleeping. *(Beat.)* At four PM. We have company arriving any minute.

KING LEONARD: I get the sense that you're displeased.

QUEEN ANN: *(Looks sternly at KING LEONARD.)* What gives you that idea?

KING LEONARD: You're giving me that look.

QUEEN ANN: Princess Fraktikala is coming to dinner tonight, and we need to make a good impression. Now get into the royal robing room and get royally robed.

KING LEONARD: Yes, dear.

PRINCE DEREK: Wait, Father. Mother. I have something I need to talk to you about.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: *(Peeks out from behind throne.)* This oughtta be good.

KING LEONARD and QUEEN ANN, confused about the mysterious voice, look around and notice PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE. RUMPELSTILTSKIN returns to hiding.

QUEEN ANN: Derek. I have something I need to talk to you about, too. Princess Fraktikala is coming to dinner tonight.

PRINCE DEREK: Really, Mother? Another princess I have to entertain? That's the fourth one this week.

QUEEN ANN: And there will be a fifth and a sixth and a seventh until you meet one you want to get to know better. Romantically.

GERTRUDE nudges PRINCE DEREK.

PRINCE DEREK: Uh...that's what I wanted to talk to you about. I've been...well, Gertrude and I have been -

QUEEN ANN: Gertrude and you shouldn't be doing anything. At least not together. You should be getting ready to meet Princess Fraktikala, and Gertrude should be working.

GERTRUDE: I am working.

QUEEN ANN: Working at what? You're a maid. How much dust could you possibly have cleared from the palace walls with your feather duster in King Leonard's hand?

Takes feather duster from KING LEONARD and hands it to GERTRUDE.

QUEEN ANN: We have company coming, and the palace needs to look presentable.

PRINCE DEREK: Mother, I really don't care what Princess Fraktikala thinks of the palace, because I -

QUEEN ANN: Do you know how hard it is on a mother to see her son so lonely?

PRINCE DEREK: But, Mother, I'm not lonely. I -

QUEEN ANN: So alone.

PRINCE DEREK: I'm not alone. I -

QUEEN ANN: So lonely and alone.

PRINCE DEREK: I just said I'm not lonely or alone. I -

QUEEN ANN: Oh, all right, all right. So single. There. I said it. You know I don't like to give my input, but you forced it out of me. It's time you settle down. Get married. You know the law of the land states that any prince who isn't married by age thirty-two can never become king. And if you don't become king, who will rule the land, someday? With no ruler, the whole land will fall apart, all because you didn't follow the law of the land.

KING LEONARD: Dear, I'm king and you're queen. We could always change the law of the land if –

QUEEN ANN: That's not the point. It's time for Prince Derek to find a partner.

KING LEONARD: Well, if you ask me –

QUEEN ANN: Nobody asked you. *(To PRINCE DEREK.)* Derek, I do hope you'll marry soon. And give me grandbabies. Do you know how hard it is when I get together with my queen friends and they're all showing off pictures of their grand princes and grand princesses and all I have to show off are pictures of my moat?

PRINCE DEREK: You don't need to worry, Mother. There's a good chance I'll settle down soon. You'll have grandchildren before you know it.

QUEEN ANN: So you'll have dinner with Princess Fraktikala?

PRINCE DEREK: That's not exactly what I meant. I –

QUEEN ANN: You don't want to give me grandbabies!

PRINCE DEREK: I do. It's just –

QUEEN ANN: Then have dinner with Princess Fraktikala. For me. Your aging grandchild less mother.

PRINCE DEREK: Well...okay...

QUEEN ANN: Fantastic! *(To GERTRUDE.)* Don't miss any cobwebs, Gertrude. *(To KING LEONARD.)* Come, Leonard. We must prepare ourselves.

KING LEONARD: But I haven't finished my nap.

QUEEN ANN grabs KING LEONARD and they exit DR.

GERTRUDE: *(To PRINCE DEREK.)* Really...?

PRINCE DEREK: See. Telling my parents about us isn't as easy as it seems.

GERTRUDE: It would be a lot easier if you ever got to finish a sentence.

PRINCE DEREK: Mother's so strong willed. And Father's barely conscious.

GERTRUDE: (*Dusts corners. Sarcastically.*) What was that, your majesty? I'm so busy dusting the cobwebs out of corners that I didn't hear you.

PRINCE DEREK: (*Hints at GERTRUDE'S strong willed nature.*) And they say a prince tends to be attracted to a princess who reminds him of his mother.

GERTRUDE: I'm not a princess.

PRINCE DEREK: That's the problem. Mother's always so worried about what people think of her that she demands, demands, demands to look perfect. "No pajamas at the dinner table," "Dust the cobwebs," "Give me grandbabies..." She wants so much from me. She'll expect me to be with a princess. Probably a princess who has a lot of money.

GERTRUDE: I know how I could earn a lot of money.

PRINCE DEREK: How?

GERTRUDE: Your mother could give me a raise.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: (*Peeks out from behind throne.*) Good one!

PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE, confused about the mysterious voice, look around. RUMPELSTILTSKIN returns to hiding.

QUEEN ANN: (*Offstage.*) Prince Derek!

PRINCE DEREK: (*To GERTRUDE.*) I've got to get ready.

GERTRUDE: Don't let poor Gertrude the maid stop you. If anybody needs me, I'll be scrubbing the toilets while my boyfriend eats a fancy dinner with a princess.

PRINCE DEREK: And as soon as the table is cleared, I'll tell Mother and Father about us.

GERTRUDE: Tonight?

PRINCE DEREK: Tonight.

GERTRUDE: Promise?

PRINCE DEREK: Promise.

GERTRUDE: Good. Or you'll end up just like that dragon.

GERTRUDE pantomimes a kicking motion. PRINCE DEREK exits DR. GERTRUDE sits on one of the thrones.

GERTRUDE: *(To herself.)* This thing is pretty comfy. No wonder King Leonard's always napping here. Well, I better go dust the cobwebs.
(Beat.) After I take my break.

GERTRUDE falls asleep. RUMPELSTILTSKIN comes out from behind throne and tries to pry bracelet off of GERTRUDE'S wrist. GERTRUDE wakes up.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Crud!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN exits DL trap door.

GERTRUDE: Who's there?

With no response, GERTRUDE falls asleep. Lights dim. SFX: Ticking clock to indicate passage of time. Lights up to reveal several hours have passed. QUEEN ANN, KING LEONARD and PRINCE DEREK enter DR. RUMPELSTILTSKIN trails behind, unnoticed.

QUEEN ANN: Really, Prince Derek, will you ever be satisfied?

PRINCE DEREK: Princess Fraktikala wasn't my type, Mother.

QUEEN ANN: How would you know? You barely spoke to her.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: I'll say! Didn't hear a peep out of him, and I was eavesdropping right up until the last lick of pudding.

PRINCE DEREK, QUEEN ANN and KING LEONARD, confused about the mysterious voice, look around.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Crud! *(Hurriedly hides behind one of the thrones.)*

PRINCE DEREK: This is getting weird.

QUEEN ANN: Don't change the subject. What was wrong with Princess Fraktikala? Was she not beautiful?

PRINCE DEREK: She was very beautiful.

QUEEN ANN: Was she not proper?

PRINCE DEREK: She was very proper.

QUEEN ANN: And we all know she's loaded. Why would a prince not take an interest in a beautiful, proper, wealthy princess?

KING LEONARD: Dear, can't you give it a rest?

QUEEN ANN: Why don't you give yourself a rest and finish your nap?
(*Looks sternly at KING LEONARD.*) Doesn't that sound like a good idea?

KING LEONARD: All your ideas sound good. (*Approaches thrones.*)

QUEEN ANN: (*To PRINCE DEREK.*) Let me ask again, why would a prince not take an interest in a beautiful, proper, wealthy princess?

KING LEONARD: Dear!

QUEEN ANN: You should be napping on your throne, Leonard.

KING LEONARD: I can't.

QUEEN ANN: Why not?

KING LEONARD: Because the maid is on my throne napping for me.

QUEEN ANN: (*Notices GERTRUDE.*) No wonder the palace is filled with cobwebs.

QUEEN ANN taps GERTRUDE on the shoulder.

GERTRUDE: (*Still asleep.*) Five more minutes. I'm dreaming about butterscotch brownies.

QUEEN ANN taps GERTRUDE on the shoulder again.

GERTRUDE: (*GERTRUDE opens her eyes and stands.*) Crud!

QUEEN ANN: Sleeping on the job?

KING LEONARD sits on one of the thrones.

PRINCE DEREK: Mother, I have something to say. I -

QUEEN ANN: Now, he has something to say. All night at dinner he had nothing to say, but now he has something to say. (*To PRINCE DEREK.*) If you've got something to say, then answer my question. Why would a prince not take an interest in a beautiful, proper, wealthy princess?

PRINCE DEREK: Because I'm already interested in another woman. Quite in love with her, in fact.

QUEEN ANN: That's wonderful! Do I know her?

PRINCE DEREK: Yes.

QUEEN ANN: Princess Kristy! Oh, I knew you liked the idea of a princess who manages her own softball team. I think –

PRINCE DEREK: Not Princess Kristy.

QUEEN ANN: Princess Claudia! The one with the beautiful almond shaped eyes. I always felt –

PRINCE DEREK: Not Princess Claudia.

QUEEN ANN: Princess Stacey!

PRINCE DEREK: Not Princess Stacey. Not Princess Mary Anne or Princess Jessi or Princess Dawn or even Princess Abby. And certainly not Princess Mallory.

QUEEN ANN: Then Princess who?

PRINCE DEREK: Not a princess at all.

PRINCE DEREK takes GERTRUDE'S hand.

QUEEN ANN: *(Shouts.)* What?!?

KING LEONARD: Excuse me. Some of us are trying to get some shut eye over here. *(KING LEONARD falls asleep.)*

QUEEN ANN: *(Quietly.)* You can't be serious. Gertrude is a maid.

GERTRUDE: I am.

QUEEN ANN: She's not a princess.

GERTRUDE: I'm not.

QUEEN ANN: She has no fortune.

GERTRUDE: I don't.

PRINCE DEREK: She doesn't. *(Beat.)* But she can make a fortune.

QUEEN ANN: She can?

GERTRUDE: I can?

PRINCE DEREK: Yes.

QUEEN ANN: Well, now I'm intrigued.

GERTRUDE: Derek, I need to see you for a minute. *(Indicates other side of the stage.)* Over here.

GERTRUDE takes PRINCE DEREK aside so others QUEEN ANN doesn't hear.

GERTRUDE: What are you doing? I have no way to make a fortune.

PRINCE DEREK: It just slipped out. I didn't know what to say to Mother to convince her that you're worthy of being with me.

GERTRUDE: What about how confident and optimistic and hard-working I am?

PRINCE DEREK: I didn't think of that.

GERTRUDE: You got us out of one lie and right into another.

PRINCE DEREK: Then you tell her truth. See how she reacts.

GERTRUDE: Your lie. Your mother. You tell.

PRINCE DEREK: I'll come up with something.

PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE join QUEEN ANN.

PRINCE DEREK: Yes, Mother, Gertrude can make a fortune. Uh...with her hands.

QUEEN ANN: What a skillset. (*To GERTRUDE.*) And to think we've been wasting those hands on scrubbing. How can you make a fortune with your hands?

GERTRUDE: Tell her, Prince Derek.

PRINCE DEREK: (*To QUEEN ANN.*) Uh...she can spin a fortune. On the spindle of a spinning wheel.

QUEEN ANN: She can?

GERTRUDE: I can?

PRINCE DEREK: She can. Some people make yarn on a spinning wheel. Gertrude makes money. Solid gold money.

QUEEN ANN: Gold! Gertrude, you certainly seem like the kind of woman I'd like to call my daughter in law, someday. Oh, won't all the other queens be jealous to hear about the talented girlfriend my son has.

PRINCE DEREK: Of course, Gertrude can't spin any gold right now or anytime soon.

GERTRUDE: I ain't arguing with that.

QUEEN ANN: And why can't she?

PRINCE DEREK: Have you forgotten? All spinning wheels have been banished in all the lands far and wide ever since that princess on the other side of the forest pricked her finger on a spindle. Terrible mess, that was.

GERTRUDE: That's right. So much for spinning gold.

PRINCE DEREK: Can't spin any gold with no spinning wheel in the palace.

QUEEN ANN: Don't be silly. Of course we have a spinning wheel.

PRINCE DEREK: We do? Where?

QUEEN ANN: It's in the room we never go into.

PRINCE DEREK: How come I've never seen it?

QUEEN ANN: Because you never go into the room.

PRINCE DEREK: How come the guards didn't remove the spinning wheel when all the spinning wheels in all the lands far and wide were destroyed?

QUEEN ANN: Because no one ever goes into the room. Until now. (To GERTRUDE.) Let's see you spin some gold. Come along, Gertrude. (To KING LEONARD.) You, too, Leonard.

KING LEONARD: (Wakes up.) Just when I started dozing.

KING LEONARD and QUEEN ANN exit DR.

GERTRUDE: (To PRINCE DEREK. Sarcasically.) Can't wait to see how this turns out. (Exits DR.)

PRINCE DEREK: (Calls offstage DR.) I'll come up with something.

PRINCE DEREK exits DR. RUMPELSTILTSKIN comes out from behind throne.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN: Gertrude can't spin gold? Well, that's no problem for Rumpelstiltskin!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN exits trap door DL. Blackout.

SCENE TWO

AT START: Lights up on the room they never go into in the royal palace. A spinning wheel and stool sit CS and a window is on the wall UL. QUEEN ANN, KING LEONARD, PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE enter DR.

QUEEN ANN: Here we are. (Indicates spinning wheel.) And there it is. The spinning wheel. Safe and secure in the room we never go into.

PRINCE DEREK: Mother, all the spinning wheels in lands far and wide were supposed to have been destroyed.

QUEEN ANN: And we'll destroy this one, too.

PRINCE DEREK: Good.

QUEEN ANN: Someday. After Gertrude has spun plenty of gold.

KING LEONARD: Well, if you ask me -

QUEEN ANN: Nobody asked you.

KING LEONARD: In that case, if anyone needs me, I'll be on my throne taking a nap.

QUEEN ANN: No, you'll be here with us watching Gertrude spin.

KING LEONARD: Have you forgotten I never finished my afternoon nap?

QUEEN ANN: *(Looks sternly at KING LEONARD.)* And have you forgotten I like gold?

KING LEONARD: In that case, it seems like a good idea to stay in here and watch Gertrude spin.

QUEEN ANN: As soon as Gertrude tires herself, we'll all take a long nap.

PRINCE DEREK: Gertrude really isn't in the mood to spin any gold today. Maybe some other time.

QUEEN ANN: If Gertrude wants to keep her job she'd better get in the mood real fast.

GERTRUDE: Anyone want to talk to me instead of about me?

QUEEN ANN: Of course. Gertrude, what type of material do you need?

GERTRUDE: Material?

QUEEN ANN: Yes. To make yarn you'd need wool or something. What do you need to make gold? I'm not familiar with the process.

GERTRUDE: Good question.

QUEEN ANN: I thought so, too.

GERTRUDE: Prince Derek knows.

QUEEN ANN: Oh?

PRINCE DEREK: Uh... *(Takes GERTRUDE aside so others don't hear.)* I said I'd come up with something.

GERTRUDE: But...?

PRINCE DEREK: But I haven't come up with it yet. Give me some time.

GERTRUDE: Give you some time? Give you some time? Your mother is threatening to fire me if I don't use that spinning wheel to spin gold. Something I'm not sure is even possible on a machine that's been outlawed in all the lands far and wide. So while I give you some time, I might end up jobless, out on the street or worse, in jail.

PRINCE DEREK: Listen, I love you.

GERTRUDE: Then why did you get my involved in this big, fat lie?

PRINCE DEREK: Because I want my mother to love you, too. Just play along until I think of how to get us out of this mess.

QUEEN ANN: (*To GERTRUDE.*) Hello! What material do you need? Can I get an answer, maid-girl?

GERTRUDE: That's it! I'm telling! That's the last straw!

PRINCE DEREK and GERTRUDE join others.

QUEEN ANN: Straw! Straw? I wouldn't say it's the first material that comes to mind when spinning gold, but if you insist...

QUEEN ANN exits DR and returns a moment later with an armful of straw. She drops the straw next to the spinning wheel.

QUEEN ANN: Straw! Get to work!

PRINCE DEREK: Mother, where did you find a heap of straw inside the palace?

QUEEN ANN: What do you think the cushions on the thrones are stuffed with?

KING LEONARD: That's why they're so soft.

QUEEN ANN: That's why they're so squishy.

KING LEONARD: That's why they're so perfect for napping.

QUEEN ANN: That's why I tore them open and ripped the straw out.

KING LEONARD: You did what?

QUEEN ANN: Tore them open and ripped the straw out.

KING LEONARD: But I nap on my throne.

QUEEN ANN: Darling, we needed straw so Gertrude can make gold.

KING LEONARD: By tearing apart the cushions of the thrones I depend upon for my afternoon naps? Why that's...

QUEEN ANN looks sternly at KING LEONARD.

KING LEONARD: The best idea you've had all day.

QUEEN ANN: I thought you'd think so. You can nap perfectly well on the couch like a normal person.

KING LEONARD: Yes, dear.

QUEEN ANN: So Gertrude, you getting to work or what?

GERTRUDE: I'm not doing a thing, you –

PRINCE DEREK: *(To QUEEN ANN. Indicating GERTRUDE.)* Why don't we give her some privacy? And some time. *(To GERTRUDE.)* Time for me to come up with something.

QUEEN ANN: If it's privacy and time Gertrude needs, then it's privacy and time she'll have. *(To GERTRUDE.)* We'll return in the morning. If you value your job, there will be gold in place of that straw. *(Pulls a key out of her pocket.)* And to keep you from running away with the loot. *(To KING LEONARD.)* Come along, Leonard.

PRINCE DEREK: *(To GERTRUDE.)* I'll come up with something by morning.

QUEEN ANN: You, too, Derek. Gertrude needs privacy.

QUEEN ANN, KING LEONARD and PRINCE DEREK exit DR.

GERTRUDE: Derek better come up with something. If I lose my job over this lie I'll...I'll...I don't know what I'll do do him but I'll come up with something. *(Looks at spinning wheel.)* Spin straw into gold. Yeah, right. Hope Queen Ann can handle disappointment.

BIRDS enter and appear in window.

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