

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

A musical in one act

By Andrew Haile Austin

© 2010 by Andrew Haile Austin
1563 N. King St Apt. 119
Hampton, VA 23669
917-476-4078
aausti13@jhu.edu

CHARACTERS

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| KING/MILLER/RUMPELSTILTSKIN | Tenor |
| MILLER'S DAUGHTER | Soprano |
| NARRATOR 1 | Soprano |
| NARRATOR 2 | Alto |
| NARRATOR 3 | Baritone |

Note: One actor plays the roles of the KING, MILLER, and RUMPELSTILTSKIN; each should have a distinctive personality. The NARRATORS adopt various roles throughout the play as indicated in the libretto.

SETTING

An ageless, ancient time and place. The sets, costumes, and props should be minimal and suggestive, rather than realistic. The spinning of the straw into gold should be fantastical and abstract.

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B-flat

2 Trumpets in C
Trombone

Piano

Violin
Cello
Contrabass

PROLOGUE

(The stage is sparse, but set as a throne room for a KING. Three NARRATORS are revealed on the stage. During the scene, they will act as NARRATORS, as well as bit parts within the show. A KING is seen pacing as the singing begins.)

NARRATORS

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A KING,
LORD OF A VAST KINGDOM,
WHO WAS FAST BECOMING BORED.

KING

We're bored.

NARRATORS

WHAT BESIEGED THE LIEGE,
MADE HIM MORE THAN WARY,
WAS THE SEARING FEAR HE WAS MERELY
ORDINARY.

(The KING paces restlessly.)

NARRATOR 1

(Acting as a friar)

Sire?

KING

Friar?

NARRATOR 1

I ponder, your grace, why thou paceth so pensive.

KING

You ask why We wander? This place is offensive

NARRATOR 1

What can I bring thee to sever this festering? Singer or jester to cleverly pester, King?

KING

No! Go back! Our wish is ambitious and of no short measure. We long for the treasure We lack.

NARRATOR 2

(Acting as a singer)

Long for the treasure ye lack?

NARRATOR 3

(Acting as a jester)

Long for the treasure ye lack?

NARRATOR 1

What is the treasure ye lack?

NARRATOR 2

BE ASTUTE IN THIS SIRE:
YE BOAST THE MOST ALTITUDINOUS SPIRE
IN ALL THE LAND.

NARRATOR 1

YE'VE GARNERED GOBS OF GARNETS
FOR THE GARNISH EACH HAND.

NARRATOR 3

I'M TOLD THOU HOLDEST THE BOLDEST OF ARMIES
AT THY COMMAND.

NARRATOR 1

Lord, for what more do ye yen? What demand?

KING

We enquire, friar, why can't We desire to acquire something higher than the prior referred to tiresome spire? You think vassals and castles en masse'll appease Us? The pleasantest peasants presenting Us presents of pheasants will please Us? May We not speak of Our weakness for seeking uniqueness? We want the thing no other king's got! The well-deserved wealth, which blesses Us so, impresses Us not!

(The NARRATORS move to another part of the stage. The lights come up to reveal a MILLER pacing more frantically than the KING.)

NARRATORS

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A MILLER,
WHOSE WIFE HAD, SADLY, DIED,
MAKING THE MILLER GO MAD!
MAKING THE MILLER GO MAD!

HE CRIED AND CRIED AND CRIED AND CRIED
AND CRIED AND CRIED AND CRIED AND CRIED
FOR YEARS.

'T WAS HIS DAUGHTER WHO BROUGHT THE WATER OF HIS
TEARS.

(The MILLER's DAUGHTER is shown, spinning wool on a spinning wheel.)

DAUGHTER

AH!

MILLER

HER SMILES WERE ONCE MY LIFE.

DAUGHTER

AH!

MILLER

NOW, AT MOST, THEY CONJURE THE GHOST
OF MY LONG-LOST WIFE.

DAUGHTER

AH!

MILLER

I can't stand her furtive glaring! See how she constantly taunts me by staring?
How grand it would be to be rid of her fast! Of the days I could stand her, this
may be the last.

NARRATORS

EVERYDAY SHE SANG AWAY AS THE SPINNING WHEEL SHE
SPUN.

THAT WAS HOW HER DAYS WERE SPEND UNTIL EACH DAY
WAS DONE.

YES, EVERYDAY SHE SANG AWAY AS THE SPINNING WHEEL
SHE SPUN.

THAT WAS HOW HER DAYS WERE SPEND UNTIL EACH DAY
WAS DONE.

UNTIL EACH DAY WAS DONE.

UNTIL EACH DAY WAS DONE.

UNTIL EACH DAY WAS DONE.

NARRATOR 2

One day, her father heard word from a passing bird: the King could use a new
ruse to amuse him.

NARRATOR 3

At first, the news confused the man.

NARRATOR 1

But, with a burst, he mused upon a plan!

SCENE 1

(The KING's throne room. The MILLER pleads outward,
as if the KING were the audience.)

MILLER

MY DAUGHTER CAN SPIN ALL YOUR
STRAW INTO GOLD,
STRAW INTO GOLD,
STRAW INTO GOLD.

NARRATORS

HIS DAUGHTER CAN SPIN ALL YOUR
STRAW INTO GOLD,
STRAW INTO GOLD,
STRAW INTO GOLD.

MILLER

YOU'RE GOT ALL THIS STRAW JUST LYING AROUND,
WASTING AWAY, TAKING UP GROUND.
WHY NOT GAIN SOME FLOOR
AND MORE SCORE IN THE BANK?
YOUR POCKETS WILL PROVE LESS POOR,
YOUR BARN LESS RANK!

(The scene shifts, the MILLER becomes the KING, facing
toward the audience as if the MILLER were now there.)

KING

Straw into gold, friar?

NARRATOR 1

(As the friar.)

Straw into gold, sire! She's the uniqueness you seek!

KING

Yes! Your daughter will live in Our barn, sir. If gold she gives, and not yarn, her neck will still meet with her head. We'd hate for this beauty to end up dead.

NARRATOR 1

The daughter feared the estrangement.

NARRATOR 3

The king and the miller adored the arrangement.

NARRATOR 2

With the achievement of his daughter sold, the miller left her to spin the gold.

KING

Plant her in there, then! We'll grant her her wares when she's done as she's told and spun

ALL OUR STRAW INTO GOLD.

NARRATORS

STRAW INTO GOLD!

STRAW INTO GOLD!

KING

WE'VE GOT ALL THIS STRAW JUST LYING AROUND,
WASTING AWAY, TAKING UP GROUND.

WHY NOT GAIN SOME FLOOR

AND MORE SCORE IN THE BANK?

OUR POCKETS WILL PROVE LESS POOR,

OUR BARN LESS RANK!

NARRATOR 3

And, boy, that barn stank!

SCENE 2

(The NARRATORS bring on a spinning wheel along with a huge pile of straw. The DAUGHTER is left alone to perform her task.)

DAUGHTER

FATHER, THE AIR IS DAMP, THE BARN IS DANK
AND ALL THAT STRAW!
SHOULD I BE THANKFUL FOR ONE LITTLE LAMP
FROM THAT FIEND?
SHOULD I, FATHER?

FATHER, WHAT DO I DO NOW?
SHOULD I BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE STRAW
IN THIS STABLE TO GOLD,
THOUGH YOU NEVER TOLD ME HOW?
HOW?

FATHER, WHAT DO I DO NOW?
KNEEL AND PRAY THIS STRAW WILL BE CARRIED AWAY?
WAIT WITH BATED BREATH FOR DEATH?
OR THE POWER YOU PROFESS I POSSESS TO APPEAR?
CONFESS, FATHER, AS I'VE NO GUESS
WHY OR HOW YOU BROUGHT ME HERE!
AND WHAT DO I DO NOW?
WHAT DO I DO NOW?

(Near the end of the DAUGHTER's song, a little man is seen listening and watching. After the song is finished, the little man approaches the DAUGHTER with a proposition.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

SO, YOU HAVE A LOT OF STRAW, I SEE
GOING FAST TO WASTE.
THE KING HAS SAID: "MAKE HASTE!"

I HEAR.
POOR DEAR,
THE CHORE WITH WHICH YOU'RE FACED!
HOW FICKLE, YOUR FATHER,
HOW QUEER!
QUITE A PICKLE HE'S LEFT YOU IN HERE!
SO, YOU HAVE AN IDLE SPINDLE
WAITING TO BE USED.
YOU ARE NOT ENTHUSED, I'VE MUSED.
AND YOU'VE UTTERLY REFUSED
TO ADMIT YOUR ABILITY TO FASHION GOLD OUT OF STRAW
IS A FIT OF SENILITY BY YOUR IRRATIONAL FA-

DAUGHTER

Stop! Who are you?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I? Your savior!

DAUGHTER

(laughing)

You? You?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I've been spurned! Such behavior! How bold!

DAUGHTER

Have you ever turned straw into gold?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I'VE WOVEN COTTON INTO SILK,
WEASEL FUR TO MINK.
I ONCE TRANSMUTED WINE FROM MILK,

WHICH IS DIVINER THAN YOU THINK!

I'VE CLOUDED GREEN GLASS INTO JADE
WITH THE AID OF JUST MY BREATH.
MADE BABY STEPS A PROUD PARADE
FOR A LITTLE BOY NAMED SETH!

DAUGHTER

But I need straw out of gold!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I'VE DIRECTED WEST WINDS BACK TO EAST,
MADE RAMBLING ORATORS TERSE,
WAS ONCE ELECTED LORD OF A FEAST
FOR CANCELING OUT A CURSE!

(RUMPELSTILTSKIN goes into a trance and begins to
chant using nonsense syllables. Suddenly, he returns to
reality.)

I'VE COOLED A FIRE DOWN TO FROST,
WHICH WOULD HAVE COST A FOREST'S LIFE.
WITH SOME BEHEST, HAD A MAN EMBOSSED WITH JEWELS
AT THE CRUEL REQUEST OF HIS PESTERED WIFE!
AH! AH! AH!

DAUGHTER

What about straw?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I'm in awe! Such a mess!

DAUGHTER

Can you turn it to gold?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Yes! The oldest trick in the book. Quick, bring me the wheel! Look, I'll make you a deal -

SINCE YOUR LIFE'S AT STAKE
IN THE HANDS OF THE KING,
IN EXCHANGE FOR THE DEED,
I'LL TAKE YOUR BEAUTIFUL RUBY RING!

DAUGHTER

My ring? But my father gave me this ring!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Is this the same father who left you here without the ability to complete the task he promised the King you could?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Fascinating.

(The DAUGHTER hands the little man her ring.)

DAUGHTER

May I stay?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

No! Go!

DON'T APPEAR 'TIL YOU HEAR THE FIRST SONG OF A BIRD
OR AT LEAST IN THE EAST THERE BURSTS THE SUN!
THEN, REST ASSURED, I'LL BE DONE!

(The DAUGHTER exits. The little man is left to spin the straw into gold. When he has finished spinning the gold, he disappears.)

SCENE 3

(The DAUGHTER re-enters, sees the gold and is amazed.
The KING quickly follows and is equally impressed.)

KING

Oh my! We feel a surge of pleasure at the sight of this turgid treasure! Bring me scales!

NARRATOR 2

(entering with scales and weights)

King, thy scales!

KING

Men with strong jaws!

NARRATOR 2

(gesturing to NARRATORS 1 & 3)

Men with strong jaws!

KING

Now, let Us assess her success at the cause: test if the gold has become what it is or remains what it was!

(In the following sequence, NARRATORS 1 & 3 bite the straw to ensure that it is gold. NARRATOR 2 weighs the gold.)

KING

WEIGH!

NARRATOR 2

WEIGHT!

KING

BITE!

NARRATORS 1 & 3

BITTEN!

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | KING |
| WEIGH! | |
| | NARRATOR 2 |
| WEIGHT! | |
| | KING |
| BITE! | |
| | NARRATORS 1 & 3 |
| BITTEN! | |
| | KING |
| WE MIGHT TAKE TO SITTING FOR THIS! | |
| WEIGH! | |
| | NARRATOR 2 |
| WEIGHT! | |
| | KING |
| BITE! | |
| | NARRATORS 1 & 3 |
| BITTEN! | |
| | KING |
| WEIGH! | |
| | NARRATOR 2 |
| WEIGHT! | |
| | KING |
| BITE! | |
| | NARRATORS 1 & 3 |
| BITTEN! | |

KING

A MOMENT BEFITTING SUCH BLISS!
WONDERFUL, THIS IS WONDERFUL!
SEEMS LIKE WE'RE DREAMING!
MY, THAT GOLD'S GLEAMING!
WONDERFUL, SO WONDERFUL!
WHO WOULD BELIEVE, MISS,
YOU'D EVER ACHIEVE THIS?
WEIGH!

NARRATOR 2

WEIGHT!

KING

BITE!

NARRATORS 1 & 3

BITTEN!

KING

WEIGH!

NARRATOR 2

WEIGHT!

KING

BITE!

NARRATORS 1 & 3

BITTEN!

KING

WHAT A STATE WE'RE IN, SMITTEN WITH YOU!
WEIGH!

NARRATOR 2

WEIGHT!

KING

BITE!

NARRATORS 1 & 3

BITTEN!

KING

WEIGH!

NARRATOR 2

WEIGHT!

KING

BITE!

NARRATORS 1 & 3

BITTEN!

KING

THIS DAY SHOULD BE WRITTEN DOWN!

DO!

WONDERFUL, THIS IS WONDERFUL!

WHO'DA FORESAW YOU'D ALCHEMIZE STRAW?

WONDERFUL, SO WONDERFUL!

THERE'S NAUGHT ELSE TO SAY

BUT MORE STRAW WILL BE BROUGHT IN TODAY!

Take this away!

(The NARRATORS carry the tested gold off the stage after the KING leaves. They bring on a new stack of straw, much larger than the previous pile. The DAUGHTER is left alone, eyeing the straw with dread. The little man appears again.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

MORE STRAW?

DAUGHTER

MORE STRAW.

KIND SIR, WERE IT NOT FOR YOU,
I DREAD THE THOUGHT,
I'D BE DEAD.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

TRUE.

WHATEVER NOW TO DO?

DAUGHTER

MIGHT YOU AGREE, FRIEND
TO SPEND ONE MORE NIGHT WITH ME,
SPINNING GOLD FROM THIS STRAW
SO I MAY SURVIVE TO TOMO-

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

ONLY FOR A PRICE.

DAUGHTER

A PRICE?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

THAT JEWEL 'ROUND YOUR NECK IS QUITE NICE.

DAUGHTER

My necklace? But my father...

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

(with sarcasm)

Please.

(The DAUGHTER hands the little man the necklace she is wearing. Again, he shoos her out, spins the straw into gold, then disappears.)

NARRATORS

EVERYDAY SHE SANG AWAY AS THE SPINNING WHEEL SHE
SPUN.

THAT WAS HOW HER DAYS WERE SPEND UNTIL EACH DAY
WAS DONE.

YES, EVERYDAY SHE SANG AWAY AS THE SPINNING WHEEL
SHE SPUN.

THAT WAS HOW HER DAYS WERE SPEND UNTIL EACH DAY
WAS DONE.

SCENE 4

(Lights come up on the KING admiring the new pile of gold. The NARRATORS test the validity of the gold. And the DAUGHTER is content to be alive, but wary of what she has done.)

| KING | NARRATORS | DAUGHTER |
|--|-------------------|----------|
| WONDERFUL! THIS IS WONDERFUL! | WEIGH! WEIGHT! | AH! |
| FINER THAN THE FIRST! | BITE! | AH! |
| WHAT SHINE! WE MAY BURST! | BITTEN! | AH! |
| WONDERFUL! SO WONDERFUL! | WEIGH! WEIGHT! | AH! |
| A GIFT FROM ABOVE! | BITE! | AH! |
| WE THINK THAT WE'RE FALLING IN LOVE! | BITTEN! | AH! |

KING

IT'S CLEAR TO US YOU ARE DIVINE, DEAR,
LIKE A FINE WINE.

NARRATORS

Here, here!

KING

NO NEED TO TARRY THUS!
TOMORROW AT NOON SHE SHALL MARRY US!

Cheer!

NARRATORS

Hooray!

KING

Hold!

YOU WILL BE QUEEN
JUST AS WE'VE TOLD
AS LONG AS YOU STYLE ONE MORE PILE
OF STRAW INTO GOLD!

(A third, even larger pile of straw is brought onto the stage
by the NARRATORS. Again, the little man appears at the
side of the stage.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

SO, ANOTHER PILE IS SEEN.
POOR DEAR.
WHATEVER DO WE DO?
TOMORROW YOU'LL BE QUEEN, I HEAR.

DAUGHTER

AND ALL BE CAUSE OF YOU.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

TRUE.
DOO, DOO, DOO, DOO
DO YOU THINK I SHOULD VOLUNTEER?
YOU ATTEMPT TO BE COMICAL, OUI?
NO, YOU'RE SINCERE.

DAUGHTER

Then, you'll help me?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

AGAIN, I AGREE FOR A NOMINAL FEE.
POOR DEAR.
WHATEVER DO WE DO?
TOMORROW YOU'LL BE QUEEN, I HEAR.

DAUGHTER

I'd pay you any price, but I've nothing left to give.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

I'M TOLD THE CASTLE'S QUITE NICE

A WONDERFUL PLACE TO LIVE.

STILL, IN THE ROOM LOOMS STRAW, NEATLY PILED.

I AGREE IF YOU PAY ME THE FEE OF YOUR FIRST-BORN CHILD!

DAUGHTER

How do I promise someone not born?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Now, do I? Ah, miss, is that the sun? Is it morn?

DAUGHTER

Agreed.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Indeed.

SLEEP, DEAR GIRL

AND YOUR OTHER LIFE

AS A MOTHER AND WIFE

AS A QUEEN

WILL UNFURL IN A WHIRL!

SCENE 5

(As the little man spins the straw into gold, the DAUGHTER is dressed for the wedding by the NARRATORS, then wed to the KING.)

DAUGHTER

THE SIMPLE LIFE IS OVER
ROYAL LIFE'S BEGUN.
NO MORE STOKING OF THE STOVE
OR TOILING IN THE SUN.
ALL BECAUSE SOME STRAW WAS SPUN INTO GOLD
BY A LITTLE MAN WHOSE KINDNESS IS OUTWEIGHED
BY THE SWIFTHNESS, WHICH COMMANDS HIS HANDS
AND THE PRICE I PAID.
PROSTRATION'S DIMINISHED.
MY POSTURE'S ERECT.
FRIGHTENING NIGHTLY FRUSTRATION IS FINISHED.
NO ONE WOULD SUSPECT
THAT THE CAUSE IS THE EFFECT
OF A LITTLE MAN WHOSE KINDNESS IS OUTWEIGHED
BY THE SWIFTHNESS, WHICH COMMANDS HIS HANDS
AND THE PRICE I PAID.

SCENE 6

(After the wedding, time elapses. The DAUGHTER is seen sitting on a throne with a baby in her arms. She sings a lullaby.)

DAUGHTER

SILENCE REIGNS IN THE WORLD OF THE WEARY
AS REFRAINS OF EMPTY PROMISES FALL
FROM THE SKY IN A UNIFIED QUERY:
WHERE IS YOUR HONOR?
GONE O’ER THE WALL?

MOATS AND SPIRES, GUARDS AND SENTINELS BODING
SMOTE DESIRES TOO FAR-FLOWN TO RECALL
THE LAUGHTER AFTER SORROW ERODING
WHEN THE TALE OF TOMORROW
STOOD TOO STOIC, TOO TALL.

(The DAUGHTER places the child in a cradle. The little man appears.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

SO, THE LONG-AWAITED BABE’S BEEN BORN.
DOESN’T IT LOOK SWEET?
SKIN LIKE PORCELAIN,
HAIR LIKE CORN,
TEENY HANDS AND FEET.

DAUGHTER

No!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

No? No, what?

DAUGHTER

No, you may not take my child!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

OH, YOU'VE SADLY GROWN ATTACHED!

HOW YOU CLUTCH IT LIKE A HAM!

AFRAID IT'S GETTING SNATCHED RIGHT NOW?

AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM!

Do you?

DAUGHTER

I do! You're that little man! The little man who spun the gold.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Yes, yes. The obvious stated! Let's play a game. I'm willing to quell my claim on your child if, in three days, you tell me my name.

DAUGHTER

Your name?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

Yes. Guess.

SCENE 7

(The guessing begins. With each name, the little man shakes his head.)

NARRATORS

ALABASTER, ALEXANDER, AARON OR AENEAS?

ARTHUR, ARVO, ANDRÉ, ANDREW, AMAN OR ANDREAS?

BRANDON, BRADEN, BATHLAZAR OR BRUTUS, BOBBY,
BENNETT?

BEAUREGARD, BARTHOLOMEW, BILL OR BEN OR BARRETT?

CALVIN, DAN, CARVER, CASEY, DEACON, DAVID?

DARBY, CEDRIC, CONNER, CUTTER, CONWAY, DUDLEY?

DONALD, DIRK?

FREDERICK, GORAM, HERSHEL, IAN, JACKSON, JONAH, KIRK?

FELIX, GALVIN, HENRY, IGNATIOUS, JOHN OR JAMES OR JERK?!

LAWRENCE, LINDEN, MORTON, MARVIN, NORRIS, NORBERT,
OGDEN?

LANCELOT, LEVITICUS, MADDOX, NORMAN, ORSEN?

PABLO, PARIS, PATRICK, PLATO, PLUTO, PRESTON?

PHILLIP, PEDRO?

QABAL, QABAN, QUENTIN, QUINCY, QUINLAN, QAYS?

ROBIN, RUDOLPH, RORY, RALPH OR RANDALL?

RUBIN, RONIN, REESE OR RON OR RUNDELL?

ROGER, ROBERT, REMY OR RODRIGO?

RICHARD, RILEY, RUSTY OR RINALDO?

NARRATOR 3

Thus it went on into the night in much the same way.

NARRATOR 1

The little man returned the next morning. The guessing continued all day!

NARRATORS

SALVATORE, SHANNON, SIDNEY, SERGE OR SIM OR SAXON?
TERRENCE, TESHI, TYSON, TITUS, TEMPLETON OR TABAN?
UPTON, VALENTINO, UGUR, VICTOR, VAUGHN, OR UMI?
UTAH, VERNE, ULYSSES, VALIN, VIRGIL, VANCE OR VICTOR?
WALDEN, WADE, WINTHROP, WENDELL, WELDON, XERXES?
WALTER, WINSTON, WILLIAM, WILBUR, WILSON, WYLIE,
XAVIER, XING?
YAKOV, YARDLEY, YANCY, YURI, YASSEN, YASH?
ZEKE OR ZEBEDIAH, ZIGGY, ZACH OR ZED?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

WHAT SHAME AND WHAT SORROW
IF I RETURN HERE TOMORROW
AND MY NAME YOU DON'T KNOW.
I'LL SCOOP UP YOUR KIND,
SWOOP LIKE THE WIND
AND AWAY WE'LL GO!

DAUGHTER

NO!

(The little man exits.)

SCENE 8

(The DAUGHTER consults with the NARRATORS. She sends them out to spy on the little man, to figure out his name.)

DAUGHTER

Fly forth, my servants, messengers, friends! Try north, try west, try all the ends of the earth!

NARRATOR 1

Lists were exhausted, wrists were sore, writing down names from fable, from lore.

NARRATOR 2

Some subjects researched.

NARRATOR 3

Many men laughed.

NARRATOR 2

Writers were sought out for whom names were craft,

NARRATOR 3

No one could conjure a name left unsaid.

NARRATOR 1

Until, one certain servant, whose chest hurt with dread, slumped by the roadside to rest his resounding head. But in place of the pounding, he heard this instead:

(The little man is seen dancing around a fire.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

THEY SEARCH, THEY BESEECH
EVERY PERSON THEY REACH
THE WORRY, THE WONDERING: WHO IS THAT MAN?
THE PRESSURE THEY'RE UNDER TO FOIL MY PLAN!

NARY A HUNCH IN THIS VERY BRIGHT BUNCH.
THEY'D FARE FAIRLY BETTER BY DEIGNING TO PLAN.
'CAUSE RANDOMLY GUESSING BY LETTER WON'T
GAIN THEM THEIR MAN!

THE FIRE DANCES!
THE FLAMES LEAP!
THE LITTLE MAN PRANCES!
YOUR CHILD HE'LL KEEP!

OH QUEEN I CREATED FROM SKEINS OF STRAW
THOUGH YOU CURSE,
I'M NO WORSE THAN THAT FIEND OF A FATHER!

WHY BOTHER TO TRY WHEN CONCLUSIVELY I
HAVE A NAME SO EXCLUSIVE IT'S MORE THAN JUST RARE
REMAINING AT LEAST AS ELUSIVE AS AIR!

YOUR MOTHER, DECEASED.
YOUR FATHER, A BEAST!
YOU'RE LEFT TO THE CARE OF A KING, TO YOUR PRAYER.
YOU BEAR HIM AN HEIR BUT IS SOMEONE ELSE THERE
WHO WILL TEAR THE WEE CHÈRE FROM HIS MÈRE?

THE FIRE DANCES!
THE FLAMES LEAP!
THE LITTLE MAN PRANCES!
YOUR CHILD HE'LL KEEP!

JUST AS I DREAMT IT,
THEIR EVERY ATTEMPT LEAVES THEM SADLY DISTRESSED.
TOO BAD THE EXPANSE OF THE ANSWERS LEFT ONE NAME
UNGUESSED!

WHAT A SHAME!
RUMPELSTILTSKIN IS MY NAME!
RUMPELSTILTSKIN IS MY NAME!

RUMPELSTILTSKIN IS MY NAME!

NARRATOR 1

The messenger bounced to the Queen to announce what he'd heard, relate what he'd seen.

NARRATOR 2

When, on the third day, a bird bade the rested Queen from her bed, her thoughts were no longer infested with dread.

SCENE 9

(In the throne room)

DAUGHTER

WONDERFUL, THIS IS WONDERFUL!
SEE HOW I'M BEAMING
FROM PLOTTING, FROM SCHEMING
AS EVERYONE'S DONE?

WONDERFUL, SO WONDERFUL!
WHAT MOTIVATION
WHEN YOUR CHILD'S SALVATION
MUST BE WON!

(The little man enters the throne room and lasciviously eyes
the DAUGHTER's child.)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

SO, THE FINAL DAY AND DAWN, MY QUEEN
RELENTLESS TIME WON'T WAIT FOR YOU TO PRAY,
MY PAWN. TOO MEAN, MY QUEEN?
RESENTMENT'S NOT A TRAIT FOR WHICH YOU WERE MEANT.
MY, IT DOES SEEM SPENT, YOUR FAWNING LITTLE SPAWN.
GONE.
AND HOW IT SLEEPS! SERENE!
CONTENT WITH ANY FATE.
NOW, IT'S GETTING LATE.

(The DAUGHTER begins guessing, teasing the little man.)

DAUGHTER

IS YOUR NAME NOT LARRY, JIM OR, MAYBE, MATT?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

NO!

DAUGHTER

IS YOUR NAME NOT HARRY, TIM OR, MAYBE, PAT?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

NO!

DAUGHTER

PERHAPS, RUMPELSTILTSKIN?

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

THE DEVIL TOLD YOU THAT!

THE DEVIL TOLD YOU THAT!

THE DEVIL TOLD YOU THAT!

(With each exclamation, RUMPELSTILTSKIN pounds his foot into the ground. After the third stamp, he disappears into the floor.)

NARRATOR 1

He stamped his foot. He broke the floor. Smoke rose from beneath his feet.

NARRATOR 2

The cracks expanded until we swore the floor looked more like teeth.

NARRATOR

Thus, the man was swallowed whole. Who will tell what befell his hollow soul?

EPILOGUE

NARRATORS

ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A GIRL
SOLD TO BE A SLAVE
BY A PATRIARCHAL KNAVE.
THEN, THERE CAME A LITTLE MAN
WHOSE KINDNESS WAS OUTWEIGHED
BY THE SWIFTNES, WHICH COMMANDED HIS HANDS
AND THE PLANS THE MEN MADE
AND THE PRICE THE GIRL PAID
AND THE GAMES THEY ALL PLAYED.

THE END