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RUMPLE SCHMUMPLE

A ten-minute play by
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(A royal nursery room in a tall tower. The Queen and a funny-looking little man. The Queen guesses.)

Are you Carl?
QUEEN

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Shifty?
QUEEN

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Needle Nose Pliers?
QUEEN

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Philomena?
QUEEN

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Randy?
QUEEN

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

QUEEN
Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise?

No.
RUMPLESTILTSKIN

QUEEN
Rumplestiltskin?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
What?

QUEEN

Forget it, that's a dumb one. Betharina?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No.

QUEEN

Bethlehem?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No.

QUEEN

Bethamphetamine?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No.

QUEEN

Gee, this is hard. Give me a hint.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No.

QUEEN

Come on.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Forget it.

QUEEN

Okay, fine. I give up. Here.

(Hands the baby over to Rumplestiltskin.)

QUEEN (CONT.)

She needs feeding every two hours. I've already pumped, so she's set for the next day or so, but then you'll have to switch to formula. Cloth diapers give her a rash, so I use disposable. I know, it's hard on the environment, but tough rocks, I have a life, you know?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Uh...

QUEEN

Be sure to give her a good burping after meals too. Spit-up is inevitable, so if I were you, I'd invest in some good washable knitwear.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Wait.

QUEEN

She can't go anywhere without her blankie, or she makes the most ear-splitting noise. Also, she's a biter.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Wait! Don't you want to guess some more?

QUEEN

No, I told you, I give up. Take her talking Elmo doll. She's not that attached to it, but it drives me crazy, so you might as well.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You're supposed to keep guessing, remember? I spin straw into gold, you promise firstborn baby, I give you name-guessing loophole. That was the agreement.

QUEEN

What's it been, three days? I know when I'm licked. Here's the bottle sanitizer, and her pacifier. It's shaped like a lady's nipple!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Slow down. Let's think about this.

QUEEN

She's got some books that make animal noises somewhere...

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You don't want to do this.

QUEEN

Yes, I do. Fair's fair.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No, it isn't. This is your firstborn baby.

QUEEN

I'll have another.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No, you won't.

QUEEN

Are you questioning my right to reproduce?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

That's not what I meant.

QUEEN

Keep your laws off my body!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I just meant, this baby is special to you. She's irreplaceable.

QUEEN

You know what else is irreplaceable? Eight hours of sleep at night. Can't wait.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

What kind of mother are you?

QUEEN

Look. I was young, I made some rash decisions. You're providing me an opportunity to make things right. Not that I have to justify my actions to you. And how dare you pass judgment on my mothering.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I am going to eat your baby. I am going to take her, hang her from a tree, skin her, and cook her. Then I am going to eat her. Her cries of pain will echo throughout these hills and only add delicious ambiance to my cooking and eating of her. And you are telling me this is okay with you?

QUEEN

Well, it's not my first choice. But what are you gonna do?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You fight! You - you keep guessing!

QUEEN

Hey, maybe you haven't noticed, but His Majesty is like, eighty thousand years old. Somebody has to keep an eye on the economy. (*Shift.*) Is it so wrong to want to establish my career before I get tied down with raising kids? Don't I owe it to my kids to

QUEEN (CONT.)

be emotionally balanced as a person before I bring them into this world? Isn't it better for my kids that way? Maybe not this kid.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

What about your biological clock?

QUEEN

You don't know the first thing about my clock.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Statistics show –

QUEEN

I know what the statistics show.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You'll be forty and pining for your baby. Lost and miserable.

QUEEN

Are you insinuating that I can't be happy if I don't have a child?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You have a child!

QUEEN

My child, my clock, my choice. Now take the little darling and get out.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You know what? You really did guess my name. Earlier. You guessed it, and I pretended you didn't.

QUEEN

Oh. This is so sad.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I'm serious.

QUEEN

Really, this is pathetic. The lengths you will go... Does fatherhood scare you that badly?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I'm not going to be the father! I'm going to be the eater! I mean I'm not. You're confusing me.

QUEEN

I know having a child is a terrible adjustment. Let me give you some advice. Go outside, light a small fire –

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

It's raining.

QUEEN

Light a small fire in the rain, center yourself, wrap my little pumpkin in some aluminum foil, throw her in the coals there, and think about the future.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

My name really is Rumplestiltskin!

QUEEN

Whatever we have to tell ourselves. Now, do you have everything? You can call me if there's something I've forgotten.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Forget it. I won't take her.

QUEEN

Yes, you will.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You're crazy, I'm not dealing with you. I demand to see your supervisor.

QUEEN

I'm the queen.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

The king, then.

QUEEN

You think the king is my supervisor?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Oh, dear lord.

QUEEN

What kind of backwater chauvinism –

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Stop it! Enough! You're going make me – *(Beat. A thought.)* You're bluffing.

QUEEN

What?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

This is a ruse. You're trying to trick me.

QUEEN

I don't know what you're talking about.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You're trying to get me to leave the baby here.

QUEEN

No, I'm not.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Oh, ho! And I almost fell for it, too. Sneaky! Very sneaky. But not sneaky enough!

QUEEN

Whatever. Are you going?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I am going. And I am taking your baby.

QUEEN

Fine.

(Beat.)

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Here I go.

QUEEN

Okay.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I'm going to eat her up.

QUEEN

Can't wait.

(Beat.)

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You're bluffing. I know you're bluffing.

QUEEN

Look, you don't believe me? Give me the baby.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Aha!

QUEEN

I'll cook her.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Come again?

QUEEN

I'll make you a nice take-out meal. How do you like her? Barbequed? Broiled? It's been awhile since I've been in the kitchen.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

(Aghast.)

You're unbelievable!

QUEEN

Oh, you can cook her because you're some baby-eating demon creature, but because I'm her mother, I can't?

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Finally, you're making sense.

QUEEN

(Sighs.)

Such a double standard. Give me that baby.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I will not.

QUEEN

Don't be such a priss. Give it.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

No.

QUEEN

Come on.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Get your hands off!

QUEEN

Let me cook my baby!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Under no circumstances.

QUEEN

First you want me to keep her, now you won't give her to me.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I don't trust you to take care of her.

QUEEN

Like you'd do such a great job.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Better than you!

QUEEN

Ha, ha, ha! Delusions of grandeur from such a tiny man.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

I could be a very good parent.

QUEEN

You and what army? Being a parent requires skills and finesse. You gotta bring home the bacon *and* fry it up in a pan.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

You think you're better than me? Okay. Prove it. Prove you're a good mother, and I'll give you the baby.

QUEEN

Who do you think you are? I don't have to submit to your authority or anybody else's.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

Fine. I'll just take her home with me, where I'll dress her in frilly pink dresses –

QUEEN

Fine.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN

- and make her play with Barbies.

QUEEN
(Horrified gasp.)

You wouldn't dare!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
I'll saddle her with some nice body image problems. "I hate math, let's go shopping!"

QUEEN
Okay, okay, okay! I love my baby. I wanna kiss her little face off.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
Not helping!

QUEEN
She's the greatest, she's the best!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
More...

QUEEN
She is my sun and my moon, and I'd die a thousand deaths if any harm were to befall my child!

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
(Grudgingly hands over the baby)
That's better.

QUEEN
Pig.

RUMPLESTILTSKIN
You know, it's women like you that make it so we can't trust you. You get into these messes and then go looking for handouts from magical creatures. Let this be a lesson to you, young lady! Don't mess with the magic man, because I am strong and invincible and know no weakness! *(Disappears. Reappears.)* I'm keeping the pacifier.
(Disappears.)

THE END.