



**Gerald Casper**

Inspired by the Brothers Grimm fairy tale "Rumpelstiltskin"

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

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**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

**P.O. Box 1401**

**Rapid City, SD 57709**

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN (THE TRUTH)** was first performed at Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester, MN: Jerry Casper, director; Paul Skattem, set design; Ben Hain, lighting design; Ethan Savage, Jerry Casper, and Ben Hain, puppet design; Carri Crary, Carrie Whitworth, and Zan Churchill, costumes.

**LADY DOSFACIA:** Renee Soderlind

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN:** Brian Bennett

**HILDA:** Tiarr Behrens

**FRUMPELSTILTSKIN:** Ethan Savage

**SCRUMPELSTILTSKIN:** Jarrod Kintzi

**ANNE:** Amanda Ahrensfield

**KING:** Jay Adkins

**CAT:** Emma Lyons

**AUDREY:** Anastasiya Nartovich

**MILLER:** Nick Anderson

**LADY ABSENTH:** Janet Wessing

**LADY LARK:** Amanda Pyfferoen

**LADY MELODY:** Ashley Dunkelberger

**LADY TUMBLINA:** Anne Mulhalland

**LORD FINCH:** Adam Worth

**LORD MANNOR:** Malcom Wessing

**GUARD:** Andrew Benning

*To Ruth, Corie, Nick, and Ben,  
who keep me creatively youthful.*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (THE TRUTH!)  
;

## RUMPELSTILTSKIN (THE TRUTH!)

**COMEDY.** So, you think you know the story of Rumpelstiltskin? Not! If Rumpelstiltskin can turn straw to gold, why does he need jewelry? Why does he even want a baby? What would Rumpelstiltskin's family be like? Wouldn't the King notice that after he married the Miller's daughter that she never turned straw to gold again? Easy to stage, this wacky, fast-paced version of the famous Grimm fairytale answers these questions and adds plenty of humor, music, dancing, and intrigue to entertain audiences of all ages.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 60 minutes.



Andrew Lang's *The Blue Fairy Book*, (1889)

## ABOUT THE STORY

"Rumpelstiltskin" is a German fairy tale ("Rumpelstilzchen") that was first published by the Brothers Grimm in their 1812 collection of stories, *Children's and Household Tales*. The story is well known throughout the world, particularly in Europe. The meaning of the name "Rumpelstiltskin" varies and the character is sometimes described as a dwarf. In German, "rumpelstilt" or "rumpelstilz" means goblin whereas "Rumpelgeist" is a type of poltergeist, a mischievous ghost or spirit that moves household objects about.

## CHARACTERS

(7 M, 10 F, 2 flexible, opt. extras)

**RUMPELSTILTSKIN:** Magical Mankin who lives on the top of Mankin Mountain; male.

**HILDA:** Rumpelstiltskin's 148-year-old wife who would like to have a baby; female.

**FRUMPELSTILTSKIN "FRUMPY":** Rumpelstiltskin's little brother who loves to dance; falls in love with Lady Facia; male.

**SCRUMPELSTILTSKIN "SCRUMPY":** Rumpy and Frumpy's father who is often confused; male.

**ANNE:** Rumpy and Frumpy's mother; female.

**KING KNOLL:** King who has no interest in marrying one of his ladies-in-waiting but has taken an interest in Audrey; male.

**LADY ABSENTH:** King Knoll's guardian who wants him to find a wife with royal blood and settle down; female.

**AUDREY:** The Miller's hardworking daughter who works as a scrubwoman at the castle; female.

**MILLER:** Audrey's father, a poor miller; male.

**DOSFACIA/ LADY FACIA:** Narrator who has a mean side and a sweet side...literally; lady-in-waiting who has difficulty making decisions but is a good dancer; female.  
Note: See production notes regarding her costume.

**CAT "KITTY":** A lady-in-waiting who is half-heartedly pretending to be a cat to please King Knoll; wears a cat costume; flexible.

**LADY LARK:** Angry lady-in-waiting who has to pretend to be the court bird so the Cat will have something to do; female.

**LADY MELODY:** Lady-in-waiting and court singer but can't dance; female.

**LADY TUMBLINA:** Clumsy lady-in-waiting; female.

**LADY BLUSH:** Shy Lady-in-waiting who always giggles; has rosy cheeks; female.

**LORD FINCH:** Gentleman of the court; male.

**LORD MANNOR:** Gentleman of the court; male.

**GUARD 1-2:** Court guards; flexible.

**EXTRAS (opt.):** As Members of the Court.



## SETTING

Knoll Castle and Mankin Mountain.

## SETS

**Mankin Mountain.** There can be a backdrop of a mountain,  
opt. There is a small bed for each of the three households.

**King Knoll's throne room.** There is a throne.

**Spinning room.** There is a spinning wheel and some straw.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

**Scene 1:** Downstage special.

**Scene 2:** Mankin Mountain.

**Scene 3:** Miller's house. Can be a bare stage.

**Scene 4:** Throne room of Knoll castle.

**Scene 5:** Throne room of Knoll castle.

**Scene 6:** Throne room of Knoll castle.

**Scene 7:** Throne room of Knoll castle, decorated for the royal  
dance.

**Scene 8:** Scrumpy and Anne's bedroom.

**Scene 9:** Spinning room in Knoll castle.

**Scene 10:** Spinning room in Knoll castle.

**Scene 11:** Spinning room in Knoll castle.

**Scene 12:** Downstage special.

**Scene 13:** Throne room of Knoll castle. There are two thrones.

**Scene 14:** Mankin Mountain.

**Scene 15:** Throne room of Knoll castle.

**Scene 16:** Downstage special.

## PROPS

Backdrop of a small mountain	Playing cards
Backdrop of a medium mountain	Fishing pole
Backdrop of a large mountain	2 Small puppets representing Frumpy and Rumpy
Tiny house backdrop	Straw
Medium house backdrop	Spinning wheel
Assorted books, games	Necklace
Newspaper	Blanket
Bird beak mask	Pile of golden straw (straw spray painted gold)
Feather boa	Glitter (for magic powder)
Scrub brush	Ring
Assorted decorations for a royal ball	Hairpin
Oversized book entitled, <i>The Big Book of Assertiveness</i>	Crown, for Audrey
Hair ribbon, for Facia	Royal garb, for Audrey
	Baby doll
	Brooch

## SOUND EFFECTS

Building construction noise  
Music for Frumpy's dance  
Knock at the door  
Music for royal ball  
Crazy percussion rhythms  
Baby crying

## PRODUCTION NOTES

When this play was produced at the Rochester Community and Technical College, the set designer created a puppet mountain that ran the length of the proscenium and could be rolled on and off. The Mankins walked up and down the trail behind knee-high walls, which made it look as if they were walking up and down the mountain. The use of strategically placed blocks may also be used.

For the Mankins' costumes, the actors' upper bodies were revealed and puppet legs hung off their costumes. The knees were jointed and invisible wire was attached to the actors' wrists to create the look of walking and dancing. The wristbands must slip off so that the actors can gesture without working the legs. The actors were blocked behind knee-high platforms and in floor trapdoors.



Dosfacia's sweet side; Dosfacia's mean side.

Dosfacia has to be able to change back and forth quickly. Her dress can be layered on the left so that it can be unsnapped and flipped quickly to become half black. Assistance from a dresser is a must. Nylon stocking material and rubber latex can be used to create a mask for the left side of Dosfacia's face. Toupee tape and clear elastic can be used for extra security.

"LISTEN AND DO NOT BE AFRAID.  
THERE IS ALWAYS A WAY  
A DEAL CAN BE MADE."

—RUMPY

## SCENE 1

(AT RISE: *The stage is dark. Spotlight on Dosfacia.*)

DOSFACIA: (*To audience, sweet side.*) Welcome, little people! Welcome, big people! Welcome, medium and sub-medium people and people of all shapes, dimensions, configurations...the flexible and the inflexible. Welcome, pretty people and the not-so-pretty... (*Mean, witchy side.*) Get on with it! (*Sweet side.*) All right. Welcome to Princess Auntie Dosfacia's Story Time. Today, we have a story for you that is often misunderstood. It is a love story, really. A story about some little people and some big people and some medium— (*Mean side.*) Stop it! Just tell the story or I will! (*Sweet side.*) Oh, that wouldn't be nice. (*Mean side.*) Then stay on task. Use that pudding hole of yours and tell the st-st-story! (*Sweet side.*) All right. Once on a mountaintop... (*A small mountain pops up. To Stagehands.*) A little bigger mountain than that. (*Slightly larger mountain pops up. To Stagehands.*) Bigger yet, I think. (*Mean side. To Stagehands.*) Hey, it's not the tip of a Popsicle. It's a mountain! A mountain! What do you think we are...ants? (*Loud building noise is heard. A big mountain pops up. To Stagehands.*) That's better. (*Sweet side. To Stagehands.*) Yes, it is. (*To audience, aside.*) I'll explain about *her* later. (*Mean side to sweet side..*) We share the same face. It's not like I can't hear you, powdered-sugar brain! (*Sweet side, smiles. To audience.*) On the top of this mountain lived a unique group of little people called Mankins. (*Mean side.*) How come they can't be "Womankins"? (*Sweet side.*) Well, I don't know. But in the story they are called Mankins. (*Mean side.*) Sign of the times, I guess. (*Sweet side.*) I guess. (*Mean side.*) Something ought to be done about that! (*Sweet side.*) I suppose. (*To audience.*) Anyway, they live in little houses. (*A tiny house pops up. Mean side to Stagehands.*) Don't even

think about it. (*A larger house pop up. To Stagehands.*) They aren't fingernail clippings, they're little people! (*To sweet side.*) Carry on, soapy-talker. (*Sweet side.*) Thank you. (*To audience.*) Now, Mankins are magical people. The Mankins live on the mountain and keep to themselves. But one bold Mankin named — (*Mean side to sweet side.*) Hey, don't tell them! That's a secret. (*Sweet side.*) It's the name of the play. (*Mean side.*) Well, whose idiotic idea was that? Yours? (*Sweet side.*) Everyone already knows the story. (*Mean side.*) Well, fine then. (*To audience.*) Everybody, go home! What a waste of time! (*Sweet side.*) Yes, but we are going to tell the whole story...the untold story. (*Mean side to audience.*) Oh, that will be great. Miss pretty tonsils is going to tell you kiddies a cutesy version of the story of — (*Sweet side, shouts.*) Stop it! Just let me tell the story. Stop interrupting me! (*Mean side.*) Well, that's what I've been trying to get you to do, candy breath. Tell the story. (*Starts to turn face to sweet side but hesitates. Mean side.*) What? (*Sweet side.*) Nothing. I thought you were going to say something. (*Mean side.*) Got nothing to say. (*Sweet side.*) All right. (*Smiles. To audience.*) As I was saying...the Mankins live in little houses on a mountain. The story starts after bedtime in the house of Rumpelstiltskin... (*Spotlight fades to black.*)

## SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Rumpy and Hilda's bedroom. There is a very small bed for Mankins. Rumpy is asleep and snoring. Hilda is sitting up, fretting.)

HILDA: Rumpy. Rumpy. Rumpy, wake up!

RUMPY: *(Sits up, startled.)*

You'll never know, you'll never guess,

My name, my number, or address!

HILDA: Stop rhyming. I'm not one of your clients.

RUMPY: Oh, Hilda, your voice could shear a sheep.

Why do you wake me from my sleep?

HILDA: I said, stop rhyming. This is important, and please don't overreact. Ready? *(Rumpy nods.)* All right, then.

*(Pause.)* I want a baby.

RUMPY: Excuse me?

HILDA: I want a baby.

RUMPY: You confuse me.

HILDA: Stop rhyming! I mean it!

RUMPY: I didn't mean to rhyme that time. How can you have a baby? You are 150 years old!

HILDA: *(Slaps Rumpy.)* I'm 148! I didn't say I wanted to *have* a baby. I said I *want* a baby.

RUMPY: You're too old to have a baby.

HILDA: I know I can't give birth to a baby, but I'm not too old to have a baby.

RUMPY: And where are we going to get this baby? The baby store?

HILDA: There is no such place.

RUMPY: I know that. I'm being sarcastic to make a point. We live on a mountaintop with two other Mankin households, and they are related to me. Where would we get a baby?

HILDA: From people.

RUMPY: People?



HILDA: Yeah, we could get a people baby. You work with people.

RUMPY: No, I offer a service to people in exchange for people trinkets and jewels, but not babies. Sometimes a sandwich...but never a baby.

HILDA: But you could.

RUMPY: No, I couldn't.

I mean, I shouldn't.

I mean, I wouldn't!

HILDA: Stop rhyming and say you'll do it.

RUMPY: I won't! I must live by the rule!

HILDA: What rule?

RUMPY: You know what rule. *(Hilda stares at him.)* The rule.

*(Hilda stares at him.)* The ruuuule. *(Hilda stares at him.*

*Recites.)* "The magic you possess,

To help the people with their troubles,

Will cost the one who is in need,

Their precious jewels, beads, and baubles.

But never get too personal,

Never get too fresh,

And never, never, use your magic,

In exchange for human flesh."

HILDA: That just means you can't take a finger or a toe.

RUMPY: Why would I want a finger or a toe?

HILDA: I don't understand your business. Besides, you made that rule up anyway. Real rules don't rhyme.

RUMPY: *(Frustrated.)* Even if I made it up, I live by it. We all need to have rules—self-rules—lines we don't cross. I won't take a people baby!

HILDA: *(Bats her eyes.)* Don't you love me?

RUMPY: *(Groans.)* You already have a baby.

HILDA: I do not.

RUMPY: Frumpy.

HILDA: He's not a baby. He's your brother.

RUMPY: He's smallish...

HILDA: We are all smallish.

RUMPY: He has a baby face...

HILDA: I want a baby.

RUMPY: He's childish...

HILDA: I— *(Thinks.)* That's true, but he's not a baby!

Rumpy, I really, really want this. *(Rumpy is flustered.)* Look, all I'm saying is that if you come across a client who has a baby lying around, pick it up for me. Now, sleep on it.

*(Hilda kisses Rumpy on the cheek and immediately goes to sleep.)*

RUMPY: *(To himself.)* Sleep? I can't sleep. I'm going to call Frumpy. He never sleeps. He'll be up. *(Hops out of bed, yells.)* Number three! Number three!

*(Spotlight up on Scrumpy and Anne, who are in bed.)*

SCRUMPY: *(Wakes up. To Anne, startled.)* What?! What is it?!

ANNE: Go back to sleep. It's for number three. We're number one.

SCRUMPY: Number one?

ANNE: Yes, we are number one. They are calling number three. Go to sleep.

SCRUMPY: Who's calling?

ANNE: How many people live up here?

SCRUMPY: What?

ANNE: Go to sleep. Go back to sleep.

SCRUMPY: Okay, you don't have to tell me twice!

ANNE: I've already told you more than twice!

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Number three!

SCRUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Who is it?

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Is this number three?

SCRUMPY: *(Shouts.)* No, you have the wrong number.

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Well, who is this?

ANNE: *(Shouts.)* How many people live up here?

SCRUMPY: *(To Rumpy, shouts.)* It's Scrumpy.

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Dad?

ANNE: *(Shouts.)* How many Scrumpy's do you know?!

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Is Mom there?

SCRUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Can't you hear her?

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Frumpy's not answering. I wonder where he is.

SCRUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Let's both try to call.

ANNE: I'm going to sleep. I hate these party line calls!

RUMPY/SCRUMPY: *(Shout.)* Number three!

*(Lights down on Scrumpy and Anne. Lights up on Frumpy's cottage. Frumpy is doing a funky dance. The music is too loud and he can't hear. He does a short dance. When the dance is over, a knock at the door is heard.)*

FRUMPY: *(Calls.)* Come on in. *(Rumpy enters.)* Oh, it's my brother! Hey, you want to dance?

RUMPY: No. Hey, why don't you answer when you get a call? I woke Mom and Dad up.

FRUMPY: Sorry, sorry. I was just working on a new dance.

RUMPY: Why do you waste your time with that?

FRUMPY: Because I'm going down to the village, and I'm going to dance with some girls!

RUMPY: With people girls? Forget it. What a waste of time.

FRUMPY: Listen...Mom can't dance with me because of her arthritis. And Hilda treats me like a child.

RUMPY: It's because you're small.

FRUMPY: We are all small.

RUMPY: Yeah, but you act smaller.

FRUMPY: Well, I'm through dancing with the coyotes. They bite.

RUMPY: Look at you...a full-grown Mankin, dancing around in the middle of the night. You're childish.

FRUMPY: Did you come over here to insult me? 'Cause if you did, I may as well go out and get bit by the coyotes!

RUMPY: No, no, no. I'm sorry, Frump. I'm just upset. I have a little problem with Hilda.

FRUMPY: Is she eating that smelly fish at night again?

RUMPY: No, no, much worse. (*Deep breath.*) She wants a baby.

FRUMPY: A baby?! She's 160 years old!

RUMPY: She's 150.

(*Spotlight up on Hilda.*)

HILDA: I'm 148. (*Immediately goes back to sleep. Spotlight down.*)

FRUMPY: (*To Rumpy.*) She can't have a baby.

RUMPY: She wants me to...to get her a people baby.

FRUMPY: What? Can you do that?

RUMPY: Probably...but it's against the rule.

FRUMPY: (*Ponders.*) Rule?

RUMPY: "Never get too personal,  
Never get too fresh –"

FRUMPY: Oh, yeah, the human flesh thing. I thought that meant you couldn't take a finger or a toe.

RUMPY: Where does this thinking come from? Why would I want fingers and toes?

FRUMPY: I don't understand your business. Why do you collect jewels and baubles?

RUMPY: Who provides for this family?

FRUMPY: You do.

RUMPY: All right then. Until you are ready to do magic, don't ask. (*Frumpy looks sheepish.*) Now, what do I do about this baby issue?

FRUMPY: Get her a pet.

RUMPY: Pets aren't good. Dogs zap my magic, and I'm allergic to cats.

FRUMPY: How about a bird?

RUMPY: She wants something she can cuddle.

FRUMPY: A fish?

RUMPY: Frumpy, think. A fish?

FRUMPY: Oh, yeah, you can't cuddle a fish.

RUMPY: Oh, she'll cuddle fish. Then she'll eat them!

*(Frumpy and Rumpy make faces.)*

FRUMPY: Maybe she'll forget about it.

RUMPY: She'll never forget. She'll bring it up at breakfast, dinner—

FRUMPY: Family functions.

RUMPY: Yes.

FRUMPY: Ugh! She drove us insane until we let her open that mountain-side restaurant. Who did she think would come?

RUMPY: *(Scoffs.)* I know.

FRUMPY: Who wants mountain meatloaf every meal?

RUMPY: And raw fish... *(Rolls eyes, scoffs.)* ...I know.

FRUMPY: What a disaster!

RUMPY: *(Rolls eyes, scoffs.)* I know. And we heard about it all day, every day. And, Frumpy, I think she is even more serious about this baby thing.

*(Spotlight up on Hilda.)*

HILDA: *(In her sleep.)* I want a baby! *(Immediately falls back to sleep. Spotlight down.)*

RUMPY: *(To Frumpy.)* See, she is even talking about it in her sleep.

FRUMPY: You do have a problem. I don't mean this in a bad way...but Hilda is a little chopped down in the forest of thought.

RUMPY: I know, but...I do love her...and I think she would be a great mother.

FRUMPY: So you're going to take a people baby?

RUMPY: I don't know. *(Thinks. Gets an idea.)* Hey, wait a minute! What am I worried about? How often do I have a client with a baby, anyway?

FRUMPY: That's probably true.

RUMPY: *(Yawns.)* My clients are 190 years old like Mom.  
*(Spotlight up on Anne.)*

ANNE: *(Insulted.)* I'm 189! *(Spotlight down.)*

RUMPY: *(To Frumpy.)* Oh, I feel better. Thank you, Brother.

I'm overreacting, right?

FRUMPY: Right. Sure. I really have no idea. Sleep well.

RUMPY: Yes, I think I will. *(Exits.)*

FRUMPY: *(To himself.)* His forest is a little barren, too.

*(Frumpy claps and music starts. Frumpy does his dance again.  
 Rumpy returns to his room.)*

RUMPY: Oh, I forgot to say goodnight. *(Shouts.)* Goodnight,  
 Brother!

*(Spotlight up on Scrumpy and Anne.)*

SCRUMPY: *(Startled, sits up.)* What?! Who's there?!

ANNE: It's your eldest son. Go back to sleep.

SCRUMPY: Which one?

ANNE: You only have one eldest son.

RUMPY: *(Shouts.)* Goodnight. Don't let the bedbugs bite.

HILDA: Stop rhyming!

SCRUMPY: *(To Anne.)* We have bedbugs?

ANNE: Go to sleep. Go to sleep!

SCRUMPY: You don't have to tell me twice!

*(Lights fade to black as Frumpy continues dancing.)*

# SCENE 3

(AT RISE: *The Miller's house. Audrey is about to leave to go to work.*)

MILLER: *(To Audrey.)* Off to work, my dear?

AUDREY: *(Sadly.)* Yes, Father.

MILLER: Audrey, dear, as soon as business picks up, you won't have to clean the castle anymore.

AUDREY: It's all right, Father. I know you are trying. They are nice to me there. Actually, they don't seem to notice me with all of those beautiful ladies-in-waiting.

MILLER: *(Hugs her.)* Keep working hard, my daughter, and people will notice. You are my pride and joy. Your mother would be proud of you.

AUDREY: Yes, Father.

MILLER: I love you. I would do anything to make you happy.

AUDREY: I love you too Father, and...thank you.

*(Audrey exits. Blackout.)*

## SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Throne room of King Knoll's castle. Court Members are scattered about reading, playing games, dancing, etc.)

LADY ABSENTH: All rise! King Knoll approaches his throne.

(A "Cat" named Kitty enters. The "Cat" is a person who is half-heartedly pretending to be a cat for the King. The Cat is reading a newspaper. Pause. Awkward moment.)

CAT: (To others, annoyed.) I'm a cat. Have you never seen a cat before? Get over it.

KING: (Offstage, calls.) Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty! Here Kitty, Kitty, Kitty!

CAT: (Businesslike.) Meow!

(King enters.)

KING: Ah, there you are, Kitty.

(King Knoll pats the Cat's head. King Knoll and the Cat go to the throne. This causes a buzz among the Court Members. Lady Absenth approaches the King.)

LADY ABSENTH: (To King.) Excuse me, Sire. (Indicating Cat.) What is this?

KING: What? (Realizes she is referring to the Cat.) Oh, this. This is Kitty. She's a cat.

LADY ABSENTH: (Awkward laugh.) I know sometimes you like to tease and joke, Sire.

KING: Who would I be teasing and joking with, Lady Absenth?

LADY ABSENTH: Me maybe? Or just amusing yourself, perhaps?

KING: About what, Lady Absenth?



LADY ABSENTH: About... *(Hesitates. Points to Kitty.) ...that*  
being a cat. That, Sire, is not a cat.

KING: Well, of course, it is. Two pointy ears, and— *(To Cat.)*  
Do you have a tail? *(Cat holds tail up. To Lady Absenth.)* See,  
a long tail. I believe that *is* a cat.

LADY ABSENTH: Please don't do this. That is a person  
dressed as a cat.

KING: *(Shocked.)* What?! *(To Cat.)* Are you a real cat?

CAT: Do you want me to be?

KING: Well, yes.

CAT: Meow.

KING: *(To Lady Absenth.)* There you have it.

LADY ABSENTH: *(Losing patience.)* Why do you play these  
ridiculous games? *(Doesn't wait for King to answer.)* I'll tell  
you why! Because you need a wife. You need to settle  
down.

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**