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**Product Code Y570-A**

# **Stiltz**

A New Adaptation of the Brothers Grimm Fairy Tale,  
“Rumpelstiltskin”

by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

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# Stiltz

by Nancy Machlis Rechtman

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

BLATHER; *foolish and greedy father of Princess*

YOUNG MAN #1

YOUNG MAN #2

BARMAID #1

BARMAID #2

YOUNG MAN #3

SIR SNOOT; *minister to the King; imperious, intelligent and eventually, kind-hearted*

PRINCESS; *beautiful and smart, clever and quick-witted*

STEWARD; *a member of the court who admits guests into the castle*

KING; *young and handsome, egotistical at first - eventually kind and loving*

GUARDS (*number can vary*)

STILTZ; *a small, agile, crafty man with magical powers*

NANNY; *loyal, observant, excitable*

EXTRAS AT INN

## SETTING

*A long time ago; various places in the village and in the palace*

ACT ONE SCENE I: *A local inn*

ACT ONE SCENE 2: *Blather and Princess's home*

ACT ONE SCENE 3: *The palace - the hall*

ACT ONE SCENE 4: *The palace - game room*

ACT ONE SCENE 5: *The palace - game room (the next morning)*

ACT ONE SCENE 6: *The palace - game room (that evening)*

ACT ONE SCENE 7: *The palace - game room (the next morning)*

ACT ONE SCENE 8: *The palace - game room (that evening)*

ACT ONE SCENE 9: *The palace - game room (the next morning)*

ACT TWO SCENE I: *The palace - the nursery (it is two years later)*

ACT TWO SCENE 2: *The palace - game room*

ACT TWO SCENE 3: *The palace - game room (morning)*

ACT TWO SCENE 4: *The palace - game room (the next morning)*

ACT TWO SCENE 5: *The palace - game room - (later that afternoon)*

ACT TWO SCENE 6: *The palace - game room (the next morning)*

## Stiltz

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### ACT I; SCENE ONE

*(AT RISE: Many years ago; an inn in a village where people are eating and drinking heartily. BLATHER, a middle-aged man, dressed in faded clothing, is standing, talking loudly to several YOUNG MEN at a large, round table, along with BARMAID #1 and BARMAID #2.)*

BLATHER

Here's to my daughter, Princess, the most beautiful girl in all the land!

*(Everyone laughs. This is not the first time they have heard this.)*

YOUNG MAN #1

Blather, your daughter is certainly a pleasant girl, but most beautiful? Come sit down and don't make a fool of yourself.

YOUNG MAN #2

Blather, you speak as only a father can speak.

BARMAID #1

And Blather, I thought you believed that I was the most beautiful girl in the land? At least that's what you said when you tried to steal a kiss last time you were here!

*(Everyone laughs once again. Blather gives BARMAID #1 a good-natured pat on her side.)*

BLATHER

And that you are, wench! But you, my dear, are a woman. My daughter is still but a girl. A most beautiful girl.

BARMAID #1

Yes, yes, you speak of her beauty from sunup to sundown. But what other talents does this beauty of yours display?

BLATHER

*(Stubbornly)* My daughter can make the best Angel Food cake in the land!

*(More laughter.)*

BARMAID #2

*(Winks)* Ah, but Blather, you should be the first to admit that all young men prefer Devil's Food cake!

*(Even more laughter. BLATHER is getting frustrated.)*

BARMAID #1

Come now, Blather. You speak the words of a proud father, but how remarkable can this child of yours truly be?

BLATHER

My daughter can milk a cow faster than any other lass in the land!

*(The YOUNG MEN begin throwing things at BLATHER.)*

BARMAID #2

And who, aside from a nursing babe would be in such a hurry to drink milk so hastily produced?

*(BARMAID #2 winks at the young men and they begin howling and laughing.)*

BLATHER

My daughter Princess can...can...take the straw in the barn and spin it into gold!

YOUNG MAN #1

Come, old man, come sit down and take a load off your feet.

YOUNG MAN #2

Just be sure not to shift it to your brain!

*(ALL laugh.)*

BLATHER

It's true, I tell you! Princess can turn straw into gold!

YOUNG MAN #3

Then why is it that you wear rags if you have so much gold?

BLATHER

Why, we are saving it up! One day we will have enough to move away from this pitiful town and have a castle of our own to rival that of the King!

YOUNG MAN #3

The King, you say? Is that why your daughter, a peasant, is named Princess?

BLATHER

Do not cast aspersions upon my daughter, sir! Believe me, one day she shall weave me so much gold that I will own a castle even grander than that of the King!

*(The YOUNG MEN laugh and poke each other. They suddenly stop their joking as they see*

*SIR SNOOT approaching behind BLATHER in an arrogant and haughty manner. Their smiles are replaced with looks of panic.)*

SIR SNOOT

Oh, really?

*(BLATHER whirls around and examines this elaborately-dressed stranger.)*

SIR SNOOT, *Continued*

Grander than the King's own castle, you say? May I ask the name of the man who dares to think he can out-king the King?

BLATHER

*(Annoyed)* I am Blather, good sir. And who, might I ask, are you, disparaging of my most humble and sincere remarks to my friends here?

SIR SNOOT

*(Contemptuously)* I am Sir Snoot, minister to the King, you pitiful fool. And if your daughter can spin straw into gold as you say she can, I want her at the castle first thing tomorrow morning to show us her stuff. We shall see what she can do. Have I made myself clear?

BLATHER

*(Trembling violently)* As a ringing bell.

*(BLATHER stumbles out the door of the inn and staggers slowly down the path that will take him home. LIGHTS DOWN.)*

## ACT I; SCENE TWO

*(AT RISE: The interior of a small cottage; evening. Blather's daughter, PRINCESS, is sweeping the floor. BLATHER staggers in.)*

BLATHER

Hello, my little Princess.

PRINCESS

You missed dinner again. I had to eat alone.

BLATHER

I'm sorry, my dear. I was off at the inn trying to find you a husband.

PRINCESS

A husband, Father? At the inn? How long will it take for you to realize that the men of this village are idiots and there is not one of them that I wish to marry. A girl would have to go far, far away to find a suitable husband.

BLATHER

Well, Princess, we will be taking a short journey in the morning.

PRINCESS

*(Eagerly)* Really? We will finally leave this forsaken village for somewhere filled with wonderful new sights and sounds?

BLATHER

*(Uncomfortably)* Well, certainly I'm sure there will be new sights and sounds for you to enjoy.

PRINCESS

Well, what is the occasion? Where are we going?

BLATHER

*(Mumbles to the floor)* The palace.

PRINCESS

What did you say? It sounded like you said 'the palace.'

BLATHER

That's what I said all right.

PRINCESS

Oh, this is so exciting! Have you done something special that the King wishes to recognize you for, some achievement above and beyond what anyone would expect of you? What have you done, Father, to deserve the honor of going before the King?

BLATHER

Well...actually...he wants to meet you.

PRINCESS

Me? What would he want with a simple farm girl like me?

BLATHER

Well, you know I stopped by the inn as usual for a bit of dinner and some companionship. And I hoped to find you a husband. I tried telling them about your Angel Food cake and the fast milking thing, but they weren't impressed.

## PRINCESS

Oh, Father, you know I don't want to marry one of those dolts from the village! I want to marry Prince Charming!

## BLATHER

*(Sighing)* That's thanks to your dear departed mother and her insistence that we name you Princess. She put all those foolish ideas into your head from the time you were a little girl. And now, you think you're only suited for a prince. Well, let me tell you, sweetheart, you're no Cinderella.

## PRINCESS

And thank goodness for that—do you think I would want to spend all day with a wicked stepmother and two horrible sisters screaming at me to clean out the fireplace? And then I'd have to run around with those awful glass slippers—who wears glass on their feet? I mean what kind of brains does it take to realize that glass is not only going to shatter if it's hit too hard, but that it certainly is not suitable material to make a shoe out of...

*(BLATHER sighs and shakes his head.)*

PRINCESS, *Continued*

And what does this all have to do with the palace anyway?

## BLATHER

I'm getting there, hold your horses please. As I was trying to tell you before you went off on a wild tangent about glass slippers, nothing I said would impress those young men last night. So I needed something extreme, something so incredible that it could not be ignored.

## PRINCESS

*(Apprehensively)* Father...what did you tell them?

## BLATHER

Well, I told them...why I let them know...uh, I informed them of what might be considered a partial truth.

## PRINCESS

And what partial truth would that be?

## BLATHER

I told them you could spin straw into gold.

## PRINCESS

You what??!!

## BLATHER

Well, it seemed like the right thing to say at the time.

PRINCESS

And how, exactly, is that a partial truth?

BLATHER

Truth is beauty, beauty is truth. Gold is beautiful, you are beautiful, you go find the truth—it's in there somewhere.

PRINCESS

*(Sarcastically)* And were all of these young men suitably impressed?

BLATHER

Well, they laughed at first. But then they stopped.

PRINCESS

And why was that? Did they end up choking to death on their laughter?

BLATHER

No, they didn't. It just so happened that the advisor to the King was there and was most impressed at this talent of yours and he commanded us to appear at the palace today so that you can show the King what you can do.

PRINCESS

What??? Oh, Father, what were you thinking? Straw into gold? Was that the best thing you could come up with?

BLATHER

Well, on such short notice – yes!

PRINCESS

Couldn't you have come up with something that actually contained a thread of truth? Like mentioning that your daughter can run as fast as the wind? Or that she can shoot an arrow as far as the horizon? Or even that she can ride a horse better than any of that poor, pitiful lot?

BLATHER

All strong arguments for a man choosing a wife.

PRINCESS

At least those things do have a thread of truth—more than a thread, an entire garment of truth. I don't need you impressing those lunkheads at the inn, whose main pleasure in life is determining who can burp the loudest after guzzling their tankards of ale! And now the King expects me to weave straw into gold? There is not a person on Earth who can do that! The King will have my head for sure.

BLATHER

He is young and unmarried. You can charm him with your winning ways. Perhaps you can propose running a race against him and when you soundly trounce him, running like the wind, you can beg him to spare your life. Either that or you can just keep running.

*(PRINCESS glares at BLATHER.)*

BLATHER, *Continued*

Or not. We'll figure out something...

PRINCESS

*(Stamping her foot)* I don't care! You can't make me go!

*(PRINCESS runs off stage and we hear a door SLAM. BLATHER sighs and picks up a cup from the table. He sniffs it, then grimaces. LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

### ACT I; SCENE THREE

*(AT RISE: PRINCESS and BLATHER have just entered the palace, let in by a jumpy little wisp of a man, the STEWARD of the castle.)*

STEWARD

Come, come, you mustn't let the King wait for you any longer, girl.

BLATHER

We came as fast as we could.

STEWARD

Then you must have ridden here on the back of a turtle. The King is waiting. Hurry, you must come right away!

*(BLATHER and PRINCESS follow the STEWARD to a sitting area where SIR SNOOT is waiting.)*

SIR SNOOT

So, you are the girl who turns straw into gold?

*(PRINCESS clears her throat and looks down at the floor.)*

BLATHER

Yes, yes, your, sir, yes, yes, your...

SIR SNOOT

*(Impatiently)* Well, the King is on his way down - he'll be here any moment. And let me tell you something, young lady. You'd better be able to do what you say you can do or it will be curtains for you!

BLATHER

Curtains? You want her to make curtains?

*(Before SIR SNOOT can respond, there is SFX: A BLARING OF TRUMPETS. The KING strides into the room. He is handsome and he knows it. It is apparent that he enjoys the way everyone defers to him when he enters the room.)*

SIR SNOOT

Your majesty.

*(The KING nods and sits upon the large, red velvet chair in the middle of the room. He stares at PRINCESS and his face suddenly softens for a moment before he catches himself and resumes his imperious manner. PRINCESS looks up and stares at him, surprised and pleased at what she sees.)*

KING

You are the girl who spins straw into gold?

PRINCESS

*(Curtseying low; almost toppling over)* Yes sir, uh, Your Majesty, uh yes.

KING

Good. You will be locked into the game room, just past the hot tub, for the night, and when we unlock the door in the morning, I expect that the room will be filled with gold. Do you understand?

*(PRINCESS nods miserably.)*

KING, *Continued*

Very well. I will see you in the morning then.

*(The KING rises and strides out of the room. Two GUARDS approach PRINCESS and gently take her arms.)*

BLATHER

Going so soon?

PRINCESS

Thanks to you. Why am I always the one to suffer your wild schemes?

BLATHER

*(Looks nervously at SIR SNOOT who is staring at PRINCESS)* Do your best, child, all right? I saw how the King looked at you. Use your feminine charms for once, can't you?

PRINCESS

Oh, sure, Father, my charms. Yes, I'm sure that my dazzling smile and the batting of my eyelashes will make him completely forget the little thing about turning straw into gold.

SIR SNOOT

Off you go, girl. Get to work now. *(Looks at BLATHER)* And you. Off you go now, as well—to whatever boulder you need to crawl back under.

*(PRINCESS is led from the room and BLATHER slowly shuffles in the opposite direction toward the door as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## ACT I; SCENE FOUR

*(AT RISE: Interior game room; evening. PRINCESS is sitting in the midst of a huge pile of straw. There are games stacked in the corner of the room, but she is dejectedly picking at the straw and she is crying.)*

PRINCESS

Oh, this is just great. How in the world am I supposed to turn straw into gold? Why does my father always come up with these wild schemes? I wish something magical could happen like it always does just about now in the theater!

*(A small door swings open, invisible up to now as it looks to be part of the brick wall, and STILTZ, a tiny little man, appears.)*

PRINCESS

*(Shrieks)* Aaaaaaaah!

STILTZ

*(Shrieks)* Aaaaaaaah!

PRINCESS

Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!

STILTZ

Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!

PRINCESS

All right. Now that we've got that done with, who are you? And what do you want?

STILTZ

Are we both done screaming? (*PRINCESS nods.*) Well, sister, you asked for some magic, so here I am. Now what's the problem here? And why all the waterworks?

PRINCESS

(*Sniffing*) My father has foolishly told the King that I can weave straw into gold. He is always saying crazy things, but this is the craziest thing he has ever done. Now the King has said I had better weave all of this straw into gold tonight or it's curtains for me. I don't even need new curtains!

(*PRINCESS sobs.*)

STILTZ

Oh, is that all? I can take care of that for you, babe. But what are you going to do for me?

PRINCESS

Really? You can do that? Oh my gosh! Well, if you really can do what you say you can, look here. I have this gold ring I got for my last birthday. You can have it, OK? Just please, please do this for me and I will be eternally grateful.

(*STILTZ pulls a giant magnifying glass from his vest pocket and examines the ring*)

STILTZ

Looks good to me. (*Bites the ring*) Delicious. Just kidding. OK, deal.

(*PRINCESS sinks down onto the floor and starts to watch STILTZ go to work, but she is tired. She stretches and yawns and soon, she is fast asleep. LIGHT FADE OUT.*)

## ACT I; SCENE FIVE

(*AT RISE: Interior game room; morning; PRINCESS is lying in a room filled with gold. She opens her eyes, stretches and sits up. When she sees the gold, her mouth hangs open in amazement.*)

PRINCESS

Oh my gosh!

(*There is a KNOCK on the door and PRINCESS looks around for the little man, but he is gone.*)

PRINCESS, *Continued*

Come in!

(*The KING and SIR SNOOT enter. They stare at the gold, then at PRINCESS.*)

KING

Amazing!

SIR SNOOT

Quite. I didn't think you had it in you, young lady, but I cannot deny my own eyes.

KING

Nor can I. You have the job.

PRINCESS

What job?

*(SIR SNOOT glares at PRINCESS and she suddenly realizes that she is addressing the KING. She curtseys and once again almost topples over.)*

KING

Gold-maker for the kingdom.

PRINCESS

Gold-maker? You mean you've had other people do this before?

*(The KING waves his hand in the air dismissively, purposely not answering the question.)*

KING

Tonight you will make even more gold for me. It's not a bad gig, you know.

PRINCESS

But I want to go home!

KING

Oh, oh, you need to stop doing that right now. Please. We'll see about you going home – later. But right now I need more gold. So have a little something to eat, enjoy the hot tub if you want, but tonight you get to work and make me more gold. Get the picture?

PRINCESS

*(Sadly)* Like the still-to-be-invented camera.

*(LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

**ACT I; SCENE SIX**

*(AT RISE: Interior game room; evening; PRINCESS is absently picking at a bowl filled with food.)*

PRINCESS

*(Starting to cry)* What am I going to do now? Oh, what am I going to do?

*(The little door opens and STILTZ once again enters the room.)*

STILTZ

How's it going, babe? Oh no, here go the waterworks again. Just wanted to let you know, love the ring. Thanks ever so much.

*(STILTZ is wearing the ring on a giant chain around his neck and shows it to PRINCESS.)*

PRINCESS

*(Sniffles)* The King was so thrilled with all the gold you made, he put twice the straw in here this time. And he wants it all turned into gold by morning!

STILTZ

*(Grins)* No sweat, baby. What you got for me this time?

PRINCESS

*(Fingers the necklace around her neck)* Here, how about my necklace?

*(PRINCESS hands the necklace to STILTZ who holds it up to the light.)*

STILTZ

Oooweee, baby, this is sweet! You got yourself a deal!

PRINCESS

*(Sadly)* Great. Thanks.

*(PRINCESS lies down on the ground as she did the night before, determined to watch how the little man does what he does, but once again, she falls fast asleep. LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

**ACT I; SCENE SEVEN**

*(AT RISE: Interior playroom; morning. The lights come up to reveal the room is filled with even more gold than the day before, from floor to ceiling. There is barely enough space for PRINCESS to move. There is a KNOCK at the door and PRINCESS opens her eyes to find the KING and SIR SNOOT with their mouths hanging open, staring at all of the gold.)*

PRINCESS

*(Rubbing her eyes grumpily, then looking around the room)* Happy now?

*(The KING looks at PRINCESS in a new light, suddenly feeling more tenderly towards her.)*

KING

Yes, actually I am. Thank you.

PRINCESS

Can I go home now? Maybe after breakfast? Isn't this enough for you already?

KING

*(Gruffly; afraid of losing her)* No. No you may not. I need you... to make more gold for me tonight. And then we'll talk about when you will go home. Or if you will go home.

PRINCESS

How much gold does one king need?

SIR SNOOT

Watch your mouth, young lady! You are addressing the King!

PRINCESS

I know. I mean, I don't mean to be rude. But honestly. This is more gold than anyone could need in a lifetime.

SIR SNOOT

Obviously you have no idea what it takes to run a kingdom.

KING

Please feel free to have a swim, take a walk, or just hang out by the pool. But tonight, once again, I expect you to get to work. We will see you in the morning.

*(The KING and SIR SNOOT exit. PRINCESS sits glumly in the room. LIGHTS OUT.)*

**ACT I; SCENE EIGHT**

*(AT RISE: Interior game room; evening. Every square foot of the room seems to be filled with straw.)*

PRINCESS

Oh, why am I still here? I'm so sick of all of this work! I want to go home!

*(The hidden door opens and STILTZ enters.)*

STILTZ

That's a laugh! All the work you've done?! Girl, all I've seen you do is hang out in the hot tub, play in the garden and fall asleep as soon as the real work starts. I think you've got it all wrong here, babe.

PRINCESS

*(Lifts her head and stares at STILTZ)* All right, all right, you did all the work – happy? But you got paid for it, didn't you?

STILTZ

*(Nods)* True. But now what will you give me if I turn all of this straw into gold for you one last time? And honey, there is an awful lot of straw here so it better be something good.

PRINCESS

*(Paces the room, thinking)* I have nothing left to give you. All I have left are the clothes on my back. And don't even think about that, mister.

STILTZ

Keep your shirt on, babe – literally. No, your clothes are no good to me. I like to dress fine, as you can see.

PRINCESS

Then what shall I do?

STILTZ

*(Pacing slowly)* Well, it seems we've got ourselves a little dilemma here, sweetheart. I'll tell you what. I've got a great idea. I've always wanted to have a little one of my own, you know?

PRINCESS

A little what?

STILTZ

You know, a cute little cuddly thing of my own.

PRINCESS

You mean a puppy? That's sweet.

STILTZ

How thick is your head? A baby, doll-face—a kid I could raise and teach to fish, and to hunt, and maybe even the whole gold magic thing here.

PRINCESS

*(Looking at him in horror)* You don't think I'm going to...you are nuts if you think I would marry you...

STILTZ

Chill, baby. You really don't think I meant...oh, man, I can't believe you thought I meant...

PRINCESS

*(Trying to laugh it off)* Oh, no, of course not. No, what a laugh to think that you...and me...I mean ha-ha! What a ridiculous—

STILTZ

OK, babe, we get the picture. Anyway, it's not like I haven't tried to find a wife. But, well, take a look at me.

PRINCESS

*(Trying to be kind)* You're not so bad, you know. Maybe if you fixed yourself up a bit...

STILTZ

Look, sweetheart. Here's the deal. When you get married – assuming you get married...to whoever – and have your first kid, how about you give it to me and I'll take care of it and raise it like it was my very own flesh and blood. I'd take real good care of it, I promise. And I'd even send you pictures. So, what do you think – deal?

*(PRINCESS's mouth drops open in shock. She addresses the audience.)*

PRINCESS

This guy is crazy. He thinks I'm going to give him my first child? Well, who knows if I'll ever get married anyway. I mean I can't stand all the dolts in the village. Maybe I'll never get married. Or I'll move far, far away to find myself a husband in some more enlightened land. And by then, this weird little man will probably be busy bothering someone else and won't even remember such a bargain. *(Looks at STILTZ)* Deal.

*(STILTZ and PRINCESS shake hands.)*

STILTZ

Deal.

*(LIGHTS OUT.)*

**ACT I; SCENE NINE**

*(AT RISE: Interior game room; morning. There is so much gold that PRINCESS is sleeping standing up, wedged between the stacks of gold bars. There is a loud KNOCK at the door.)*

PRINCESS

Who is it?

KING

It is I, the King.

PRINCESS

Come in! If you can.

*(The KING and SIR SNOOT enter.)*

KING

Wow!

SIR SNOOT

Double wow!

PRINCESS

Are you happy now?

KING

*(Trying to approach her through the stacks of gold)* I promised you that this would be the last time I asked you to turn straw into gold.

*(The KING gets wedged between one of the stacks and SIR SNOOT yanks him out and motions for PRINCESS to exit the room and join them in the garden. The scene continues uninterrupted as the KING and PRINCESS cross into the garden.)*

KING, *Continued*

As I was saying, you may leave if you'd like, today. But I hope you won't.

*(SIR SNOOT jumps at this remark and the KING motions for him to leave. SNOOT exits. The KING is now alone with PRINCESS.)*

PRINCESS

Won't what?

KING

Leave.

*(PRINCESS stares at him and starts turning away from him.)*

**KING, *Continued***

No, I mean I hope you won't leave. You are so beautiful and so clever and you aren't afraid to speak your mind. I find that so refreshing and I feel like, well, I feel like I'm falling in love with you. Will you marry me, Princess?

**PRINCESS**

Marry you? And be the queen? And that would make me...Queen Princess?!

**KING**

I suppose it would. I admit it sounds a bit strange, but we could get used to it, I'm sure.

**PRINCESS**

I could live with that. Sure I will. And thanks for asking.

*(The KING and PRINCESS hug and EXIT as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

**END ACT I**

**ACT II; SCENE ONE**

*(AT RISE: Two years later; day. The lights reveal the royal nursery; PRINCESS and the KING have married and PRINCESS has had a baby girl. PRINCESS and the KING are standing by the cradle, cooing at the baby. The NANNY hands the baby to PRINCESS, who kisses her little girl and smiles at her. The KING beams at the two of them.)*

KING

My two girls. My Princess and my Queenie.

PRINCESS

How I love my little Queenie. You were right, my husband, having us name her Queenie to suit her eventual position in life. Although until then, everyone will have to call her Princess Queenie. And, one day when she becomes queen, she will be... Queen Queenie. But I suppose we can worry about that later.

KING

And you are my Queen Princess. My beautiful Princess. And my Queen.

NANNY

Madam, would you like me to take the princess to be changed?

PRINCESS

*(Hands the baby to NANNY)* Yes, thank you, Nanny. That is the one part of this motherhood job that I don't mind handing off to you. See you when she's nice and dry again!

*(There is a KNOCK at the door. BLATHER strides into the room. He looks at the baby in NANNY'S arms.)*

BLATHER

Is this my granddaughter then? Let me take a look at her, eh?

NANNY

*(Turns the baby toward BLATHER)* Here is our little princess, sir. Isn't she beautiful?

BLATHER

*(Confused)* My little Princess is over there. *(Indicates Princess)* Is this baby named Princess, too?

NANNY

No, sir, she is our Queenie.

BLATHER

Princess is your Queenie, woman!

NANNY

*(Exasperated)* The baby is our little princess and she is our Queenie. Our Queen is your Princess.

BLATHER

*(Sinking into a chair and holding his head)* I should not have stayed so late imbibing at the inn last night.

NANNY

*(Shaking her head)* I will return with little Queenie as soon as she is dry, your majesties.

*(PRINCESS and the KING nod in acknowledgement.)*

PRINCESS

Father! What brings you here?

BLATHER

Why, I came to see my grandchild, of course.

PRINCESS

Isn't our little Queenie adorable?

BLATHER

*(Smacks himself in the head)* Are you going to confound me with this gobbledy-gook also?

KING

I admit it is a tad confusing with a Princess and a Queenie both under the same roof. But while your lovely daughter here, Princess, is now the Queen, we have decided to name our little princess, our baby, Queenie. Do you get it now?

BLATHER

Oooh, I must cut down on all the, uh, celebrating. My head is about to uncork.

PRINCESS

Never mind, Father. It is good to see you.

BLATHER

And you. You are looking quite well.

*(SIR SNOOT enters.)*

SIR SNOOT

Excuse the interruption, your majesties, but it is time for your meeting with the knights, Sire.

KING

Ah, yes. Well, my dear, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to a scintillating chat with a bunch of men in metal.

PRINCESS

Try not to nod off like you did at the last meeting, my dear.

KING

*(Smiles)* I'll try. And Blather, I hope I will see you later at dinner.

*(BLATHER attempts a deep bow and topples over, then rights himself. Shaking his head, the KING exits.)*

BLATHER

Nice guy, your husband.

PRINCESS

Father, why are you really here?

BLATHER

Why, to see your beautiful princess, Queenie, whatever she is, of course!

PRINCESS

I wish I could believe that.

BLATHER

*(Acting hurt)* Well, it's true. And, of course I wanted to see my beautiful daughter, living like a queen here at the palace thanks to me.

PRINCESS

I am living like a queen because I am the queen, Father. And thanks to you I almost lost my head over your crazy story about the straw and the gold.

BLATHER

Thanks to me you got to meet the King and he fell in love with you. And, by the way, you never actually explained to me how you pulled off the whole straw into gold thing.

PRINCESS

That is a long story for another day, OK? So why don't you just get to the point and tell me why you've really come here today?

BLATHER

Oh, OK. Although the part about wanting to see your little Queenie, princess, whatever, is true, you know. But I wondered that since you were able to whip up so much gold on such short notice, how about sharing the wealth? I have a rather lengthy tab running at the inn which they are, well, insisting, that I settle soon.

PRINCESS  
How soon?

BLATHER  
Immediately.

PRINCESS  
Exactly how large is your tab?

*(BLATHER whips out a rolled sheet of paper like a toilet paper roll and lets it unroll down the length of the floor)*

BLATHER  
This large.

PRINCESS  
*(In shock)* Oh.

BLATHER  
So, my dear, knowing how if it weren't for your dear old dad you wouldn't be where you are today in the first place, how about a bit of assistance here?

PRINCESS  
I shall talk to my husband, the King, and ask him if he'll see fit to help you out.

BLATHER  
*(Bowing deeply again, and catching himself before he topples over)* I can ask for nothing more. I will see you tonight at dinner. I must go relax now in the hot tub.

*(BLATHER exits. As he walks out the door, NANNY returns with QUEENIE in her arms. BLATHER smiles at the baby and at NANNY as he leaves the room and we can hear him WHISTLING down the hall.)*

NANNY  
Here she is, your majesty, all nice and dry and nearly asleep.

PRINCESS  
Thank you, Nanny. You may go.

*(PRINCESS takes QUEENIE from NANNY and sits in a rocking chair. NANNY exits. PRINCESS begins rocking QUEENIE to sleep, humming, when suddenly an invisible door opens up and who should appear, but STILTZ.)*

PRINCESS  
Aaaaah!

STILTZ

We're not going to start that again, are we? What are you screaming about anyway, babe? It's me, your old pal, remember?

PRINCESS

*(Glaring)* What are you doing here? Don't you know that I am the queen now?

STILTZ

So I heard, sweetheart. And who do you think made you the queen? Do you think you could have possibly become queen if it wasn't for the help I gave you, or is your memory so short that you don't remember just how you came to be here?

PRINCESS

Isn't it interesting that you are the second man today claiming credit for me becoming queen? As if I, a mere woman, had no part at all in my fate? And yes, yes, you took straw and spun it into gold, we all know the story. I paid you handsomely for your work, so you need to leave now and go back to...well, whatever boulder you crawled out from.

STILTZ

*(Stepping back, clutching his heart)* Hold on there, babe, that's no way to talk to your main man here. You're hurting my heart with that kind of trash talk. *(Looks at the baby)* Cute kid.

PRINCESS

*(Holds the baby closer to her)* Thank you. Now why are you here? Our business is finished.

STILTZ

I'm here to settle the last part of our deal.

PRINCESS

Last part of what deal? I gave you my ring; I gave you my necklace, what more could you possibly want?

STILTZ

You really forgot our deal? I spun straw into gold for you for three nights, sister. And you only paid me twice. There was a price for that third night.

PRINCESS

Well, name it. Now that I'm queen, I can get you a diamonds, rubies, sapphires...

STILTZ

A baby.

PRINCESS

What in the world are you talking about?

STILTZ

The baby, sis. The baby is mine. We had a deal.

PRINCESS

*(Panicking)* You're out of your mind! I'm not giving you my baby, you crazy little man! I'm going to call the guards and have you thrown in the dungeon!

STILTZ

And let them know who actually spun the straw that made the gold for your husband, the King? And tell them that you are a fraud and a sham? Go ahead. I've got all day.

*(STILTZ leans back against the wall with his hands behind his head and begins to whistle.)*

PRINCESS

You are a wicked, wicked man. I know you helped me make the gold...all right you made the gold all by yourself. But why not take fine metal or jewels? Why do you want my baby?

STILTZ

You really don't remember, do you? Do you need me to re-play the conversation we had the last night that I made the gold for you? That you told me you had nothing left to give me and I said I'd take your first-born child? Did you really forget that so soon?

PRINCESS

*(Claps her hand over her mouth, suddenly remembering everything)* Oh no, what am I going to do? You can't take my little Queenie, you just can't!

*(PRINCESS sobs clutching her baby.)*

STILTZ

I thought you were the Queenie around here.

PRINCESS

*(Still sobbing)* Oh, let's not go through this now please. That is her name, Queenie. Oh please, sir, please think of something else I can give you in place of my child. I can't give her up, please! She is the light of my life. It would kill me – and my husband – to lose her!

*(STILTZ scratches his head and stares at Princess. He is beginning to feel pity for her)*

STILTZ

I'll tell you what. I'll give you three days to guess my name. If you can guess my name by the time the sun sets three days from now, you get to keep your little Queenie. But if you can't...well, I expect you to turn her over to me. A deal is a deal.

PRINCESS

Is that all? Just your name? Deal.

STILTZ

I'll be back tomorrow to hear what you come up with.

*(STILTZ turns and exits through the nearly invisible door in the wall. PRINCESS leans forward and puts her face against QUEENIE'S and rocks her gently.)*

## ACT II; SCENE TWO

*(AT RISE: Later in the game room. PRINCESS is pacing. NANNY enters carrying a stack of books.)*

PRINCESS

Oh, Nanny, thank goodness! Do you have them?

NANNY

Yes, your highness. I had the servants scour all the book sellers throughout the land and they have found every baby-name book that has ever been written.

PRINCESS

Great! Let me have a look at them then. Put them here, Nanny.

*(NANNY lays the stack of books on the table and then looks curiously at PRINCESS.)*

NANNY

Excuse me, your highness, but may I ask you a question?

PRINCESS

*(Grabbing the first book and eagerly leafing through the pages)* Yes, yes, what is it?

NANNY

Well, are you planning to change little Queenie's name?

PRINCESS

Nanny, what in the world are you talking about?

NANNY

Well, it's just that you have already named her such a beautiful and suitable name and now, six months later, you suddenly are...oh...your highness...how wonderful!

PRINCESS

Nanny, I am beginning to think everyone around me has lost their minds! What is wonderful?

NANNY

Oh, I understand. You haven't told your husband, the King yet. Well, you can trust me; I won't say a word about the blessed event. Oh, this is wonderful news!

PRINCESS

All right, Nanny, now I am certain that you have definitely lost a marble or two out of your bag. This must remain a secret from the King - in fact, he must never know of this.

NANNY

*(Confused)* But your highness, in several months he is bound to notice...

PRINCESS

He will not notice anything. He is too wrapped up with matters of state.

NANNY

But then the day will come when he and the kingdom will rejoice...

PRINCESS

Nanny, I will be the only one who rejoices because I will be the only one who knows about this. Do I make myself clear?

NANNY

Uh...well...you are planning to keep the child a secret?

PRINCESS

Queenie? Why would I keep Queenie a secret? Although perhaps that would have been a good idea, and then that little man never would have...

NANNY

No, not Queenie. The new baby.

PRINCESS

There's a new baby? Where?

NANNY

*(Points to Princess's stomach)* In there.

PRINCESS

*(Grabs her stomach)* Oh dear, I knew I shouldn't have eaten that last hunk of mutton last night. Do I look so huge that you think I am with child?

NANNY

*(Drops to the floor)* Oh no, your majesty. You are as lovely as ever. It is just that you have asked for all of these baby books to choose a name and I thought it was...

PRINCESS

Oh, Nanny! You thought I was going to have another baby? No, no, if it were only so simple. Nanny, if I tell you the real reason why I need these books, will you help me and swear upon your life that you will never breathe word of this to another living soul?

NANNY

Yes, your majesty. I swear it.

PRINCESS

All right then. This is the whole story.

*(LIGHTS DIM as PRINCESS whispers to NANNY and we see NANNY'S eyes widen as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## **ACT II; SCENE THREE**

*(AT RISE: Game room; morning. Princess has fallen asleep reading the books. She has a long sheet of paper next to her on the sofa. PRINCESS wakes up and stretches. STILTZ appears behind her.)*

STILTZ

Good morning, Princess. I mean Queen Princess. I mean, good morning. Did you sleep well last night?

PRINCESS

*(Trying to tame the stray hairs flying around her face)* I slept just fine, thank you.

STILTZ

Good, good. And where is our little Queenie this morning?

PRINCESS

My little Queenie is with her Nanny having breakfast at the moment.

STILTZ

I see you have some new additions to your library here, babe. Let's see, what kind of reading do you like? Baby's Book of Names. Name Your Baby. Baby Names for Baby. Naming Babies by their Sign. Names, Names, and More Names. Not a huge diversity of subject matter here, sweetheart.

PRINCESS

These books are none of your business.

STILTZ

Boy, do you have a lot to learn about being a good hostess.

PRINCESS

I am not hosting you, sir.

STILTZ

Whatever. Well, have you guessed my name?

*(STILTZ sits down in the corner of the room and takes out a pipe and puts it in his mouth.)*

PRINCESS

Put that away! There is a no-smoking policy in this castle. And you should know that you never smoke around children!

STILTZ

But the baby isn't even here.

PRINCESS

It doesn't matter. The smell of smoke can linger in the air for days. No smoking.

STILTZ

Yes, ma'am.

PRINCESS

As to your name, yes, I am ready for you. Aaron?

*(STILTZ shakes his head "no.")*

PRINCESS

Adam? Alan? Andrew?

*(After each name, STILTZ again shakes his head "no.")*

*(LIGHTS DIM to indicate time passing and we hear PRINCESS reading her list of names. As she comes to her the end of her long list, the LIGHTS RESTORE to indicate it is now later into the morning. PRINCESS looks exhausted and STILTZ is now lying down, but still shaking his head "no" after each name.)*

PRINCESS

Isaac? Isadore? Ivan?

STILTZ

*(Rises; stretches)* I'll be back same time tomorrow, toots. Better luck next time.

*(LIGHTS OUT.)*

**ACT II; SCENE FOUR**

*(AT RISE: Game room; next morning. PRINCESS is thumbing frantically through the books. STILTZ appears through the nearly invisible door.)*

STILTZ

Did you have a good night's sleep, babe? All set for another day of futility?

PRINCESS

*(Glaring at STILTZ)* No need for pleasantries, sir. Let's get started. Jacob? Jarod? Jeffrey? Jethro?

STILTZ

*(Snorts with laughter)* Jethro? Really?

PRINCESS

*(Shrugging)* Hey, it's a name, isn't it?

*(Once again, LIGHTS DIM to indicate time passing and we hear PRINCESS reading her list of names. The LIGHTS RESTORE to indicate it is now later into the morning. PRINCESS again looks exhausted and STILTZ is again lying down, but still shaking his head "no" after each name.)*

PRINCESS

Robert? Rodney? Roger? Roland?

STILTZ

*(Rises; stretches)* OK, sweetheart, I see you're getting a little punchy here so let's call it a night. I'll see you tomorrow. And don't forget to pack a diaper bag for me so when I take little Queenie here, I've got her bottles and toys and all that kind of stuff, OK?

*(PRINCESS picks up a stuffed animal and flings it at STILTZ. He cackles as he disappears through the almost-invisible door. PRINCESS crumples to the ground in tears. SIR SNOOT enters.)*

SIR SNOOT

*(Clears his throat)* Excuse me, Your Majesty.

PRINCESS

*(Looks up miserably)* Sir Snoot! You must excuse my poor appearance. I am not myself at the moment.

SIR SNOOT

*(Looking around)* I'm sorry to intrude, Your Highness, but I could have sworn I heard voices coming from here.

PRINCESS

I...uh...I...uh...I wasn't talking to myself.

SIR SNOOT

*(Glances around the room again)* Yes, Your Majesty. My mistake.

*(SIR SNOOT turns to leave.)*

PRINCESS

No, Sir Snoot, it wasn't your mistake! It was mine. There was someone here. Someone who can cause a great deal of trouble for me—and for the kingdom

SIR SNOOT

Your Highness, I do not mean to question your...your...sanity. But I came through the only door to this room and saw no one leaving.

PRINCESS

*(Begins to wail)* Oh, Sir Snoot, why should you believe me? Why should you believe that there is a little man who comes to see me through an invisible door in the wall over there?

*(PRINCESS points to the part of the wall where Stiltz has appeared and disappeared. SIR SNOOT walks over to the wall and feels around, but finds nothing. He looks at PRINCESS questioningly.)*

SIR SNOOT

A little man? Through the wall? In and out of an invisible door? Why would Your Highness think I would question your story? Or whether all your marbles are still in the bag?

PRINCESS

Sir Snoot. I know my husband trusts you with his life. I wonder if I can do the same.

SIR SNOOT

*(Bows deeply)* I must admit, Your Highness, I did have my concerns about you in the beginning. But now that I have come to know you and I have seen your beauty not only exists outwardly, but resides inside you as well, I have become most fond of you as a father would regard his daughter. Of course, your own father is a special situation...

PRINCESS

*(Laughs with relief)* True, my father is a rather unique individual. But you cannot imagine my relief upon hearing your kind words. Because I do have a story to tell you that must remain between us. My husband must never hear word one of what I am about to impart to you.

SIR SNOOT

*(Bows again)* You have my solemn vow.

## PRINCESS

Then I shall tell you my sorry tale. Please, have a seat.

*(SIR SNOOT sits down and PRINCESS begins to pace around the room. As she begins to speak, the LIGHTS DIM and MUSIC PLAYS. Although we cannot hear what she is saying, PRINCESS gestures wildly obviously talking about Stiltz; how he enters the room, spinning the gold, giving him the gifts, and the promise of her first child. When PRINCESS completes her tale, she sinks down next to SIR SNOOT who pats her arm sympathetically. The LIGHTS RESTORE.)*

## SIR SNOOT

I always wondered about that whole gold-spinning thing. Now it all makes sense. I mean, with a father such as Blather, I was certain if you truly had such a gift, he would have been sure to have you use it for his own gain way before meeting the King!

## PRINCESS

*(Smiles)* You understand my father quite well, Sir. I am sorry for deceiving you. But after my father's boasts, I feared for his life, as well as mine if it was revealed that all his words had been nothing but lies. And when the little man showed up, and he spun the straw into gold so easily...

## SIR SNOOT

And the King was afraid you would leave so he continued asking you to spin more than he could possibly have a need for—just to keep you here.

## PRINCESS

I know. He told me. And after I gave the little man the only things I had of value, when he demanded my firstborn child, it seemed so far away. So out of the realm of possibility, that I agreed. And then, even worse, I forgot all about the deal I made. Until he returned the other day, demanding my little Queenie!

*(PRINCESS flings herself onto the floor, sobbing. SIR SNOOT rushes to her and pats her on the back.)*

## SIR SNOOT

Fear not, Your Highness, all is not lost. I will have posters made of the little man, based on your description, put onto every tree, every home, every place of business. Someone knows who this little man is. And I will be sure to offer a handsome reward for this information.

## PRINCESS

*(Nods vigorously)* Yes, yes. And since the King is traveling to finalize some treaty or another, he will not be aware of the situation. But this must be done immediately, because the little man will return tomorrow and if I cannot produce his name, all will be lost.

SIR SNOOT

*(Walks to the door)* I shall begin at once. And I will report on my progress every hour on the hour. Don't despair, Your Highness. You will not lose your little Queenie.

PRINCESS

Thank you, kind sir. I am forever indebted to you.

*(SIR SNOOT pats PRINCESS gently on the head, then EXITS as LIGHTS FADE OUT.)*

## ACT II; SCENE FIVE

*(AT RISE; Game room; late afternoon, the same day. PRINCESS is reviewing pages and pages of names piled in front of her.)*

PRINCESS

Applejax, Coconut, Threepence—as if a person would be named after a food or a number! Oh, I am doomed! No one will ever know who the little man is and my Queenie will be lost to me forever!

*(There is a KNOCK on the door. SIR SNOOT enters, followed by CHAD, a teenage boy with long blond hair, carrying a rudimentary skateboard.)*

PRINCESS

Sir Snoot?

SIR SNOOT

Your Majesty. Forgive me for the interruption, but this young man has a unique tale to tell which I believe will be of great interest to you.

PRINCESS

*(Eagerly)* Your name, young man?

CHAD

Uh, Chad, your Majesty. And might I say that all the rumors about you are true—you are quite a fox.

SIR SNOOT

Young man, hold your tongue—or you will find yourself literally holding your tongue! You are speaking to your queen!

PRINCESS

Oh, Sir Snoot, he is young, I'm sure he meant no disrespect.

CHAD

*(Shakes his head emphatically)* No, Ma'am. You are quite the babe, that's all.

*(SIR SNOOT moves menacingly toward CHAD, but PRINCESS stops him.)*

PRINCESS

You have a tale to tell?

CHAD

Uh, yes, Ma'am. As I was telling Sir Snooty over here...

SIR SNOOT

Sir Snoot to you!

CHAD

Whatever. Anyway, I was practicing on the ramps in the board park out by the woods yesterday—

PRINCESS

*(Impatiently)* Am I to hear tales of ollies and three-sixties?

CHAD

*(His mouth hanging open)* How do you... I mean... How could you...

PRINCESS

I was not always a queen. I used to find my way to the board park in my younger days.

CHAD

*(Impressed)* That is very cool. *(Sees SIR SNOOT's glare)* Uh, that is very cool, Your Majesty.

PRINCESS

Continue with your story, young man.

CHAD

Well, I was practicing at the board park and I was the only one there because it was kind of late and I lost track of the time...

SIR SNOOT

Will you get to the point already?

CHAD

Anyway, suddenly I heard, like, music so I looked around but I couldn't see anyone. Weird, huh? So like I peeked into the woods and I saw this little dude racing around a campfire on stilts as fast as he could. I figured maybe there was some kind of circus around but he was the only one there. He kept singing something about finally being tall whenever he was on his stilts.

PRINCESS

Can you remember the song exactly?

CHAD

*(Scratches his head, then takes a deep breath and sings)*

*When I'm up this high  
I feels like I could touch the sky  
I just leans and then I tilts  
That's why they call me Stiltz!  
Stiltz, Stiltz, my name is Stiltz  
But they'll never know it`  
'Cause I'll never blow it  
They've never heard of Stiltz!*

*(PRINCESS jumps up and hugs CHAD.)*

PRINCESS

Thank you! Sir Snoot, pay him well.

CHAD

Cool!

SIR SNOOT

Yes, Your Majesty. *(To Chad)* Come along, boy.

*(LIGHTS OUT.)*

## ACT II; SCENE SIX

*(AT RISE: Game room; the following morning. PRINCESS is thumbing through the baby name books idly. She is smiling and humming. STILTZ suddenly appears through the nearly-invisible door in the wall. STILTZ struts in confidently, but is taken aback by PRINCESS's cheery mood. PRINCESS indicates that STILTZ should sit down in his usual spot in the corner.)*

PRINCESS

Welcome, my friend. Can I get you something to eat? A drink perhaps?

STILTZ

*(Shakes his head "no")* No thanks. Why don't we just get on with it so I can be on my way – with Queenie.

*(STILTZ waits for a reaction, but PRINCESS walks around the room calmly.)*

PRINCESS

Not so fast. I still have this afternoon to continue guessing your name. That was the deal, wasn't it?

*(STILTZ nods warily.)*

PRINCESS, *Continued*

OK then. Sam, Sandy, Samuel...

*(STILTZ smiles and rubs his hands together gleefully.)*

STILTZ

Not even close, babe!

PRINCESS

*(Ignores him)* Seth, Sigmund, Sly...

STILTZ

You've got to be kidding! Where are you even coming up with these names, doll?

PRINCESS

Stacy, Stefan... *(Pauses; looks directly at him)* Stiltz!

*(STILTZ falls over, then jumps up.)*

STILTZ

How did you...how could you...no way!

PRINCESS

It doesn't matter how. It just matters that I did. So the deal's off. No Queenie for you.

STILTZ

Babe, now wait a minute here! Doesn't it matter to you that I'm the reason you've got all this stuff? That you married the King? I mean, the KING? Don't you think that you got the good end of the deal, living in the castle with all this cool stuff and all I got for giving you all that gold was a lousy ring and a necklace?

PRINCESS

*(Studies him carefully)* You're right. I owe you a lot, Stiltz. How can I repay you for all you've done for me—and don't say you want my baby!

*(STILTZ chuckles.)*

STILTZ

Nah, that's OK. You know, I was going to build me a little house so I could take care of the baby. I've got no place to call my own. That straw-spinning thing doesn't work anymore

*STILTZ, Continued*

and I'm as broke as a busted watch. How about you help me find some new digs?

PRINCESS

Hmm, let me think, let me think.

*(PRINCESS paces around the room and looks up at the ceiling. She smiles.)*

*PRINCESS, Continued*

Tell me, how high do your stilts go?

STILTZ

They're adjustable. They can go all the way up to the ceiling. Why?

PRINCESS

Well, this castle is filled with chandeliers. Dirty, dusty chandeliers that no one can reach. How would you like to become the official court chandelier-shiner?

STILTZ

*(Grins and sticks out his hand)* Princess, you've got a deal.

PRINCESS

*(Grabs his hands and begins twirling around)* Deal!

*(The KING enters the room. He looks quizzically at PRINCESS and STILTZ. Their celebration comes to a screeching halt.)*

This is Not the End of the Play  
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes