

NODA PANTOMIMES

PRESENT

Rumpelstiltskin

The story of a man who spins more
than a good yarn.

By

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Welcome to what is now our seventh pantomime. Who would have thought we'd have got this far? And as we always reply to ourselves, not us and that's for sure.

In this pantomime we have looked at a tale that has been around as long as we can remember. Not often performed, forsaken for the more popular in the panto canon. But what a great tale it is with all the magic, mystery and opportunity for comedy that a good pantomime could wish for.

As usual we have taken the tale and given the story our little twist and added a couple of extra characters for the audience to love and hate in equal measure. Whilst there is direction and suggestions for song breaks to help with interpretation, we realise that companies and other directors like the freedom to add and take out elements that may or may not suit their company. Feel free. The story lends itself to this and gives ample opportunity for groups to put in the local / topical feel, which is important and let's face it, traditional in these productions.

Again, in our writing we have envisaged a production on a smaller stage with simple sets but could well see these performed on a bigger stage and with bigger budgets having great effects and lavish scenery. Whatever you do with it, as always, our motto is, 'make it fun'.

Best of luck

Rob and Leo

PS: If you do perform one of our pantos and let us know when it's on we'd love to try and come and see it. You can message us via our Facebook site Robleo Productions. L & R.

Others in the series

Cinderella

A Christmas Carol – the panto

Puss in Boots

Snow White

Jack and the Beanstalk

Robin Hood

CHARACTERS

Millie, the Millers daughter – (F) The sweet but feisty heroine of the story. Must be able to act, move and sing.

Teddy ‘Two Sails’ Baker – (M) The ‘love’ interest of Madam Miller. A comedic role. Must be able to act, move and sing.

Madam Miller – (M/F) The dame role. Can be played by a female but more appropriate to a male. Must be able to act (comic timing), dance and sing as she should have one or two solos.

King Richard – (M) Millie’s love interest. Must be able to act and sing. Many comedic lines.

Queen Mother – (F) Can be any age but probably more suitable for an older character. Comedic role.

Sir Rupert – (M) One of the villains of the piece. Plenty of villainous / comedic lines and works with Rumpelstiltskin. Needs to be able to sing and act.

Sid Kick – (M/F) Played as a male is Sir Rupert’s young apprentice. Has a bit of thing for Millie initially. Works also with Joe King and sings a duet.

Joe King – (M/F) Played as a male. Queen Mothers apprentice. Should be able to sing act and dance. Works also with Sid Kick and sings a duet.

Rumpelstiltskin – (M/F) It’s written as a male part though it could equally be played as a female. A few rhymes to remember so needs to be good with lines and be able to act, move and sing. Works with Sir Rupert second Act.

Sergeant Cringe – (M/F) One of the king’s guards. Is part of the double act with Corporal Cower. Needs to be able to move, sing and deliver lines.

Corporal Cower – (M/F) As for Sergeant Cringe.

Chorus parts – (M/F) There are several chorus lines suitable for any age male or female.

Soldiers (non-speaking role).

List of scenes

Act One

- Scene 1** Full stage at Madam Millers windmill
- Scene 2** The palace – full stage with throne
- Scene 3** Can be front of tabs. Millie locked in the room to spin straw plus spinning wheel and bags of straw / gold
- Scene 4** As per scene 2
- Scene 5** As per scene 3
- Scene 6** As per scene 1
- Scene 7** As per scene 3
- Scene 8** As per scene 2

Act Two

- Scene 1** The palace full stage
- Scene 2** Front of tabs then tabs open to reveal boudoir
- Scene 3** A forest scene plus lone oak tree and crescent moon
- Scene 4** As per scene 1
- Scene 5** As per scene 3
- Scene 6** Front of tabs / tabs open to reveal Windmill set, full stage
- Scene 7** Full palace scene or front of tabs which is then set to Rump's camp
- Scene 8** As per scene 3
- Scene 9** Front of tabs for song sheet opening to full palace set for walkdown

Act 1

Scene 1

(Scene opens full stage / the mill and the chorus are on all stacking flour and crates and singing a general happy working song. As the song ends Millie and Madam Miller start speaking and chorus exit).

Madam *(To Millie)*. I don't know why they are feeling so happy. We haven't enough flour to sell to pay our taxes.

Millie *(Statement)*. An honest day's work fills your heart with joy.

Madam Yes, but not your pockets with cash. If we don't get some money together I'm afraid that we'll have to sell something.

Millie What have we got to sell?

Madam We've only the house and the mill.

Millie And don't forget the sails that go around and around.

Madam I've been meaning to have a word with you about that.

Millie What do you mean?

Madam The sails.

Millie What about the sails?

Madam You know how there's four of them, well, we only own two. It was just before your father passed away. *(To audience)*. He was a real thief. He stole my heart, my purse, and my life's savings. But what did I get in return? Nothing really, except for my lovely Millie. And a little bit of jewellery *(goes up to Millie and plays with her necklace)*. Hot, hot, hot!

Millie What are you doing mother?

Madam I digressed. Where was I, oh yes I was telling you about the sails. Your father, God rest his soul, was playing cards and Teddy won two of them. That's why we call him Teddy Two Sails.

Millie Can we not just take his off then?

Madam We could, but there's two things wrong with that. Firstly, we'd have to change his name to Teddy no sail and that's ridiculous and secondly *(she retrieves two beach windmills one with four sails one with two sails) y 'see (blows the one with four sails then the other with two sails)*. It doesn't work.

(Teddy enters).

Madam Oh thank goodness you're here.

Ted Why?

Madam I've been telling Millie about

The tale of the sail, that turned in the gale

That clunked and moaned and creaked and groaned

That was there at night to give us a fright

We had all four but of course there's more

Father's games of chance always lead us a dance

With his penchant for betting he left us both fretting

Losing two sails that turned in the gales

As we lay in our bed, to our best friend Ted.

Madam *(Pause)* That's a thought! As you own two of the sails, have you any money to pay the tax collectors.

Ted Sorry, what? No, I was hoping you'd have some from the flour, I'm skint.
(Pulls his pockets out).

Millie I could always sell my necklace and ring mother.

Madam No, you can't sell those, they're stolen proper...., I mean heirlooms. They've all you've got left to remember your father by. *(Audience)* They've got his fingerprints all over them.

Millie Perhaps the king when he hears of our plight will take pity on us. I've heard he is such a benevolent man.

Madam He might be, but his tax collector Sir Rupert is as nasty as snot porridge.

(Sir Rupert enters as soon as Madam Miller finishes her line).

Sir Rupert Did I hear someone mention my name?

Sid Snot porridge?

Sir Rupert No, Sir Rupert. *(To Madam Miller).* I've come for my money.

Madam Money? *(Starts crying fake tears)*. We've got no money. Ever since my husband was taken from me it's been so difficult *(violin plays)*, raising this lovely young girl, trying to keep a roof over my head and the sails going around and round.

Sir Rupert *(Interrupts, violin stops abruptly)*. Yes, yes all very sad I'm sure, but if you've no money then I will take *(gets out abacus and does some quick counting)* six bags of flour.

Madam *(Gets Millie and Ted, speaks in a stage whisper)*. What are we going to do? We don't have six bags of flour. We've only got two and one of them is full of rats.

Ted Don't worry I have a plan. *(Ted gets a stool and puts it centre stage)*. Would you like to take a seat Sir Ruthless, I mean Sir Rupert, while we sort out your flour?

Sir Rupert I don't mind if I do, I've been standing all day beating people, but be quick about it, I have another seven people to evict and four more to take to the debtor's jail.

(Sir Rupert sits facing the audience as the others recycle the one bag of flour. As it passes in front of him, he counts them. Ted takes the bag off and then re appears at the back of the stage and throws the bag to Madam Miller who starts the process again. This happens six times getting more frantic at each time. As the sixth bag is counted Madam Miller speaks probably a little breathless).

Madam There you are your Lordship. Six bags as requested, all loaded onto your cart.

Sir Rupert Good. And next time don't have me waiting otherwise I'll add another six on.

Madam Oh don't do that *(to audience)* these six nearly killed me.

Sir Rupert *(To Sid)*. Right you.

Sid Sid sire.

Sir Rupert Sid, Sad, whatever, let's get on.

(Sir Rupert and Sid start to exit).

Sid *(To Madam)*. Best of luck. I'll try and bamboozle him with my wit and cunning so he won't find out.

Madam Great.

(Sid exits).

Madam *(As Sid exits Madam watches him off).* I think we're in big trouble! *(To the others).* Maybe he won't notice with all the other bags that were on the cart.

Ted Let's hope so. Otherwise it'll be the debtor's prison for you.

Millie Oh no, I'm sure it won't come to that. Perhaps Sid will be able to help us. Sir Rupert, for all his bluster looked a kind man. He might let us off.

Madam *(To audience).* Oh no he won't

Millie Oh yes he will. *(This can go on until Sir Rupert enters).*

Sir Rupert Oh no he won't. *(He has Sid by the ear).* He tried his wit and cunning, but he failed miserably. *(Lets him go).* Now, I believe you owe me another five bags.

Madam Are you sure?

Sir Rupert One on the cart from six leaves five.

Ted But don't forget the one on the cart.

Sir Rupert But that means we've counted it twice.

Madam Exactly! So two from six leaves four.

(Sid enters carrying their bag of flour).

Sid And don't forget this one they've already given you.

(Sir Rupert looks confused).

Madam That's three then. Now sit down and we'll count out the other three.

(Again, they recycle the same bag but this time four times.)

Sir Rupert Hold on isn't that one bag too many?

Madam I believe you're right. I think you owe me a bag of flour.

(The 'fourth' bag is sitting in front of Sir Rupert).

Sir Rupert Although its not in my nature I suppose you'd better have this one then.

(Teddy picks up the bag).

Madam Thank you sire.

(Sir Rupert and Sid exit).

Ted That worked out better than I thought.

Madam But for how long?

(Sir Rupert blusters back in).

Madam Not long then.

Sir Rupert You're trying to make a fool of me.

Madam No, you're managing that all by yourself.

Sir Rupert Enough of this! You owe me six bags or, or, I'll take your windmill.

Ted Sir Rupert two of those sails are mine.

(Sir Rupert gives him a dirty look).

Madam Please no! *(Looks frantic)*

Millie *(Blurts out)*. I can spin straw into gold!

All What?

Ted Who knew.

Sir Rupert *(To audience)*. Well, there's a gift. *(Back to Madam)*. In that case Madam Miller, she is coming with me and she will stay with me until she has repaid your debt. But should this turn out to be a lie, then your windmill *(Ted is about to interrupt)* and all four sails will be mine and you will be thrown into debtor's prison until it is all repaid.

(He grabs Millie by the wrist and Sir Rupert exits).

Sid Don't worry Madam Miller, I'll keep an eye on her. *(Sid exits)*.

(Blackout, End scene)

Scene 2

(The King's Palace. All the chorus dressed as courtiers are on and they sing a song. As it finishes they exit and the King and Queen Mother enter. A young man / woman is sitting on the King's throne unseen by the King and Queen Mother).

King Hah, I have a good one. *(Sings)*. ***If I ruled the world.....***

Queen Mother *(Sings)*. ***Every day would be the first day of spring.***

King Nice one mother.

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Queen Mother What about this one. (*Sings*). ***Everybody wants to.....***

King (*Sings*). ***..... Rule the world.*** I love this game guessing songs about me. What if we do songs about you mother? I know (*sees Joe sitting waiting on his throne*), who is that person sitting in my chair.

Queen Mother (*Hums something as if she might sing*). Sorry son, I don't know that one, if you hum it, I will try to sing along.

King No, look, someone is sitting on my throne.

Queen Mother (*Sees Joe*). Oh yes! Excuse me young man, what are you doing sitting on my son's throne?

Joe Oh sorry. Does he want to go then?

Queen Mother Yes, I mean no, it is not that kind of throne. It is the king's royal throne. What are you doing here?

Joe I've been sent.

Queen Mother By who.

Joe By whom.

Queen Mother Smart ahh...choo! Alright then, by whom?

Joe Job Centre said I had to come.

Queen Mother (*Excitedly*). Oh, (*realises*), you're my new palace apprentice.

King Apprentice?

Queen Mother Yes, Sir Rupert got one so I thought I would get one as well. It keeps the young whippersnappers off the streets and he will go so nicely with my handbag (*pats her handbag*). (*Takes the king to one side*). When I was a young queen we would often send lackeys on all sorts of silly jobs; a long stand, a straight banana, left handed screw driver. Should we play a trick on this new apprentice?

King (*Dismissively*). No. (*To Joe*). Listen here you young scamp, what's your name?

Joe King.

King Yes.

Joe Pardon?

King Yes, I am.

Joe No, my name is King.

King What, just King?

Joe No I'm Joe King.

King Well stop joking and be serious.

Joe Right, my name is Joe.

King Joe.

Joe King.

King King.

Joe Joe King.

King Oh I see, Joe King. This won't do mother, it is going to get very confusing, we can't have two kings.

Queen Mother Yes, I think it could result in all kinds of confusion at some point.

King (*To audience*). Could even result in some hilarious comedy situations.

Queen Mother I doubt that son.

King Right Joe, first day on the job, a few things you need to know. This is a happy kingdom and it is happy because I am kind and caring and look after the welfare of my subjects. Isn't that right Queen Mother?

Queen Mother Quite right son.

King If you are to work here, you too must be kind and caring. That right Queen Mother?

Queen Mother Quite right son.

King So, if you could do one thing to make life a little easier for the people of this beautiful land, what would it be?

Joe Cut taxes.

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Queen Mother Quite right son.

King No, mother, it is not quite right. How would we pay for the sewage system, health care, the fire service?

Queen Mother But we don't have any of those.

King We don't? What does all the money go on then?

Queen Mother We are lucky to collect any money at all. I heard last year we collected, three bags of parsnips, a donkey and a pair of galoshes.

King But, Sir Rupert is in charge of collecting taxes isn't he? Queen Mother get your palace apprentice to tell him I want to see him immediately.

Queen Mother Good idea son.

King *(To Joe)*. You will go far young Joe. Any other ideas?

Joe *(Thinking)*. We could privatise the railways, reduce the trade deficit, invest in infrastructure, and replace the monarchy with a democratic republic.

King Joe.

Joe Yes, Your Highness.

King After you have told Sir Rupert I want to see him go to the kitchen and get me a left-handed screwdriver.

Joe Yes, Your Highness. *(He bows and exits)*.

(Song by King and Queen Mother). (End of song, Blackout, End Scene).

Scene 3

(Millie is on a stool centre stage with a spinning wheel. She's lit dramatically and is crying. She might start singing a song here. There are a number of bags of straw (on one side is written straw on the other is written gold). As the lights come up, Sir Rupert and Sid Kick enter, interrupting).

Sir Rupert Sorry my dear, am I interrupting something?

Millie *(Sniffs)*. No *(big sniff)*. But I think I'm getting a chill.

Sid She's right y'know it is a bit damp in here.

Sir Rupert *(To audience)*. Probably, from all her silly snivelling! *(To Millie)*. I know one way to warm you up, start turning that straw into gold. You did say you could do it.

Millie I did, but perhaps not quite as you think.

Sir Rupert What do you mean?

Millie If I have enough of it I can sell it and make you lots of gold.

Sid I see where you're going with this but I don't think he means that. Good try though.

Sir Rupert You can either turn straw into gold or not. Y'see you have two choices spin the straw into gold or join Goldilocks in the prison next door who said she could make porridge from snails.

(Girls voice from Off) Oh no, not more snails!

Millie I'll spin the straw!

Sir Rupert Good answer. You have until dawn to spin all six *(or a number)* bags of straw into gold. If you don't succeed, then be assured there is room for both you and your mother next door and then I will have your windmill and all four sails for myself and perhaps you for my bride. Hah hah haaaaah!

(Sir Rupert exits. As he does Millie breaks down and sobs).

Sid *(He goes and comforts her. Perhaps sings a song)*. It's going to be all right I have faith in you, you can do it.

Millie I can't. It was the first thing I thought of when Sir Rupert came to the windmill and I just blurted it out. Why couldn't I blurt out, here take my necklace, or my ring, or I'm a rocket scientist.

Sid *(Starts to go)*. What's a rocket scientist? Never mind, I'd love to stay and help but Sir Rupert wants me to get some more snails for Goldilocks next door.

(Girls voice off) For the love of noooo!

Sid See you later. *(About to exit then stops)*. Oh, good luck!

(Sid exits).

Millie *(To audience)* Good luck he says. I'm going to need more than that. Perhaps there is a spell for changing straw into gold? *(Thinks)*. What about this?

(Lights go down for atmosphere and perhaps there is some eerie background music. Millie speaks as if casting a spell)

Hocus pocus jigidiwig are magic words I'm told

Do your stuff don't mess about, Turn this straw into gold.

(Lights come back up).

Millie *(To audience)* Alright, I know it wasn't exactly 'wingardium leviosa' but let's see if it's worked. *(Looks in one bag)*. Nothing, well nothing but straw that it is. What am I going to do? *(She sits on her stool and starts sobbing again)*.

(There is a sound of a door creaking. Millie doesn't look up but starts speaking – she thinks its Sid)

Millie Sid? Is that you? Have you come back to see how I'm getting on? *(She looks up but there is no one there)*. *(To audience)*. I thought I heard a door creaking. Perhaps not. *(The lights dim and perhaps some atmospheric smoke)* Oh dear the lights have gone down and there is some atmospheric smoke. This doesn't look good. *(Rumpelstiltskin appears and stands behind her. There is the behind you moment)*. What? Is some one behind me? Oh dear, whoever could this be? Shall I have a look? *(Audience should be shouting 'Yes' by now. As Millie looks Rump' moves behind her)*. I'll look this way first. Nothing there. What about this way? No nothing there. I know I'll walk all the way round *(She walks round her stool in a big circle as Rump' follows her)*. Still nothing.

(Rump' taps Millie on the shoulder).

Rump Are you looking for me?

Millie *(She jumps in fright)*. Ahh! Who are you and how did you get in here?

Rump Never mind who I am, or how I got through a locked door. Just know I am here to help you. *(To audience)*. For a price.

Millie Here to help me? Whatever do you mean?

Rump Have you managed to spin all that straw into gold yet?

Millie No, I'm just having a little problem figuring it out. I'm sure I'll get there in the end. How hard can it be?

Rump You can't do it can you?

Millie No!

Rump Then allow me *(moves to the spinning wheel but stops)*.

Millie Why have you stopped?

Rump If I help you there is a price to pay.

Millie But I don't have anything I can give you.

Rump Really? What about that fine necklace you are wearing?

Millie But, it was from my dear departed father. How can I give it up?

Rump Oh yes, your dear departed father, boo hoo. *(Back to Millie)*. Give me that necklace and I will see to it that this straw is spun into gold, saving you, your farm and your strangely masculine mother.

Millie Well, that was a little unkind, but as you put it like that then yes. If you can do all that, here take my necklace. *(Millie gives Rump' her necklace)*. Now show me how you do it.

Rump

Do you think I'd let you peep, no for now you must sleep

(Rump waves his arms magically and Millie falls fast asleep).

Come sprites, come fairies do my bidding, show this girl that I'm not kidding

Come magic, come power from ages old, turn this straw into bags of gold.

(As Rump' says all this the lights change and music begins to play. As the music plays, fairies dance on and as part of the dance they pick up each bag and turn it round so that the word 'GOLD' is now visible to the audience. Once they have finished the dance they exit. As the music is coming to an end Rump' begins to speak over the music).

Rump

So, for now my work is done, but my plan has just begun,

Will Sir Rupert set her free, we'll wait till dawn and then we'll see,

But for now, I'm off to sleep, among the trees in forest deep,

But I'll be back, oh lucky me, to see young Millie, total three!

Ha ha ha haaa!

(Rump' exits with a flash and puff of smoke).

(The lights come back up and Sir Rupert enters with Sid. Millie is still fast asleep).

Sir Rupert Asleep on the job hey! *(To Sid)*. Wake her up.

Sid *(Moves to Millie and gently shakes her shoulder)*. Millie wake up. *(She stirs, as she does Sid goes to look at the bags)*. I, I don't believe it! Millie you've done it.

Millie *(Yawning and stretching like she's had the best nights sleep)*. Done what? *(She gets up on her hands and knees and presses the floor like it is a very comfy bed)*. This floor is sooo comfortable.

Sir Rupert *(He looks at the bags and is mildly impressed)* Six bags of gold. *(To audience)*. It is possible!

Sid *(Picks Millie up and takes her to the gold)*. Look Millie, you've spun the straw into gold.

Millie What? How? *(To audience)*. I know I had a very strange dream last night, but was it all real?

Sid You've done it. You've saved your family and your windmill.

Sir Rupert Yeesss, about that. I don't think you'll be going home just yet. I have a few more bags of straw for you. Let's see how you get on with those tonight. Same rules apply. Spin them into gold and you save your family, if not then it is debtors prison for all of you.

Sid Well, that's a bit mean.

Sir Rupert Exactly! Lock up after you've finished, oh and bring the gold with you. Hah, ha ha haaaah! *(He exits)*.

Millie Maybe I'll have another funny dream again tonight.

Sid I know what you mean. I think it's the fungus in the sacks.

Millie Oh Sid what if I can't do it? My family, my windmill.

Sid You've done it once you must be able to do it again?

Millie To be honest I don't really know.

(Song from Millie and Sid perhaps. End song, blackout, end scene).

Scene 4

(Lights come up. Once more back in the palace. King is on pacing around. Queen Mother enters, Joe is following her around).

King Ah mother, I was hoping to catch you.

Queen Mother Yes my son?

King What about this one? *(Sings)* **Leader of the pack.....**

Queen Mother *(Enthusiastically sings)***brmm**. Good one my boy.

King I see you still have that apprentice with you.

Queen Mother Yes, I'm a little worried about him actually. He has all sorts of strange ideas. Earlier I heard him talking to someone about the right to vote. I think he may be a revolutionary.

King Mother, you worry too much. We need more young blood around here. Some new ideas, blue sky thinking.

Queen Mother He also mentioned that without an heir, the monarchy was a vulnerable and outdated institution.

King *(Suddenly stops laughing and is now outraged)*. What! Oy you! Joker!

Joe *(He steps forward and bows)*. Joe King, Your Highness.

King No I'm not. Now do something useful, go and get some tartan paint from the stores. *(King and Queen Mother snigger quietly as Joe exits)*. That should keep him busy for a while. We need to keep our eye on him, he could be trouble.

Queen Mother Indeed my son.

King Now, where is Sir Rupert? Did Joe tell him I wanted to see him?

Queen Mother Yes and I believe he is due to arrive around about, now!

(Sir Rupert enters immediately after the Queen Mothers last 'now' and speaks).

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Sir Rupert Good day sire.

King Good day to you, Sir Rupert.

Sir Rupert I believe you wanted to see me.

King Yes I did. Now do you have the tax ledgers with you?

Sir Rupert Yes, Your Highness, I have them here.

King Good. Let's have a look at them then, we'll make sure everything is ship shape and Bristol fashion.

Sir Rupert They are quite complex sire.

King I am your King Sir Rupert. Do you think I cannot understand a few curly little figures?

Sir Rupert Very well.

(Hands the king a book. It is upside down)

King Yes, this all seems to make sense. Yes, yes, got that I think.

Sir Rupert This way up sire. *(He turns the book the right way up)*.

King I knew that, I was just waiting for you to spot that. Right, so what does this bit mean?

Sir Rupert *(He looks over the king's shoulder)*. That will be the date sire. If I may. *(He takes the book back)*. As you can see the revenues raised are here and the expenditure is here. Once we deduct the column in red from the column in black then that is what we have left to spend on *(sickeningly)* the poor.

King But there is nothing left.

Sir Rupert Alas the poor continue to be poor my lord, otherwise they would be the rich and that would never do, would it?

King What is this column?

Rupert That column? Don't worry about that column sire. *(To audience)*. That is just the column which shows how much of the taxes I take for myself ha ha!

King (*Angrily*). Don't worry about it you say? (*Changes to acceptingly*). Alright then I won't. This line here seems to suggest we are buying lots of straw. Why would we be buying straw?

Sir Rupert (*To audience*). For that stupid girl to make me very, very rich that's why. (*To King*). Err, to feed the royal horse's sire, they are very greedy.

King All sounds reasonable to me. Old Bess likes to get her gnashers into something tasty at the end of the day.

Queen Mother (*She's been listening*). We don't have a horse called Bess.

King We don't? (*Embarrassed*) Oh right. Now, how much do we hope to raise in renevue, reverie, revenie.

Sir Rupert Revenues sire.

King Yes those. How much will we raise this year?

Sir Rupert It's been a bad summer sire, you must have heard about that plague of, of, of, (*it comes to him*) money weevils. They ate quite a lot of our gold reserves.

King Money weevils hey. Best set some more traps. Queen Mother get Joe onto it

Queen Mother Good idea.

(The King has been flicking pages over).

King This little column here in tiny writing, right at the back. I can't quite make out what it says. Looks like 'straw spun into gold, six sacks'. What on earth is that?

Sir Rupert That sire? I have a very small confession to make. I often stay up through the night spinning straw into underpants and knickers for the poor who have no wool or cotton for their clothing. The locals say it is good as gold to them, so I call it gold for their sake. I only wish I could do more.

King You're all heart Sir Rupert. A good fella. Staying up all night making itchy underwear for the poor. We could all learn something from this fella here.

(Everyone scratches their behinds).

(Joe returns with some tartan paint, singing we'll keep the red flag flying here. He also has a straight banana).

King Where on earth?

Joe You asked me to get you some tartan paint.

King Yes I did. And what's that you are eating?

Joe A straight banana, Your Highness.

Queen Mother Well I never.

King (*Back to the task in hand*). I suppose we are going to have to tighten our belts hey. Need to set a good example to the commoners.

Sir Rupert Things are a little precarious sire. Maybe we should think about, oh I don't know, a new management strategy? You know, a reorganisation, shuffle the deck a little?

King Interesting. What did you have in mind? Some redundancies, salary cuts, that sort of thing?

Sir Rupert Yes, those as well, but perhaps it would be better if you gave up some of your responsibilities. They weigh heavily on you sire and you are not getting any younger.

King I'm twenty five (*or a suitable age*).

Sir Rupert Exactly, and what a twenty five years!

King You're right about that, it's been tough at the top.

Sir Rupert Maybe you should step down for a while, have a break, let someone else have a go at the top job.

King Who did you have in mind?

Joe (*Sticks his hand up*). I'll have a go.

King No Joe, that would make you King King. You'd sound like a panda.

(*Makes a sign to the Queen Mother to keep an eye on Joe*).

Rupert (*Obsequiously*). As reluctant as I would be, if it would help you, then I am happy to be king for a while. (*To audience*). First royal decree, off with his head.

King Sir Rupert, what a thoughtful chap.

(*Sir Rupert takes out a pen and document to sign*).

End of sample script.

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