

Illustrated Children's and Puppet Theater

Second Group.

2.

Rumpelstiltskin.

A Play in Two Acts

Freely adapted for Children's Theater
after
W. Grimm.

Published by Otto Spamer in Leipzig.

Characters.

Rumpelstiltskin.

The King.

The Miller.

The Miller's Daughter.

Messenger.

Setting

The first act takes place in the home of the Miller. The second act takes place in the throne room of the King and also in the woods.

Hints and Suggestions for the Performance

The scenes of the first act call for only *one* setting: a very simply arranged farmhouse room, in which, next to a bundle of straw, a spinning wheel sits. One can also mix long narrow strips of golden paper into the straw.

In the *second* act the scenery changes. The first and last scenes occur in the king's throne room with two thrones. One forest scene occurs in between, which can be easily arranged with potted plants or green branches, or during Christmas time, fashioned with pine trees. Rumpelstiltskin wears a high, cone-shaped cap, a jacket or a cloak attached to his shoulders, a shirt which reaches to the knees, leggings, and colorful (red) stockings. During the conversations, Rumpelstiltskin constantly hops about. The Miller's Daughter wears a necklace and a ring on her finger.

Props.

A bundle of straw with strips of golden paper intermixed.

A spinning wheel.

A large doll.

Three letters that the messenger brings.

Act One.

The Miller's residence.

The King, the Miller, then the Miller's Daughter and Rumpelstiltskin

Miller.

Trust me. My little daughter can spin pure golden threads out of straw. It can be done in only a few hours. Just give me some time.

King.

Well then, I'll grant you the time. If the gold is spun, I will cancel your obligation. If not, you must move off my land.

(Exits stage right.)

(The Miller looks after the King full of desperation; the Daughter enters from the left.)

Miller.

My child, what took you so long? I was so afraid and full of worry! The King was here and he earnestly and sternly threatened me.

Daughter.

What has now begun for us, poor us, who have done nothing to the king?

Miller.

We owe him a lot of money, so he can do with us as he pleases. Therefore, daughter, you must help me. Spin this straw into gold.

(He kicks the bundle of straw, and looks at his daughter half pleadingly, half threateningly.)

Daughter *(severely frightened).*

Spin gold out of straw? -with my hands? Impossible! Father, have pity on me!

Miller *(angrily).*

My life is at risk! All I can advise you is to spin away!

(Exits stage left)

Daughter *(sits herself sobbingly at the spinning wheel).*

O dear, what got me into this mess? In my mind, it is already done. What should I do with this crisis? I'm going to cry until my eyes are red.

(Sobbing, she covers her face with her apron.)

Rumpelstiltskin.

(Comes springing out of nowhere and lands with a bounce in front of the Miller's daughter.)

My dear girl, do not cry, or else your face will get all dirty. Human eyes, which are often blue, black, green, brown, and also gray are to be used for seeing, maiden. Isn't the most beautiful thing, dear child, when out there in the world, people innocently watch, and their eyes teach them to believe what they clearly see. Beautiful eyes add much to life and always glow bright and clear. Please do not cry, my dear child, or else you will end up blind.

Daughter.

What does it matter, if my eyes are blue, gray, green, or red? They will soon close the light out forever, and then the color will not matter to me.

Rumpelstiltskin.

What is it with you? You cry and appear so tired of life? You are so young. Be happy!

Daughter.

I have to spin gold out of this straw! My father wants it, but I cannot do it. My life is in danger. My father must leave the mill if I do not bring him any gold.

Rumpelstiltskin.

My dear girl, listen to me, this can be done with little effort. However, I'm telling you that without payment, you are not going to get any gold from straw out of me.

Daughter *(taking her necklace off and handing it to him).*

Here is the best that I have—my beautiful necklace. I'll give it to you. Here, little man, it shall be yours in exchange for golden threads, shiny and fine.

(After he has taken the necklace, Rumpelstiltskin sits himself at the spinning wheel. He spins the wheel, pulling golden threads out of the straw, and after only a short time, jumps up.)

Rumpelstiltskin.

Here is the gold; it is as shiny as Genoveva's¹ light hair. Now I'm going. Your crisis is over. Your father will keep his mill and house.

(Exits via center stage.)

(Daughter sits in front of her spinning wheel; King and Miller enter.)

Miller.

Have you done what I wanted? Where is the straw that you have turned to gold?

Daughter.

Here it is, Father, glittering and pure. There is nothing more beautiful on earth.

King *(taking the gold).*

The gold pleases me but I still want about five times as much. That is why you must spin, girl, spin more. We'll come back again soon.

Daughter.

O King, the gold is so hard to spin. I will never be able to do it.

King.

I told you. I want the gold! There will be no protests waged here! Spin swiftly, or else you shall lose your life.

(King and Miller exit to the right.)

Daughter *(sitting sadly in front of her spinning wheel).*

Oh dear! Now it's all over! Soon will I be dead. Then it will be over and my coffin will be led out of the house. Soon I will be free from fear because I find no protection against such selfishness and greed.

(She dries her eyes with her apron.)

Rumpelstiltskin *(Has already come in while she was talking; leaps in front of her).*

What has happened now? Why must I see you so sad? That doesn't suit a young person like you.

¹ heroine of medieval legend; wife of Siegfried

Daughter.

Oh good friend, oh be so good. Help me out of this crisis once more. Please help me escape death one more time.

Rumpelstiltskin.

So tell me, what is wrong? You are still in the exact same spot that you were in when I last saw you.

(Looking her directly in the eyes.)

You were crying again, weren't you?

Daughter.

This straw is causing me fear and pain. It's supposed to be spun into gold. The king is a hard man, one who never can get enough.

Rumpelstiltskin.

Like all men he loves only vain silver and gold. Who knows, he might have a great reward planned for you. Give me the straw. I'll spin for you, but what will you pay me?

Daughter *(pulling her ring from her finger).*

Here is the ring from my finger. Take it. It shall be yours. It's very plain, and not worth a lot, but I humbly give it to you.

Rumpelstiltskin *(puts the ring on; spins as he did the first time; and then leaps away).*

It's perfect! What you desire is well worth your ring. Give it to the King, maiden. He's going to be pleased with you!

(Exits via center stage.)

(King and Miller enter in from the right.)

Miller.

Now daughter, have you finished the work that you thought was so hard?

Daughter.

My father, I was able to practically let it turn itself without any help. My King, the gold is here. Are you pleased with me now?

King *(taking the gold).*

Pleased? I'm still not pleased yet. I still need much more gold. That, girl, is why you must spin ten times more than you have spun before.

Daughter.

I can't. I am tired of spinning. Please let me rest!

King.

What I say goes. Spin me glittering gold from the straw. Once you have given me the gold, you will be made queen. If you don't, you will lose your life!

(King and Miller exit to the right.)

Daughter.

Oh, if only the little man would come again and take this work from me.

Rumpelstiltskin *(comes skipping in).*

Here I am and I am willing to take on anything you might request. Still, without pay, you know it's true, that I will do work for no one.

Daughter.

I can't give you anything more. I sit here poor and miserable. If I had something, I'd gladly give it to such a good little man.

Rumpelstiltskin.

Well, if you are destitute, I'll help you in your need and grief. You must promise me only one thing. If you become queen, your first child is not the king's, but mine!

Daughter (*to self*).

Who knows? If it gets so far, I think he might forget. (*Aloud.*) Yes, I give you my promise, to free myself from death.

Rumpelstiltskin (*spins and then jumps up*).

I have spun the gold finely. Now mark my word, my maiden. I served you with friendliness. Now you must act with honesty. I'm leaving now, but believe me, I shall return to you again.

(*Exits via center stage.*)

(*King and Miller enter.*)

Miller.

My child, it brings me great joy to see that all our sorrow is reversed! You've spun enough gold in the last hour's labor.

King.

Yes, dear girl. Such a spinstress must be made the land's queen.

(*The curtains close.*)

Act Two.

The King's throne room.

King and Queen, then the Messenger and Rumpelstiltskin.

(*King and Queen sit on two raised thrones, the Queen has a large doll, representing the child, in her arms. To the right of the Queen is a window.*)

King.

Beloved wife, now tell me what has been done to distress you? You are sorrowful—what has happened? I don't wish to see you so sad.

Queen.

Oh, dear husband, my poor heart will likely break from great pain. The little man was here yesterday and demanded our child from me.

King.

That would be such a tragedy! Is there any help from far and wide?

Queen.

He'll come to our house now for three days and ask for the answer to a riddle he gave me. He'll want to know whether I've solved the riddle. Oh, I am thinking so hard! The answer to the riddle is too hard to come by. I think that in both the city and country, the name is entirely unknown. I sent out the messenger to spy out a lot of names for me.

(*She looks out the window.*)

There he comes—oh, if he could only tell me the right name!

Messenger (*runs in, coming from the right*).

Your Highness, I have found many beautiful names from all around the city and country. They're listed here in this letter. However, the little man was hastily running after me.

(The Messenger hurries away to the left, after he has handed the letter to the Queen.)

Rumpelstiltskin *(jumps in from the right).*

My Queen, now tell me, what do you think my name is?

Queen *(looking here and there in the letter).*

Is your name Kunz or is your name Franz? Is your name Albert? Conrad? Hans? Is your name Withold? Wilhelm? Kuno? Or Berthold, Richard? Bruno? Edmund? Edwin? Fritzchen? Freimund? Felix? Roderich? Harald? Siegmund? Is your name Kaspar? Is your name simply –

Rumpelstiltskin.

Oh Queen, don't ask further! It's quite clear the name is missing—otherwise it would have been listed by now. I'll come again later. Perhaps you'll know something more then.

(Rumpelstiltskin bows and runs away to the right.)

King.

My child, don't look so discouraged about it. The next time will be better! Look there, the messenger is quickly running back. Certainly he brings you news of the riddle's solution.

Queen *(looking to the window).*

I see, the messenger is coming in haste, but the little man is right behind him.

Messenger *(enters from right).*

Your Majesty, all the names I have collected this time are all very wonderful and very strange to me.

(He presents the letter to the queen and hurries off to the left.)

Rumpelstiltskin *(comes in from the right).*

Oh Queen, what is my name? Tell me – my curiosity is peaked.

Queen *(looking at the letter now and then).*

Ribbed beast or Mutton calf? Snip, Snap, Snoop, or Shoo-bop-da-bap? Scary-Face or Lacy-Leg? Moldy Bread Crumbs or Fatty Pants? Tra-la-la or Monkey-Tail? Dying Cat or Dancing Mouse?

Rumpelstiltskin.

None of those are my name. I'll only come one more time and then I will come no more!

(Jumps off stage right.)

(Scene change.)

Forested area

A large outdoor place in which Rumpelstiltskin performs a funny dance with crazy leaps. Hidden behind a bush, but visible to the audience, stands the messenger, who eavesdrops on Rumpelstiltskin.

Rumplestiltskin.

(Sings to the melody: Hopp, hopp, hopp.²

Ei, ei, ei,

² A famous German children's song. A copy of the music will be available to scan

It's beautiful in May.
When the woods are again so green
And the May-time flowers bloom!

Ei, ei, ei,
It's beautiful in May.

Ho, hi, stop!
I'm so happy in the woods,
When the wind all soft and smooth
Sings and sways the forest trees;

Ho, hi, stop!
I'm so happy in the woods.

Tra, ra, ra,
Yes the day is near,
That I collect the little child,
Tomorrow morning she'll be mine!

Tra, ra, ra,
Yes, the day is near!

Ho, ho, ho,
Oh, how happy I am!
Oh, how great, that no one knows
That I'm called Rumpelstiltskin.

Ho, ho, ho,
Oh, how happy I am!

Messenger (*to himself*).
Now I know. I must quickly tell her Highness!

(*Scene change.*)

The King's throne room.

King.
Now, beloved wife, I certainly hope you find the name?

Queen (*looks toward the window*).
The messenger is running towards our palace. Oh, I'm so frightened!

Messenger (*comes from the right*).
Your Majesty, I could only find one more name in the entire city and country and I think it is right. It would make me very glad.

(*He gives the Queen the letter and runs off stage left.*)

Rumpelstiltskin (*jumps in from the right*).
For the last time, I ask you: Your Majesty, what is my name?

Queen (*unfolds the letter*).

Are you called, perhaps, Flying Mushroom?

(*After she reads*)

Are you called, perhaps, Rumpelstiltskin?

(*Rumpelstiltskin jumps in the air, screams out loudly, and plummets to the ground.*)

(*The curtains fall.*)