

Rumpelstiltskin

NOTES

Once upon a time there lived a poor miller who had a beautiful daughter. This miller was quite a braggart, and one day he told the King that his daughter could spin straw into gold. The King was very impressed and demanded that this girl be brought to him. The next day, the miller's daughter came to the King's palace. The King locked her in a room at the top of a tall tower and told her that she must spin straw into gold; and if she did not perform this task by morning, she would die.

The miller's daughter was distraught. How was she to spin straw into gold? Deep into the night, a small man-creature entered the locked room and asked the girl why she was so upset. She explained to the man-creature her predicament, and he told her he could help her if she were to give him gifts. The miller's daughter was relieved and agreed to pay him whatever he asked. The first night, he asked for her necklace, and she gladly gave it to him. By morning all the straw had been spun into rich gold. The King was overjoyed, but then became greedy and told the miller's daughter he wanted more. This time, the miller's daughter promised the man-creature her jeweled bracelet, and again he spun all the straw into gold. The King was so pleased that he said he would take the miller's daughter as his wife if she could do it one more time.

The miller's daughter was ecstatic, for she would no longer be poor if she were to marry the King. She waited in her locked room for the man-creature to reappear. When he did, the miller's daughter realized she had nothing left to offer for his services. The man-creature asked for her first-born child; and she, believing that it would not happen for a long time, agreed. All the remaining straw was spun into gold, and the King took the poor girl as his wife.

Time passed, and after one year the miller's daughter, now the Queen, gave birth to a baby. That evening, while the Queen was rocking her baby, the man-creature crept into the room and demanded the child. The Queen panicked, she could not give up her first-born. The man-creature told her that he would give her three days, and if she could discover his name within that time,

she could keep her baby. The Queen sent out messengers to scour the land in a search for this man-creature's name. Every night, the man-creature came back, and every night the Queen guessed but never discovered his name. Finally, on the third day, one of the Queen's messengers returned from the forest. He had happened upon a small clearing and had hidden among the bushes. Into the clearing had come a small man who was dancing and singing the following tune:

*Today I bake, tomorrow brew,
the next I'll have the young queen's child.
Hal glad am I that no one knew
that Rumpelstiltskin I am styled*

When the man-creature arrived the third night, the Queen asked if his name was Rumpelstiltskin. The man-creature was furious that she had guessed his name. In his anger, he plunged his foot deep into the earth, and when he grasped it to pull it out he broke himself in two.