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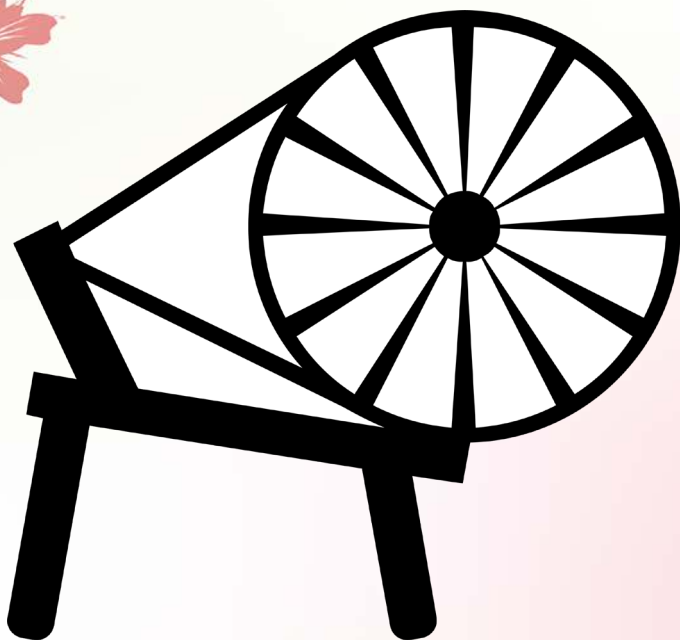
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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Rumpelstiltskin

Dramatised by  
Charlotte B. Chorpensing



# Rumpelstiltskin

Original production by the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, Ill.

*Fairy tale. Adapted by Charlotte B. Chorpensing. From the story by the Brothers Grimm. Cast: 8m., 7w.* Here is a play of intrigue, showing that greed can never master the world. Rumpelstiltskin wishes for a king's baby to put in his pot so that he may rule the hearts of men and fill them so full of greed that they will destroy each other, leaving him the whole world to himself. Looking over the earth from his hilltop, he discovers a miller's daughter who has just won a prince for her husband if she can spin straw into gold. When the king orders her to spin the gold, she is left alone in despair. Rumpelstiltskin appears magically, offering to spin the gold for her if she will give him her first child. When the child is born, and Rumpelstiltskin appears to claim it, she persuades him to give her another chance. He offers her one chance to keep the child—if she can guess his name. When, at the last moment, she confronts him with the name, he flies to pieces with rage. *Two sets. Fairy tale costumes. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: RA6.*

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Rumpelstiltskin



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**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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## **Cast For**

# **RUMPELSTILTSKIN**

*(in the order of their appearance)*

RUMPELSTILTSKIN  
MOTHER HULDA  
MILLER'S DAUGHTER  
MILLER'S WIFE  
MILLER  
GOTHOL  
INGERT  
KING  
KING'S SON  
KAREN  
NURSE  
TWO LADIES IN WAITING  
PAGES

## **Synopsis**

### **ACT ONE**

SCENE 1. At the Edge of the World.

SCENE 2. In the Queen's garden.

### **ACT TWO**

SCENE: The Queen's spinning-room, the next morning.

### **ACT THREE**

SCENE: Same as Act One, a year later.

## The Scene

The settings for this play may be very simple, or they may be elaborated to varying degrees.

It may be given on small stages by closing the curtain between the scenes on the hill and those in the garden in Acts One and Three. This cuts out Rumpel's looking down at the scenes in the garden, which is interesting but not essential. In this case, the curtains begin to close on Rumpelstilskin's "Boil scarlet and gold, etc." The dialogue goes on behind the curtains while the pot is swiftly removed and the Miller's Daughter enters. They open almost instantly to show her standing looking around in wonder. She speaks as soon as she can be seen by the whole audience, identifying the scene as the garden by her line.—"How sweet the air is in the King's garden—", and the scene continues without break. In the same way, at the end of the garden scene, the curtains close on the Miller and his Wife strutting off, and Rumpelstilskin's "Ho, ho, ho!" is heard behind them, continuing after the curtains open again. The changes in the third act are handled in the same fashion.

If drapes are used, these entrances are taken care of simply by openings through which the actors enter, letting them fall together again behind them. If flats are preferred, the decoration must be of such that the same ones can serve as background for both the hill and the garden, and the entrances are through wings, as it makes too long a wait to unlash and lash flats. Continuity is more important than elaboration of the set.

If equipment permits dimming and bringing up the lights as the curtains close and open, it will add to the effect, but it is not necessary. No lighting which delays the opening of the curtain is worth while, but if a change in tone on the two sets can be achieved without any delay, it adds to the charm.

If it is desired to go further in indicating the settings, cutouts of bushes, rocks and so on can be added to the hill, and bits of wall and flowers can be painted on the background set and concealed by the cutouts when



the scene is the hill; or a throne, or other cutouts can be brought in, during the change. This should only be done when there can be a large enough crew to make the changes with great speed, however. There should be almost one worker to each movable piece, and careful "traffic routing" so there is no interference of movements.

If the stage is large enough to show the garden and the hill at once, as was done at the initial production at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, the hill is on a platform at the back of the stage, as high above the garden as the proscenium permits. There are steps leading up to it on either side, and some sort of background, either sky or foliage or rocks, etc. Again, the pot is the only essential. Mother Hulda can come up the steps, or from the back. The garden is separated from it by a wall which is high enough to conceal the construction of the hill. This hill may be regular platforms, or boxes, or even, as has been done once at least successfully, large tables set together and blocked so they can't slip. A gauze between the hill and the garden is effective but not necessary. The decoration of both scenes, in this case, can be made as complete as desired, since it involves no loss of time between the scenes. It is very effective, but again, not necessary, to have the lights dim out on the hill and up on the garden etc. as the scene changes location.

In Act Two, the only essentials are Rumpelstilskin's little door, an entrance to the palace, and the doors to the three rooms to be filled with straw. If the play is done in drapes, these doors can be merely openings in the drapes which are held back to show the straw and the gold. This will mean that the straw is put in by one while the other holds the drapes, and that two people hold back the drapes when the King discovers the gold, but this will require little if any change in the lines.

The change from straw into gold is accomplished by fastening to some support set back of the drapes a piece of cloth to which enough straw has been glued to give the impression that it goes on back. It can be so slanted on the down stage side that the Miller and his Wife can throw their straw up and beyond it, pushing and prodding as if the room would barely hold this last armful. While the drapes are closed, the first cloth can be changed for one in which the straw has been well sprayed with gold radiator paint. If a strong amber light is thrown on it from above or

from the two sides between the straw and the drapes, the effect will be heightened, but this is not necessary.

If the play is done in flats, the three doors can of course be built into the flats. It is effective to have each door a little larger than the last. The little door can be so painted into the set as not to show until it is opened. The door to the palace can be as simple or as ornate as the designer wishes, to match the tone of the other acts.

The lighting can be perfectly simple. The play offers opportunity for very interesting lighting effects, but none are essential. Even Rumpelstiltskin's magic over the wheel when it spins is effective with merely his dancing, or if the actor does not dance, with his motions. The wheel may be made to turn either by electric connection, or by an invisible cord, worked by hand by some one off stage.

## **Costumes**

Costumes may be of any period or nationality which removes them from the modern. The folk-tale from which the play is made is German, but there are variants in many countries. The English variant is Tom Tit Tot, and any early English costumes are suitable. For that matter purely original costumes, controlled by nothing but the designer's imagination, are perfectly in order.

## **Properties**

### **RUMPELSTILTSKIN'S POT**

This should be large enough to be impressive from a distance. If a large pot is not available, it can be a cutout, of wall board or corrugated pasteboard. Lights behind it, to shine up on Rumpelstilskin when he leans over it, and to change color according to his spells, add to the effect.

### **BAG OF FLOUR**

This gift which the Miller brings should be not too large a bag, of some fantastic color or decoration.

### **TWO PIES**

The Miller's Wife brings pies of size large enough to seem large from the front.

### **THREE SPINDLES**

Wound with threads of different colors—one blue, one green, one vivid pink. These also should be larger than actual size. String, colored, serves for thread.

### **GIFTS FOR EXCHANGE**

Chain of metal and jewels for the King's Son.  
Chain of flowers for the Miller's Daughter.  
Ring of gold and jewels for the King's Son.  
Ring of plaited grass for the Miller's Daughter.

### **STRAW**

For the Pages to bring, and for the Miller and his Wife to thrust through the three doors.

### **SPINNING WHEEL**

This may be a genuine spinning wheel, if one is available, or a fantastic one may be made, all that is needed being a frame of the general shape of a spinning wheel and a cutout wheel of wall board, or pasteboard, or some old wheel covered and painted. The important thing is that it can be made to whirl apparently without human hands.

### **TRAY OF FLOWERS**

For the Page to bring to the Miller's Daughter, including three noticeable ones which Rumpel afterward asks for.

## THE SHADOW OF THE TREE ON THE GRASS

If there is no window, as will be the case if the play is done in drapes, something, such as an hour glass, large enough so that the audience can see the sand running, or at least see the top which shows the sand getting lower and lower is used. This top can be made of a large glass bowl, and the sand can be a colored powder, so it shows from a distance. The amount needed is easily timed, during rehearsal. The lower part of the hourglass can be glass, or opaque as desired. In case there is a window, and it is desired to have the shadow's movement show, for suspense, it can be thrown on a wall through the window. If left to the imagination, all that is needed is to have the actor go to the window to report on it.

## SWORDS FOR THE KING'S SON AND THE PAGES

If these actors do not know fencing and there is no one to teach them, a physical conflict can be substituted.

## CRADLE

The cradle should be decorated, and regal. If it is desired to have Rumpelstiltskin stamp through it, in his final rage, the bottom can be made of paper.

## FLOWERS FOR THE KING'S SON

In Act I, probably on the bench where he can pick them up.

## BABY FOR RUMPELSTILTSKIN TO LIFT FROM THE CRADLE

This may be a large doll, or merely a bundle, wrapped in fine garments. If the doll is used, care must be taken to keep it well covered, so its immobility will not spoil the illusion.

## FRAGMENTS OF RUMPELSTILTSKIN

To be thrown into the air after Rumpelstiltskin leaps off the edge of the world. If it is possible to have a trap, and have him stamp himself into the ground and out of sight, instead of flying to pieces, his end will be nearer the story. In that case the opening to the trap must be hidden during the earlier scene, he can work down steps, shouting and waving his hands as he goes. The trap should be closed from below after he disappears and whatever hides the opening—e.g., a piece of furniture—should be moved by the Queen, looking for him and showing no opening. In that case the lines about flying to pieces should be replaced by line about stamping himself into the ground.

## THE MUSIC

The author intends Rumpelstiltskin's little rhymes, and the lovely, poetic words of the Miller's Daughter, to be chanted rhythmically and tunefully, arising from the actor's own imagination. There should be no actual form or melody to the songs of either character. They are called "songs" in the script, because they have lilt and rhythm, and they are the voices of two souls.

The dance between the Prince and the Miller's Daughter should be a stately court dance, such as a minuet, or pavanne, for which appropriate music is usually provided by phonograph, offstage.

This play was given its premiere production at the Goodman Memorial Theatre, of Chicago, under the direction of the author, Charlotte B. Chorpensing.

The pictures and technical notes used in this play-book are taken from the Goodman production, and are reproduced here by courtesy of Mrs. Chorpensing.



*Act One, from "Rumpelstiltskin"*

## RUMPELSTILTSKIN

### ACT ONE

SCENE: *On the Edge of the World.*

*At the back, for some width—(enough for Rumpel's dancing)—is a level considerably higher than the forestage. Rumpel is circling his pot and chanting.*

RUMPEL (*Dancing around pot*):

Today I brew, tomorrow I bake.  
I stamp my foot, and the world doth shake.  
And no one knows from whence I came,

Or that Rumpelstiltskin is my name.  
Oh, show me east, and show me west,  
Till I find the child that suits me best.  
Show me north and show me south—

*(During this, a woman's tall figure comes up over the edge of the world; she watches him. Her eyes twinkle, and she laughs silently, but at this point, she shakes her head, and taps him on the shoulder sharply. He stops chanting, and backs away from her. He is afraid of her.)*

MOTHER HULDA: Rumpeelstiltskin—

RUMPEL: Eh-h?

MOTHER HULDA: What are you doing?

RUMPEL: I am boiling my pot.

MOTHER HULDA: What are you doing that for?

RUMPEL: It is showing me this place and that in the world.

MOTHER HULDA: Now, now, now! Why do you want to see this place and that?

RUMPEL: I am looking for something to put in my pot.

MOTHER HULDA: Something new?

RUMPEL: Yes.

MOTHER HULDA: Something different?

RUMPEL: Yes.

MOTHER HULDA: What?

RUMPEL: Something.

MOTHER HULDA: What? . . . Stand still. Look at me. Straight into my eyes. What do you want to put in your pot?

RUMPEL: A baby. A King's baby.

MOTHER HULDA: A King's baby!

RUMPEL: Then, you see, when I boil my pot, I can rule the thoughts of men.

MOTHER HULDA: Why do you want to rule the thoughts of men?

RUMPEL: I want to make an end of them. I want the whole world to myself.

MOTHER HULDA: You told me that before.

RUMPEL: I know it.

MOTHER HULDA: Haven't I given you every power you asked for?

RUMPEL: Yes.

MOTHER HULDA: Why don't you use them?

RUMPEL: When I stamp my foot, the earth shakes, and hurls all men's work to the ground. But they only build it up again.

MOTHER HULDA: That isn't the only thing I let you do.

RUMPEL: When I blow my breath, and my pot sends hot winds to burn men's crops in the field; or cold ones to freeze them in the ground, or floods to wash them away, they only plant the field again. There's something I've found out.

MOTHER HULDA: What?

RUMPEL: You can never make an end of men by sending them trouble. They only learn things from it.

MOTHER HULDA: I knew that all the time. That is why I let you try it.

RUMPEL: But if I can rule their thoughts, I can fill them as full of greed as a night is full of dark when there are no stars. Then they will make an end of each other.

MOTHER HULDA: For once you've found out something important.



RUMPEL: A King's child. A little King's son! (*He runs to the pot and flings something into it. It flames up.*) Today I brew—

MOTHER HULDA: Now, now!

RUMPEL (*continuing*): . . . Tomorrow I bake—

MOTHER HULDA: I didn't say you could.

RUMPEL (*continuing*): Show me a King's son I can take—

MOTHER HULDA (*following him and giving him a spank*): Stop it!

RUMPEL: For nobody knows from whence I came—(*Mother Hulda snatches him away from the pot by the seat of his trousers.*)

MOTHER HULDA: Rumpelstiltskin! You bad little thing! I didn't say you could put a King's son in your pot.

RUMPEL: I wasn't. I was only making it show me palaces and King's gardens, where a queen might be walking with her baby.

MOTHER HULDA: However would you get the baby if the pot did show one?

RUMPEL: That's easy. I have only to go three times around my pot backward, and my little door will open onto any place in the world I tell it to. When it is dark, and the world is asleep, I can go through my door and steal the baby away.

MOTHER HULDA: Nothing of the sort! If you want your pot to make men greedy, you must bargain for the baby.

RUMPEL: Bargain? Queens don't bargain their babies away.

MOTHER HULDA: You must get a queen to give you her child in exchange for gold.

RUMPEL: No mother in the world would do that.

MOTHER HULDA: Then you can never make men quite greedy enough to make an end of each other.

RUMPEL: There might be one. Or maybe I can trick one into it. I'll keep looking. May I keep looking?

MOTHER HULDA: Oh, yes. You may look. (*Rumpel skips to his pot, and flings something in.*)

RUMPEL:

Today I brew, tomorrow I bake,  
I search the earth for a child to take.  
And nobody knows from whence I came,  
Or that Rumpelstiltskin is my name.

Boil scarlet and gold, and show me a hall  
Where queens and princes dance at a ball.  
Boil—

MOTHER HULDA: You'll never see a baby at a ball.

RUMPEL: That's so. I'll change.

Boil green, and show me a garden fair,  
Where a queen walks soft in fragrant air—

(*The lights, green at first, then sunny daylight, come up on the garden*)

*below. The Miller's Daughter is discovered. She has just slipped through the gate, and stands drinking the fragrant air, her hand lifted in wonder. She is in brilliant peasant holiday dress.)* That's not a queen.

MOTHER HULDA: Sh-h-h! The pot knows.

DAUGHTER: How sweet the air is in a King's garden. But the sun has no more gold than at my father's mill.

RUMPEL: It's just a Miller's daughter.

MOTHER HULDA: Wait a while. (*Rumpel settles down to listen. The Miller's Wife, who has peered in at the gate from the beginning of the Daughter's speech, thrusts her head farther in.*)

WIFE: What are you doing, Daughter?

DAUGHTER: I just tried to see through the gate, and it came open, so I came in.

MILLER (*following his wife in*): You will get us all killed.

DAUGHTER: I can't help going in when a gate opens. Something seems to call to me—"Find out!" . . . It's wonderful here.

WIFE: No one is allowed to enter the King's garden unless a servant opens the gate.

DAUGHTER: But there wasn't any servant.

WIFE: You'd better knock now.

MILLER: I'll knock very loud.

WIFE: No, don't go way back to the gate. Knock here at the palace.

MILLER (*knocks timidly at palace*): Do you hear anybody?

WIFE: Not yet.

MILLER and WIFE (*going out the gate, to Daughter*): Come out! Come back!

DAUGHTER: It's silly to pretend I'm out when I'm in.

WIFE (*entering to pull at her*): What will happen to us?

DAUGHTER: Don't cry. (*The Miller comes in a step, too, to hustle them both out. The gate is closed tightly from outside. Ingert, a courtier, enters and crosses to the gate. He throws the gate open. The Miller and his Wife and Daughter enter.*)

INGERT: Who are you who come knocking so loudly on the gate of the King's garden?

MILLER: I am the Miller who grinds the King's grain. I have brought a gift of fine new flour to the King. You can't find flour like it anywhere.

WIFE: And I am the Miller's wife. I have brought a gift of fine pies made from our flour. You will never taste such pies in the world.

INGERT: And who is this pretty maid?

DAUGHTER: I am the Miller's daughter, sir.

INGERT: What have you brought?

DAUGHTER: Nothing. I have nothing good enough.

WIFE: I bade you bring a spindle of your fine spinning.

DAUGHTER: It is not perfect enough for a King.

WIFE: It is better than the work of any maiden in this valley.

MILLER (*to Inger*): There is no one who can spin as our daughter can.

WIFE: She is the cleverest lass. You can't think!

DAUGHTER (*ashamed*): I'm not really clever, sir. My parents only think I am.

INGERT: But can you spin at all?

DAUGHTER: Of course, sir. All the girls are taught to do that. But my thread is not as smooth and fine as the thread I can see in my miud. Nothing but the best one can think of is good enough for a King.

MILLER: She spins perfect thread.

DAUGHTER: Oh no! I should have to sit all day at my wheel, and think of nothing else, to do that. And I like too well to walk in the forest and the fields. Then when I am spinning, I shut my eyes and remember how the clouds turned the brook to silver, and the sun turned the grain in the field to gold, and I pretend the whirr of my wheel is music, and I sing:  
The world spins, and I spin.  
I spin flax into thread for the King to use.  
The clouds spin the brook into silver for the moon to walk on.  
The sun spins straw into gold.  
And knots come into my threads because I am not watching. I am a very bad spinner.

INGERT: All the same, I think the King would like a gift of your spinning, and to hear your song about turning straw into gold. Send your daughter to fetch some of her work, Miller. I will tell the King you are here with your gifts. (*Inger exits.*)

DAUGHTER: Now see what you have done. My spinning is only like everyone else's and I must show it to the King.

MILLER: Go quickly, quickly. The King will come out to us soon. You are ordered to bring your work to the King. My daughter is called by the King!

WIFE: Run like a fox, daughter. Tell everyone as you go—"The King sent for my spinning!"

DAUGHTER (*going*): I should be ashamed to tell it.

WIFE (*calling after her*): Don't let your feet touch the ground. Hurry! Haste!

MILLER (*looking out the gate after her*): She goes like an arrow. Oh, what a daughter we have! No one can come near her swiftness.

WIFE: How her feet twinkle in the grasses.

MILLER: If she keeps on like that, she will meet herself going when she comes back.

WIFE: I never heard of that.

MILLER: Our daughter can do it if anyone can.

WIFE: The King himself wishes to see her spinning! What will the neighbors say to that? Ah—get down. The King is coming!  
(*The King enters. They kneel, holding out their gifts, as the King*

*enters. The King is an old man, greed written on every line of him. He is preceded by Ingert and Gothol, two courtiers, and followed by his son, and daughter, Karen, and her lady-in-waiting. All are excited and looking eagerly around, except the King's son, who is skeptical of what he has heard.)*

MILLER: Your Majesty, here is the flour from my fine new wheat—

WIFE: And two pies made out of it—

KING (*waving their gifts aside*): Yes, yes. You are good subjects.

But where is the wonderful spinner Ingert told me about?

MILLER: That is our daughter.

WIFE: She is the most wonderful girl in the world.

KING: Is it she who sang of spinning straw into gold?

WIFE: Oh, yes, King. She sings more sweetly than a nightingale!

MILLER: No one in the village has a voice like hers. The birds in the forest gather to listen to her.

KING: Straw into gold! Straw is easy to get. I will fill a room with it. Gothol, fill the three secret rooms with straw.

GOTHOL and INGERT: Straw? . . . Straw?

KING: Why not? Haste! If she can do what you say, she shall marry my son, and be queen of the land. Straw into gold! Gold! Gold! What a wife for you, son!

SON: Nay, King, my father, this cannot be true.

KING: Why not? Why not? All my life I have wanted more gold. I have looked for ways to make more and more. No end to more! Now I have found it. No long digging by a thousand men. No hours of waiting while it is cooked and heated in a crucible. A maid who can spin straw into gold. Where is she? Fetch her to me! She shall come to dwell in the palace, straightway. There is not her like in the land!

WIFE: (*to Miller*): Even the King says there is not her like. Wait till the neighbors hear that!

MILLER: Our daughter will dwell in the palace!

WIFE: She is going to be queen!

KAREN: Surely, good Miller's wife, your daughter is not as wonderful as all this—

WIFE: She is most beautiful, and most kind and gentle—

KAREN: But her spinning—

MILLER: Nothing like it has ever come off a wheel.

WIFE: It is as fine as a spider's web when she wants it to be. And she makes her threads of this color and that—

SON: But Ingert said she told him sometimes it knotted—

MILLER: She is so modest. She never believes anything fine about herself.

WIFE: Don't ask her what she can do. She will say no, to everything. But there is nothing she cannot do! If you could taste the cakes she bakes! If you could sip the ale she brews, or see her planting a fur-

row in the spring. Everything grows that she has to do with. Everything she makes is perfect. It isn't only her spinning. She can weave, and sew a seam, and—and she can dance like birch leaves in the wind, and sing like a brook, or a thrush—

SON: Ah, yes, but can she spin gold?

MILLER: She can spin anything! You should see her at the wheel—

SON (*seeing her approach*): Ah-h-h-h— (*They all turn to the gate. The Daughter enters, carrying spindles of colored threads. She looks around taken aback by the splendid court folk. After a scrutiny of the company, she goes to the King's son, and kneels with grace, but simply.*)

DAUGHTER: They bade me bring my most fine-spun thread to the King.

SON: I am not the King. I am the King's son.

KING: I am the King. (*The Daughter kneels again, after gazing at him in manifest disappointment and surprise, and lays her spindles at his feet, as she speaks.*)

DAUGHTER: Here is the best of my work, your Majesty. The best is not worthy a King.

KING: Where is the gold one?

DAUGHTER: It is not beautiful enough to bring. The gold thread is never bright enough to please me. I want it to be bright like the sun, and it never is. But this spindle-full is the color of the sky. And this one has the green of leaves in April, when the sun falls through them. And this is like wild roses, along the wayside. All the threads have rough spots, where I fell a-dreaming. But they are brave colors.

KING: Yes, yes. The colors do very well. But it's the gold one I want.

DAUGHTER: I made a bad choice, then. I'm sorry, King. Shall I fetch the gold spindle?

KING: Never mind now. You can make plenty more, can't you?

DAUGHTER: Yes, King. There is plenty of color left in the pot, and plenty of flax on the distaff.

KING: What's that? What do you mean?

WIFE: She means she can have the gold thread spun very quickly, if you want many more spindles-ful.

KING: Good. Get up! It is not fitting that you should kneel to me now, for I have a surprise for you. You are going to marry my son, and dwell in the palace. (*The Miller and his Wife gurggle with delight, in spite of themselves.*)

WIFE: Thank the King, Daughter. Don't gape like that.

MILLER: You are honored. Show your manners. Say "Thank you, King."

DAUGHTER: The King's son will be King some day.

KING: That day will come soon enough. I am an old man, and the crown is heavy on my head. Now that I have all the gold I want, I shall pass the crown on to my son. The day you are wed, he shall be King, and you shall be Queen.

DAUGHTER: But I am just a miller's daughter. I don't know how to be Queen.

KAREN: I will teach you. You please me. You shall be my sister.

DAUGHTER: Then I am not afraid.

KING: Son, take the chain from your neck, and the ring from your finger, and exchange betrothal rights with this maid.

SON: Miller's daughter, take my chain and give me yours, as has been done as a sign of betrothal by King's sons in our line, from the early days. (*Wife pulls at Daughter's skirt, and she kneels. The King's son puts his chain on her.*) It shall be a token and a bond between us.

DAUGHTER (*lifting her flower chain off*): This is only field flowers I gathered on my way here.

SON: They please me more than gold and jewels.

DAUGHTER: But tomorrow they will be dry and dead.

SON: Tomorrow you shall make me another. And every tomorrow after.

Take my ring and give me yours, as has been done in token of betrothal by King's sons in our line, from early days.

DAUGHTER: Mine is only plaited grass.

SON: I shall keep it as long as you keep mine. The rings are a token between us also.

KING: Karen, lead her in. And give her garments such as my son's betrothed shall wear.

SON: I will lead her. Karen may come too. (*Ingert, Karen, Daughter, and Son go off. The pages, headed by Gothol, enter, bearing armfuls of straw. They are disdainful and amazed as they go toward the palace*)

KING: That's not enough.

GOTHOL: There is no more at the threshing place, your Majesty.

KING: Miller! Get all the pages and fetch all the straw from the field and mill. Fetch it to the Queen's spinning room. Have you straw enough to fill a room?

WIFE and MILLER: Yes! Oh, yes!

KING: Could you fill two rooms?

WIFE and MILLER: Yes, of course! Oh, yes!

KING: Here are three doors. They open into three rooms for storing the Queen's spinning. Fill those rooms full. I will order them emptied of all else this instant. Three roomfuls of straw! I shall have gold enough. (*King exits.*)

MILLER: The King has ordered all our straw for the palace!

WIFE: We shall be carrying straw under the moon, and in the white dawn.

MILLER: We shall be going in and out of the palace as if we were at home there!

WIFE: Husband! After this night, we shall be as much at home in the palace as in our own mill.

MILLER: Of course! For our daughter is to be Queen.

WIFE: I always told you she was not like other girls.

MILLER: It is good we spoke up for her. She would never speak up for herself. She is so modest.

WIFE: Without her mother and father, she would not be where she is today.

MILLER: I always knew she would come to something great, but to be the bride of the King's son, I never thought of.

WIFE: It will go beyond that, too. Some day, she will hold a little King's son in her arms.

MILLER: She will really be the mother of a little King's son!

WIFE: We have done this for her.

MILLER: It is our work.

WIFE: Come. Let us begin our trips to the palace before the neighbors are off the streets. (*Miller and Wife exeunt.*)

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (*laughing with glee, on his high perch*): Ho, ho! Ho-ho-o-o-o! (*He rises and throws something into the pot, circling. The lights change as he sings, coming up on him, and down on the garden scene.*)

Boil, purple and blue, and dim and grey.

The garden shall fade and fade away.

And nobody knows from whence I came,

Or that Rumpelstiltskin is my name!

(*He is so full of triumph and self-importance that he shouts his name louder and louder.*)

Rumpelstiltskin!R-u-m-p-e-l-s-t-i-l-t-s-k-i-n! RUMPELSTILTSKIN!

MOTHER HULDA: Now, now, now!

RUMPEL: It is my name.

MOTHER HULDA: Why do you shout it so loud?

RUMPEL: I can't help it. I feel like it.

MOTHER HULDA: Suppose someone hears you?

RUMPEL: How could that happen? No one ever comes to the edge of the world. They are all afraid.

MOTHER HULDA: Now, now! Didn't I say, when I gave you this place, that if anyone in the rest of the world was brave enough, he could get here? (*Rumpel sulks away from her.*) Why don't you answer me?

RUMPEL: I'm not listening.

MOTHER HULDA: Yes, you are. Why don't you answer?

RUMPEL: I don't like to think about it.

MOTHER HULDA (*giving him a spank*): Tell me what I said.

RUMPEL: I've forgotten.

MOTHER HULDA: Nothing of the sort!

RUMPEL: I've forgotten. (*Mother Hulda catches him by the seat of the trousers, and sets him down.*)

MOTHER HULDA: Rumpelstiltskin, you bad little thing! Tell me what I said.

RUMPEL: You said anyone in the world who was brave enough could come here.

MOTHER HULDA: And what else did I say?

RUMPEL: Nothing!

MOTHER HULDA: Now, now, now, now! What else did I say?

RUMPEL: Nothing!

MOTHER HULDA: What?

RUMPEL: You didn't say anything at all.

MOTHER HULDA: Sit still! Look at me. I am going to say it again.

RUMPEL: No, no, no, no!

MOTHER HULDA: Come back.

RUMPEL: I don't want to hear it.

MOTHER HULDA: Why not?

RUMPEL: I don't like it to be true.

MOTHER HULDA: I will do it whether you remember it or not. So you'd better stop shouting our name to the sky. You'd better even stop singing about it. Someone might come this way.

*(He sulks away from her, muttering. A thought strikes him. He points a finger at her, laughing immoderately.)*

RUMPEL: Ho, ho! Ha, ha!

MOTHER HULDA: What are you laughing at?

RUMPEL: You.

MOTHER HULDA: Take care. Take care.

RUMPEL: I know a joke on you.

MOTHER HULDA: Are you sure?

RUMPEL: You think someone will find out my name, and there isn't going to be anyone left in the world to find out. I know how I can get a King's son to put in my pot, and get the whole world to myself.

MOTHER HULDA: Now! What will you do to get a King's son for your pot?

RUMPEL: Something!

MOTHER HULDA: What?

RUMPEL: Something.

MOTHER HULDA *(goes to him)*: You must tell me.

RUMPEL: Will you let me do it?

MOTHER HULDA: If I think best.

RUMPEL: The Miller's daughter thinks she is going to be Queen.

MOTHER HULDA: Yes.

RUMPEL: The King ordered a roomful of straw to be carried into the palace.

MOTHER HULDA: Yes.

RUMPEL: The King thinks the Miller's daughter can spin all that into gold.

MOTHER HULDA: I know.

RUMPEL: She can't

MOTHER HULDA: Of course not.

RUMPEL: What will the King do when he finds out she can't?

MOTHER HULDA: I suppose he will order her put to death.

RUMPEL: Ho! I will go down there and make a bargain with her. I will offer to turn the straw into gold for her, if she will give me the first child born to her when she is Queen. . . . I must make haste.

*(Rumpel runs to circle the pot, singing.)*