

A Study Guide to Dream Tale Puppets' *RUMPELSTILSKIN*



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At Dream Tale Puppets we believe in the transformative power of the arts, and in the strong value of theatre and its creative processes as tools for human development and education. We approach children and adults alike as allies in our artistic and creative inquiries and practices and we are devoted to sharing our curiosity, experiences and joy.

We appreciate your interest and partnership and we hope this Study Guide will help you in integrating our show into your *classroom* teaching program.

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A SUMMARY OF THE STORY

When the miller goes to give a bag of flour as a gift to the King, he brags about his daughter. He tells the King that she can spin straw into gold. The King tells the miller to send his daughter to the castle to spin the straw the next day. He also tells the miller that if she can't spin the straw into gold, he will cut off her head. The miller is very frightened.

Kathleen goes to the castle the next day. The King orders her to spin a bundle of straw into gold. He doesn't give her a chance to tell him that she can't do it. As Kathleen is crying next to the straw, a little man appears. He offers to spin the straw into gold if she will give him something. She gives her necklace. The Little Man spins the straw into gold.

The King is very happy when he sees the gold. He tells Kathleen she must spin still more, or her head will be cut off. The King sends three more bundles of straw for Kathleen to spin. She is very worried, and starts to cry. The Little Man reappears and says he will spin more gold if she gives him more things. Kathleen gives her ring and tells him that the King wants all three bundles spun into gold. The Little Man says he will spin only one bundle unless she gives him something more. Since Kathleen has nothing left to give, they agree that she will promise her first child after she is Queen. Kathleen does not believe the King will want to marry her and doesn't worry about making the promise. The Little Man spins all the straw into gold.

The King sees the gold and decides that he should marry Kathleen. She becomes Queen, and has a baby after one year. Since he is a boy he is called a prince.

The Little Man comes back and asks for the child Kathleen promised to him. She is very sad and can't stand the idea of giving up her baby. The Little Man gives her a chance to keep her child if she can guess her name. Kathleen tries, but none of her guesses is the right name.

After the Little Man agrees to give her some more time to guess, he leaves. Kathleen sends the Watchman into the forest to see if

he can learn anything about the Little Man. He hears the Little Man singing a song that tells his name: Rumpelstiltskin.

When the Little Man comes to see Kathleen, she guesses his name. Rumpelstiltskin is very angry and runs away, leaving her the Prince. She is very happy and so is the Miller.

WHERE DOES THE "RUMPELSTILTSKIN" STORY COME FROM?

"Rumpelstiltskin" is a very old German folk tale. Like all folk tales it was created by generations of storytellers in villages many years ago when people in villages did not know how to read, but they gathered and listened to storytellers. Often such gatherings were arranged on long winter nights when peasants came together to work on spinning, weaving, sawing, embroidering, making pillow cases, bed covers or other goods.

It is also a fairy tale, a kind of folk tale that has a magical character, objects or magical events in it.

In the nineteenth century, two hundred years ago, learned people in European towns become interested in folk culture -- the stories, songs, and customs of villagers. The brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who were German scholars, collected folktales from villages and put together a famous book called "Children's and Household Tales."

The first volume of the tales was published in 1812. The Grimms added to the collection for many years. Eventually it contained more than 200 tales. Today the collection is commonly known as "Grimm's Fairy Tales." Rumpelstiltskin was one of these tales.

Dream Tale Puppets used an English translation of the Grimms' story about Rumpelstiltskin when we wrote the script for the puppet show of "Rumpelstiltskin." Note that we changed a little the name of the character. In our adaptation of the tale Rumpelstiltskin is called Rumpelstilskin. One "t" of the original name is missing. We omitted it to point out that our story is an adaptation and is a little different than original one.

LIFE IN FEUDAL TIMES

The story of “Rumpelstiltskin” is located in a fantasy world, one invented by storytellers. However many motifs and elements of the story have its counterparts in a real world and the world we know from history.

Five hundred years ago Europe was divided into kingdoms, each with its own king. Most people lived on farms or in villages and worked on fields. A miller, like the father in the story, was an important man in a village because everyone needed flour to make bread and noodles.

The kingdoms did not print paper money to use in buying and selling goods. People either traded one thing for another, which is called bartering, or they used golden coins to buy what they wanted. The king in Rumpelstiltskin wants gold so that he can issue coins to pay for things his castle needs or he wants.

Sources:

*Brittanica: “Middle Ages” and “Feudalism”,
school.eb.com/levels/elementary Chicago*

ABOUT PUPPETS

Where have you and your students seen puppets? Maybe you have puppets at home, or in your classroom; perhaps you’ve seen a “live” puppet show or a show on Youtube or television. A puppet is a figure that is moved by a person, often for a kind of performance. Puppets are used to tell stories, entertain, celebrate holidays, and to teach lessons.

Puppets have been used for thousands of years, by people all over the world. In China, India and Indonesia, shadow puppets were probably the first kinds of puppets. Puppeteers made shadows walk and dance on a cloth screen, by holding very thin leather figures on or close to the screen. When they shone a light from behind the leather figures, shadows appeared on the screen. The effect was a lot like a movie --but made by puppets.

Marionettes are puppets that are moved by strings attached to different parts of the puppet. The puppeteer holds a control above the puppet.

By pulling a string, the puppeteer can make the puppet’s head, leg, arm, or tail move. Many European countries have marionette theaters with elaborately costumed puppets that perform traditional stories and ballets. Sometimes one marionette has as many as thirty strings!

Hand puppets take their shape from the puppeteer’s hand. They range from the very simple “sock” puppets made from decorated socks, to very intricate puppets such as those used in the ‘theater of the palm of the hand’ style in `China and Taiwan. Those puppets, which can perform delicate movements such as writing with a calligraphy brush, as well as acrobatic flips and spins, are used in performances of history stories and legends.

In “Rumpelstiltskin,” Dream Tale Puppets uses puppets that are controlled by rods in their necks and hands. You can see the puppeteers clearly as they work around a stage made from a table. The relationship between the puppeteer and his or her puppet is an important part of the performance. This type of puppet theater is called table-top puppetry.

Puppets help actors be characters very different from themselves. A tall man can perform as a funny little man or a cow, with the help of a puppet. Puppets can bring things we imagine to life.

Source:

*Brittanica School – Elementary level
(school.eb.com/levels/elementary/puppet)*

MEET DREAM TALE PUPPETS

Dream Tale Puppets was founded in 2003 by Jacek Zuzanski, puppeteer, stage director and theater teacher who, before coming to the United States in 2001, studied, practiced and taught theatre and art in his native country, Poland. Preschool teacher and storyteller Mary Almeida co-founded the troupe with Jacek.

Working at the Cape Cod Children's Museum, they created a series of short shows in which Mary gave voices to characters from well-known tales while Jacek operated the

puppets. Two of these short shows - "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Three Little Pigs" - made a program called "Story and Puppet Time". Since this time, Dream Tale Puppets has produced two more shows: "Rumpelstiltskin" and "Jack and the Beanstalk." We perform in schools, libraries, cultural centers and private functions.

Today Dream Tale Puppets is a small community of artists. We work and learn together, and each member of the theater works on other projects individually or with other theaters or art organizations. We perform, teach, design, build puppets, and write plays. And we like very much to meet other communities of artists and learners, including school communities, perform for them and work together.

MORE RESOURCES

Reading "Rumpelstiltskin":

Here are some on-line versions of the traditional Grimms story:

<https://shortstoriesshort.com/story/childrens-stories/rumpelstiltskin/>

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm055.html>

Your school library may have these picture book editions:

Rumpelstiltskin, retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, E.P. Dutton, 1986.

Rumpelstiltskin, retold by Paul Galdone, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

A bilingual edition (Spanish and English);

Rumpelstiltskin, adapted by Xavier Carrasco, Amicus, 2014.

For independent readers:

Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin by Liesl Shurtliff, Random House, 2014.

Rumpelstiltskin: The Graphic Novel by Martin Powell and Erik Valdez, Capstone Press, 2008.

Learning about puppetry:

We hope you will visit our website:
www.dreamtalepuppets.com.

Puppeteers of America and UNIMA-USA (the North American Center of Union Internationale de la Marionnette) provide a lot of useful resources:

<https://www.puppeteers.org>

<http://www.unima-usa.org>

A terrific book on using puppetry with students:

Rump, Nan. *Puppets and Masks: Stagecraft and Storytelling*. Worcester, MA: Davis Publications, 1996.

THEATER MANNERS

As puppeteers and actors, our work is to create another world that grows while our show is happening. It is a theater world, which has slightly different social customs than your students may be used to.

Please help our theater world grow by asking children to be quiet while the show is in progress. If they talk to each other or to you, other audience members will be distracted from the show.

When doors open and shut we feel it takes away a little of our theater magic. Please give your students the opportunity to use the restroom, get water, and complete other necessary tasks before the show. That way they will feel free to engage in our story.

We understand that sometimes a child or teacher will need to leave the room during the show, for whatever reason. Thank you for your help in building our theater world by preparing students to enter it.

And thank you for your own attention and concentration. We're glad to create theater with you.

VOCABULARY

actor – one who performs as a character in theatrical production

audience – people who assemble to hear and see something

dialogue – conversation between two or more people as a feature of a book, play, or movie, also spelled as “dialog”

puppet – a figure controlled and manipulated by puppeteer

prop – an object used in a theatrical production

play – a text for theatrical performance usually written as dialogue between characters

spell – a word or a set of words thought to have magic power

stage – a platform or area where actors perform theatrical productions

CLASS ACTIVITIES AND QUESTIONS SUGGESTIONS

We hope that this study guide and following suggestions and sample questions will be useful to you as you prepare for class activities and discussion related to CCSS and Art Standards for grades K-4. Some relevant CCSS standards are quoted here as well.

Activities before the show

Students will benefit from being introduced to the story before they see our show.

Our “More Resources” section has suggestions for on-line and print sources of “Rumpelstiltskin.”

Using a picture book version of the tale in class could lead to interesting discoveries of peculiarities and differences in visual interpretations of the story.

Also, the CCSS for Grades 3-4 we suggest as being relevant to this experience would require using a written version of the tale as a reference for activities with children.

Sample questions to ask after reading the story and/or after the show or to inspire or facilitate discussion (related to CCSS listed below – questions for K-2 and grades 3-4 are both included here).

Can you ask question with the word “Who”?
What about a question with the word “What? Where? When? Why? How?”
Who were the characters in the story? Do you recognize them on the pictures?
How would you describe each character?
How would you describe his or her appearance; behavior?
What did each character want? Why?
Where did the story take place? Why do you think so?
Did events in the story happen in one location or many? Why? When?
What did the King want in the story? How about Rumpelstiltskin? What did Kathleen want? Why?
Was it easy for the character to get what he or she wanted? Why or why not?
How did characters get what they wanted/achieve their goals? What made achieving the goal possible? Was it easy?
How did the character feel after having his need being fulfilled? Was it completely satisfying? Was it satisfying for long?

Samples of questions to ask after the show or to facilitate discussion (related to Art Standards listed below).

What did you see in “Rumpelstiltskin”?

Did you see the actors? How they were dressed? Why?

How were the actors’ costumes different from those worn by the puppets?

How did the actors move the puppets? What kind of movements – walking, dancing, gesturing, etc. – did you notice?

Try walking like a king, a queen, or a small, magical character. What do you notice about the different ways these characters move?

Were the puppets' movements different from the movements people make? How?

What is a stage? How was a stage created for this show? Why are these puppets called tabletop?

Did the story happen in one location or in more than one place? What hints did actors give to tell the audience they had changed location?

Did you notice props in this show?

Was music used in the show? When?

Who was talking? Was it the puppet characters or the actors? How did you know when a character was talking? Did movement help you know?

What did you notice about the voices used for each character?

Notice what the King, the Miller, Rumpelstilskin and Kathleen wanted in the story.

Each character has something they want in this story. The Miller wants admiration, the King wants gold, and both Rumpelstilskin and Kathleen want the baby. Think of things you have wanted, or that you want now. Do you think what you want is similar in any way to what the characters in Rumpelstilskin want? Why or why not?

Writing activities

These are just suggestions. We believe the show could inspire a broad range of writing tasks and exercises. Please feel free to send us children's letters or copies, pictures or other children's work. We will be happy to receive such correspondence and we promise to respond.

THE MAGIC OF WORDS

Rumpelstilskin uses a magic spell to spin gold out of straw:

Whir, whirl, spin, spin

Gold is heavy and straw thin,

Whir, whirl, spin, spin,

Here is one who knows how to twirl

Whir, whirl, spin, spin,

Turn the wheel and

Out gold whirls!

Do you think you would enjoy using magic to change something in your life? Can you invent a magic spell to make it happen and write it down?

THEATRICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TALE

The show is a theatrical interpretation of the tale. How different is it from a tale you read? Which uses written words to tell the story? Which uses actors and actions? How are these two ways of telling a story different? Does the author use puppets? or actions? Or voice? Do you remember dialogs in the written version of the story? Do you remember descriptions of characters and events? Do characters in the show use descriptions of events or not? Do they tell to the audience what happened? Who does? Where there are more dialogs in the written tale or in the theatrical performance? Do you see more differences between how the tale is told by writers and actors?

LETTER TO PUPPETEERS

Do you like the story? How about the show? What do you like the most? Were you scared? Do you have a character you like most? Or dislike most? Why? What was most interesting in the way the actors performed? What was surprising? Have you seen a puppet show before? Where? How different or similar was it to our performance? What did you learn from the show? Did it help you to appreciate better other parts of your school experience?

MOTIVES IN TALES AND IN LIFE

Choose one character from the story and write about what he or she wants and whether the character got what he/she wanted as the story developed. How are these wants similar to some of your own wants or wants of your friends and how are they different?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THE PROGRAMS

Grade PreK: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

Grade PreK: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in the story.

Grade K: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 1: With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

Grade K: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in the story.

Grade 1: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

Grade 1: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details #3: Describe Characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Grade 2: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Grade 2: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Grade 3: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of the text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers

Grade 3: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 3: Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Grade 4: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

Grade 4: Reading Standards for Literature: Key Ideas and Details # 3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. a character's thoughts, words or actions).

ART STANDARDS

Grade PreK – 4: Theatre: Content Standard 6: Connections: Describe visual, aural, oral and kinetic elements in theatre, dance, music and visual arts.

Grade PreK – 4: Theatre: Content Standard 7: Analysis, Criticism and Meaning: Explain how the wants and needs of characters are similar to and different from their own.

Grade PreK – 4: Visual Arts: Content Standard 6: Connections: Describe how the visual arts are combined with other arts in multimedia work.