

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

A Fairytale Retold
By Dale Ahlquist

Cast of Characters

13 Females; 12 Males; 10 Either

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| <u>JOHANN:</u> | A miller. |
| <u>MARIA:</u> | Johann's daughter. |
| <u>MAGGIE:</u> | Johann's daughter. |
| <u>MINDY:</u> | Johann's daughter. |
| <u>GRANDMAMMA:</u> | The grandmother. |
| <u>BRUNO:</u> | A butcher. |
| <u>WILMA:</u> | Bruno's daughter. |
| <u>PRINCE PHILIP:</u> | The Prince. |
| <u>GREGOR:</u> | Philip's friend. |
| <u>KING WALBURG:</u> | The King. |
| <u>QUEEN HILDA:</u> | The Queen. |
| <u>BARON:</u> | Baron Friedrich Von Herschelbanger, Grand Counsel. |
| <u>LADY GERTIE:</u> | A noble lady. |
| <u>LADY VICKI:</u> | A noble lady. |
| <u>LADY HEIDI:</u> | A noble lady. |
| <u>ROYAL SERVANT:</u> | The King and Queen's royal servant. |
| <u>NURSE:</u> | The palace nurse. |
| <u>LITTLE MAN:</u> | A strange little man whose name is unknown. |
| <u>STUMP:</u> | A brigand. |
| <u>CROAK:</u> | A brigand. |
| <u>WALLOP:</u> | A brigand. |

HISS: A brigand.

PLUM VENDOR: A plum vendor.

JEWELRY VENDOR: A jewelry vendor.

GUARDS: Palace guards.

FAIRIES: Fairies in the forest.

9 VILLAGERS: Villagers in the town.

JUGGLERS, ACROBATS, MUSICIANS, PUPPETEER

ACT I

- Scene 1 – Harvest Festival in the Village
- Scene 2 – A Room in the Palace, That Night
- Scene 3 – A Room in the Palace, the Next Morning
- Scene 4 – Courtyard, the Next Day
- Scene 5 – A Room in the Palace, Later That Day

ACT II

- Scene 1 – The Palace Nursery, One Year Later
- Scene 2 – Courtyard, the Next Day
- Scene 3 – The Palace Nursery, the Day After That
- Scene 4 – Outskirts of the Village, That Evening
- Scene 5 – The Haunted Forest, That Night
- Scene 6 – A Cave in the Forest, That Same Night
- Scene 7 – The Palace Nursery, the Next Morning

Approximate Length

75 minutes

Time

Medieval Ages

Place

A kingdom

Scene 2

Setting: A roomful of straw in the palace, with a spinning wheel.

At Rise; MARIA sits with her spinning wheel. She picks up some straw, looks at it, looks at the spinning wheel, and then bursts into tears.

(The LITTLE MAN suddenly appears)

LITTLE MAN

Ahh... a weeping maiden locked in a roomful of straw....

MARIA

(Looking up with shock)

Wha...? How did you...?

LITTLE MAN

What seems to be the problem?

MARIA

The room is locked. The door never opened. There is no way for you to have gotten in here.

LITTLE MAN

I'm not talking about that problem. I'm talking about the problem that is making you so...weepy.

MARIA

I...I can hardly even explain it. It doesn't seem real. We were at the harvest festival today and my silly father—he started bragging about me in front of the King and Queen. He said that I could spin straw into gold. And the Queen took the whole thing far too seriously and she arrested my father, locked me in this room, and if I don't spin all this straw into gold, she is going to put my father to death!

LITTLE MAN

Doesn't seem fair, does it.

MARIA

It was such a lovely day today, so happy. How could it have come to this?

LITTLE MAN

Maybe your day will still end happily.

MARIA

But how? I can't spin straw into gold. That's impossible.

LITTLE MAN

Nyaah. Spinning straw into gold is no big deal. As a matter of fact, I can do it.

MARIA

You can spin straw into gold?

LITTLE MAN

Yeah.

MARIA

That's...that's wonderful! But how? How do you do it?

LITTLE MAN

It, um...it's magic, actually.

MARIA

You're a magician?

LITTLE MAN

Hey, now, let's not be calling names here.

MARIA

I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

LITTLE MAN

(Holds up his hand, and she stops speaking)

Tell me, weeping maiden: would you like it, if I should spin all this straw into gold?

MARIA

Would I like it? It would save my father's life! If you can really do it, please do. Oh please. How could I ever repay you?

LITTLE MAN

Well, that's just what I wanted to discuss next. What will you give me if I spin all this straw into gold?

MARIA

I don't have anything that is worth all that gold.

LITTLE MAN

What about that necklace?

MARIA

(Clutches her necklace)

Oh!

LITTLE MAN

Oh?

MARIA

But I was just given this today!

LITTLE MAN

Looks like you've grown pretty attached to it in a short time.

MARIA

Well...it...I...

LITTLE MAN

Of course, if you like that necklace so much, you should keep it, obviously.

(Pauses)

And I'll just be on my way.

MARIA

Wait!

LITTLE MAN

Wait? And what should I wait for?

MARIA

You really can spin straw into gold?

LITTLE MAN

I really can.

MARIA

Prove it.

LITTLE MAN

You want to see magic. For free?

MARIA

Just a sample.

LITTLE MAN

Bring me some straw.

(She brings him straw. He sits at the spinning wheel, runs some straw through it, and pulls it out as gold thread.)

MARIA

Amazing!

LITTLE MAN

(With false modesty)

Yeah, well, it's good work if you can get it.

MARIA

You would really trade a roomful of gold for just my necklace?

LITTLE MAN

It doesn't seem fair, does it.

MARIA

No, I suppose it doesn't. Here.

(She reluctantly removes her necklace and gives it to him)

LITTLE MAN

(Pockets the necklace)

Okay! Let's get to work.

(He starts gathering up straw and bringing it to the spinning wheel)

MARIA

I should introduce myself. My name is...

LITTLE MAN

(Stops and holds up his hand as before. She stops speaking.)

Let's just keep names out of it, shall we?

MARIA

But that's strange.

LITTLE MAN

And we are strangers, aren't we? After all, you consider me strange, don't you?

(Pause. He goes back to work.)

Don't answer that if you don't want to.

(She looks around awkwardly as he continues working)

FADEOUT

Scene 3

Setting: Same Room in the Palace, the next morning.

At Rise: The room is now filled with gold thread. MARIA is alone. And asleep.

(Enter ROYAL SERVANT. She looks around, wide-eyed, then exits. Enter KING WALBURG and QUEEN HILDA with SERVANT.)

KING

But really, couldn't we have had breakfast first...?

QUEEN

It's gold!

KING

Gold? But...but...

SERVANT

Yes, just as I told you, Your Majesty.

(MARIA wakes up. Looks around, confused.)

QUEEN

Go fetch Lady Gertie. Go!

SERVANT

Right away, Your Majesty.

KING

You'd better get Baron von Herschelbanger, too.

SERVANT

Yes, Your Majesty.

KING

He has some explaining to do.

(Exit SERVANT)

MARIA

(Rises and curtsies)

Good morning, Your Majesties.

QUEEN

Oh yes, good morning. Tell me your name again?

MARIA

Maria, Your Majesty.

QUEEN

Maria. A rather plain name, isn't it.

MARIA

If you say so, Your Majesty. And I am just a plain peasant girl. Will you release my father so that we may both return to our village now?

(The QUEEN does not pay any attention to her. She is quite distracted by all the gold. MARIA goes to the KING.)

MARIA

Your Majesty, may I go now? Will you give me my father?

KING

(Also distracted)

Your father. I understand he can turn wheat into bread. It's all quite amazing really...

MARIA

So here is the gold, Your Majesty. Will you release my father now?

KING

(Not really paying attention)

Your father. Yes, yes, of course.

QUEEN

Not so fast.

KING

(Automatically repeating her)

Not so fast.

(Pause. To QUEEN.)

How fast exactly...should we...

QUEEN

(Ignoring him, to MARIA)

My dear...Miriam, is it? This is quite a talent you have.

MARIA

(With some hesitation)

Thank you, Your Majesty. And my name is Maria, Your Majesty.

KING

(Picking up some gold, suddenly realizing)

This is gold! It's completely gold!

QUEEN

Walburg!

KING

(Dropping it)

Sorry, dear.

QUEEN

(To MARIA)

Tell me... Martha, is it? How did you manage to keep this great power of yours a secret for so long?

KING

A secret? Was it a secret?

QUEEN

(Turning and hissing at him)

Of course it was a secret! We didn't know about it, did we?!

KING

Well, that's just it. We didn't know about it.

QUEEN

Tell us, Martha.

MARIA

Tell you what, Your Majesty?

(Enter BARON FRIEDRICH von HERSCHELBANGER)

KING

Baron von Herschelbanger! It's gold!

BARON

(Examining it)

But...

KING

That's just what I said: but!

BARON

But...

KING

But you said it was impossible to spin straw into gold.

BARON

But...it *is* impossible!

KING

And you said that we would be wasting the life of a perfectly good miller just to teach the peasants a lesson. But what are we going to do now? What are the peasants going to learn from this?

BARON

(Still in shock)

I am hoping that the peasants have not taught *us* a lesson.

QUEEN

Don't be ridiculous! The peasants must not find out anything about this!

BARON

(Examining the gold)

Theoretically, it is possible...

KING

What, for the peasants to teach us a lesson?

BARON

Um, no, Your Majesty, it may be possible to spin straw into gold if...

QUEEN

Friedrich! You're talking nonsense!

KING

Hilda, please. Baron von Herschelbanger is my advisor not yours.

QUEEN

He's not giving any advice now. He's just making a fool of himself! Spinning straw into gold! Can't you see? It's a trick!

BARON

(Slowly)

Yes...that's it. Perhaps another test...

QUEEN

Precisely! Good show, Friedrich!

KING

You just said he was talking nonsense.

QUEEN

He was! Until just now. Another test is what we need.

MARIA

But...

KING

That's what I said: but!

(Enter LADY GERTIE)

GERTIE

It looks like gold!

QUEEN

It *is* gold, Lady Gertie! Look at it!

(The QUEEN and GERTIE examine it together)

MARIA

(To the KING, pleading)

Please, your Majesty! You have what you want. Please let my father and me go home now.

KING

Well...

QUEEN

Not so fast.

BARON

Not so fast.

KING

Actually, it hasn't been fast at all.

QUEEN

Tell him it is obviously a trick, Friedrich.

BARON

Your Majesty, it is...

KING

Yes, yes, I heard what she said. It's a pretty good trick though. I mean, look at all this gold. Shouldn't we just let the young lady and her father go and...

QUEEN

Walburg! Be quiet!

KING

Yes, dear.

QUEEN

(To MARIA)

Tell us how you did this!

MARIA

I...I can't, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Can't? Or won't? Is it a trick?

MARIA

(Hesitates)

No, Your Majesty.

QUEEN

Can you prove it's not a trick?

MARIA

No, Your Majesty. I can't prove anything. Here is your roomful of gold. Please let me go now. And please give me my father. You said you would.

QUEEN

Of course we'll let your father go. We are true to our word. But...Maria, is it? You must admit that we find it a tad odd that one of our subjects has been keeping from us such a marvelous power, something that should be so very good for our kingdom. We are tempted to doubt your very loyalty.

MARIA

Your Majesty! I assure you...

QUEEN

Of course you do. But really. How can we be sure?

KING

(to BARON)

Shouldn't I be saying something?

You could try, Your Majesty.

BARON

Hilda?

KING

Quiet, Walburg!

QUEEN

(to MARIA)

Now, listen...Mandy, is it? This just won't do.

MARIA

Your Majesty, in one night you have doubled the wealth of your kingdom. Are you not satisfied?

QUEEN

(With a false and dismissive laugh)

Satisfaction is not enough. We need...verification. I seem to recall that you have some lovely sisters...

BLACKOUT

Scene 4

Setting: Courtyard, the next day. In front of curtain.

At Rise: LADY GERTIE approaches LADY VICKI and LADY HEIDI.

VICKI

Lady Gertie! Tell us what you know!

GERTIE

You have to understand that there are some things that I don't understand.

HEIDI

We're not interested in what you understand. Tell us what you *know*!

GERTIE

I know this...

(Pause)

VICKI

What?!

GERTIE

But you won't believe it.

HEIDI

Tell us anyway!

GERTIE

Alright. They locked the miller's daughter in a room filled with straw.

HEIDI

Was it a barn?

GERTIE

No, it was a room in the palace.

HEIDI

There's a roomful of straw in the palace?

GERTIE

They brought the straw in!

VICKI

So what happened?

In the morning, the room was full of gold!

Gold! I don't believe it.

I told you you wouldn't believe it.

The Queen must have been very happy.

Well, that's just it. She was not very happy.

I don't believe it.

I told you you wouldn't believe it.

Why wasn't she happy?

Because *she* didn't believe it.

But the gold was right there.

She thought it was a trick.

A very good trick.

A very *gold* trick.

So what did the Queen do?

She insisted that the miller's daughter spin straw into gold again.

GERTIE

VICKI

GERTIE

HEIDI

GERTIE

VICKI

GERTIE

HEIDI

GERTIE

HEIDI

GERTIE

VICKI

HEIDI

VICKI

GERTIE

Again?
HEIDI

Again. But this time the room of straw was twice as big.
GERTIE

So it was a barn.
HEIDI

No, it was a room in the palace.
GERTIE

Where do they get all this straw?
VICKI

I don't know! From mattresses and pillows, I suppose. Wherever straw comes from.
GERTIE

From barns!
HEIDI

Yes, from barns.
VICKI

You see, I know a thing or two.
HEIDI

Shhh! What happened next?
VICKI

The next morning the room was full of gold.
GERTIE

The miller's daughter spun all the straw into gold?
VICKI

That's what it looked like.
GERTIE

A roomful of gold. And then another roomful of gold. The Queen must have been thrilled!
HEIDI

That's just it, the Queen was not thrilled.
GERTIE

VICKI

I don't believe it.

GERTIE

I told you you wouldn't believe it.

HEIDI

What did the King think?

VICKI

Lady Heidi, the King doesn't think.

HEIDI

True. But what about the Baron? He must have said something interesting. He's the smartest man in the kingdom.

GERTIE

He tried to explain something about something.

HEIDI

That is interesting.

GERTIE

They still thought it was a trick.

VICKI

But how do you do a trick like that? The room was locked all night.

GERTIE

Right.

HEIDI

How do you get all the straw *out* and all the gold *in*?

GERTIE

That's just what Queen Hilda wanted to find out.

VICKI

So what happened?

GERTIE

We'll just have to wait and find out.

BLACKOUT