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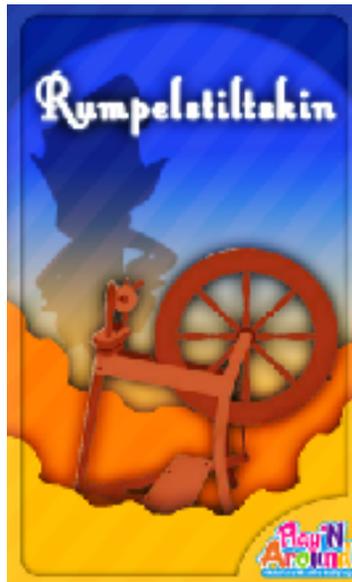
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An Educator's guide to:

RUMPELSTILTSKIN

An original adaptation play by
PLAY'N AROUND THEATRE



THE EXCITEMENT BEGINS WHEN GRACIE THE BAKER'S DAUGHTER MEETS A MAGICAL LITTLE ELF WHO SPINS STRAW INTO GOLD FOR A ROYAL FEE. LESSONS IN THIS ORIGINAL MUSICAL INCLUDE "IT ISN'T NICE TO BRAG OR BOAST" AND "NEVER MAKE A PROMISE THAT YOU CAN'T KEEP." **PRE K – 5**

HISTORY BEHIND THE STORY

Rumpelstiltskin has been studied by many folklorists with a critical study of it dating back to Edward Clodd's *Tom Tit Tot, An Essay on Savage Philosophy in Folk-Tale*, a full length book from 1898. The tale is well-known throughout most of Europe, ranging from Italy to Scandinavia to Spain. In all of the versions, its principal traits are usually the same. In fact, the Grimms collected four versions of the tale in their research in Hesse which they combined into the Rumpelstiltskin that is best known in English speaking countries today.

Rumpelstiltskin's name and story appears to have been around for centuries. The earliest known version of the tale has been traced back to Johann Fischart's adaptation of Book 1 of Francois Rabelais', *Gargantua, Geshichtkitterung* also known as *Gargantua and Pantagruel* which was published in 1575-1590. The 363rd amusement given in the book is titled "Rumpele stilt oder der Poppart."

Of course, Rumpelstiltskin is not the only name known in the many versions of the tale across Europe, including the British Isles. For example, the dwarf has been known as Trit-a-Trot in Ireland, Tom Tit Tot in Suffolk, Terrytop in Cornwall, and Whuppity Stoorie in Scotland. A book published in Amsterdam in 1708, titled *Tour tenebreuse et les jours lumineux, Contes Anglois tirez d'une ancienne chronique composee par Richard surnomme Coeur de Lion, Roy d'Angleterre* presents the dwarf, but his name is Ricdin-Ricdon.

The oldest known version in English was published in *German Popular Stories, Translated from the Kinder and Haus-Marchen, Collected by M. M. Grimm, From Oral Tradition, 1823*. A copy of the story published in that book can be found in Iona and Peter Opie's *Classic Fairy Tales*. It still remains the best known version in the English speaking world and is very close to the version included by Andrew Lang in his fairy tale books. The Lang version is what I have annotated on this site.

MUSICAL THEATER

Theatrical production in which songs and choruses, instrumental accompaniments and interludes, and often dance are integrated into a dramatic plot. The genre was developed and refined in the United States, particularly in the theaters along Broadway in New York City, during the first half of the 20th century. The musical was influenced by a variety of 19th-century theatrical forms, including operetta, comic opera *pantomime*, *minstrel show*, and *vaudeville*.

ORIGINS

The American musical has its roots in a series of 18th- and early 19th-century theatrical productions involving music. Of these, the best known is *The Archers; or, The Mountaineers of Switzerland*, (1796), composed by Benjamin Carr, with a libretto (the text of the musical) by William Dunlap. *The Black Crook* (1866), which ran for 475 performances and combined melodrama with ballet, is generally credited as being the first musical. In the late 19th century, operettas from Vienna, Austria (composed by Johann Strauss, Jr., and Franz Lehár), London (by Sir Arthur Sullivan, with librettos by Sir William S. Gilbert), and Paris (by Jacques Offenbach) were popular with Eastern urban audiences. At the same time, *revues* (plotless programs of songs, dances, and comedy sketches) abounded not only in theaters but also in some upper-class saloons, such as the music hall operated in New York City by the comedy team of Joe Weber and Lew Fields. The successful shows of another comedy team, Ned Harrigan and Tony Hart, were also revues, but had connecting dialogue and continuing characters. These in turn spawned the musical shows of multitalented George M. Cohan, the first of which appeared in 1901.

In the years before World War I (1914-1918), several young operetta composers emigrated from Europe to the United States. They included Victor Herbert, Rudolf Friml, and Sigmund Romberg. Herbert's *Naughty Marietta* (1910), Friml's *The Firefly* (1912), and Romberg's *Maytime* (1917) are representative of the new genre these composers created: American operetta, with simple music and librettos and memorable songs that were enduringly popular with the public.

THE MODERN MUSICAL

In 1914 composer Jerome Kern began to produce a series of shows in which all the varied elements of a musical were integrated. Produced in the intimate Princess Theatre in New York City, Kern's musicals featured contemporary settings and events, in contrast to operettas, which always took place in fantasy lands. In 1927 Kern provided the score for *Show Boat*, which had the first serious libretto. It was also adapted from a successful novel, a technique that was to proliferate in post-1940 musicals.

Gradually the old musical formula began to change. Instead of complicated but light plots, sophisticated lyrics and simplified librettos were introduced; underscoring (music played as background to dialogue or movement) was added; and new types of American music, such as jazz and blues, were utilized by composers. In addition, singers began to learn how to act. In 1932 *Of Thee I Sing* (1931) became the first musical to be awarded a Pulitzer Prize in drama. Its creators, composer George Gershwin and lyricist Ira Gershwin, had succeeded in intelligently satirizing contemporary political situations.

In the 1920s satire, ideas, and wit had been elements of the intimate revue. These sophisticated shows were important as testing grounds for the young composers and lyricists who later helped develop the serious musical. One composer-lyricist pair who started in the intimate revues, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, wrote a show in 1940, *Pal Joey*, that had many of the elements of the later musicals, including a *book* (the spoken dialogue in the musical) with fully developed characters. But it was not a success until its 1952 revival. In the meantime Rodgers, with Oscar Hammerstein II as his new collaborator, had produced *Oklahoma!* (1943), which had ballets, choreographed by Agnes de Mille, that were an integral part of the plot. The role of the choreographer-director was eventually to become vastly influential on the shape and substance of the American musical. Jerome Robbins, Michael Kidd, Michael Bennett, and Bob Fosse are notable among the skilled choreographers who went on to create important musicals, most memorably Bennett's *A Chorus Line* (1975) and Fosse's *Dancin'* (1978).

THROUGHOUT THE STUDY GUIDE, THIS SYMBOL MEANS THAT SPECIFIC SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS.



ACTIVITIES BEFORE THE PLAY

1. Ask your students to discuss the difference between television and live theatre. It is important that they know about theatre etiquette, or manners.



TH.1.2.3. (3-5) The student understands theatre as a social function and theatre etiquette is the responsibility of the audience.

2. Have the students learn the following vocabulary words and listen for them during the play. See how many words they can recall and how the characters use them in the context of the play.

BRAG

SPECIALTY

DELICIOUS

PRINCE

BOAST

PALACE

STRAW

TALENTED

PRINCESS

DAUGHTER

SPINNING WHEEL

GOLD

3. Read to your students the story of *RUMPELSTILTSKIN*. Discuss the elements of the story that would make it a Fairy tale. Explain to them that there are many different versions of these stories and that the version that they see will not be exactly like the book.



LA.E. (preK-2) The student knows the basic characteristics of fairy tales, fables and stories.

4. Have the student look and listen for patterns during the play. See how many patterns they can recall and how they were used in the context of the play. Encourage the students to be aware that they may occur in music, dance, scenery, costumes and dialogue. Students may also notice architectural patterns in the play.



MA.D.1.1.1 (PreK-2) The student describes a wide variety of classification schemes and patterns related to the physical characteristics and sensory attributes, such as rhythm, sound, shapes, colors, numbers, similar objects and similar events.



MA.D.1.2.1 (3-5) The student describes a wide variety of patterns and relationships through models, such as manipulatives, tables, graphs, and rules using scientific symbols.

ACTIVITIES AFTER THE PLAY

1. Have your students draw a picture or write a letter to the cast of *RUMPELSTILTSKIN* telling them what they learned during the presentation. Have them tell the cast some of their favorite parts of the production.
2. Discuss the difference between fairy tales, fables, and parables. Have the students discuss the difference between the play and the fairy tales they have read. What were the similarities? What were the differences? Why was the story a fairy tale?
3. Have the students discuss the importance of telling the truth. Ask your students why it is important to never brag or boast.



TH.D1.1.2 (preK-2) The Students analyzes, criticizes, and constructs meaning from formal and informal theatre, film, television and electronic media.



LA.A.2.2.7 (3-5) The Student recognizes the use of comparison and contrast in the text.

4. “You should never brag or boast”, “Never make a promise that you can’t keep” these expressions have great meaning. They are great morals with profound meaning. What are the morals or social duties impressed upon the students by the story of *Rumpelstiltskin*? (It is always best to tell the truth. You should always try to be kind to others, and never brag or boast.)



LA.E.2.2.4 (3-5) The student identifies the major theme of the story or notification text.

5. Act out a fairy tale of your own. Assign a director, actors, narrator, etc.



TH.A.1.2.3 (3-5) the student creates imaginary characters, relationships, and environments, using basic acting skills (e.g. breath control dictation, concentration, and control of isolated body parts).

THE REFERENCES

SUNSHINE STATE STANDARDS (ONLINE)
AVAILABLE: <http://fln.education.net/standards/sss.htm>

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANICA 2004. 2004

WIKIPEDIA ENCYCLOPEDIA – wikipedia.com

THE SURLALUNE FAIRY TALE SITE: <http://surlalunefairytales.com>

THANKS FOR CHOOSING PLAY'N AROUND!

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