

# **RUMPELSTILTSKIN: THE TRUE HERO**

*A One-Act Play for Young People*

By

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## **DEDICATION**

*For Ella, Zoë, Bennett, and Stella,  
who help us stay in touch with the children inside us.*

## **STORY OF THE PLAY**

At last, Rumpelstiltskin gets to be the hero! Based on the original Grimm fairy tale, this traditionally misunderstood character earns a well-deserved happy ending, winning the hand of Freya, the beautiful miller's daughter. Both comic and suspenseful, and using elements of other fairy tales and classical myths, this adaptation involves King Good, the (not very) Good; his vain son Prince Werther; and an unscrupulous chancellor. Rumpelstiltskin, a handicapped young man, is actually Prince Werther's twin, whom the soft-hearted miller could not bring himself to kill on the chancellor's order years earlier. Due to the kingdom's approaching bankruptcy, the miller makes a dangerous attempt to have Freya selected as Werther's princess, resulting in the well-known "spinning straw into gold" test. But with lots of fun twists Freya and Rumpelstiltskin are united at the end!

## **PLAYWRIGHTS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We developed this play from one of the fifteen half-hour radio dramas we've written on commission for *All Ears Theatre*, a series founded and produced by Donald Ramlow, administered and marketed by the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, and funded by the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation. We wish to thank Don, the arts council, the Gilmore Foundation, and WMUK-FM, which records the *All Ears* shows before an audience at Kalamazoo's First Baptist Church for later broadcast on the air. We'd also like to thank all of the talented directors, performers, musicians, and technical personnel who have brought our plays to life over the years.

## **PREMIERE PRODUCTION**

This play was originally produced by Moonlit Wings Productions, Falls Church, VA., in June, 2013.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(6 men, 7 women, 6 flexible, possible extras including children)*

*In order of appearance*

**FREYA:** the beautiful daughter of Watt the Miller

**HERALD 1:**

**HERALD 2:**

**CLARA:** a villager

**ABE:** a villager

**MARIAN:** a villager

**GUARD 1:**

**GUARD 2:**

**WATT:** a miller

**SIR EDMONT:** a courtier

**SIR BARNEY:** a courtier

**LADY DAPHNE:** a courtier

**PRINCESS WILHELMINA:**

**PRINCESS ROWENA:**

**PRINCESS VELMA:**

**CHANCELLOR:**

**KING GROOD:** "the Good"

**PRINCE WERTHER:**

**YOUNG MAN / RUMPELSTILTSKIN:** *(May be played by a  
handicapped actor.)*

*NOTE: Handicapped actors or children can be added as castle servants, pages, village youngsters, or as helpers for Rumpelstiltskin to carry gold and straw. They may also be a part of the family in the final scene. All extras may be used to help change scenery.*

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**TIME**

Once upon a time, long, long ago.

**SETTING**

The fairy-tale kingdom of Monkovia.

**SCENES**

*(All settings may be represented minimally with props, set pieces, lighting, and area staging.)*

**Scene 1:** Outside Watt's mill in the Kingdom of Monkovia.

**Scene 2:** The court in the royal palace, three days later.

**Scene 3:** The palace dungeon, some hours later, and later in the middle of the night.

**Scene 4:** The dungeon and courtyard, the next morning.

**Scene 5:** A room in the palace, later that day. Also an inset scene, years earlier.

**Scene 6:** The dungeon, late that night.

**Scene 7:** The dungeon, the following morning. Also an inset scene, years earlier.

**Scene 8:** The throne room, a few days later.

**Scene 9:** A room in a cozy cottage, perhaps a year later.

***Freya's Song:*** *Freya sings several verses of the traditional folk song, "Black Is the Colour (Of My True Love's Hair). There are many different versions of the song first known in the Appalachian Mountains. It probably originated from Scotland when it references the river Clyde in the lyrics.*

### Scene 1

*(AT RISE: FREYA, the beautiful daughter of Watt, the miller, is seated at her spinning wheel outside her father's mill.)*

**FREYA:** *(Singing sweetly as she spins thread.)*

But black is the color of my true love's hair.  
His face is like some rosy fair,  
The sweetest face and the neatest hands,  
I love the ground whereon he stands.

I love my love and well he knows  
I love the ground whereon he goes  
If you no more on earth I see,  
I can't serve you as you have me.

*(As she finishes this verse, HERALD 1 and HERALD 2 enter with a trumpet and a proclamation. They are followed by ROYAL GUARDS 1 and 2 and three curious villagers, CLARA, ABE, and MARIAN.)*

**HERALD 1:** *(After a blast on the trumpet, HE unrolls the proclamation.)* Hear ye, hear ye! King Grood the Good wishes it to be known that three days hence at six of the clock, a gathering shall be held at the royal palace.

**CLARA:** What for?

**HERALD 2:** Listen—instead of flapping your jaws—and ye shall hear! At this great gathering beautiful maidens from around the Kingdom of Monkovia—and beyond—shall present themselves for consideration by good King Grood as to their fitness to be bride and princess to Prince Werther the Good...Looking.

**ABE:** How many of them is he going to wed?

**HERALD 1:** Just one, you bumpkin.

**MARIAN:** I suppose these maidens will have to be noble-born?

**HERALD 2:** *(Consulting the proclamation.)* The proclamation mentions only beautiful maidens. Prince Werther will wish a princess as well-favored as himself. I have no doubt, though, that only a noble-born maiden could be beautiful enough to meet his exacting standards.

**ABE:** Typical. How could any humble-born maid hope to be chosen by a snob like Prince Werther.

**GUARD 1:** Watch your tongue, varlet, or you're liable to lose it.

**CLARA:** *(Pointing to FREYA.)* What about her? Watt the Miller's daughter, Freya? She's as beautiful as any prince could hope to find.

**GUARD 2:** Let her present herself at the royal palace three days hence and we'll soon see what's what.

**HERALD 1:** Though she'd better provide herself with garments more fitting if she expects to be chosen for more than a post as chambermaid.

**HERALD 2:** Now we must be off to spread the news in more promising places.

*(HERALDS and GUARDS exit to the grumbling of the VILLAGERS. As they leave, WATT the Miller enters with an obviously heavy sack slung over his shoulder.)*

**MARIAN:** Ho, Watt! You've just missed a royal proclamation.

**WATT:** What?

**MARIAN:** You. Watt!

**WATT:** Enough. What proclamation?

**ABE:** You should stick to your mill and stay out of the forest. Then you'd know what's what, Watt.

**WATT:** Do any of you have grain to be milled?

**CLARA:** Not today, Watt.

**WATT:** Then leave us to our work.

*(The VILLAGERS exit, grumbling. WATT turns to FREYA.)*

**WATT:** *(Cont'd.)* What's all this, Freya?

## **End of Freeview**

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