

**An Imp Named  
Rumpelstiltskin**  
As Retold by Ms Holly 1997

As all good stories of Old began in the Great and Never to be forgotten mythical but not imaginary world of Nod where all good and bad children go when they sleep at night - The Land of Dreams 'Nod' - there was a family who told lots of stories...Now stories are meant to be entertaining but sometimes people begin to believe the stories they tell if they tell them too often. So eventually too often they begin to say the stories they tell are true...Well this is what happened to one family...

Once Upon a Time... There was a momma, a poppa and a very beautiful daughter who all lived in a small cottage on the edge of the Enchanted Forest at the edge of the Lands of Duke Neverenough. Well the people of Neverenough would come to listen to the family tell stories just to laugh, have fun, and be entertained.

One day the when the daughter was outside listening to her father tell everyone stories a storyteller from a nearby town came by to swap stories. The storyteller commented on how beautiful his daughter was and the father began to compare his daughter's beauty to that of the sun after a long winter. Then the other storyteller began to tell stories about far away lands and different types of beauty in different places. Then the travelling story teller said, "Oh but the true beauty of the women of far away lands is their ability to make wondrous and beautiful things like a fine beautiful cloth called silk. It is so fine it can be pulled through a ring. So what can your beautiful daughter do?"

Well the storyteller was not about to be out done so he began to tell a story about how well his daughter could spin - in fact she could spin so well she could spin straw into yarn...The townspeople were laughing and carrying on with the father about this until finally the father declared, "My daughter can spin so well she can spin straw into gold ." His pretty daughter just smiled at what he had said...Well everyone laughed - but some of the children believed it was true and went back to the town talking about how amazing it was the girl could spin straw into gold.

Well Duke Neverenough heard the children talking and decided he would have the girl come to his castle to spin all the straw in the Land Of Neverenough into gold. The father could do nothing but send the girl to the castle to be eventually discovered it was only a story. The pretty young girl was put in a locked room and was told, "By morning all the straw must be spun into gold or ELSE!" by Duke Neverenough.

The door to the room slammed shut and locked.... the girl stared in disbelief...There was so much straw that even if she could spin it into gold she could never do it in one year much less one night...But she began to try to spin the straw into gold for she had heard the story so much she almost believed it was true and she was so desperate she would have tried almost anything - for the words 'or else' filled her with great fright....As she tried to spin the straw into gold its coarseness began to make her fingers bleed...Eventually her fingers were hurting so bad she had to stop...She sat down in the straw and began to cry...When all of a sudden she heard a rustling in the corner...Then out stepped a crooked tiny little man with a big crooked nose, funny pointed shoes and a funny pointed cap.

She looked over in disbelief, rubbed her eyes and asked, "How did you get in here?"

He replied, "Never you worry deary," in a scratchy sounding low voice, "Tale is your father boasted you could spin straw into gold and you haven't a clue. But I know how to use magic to spin straw into gold."

The pretty storyteller's daughter looked up, stopped crying and asked, "Oh would you please spin my straw into gold. I will do anything - give you anything I can - if you will spin the straw into gold."

This is just what the funny little crooked man wanted to hear so he smiled with glee and danced around a little bit. The girl held out a beautiful bracelet to the little man. He looked at it closely then said, "Hmm, that does not seem like much for a trade for 'or else'...What else do you have to trade?" The girl gave him all the jewellery she had on her. The little man took her jewellery and began to spin the straw. As he put the straw into one end of the spinning wheel slowly but surely gold began to come out...

The girl looked and said, "But it is so little gold for so much straw."

The little man smile craftily and said in a beguiling voice, "Oh but it takes so much straw to make gold. Don't you worry deary there will be enough - but it will only be whatever my magic can trade for the straw."

The girl watched in amazement as the little man spun the straw into gold. Eventually she grew weary and fell asleep. In the morning Duke Neverenough opened the door to the locked chamber and stared in disbelief at the pile of gold on the floor. The girl had been awakened by the noise of the door being unlocked and was standing nervously next to the pile of gold . Duke Neverenough looked at the pile of gold then around the room which no longer had any straw in it...He frowned as he studied the gold , then said, "Why is there not more gold for there was so much straw?"

The pretty storyteller's daughter looked up at him smiling wistfully and said, "It takes so much straw to make gold."

Duke Neverenough looked around the room and studied the pile of gold for a while. Then he said to his servants, "Take the gold, lock it up, and bring the girl a change and some food. But leave her in here. Make sure to lock the door."

When the servants came back the girl refreshed herself and ate her meal. She began to wonder why she had not been set free. She heard a whisper from the window...it was her papa and moma. They asked her how it had gone...She showed them her fingers and told them about the little man...

Her mother said, "No good will come of this if there is magic and gold involved."

Her father said, "Never you worry, dear, I am sure he will let you come home now."

Just then the door opened and in walked the Duke with enough straw to fill the room from top to bottom again. The door slammed shut and was locked tight. The storyteller's daughter began once again to try to spin the straw into gold . Eventually her hands and fingers were so hurt she could no longer try in vain to spin the straw into gold . When she sat down to cry then she heard shuffling in the straw in the chamber. She saw the little man just step out in front of her.

The pretty storyteller's daughter looked up and stopped crying and asked, "Oh please spin my straw into gold again. I will do anything give you anything I can if you will spin the straw into gold."

The funny little crooked man smiled with glee and dance around a little bit once again, and then asked, "So what do you have to offer me tonight?"

The girl held out an exquisitely e m b r o i d e r e d bag.

He looked at it and said, "Hmm, that is not much of a trade for 'or else'...What else do you have to trade?"

The girl replied, "Look inside."

The little man looked inside, smiled, then sat down to begin spinning the straw into gold again.

Once again the storyteller's daughter fell asleep and was awakened in the morning to the same thing. But this time Duke Neverenough asked the girl about how she spun straw into gold hoping to discover how to do it for himself. Out of fear she said, "It is the good Lord's will that has come to me." Which was not a lie - but it was only a part of the truth. With that answer Duke Neverenough left the chamber and locked the door shut again. Once again the storyteller's daughter began to try to spin the straw into gold until she hurt so much she could not spin anymore. And once again the funny little crooked man appeared in the chamber.

But this time the funny little man asked her "So what do you have to trade deary?"

The girl replied, "I have nothing to trade but I will do anything you ask, give you anything you ask for."

The funny little crooked man smiled and asked, "Would you give me your first born child?"

The girl stared in wild eyed disbelief for she was young and had no idea what he was asking for then replied in desperation, "Yes!"

The funny little man smiled and sat down once again to spin the mountain of straw into gold .

In the morning the girl was greeted by the Duke and he asked her "Do you like spinning straw into gold ?" as he looked at her straw cut fingers and hands.

She looked at him and said, "No it is such a difficult thing to spin straw into gold, and it is not so much gold for so much straw to be spun.

The Duke looked around and thought it over for a minute. He had fallen in love with the girl while she had been there so he asked her, "Would you like to stop spinning straw into gold ?"

She looked up at him, smiled and said, "Yes."

He said, "Then you will have to marry me for no wife of a Duke is allowed to spin anything."

The girl looked at her hands, and then looked at the Duke. She decided that he looked more appealing then having to deal with the funny little man and the straw - so she agreed. They were married that day...

About a year later the Duke and the now Duchess had a young child born to them...On that day the funny little crooked man came to the her chamber to claim what was promised him. The Duchess began to cry and say "NO! NEVER! It is my child you are asking for!"

The little man began to rant, rave and get very angry.... He shouted, "THAT WAS A PROMISE! YOU MUST KEEP YOUR PROMISE!"

The Duchess replied, "That was a promise of a story teller's daughter who was not responsible for the situation she was in. I was so desperate to get out of it that I would have agreed to anything - Even something I did not know would be so precious. I can give you the gold and more back for what you did for me, but not my precious child for I love it too much."

The funny little crooked man began to stomp and shout, but there was nothing the imp could do - for anything bargained for must always be gained willfully. So he began to think maybe I can trick her into that which I so desire. So he smiled and said to her, "This I say to you Duchess were it not for me you would not be Duchess nor would you have given birth to that child...So I will give you this much of a chance...If you can guess my name within three days then you shall have what you want...But if you cannot I shall have what I want. I will be back this evening for your first attempt to guess my name."

With that the funny little crooked man disappeared in a puff of smoke.

The Duchess sent for her father and told him, "It is your stories that got me into this fix and if I am discovered surely we shall all suffer - so you must help me figure out his name."

The family set about gathering the names of all the people that they could find and the names they knew of. In the evening when the little man returned she began to name off the names but to each he replied, "No. No. No." When she reached the end of the list the imp began to laugh and dance.

He said, "This is the first evening you have two more." The next day they sent many more people near and far to get her any new names they had not tried. But once again he replied, "No. No. No." and danced off laughing again.

The next day the Duchess remained in her chamber crying...eventually Duke Neverenough came in and asked why she was crying...By then the girl was so desperate for her baby's sake she told him the entire story...The Duke loved his wife and child so much by then for she was a good girl so it did not matter so much to him how the gold was spun to straw...All that mattered to him now was his wife and child. Duke Neverenough gathered the entire town together to have everyone travel as far as they could to get names and still return by evening.

When the funny little crooked man returned the people of the town began naming off names until there seemed there were no more...Once again the little man had replied, "No." to all of them.

Then the funny little crooked man declared in a gleeful voice, "Oh I see you have not been able to guess my name so the child is now mine!"

The Duke's soldiers raised their swords to defend the child. The funny little crooked man raised his hands and with a puff of smoke the swords were gone.

Just then a man stepped forward and said, "Wait I have someone who has a story to tell you." Then he led a mystical being called an Irid forward.

(Irids have many names such as wizard, sorcerer...)

"Last night I went to the forest to gather the herbs that only grow at night," began the Irid, "When I saw a fire glowing in the woods. I heard odd singing so I approached carefully to the edge of the fire light. There I saw all manner of forest folk gathered around fire watching the imp who was dancing, singing, and telling a story.... And this is how the story went..."

"An imp's desire is a simple one...  
To steal the youth when its just begun...  
To take what is given can't be undone...  
For in convincing the Duchess  
The child's life is won...  
Rumpelstiltskin is my name...  
An imp to live from the young again."

The imp stared in disbelief he had been discovered for what he was and in a puff of smoke disappeared.

From that day onward the storyteller was careful when he spun a tale to make sure it was as real as possible...