

Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin Study Guide

**Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin by Liesl
Shurtliff**

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Plot Summary

Rump lived in an unnamed village in a mountainous region of an unnamed country. Rump's father died in an accident in the gold mines of the mountain before Rump was born. His mother died giving birth to him. With her last breath she told his grandmother what the baby boy's name would be. She said "Rump. . . Rump. . ." but then breathed her last breath before she could tell his grandmother his complete name. It was a law in the community that children had to keep the name that their mother gave them. He was henceforth known as "Rump".

Rump suffers from the misfortune of having a really bad name. He also suffers from never having known his mother who he often thinks and wonders about. His unhappiness with his lot in life caused him to stop growing when he was just eight. So not only does Rump have a dreadful name, he is the smallest boy in town. Rump is teased unmercifully by the other kids, especially two bullies named Bruno and Frederick. He is the "butt" of their ridicule and in fact they call him "butt". On his twelfth birthday they give him a "present" – they threw what looked like mud in his face. But it wasn't mud; the boys pointed out that it was the perfect gift for him because it came from a cow's rear. Rump has a rough life. He has to work in the gold mines all day to try to find enough gold to exchange for rations. It is his and his grandmother's only means of support. But the mine is running out of gold and he is at a disadvantage because he is too small to use a pick-axe. Each week he barely finds enough gold to get even a small amount of food.

Rump lives with his grandmother who loves him. But she is old and sick and doesn't take the place of his mother. He discovers his mother's old spinning wheel in a pile of firewood. He wants to keep it but his grandmother wants to throw it in the fire. She tells him not to use it. He is too young and could get hurt. But the boy is curious and when his grandmother is asleep, he decides to try it out. To his astonishment when he spins a handful of straw, it turns into skeins of gleaming gold.

Although Rump wants to keep his gift of spinning gold a secret circumstances are such that he is forced to sell his gold to the greedy miller who felt he had found his own personal gold mine. When the king gets wind of the unusual gold that someone was crafting in the village, he comes to town with his soldiers to search each house to find out who was making the gold. The miller's lies and deceit set off a series of events that result in an awful situation for Rump and others, including the miller's own daughter.

The Witch of the Woods tells him that he will find the rest of his name. She also warns him against the perils of magic. Every act of magic, even the smallest, has a consequence. Rump eventually leaves the village and sets off to find the rest of his name and to liberate himself from a life of spinning gold for greedy men. In his ventures, he makes good friends and learns a lot about himself, his mother and life in general. He learns that his name is Rumpelstiltskin and that he indeed possesses a powerful magic. Along with his name, he finds resolution about the mystery surrounding his mother and

about magic itself. Rumpelstiltskin also discovers that love is a special kind of magic and in a category all by itself.



Chapters 1-6

Summary

Chapter One: Your Name Is Your Destiny

When Rump was born, Anna, his mother had a difficult birth and didn't survive. Before she took her last breath, she told her mother-in-law that the boy's name was "Rump... Rump..." she wanted to finish the name but couldn't get it out; she died and the newborn boy was stuck with the name "Rump". He lived with his grandmother and worked the mines. The people had to find gold for King Bartholomew in order to get rations. If they found a good amount, they'd get extra rations.

Rump worked the mines but he was small and weak – he stopped growing when he was eight – and not able to dig up much gold. The other bigger boys, Bruno and Frederick, made fun of Rump and his name. One of them called him "Butt". On this twelfth birthday one of the boys gave him a "gift" - he flung something that looked like mud in his face but it wasn't mud. They told him it was the perfect gift for him because it came out of a cow's rump. "Red" a girl who was the closest thing to a friend that Rump had told the boys to leave him alone. She didn't have many friends either. Her name was a color but it represented anger and evil so people were intimidated by her.

The pixies were always looking for gold, too. They were pesky and would fly in front of Rump's face and land on his arms. They were useful when there was still a lot of gold left in the Mountain. They could detect where the lodes were. When anyone saw them swarming in a certain spot in the mine, it was a sure sign that gold was there. But now they weren't much help because the mountain had been stripped of so much of its gold.

Rump thought to himself that if "your name is your destiny" that his really stunk.

Chapter Two: Spinning Wheels and Pixie Thrills

Rump loved coming home to Gran and the smell of her cooking. Rump liked to make up rhymes. He got it from Gran who liked to make them up herself. He was glad she didn't mention that it was his birthday. He didn't tell her the gift he got from one of the boys. She told him not feel ashamed for not being able to find gold. Boys were considered men when they were twelve. But Rump wasn't even allowed to handle a pick axe. He had half a name and he was half a boy. Gran told him to get some firewood which was her way of telling him to get on with his life. If he never learned the rest of his name and he was Rump all his life she would still love him.

Rump walked outside and said hello to "Milk" the goat and "Nothing" the mule. People didn't normally name their animals but Rump thought he should call them something. Milk gave Gran and him milk. Rump's father had worked in the mines and died there before Rump was born. Nothing used to help his father in the mines but now he was lazy and did nothing to help Rump.



At the bottom of the woodpile, Rump spotted a spinning wheel. It had belonged to his mother. She used to spin wool and sell it. It was old and warped and Gran wanted to use it for firewood, but Rump had nothing from his mother and wanted to keep it. Gran finally agreed to let him keep it but told him he wasn't old enough to spin.

After Gran went to sleep that night, Rump decided to try it out. Suddenly, pixies emerged from the cracks in the wall and were dancing on the spinning wheel and on his head and even on his nose. He cut his finger on the wheel and yelped waking his grandmother. He pretended he was asleep as she dragged the spinning wheel away. He feared she was going to throw it in the fireplace but much to his relief she didn't.

Chapter Three: The Greedy Miller and His Daughter

The next day was difficult for Rump. His finger and his head hurt so he couldn't get much done, and of course Frederick and Bruno were relentless in their favorite pastime – ridiculing him. He was glad when the day was over. He was hungry and all he could think about was food. It was rations day and everyone walked to the mill. An old mine worker named Rupert complained that he didn't get enough food for his gold. But everyone else just humbly took what they were given. Gran swore that Oswald, the miller, cheated the people.

As Rump approached the miller for his turn to get rations, he noticed that Oswald's daughter, Opal, was on the porch spinning. Rump was transfixed and watched her closely. Oswald noticed Rump watching his daughter. Spinning was a woman's work but Opal would show Rump how to spin for some gold. Rump turned him down. He couldn't use gold for that. He would be betraying his Gran. Opal was a beauty and Hans Jacob had offered the miller a fortune for her hand in marriage, but the miller turned him down. She was worth more than that.

Rump brought the rations home but Gran was resting so he ate a piece of cheese for dinner. After he fed the animals, he felt like being alone and went to the woods. Most people avoided the woods because of the ogres and trolls but most of all because of The Witch of the Woods who could cast magic spells. The pixies were pestering him and constantly landing on him. He swatted them away but they returned. The pixies attacked him causing him to fall on the ground. When he recovered, Red was standing there. She asked him if he was made of gold.

Chapter Four: Red and Her Grandmother

Red asked Rump if he had stolen some gold. The pixies didn't attack like that unless someone had gold in his pockets. Red noticed that Rump had pixie bites all over his arms which confirmed her suspicion that he had gold. The town bell chimed meaning a baby had been born. The gnomes would soon be running through the village telling everyone the baby's name. Rump wondered why the town and the mountain and animals weren't given names. Red said names were important and shouldn't be wasted on animals or non-living things.



Rump and Red laughed heartily when the gnomes announced that the new baby girl was named Furball. Suddenly Red's grandmother emerged from the woods. She wanted to know what was so funny. He learned that Red and her grandmother knew that he had only a half name. Red's grandmother told him he'd eventually find the rest of his name. She told him he'd cause a heap of trouble before he found it and that he'd have to live his destiny first. He thought his name was his destiny. She told him that he'd find his destiny first and then find his name. She warned him to watch his step. That night in bed, he thought about what Red's grandmother had told him. He looked at his spinning wheel. It was waiting for him.

Chapter Five: Fluff to Mouse, Mouse to Mice

Rump and Red were walking home the next week on rations day and encountered Kessler the peddler. His bright red hair stuck out in all directions. He sold ware from the Kingdom including gold jewelry. But Rump and Red couldn't afford any of it. Kessler said he would cast a magic spell for a scoop of grain. Red wasn't interested but Rump was. Red pointed out that Kessler's magic often didn't turn out very well.

Rump allowed Kessler to scoop his cup into his bag of grain. Kessler grabbed a bit of fuzz and said he could turn it into a mouse. Then, right in front of their eyes, he did just that. Suddenly there were six mice scurrying about. Then there was a noise that frightened Kessler and suddenly mice started raining down from the sky. The mice were everywhere, all over the village. Kessler hightailed it out of town. Red warned Rump that magic had consequences. Even small magic can cause big problems. Rump, however, wondered to himself if he could he would do magic too.

Chapter Six: Gold! Gold! Gold!

Rump woke that night with a swarm of pixies hovering over him. Some landed on his face. He was careful not to disturb them. He didn't want to be attacked again. It occurred to him that maybe the pixies could not only detect gold but could sense that a person had the ability to turn something into gold. The pixies sang "Gold! Gold! Gold!"

Rump had no wool but a voice told him to spin the straw that lay beneath his feet. He took some straw and spun it in the spinning wheel. Suddenly, around the bobbin were glowing threads of gold! He pulled more straw from his mattress and spun more gold. The pixies were joyful. He spun all night and in the morning a fortune was lying at his feet. It was his destiny to be rich and happy. Rump caught Frederick and Bruno looking in the window. Had they seen the gold?!

Analysis

Rump was cheated out of having parents and out of having a full name. His mother died just after she gave birth to him. She had selected the perfect name for him but she didn't have enough energy to get the entire name out before she took her last breath. All she could say was "Rump". So Rump was stuck with the name and was the "butt" of jokes from the other boys. He was bitter about his name because everyone associated



it with a “rear end”. He had always thought that “your name is your destiny” but Red’s grandmother told him it was just the opposite. He would find his destiny and then learn his name. Her words seemed to give Rump new hope.

Red’s grandmother emerged in the woods when Rump and Red were sitting talking and laughing. Most people didn’t enter into the woods because scary creatures lived there – ogres, trolls and, worst of all, The Wicked Witch of the Woods lived there. Red and her grandmother seemed to know a lot about Rump and his mother, things that even Rump didn’t know. Red’s grandmother predicted that he would cause “a heap of trouble” before he found his name. Could it be that Red’s grandmother was The Wicked Witch of the Woods? That would explain why she was in the woods and how she knew so much about Rump and his mother.

Despite the warnings of Gran and Red and her grandmother, Rump was fascinated by magic. When Kessler the peddler, a quasi-magician, turned a piece of fuzz into a mouse, Rump was astounded. He would love to cast magic spells. When Rump got home, he was drawn to the spinning wheel. Since he had no wool, he tried to spin straw. He was amazed when he turned it into golden thread. Even though Rump was told that the spinning wheel would only bring sorrow, he was determined to continue his spinning. He ignored the advice of his elders, which he would probably regret later.

Rump felt that there could be no problem spinning gold. After all, they needed it to get food and he hadn’t been finding much gold in the mines. When the miller gave him a bag of sawdust instead of rations, he emphasized that “Gold means food”. Perhaps the miller was somehow aware that Rump was spinning gold. A few of the boys were looking in Rump’s window and probably saw the gold. Perhaps they told the miller who was known to be a greedy man.

Rump could get himself in that heap of trouble that Red’s grandmother told him about if the miller caught on that Rump could spin gold on the spinning wheel. His own daughter had a spinning wheel but she spun wool. The miller could force Rump to teach his daughter how to spin gold by threatening him that he’ll get no food unless he does. The boys who peeked in the window could threaten to turn Rump into the authorities unless he gave them gold. Red’s grandmother told him he’d find his destiny and then find his name. If this is his destiny, how will it ever lead to his learning what his whole name is?

Discussion Question 1

Why did Rump hate his name?

Discussion Question 2

Why did the pixies swarm Rump?



Discussion Question 3

Why did Gran tell Rump not to use the spinning wheel?

Vocabulary

destiny, treadle, pick axe, pixie, fluttered, ingratitude, meager, brayed, bleated, spinning wheel, converged, shrill, swarm, hovered, vibration, bobbin, scrounged, rhythmically, vibrant, crevices



Chapters 7-12

Summary

Chapter Seven: Gold Means Food

Rump hid the gold under his bed and didn't report into the mines at starting time. He worried that the boys had seen the gold and would think he stole it. He was afraid he'd be arrested and spend the rest of his days in a dungeon. He didn't tell Gran. She looked so old and tired, he didn't think she could take any more stress and worry. He remembered how she had reacted to the spinning wheel the first night he found it.

Rump wrapped the bobbin with the golden thread in a cloth and headed to the mines. He'd tell Red what happened. He didn't see the boys at the mines which surprised him. The pixies were swarming him. He found Red and told her he wanted to talk to her in private. She led him to the woods and suddenly there was a path beneath his feet, a path he'd never seen before. She told him not to ask any questions.

They went deep into the forest where Rump had never been. They ran into a swarm of bees. Rump stayed back but Red walked right through them. She pulled a piece of honeycomb from a log and the bees all flew back into their log. This was Red's private place and she promised to punch him in the face if he told anyone about it. She warned him not to come there without her. They sucked all the honey out of the honeycomb and ate the waxy honeycomb all gone.

Rump showed Red the bobbin with the golden thread. Red knew that his mother had been a spinner. He thought the bobbin was special (he didn't want to say magic) and that it could change things into different things. What if the bobbin could turn straw into gold, he asked her. She said the bobbin wasn't magic. If he spun straw into gold it was coming from him not the bobbin. She told him his mother was from Yonder and had used magic to spin and that it got her into a lot of problems. There were consequences for magic.

The next rations day the miller gave him a huge sack. Rump had only found a few pebbles of gold. The miller told him that "Gold means food". When Rump opened the sack, it was filled with chalk and sawdust. The miller was sending a message.

Chapter Eight: Gold Means Secrets

Gran was upset that the miller didn't give them any rations. She wanted to give the miller a piece of her mind but she was too weak to leave the cottage. She needed food. Rump knew the miller wanted his gold but he would notice that the gold didn't come from a mine. Gran said they would make do with what they had.

Gran saw him looking at the spinning wheel. She said she hoped he hadn't tried it out. He was too young and could get hurt. Rump asked her if his mother had gotten hurt on



it. He also asked her why she hadn't told him that his mother was from Yonder. She told him that her mother spun trouble and left it for her. She told him she loved him and would protect him, but he should stay away from the spinning wheel. It would only bring sorrow.

That night Rump saw a woman with black hair and green eyes spinning by the fireplace. He knew it was his mother. She was spinning straw into gold. She kept spinning and the gold kept piling up until it was up to her eyes. But it was all a dream and Rump woke up.

Chapter Nine: Gold Found, Treasure Lost

Winter fell and although the blanket of snow was beautiful, it meant that the road would eventually be blocked and no one could get to the mines to look for gold. There would be more hunger than usual. Rump made his way up the mountain while he still could and was hit by a barrage of snowballs from Frederick and Bruno. When he went for his rations, again the miller said "no gold, no food." He felt that his spinning had already brought bad fortune upon him.

Gran fell ill and Rump ran to Red's house. Red and her mother followed Rump back to the cottage. Red's mother told Rump to get a bucket of snow. Red's mother warned Rump that his Gran was old and that no one lasted forever. But she and Red tended to her and did their best to break her fever. Red warned Rump not to spin any more gold. It wasn't safe to trade gold. Rump stayed up all night. He sat by his Gran's bedside and fed her broth, but she needed more food. After Gran fell asleep, he took out three skeins of gold and wrapped them in a rag. He left and headed for the mill.

Opal answered the door and told Rump to go away and come back on the next rations day, but Oswald came into the room and Rump showed him the gold skeins. Rump wouldn't let Oswald touch the gold. Rump was going to insist on picking out whatever food he wanted, but Oswald gave him only a ten pound sack of oats and a ten pound sack of flour. Rump knew he should have gotten more for the three skeins of gold, but he couldn't muster the nerve to ask for more.

Rump made food for Gran and spoon fed her. Her fever raged for three days. She finally refused to eat. He retold her all the stories about trolls and pixies and ogres that she had told him. Then he told her his story about his birth and how he had his mother's spinning wheel. His life would have been so different if she had lived. Gran grasped his arm and told him to spin gold. She fell asleep that night and didn't wake up the next morning.

Chapter Ten: Unfair Bargains

The gnomes ran around announcing the Elsbith, grandmother of Rump, had passed away. Rump didn't cry when Gran died or when she was buried, but after he came home after the burial, he cried and cried. Rump ripped all the gold from his mattress. He hated the gold. He took it all to the miller. The miller gave him only a five pound sack of potatoes and told him to keep up the good work. Rump felt he had been cursed. Rump



didn't plan to spin again but he ran out of food. There was hardly any gold to find in the mines. Besides, the miller didn't want that gold anymore - he wanted Rump's gold.

Rump was forced to take the straw from Gran's mattress and spin it. He felt guilty at first, like he was betraying her, but he had no option and kept spinning. For the next four months he spun and traded his gold for food. However, the miller was never fair. One time he only gave Rump a sack of rotten carrots and a small sack of flour. Rump's rarely went outside and his only visitor was Red who came by once in a while with a loaf of bread.

Rump thought that he was destined to spend his life spinning gold and getting nothing for it, but then someone came to the village who wanted a certain kind of gold.

Chapter Eleven: King Barf

Winter ended and the pixies reappeared; Rump's cottage was swarming with them. One morning he saw that everyone was gathered in the town square. He found Red outside who told him that the mountain pass was cleared and that someone was coming. He looked down the mountain road and saw armed soldiers mounted on huge war horses. Suddenly, King Bartholomew was there and introduced to the crowd. The King had never set foot in the village before. The King was bedecked in gold from his crown to his boots and saddle. The King, who people called King Barf behind his back, was rather chubby. He looked like a pig wearing a crown.

The King thanked the people for the important work they were doing. He had come to the village because something unusual had come to his attention. He pulled out a spool of golden thread. It was Rump's gold. It was high-quality gold and fine workmanship but no one knew where it came from. The miller must have traded it and then it somehow fell into the hands of the king. He announced that his soldiers would search all the houses to learn if someone had been holding out on him.

Everyone was ordered to return to their homes and await inspection. Rump was doomed! Gold was lying all over his floor as if it were straw. He decided he would hide it in the woods. Rump didn't care about the gold, but he didn't want to go to the dungeons. He gathered up all the gold and ran to the woods. The miller spotted him with his satchel and knew what it was. The pixies sensed that Rump had gold and swarmed him. Rump fought them off, fell, and rolled on the ground. When Rump looked up, the miller was standing before him with his nine sons, Opal, and three soldiers. A spool of gold was unraveling and rolling toward them. Rump ran towards the woods but he was blocked by a big horse that King Barf was mounted on.

Chapter Twelve: The Miller's Life

King Barf ordered Rump to give him the gold. The miller stepped between them. He told the king that the gold was his and that Rump was just his slave. The king insisted that Rump turn the gold over to him. Rump blurted out "What will you give me?" The king responded that he would spare his life. Rump gave the gold to the king who looked it



over carefully. The king asked the miller how the gold was made. It was a strange business, he responded, lots of magic and mystery.

The king didn't like magic or anything that was more powerful than he was. The miller told the king that it was his daughter, Opal, who spun straw into gold. The king wanted to see Opal spin gold but the miller said he'd never seen it himself, but she could turn a roomful of straw into a roomful of gold. Opal would spin gold for him that very night. The king wondered why he had never heard of her gift. She would be rewarded if she wasn't being deceitful. The Miller assured the king that she had just discovered her talent. The entire village would be rewarded if what the miller told the king was true. If not there would be dungeons or death. Opal was terrified when she was pulled upon a horse and led away with the king's procession. The miller was beside himself. What had he done?!

But Rump had spun the gold and started it all. It was really his fault. And now Opal was in a terrible situation and she hadn't done anything wrong. Rump needed help and the only person he could think of was The Witch of the Woods.

Analysis

Rump was beginning to understand the curse attached to spinning gold. His grandmother fell sick and died and the miller continued to cheat. Yet, Rump had no choice other than to continue spinning gold. Although he didn't get what he should from the greedy miller, at least he got enough to survive on. He was alone and depressed, because his grandmother died and he blamed himself for her death. Her dying words were for Rump to spin gold, but she had always told him not to spin gold. She apparently died with some secrets that Rump would never know. At this point, however, her change of heart about spinning is inexplicable to readers.

Rump was not having an easy time of it. He was constantly attacked by pixies, which were becoming more and more aggressive because they knew that he had hidden gold and they were determined to find it. They were not the only ones after the gold. The miller wanted Rump's gold more than the gold in the mines. The gold that Rump spun is described as gleaming and finely crafted. King Bartholomew got wind of the gold and that it was crafted by someone in the village, and his visit to the village makes things worse for everyone - especially Rump.

The miller saved Rump's hide by saying that it was his daughter who spun the gold. But the miller isn't really worried about Rump's hide; he was a greedy man and wanted to take the credit for the gold himself thinking that he would be rewarded by the King. The miller didn't realize, however, that he was actually sentencing his daughter to death or to the dungeon. Additionally, the miller would personally be in deep trouble when his daughter was not able to spin gold.

The miller brought on his own problems, however. He pressured Rump into spinning gold by cutting his food supply off which contributed to Gran's illness. He told Rump that gold was food forcing Rump to spin gold so he could get food to help his Gran get



better. But Gran was too ill, and it was too late. The miller was proud of his beautiful daughter and boasted to the King about her spinning ability. He even tried to get Rump to pay for spinning lessons with Opal. Overall, the miller was a greedy man and a liar and cheat.

Due to her rather's false claim that she could spin gold, Opal may be doomed. However, it was noted that she was a beautiful girl. A fortune had already been offered for her hand - an offer that the miller declined. Perhaps the King could be smitten with Opal even if she didn't spin gold?

Rump felt guilty about all the misery he wrought. Had he listened to his dear dead grandmother, he wouldn't have touched the spinning wheel, and none of this would have happened. Maybe even his grandmother would still be alive and Opal's life and that of her father wouldn't be in jeopardy. Rump understood the bad fortune that his spinning caused. Red's grandmother told him that he would cause a heap of trouble before he found his destiny and then his name. Her prophecy was coming true.

Rump needed help and the only person he could think of that could really help him was someone possibly more powerful than the King - the Witch of the Woods. He would ask the witch to save Opal from a horrible fate. Rump could save Opal if he spun the straw into gold and somehow got it to her, but how long could he keep up such a farce?

Discussion Question 1

Why did Rump decide to take some of the gold he spun to the miller?

Discussion Question 2

What warnings did Red's grandmother give Rump about magic?

Discussion Question 3

What brought the king to the village?

Vocabulary

dungeons, sluice, wary, prickle, trodden, flinch, consequences, rations, subdued, eager, miller, billowed, melancholy, skeins, girth, rancid, gnome, despicable, ornery, expedition, sentiments, ambled, trundle, mongrel, damsel



Chapters 13-18

Summary

Chapter Thirteen: The Witch of the Woods

Rump gave one of the gnomes a message for Red. He was going to the woods to see the witch. If he didn't return, he asked that she feed his animals. The woods were eerie and he couldn't find the path that he and Red had taken. Suddenly, Red turned up and told him that the witch couldn't fix his problems. The witch could cause him more problems. But Opal was in big trouble and needed help. Red finally agreed to take Rump to the witch. Suddenly, the path reappeared underneath his feet.

It was a long walk to the witch's cottage. Rump was frightened and was about to turn around when the cottage door opened. It was Red's granny. She was making stew that smelled wonderful. Inside there were little vials and bottles all over but no eyeballs or lizards. Instead, she had pots of plants and fresh herbs. The witch knew about all Rump's problems and told him that they had really just begun. He wondered if the stew was poisoned, but it smelled so good that he couldn't resist a bowl of it.

The witch told Rump about his mother. She was a natural born spinner and had special gifts. She was from Yonder where they raise sheep and gather wool. Rump asked if his mother was a witch. The witch responded that the mountain had gold and the earth was full of magic and mystery and so was his mother; because Rump's mother could spin gold, she had magic and was a witch. Unfortunately, Rump's mother abused her gift. She didn't realize that the transformations she made would steal her life away. The witch knew that the miller had been cheating Rump. The King gave Rump something for the gold he took – he had spared Rump's life. Rump's mother came to the witch because she could never refuse a bargain that was offered to her. Rump was having the same experience. He couldn't speak up and ask for more.

The witch had tried to help Rump's mother. The witch had told her that there was one thing that could free her from the ties that bound her; she needed to find a stiltskin which was magic in its purest form. Rump wanted to know where he could find one. It could be anywhere – under a rock or on a mountain. Once a person had stiltskin, it couldn't be taken from him and a curse couldn't destroy it. Rump would have to look for his stiltskin. His mother's sisters in Yonder might be able to help him. Opal had her own destiny. Sometimes it was best not to interfere with another person's destiny. Before Rump left the witch gave him a small seed.

Chapter Fourteen: Rump to the Rescue

Rump decided to take Nothing and try to find Opal. He had to help her. Red would feed Milk for him. Red didn't think he should go but she understood that he had to. Red was worried about how Rump could find Opal and if he might get caught and shot with an



arrow or poisoned. He really didn't think he had a chance, but he had to try. Rump and Red dug a little hole and buried the seed that the witch had given him. He packed a few things in a satchel – his mother's bobbin and a dry loaf of bread. Rump walked through the village that led down the mountain. He looked back on his village not knowing if he'd ever see it again and felt like he was going on a great expedition. When he reached the bottom of the mountain, it was night and it was still twelve miles to the King's palace.

Rump walked what seemed like forever when he finally saw a village and the King's castle in the distance. When he got closer, he saw that the castle was surrounded by huge walls; soldiers with spears were guarding the gate. How could he get around all this? Then a miracle happened. Rump overheard a man on a horse-driven cart tell the guards that he was delivering straw – not to the stables but to the chamber. Rump knew that it was for Opal. While the man talked to the guards, Rump sneaked into the cart.

A maid began taking the straw from the cart and discovered Rump. She hit him with a poker and told him to get out. He was able to elude her and wound up running alongside the castle walls. The soldiers searched for him but he hid in some thorny bushes and they didn't find him. He figured that Opal was in a tower. There were several towers and he picked the one that was closest to the stables where the straw was kept. He climbed up on the outside of the tower to an open window. He heard someone crying. It was Opal. She grabbed a poker to hit him but then realized it was Rump. She found the idea of Rump rescuing her hilarious. She laughed so loud he was afraid that someone would hear.

But Opal was upset. Why did her father tell the King that she could spin gold? Rump explained that it was actually him who could spin gold, and her father hadn't thought that the King would take her away. He thought Rump would spin the gold and her father would deliver it to the King and then take credit for it. There was a big pile of straw in the corner. Opal told him to start spinning. Rump asked what she would give him. She responded that she would give him her gold necklace. He wanted to ask for more but couldn't. He spun all night and turned all the straw into gold. He found a comfortable place in the stables and rested before he started his trip back. He swore he'd never spin again.

Chapter Fifteen: Straw, Straw, Straw

The next day there was a lot of activity in the stables and Rump was afraid to leave his straw bed because he might be discovered. He was hungry and thirsty. He wondered what happened to Opal. Had her father come for her? The maids told the stableman that the King ordered that all the straw in the stables be brought to the west tower. Rump knew that Opal still needed his help, so he decided to make his way back to her tower room. There was twice as much straw in Opal's room. It all had to be spun to gold by morning or else she would be killed. This time she offered him the opal ring that her mother had given her. He worked through the night, and by morning the room was filled with straw.



Rump made his way down the tower to leave but saw carts of straw being brought into the grounds. He figured that it was his destiny to spin gold for a greedy King for the rest of his life. One of the men who was hauling straw up to the west tower recruited Rump to help them carry it. After he deposited the straw he totes, he was so exhausted that he buried himself in the straw.

Chapter Sixteen: One Bargain Too Many

Rump fell asleep in the straw. When he awoke, Opal was crying and straw was stacked to the ceiling. The King promised to make her his queen if she spun all the straw into gold. Rump worked all night. Opal kept harping at him to work harder and faster. When he was almost finished, he asked Opal what she was going to give him for his work. She had nothing left to give him. She became angry and told him to get out. She bent over to pick up a skein of gold but it wouldn't budge. It was as though the gold had melded with the floor. It was the magic. Since she hadn't given him anything for the gold, it wasn't hers. No one – including the King – would be able to pick it up. She could promise to give him something when she became queen. She heard the King coming and pushed Rump toward the window. In her haste, she promised to give Rump her first born.

Chapter Seventeen: Martha's Endless Tales

Rump had fallen out of the window, hurt himself and passed out. When he awoke he heard people talking about the King marrying a commoner who was a witch. He'd marry any woman if she could spin gold for him someone said. Rump was in the servants' quarters and was being tended to by a very nice woman. He told the woman his name was Robert. Her name was Martha and she was the King's cook. The soldier standing nearby was her son, Helmut. Rump saw that they were very close and wondered if he would have had a close relationship with his mother had she lived. Martha referred to the girl and the gold. No good ever came of magic, she said. The King should focus on food, not gold. The kingdom was suffering from a food shortage. There was gold everywhere in the castle but the King loves his gold and wouldn't trade it. The servants were constantly warding off the pixies. Martha told of the many calamities that gold had caused.

The wedding was scheduled for the next day. The King planned to toss gold coins to the people as part of the celebration. Martha wanted to send Rump's mother the message that Rump was being well cared for. She would get a gnome to deliver the message. Rump said his mother's name was Red. Rump had indeed stirred up a heap of trouble. Opal didn't understand magic. She probably thought he wouldn't take her first born, but it was magic and he HAD to take the baby. The King would want his queen to continue spinning gold for him. Would Rump have to stay there forever? And what would she give him to keep spinning the gold for her – more babies? She had to give him something or it wouldn't work – it was the logic of magic. He remembered the witch's words – he had to find stiltskin. The next morning after Martha left for the wedding, Rump took some food, gathered his belongings and left.



Chapter Eighteen: In Search of a Stiltskin

Nothing was right where Rump had left him, chewing grass and looking bored at the bottom of the hill. The royal procession with the King and new queen passed by. The King was dressed in more gold than ever. Servants were throwing gold coins to the crowd. Rump encountered Kessler who had caught a coin and was trying to cast a spell on it to make it multiply. It frightened Rump that magic had obviously driven Kessler mad. After traveling for a while a gnome delivered a message from Red. She told him to stop spinning for Opal, get away from her and make no more bargains. He gave the gnome a message to take back to Red. He told her he was traveling to Yonder and that he was to be given Opal's first born child.

Rump and Nothing took a rest break. Rump wandered into the nearby field and found an apple tree. Just as he reached for a big juicy apple something grabbed him by the ankle. Big brutish hideous creatures with yellow eyes and teeth had captured him. They were trolls!

Analysis

The Witch of the Woods was Red's grandmother, which explains why the path in the woods magically appeared and disappeared, as well as explains why Red was protected from the swarm of bees. Although Rump was naturally a little apprehensive to enter her cottage and eat her food, she won him over and appeared to be a nice woman who had the ability to cast magic spells. Her being a witch also explained why she and Red and Red's mother knew so much about Rump and his mother.

Rump was naturally a little defensive when the witch told him that his mother abused her gift of magic. The witch only told him, however, so he wouldn't make the same mistakes that his mother made. Unfortunately, Rump seems the type of boy who has to learn the hard way. Rump is able to relate to his mother when the witch told him that she made bad bargains – he had been making some very bad bargains with the miller himself. The witch also knew that the miller had been cheating Rump. The witch was trying to build up Rump's confidence so that he wouldn't continue getting cheated and so he wasn't so quick to trust others.

Unknown to Rump, the witch told him what the rest of his name is – stiltskin. She tells him that stiltskin is the name for pure magic. Once he finds this pure magic he will, at the same time, find his name which makes sense because it's one in the same. His mother was trying to guide him when she named him Rumpelstiltskin. She wanted her son to find pure magic not the magic that she practiced that was destructive and that, according to the witch, stole her life from her. It was a mother's dying gift to the son she would never know.

Although the witch advised Rump not to interfere in Opal's destiny, he felt duty-bound to help her. He felt guilty that she was in such a spot. Had he listened to his grandmother,



he would have never touched the spinning wheel and Opal's life wouldn't be in jeopardy. He knew he was risking his life but he had to try to save her.

Rump was a selfless person who thought of others first. He always worried about his grandmother having enough to eat; he worried when Red was angry with him; he didn't want to offend the miller and Opal; and he allowed the miller to cheat him week after week without speaking up. Although he was saving Opal's life by spinning gold for her, she treated him rudely. He put up with her. The only reason he asked what she would give him for his efforts is because it's the "logic of magic". Magic doesn't work if there is not a bargain, and the bargain has to be kept. In her haste to get rid of Rump when she heard the King coming, Opal told Rump that she would give him her first born child for the gold he spun for her. Opal probably thought it was a silly promise that Rump didn't take serious. But, as he said, she didn't understand magic and that she **MUST** give him the child now.

Rump saw himself as spinning gold forever and hiding in the shadows of the castle in order to supply gold to the greedy King, allowing him to believe that Opal is doing the spinning. Rump did not want that to be his future. He wanted more out of life than that. He recalled that the witch told him that his aunts in Yonder might be able to help him, and he remembers that he needed to seek his stiltskin.

Discussion Question 1

Who was The Witch of the Woods? Were there hints in the book that this woman was the witch before it is revealed in this section?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Rump feel compelled to help Opal?

Discussion Question 3

When Rump left the castle, what was he determined to find?

Vocabulary

dwindled, transfixed, trickster, fidgeted, mirthless, scoundrel, hooligan, stalwart, ritual, brutish, bulbous



Chapters 19-24

Summary

Chapter Nineteen: Trolls, Witches and Poison Apples

The trolls thought that Rump looked like a nice tasty boy. But Bork, one of the trolls, thought he didn't smell like most humans. He cut him down and brought him to a clearing where more trolls were gathered. He told Mard, a girl troll, to smell Rump. Rump asked them to get it over fast which the trolls found very funny. They didn't want to eat him - he was too skinny! They generally didn't eat humans but wanted them to think they did so the humans would leave them alone. If the humans weren't afraid of them, they'd try to make slaves out of the trolls.

The trolls stopped Rump from eating an apple because it could have killed him. It wasn't an ordinary apple tree – it had poisoned apples. Out of politeness, Rump drank some of the sludge drink that they all loved. It was awful and he was sure that he had swallowed a worm. He asked how they knew the apples were poison. Bork told him that long ago a queen hated her stepdaughter because of her beauty. The girl ran away and lived with the dwarves in the forest. The queen delivered a poison apple to the girl who went into a deep sleep. Then a prince woke her up with a kiss. Rump's grandmother had told him that story many times, but he had never heard the ending that the trolls went on to tell him. The dwarves were careless and threw the apple down into the valley, a seed took root and the poisonous tree sprouted up.

The trolls heard that the King married a girl who could spin gold from straw. The trolls figured she must be a witch. Rump told them that not all witches were bad. The trolls began wrestling and rolling around. One of them fell into a hole, and the other trolls pulled him out. Rump looked down in the hole saw a treasure of curious objects – a boot, a mirror, a coil of golden rope among other items and a harp that was playing all by itself.

Chapter Twenty: Trolls Smell but They Also SMELL

The trolls told Rump that it was nothing. They blocked his view of the hole. They told him the harp wasn't playing by itself – it was the wind. Mard wanted to tell Rump the real story about the items but Bork didn't. He said it was their secret but Mard said that Rump was their secret. They could smell the magic on him. They were protecting the items in the hole and he couldn't have them or touch them. Years before, Bork's ancestor, Bork the Great, was sniffing for magic. His master ordered him to eat a magic bean to see what would happen. Bork the Great was angered and told his master that he'd eat him if he didn't set him free. And that was when people became afraid of trolls and feared that they'd be eaten by them. They still look for magic so they can keep it away from humans. Rump had more magic smell than most witches; he reeked of magic.



Rump stayed the night but couldn't sleep. When the trolls were all asleep he went to the hole. Maybe his stiltskin was in there. Slop, one of the trolls, was sitting in a tree watching him. When he pulled out the boot, Slop told him it was a seven-league boot – one step and he'd be over the mountains, but it would give him an itch that could last twenty years. The mirror would tell him what he wanted it to tell him but it would enslave him and make him twisted and evil. Every item was magical but each one would cause bad things to happen, too. Slop warned him again to stay away from the apples.

Later, Rump sneaked away into the darkness and found the tree. The apples were glowing in the dark. Rump hoisted himself up in the tree hoping maybe its magic would rub off. He fell asleep under the tree. Slop dragged him back to the clearing in the morning. He told them his name was Rump. Mard thought it was the finest human name she ever heard. Rump gave Nothing to the trolls. He'd be happy with them and Rump could travel faster without him. Rump left for Yonder with his satchel on his back.

Chapter Twenty-One: Yonder

Red sent Rump a message that Oswald was now Lord Oswald but she refused to call him that. On the third day of his travel, he found a sign post that indicated that Yonder was one way and Beyond was another. A kind woman who had not heard of his mother gave him some bread and cheese. She pointed him in the direction of another village. The pixies were beginning to swarm again. Rump asked a man in the next village over if he knew Rump's mother but the man didn't. Another man, who was spinning on his porch, told Rump that he must be lucky with all the pixies swarming around him. Rump said he was the most unlucky person he knew. Rump asked if there were a lot of spinners in the village. There were a number of wool spinners and there were the Wool Witches who could turn wool into silk and grass into silver. The Wool Witches lived in the woods. Rump ventured into the woods and found a cottage. A girl opened the door and invited him in for cake.

Chapter Twenty-Two: The Wool Witches

The girl grabbed Rump and pulled him inside. The smell of delicious food was overwhelming. Inside, the large room seemed to hum as if it were alive. The girl tried to guess his name. Then another woman came in and called another older woman in. The old woman looked closely at Rump and said "Anna". He told them that Anna was his mother. They hugged him and called him "nephew" and said he looked like his mother. The older aunt, Hadel, was less than thrilled that he was there. Balthilda was wary of him but Ida, the youngest sister, was happy he had come. He told them his name was Robert. Hadel insisted that he take a bath before he ate with them.

After dinner, Rump stopped in his tracks when he saw Hadel spinning wool and turning it into skeins of thread of every color imaginable. Balthilda was knitting a shawl with the colorful thread. But the most amazing thing he saw was a beautiful tapestry of unicorns, princesses, dragons and maidens. There was a big loom that Ida used where she created beautiful images as she weaved the colorful threads in and out. It was surely magic.



Ida told Rump that it was all created by magic and enchantments. Balthilda and Hadel sounded a cautionary note. It was more hard work than magic they insisted.

Rump learned that his mother traded everything she had – including her soul. He asked what happened to his mother. Hadel responded that greed and magic spun her to death. Balthilda told Rump that they never ask for more magic without the same amount of skill to match it, but Anna pushed the limits by believing that she was more powerful than magic. One day a greedy merchant asked her to spin straw into gold. Her sisters were worried but Anna was undeterred. She turned the straw into skeins of gold. The merchant cheated her and gave her just a sack of grain for her pile of gold. Anna was bitter and vowed to be the greediest wench ever. But no matter what people offered Anna for her gold, she took it. Rump could relate.

The merchant returned with a wagonload of straw. He paid her with a new spinning wheel so she could keep spinning. She was wrapped in a rumpel – which was what the aunts called their work because it was trapped in magic. Hadel cautioned that once a person became unbalanced in magic, the rumpel would grab him and never let go. To get away from the merchant, Anna ran away taking only her spinning wheel with her. When Rump lay down to sleep all he could think of was “Rumpel” – was that what his mother meant to name him? He fit the definition. He was definitely caught up in magic.

Chapter Twenty-Three: Growing Crazy

Rump woke in the morning and heard his aunts talking. They felt he was keeping something from them.

Hadel said her trouble didn't die with her especially if she had been in a rumpel. Ida wanted to help Rump, but Hadel said they tried to help Anna but there was nothing they could do. He thought to himself that Rumpel must be his name because that was what he was and it was why he could spin gold.

Their goat's name was Eloise. Rump said he was surprised that they named their goat. The sisters told him that they couldn't expect to get any milk out of her if they didn't have enough respect for her to give her a name. When he milked Eloise he got milk up to the bucket's brim. Maybe his aunts were right about naming animals. He felt bad about calling his mule Nothing because that was what he got out of him.

That night the aunts worked on their creations. Ida told him she pulled the magic into her and that magic was everywhere. You breathe it in like air, she told him. Hadel said if you breathe in too much and don't push it back out, you get in trouble. . . like Anna did. The aunts made sweaters, shirts and pants for Rump. One of the sweaters was green like his eyes. He had eyes like his mother they told him. After several weeks with his aunts, they became less wary of him. Hadel never did warm up to him and always stayed her distance. Ida always made sure he had plenty to eat. Rump helped his aunts. He kept their thread and yarns from tangling and chased away the pixies. He and Ida had fun making up rhymes together.



One day Rump pulled on his pants and they came up over his ankles. He yelled for Ida. His pants had shrunk! But his pants weren't smaller; Rump had grown. He wondered if he had grown because he learned that his name was Rumpel. Ida attributed it to the hardy food he had been eating. One morning he gagged on his oatmeal when he heard his aunts talking about the queen. She was with child. He hoped he wouldn't hear the news of the baby's birth.

Chapter Twenty-Four: Where There's a Will, There's No Way

Rump decided he would stay for a while. Babies took a long time to be born. In the fall his aunts went to market with their tapestries, yarns and cloths. Hadel asked Rump to help her move the pixie nests. It was best to move them right before winter when they were too tired to fight. Hadel showed him an old log that was filled with sleepy pixies. Hadel picked up a few more pixie nests and had Rump carry the log and follow her. A couple of the pixies started to flutter around Rump. Hadel told Rump not to move or talk, took a bucket of dirt and dumped it on the top of his head right as Rump was sneezing. Hadel was suspicious about the interest the pixies had in Rump mentioning that they loved to smell gold. Rump confessed that his name wasn't Robert and that he had knew how to spin. Hadel assumed he'd gotten himself into trouble. He said that his Gran told him to find a stiltskin. Hadel had heard of them but they were rare and it wouldn't be easy for Rump even if he found one. The best advice she could give him was to remember that when a spinner's wool is tangled only a tangler could get it untangled.

After his aunts were asleep that night, he spun a few pieces of straw. And sure enough they turned to gold. Then he tried wool. At first it seemed to stay a gray color but in the end it turned to gold, too. He felt trapped by magic.

Analysis

Rump learned several good lessons from the trolls. He learned that they weren't human-eating monsters and that it was best when magic was kept away from humans. It was humans who misused and abused magic and who cause real sadness and misery. Like the ability the pixies had with gold, the trolls could tell if a human possessed magic. While the pixies sensed where gold was, the trolls could smell magic. One troll commented that Rump smelled more like magic than most witches, indicating that Rump's powers are quite powerful. The trolls had hidden magical items that they were keeping from the humans. What else might they have hidden – perhaps the stiltskin that Rump is looking for could be secreted in one of the trolls' treasure troves.

Staying with his aunts was a positive experience for Rump. He learned a lot from his aunts. He learned to treat all living things with respect. He saw that the goat that the aunts had named Eloise gave more milk than his goat at home that had no real name. He also learned that he should use magic wisely, but was that advice that he would follow? He was fed well by his aunts. So well, in fact, that he grew a few inches. They are all witches but their magic was not all-powerful and they had learned to temper it. They cautioned Rump that one's magic cannot outweigh one's natural abilities.



The aunts hoped that Rump would listen to them. They sense he had inherited the powers of his mother, their sister, who abused her powers and led to the sadness that Gran referred to and perhaps even to her early death. Rump didn't reveal that he could spin straw into gold, as he didn't want his aunts to worry about him and fret over whether he'd turn out like his mother. But Rump had been cautioned quite a bit about the abuse of magic and perhaps it was finally sinking in.

Rump also added another piece to his name. Now he feels that he has found his name – Rumpel. He didn't yet realize that there was one more piece to be added before he found his full name. He also learned that a rumpel is the magic that can wrap and ensnare a person gifted with magic ability. The aunts debated about Anna, Rump's mother, and whether she had been in a "rumpel" when she died.

Rump was still searching for a stiltskin. Perhaps when it is finally added to his name to make it complete, the suffocating rumpel magic would be tamed and tempered by the pure magic of the stiltskin. Perhaps his mother feared her son would inherit her magic and abuse it like she did. By adding the "stiltskin" on the end of "rumpel" she was perhaps hoping that the bad magic would be trumped by the good.

Rump's past will soon be catching up with him. The bargain he made with Opal would soon be something to be dealt with; he had to take the baby. But he still had time. He was enjoying his time with his aunts. It was probably the best family life and the best he'd ever eaten in his life. Hadel was not surprised when Rump confesses that "Robert" is not his real name. Rump figures that his spinning had gotten him in trouble. Hadel had always feared that he was like his mother. Hadel gave Rump a piece of advice that doesn't make sense yet: if your wool is tangled only a tangler can untangle it. Rump was still tempted by gold. He felt the lure of the spinning wheel and learned he could still spin gold from straw. He also figured out that he was able to spin wool into gold, too.

Discussion Question 1

What familiar fairytale did the troll tell Rump about how the poison apple tree was able to grow?

Discussion Question 2

What did the trolls tell Rump about all magical items? Why did they keep them from the humans?

Discussion Question 3

Who were the Wool Witches and what were their gifts?

Vocabulary

succulent, writhed, captor, rancid, furtively, hoard, recoiled, troll, shrill, stupor, furrowed, intricate, enchantments, wench, abominable, pittance, contagious, oaf, abundant



Chapters 25-29

Summary

Chapter Twenty-Five: Warnings from Red

It was winter and the snow was falling. Rump grabbed a gnome and gave him a message for Red. First he thought about telling her about his witch aunts and Opal's baby but changed his mind. In the message he sent with the gnome Rump told Red that he had three aunts in Yonder and that he grew. Sixteen days later, he got a message from Red. Lord Oswald was running out of food and there was hardly any gold left in the mountain. The King had found Opal out, but he couldn't kill Opal now, so he had turned his wrath on the mountain people. Rump wondered if Opal and her father told the King about Rump and if soldiers were searching for him.

To cheer Red up, Rump made up a rhyme and sent a gnome to deliver it to her. It took 34 days for Red to respond. Rump was worried about her. Red wrote that the miller had been asking about Rump and where he was. Red also wrote that her granny said to remind Rump to watch his step. Rump wondered if the miller could find him. He worried that the miller could hurt his aunts. So no harm would come to his aunts, Rump felt it was time for him to leave.

Chapter Twenty-Six: Destiny Calls

Rump left his aunts' house one frigid morning without saying goodbye. He couldn't let them know where he was going. He'd miss them - especially Ida. He left them a note thanking them for everything they did for him. He walked through the snowy woods. He decided to go beyond Beyond, which was the farthest place away from the palace that he knew of. Rump hid when he heard some people approaching in the dark. They were talking about being on "Butt's" trail. It was Frederick and Bruno! Rump stepped on a pixie's nest and riled up the sleeping pixies. He thought of the witch's warning – watch your step! The pixies viciously attacked Rump, and the commotion caught the attention of Frederick and Bruno, who were wearing soldier uniforms and carrying big hunting knives. Frederick ordered Bruno to tie Rump up.

Bruno and Frederick were sons of the miller who had sent them. Rump was being kidnapped. Rump didn't want to return to his village to spin gold for the rest of his life - he wanted to be free. Rump was tied to a tree when they stopped to sleep the first night. He was swollen from the pixie bites, but the swelling reduced through the night, and Rump was able to wriggle out of the rope that tied him to the tree. Just as Rump ran for it, a gnome appeared announcing that the queen had had her baby. Rump wanted to run to Beyond, but the magic within him made him run toward the castle to collect on the worst bargain he ever made.

Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Miller and the Merchant



Rump would have wound up at the castle no matter what, but Bruno and Frederick caught up with him and led him with a rope like a cow. Once through the castle gates, they took Rump to Opal's room. Lord Oswald was there and ordered his daughter to give Rump what she had promised him. Rump didn't want the baby, and Opal didn't want to give it to him. She had fallen out of favor with the King. Now with Rump back, she could start supplying gold to him again. The King wanted gold more than he wanted the child. Opal, however, would give Rump the riches of the kingdom to keep her baby. She pleaded with Rump not to take him. The miller told her to give Rump the child, she would have more children.

Opal knelt before Rump and was racked with sobs. The baby's name was Archie. Rump took the baby in his arms. Lord Oswald showed him to the stack of straw and the spinning wheel, but Rump said he would never spin again. Oswald mentioned Rump's mother and right then he realized that Oswald was the merchant who first forced his mother to spin gold and cheated her in their bargains. She ran away to the mountain but he followed. He held out hope that Rump had inherited her gift. He was convinced of it when Bruno and Frederick told him that they had seen a huge pile of gold when they peeked in the window.

Rump hated Oswald. It was Oswald who ruined his mother's life and now Rump wanted to ruin his Oswald's. Rump repeated that he wouldn't spin any gold, but Oswald said he had something to offer him that he couldn't decline. The miller pulled a girl from the straw. She had a black eye and had been beaten. For his spinning, Oswald would return to him his friend unharmed. It was Red.

Chapter Twenty-Eight: Grasping at Straws

Red fought to break out of her bindings. Her screams were muffled by the gag on her mouth. The boys had captured her because she was Rump's only friend. Rump had no choice. He gave the baby back to Opal so she could feed it. Oswald told him he had three days to spin all the straw into gold. Rump knew, however, that it would be more than three days; he'd spend the rest of his days spinning for the King. Rump worked through the night. In the wee hours of the night, Oswald drifted off. Rump figured he could untie Red and they could make a run for it. He convinced Opal to take the gag off Red's mouth by promising her there was a way for her to keep her baby. Red told him he would die if he didn't stop spinning. She said he hadn't found his full name yet. Rump said spinning gold was his destiny, but Red said he had a choice. Oswald woke up and gagged Red again. He threatened to burn her in a stack of straw if Rump tried that again. He slapped Rump brutally across the face. He ordered him to resume his spinning.

Oswald eventually fell asleep again. Opal wanted to know how she'd be able to keep her baby. In order to keep her baby, she would have to tell him his full name before he finished spinning the gold. She immediately left to consult the king's wise men. Later she came back with some names but they were all wrong. He reminded her that his name started with "Rump".



Chapter Twenty-Nine: Guessing Game for Finding Names

There was so much gold that Oswald figured he could take some for himself without the King noticing. Opal continued to guess names – they were all wrong and ridiculous sounding. Oswald kept taking more gold. Red had grown exhausted and quit fighting the rope that bound her hands. And Rump, of course, kept spinning. He remembered that Red's granny had told him there would be a way out for him. But what was it?!

Nature was calling and Rump had to go outside. Frederick and Bruno accompanied him. He told them he didn't need an escort. They told him that he needed protection because the trolls could get him. That gave Rump an idea. He told the boys that he had a hidden stash of gold out in the field. If they took him there, he would split it with them. The brothers agreed to the bargain.

Analysis

Rump once again showed that he was a caring and considerate boy. He feared that the King or the miller were after him, and his aunts had been so good to him that he didn't want to stay at their house and endanger them.

The magic that Rump possessed was once again proven to be powerful. After he escaped from Frederick and Bruno, he wanted to run as far away from the castle as possible. When a gnome announced the birth of Opal's baby, however, the magic inside him – the rumpel – twisted and turned his insides, forcing him to travel back to the castle to claim the baby. When a magic bargain was made, it had to be carried out.

Rump's instincts were right when he feared that the miller might be tracking him down. After all, he and his daughter were in deep trouble because of Opal's inability to spin gold. Besides, the miller was greedy and surely wanted to steal some of the gold himself. Rump had taken in the advice from Red, the Witch of the Woods, and his aunts that magic does not bring happiness and that his spinning gold had caused sadness like his Gran told him. Rump told Oswald that he would not spin any more gold, but the bargain Oswald made was impossible to ignore. Red had been captured and Oswald was holding her hostage to force Rump to do his bidding.

Rump told Opal she could keep her baby if she could tell him his full name. That seemed an impossible task but maybe a little magic would make it happen.

Oswald, as greedy as ever, was stealing gold from the king. He thought there was so much gold that the King won't notice some missing. However, the King said long ago that if he was deceived, the guilty party would either die or be sent to the dungeon.

Rump had learned a lot after leaving home. He thought quickly and told the greedy Frederick and Bruno that he would share some hidden gold with them. However, he had a different plan in mind.



Discussion Question 1

Why did Rump leave his aunt's house? What does this say about Rump?

Discussion Question 2

What did Rump learn about Oswald that made him really detest him?

Discussion Question 3

What bargain did Rump make with Opal that would allow her to keep her baby?

Vocabulary

veered, seething, disheveled, embroidered, wail, girth, slithered, scoffed, utterly, insatiable, provident, entrapment, feisty, flail, malevolently, submissive, peeved, vile, manipulate



Chapters 30-Epilogue

Summary

Chapter Thirty: The Stiltskin

Bruno and Frederick made an excuse to their father and went with Rump by horse and carriage to the hidden gold. The baby was with them because Oswald insisted that Rump take him everywhere. In just a half-hour they arrived at the area near the woods where Rump claimed the gold was hidden. He walked carefully to the tree – watch your step rang in his ears – and spotted the snare. He stepped in it and it yanked him high in the air bringing the trolls out from the deeper woods. Rump yelled, “Trolls!” and pretended he was afraid of them. Bruno and Frederick were so afraid that they ran for the carriage and took off.

Rump was out of the castle! Now, he had to find his stiltskin. Two things were different since the last time Rump and the trolls were together: Nothing was fat and was renamed “Horace”, and Rump was a good two inches taller. Rump explained who Bruno and Frederick were and why he had a baby with him. He confessed to them that it was he who spun gold, not the queen.

Bork told him that he had seen raccoons and squirrels eating the apples from the poison tree. He got to thinking that maybe poison didn’t come from poison. To prove his point, Bork took a big bite out of an apple. Rump complained about what his magic had done to him. Bork said it wasn’t the magic, it was what Rump did with the magic. Bork walked off and Rump thought about what Bork had told him. His destiny controlled him. But what exactly was “destiny”? Rump realized that he was born with the magic he possessed and that no one could take it away. He was Rumpel and he was a stiltskin. He pictured his mother and continued to repeat “Rumpel” and “stiltskin”. He said the words over and over again until he said them together as one word. The name traveled through his body from his head to his toes. He knew that Rumpelstiltskin was his name.

Bruno and Frederick returned for him. Rump wasn’t afraid of them any longer. But there was a lot to untangle: Red was in trouble, he had Archie with him and he had to face Oswald. Rump was the only one who could untangle it all.

Chapter Thirty-One: Third Day’s the Charm

Rump had the confidence that he could make everything right. On the way back to the castle, nature was calling and Rump walked off the road into the woods. He found several pixie nests and placed them carefully in the baby’s basket. All the pixies were asleep. Rump took his coat off and piled some dirt in it. He pulled out Opal’s necklace and ring and put them in the basket. They would soon be returned to their true owner. When Rump returned to the tower, he told Oswald that he refused to spin. Red looked confused. She was still bound and gagged and Opal was still sobbing. Rump heard the



pixies coming alive and starting to hum. Rump told Oswald that he had broken their bargain. He had promised to return Red unharmed. She'd been beaten and bound. No bargain, no gold.

Opal started to talk, but Oswald interrupted her. But she told her father that she was the queen and she would speak. She wanted to get her baby back and said a few names that she had said before and knew were wrong. But then she said that Rumpelstiltskin was Rump's full name. Rump figured that the boys overhead him saying his name. Opal demanded her baby back. She struck out at Rump when she saw her baby's face caked with mud.

Then it all happened at once. He remembered the witch's word, "Watch your step!" He proclaimed that Rumpelstiltskin was his name. He stomped on the pixie nests and soon the room was swarming with angry pixies. He stomped on the floorboards and he and Red plummeted through the floor. They fell in the kitchen in a big pot of mashed potatoes. Martha was standing over them with a knife. Then she recognized "Robert". He told her that his real name was Rumpelstiltskin. He borrowed Martha's knife and cut the rope off Red's hands. As Rump began to lead Red out of the room, Martha stopped him and gave them some pies. Rump and Red took off running.

Chapter Thirty-Two: From Small Things

While everyone was dealing with the pixies, Red and Rump ran out the gate. The pixies were picking up the gold and throwing it out the window. When it landed on the ground, the gold turned to stones that no one could pick up. When Rump and Red got back to the Village, she invited Rump to her house, but he wanted to go home first by himself. The village was the same but it seemed that it had changed; it was he who had changed though. He was thrilled to see that the seed they planted had grown into a sapling. Rump thought about what Ida had said that magic was everywhere and what Red said that the magic was inside of him. Magic was everywhere, inside and outside, of everyone and everything. He took some straw and sat down at his mother's spinning wheel. He pushed the straw through and it floated in the air glittering in the moonlight like bits of gold – but it wasn't gold. It was straw. He knew his mother and grandmother would be happy. He felt that they were close which was its own kind of magic.

Epilogue: Your Destiny Is Your Name

Rump was thrilled with his name. He and Red climbed the mountain and he could see the village, the castle and even Yonder and Beyond and the woods where the trolls lived. Someday he would visit his aunts again but for now he was home. He decided he wanted to give the mountain a name. Everything deserved a name and everything had a destiny.

Analysis

When the troll ate the apple that had always been considered to be poison, he took a risk but proved that it wasn't poison. Although a poison apple had been planted and



sprouted into a tree, it turned out that it didn't mean that the apples would be poison. Rump learned that poison doesn't come from poison which was a metaphor for him and his mother. Not that his mother was evil or cruel, but she had abused magic and caused trouble and problems for herself and others. She did not do well with magic but it didn't mean that Rump, her off-spring, would make the same mistakes.

After he figured out his complete name, Rump had a new confidence. He became a quick thinker and quickly figured out how to make everything right. Just like Eloise the goat, when a person has a name that belongs to them, he will do his best. Nothing the mule really did nothing – but what could be expected of him since he was “Nothing” to Rump. A person lives up to his expectations even if those expectations aren't very high.

Rump returned home after his adventure. He was glad to be back home, but by leaving home he was able to find himself. He commented that the village was the same but seemed changed. However, in his maturity and new self-awareness he acknowledged that it was he who had changed – and changed for the better. The magic he had would always be part of him. It couldn't be taken away, but he had learned that it should be used sparingly and was nothing that should be flaunted. With his new view of life, he saw magic everywhere. The closeness he felt to his mother and grandmother was a special kind of magic which might be the best kind of magic he would ever know.

Discussion Question 1

Why did Rump want to take Bruno and Frederick to the trolls?

Discussion Question 2

Why did Rump feel that it was Oswald who had broken their bargain?

Discussion Question 3

What did the sapling that grew from the seed that Rump and Red planted represent?

Vocabulary

brayed, pathetic, demon, whimpered, scoffed, pranced, gingerly, crevice, sludge, clenched, tunic, maniacally, converged, incessant, plummeted, commotion



Characters

Rump

Rump lived in a mountainous region of an unnamed country. Rump's father died in an accident in the gold mines before Rump was born. His mother died giving birth to him. With her last breath she told his grandmother what the baby boy's name would be. She said "Rump. . . Rump. . ." but didn't have enough life left in her to tell his grandmother the rest of his name. The baby was henceforth known as "Rump".

Rump was twelve years old and small for his age; he stopped growing when he was eight. He not only had a terrible name, he suffered from not having a mother who he often thought about. Rump was teased unmercifully by two bullies named Bruno and Frederick. He was the "butt" of their jokes and, in fact, they even called him "butt". Rump's best friend was a tough girl named Red who stood up to the bullies for him. Like the other children in the village,

Rump had to work in the gold mines all day to try to find enough gold to exchange for rations. But the mine was running out of gold and he was at a disadvantage because he was too small to use a pick-axe. Each week he barely found enough gold to exchange for an adequate amount of food for him and his grandmother.

Rump's life changed when he found an old spinning wheel that belonged to his mother. His grandmother cautioned him not to touch it. She knew that it was magical and that it could lead to real problems for her young grandson. However, Rump's curiosity compelled him on and he was astonished when he ran straw through the wheel and spun it into gold.

Rump had to deal with powerful magic and greedy men who wanted his gold. However, his real quest was to learn about his mother and find the rest of his name. He left the village on a quest to discover his name and in the process found himself.

Lord Oswald

Oswald was the village miller. He collected the gold that the villagers mined from the mountain at the end of the each week and gave them their weekly rations. The amount of the rations each person received would depend on how much gold they had found. Everyone was aware that he cheated the people and probably kept some of the gold for himself but they were powerless against him. He held all the cards because the people depended on him for their food.

Oswald had nine sons, two of whom were Frederick and Bruno, the bullies who picked on Rump, and one daughter. His daughter Opal was beautiful. Oswald turned down a fortune from one man who wanted her hand in marriage. Oswald said she was worth more than that. Unknown to Rump, it was Oswald who first corrupted his mother into



using her magic to spin gold. Oswald sensed that Rump had inherited this gift from his mother and kept reminding him that gold meant food.

When the King came to town and demanded to know who was making the finely crafted gold, Oswald lied and said it was Opal. To Oswald's surprise, the King took Opal back to his castle with him. He expected her to spin gold, and if she couldn't it would mean death or the dungeon. Rump came to the rescue and spun the straw into gold for Opal and allowed her to pretend she had spun it.

After his daughter married the King and became queen, Oswald became Lord Oswald. He had a final confrontation with Rump who refused to spin any more gold for the King.

Red

Red was a tough, no-nonsense girl in Rump's village. She was Rump's only friend and she stood up to the boys who bully Rump. She worried that magic would be Rump's undoing and advised her friend to stay away from it.

Gran

Rump's mother died in childbirth; his father died before he was born. He was raised by his grandmother who loved him dearly. But when he was twelve, Gran fell ill and died and he was left virtually alone in the world.

Bork

Bork was a troll with yellow teeth and eyes and became friends with Rump. He told Rump how humans abuse magic and how trolls keep magical items hidden away from humans to keep them from misusing them.

Ida

Ida was one of three aunts that Rump found in the village of Yonder. She was the youngest sister and welcomed her nephew into their home. She made sure to feed him well and was always on Rump's side when her older sisters questioned his character.

Opal

Opal was the beautiful daughter of the miller. Her father lied and told the King that Opal could spin gold. The King kidnapped her, placed her in the tower, and demanded she spin straw into gold for him, or she would either be killed or put into the dungeon forever. Rump sneaked into the tower Opal was being held in and spun the straw for



her, allowing her to pretend she had performed the act. Rump didn't want to spin the straw, but he felt obligated to try and save Opal's life.

Opal, however, was rude and somewhat ungrateful to Rump, despite all he did for her. The last time Rump spun straw into gold for her, he asked what she would give him in return, as his magic required a payment, and she hastily offered her first born. Opal eventually married the King and becomes the queen. Years later, she gave birth to her first baby, and Rump reluctantly returned to claim it.

Not wanting to give up her baby, Opal and Rump struck another deal; if Opal could guess Rump's real name, she could keep her baby. After many guesses, Opal finally guessed "Rumplestiltskin" and the spell was broken.

King Bartholomew

King Bartholomew, also known to the villagers behind his back as King Barf, loved gold and couldn't get enough. Rump was forced to spin gold for the greedy king and feared that it would be his destiny to spin gold for the monarch forever.

Frederick and Bruno

Frederick and Bruno were two of the miller's sons. They were bullies and teased Rump about his name. Later, they became soldiers in the King's army and captured Rump. They brought him to the castle where Lord Oswald forced Rump to spin gold for the King.

The Witch of the Woods

People were afraid to go into the woods because of the Witch of the Woods who lived there. However, she was really just Red's grandmother and turned out to be a kind and helpful woman who had magic powers.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Spinning Wheel

Rump discovered his mother's old spinning wheel in a pile of firewood. His grandmother wanted to throw it in the fireplace but Rump wanted to keep it because it was something that belonged to his mother. It was with this spinning wheel that Rump discovered he held the same magic his mother did and was able to spin straw into gold.

The Seed

The Witch of the Woods gave Rump a single seed. He planted the tree before he left the village for a long adventure. When he returned, he was heartened that the seed had sprouted into a tree – a sign of renewal.

The Poisonous Apple Tree

The trolls warned Rump not to eat the apples from the poisonous apple tree. Later, Rump and his troll friend, Bork, discovered that the apples weren't poisonous and that something that comes from poison isn't necessarily poisonous itself. The tree is a metaphor for Rump and his mother.

The Disappearing Path

When Rump walked in the forest with Red, there was a pathway, but when he ventured into the woods by himself the path had disappeared. This path led to the Witch of the Woods' cottage.

The Straw

Rump tried out his mother's spinning wheel against the wishes of his grandmother. He was astonished when the straw turned into gold after he spun it.

Sludge

When Rump spent time with the trolls, they gave him sludge, their favorite drink. The liquid was slimy and dirty and had live worms in it. Although he detested it, Rump drank some to be polite.



Stiltskin

The witch told Rump that he had to seek his stiltskin which was magic in its purest form. It could be found anywhere on a mountain or under a rock. Stiltskin couldn't be taken away or destroyed by a curse.

Rations

Rump and the other villagers had to work in the gold mines in the mountain. At the end of the week the villagers turned their gold over to the miller in exchange for rations. Despite the fact that most of the villagers were not getting enough to eat, the miller consistently shortchanged them on rations.

Bargains

A bargain had to be agreed to for every act of magic. The bargain had to be carried out and could not be broken.

The Pixies

The pixies were tiny winged beings who could sense where gold loads could be found in the mines and knew when someone had gold stuffed down in their pockets. When riled, the pixies would swarm, attack and bite their targets. Rump was frequently swarmed or attacked by pixies due to his magical ability to turn things into gold.



Settings

The Village

Rump lived in a cottage with his grandmother in an unnamed village. The village was located in a mountainous region and was surrounded by woods.

The Mountain

Rump and all the kids and men worked in the gold mines in the mountain. They were required to turn over their gold to the miller who gave it to the King. In exchange for their gold, they were given weekly rations.

The Castle

Opal was the miller's daughter and had been taken by the King to his castle. Her father claimed that she could spin gold but she can't. Rump felt guilty for the spot that Opal was in and took off for the castle to save her.

Yonder

Rump traveled to the village of Yonder to find his aunts. He wanted to learn more about his mother who died when he was born. He stayed with his aunts for many months and was fed so well that he grew two inches while there.

The Woods

The Wicked Witch of the Woods lived in a cottage in the woods. When Red learned that Rump needed the witch's help, she led him to the witch's cottage on a magical path.



Themes and Motifs

Abandonment

One of the main themes that runs through the story of “Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin” by Liesl Shurtliff is one of abandonment. Rump’s father died in the mines of the mountain before Rump was born. His mother died in childbirth and she had only enough breath left in her to get out just part of his name. Thus, the baby would be known as “Rump”, a name that caused him a special kind of grief for years to come. He didn’t blame his mother for his half-name but couldn’t help but imagine how much better things would have been for him had she lived and been able to tell him his complete name. The story unfolds when Rump is twelve.

Rump was raised by his grandmother who loved him, but he was tortured by the loss of his mother. He saw the close relationship between Martha, the king’s cook, and her son, Helmut, and he wondered if he would have had a close, loving relationship like that had his own mother lived. Rump felt cheated out of that opportunity. As a motherless child, he had a lack of confidence and belonging. The unintentional abandonment by his mother left him emotionally, as well as physically, damaged. Even his growth was stunted; he stopped growing when he was eight.

The only “mother” he had, his grandmother, became ill and died. At twelve years of age, Rump was truly alone in the world and had to fend for himself. He became isolated for a time and rarely left his cottage. He grieved over losing his grandmother and felt guilty because he had not obeyed her. He had discovered a spinning wheel that had belonged to his mother. His grandmother knew that it could lead to trouble and wanted to burn it. However, Rump wanted to hold onto it, as it was the only thing that he had that his mother had touched. It was a piece of his mother. But the entry of the spinning wheel into his life spelled trouble in the form of powerful magic and partially led to Gran’s end.

To find his real name – a metaphor for finding himself – Rump had to leave home. When he returned, his village hadn’t changed but he had. He had found resolution about his abandonment issues. When Rump entered his cottage again he felt the love of his mother and grandmother and knew that they were pleased with him. It was a special kind of magic that was more powerful than the kind that had wrought evil.

Greed

One dominant theme in “Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin” by Liesl Shurtliff is greed. Ironically, the boy who could spin as much gold as he wanted and could literally spin himself into a fortune, had no interest in the gold.

However, the miller who collected the gold mined in the mountain by the villagers in exchange for rations was known as a dishonest and greedy man who cheated the people and likely kept some of the gold for himself. Years before, the miller had



corrupted Rump's mother by forcing her to use her gift of magic to spin straw into gold. The miller knew that Rump was her son and sensed that the young boy had inherited the same gift from his mother. The miller would look intensely at Rump, give him meager rations which were not enough to live on and tell him that gold meant food. He was trying in a not so subtler manner to get him to spin gold.

When the King learned that someone in the village was creating finely crafted gold, he immediately came to the village and demanded to know who was making the gold. Oswald lied and told the King that it was his daughter, Opal, who was spinning the gold. To Oswald's surprise, the King took Opal back to his castle, declaring she either must spin gold or face the dungeon or death. Oswald was upset that he placed his daughter in such jeopardy, but it was his greed that drove him; he had thought he would be rewarded for his daughter's "gift".

King Bartholomew was a greedy monarch who can't get enough gold to make himself happy. He took all the gold from the people and left them in near starvation. When he rode into town, he was dressed in gold from his crown to his boots and there was even gold on his horse's saddle. After he discovered the gold being spun from straw, he ordered that every scrap of straw that could be found be brought to the tower where Opal was staying. Opal couldn't spin the straw but Rump sneaked in to save the day. The cook told Rump that gold is everywhere in the castle and that the King was wearing more gold than ever.

Rump enjoyed the riches of his magic; he didn't need the riches of gold.

Coming of Age

Although "Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin" by Liesl Shurtliff is a fantasy and a different take on an old fairytale, it is fundamentally a coming of age story. As the story unfolds, Rump had just turned twelve. In those days of yore, when a boy was twelve he was considered a man. And Rump had a man-sized job. He worked in the gold mines on the mountain hunting for food that he exchanged for food for himself and his grandmother. But Rump didn't feel like a man. He was small for his age – the smallest boy in town. His mother had died giving birth to him and he had been emotionally traumatized from the loss. He had been cheated out of an important part of life. In addition, he had such an awful name that he suffered daily humiliations and harassment from the other boys over it. They nick-named him "butt" and he was certainly the butt of all their jokes.

A turning point in young Rump's life was when his grandmother fell ill and died. She had raised him and loved him and had been the only source of stability in his life. Rump was in deep mourning over his grandmother's death. As what often happens in such times of despair, Rump became introspective and began to evaluate himself and his life; he realized that he was not happy. There were mysteries and unknowns surrounding his mother and the name she intended on calling him. There were also mysteries and unknowns about Rump himself.



With all that in mind, Rump was determined to find some answers. He ostensibly set out to learn what his full name was, but in reality his mission was to find himself. In order to do so, however, Rump needed to learn more about his mother, her involvement with magic, how she lived her life, and why it ended so soon. After visiting his aunts, befriending some friendly and helpful trolls, taking in the advice of a kind witch who knew what he must find and encounter a real challenge from the greedy King Bartholomew and the equally greedy Lord Oswald, Rump realized who he was and that he didn't have to go on a trek to find himself. The magic within him was always there and would always be there. He learned that he must use his magic well and not use it to satisfy anyone's greed. When he returned home, he had grown a full two inches, but truthfully, he had grown much more than that and in so many ways.



Styles

Point of View

“Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin” by Liesl Shurtliff is written in the first person from the perspective of the protagonist, Rump. Writing the book from this perspective allows the reader to be aware of the thoughts and feelings of Rump and permits the reader to gain a deeper understanding of his motivations and actions. Writing from the third person would disallow this in-depth scrutiny of the protagonist and leave what drives him to the speculation and judgment of the reader. The author does that work for the reader through Rump’s thoughts and deeds and through his dialogue changes with other characters.

Rump is an appealing character and the reader is privy to his hurt at literally being the “butt” of jokes with the other boys in his village who bully him. He is the smallest boy; his growth was stunted when he was eight. This scenario allows the reader to experience the brutality experienced by kids who are bullied by other kids. Rump is not only hurting from his small stature and his name, he lost both his parents – his father before he was born and his mother at childbirth. He only has his grandmother, and though she loves him despite his name and his other shortcomings, Rump feels like he is virtually alone in the world.

In the “Author’s Notes” at the end of the book, Shurtliff provides a view of her approach in writing this book. She focused on Rump’s unusual name and imagined how modern-day kids would react to it. She is fascinated how many people she interacts with seem to fit their names. Did their parents have an intuitive sense about their children before they were born? Her concept is also based on her own personal experiences. She was a shy child, like Rump is portrayed, and didn’t like her name because it was hard for others to pronounce and spell. There were plenty of Jennifers and Ashleys in her classes but she was the only Liesl. She expanded this concept about a person’s connection to his name to the destiny that is linked to a person and his name.

Language and Meaning

“Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin” by Liesl Shurtliff is a tale of lost names, mysterious powers, magic and unknown destinies. The story is a fantasy based on the fairytale of yore, “Rumpelstiltskin”. In this updated version of the story, there is an emphasis on magic and destiny. In the unnamed mountainous region where the story takes place, there are colorful and unusual characters that appear throughout the story. Living in underground tunnels in the village are gnomes. They are not very bright but are useful. Since the story takes place in a time before modern communication, the gnomes are used to deliver messages and to make birth and death announcements.



All the people in the village work in the gold mines of the mountain. The area is populated with pesky tiny flying pixies who sense where the gold lodes in the mine are located and can sense who has gold in their pockets. The pixies love gold! When angered and woken from sleep, they attack humans, flutter in their faces, land on their noses and in their hair and have a wicked bite. There are also ogres in the woods and a feared Witch of the Woods who turns out to be friend rather than foe to Rump.

When Rump travels to the kingdom, he is captured by huge beastly trolls who have yellow eyes and yellow teeth and are rumored to eat humans. But they are really harmless. They like to keep humans afraid of them so they don't try to enslave them. When Rump becomes friendly with the trolls, Bork tells him about the story of the poison tree in the area. He tells them the story of Snow White but with a different ending. In Bork's version, the dwarves were careless and threw the witch's poison apple into the dirt where one of its seeds takes root and sprouts into a poisonous tree. The trolls keep magical items hidden from humans because they are known to misuse magic. In the troll's treasure trove of magical items there is a mirror that lets a person see what he wants to see, a seven-league boot that will take its wearer to the kingdom in one step, and a harp that plays by itself.

The poison tree and its apples are a metaphor for Rump and his mother. Rump's aunts fear that he will misuse his magical powers like his mother did. The trolls assume that the apples on the tree that came from a poison seed were also poisonous but later learn that the apples were free of poison. Rump and the trolls learn that an apple from a poison tree doesn't necessarily produce poison apples. Even though Rump's mother misused magic doesn't mean that Rump will do the same. Another metaphor also involves a seed. Rump and Red bury a seed that the witch gave them. They bury it before he leaves on his trek. When he returns, he is heartened to see that the tree is blossoming into a lovely tree. The tree represents Rump's new beginning after returning from his adventure.

The author has created a magical and enchanting story about magic and enchantment. Her use of humor and colorful characters is engaging and creates great interest.

Structure

"Rump: The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin" by Liesl Shurtliff has thirty-two chapters and is concluded with an epilogue. Each chapter is numbered and titled. The titles are clever and hint at the content of the chapters. For example the clever titles in "Chapter 2: Spinning Wheels and Pixie Thrills" and in "Chapter 20: Trolls Smell, but they also SMELL" provide a glimpse into the chapter. The beautiful cover graphic is of Rump and Red emerging from the woods and standing before a towering castle.

In a section following the last chapter entitled, "Author's Notes" Shurtliff describes her personal impetus for writing the book. She relates to the protagonist who is shy and has a name he hates just like she does. She stresses the importance and power of names which is the premise for Rump's story.

The use of foreshadowing and cliffhangers creates good pace and maintains an interest level that never wanes.



Quotes

My mother named me after a cow's rear end... Really, my mother had another name for me, a wonderful name, but no one ever heard it. They only hear the first part. The worst part.

-- Rump (Chapter 1 paragraph 1)

Importance: This quote sets the premise for the struggle that Rump had with his unusual name and his quest to find the rest of his name.

May I have the spinning wheel? . . . I don't have anything from my mother. She would've wanted me to have something of hers.

-- Rump (Chapter 2 paragraph 6)

Importance: Rump's mother died when he was born. He is desperate to have something that belonged to his mother, something that she had touched.

Find a little extra gold and I'll have Opal show you how to spin. She is a fine spinner, but I've known some who possess a more... natural talent

-- Oswald (Chapter 3 paragraph 3)

Importance: This was a subtle hint from the greedy miller Oswald to Rump. Oswald was certain that Rump was gifted with magic and could spin straw into gold.

My brain felt all tangled. Red's granny came even closer. . . It felt she was looking through me and around me and beyond me all at once. 'One more thing, watch your step.

-- Rump (Chapter 4 paragraph 7)

Importance: Red's granny was a wise old woman who knew that Rump would be facing a heap of trouble. Her warning to watch his step came to mind and was relevant during several of his adventures.

All magic has consequences, Rump. Even small magic can have big consequences.

-- Red (Chapter 5 paragraph 7)

Importance: Red knew that Rump was playing with fire as he dabbled in magic. She knew he had the gift of magic but she was afraid he would abuse it which would be disastrous for him.

What if pixies couldn't just sense gold inside The Mountain? What if they could also sense it in a person, in someone who might possess the magic to take one thing... and turn it into. . . Gold!

-- Rump (Chapter 6 paragraph 4)

Importance: This quote captures the moment that Rump understood why the gold-



seeking pixies always swarmed him and that he might have the ability to make gold from something else.

Why did I have to spin all that straw into gold? I should have listened to Gran. But maybe trading the gold for food could make her better.

-- Rump (Chapter 9 paragraph 8)

Importance: Rump was torn. He blamed himself for Gran's illness. He had disobeyed her yet felt compelled to spin more gold because it would buy food that could save Gran's life.

That's when I cried. I cried real snot-running, chest-heaving cries until it was all drained out and I was empty, empty, empty. Gran was gone.

-- Rump (Chapter 10 paragraph 4)

Importance: Rump who learned to hide his feelings describes how traumatic the death of his grandmother was. It was a turning point in his life. He was on his own and had to fend for himself.

My mouth ran dry. Red's granny! The Witch of The Woods! Red's granny was The Witch of The Woods!

-- Rump (Chapter 13 paragraph 7)

Importance: Rump is astounded that Red's granny is The Witch of The Woods. It explains why Red knew so much about Rump and his mother and why Red had been warning him to stay away from magic.

This was my destiny--to spin gold at the whims of a greedy king for the rest of my life.

-- Rump (Chapter 8 paragraph 1)

Importance: Rump feared that he had found his destiny and was none too pleased about it.

More creatures came rushing through the tress. They were all big and brutish with arms as thick as my stomach that hung down to their knees. Their faces were squashed and animal-like, with bulbous noses and yellow eyes and teeth.

-- Rump (Chapter 18 paragraph 8)

Importance: Rump feared that the trolls would eat him. But appearances aren't everything. He made friends with the trolls who taught him a lot about magic and its ramifications.

The straw snapped and sputtered through the wheel. It floated in the air, glittering in the moonlight like bits of gold dust. Like gold, but not gold. Beautiful. Grand would have loved it and so would Mother. I could almost feel them with me. And that's its own kind of magic -- to feel that people who are gone are still there.

-- Rump (Chapter 32 paragraph 3)

Importance: After Rump found himself and his complete name, he found resolution and came to realize that the power of love was the strongest magic of all.