

Rumpelstiltskin Hints at Education as New Way of Survival

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(Editor's Note: This is the second and concluding part of a story of Aunt Mumangeena and Uncle Nayukuk. This editor, as a boy of 12 years of age, told them the story of Rumpelstiltskin. The King had just locked the miller's beautiful daughter into a room full of straw and told her to make it into gold. (The editor called it "grass" to make it more understandable to Mumangeena and Nayukuk.) The miller, to impress the King, had told him that his daughter could make gold out of straw. Aunt Mumangeena had berated the selfish father for putting his very own daughter into this terrible predicament and had said, "The selfish father should be shoved under the ice!" She sadly wondered what would become of the poor miller's daughter.)

I resumed the story:

The beautiful girl did not know how to make gold out of grass. Here she was locked in the room. She sat down and she didn't know what to do. She started to weep with great sadness.

Mumangeena was sadder now and she looked as if she was about to cry.

"What is the poor little girl going to do now?" she asked in a whiny voice.

Suddenly the door opened and in walked a spindly-legged little old man.

"What is he going to do, mother?" Is he going to harm her?"

"Good evening flourmaker's daughter. What are you crying about?" asked the little man.

"I have to make gold out of this grass and I don't know how to do it," the girl answered.

"Poor little girl. That — that — father! I sure wouldn't hesitate to shove him under the ice!"

The little man asked what the girl would give him if he made gold out of the grass.

Medicine Man

"My necklace," answered the girl.

"Is he going to do it? Is he ahngatkuq (medicine man) or something?"

"I guess he is, but I wish you

would listen and find out Aunt Mumangeena," I said impatiently.

Uncle Nayukuk stirred and looked at his wife, apparently hoping she would shut up.

The little man took the necklace and mysteriously spun gold out of the grass.

"He's an ahngatkuq all right,"

Early next morning the King was very happy to see the grass all made into gold. He took the girl into another room full of grass and it was even bigger than the first. The King commanded her to spin all that grass into gold in one night.

The girl began to weep once again.

"Poor, poor little girl," Mumangeena whined.

The little old man appeared once again. This time the girl gave him her ring and he spun all that grass into gold. The next morning the King was very happy to see all the gold and he told the girl he would marry her if she spun the grass in an even bigger room.

Nothing More to Give

The beautiful girl was very distressed but the little man appeared for the third time and asked, "What will you give me if I spin this grass for you?"

"I have nothing left to give," the girl answered miserably.

Mumangeena's eyes were moist now.

"Poor little thing is suffering so. Those terrible people — I'd shove all of them under the ice! I have a feeling that little man is going to do something horrible."

"Why do you think that, Aunt Mumangeena? If it wasn't for the little old man, the flourmaker's daughter would have been killed by the King already," I said.

"I still think that ahngatkuq is not to be trusted. He seems to be as slippery as aqalukroaq (salmon). I don't think he is out to do any good," Aunt Mumangeena speculated.

I continued:

The little man said to the girl, "You have nothing more to give so you must promise to give me your first baby after you become queen."

"You see, what did I tell you! That hateful little man is wanting the most precious thing

that nice girl will ever have! If I could only get my hands on him, I'd bite him in two!" Mumangeena fumed.

"Will you promise to keep quiet so I can finish the story, Aunt Mumangeena? Besides I'm starting to get hungry."

Quiet Please!

"Don't get hungry, mother! What a time to get hungry. Now to go on with the story and I'll listen quietly."

Uncle Nayukuk shifted his position with a faint smile on his face.

The flourmaker's daughter didn't know what to do so she just took a chance and promised the little man that she would give him her first baby.

"See what I mean! That qupilguq (worm) has forced her to promise the —" She looked quickly at me and Uncle Nayukuk with a sheepish smile. "I forgot to keep quiet didn't I?"

After the girl made her promise, the little man happily spun the grass into gold.

"That qupilguq! He should have done that without making the little girl promise!"

Interrupt?

"Why do you interrupt so much, Aunt Mumangeena?" I asked.

"Me? Interrupt? I didn't realize I was," Aunt Mumangeena answered.

Her face became speculative and she said, "You know, mother, I've been told to my face that I talk too much but that's the way I am. Can you, or anyone, imagine me as a quiet person? If I was, this igloo would be like one abandoned in my grandfather's time."

I agreed mentally with Aunt Mumangeena. Our little igloo would certainly be a vastly different abode if she was anything but what she was.

"And mother, if I seem to be interrupting, all I'm trying to do is to try to keep right on top of the story. In that way, I shall never forget it and I would be able to tell it word for word," she continued. "Now, mother, let's hear the rest of the story."

Beautiful Child

I did what my aunt told me to do.

The King married the flourmaker's daughter and in a year's time, a beautiful child was born.

"Now, it's going to start all over again," Mumangeena moaned.

The beautiful Queen had forgotten all about her promise to the little man — until one day he suddenly appeared in her room and said, "Give me the baby you promised me."

"That — that despicable little brute! How can he do such an unheard of thing like that? He just comes right out and asks for the baby! I'd — I'd —," she fumed, clenching her fists.

Sudden Hunger

Even after Aunt Mumangeena's little lecture, I began to feel frustrated from her constant interruptions. I suddenly said, "I'm hungry!"

"Of all the times to get hungry! Be nice now and finish the story. I'll let you have some of that meat after you finish. I'll let you have some muktuk too, if you want it," she enticed.

"But I'm hungry now."

"Now mother, if you keep insisting I won't let you eat at all."

Uncle Nayukuk stirred once more with a faint smile.

"It's going to take a long time to finish the story and I'll get hungrier and hungrier," I said.

"Of all the times to get hungry," Aunt Mumangeena said to herself as she got up. She walked over to the stove and fished out a piece of seal meat from the pot. She put it in a wooden bowl and brought it to me.

"One would think you are the chief the way I'm waiting on you. There you are, umealik! Eat!" she said sarcastically.

"Quyaana (thank you), Aunt Mumangeena," I said feeling a little guilty.

No More Patience!

I resumed the story between bites of seal meat:

The beautiful Queen was terrified when she suddenly realized that she had promised to give her first child to the little man.

My aunt hissed, "I've completely lost my patience with that knotty little man!" She suddenly laughed. "That's his name, isn't it? That Rum-skin thing? Is that right, Mother?"

"You're spoiling the story Aunt Mumangeena. Just listen and find out."

The Queen offered the little

man all the riches of the kingdom if he would change his mind but he said, "I would rather have the baby than all the treasures in the world."

"I'd give him the seal neck and toss him out!"

Sad Listener

The Queen became very sad and began to cry.

Mumangeena's eyes became red as she let out a sad sympathetic moan.

"That poor little mother — her own beautiful child —" She couldn't finish what she was going to say.

The little old man began to feel sorry for her.

"I don't believe it!"

"I will give you three days and if you don't guess my name in that time, you must give me the baby," said the little man.

"If I could only be there I'd surely tell that nice girl the name of the qupilguq!"

"How would you do it, Aunt Mumangeena? You can't even say the name," I pointed out.

"Stop it, mother! Don't make me feel worse than I do now. I'd say that qupilguq's name somehow," she said with determination.

The poor Queen stayed awake all night thinking of all kinds of names including Casper, Melchior, and Balthazar, but they were not the right name for the little man.

"Come on little woman, not those. His name is Rum — Rum —. Stop laughing at me, mother! You can't laugh at a time like this."

On the second day, the Queen called all the servants and neighbors to give her all kinds of names. Lots of them were unusual like, Cowribs, Sheepshanks, or Spiderlegs.

"No, none of these is my name," the little man said.

"None of these is my name! None of these is my name!" mocked Aunt Mumangeena. "Why was that — that horrible half man named Rum — thing anyway?"

On the third day a messenger came back and said he had been unable to find a single new name. But he said, "I passed through the woods. On the side of a high hill was a little house and before it burned a fire. Around the fire danced a funny little man who hopped on one leg and sang:

"Tomorrow at last the child comes in,

"For nobody knows I'm Rumpelstiltskin."

"That's what he thinks, that nasty little man! The cruel thing is not going to have the baby after all and I'm so happy for that nice little mother."

What?

The Queen was the happiest person in the world when she found out the name of the little man. She decided to tease him when he walked in.

"Are you called Jack?" she asked.

"No, that isn't my name."

"Are you called Mumangeena?"

"WHAT IS THAT?" Aunt Mumangeena jerked and exclaimed in a loud voice. "How did that little — Mother! You're playing tricks on me."

She began to laugh loudly and said, "That Rum — thing named Mumangeena? Now stop being funny and go on, mother."

Uncle Nayukuk was shaking again. A grumpy chuckle slipped out of him.

"That's not my name," said the little man.

"It most certainly is not!" Mumangeena hissed.

Then the beautiful Queen

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asked, "Perhaps your name is Rumpelstiltskin?"

Mumangeena sighed happily, "The nice little mother is going to keep her beautiful baby and such suffering she had to go through to keep it."

Little Devil

"Tuugome quleatigaatin! Tungome quleatigaatin!" ("The devil told me that! The devil told you that!") the little man shrieked.

"The little coward cannot take it, can he? He's a little devil himself."

Rumpelstiltskin was so angry he stamped his right foot so hard that it went into the ground above his knee. As he ranted and raved he took hold of his left foot with both hands with great fury and pulled and split himself in two! And that was the end of Rumpelstiltskin!

Ouch!

"AHREE!" ("OUCH!") Aunt Mumangeena groaned, her eyes wide. "He's as dumb as a lynx. Imagine anyone taking a hold of the wrong leg splitting himself in two! I could have been more humane and nicely shoved him under the ice."

Uncle Nayukuk had begun to convulse and shake once again. His mirth had such spontaneity that he couldn't have stopped if he wanted to. What made it all the more comical was that he tried to muffle it and guffaws came out in chopped up grunts.

I often wondered what really made him laugh. At any rate, Uncle Nayukuk's mirth was so genuine no one could have been able to help himself but join in the laughter. Aunt Mumangeena and I did and we guffawed happily that evening in the flickering light of the whale oil lamp.