

## Rumpelstiltskin

### Storyteller Notes

This story comes in two parts, each defined by distinct examples of those magical sets of three so often found in traditional tales: three appearances of the goblin to spin straw into gold, then three more as he attempts to take Lily's baby. Each set of three has its own refrain, but coherence is achieved by giving those refrains a tune. Singing, be it a simple variation of pitch (as in *The Big Carrot*) or a more complex melody (here, and in *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*), makes a telling both colourful and memorable. Here it has the added advantage of making the goblin instantly recognisable even when he appears, disguised, in the marketplace.

Notice how I vary the narrative around each refrain. After the first occurrence, the refrain gets shorter and quicker, preparing for the moment when it breaks because Lily doesn't have anything shiny. This emphasizes the significance of what is about to happen, similar to the technique for achieving surprise that we explored in *Tom, Dad and Colin*.

Asking the children to supply names gives them ownership of the telling by drawing them into the story world (for another example of how to do this, see *The King and His Wish*). Asking for specific names – their own, a friend, and someone else at home – keeps thinking time short and unobtrusive... as well as discouraging a child who knows the story from suggesting the right one!

Disappearing behind the chair at the end is another way of including the physical environment within the telling, along with those seen in *The Frog Prince* and *Finn MacCool and the Giant's Causeway*. Don't be afraid to take yourself out of sight from your children – the flow of the telling will keep them engaged. The impact is lost if you don't quite disappear thoroughly!

#### Written by Amy Robinson

Amy is a professional storyteller. Previously a primary school teacher, Amy now tours schools and theatres in the UK with her storytelling colleague, Chip Colquhoun. Find out more at [www.snailtales.org](http://www.snailtales.org)