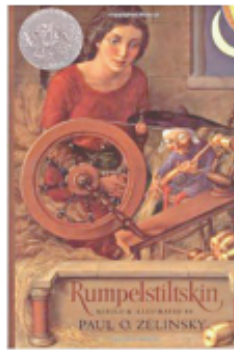




Children's Book of the Month



Book reviewed by
Kim Barry,
preschool teacher

'Rumpelstiltskin'

Retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky

"If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales." — Albert Einstein

In the preschool classroom at the Village School, fairy tales are woven into the curriculum and many are told as the Story of the Week. In the beginning of the year the stories are simple and include folktales such as "The Three Billy Goats Gruff," "The Three Little Pigs" and "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." These stories are short and match the young child's attention span. As the school year progresses, the children are able to sit and listen for longer periods of time and so more complex stories can be told.

Our Story of the Week is a wonderful routine for the children. On Monday the children simply sit on the rug and listen as a teacher tells the story verbatim; on Tuesday a flannel board and simple flannel board pieces are used for telling the story; on Wednesday the story is presented as a puppet show; on Thursday we read the story aloud from a well-illustrated book; finally on Friday the children act out the story with each child choosing the character they want to be.

On Fridays, if five children want to be Rumpelstiltskin, they can all act out that part together. With a teacher acting as narrator, the story begins. After hearing the story on the four preceding days, the children know the characters' lines well. The children act it out with great enthusiasm. We keep it simple and don't use any props. When the story comes to an end, we form a circle, take a bow and clap for each other.

We recently chose "Rumpelstiltskin" as our Story of the Week and told it to the class Monday through Friday, presenting it differently each time. Most people are familiar with the story of the miller's daughter who must spin straw into gold and the little man who spins it for her, but for a price.

When we are reading the story of "Rumpelstiltskin" we always use the Caldecott Honor book of the same name, retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky. Each page of the book is illustrated with stunning oil paintings. The beauty of the miller's daughter and the mysterious little man are portrayed with fine detail, bringing the medieval scenes to life. The classic story is compelling, the text is clear and the illustrations are so realistic that the preschoolers sit with rapt attention. Will the miller's daughter, now queen, be able to guess Rumpelstiltskin's name and keep her baby?

The next time you are at a bookstore or a library ask for "Rumpelstiltskin" retold and illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky and then take Albert Einstein's advice and read this fairy tale to your child, grandchild, niece or nephew and don't be surprised when they ask you to read it again and again.

You can find out more about the Village School curriculum for children ages 3 to 12 at an open house on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 10 a.m. to noon in the Raymond School building on Royalston Common. There will be science and arts and crafts activities in the classrooms for children, refreshments and interesting conversation everywhere! Take a look at the classroom libraries, filled with classic engaging books for children. Find out more at www.village-schoolma.org.