

QUICK CARD: STRAW INTO GOLD



<i>Reference</i>	<i>Straw Into Gold</i> . Gary Schmidt. (2001) ISBN-13: 978-0547237763
<i>Plot</i>	Drawing on the timeless fairytale of <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> , in which a peasant girl becomes queen with the help of a strange little man who helps her to spin straw into gold at the cost of her first born child, this story provides the motivation behind the little man’s seemingly capricious bargain with the queen. Picking up the story years later when the babe has surely grown to adolescence, the tale begins again with the little man, known as Da, taking his boy, Tousle, to a parade in which captives from a rebel village are led by the victors through the town streets to receive their sentence before their king. The events that occur on this day lead Tousle on a quest to discover the answer to a new riddle upon which the lives of many will depend: “What fills a hand fuller than a skein of gold?”
<i>Setting</i>	The story takes place in early winter in the medieval town of Wolverham. It occurs in the adolescence of the main character, Tousle, and so may be regarded as a coming of age story. The story begins after the famous events of <i>Rumpelstiltskin</i> .
<i>Characters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tousle – (protagonist) a young boy thrilled with thoughts of the world outside his sheltered home. He longs to know the mystery of his birth, to have a gift of his very own, and to enjoy the love of a mother. The events of the story threaten his innocence and challenge his presuppositions about life and human nature. • Innes – a young rebel boy, brother to two girls, who is blinded during the battle with the king’s men. He hopes, together with Tousle, to discover the answer to the riddle and free his family and neighbors. He can hear the dawn. • Da – the little man with froggy eyes and long, spindly fingers, who can spin straw into gold. He has raised Tousle and maintains throughout the story hope in the truth that “Nothing is ever quite by chance.” • Lord Beryn –(antagonist) leader of the Great Lords. Cruel and calculating, he controls the king.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The King’s Grip - (antagonist) wielder of the king’s sword, he is motivated by simple greed • The King – (antagonist) puppet to the Great Lords in his realm, he lives with fear and shame. His own greed has brought him to this, however, there may yet be some hope in him. • The Queen – banished, she is lonely and fearful; she lives with a quiet grief. • The Great Lords – (antagonists) together with Lord Beryn, they bully the king into complying with their wishes and desires • The Miller – a disappointed and regretful man, haunted by his past failures • The Miller’s wife – who sees in Tousle the shadow of another child • The Sexton – husband of the merry woman who shelters the children in the early pages of the story; he can see in the dark. • The Sexton’s wife – a merry woman full of compassion and human charity, she aids the children in their flight from the Grip.
<i>Conflict</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man vs. Self; Man vs. Man; Man vs. Society; Man vs. Providence: Will Tousle discover his identity and his gift? • Man vs. Man; Man vs. Society; Man vs. Self; Man vs Providence: Will Tousle and Innes find the answer to the riddle in time to save the rebels, the king, and themselves?
<i>Theme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Sacrificial Love • Forgiveness • Coming of Age • Honor • Greed • Loyalty • Providence/Design • Appearance vs. Reality
<i>Literary Devices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagery – use of evocative word pictures to communicate abstract ideas • Symbolism – the extended use of an image or metaphor, usually associated with major story themes. Look for references to gold • Similes and Metaphors – comparisons of unlike things in order to establish a resemblance between them. Similes make this comparison using the words “like” or “as”; metaphors without. • Alliteration – repetition of initial consonantal sounds. • Assonance – the repetition of an internal vowel sound in words of close proximity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aphorisms–pithy observations that contain a general truth• Personification – attributing human qualities to inanimate things• Allusions – referencing another historical event, personality, literary or artistic work or idea for the sake of importing all the ideas associated with the reference to the present text and context.• Foreshadowing – hints planted in the text that suggest future plot developments.• Dramatic Irony – a literary technique which originated in Greek drama by which the full significance of a character’s words or actions are clear to the audience or reader although unknown to the character
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