



For little knows my royal dame ...

As a reminder: Once upon a time there was a miller's daughter, who's father was bragging with her benefits in front of the king up to the claim that she can spin straw to gold. The king forced her to prove that under the penalty of death and even in triple climax as common in fairy tales.¹

Only a fairy tale?

Do you know the experience of getting into situations that overwhelm you, where you don't know how to get out, how to solve the problem, how to meet the challenge?

Or do you rather avoid these situations, so you are not forced to spin straw to gold, that is trying the seemingly impossible, in the first place? Could it be that the way you arranged your life serves the purpose of avoiding exactly these kind of challenges?

I know both from myself. And I also know the dark side in me, the part that is destructive (like Rumpelstiltskin, when it tears itself in two), malicious (like Rumpelstiltskin dancing around the fire), pretentious (like the miller towards the king), greedy (like the king in the prospect of gold).

Which shadow sides do you know from yourself?

Before the next step it is important to bring a distinction into the game: When I talk about dark side, it is not connected with judgment. I am interested in results and possibilities. Close inspection reveals judgments themselves are shadow sides: With good/bad, right/wrong and all other judgments and moral terms people can wonderfully be excluded, humiliated, manipulated, dominated ...

Obviously Rumpelstiltskin not only allows the miller's daughter to survive the examination of the king three times and actually transform straw into gold, but to become queen. At the same time this power that helped her threatens her most precious, the new born child, a symbol of liveliness, love and connection. Initially, the price is seemingly small (necklace, ring – here a small fight, where the dark sides feasts on, there a carelessness that hurts the counterpart), in the end its all or nothing: Does the queen succeed to name her shadow side and take responsibility for it? Or robs (destroys) the dark side her love and vitality?

The fairy tale offers a key: Call your shadow by its name and it loses its power over you. A catchy name for this part of ourselves that proved itself in practice is “Gremlin”². The name helps to come to an understanding and communicate when and how this queen or king of our shadow world is in charge. But this general term is not enough to put him or her on the leash.

The queen undergoes substantial efforts to find the name (of her Gremlin) and shows us that it takes the use of all (inner) resources to go this initiatory step. If you hide behind “I have not figured out the name yet”, guess who is dancing around the fire rubbing hands?

1 The full text „Rumpelstiltskin“ is in the Brothers Grimm fairy tale collection; for an online version look e.g. under www.grimmstories.com/en/grimm_fairy-tales/rumpelstiltskin.

2 See e.g. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gremlin: Creatures who are (sometimes really bad or even deadly) tricking others or as in the movie “Gremlins” nice seeming figures who can become really dangerous depending on circumstances. A similar meaning to the one used here is found in the readable book „Taming your Gremlin“ (Rick Carson).



Would you like to be in charge, then you decide about the name with the conscious intention to take your Gremlin on the leash. Experience shows that the name can change over the course of time, while the relationship to your Gremlin strengthens.

The relationship establishes? After the conscious discovery of such shadow parts I could observe, and I hear it often from others too, a pain about it inside, so great that self-condemnation starts. Our Gremlins have a lot of fun with condemnation, whether of other people or ourselves. However, our Being can't come into radiance and abundance, not in the power of own responsibility, as long as we play such games.

Another aspect: How can you spin straw to gold without the non-linear power of your Gremlin? How can you unfold your full potential and make the best out of it in service to the world without him or her? Your Gremlin is a part in you, who knows no rules and can destroy every space without reason, also spaces of fighting, that are only about who wins or that don't serve your conscious intention in another way. It is the part that can stay awake, if all other Gremlins confuse or bring the space to fall asleep, the part that can step beyond usual habits (like shyness or niceness) and change something that you would normally never dare to. And it is the part that is fast enough to catch and expose both other Gremlins and herself (or himself) and hereby create safe spaces.

What does your Gremlin like best? How could you "feed" him or her to establish a respectful and reliable relationship? The intention is that you have this part of yourself on your side, if you are unable to cope with all the straw that is waiting for transformation. And that you are mistress or master of your Gremlin, which means you decide when and what to feed her or him. Which food has a price that is not too high?

In order to get on to the track of your Gremlin and its typical behavior patterns as well as favorite foods, these experiments and questions can help:

- Which resolutions do you not stick to? What do you eat more than you actually want? What things happen in your life that you don't consciously wish for? (Choose as a dangerous working hypothesis for more possibilities and power that your Gremlin feels joy through being actively involved in causing them.)
- What annoys you about others? (Observe without judgment also with the dangerous hypothesis that this precisely mirrors your own shadow parts.)
- Ask others (preferably some you have a tense relationship with) actively for feedback about what bothers them about you. Say "thank you for the feedback" and let it be without justification. Observe how your Gremlin jerks on the leash and wants to make others or yourself look small and be with it without allowing it to happen.

Have fun with experimenting!
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