

The sleeping beauty



The sleeping beauty

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who were grieved, more grieved than words can tell, because they had no children. They tried the waters of every country, made vows and pilgrimages, and did everything that could be done, but without result. At last, however, the queen found that her wishes were fulfilled, and in due course she gave birth to a daughter. A grand party was held, and all the fairies were invited to be godmothers to the little princess. Everyone was happy. Many gifts were given. Music was played, all the guests laughed and enjoyed themselves.

When the ceremony was over, all the company returned to the king's palace, where a great banquet was held in honor of the fairies. Places were laid for them in a magnificent style, and before each was placed a solid gold casket containing a spoon, fork, and knife of fine gold, set with diamonds and rubies. But just as all were sitting down at the table, an aged fairy was seen to enter, whom no one had thought to invite. The reason being that for more than fifty years, she had never left the tower in which she lived, and people had supposed her to be dead or bewitched. By the king's orders a place was laid for her, but it was impossible to give her a golden casket like the others.







There were seven fairies. The old creature believed that she was intentionally slighted, and muttered threats between her teeth. She was overheard by one of the young fairies, who was seated nearby.

The latter, guessing that some mischievous gift might be bestowed upon the little princess, hid behind the tapestry as soon as the company left the table. Her intention was to be the last to speak, and so to have the power of counteracting, as far as possible, any evil which the old fairy might do.

Presently the fairies began to bestow their gifts upon the princess. The youngest ordained that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next, that she should have the temper of an angel; the third, that she should do everything with wonderful grace; the fourth, that she should dance to perfection; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; and the sixth, that she should play every kind of music with the utmost skill.

It was now the turn of the aged fairy. Shaking her head, she declared that the princess should prick her hand with a spindle, and die of it. A shudder ran through the company at this terrible gift. All eyes were filled with tears. But at this moment the young fairy stepped forth from behind the tapestry. "Take comfort, your Majesties," she cried in a loud voice. "Your daughter shall not die. My power, it is true, is not enough to undo all that my aged kinswoman has decreed. The princess will indeed prick her hand with a spindle. But instead of dying she shall merely fall into a sleep that will last a hundred years.

At the end of that time a king's son shall come to awaken her." The king, in an attempt to avert the unhappy doom pronounced by the old fairy, at once published an edict forbidding all persons, under pain of death, to use a spinning wheel or keep a spindle in the house. The king sent to everyone who could help in solving his daughter's problem ,but he could not get any way to avoid being in a problem. The queen did her best to take the princess away from any danger. There were many guards who never left the princess alone.

Once, the princess went to have a walk in the garden. She saw some beautiful flowers and she tried to pick one, but she hurt her finger. When the king saw the princess, He was in a pensive mood as he thought that the old fairy's wish came true. The queen spent nights crying. She was worried to lose her only daughter. She woke up at midnight to see if the princess was still alive. The princess was never allowed to play with something made of metal or iron.

The princess was overprotected by her parents. She had no friends to play with. No place to enjoy alone the princess was always seen in the protection of her guards, She tried many times to go away by herself, but the guards never gave her the chance. She dreamt of a day to be away of her guard's sight.



At the end of fifteen or sixteen years the king and queen happened one day to be away, on pleasure bent. The princess was running about the castle and going upstairs from room to room when she came at length to a garret at the top of a tower, where an old serving woman sat alone



with her distaff, spinning. This good woman had never heard speak of the king's proclamation forbidding the use of spinning wheels. "What are you doing, my good woman?" asked the princess. "I am spinning, my pretty child," replied the dame, not knowing who she was.