

Sleeping Beauty – Little Briar-Rose

By the Grimm Brothers

A king and queen had no children, although they wanted one very much. Then one day while the queen was sitting in her bath, a crab crept out of the water onto the ground and said, "Your wish will soon be fulfilled, and you will bring a daughter into the world." And that is what happened.

The king was so happy about the birth of the princess that he held a great celebration. He also invited the fairies who lived in his kingdom, but because he had only twelve golden plates, one had to be left out, for there were thirteen of them.



The fairies came to the celebration, and as it was ending they presented the child with gifts. The one promised her virtue, the second one gave beauty, and so on, each one offering something desirable and magnificent. The eleventh fairy had just presented her gift when the thirteenth fairy walked in. She was very angry that she had not been invited and cried out, "Because you did not invite me, I tell you that in her fifteenth year, your daughter will prick herself with a spindle and fall over dead."

The parents were horrified, but the twelfth fairy, who had not yet offered her wish, said, "It shall not be her death. She will only fall into a hundred-year sleep." The king, hoping to rescue his dear child, issued an order that all spindles in the entire kingdom should be destroyed.

The princess grew and became a miracle of beauty. One day, when she had just reached her fifteenth year, the king and queen went away, leaving her all alone in the castle. She walked from room to room, following her heart's desire. Finally she came to an old tower. A narrow stairway led up to it. Being curious, she climbed up until she came to a small door. There was a small yellow key in the door. She turned it, and the door sprang open. She found herself in a small room where an old woman sat spinning flax. She was attracted to the old woman, and joked with her, and said that she too would like to try her hand at spinning. She picked up the spindle, but no sooner did she touch it, than she pricked herself with it and then fell down into a deep sleep.

At that same moment the king and his attendants returned, and everyone began to fall asleep: the horses in the stalls, the pigeons on the roof, the dogs in the courtyard, the flies on the walls. Even the fire on the hearth flickered, stopped moving, and fell asleep. The roast stopped sizzling. The cook let go of the kitchen boy, whose hair he was about to pull. The maid dropped the chicken that she was plucking. They all slept. And a thorn hedge grew up around the entire castle, growing higher and higher, until nothing at all could be seen of it.

Princes, who had heard about the beautiful Briar-Rose, came and tried to free her, but they could not penetrate the hedge. It was as if the thorns were firmly attached to hands. The princes became stuck in them, and they died miserably. And thus it continued for many long years.

Then one day a prince was traveling through the land. An old man told him about the belief that there was a castle behind the thorn hedge, with a wonderfully beautiful princess asleep inside with all of her attendants. His grandfather had told him that many princes had tried to penetrate the hedge, but that they had gotten stuck in the thorns and had been pricked to death.

"I'm not afraid of that," said the prince. "I shall penetrate the hedge and free the beautiful Brier-Rose."

He went forth, but when he came to the thorn hedge, it turned into flowers. They separated, and he walked through, but after he passed, they turned back into thorns. He went into the castle. Horses and colorful hunting dogs were asleep in the courtyard. Pigeons, with their little heads stuck under their wings, were sitting on the roof. As he walked inside, the flies on the wall, the fire in the kitchen, the cook and the maid were all asleep. He walked further. All the attendants were asleep; and still further, the king and the queen. It was so quiet that he could hear his own breath.

Finally he came to the old tower where Brier-Rose was lying asleep. The prince was so amazed at her beauty that he bent over and kissed her. At that moment she awoke, and with her the king and the queen, and all the attendants, and the horses and the dogs, and the pigeons on the roof, and the flies on the walls. The fire stood up and flickered, and then finished cooking the food. The roast sizzled away. The cook boxed the kitchen boy's ears. And the maid finished plucking the chicken. Then the prince and Brier-Rose got married, and they lived long and happily until they died.