



## NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS THE SLEEPING BEAUTY STUDY GUIDE

### ***THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*** by Charlotte Chorpenning

Based on the French fairy tale.  
Directed by Rachel Ribeiro  
Costumes by Jaime Pardo

Sets by Mike and Wendie Cutcher and Rachel Ribeiro with Soraya Askar

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of ***The Sleeping Beauty***. We are offering this study guide as a way to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production. Included in this guide are a history and synopsis of our story, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, as well as some audience protocol reminders. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production. Thank you for your interest in and support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you soon!

### **History and Synopsis**

The story of Sleeping Beauty was first heard during the Middle Ages, but it was not published until 1634 by the Italian writer, Giambattista Basile. It was later adapted and published by Frenchman, Charles Perrault, in 1697, then later published by the Germans, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, in their famous collection of 1812. Our play is based on the Grimm Brothers' version of the story. Sleeping Beauty has been called different names in different versions of the tale, including Talia, Little Briar Rose, and Aurora.

Our story opens in a room in the King's castle. The infant princess is asleep while the King, Queen, and their staff prepare for the arrival of the five fairies, who will offer gifts to the princess on this, the day of her christening. The King soon realizes that only four places are prepared; the King's page, Elano, failed to invite the evil fairy, Frytania, to the celebration. After each fairy offers her gift, an angry Frytania suddenly appears and curses the child with death on her sixteenth birthday by pricking her finger on a spindle. The first fairy, Una, appears and agrees to change the curse of death to the curse of sleep if Elano can regain his courage in sixteen years. Frytania disappears as the Queen commands that all spindles in the kingdom be destroyed. Since the lone spindle in the castle seems indestructible, the King locks it in the tower room high above the castle.

Sixteen years later the castle staff await the arrival of the fairies who will bring gifts for Beauty's sixteenth birthday. The King and Queen are nervous since Beauty has mysteriously been asking for a spindle. After the fairies arrive, Beauty happily asks for time alone as her gift. All depart, leaving Beauty alone while Frytania, who has been hiding in the tower spindle room, lures Beauty through the spider web into the tower.

Beauty meets Frytania in the spindle room. Frytania is deceptively kind and shows Beauty how to use the spindle. The page, Elano, sees Beauty in the tower from the castle garden. Remembering the curse, he races to the tower and tussles with Beauty over the spindle. The rest of the castle staff and the four fairies appear. Elano must face his fear to get the spindle. He fails as Beauty grabs the spindle and pricks her finger. As Frytania's bell tolls, Beauty learns of the curse. Since she forgives her family and declares her love for them, Una is able to change the curse from death to sleep and puts everyone in the kingdom asleep for 100 years.

100 years later, Elano awakes. He slowly remembers that he must find Beauty and kiss her by the fifth toll of Frytania's bell. Frytania, in disguise, tries to dissuade him from reaching Beauty, but by the fourth bell toll, Elano recognizes Frytania and reaches Beauty in time. He kisses the sleeping princess and all live happily ever after.

### **Cast of Characters**

**Elano**, the Queen's page

**King**, proud father of Beauty

**Queen**, Beauty's happy mother

**Gort**, the King's attendant

**Ella**, maid in waiting to the Queen

**Una**, the first fairy

**Freona**, the fairy of love

**Cordia**, the fairy of beauty

**Belita**, the fairy of courage

**Frytania**, the evil fairy

**Beauty**, the princess

**Norbert**, a kitchen boy

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (PRE-PERFORMANCE)**

1. *How many of you have experienced a live dramatic performance? What did you see?*

2. *What are some of the differences between seeing a live performance and watching television or going to a movie?*

- Theater features live actors on stage. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
- The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the appropriate times. The success of the play often depends on the audience.
- The atmosphere of a live performance is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.
- It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
- Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.
- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

3. *Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:*

Box Office • Acts & Scenes • Producer • Program • Costumes • Props • Director • Stage • Curtain Call • Stagehand • Lobby • Usher • Musical Theater • Orchestra Pit • Playwright • Scenery • Makeup • Actor • Balcony • Cue • Play

4. *Introduce your students to the following terms found in our story:*

Christening • Cavern • Fate • Page (as a member of a royal court) • Spindle • Forbidden • Sundial • Enchanted • Century • Stroke (as in the tolling of a bell)

## THEATER ETIQUETTE

*Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.*

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable. Lights may go out before the performance begins and seating is very difficult after that time.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- Try your best to remain seated once the performance begins. There is no intermission during the performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, which is 55 minutes in duration.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if and only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song, dance, or joke.

## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES (POST- PERFORMANCE)

1. *Write an Epilogue:* Predict what happens next in the story. Write an article in which you tell the readers what happens after Elano awakens Beauty. What happened to the other characters in the story? What is the next mission of the fairies? Be as specific as possible and keep with the spirit of the original story.

2. *Discuss real life situations that reflect the moral in The Sleeping Beauty.*

- a) Ask the children what important traits they value in another person. Why is it important to be sincere and honest in your relationships? Why is it important to always consider one's inner beauty rather than a person's physical characteristics?
- b) Discuss how the fairy, Frytania, could have turned evil. What internal struggles does she face? Identify positive attributes that can be cultivated to counter emotions such as anger, jealousy, and resentment.

c) Reflect on the characters in the play. Ask your students which character they identify with the most. Why? List positive and negative traits of each character. What might each character do to improve his or her flaws?

3. *Music*: Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music were used? Identify musical instruments that were played. Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings? When a theater production is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some? A musical costs more to produce than a play. Can you name some additional expenses? (e.g., orchestra, a practice piano, a score, a choreographer, etc.)

4. *Sets*: Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Suggest a scene (a farm, a school yard, a classroom, a shopping center, a neighborhood, a city street, a castle, an amusement park, a forest) and ask students to describe a basic stage set for the scene.

5. *Costumes*: What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (historical accuracy, sewing, theatrical effects, knowledge of fabric, etc.)? Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

6. *Art activities*:

- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from on-stage.
- Re-create a scene from the play using clay forms in a box.
- Design a program cover for the play using the title, date, and an illustration inspired by the play.
- Draw an advertisement for the play.
- Create a fairy tale castle, including a moat, turrets, walls, and grand rooms.

7. *Language arts*:

- Choose a character that you liked and write a one-day's diary for that character. Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about her or his character.
- Discuss the play. Was there a hero or heroine? A villain? The setting? Was there a moral to the story?
- In 25 words or fewer, describe the plot of the play.
- Discuss the work of a movie or theater critic. Write a newspaper-type review of the play.
- Read the original fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. Expand that into other Grimm fairy tales and fantasy stories by other authors, such as Hans Christian Andersen. Assign various stories for the students to read and investigate.

8. *Theater*

- Discuss live theater. Are the actors aware of the audience? Why might an actor change his presentation because of audience reaction? Would it be easy to be an actor? Conduct an interview with a classmate pretending to be one of the actors and discover the actor's feelings about being on stage, memorization, rehearsals, costumes, audience, etc.
- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play (director, actors, musicians, author, designers—set, costumes, lights, sound—stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc). What do these different jobs contribute to the theatrical production?

## 9. History

- Research the history of fairy tales. Discuss oral and folk tradition in the dissemination of fairy tales.
- Research the history and biography of the Brothers Grimm.

### Resources

#### **Books**

Grimm, Jacob & Grimm, Wilhelm. *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1945.

#### **Internet**

The story of Sleeping Beauty: <https://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/175/grimms-fairy-tales/3066/sleeping-beauty>

Information about the Grimm Brothers: <https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html>

A list of over 200 Grimm fairy tales: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmtales.html>

Classroom fairy tale activity guide: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/tguide/>

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