

Sleeping Beauty, Briar Rose

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR: A young woman.

EDMUND: A prince.

ERDA: A forest fairy.

SURA: A water fairy, a nixie.

CHARLES: The king.

FRIEDA: The queen.

OLINDA: The castle fairy.

DAGNA: The agricultural fairy.

BLUMA: The garden/floral fairy.

FIRST GUARD: Princess Rose's first guard.

SECOND GUARD: Princess Rose's second guard.

ROSE: The sleeping beauty.

COBB: Son of the gardener, same age as Rose.

TIME: Long ago.

PLACE: The castle garden.

Dialogue for Narrator and Edmund

Narrator: Once upon a time, a prince, while hunting in the deep forest, came upon a young woman eating berries.

(Edmund enter, bow and arrow ready, stalking an animal. He quietly moves through the forest until he spies the narrator who has her back to him. He quietly advances, draws, and aims. The Narrator turns to see him and suddenly flattens herself on the ground with a cry.)

Narrator: Mercy

Edmund: AH!

Narrator: Mercy for a poor woman with no coins! I am but gathering berries!

Edmund: Ah, forgive me, friend, I am not a thief. I mistook you for a deer. *(He rushes to her to help her up.)*

Narrator: A deer?

Edmund: I've tracked this deer for two days – when I finally see her, she bolts out of my sight. I thought I finally came upon her But it was you I saw.

Narrator: *(brushing herself off)* You do not know the difference between a woman and a deer?

Edmund: Your ears are smaller. *(He smiles)*

Narrator: Thank the heavens for that!

Edmund: I live in the neighboring kingdom where our deer are scarce. The deer led me harem to this kingdom. Ah, I am tired of the hunt; and hungry. May I join you?

Edmund: *(takes out a wineskin and starts to drink)* A fine wine. Would you like some? *(He offers some to Narrator – she shakes her head no)* what wood is this? I have been confused as if lost all morning. And what are these ruins?

Narrator: An old marketplace abandoned long ago.

Edmund: What castle is that, overgrown with briars and forest?

Narrator: Some say ghosts haunt that castle and the whoever spends three nights in the castle shall have the princess for his wife.

Edmund: A princess?

Narrator: Others say that all the witches of the countryside live in the tower. But the favorite tale is that an ogre lives there. She carries to her castle all the children whom she could catch, there she devours them at her leisure.

Edmund: An what should I believe of those tales? For I like the princess story best of all.

Narrator: Only one story tells the truth of that castle. My grandmother told it to us every spring.

Edmund: Set before my eyes your tale, bring me to the knowledge of all good things.

Narrator: Long ago, within the castle walls, there was a garden, with flowers, statues, and a spring pond. One evening, a forest fairy entered the garden.....

Dialogue for Erda and Sura

Erda (Forest Fairy who puts the spell on Rose)

Sura (water fairy who partially undoes the spell on Rose)

(Erda enters in a green dress. Her feet are bare. She wears flowers in her long, wild hair. She has a colorful image painted on her face. She moves to the pond, carrying a large white forest lily.)

Erda: Hear me, nixie, come and talk to me! (She throws the lily into the water). Appear to me swiftly and now.... now! nixie!

(Sura rises out of the pond, she is dressed a flowing blue dress, with long, bluish- green hair, she wears a necklace of precious stone around her neck.)

Sura: Erda! You have come to play?

Erda: Come out of the water.

Sura: But my water is warm, the evening is cool. Come and bathe and I will ease your mind.

Erda: Out of the water!

Sura: But why? You don't say why. I can do whatever mischief you desire in my pond. Who shall I call into the water? I will turn them blue for you.

Erda: Come.... *(Sura hesitates)* You will enjoy the game we are about to play. *(Sura still hesitates)* Do not make me angry, Sura. *(Sura moves on the land).* The king and queen walk in the garden. They will find you.

Sura: Will we urge the king into the pond? Will we turn him blue? I like this game.

(Erda suddenly gestures at Sura, who lunges backwards and lands, upright, into the rose arbor. There she is stuck and cannot pull herself free. She will begin to lose her energy immediately)

Sura: Ah!! The thorns!

Erda: The king and Queen come....

Sura: What do you want Erda?

Erda: The king and queen are childless; they need an heir to the throne. Yet, they may not be worthy of children. We shall see. (She begins to exit)

Sura: You are leaving me here?

Erda: Say nothing to me, or you will never swim again.

Sura: You said I would enjoy this game! I hate this game! It hurts! ERDA!

Dialogue for Charles (the king), Freida (the queen), Sura (the water fairy), Erda (the forest fairy)

(Sura is stuck on the thorns in the garden. The King and Queen enter the garden)

Freida: Perhaps if I bathed in the pond and asked the water spirit, she would help us.

Charles: You cannot know what she will do. She is a nixie ... a trickster..... and not always subject to our commands.

Sura: Oh.....

Frieda: Look! *(She points to Sura who is stuck and losing energy quickly)*

Sura: *(as she weakens)* Help me, please. I cannot free myself from these thorns.

(Freida goes to help her, but Charles stops her)

Charles: We don't know why she is stuck there, or what mischief this is about.

Sura: Free me and I will grant you one wish.

Frieda: Any wish?

Sura: A wish within my power.

Freida: *(to Charles)* Any wish!

Sura: But you must grant me my wish... to swim in the spring again. Oh, I am fading away..... *(Freida tries to pull away from Charles who is holding her back.)*

Charles: this is one of her pretty tricks.

Freida: She's dying, Charles, can't you see? *(She goes to Sura and begins to free her from the thorns)* We will have you out in no time. I cannot imagine how you entangles yourself so, *(She gets her out).* There you go. *(Sura collapses but is caught by Freida)*

Freida: *(to Charles)* Help me! *(Charles and Freida each take one of Sura's arms and help her to the pond. They carefully lower her into the water, she sinks, and a few minutes later bursts out of the water, completely restored twirling and dancing.)*

Sura: Ah, you have given me back the deep water! You have granted my wish! What is yours?

Frieda: We have long wished for a child.

Sura: A child.....

Freida: we have done everything we could but without results.

Charles: we are growing older we cannot wait much longer We need an heir to the throne - a boy!

Freida: Or a girl.

Sura: I cannot grant you a child.

Frieda: But you yourself said you would grant us one wish.

Sura: A wish within my power. Ask for another.

Charles: You, see? This is nixie gratitude: she befools us!

(Erda appears to them, plucking a rose. Seeing her, Charles draws his sword and pulls his wife back.)

Charles: Erda!

Sura: The queen freed me from the roses.

Erda: Drawing your sword? When I've offered you no danger.

Charles: I remember well you are flooding the river and drowning the village.

Erda: And I remember your fires burning the forests and the creatures who lived in them.

Charles: Why are you out of your wood?

Erda: You have saved Sura from fading away.

Frieda: She was stuck in the rose arbor.

Sura (to Erda): I said nothing of you!

Erda: and you, dear heart, released her and carried her to the water.

Charles: Do not speak with her, you don't know what is in her foul mind.

Erda: You have proven yourself a friend to this nixie to my sister. It is in my foul mind to help nature grant your wish

Freida: How can we earn this wish?

Charles: Yes, at what cost?

Erda: Your goodness has already paid the price. Lower your sword or remain forever childless. *(Charles lowers his sword).* For your act of kindness, *(places the rose in Freida's hair),* nature will fulfill your wish, *(gesturing toward Freida's abdomen)* and you will bring a daughter into the world.

Frieda: A daughter? A Daughter! Do you, Charles, we will have a daughter!

Charles: An heir to the throne!

Dialogue for Olinda (castle fairy), Dagan (agricultural fairy), Bluma (Garden fairy), Charles, Freida, Sura, Erda

(Time passes, and the queen gives birth to a beautiful baby girl. To celebrate her birth, the fairies are invited to the celebration. Olinda, Dagna and Bluma enter) Charles and Frieda enter with a baby wrapped in a beautiful blanket. She places the baby in a basket. Sura enters and stays hidden)

Charles: Fairies, we welcome you to our celebration of the birth of our daughter, Rose.

Frieda: A beautiful princess! And heir to the throne!

Charles: You shall be our daughter's godmothers. There, if you agree, would each of you bestow upon Rose a gift befitting a princess.

Olinda: *(moves to the basket).* For our Princess Rose, I give you, Health, Strong bones, strong mind, and strong blood. *(She jesters and waves her hand over the child)*

Dagna: To Rose, our princess, heir to the throne, leader of the people, I give you: Curiosity *(she gestures and sprinkles glitter over the child.)*

Bluma: To Rose, princess and heir to the throne – the future queen – I give you: Wisdom. *(She waves her wand over the child.)*

Freida: In thanks, good fairies, I have the cooks prepare your favorite fairy food – Honey Cake!

Sura: Honey Cake!

Fairies: Honey Cake! Bless you, your majesties! We thank you! Let us eat! *(They all begin to eat and celebrate)*

Erda: *(as everyone is celebrating, they do not see Erda sneaking up to the basket where Rose is sleeping, she is angry)* Your majesties, why was I not invited to be a godmother? I granted you this wish – and this is how you repay me! My wish for this child! *(She waves a wicked wand over the child)* On her 16th birthday, she will prick her finger on a spinning wheel and fall dead! *(She storms out of the room)*

(All the merriment stops)

Charles: You, Sura, you once said you would grant us one wish. Here is our wish: Undo this enchantment that Erda has placed on our beautiful princess!

Sura: Take comfort your majesties your daughter shall not die. My power and the power of my sisters, it is true, is not enough to undo all the Erda has decreed. But we can alter some of her enchantment. Help me sisters! (The fairies gather around the baby, hold up their left hands and poi their right at the baby.)

Sura: In your sixteenth year...

Fairies: in your sixteenth year

Sura: you will prick your hand on the spindle...

Fairies: you hand on the spindle...

Sura: But you shall fall into a deep sleep and dream of growing and waking one hundred years later....

Fairies: Dream of growing...

Sura: to find your health, your curiosity and your wisdom have all gown within you!

Fairies: Health, curiosity, wisdom...

Sura: this we declare together!

All Fairies: So, will it be!

Sura: So, will it be!

Freida: Sleep, a hundred years?

Charles: She is my daughter! Erda this devil of nature, will not harm her! I command that all persons who use a spinning wheel or keep a spindle in the house to immediately burn them. There must not be a single wheel or spindle left in the kingdom. Post this edict so all may know. I say again, under the pain of death, there will be no more weaving destroy all spindles.

Dialogue for Rose and Guards, Sura

(Many years have passed and Rose has grown into a lovely young lady. The king has proclaimed that Rose shall never walk outside the castle walls and gardens. She is constantly guarded. This is her thirteenth year and she enters the garden and runs up to the pond. She is followed by two guards.)

Rose: Sura!

First Guard: Stand further away from the pond, princess.

Rose: Sure, you little goblin, appear! (Sura appears)

Sura: Have you come to play?

Rose: I have come with honey cake.

Sura: Honey cake!

Rose: For a trade.

Sura: Trade for what?

Rose: Does your water flow outside the castle walls?

Sura: Come in, bring the honey cake, and I will show you.

First Guard: Stay back, Rose.

Rose: But does the water flow outside the castle walls? Say, into the river? I can see a river outside the castle walls. Could a person dive into your water and swim out into the river?

Sura: Come into the water and you will see.

Second Guard: Princess.....

Rose: You nearly drown those that join you.

Sura: I do!! And it is such fun!! Splashing and gasping and howling for help!

First Guard: you see?

Sura: It is a wild water dance! Come in, we'll play together.

Second Guard: Some drown, princess.

Sura: Only the wicked – but not you princess, as that is not your fate.

Rose: I have a fate?

Sura: Why yes, of Course,

Rose: What is my fate?

Sura: what is your fate?

Rose: My fate is to become queen. *(look at Sura)* Is that not my fate?

Sura: Come into the water, bring the honey cake and I will show you all the river has to reveal.

First Guard: You must not princess, the king will not permit that, and we will not allow it.

Sura: Perhaps one of the guards would like to join me?

Guards: NO. Not me, Not for a moment!

Rose: I will trade you the honey cake for your necklace.

Sura: My jewels?

Rose: Yes, your necklace.

Sura: Ah.... But... my pretty earth stones....

Rose: This honey cake was freshly made ... *(she bites into the cake)* Yumm.. Perhaps I will eat it all!

Sura: Oh all right I can find more jewels..... *(Sura removes her necklace and holds it out to Rose, who begins to reach for it and gets closer to the pond)*

First Guard: Go no further, princess! *(he pulls Rose back, but Sura and Rose are both pulling on the necklace. Second guard steps in to help get Rose away from Sura. Rose hands the honey cake to Sura , it starts to fall, and Sura has to let go of the necklace to grab the cake. Rose has the necklace.)*

Sura: *(Sura is angry that she has lost her necklace)* You must know your fate! Ask the queen! Ask the king! Ask them what lives in the forest! *(she disappears into the pond)*

Rose: *(to guards)* What does she mean? My fate?

Second Guard: *(doesn't want to tell Rose her fate)* She is just fairy folk and talks in riddles!

First Guard: We can tell you nothing. We have to duty to watch and protect you.

Second Guard: *(whispers to first guard)* We could tell her something.... Surley, that would....

First Guard: *(whispers back)* We can tell her nothing!

Rose: I command you to stop whispering and tell me what did Sura mean?

Second Guard: If you command us to.....

First Guard: We know nothing. And this nixie, everyone will tell you, she is mischievous, she plays with us, she plays with you. You cannot believe her.

Second Guard: She wished to drown you.

First Guard: She knows nothing of your fate, how could she?

Second Guard: She could know something of her fate because.....

First Guard: How could she?

Second Guard: How could she?

Dialogue for Cobb, Rose, Guards (stand at attention)

(Cobb is the son of the castle gardener. He helps his dad and on this day, he enters the garden carrying tools for pruning. Rose is sitting on a rock by the pond, reading a book. Her two guards are standing at attention.)

Cobb: *(bowing)* Good day Princess Rose.

Rose: Good day, Cobb. What are you doing?

Cobb: Pruning the flowers, Princess; unlike wild plants, most garden plants need the pruning or they sicken and die. What is it you are reading?

Rose: A dull story in a boring book and ancient Italian tale that I have read three times before I have almost memorized the story. Yet my tutor demanded that I read it to the end - - again!

Cobb: Perhaps I could help?

Rose: I don't know how you could possibly help me read?

Cobb: If you would, say, read the story aloud, I could, perhaps, entertain you by acting the parts.

Rose: I see now, you shall read the story to me!

Cobb: But Milady, I could help you , instead, if I could just act the parts

Rose: *(hands him the book)*. You shall read it aloud, and I will say I read to the end again.

Cobb: *(opens the book, looks at the pages)* There are..... no pictures to see.

Rose: *(turns the book right side up, as he is holding it upside down)* It is a reading book, not a picture book. Begin at the beginning and read to the end.

Cobb: I.... *(he is hesitating to start)*

Rose: Begin.

Cobb: In truth, I cannot read. *(The guards look at each other)*

Rose: Ah, I see. *(Cobb hands the book back to Rose.)* Now, I see.... I shall read the story to you! That may help my interest in the story.

Cobb: I will listen and thank you for not making sport of me, that I cannot read.

Rose: *(Reading)* “Once upon a time .. long ago, there lived a king...” *(Cobb becomes a king, she see this.)*

Cobb: *(as king)* HYAH!

Rose: “and a queen”

Cobb: *(as queen)* Hyah!

Rose: “who wished for a child”

Cobb: *(as queen)* Oh, how I long for a child. This would please you, would it not, King? *(As King)* I would thereafter be the happiest king on earth. *(As queen)* Oh, a child, a child, to hold forever in our hearts, tiny hands and tiny ears, I want to kiss her little fat cheeks.

Rose: *(reading)* “And when their daughter was born, the people of the castle greeted the news with cheers”

Cobb: *(goes through a series of crowd responses, cheers, clapping, etc.)* Bravo..... fate was kind..... long live the princess..... etc. We are blessed, what a beautiful baby.

Rose: *(reading)* “as the girl grew older, she grew more beautiful everyday.....” *(Cobb becomes more beautiful)* “Every day more beautiful than the day before” *(Cobb ties to become more beautiful ... he does his best but finally says:_)*

Cobb: *(as himself)* Ah, but this princess, she must be played by you!

(Cobb and Rose change places and Rose stands in the place where the Cobb as the princess was)

Rose: *(From memory)* “as the girl grew older, she grew more beautiful every day”.