

COVER  
NOT FINAL

# *Sleeping Beauty*

With six  
enchancing  
pop-ups



*Illustrated by Anja Sušanj*



Long ago, in a kingdom of sunshine, kindness and fragrant flowers, there lived a King and queen who ruled with wisdom and kindness. Every day, they sat on golden thrones in a magnificent castle, wearing jewel-encrusted crowns and richer women by the finest weavers. They were surrounded by many books and ornaments, and had a whole kingdom of loyal subjects who served them, and seemed that they had everything anyone could want. All that is, except the one thing they wished for more than anything: to have a child.

Each morning, by a crystal-clear pond in the castle gardens, the King and queen would stroll and watch for a baby son or daughter, wishing with all their hearts.

Then one day, to their great delight, a frog hopped out of the pond. "Your wish is granted!" declared the frog. "Within a year you will have a baby girl." And so it was.

When the new princess was born, the whole kingdom went stark with delight. But the King and queen, who had waited so long for this precious gift, were the most delighted of all. All day long, they watched their baby girl cooing in her exquisite cradle. Laughter and smiles filled the castle like sparkling stars, and announced a great celebration. A profusion of brass trumpets sounded, and in honour of the new princess, the King and Queen threw open their doors; messengers were sent in every direction to carry the invitation far and wide; they invited friends, family, neighbours, and, as special guests of honour, the wise fairies of the kingdom. There were seven in total, but the King said, "There are only six golden plates for them to eat from! One fairy will have to stay at home."

So the celebration began — without the seventh fairy!



All day, and long into the moonlit night, people danced to melodies that shimmered through the air. In the dining room, tables were laden with vibrant roasts and delicacies, and the rich fragrance of pine, cedar and roses wafted through the air. When everyone had danced and eaten their fill, the six fairies came forward and presented themselves. Each was dressed in a robe woven of silver thread and laden with jewels like sunlight dewdrops. One by one they turned over the baby's cradle, wove their long words and spoke a charm. With each charm, the baby received a gift for her future: kindness, courage, curiosity, skilled hands, and a voice so radiant that all who heard it had to listen.

The king and queen bowed and thanked each fairy in turn, exclaiming, "By your generosity, our daughter is enriched!"

But just as the fifth fairy lowered her wand, a cold wind blew through the castle.

Without first taking a look at the baby, and the seventh fairy appeared, feeling so being included from the celebration. She was dressed in a robe woven of silver thread and laden with jewels like sunlight dewdrops. She turned over the baby's cradle, wove her long words and spoke a charm. With each charm, the baby received a gift for her future: kindness, courage, curiosity, skilled hands, and a voice so radiant that all who heard it had to listen.

The king and queen bowed and thanked each fairy in turn, exclaiming, "By your generosity, our daughter is enriched!"

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*The King and Queen vowed to prevent the curse of the seventh fairy. That very day they sent out a command to their knights, soldiers and hunters:*


*"Go to every house across the kingdom, find every spindle, and destroy them all!"*  
*From all corners of the land, spindles were collected into one mountainous pile and set alight. Orange-red tongues of fire and flame danced high into the sky. Soon there were no spindles left anywhere in the kingdom – all had been burned to ashes. No new thread could be spun, and no new clothes made. But it was a small price to pay for the safety of the princess.*

*So the princess grew from a baby, into a child, into a young woman, without ever seeing a spindle. Nobody was allowed to tell her of the curse: the King and Queen wanted their daughter to be perfectly happy.*

*And she was happy – with each passing year, the promises of the fairies came true.*

*By the time she was fifteen years old, because of their gifts, the princess had more talents and skills than anyone could wish for. And more – she became so brave, kind, and curious about the world that everyone who saw her loved her. She listened to people, made friends from all over the kingdom, and spent her days exploring the craggy mountains, crystal-clear waterfalls, and yellow buttercup-filled meadows of the kingdom. Whenever she spoke, the princess inspired everyone around her to be as brave, kind and curious as she was herself.*

*So when preparations began for the princess's sixteenth birthday party, it was no surprise that everyone in the kingdom offered to help. From small cottages to huge mansions, in fields and farms and shops, up and down narrow lanes and broad city streets, people bustled to and fro. The air of the kingdom hummed with excitement for the coming celebration.*



*At last, the day of the princess's sixteenth birthday arrived. She awoke early, but found the castle empty: everyone was out preparing for the party. Alone for the first time, a strange impulse drew the princess's feet toward the castle's abandoned wing. There she roamed silent halls, corridors lined with ancient books and secret passageways she had never walked before.*

*She turned key after key to room after room, until she came to an old stone tower, a narrow staircase winding up towards a room at the top. In the middle of the room, beside a little bed, a strange old woman sat spinning thread at a whirring wheel. It spun round and round, as the woman's foot tapped up and down. The princess had never seen such a thing before.*

*"What's that?" she asked.*

*The old woman answered, "A spindle, to make thread to weave into beautiful clothes."*

*"Can I try it?" asked the curious princess.*

*"Yes, please do," replied the old woman.*

*The princess reached out to take hold of the spindle, and cried "Ouch!"*

*She had pricked her finger on its sharp point.*

*Instantly, her eyes closed. She swayed, then sank onto the bed, straight into a deep sleep, just as the seventh fairy had promised.*

*And when the princess fell asleep, so did everyone else. Sleep spread over the castle like a warm soft blanket. The king and the queen, their servants, and the cook – just arrived home from their errands – all fell asleep. The horses in the stables, the dogs, geese and hens in the yard, the pigeons on the roof and even the flies on the walls all slept. The fires in the fireplaces died down, food stopped cooking and soon everything settled into stillness. All was silence, but for the sound of peaceful breathing.*