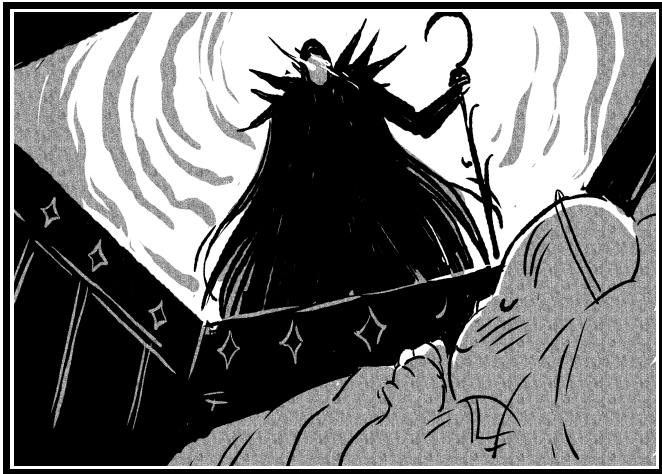


Story Synopsis: Sleeping Beauty

Princess Aurora is born to a royal couple, King Stefan and Queen Leah, who declare a holiday to celebrate her birth. At the celebration, the royal family agrees to betroth Aurora to Prince Phillip, a young prince from a neighboring kingdom.

Guests at the celebration include three fairies (Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather) who begin to offer the little girl individual blessings. While doing so, an evil fairy (Maleficent) storms into the party interrupting the blessings and, out of spite for being shunned from the kingdom and the celebration, curses the young Aurora to death by the time of her sixteenth birthday by pricking her finger on a spinning wheel spindle.

Merryweather is luckily able to soften the blow of Maleficent's curse with her blessing to Aurora, by changing the curse's death sentence to that of a deathlike sleep, from which she may be awoken by "true-love's first kiss." Merryweather and the other two good fairies agree to hide the princess in a cottage in the woods to keep her safe from the curse until she turns sixteen, and leave the castle with Aurora in their care.



When we see Aurora again, many years have passed and she is now a beautiful young woman, about to turn sixteen. As Aurora picks berries in the forest, she meets a handsome young man, Prince Phillip, and though they are both unaware that they are already betrothed to each other, they fall in love. She invites him back to her cottage later that evening.

While Aurora is in the woods, the fairies' cottage is discovered by Maleficent's scout (a raven), who informs the evil fairy of Aurora's presence there. When Aurora returns to the cottage happily in love, she tells her guardian fairies of this new romance. The fairies are forced to let Aurora know the truth about her history and forbid her to meet her new, unknown suitor out of fear of the curse taking hold.

Meanwhile, Phillip has told his father, King Hubert, of this beautiful peasant girl he has met in the woods and wants to marry, wishing to cancel his betrothal to the Princess Aurora. Phillip, too, is forbidden to meet his new love, but he refuses to obey his father's orders.

In preparation for her sixteenth birthday, the fairies take Aurora back to the kingdom's castle that night, where Aurora unwittingly falls into Maleficent's magical trap, pricking her finger on an enchanted spinning wheel. This completes the curse, and Aurora succumbs to a death-like sleep. Maleficent seems victorious here - the villain has won and the tension of the story grows. When the three good fairies see Aurora in this state, they place her in the tallest tower and enchant the entire kingdom to sleep as well, while they wait for the princess's spell to be broken by true love's first kiss.

Soon after, the fairies learn overhear a conversation between Aurora's father and King Hubert confirming that it is indeed Prince Phillip with whom Aurora had fallen in love in the woods. The fairies search the kingdom to find him, but we discover that Maleficent has ambushed Prince Phillip at the cottage in the woods when he returned that evening to see Aurora. Maleficent has kidnapped Phillip and is holding him prisoner in her castle.

With the story at its most tense, we find that the curse has befallen the Princess and the only one who can save her is held captive. With victory in her grasp, Maleficent is intent on keeping Phillip from seeing Aurora until he is an old man, destroying their chances at love.

As luck will have it, however, the fairies make their way to Maleficent's castle and are able to rescue the Prince, arming him with a magical sword and shield in the hopes of helping him make his way to the Princess.

As Prince Phillip escapes, Maleficent uses everything in her power to stop him. She first creates a forest of thorns, but he is able to cut through them with the sword. Maleficent then takes on the form of a ferocious dragon to fight Phillip. In this epic fight, Phillip comes close to losing the battle, but in a last ditch effort, he is able to pierce the dragon's heart by throwing his magical sword at her, finally killing Maleficent. Prince Phillip races to meet his young love and kiss her, waking her and the kingdom from the deep sleep, ensuring them a life lived happily ever after.

