

Isabelle Hidalgo

Creative Writing

December 8, 2016

Period 2

Twisted Tale Essay

In the story of *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, Neil Gaiman took it upon himself to twist not one, but two tales. He mashed together Sleepy Beauty and Snow White into a strange piece of vanity and adventure. While he attempted to keep some similarities to the original fairy tales, he made the story very much his own.

In the very beginning, the reader is introduced to three dwarfs: which could be a mix between the three fairies and the seven dwarfs, but not much of their roles or personalities made their way into this version of the story. You start to notice what tale is being twisted when the dwarfs are told there is a plague of sleep that has doom written all over it. They were informed of an enchantress that was not invited to a birthing ceremony so she cast a spell upon the princess, much like in the original edition. The curse was exactly the same, all the way to pricking her finger on a spindle! Additionally, the believed way to break the curse is through a kiss.

The reader has a bit of a suspicion when it is explained that the queen has a pal and and raven-black hair. Though, they ignore that as the queen decides to call for a sword and a horse and kissed her fiance explaining that they will be married soon, then she left for the palace. Another off-putting oddity is the idea that the spiders do not sleep, they seem not to play much of an important role in the remastered story. After a bit of setting description, you are struck with

action! Unlike in the original tale, the sleepers of the town stand up and begin to sleepwalk and chase the queen and the dwarfs.

After some of the action, the reader is brought to the castle, with the old woman climbing up the tower stairs to the highest tower with an opulent room just like the first telling of the story. The four travelers set fire to the roses and make their way up the stairs, catching the old woman. Suddenly there was a young woman in sight, presumably the “sleeping beauty.” It was different because she was rather awake. She was controlling the sleepwalkers and was very vain, much like the Evil Queen in Snow White.

Everyone (the traveler and the young woman and the old woman) finds themselves in the room in the highest part of the tower. The reader may start to think of Rapunzel with the wretched old woman and the beautiful young girl, but the young girl showed signs of being the “mother.” She kept claiming that no weapon could kill her, she was indestructible. The room was very bland besides the bed, the tight slits of windows and of course a spindle.

A lot happens conversation wise, when suddenly the old woman spears the spindle through the young woman’s heart. The young woman laughed, saying she could not be killed by weapons. But the spindle was not a weapon, it was magic. The young woman transformed: wrinkles, then skin and bones, then just bones. It was much like what happened when Rapunzel’s hair got cut off and Mother Gothel began to age. The footsteps of the sleepwalkers strayed from a shuffle into confused chatter; they were awake!

It seemed like the end, but oddly, the queen, Snow White, decides to go West rather than East. The dwarfs tell her but she continues to walk. She says everyone has to make a choice. She choose to not return to her fiance. This was a way the author strayed from the original stories.

I found that this story was good on it's own, but it was too mixed up and away from the original story to be called a twisted tale. It may have been inspired by the famous original stories, but without the explicit description of twisted tales I would just think the allusions to Snow White, Sleeping Beauty and Rapunzel were entirely coincidental.