

# **Sleeping Beauty, Briar Rose**

By

MAX BUSH

Based loosely on the tales as told by  
Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm

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MAX BUSH

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*Sleeping Beauty, Briar Rose* was co-commissioned by University of Northwestern - St. Paul and Carbondale Community High School. The play opened in the Beverly & John Lord Knight Performance Hall at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul on Sept. 14, 2017:

CAST:

Narrator ..... Rue Norman  
Prince Roderick..... Jacob Berggren  
Erda ..... Annaliese Day  
Sura ..... Jazmin Waltner  
King Charles ..... James Anenson  
Queen Frieda..... Callista Wengel  
Olinda..... Abbie Krohn  
Dagna ..... Faith Winship  
Bluma ..... Kara Zondervan  
Dorinda ..... Grace Halme  
1st Guard..... Caleb Davis  
2nd Guard..... Adam Schliesmann  
Rose..... Jillian Johnson  
Cobb ..... Micah Spieldenner

PRODUCTION:

Director ..... Jennifer Hunter  
Asst. Director ..... Jeremiah Thiessen  
Technical Director..... Iris Dodge  
Lighting Designer ..... Paola Rodriguez  
Sound Designer..... Todd Lewis  
Costume Designer..... Diane Beal  
Scenic Designer ..... Robin McIntyre  
Choreographer..... Jolene Konkell  
Head Carpenter ..... Jay Schueller  
Stage Manager ..... Katie Sondrol  
Asst. Stage Managers..... Brenna Hay, Dawson Ehlke



Assistant Directors ..... Sarah Dubach, Cara Polczynski  
 Stage Manager ..... Alex Roberts  
 Set ..... Erik Berrey  
 Set Decoration..... Gloria Jones, Jennifer Kennedy  
     Students: Alex Brown, Amere Donnell, Connie Farhang,  
                 Dominic Groves-Nicholson, Anna Jones, Elise Jones,  
                 John Patton, Sariah Tolley, TyRee Zachary  
 Light Design..... Seth Kohlhaas  
 Lighting Assistant ..... Josh Taylor  
 Props ..... Sarah Dubach, Cara Polczynski  
 Light Board Operator..... Cat Moreno  
 Sound Board Operator ..... Stasi Solbrig  
 Costumes..... Sarah Dubach, Cara Polczynski  
 Hair and Makeup..... Cara Polczynski,  
                 Bushrah Abughazaleh, Noor Abughazaleh,  
                 Alaina Bowker, Lynda Camp, Allison Connet,  
                 Madison Lacy, Sarah Petrowich  
 Poster and Program Art..... Olivia Rebellón

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# 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.

NOTES: Sheet music and information regarding the original tales and how they were considered in the making of this play can be found in the back of the book.



## Sleeping Beauty, Briar Rose

AT RISE: *A spot comes up far R on the NARRATOR, a young woman, preparing to eat her lunch. Ruins are scattered around her. She wears a headpiece, and a long, earth-toned dress and blends into the scenery. The castle garden, covering most of the stage, is unlit. The NARRATOR turns to the audience.*

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

*(EDMUND enters, 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 to the ground with a cry.)*

NARRATOR. Mercy!

EDMUND. Ah!

*(EDMUND, seeing it's a person, jerks his aim and lets the arrow fly well away from the NARRATOR.)*

NARRATOR. Mercy, for a poor woman with no coins! I am here gathering berries!

EDMUND. Ah, forgive me, friend, I am not a thief. I mistook you for a deer.

*(He rushes to her and helps 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 (*dusting 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 here, to this kingdom. Ah, I am tired of the hunt; and hungry. May I join you?

NARRATOR. I have little to offer you, except berries I have gathered.

*(EDMUND takes out a wineskin and starts to drink. He stops, offering the wineskin to the NARRATOR instead.)*

EDMUND. A fine wine.

*(NARRATOR takes it and drinks. EDMUND looks out over the environment.)*

EDMUND (*cont'd*). 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 that 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 hold revels 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. And what should I believe of those tales?—For I like the princess story the best.

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.

*(He sits, relaxes and eats some berries.)*

NARRATOR. Long ago, within the castle walls, there was a garden, with flowers—

*(Lights up on garden.)*

NARRATOR *(cont'd)*. Statues and a spring pond. One evening, a forest fairy entered the garden ...

*(Dusk, in the castle garden. A hot spring flows through it; steam floats off the hot spring's pond. A full moon rises in the background. A large, thick, blooming rose arbor stands near the spring. Upstage, if possible, a stone bridge arches over the stream and pond. Statuary, benches and bushes decorate the floral garden. There's a substantial open area in the center of the garden. An air of mystery hangs over the scene.*

*ERDA, the forest fairy, enters, dressed in a low-cut, green dress. Her feet are bare. She wears flowers in her long, wild hair. A colorful floral image, with green and brown being the primary colors, is painted on her face. In contrast to*

*spritely and girlish SURA, ERDA is womanly, grounded and alluring. She moves to the side of the pond, carrying a large, white forest lily she brought with her.*

*During the telling of the NARRATOR's tale, EDMUND looks directly at the action in the garden.)*

EDMUND (*standing abruptly*). You say this, and I see this fairy in my mind; as if I know her!

NARRATOR. How do you see her?

EDMUND. Dressed in green; wild hair with flowers.

NARRATOR. The very one! That is Erda!

EDMUND. How could I know her? ... Except in some dream.

NARRATOR & ERDA. Come to me, Sura,

*(ERDA smells the lily, then turns to the spring pond.)*

NARRATOR. Erda called.

ERDA. Hear me, nixie, come and talk with me. (*She throws the lily into the water.*) Appear to me swiftly and now; now, nixie.

*(SURA rises out of the spring. She is dressed in a flowing blue diaphanous dress, with long, bluish-green hair; she wears a necklace of precious stones around her neck. She is young and lovely.)*

SURA. Erda! Have you 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.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. You will enjoy the game we are about to play.

*(SURA hesitates.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. Do not make me angry, Sura.

*(SURA moves onto the land.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. The king and queen walk in the garden. They will find you.

SURA. Will we lure 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 energy immediately.)*

SURA. Ah! The thorns!

ERDA. When 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.

*(ERDA begins to exit.)*

SURA. You are leaving me here?

ERDA. Say nothing of me, or you will never swim again.

SURA. You said I would enjoy this game! I hate this game! It hurts! ERDA!

*(ERDA exits as SURA struggles to free herself. SURA gives up for the moment. Because she is held captive, she is fading fast.)*

*The king, CHARLES, and queen, FRIEDA, enter.)*

FRIEDA. Perhaps if I bathed in the spring 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!

*(FRIEDA has spied SURA, who is losing energy.)*

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

*(FRIEDA goes to help her; 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.

FRIEDA *(to CHARLES)*. Any wish.

SURA. But you must grant me my wish—to swim in the spring again. Oh, I am fading away ...

*(FRIEDA tries to pull away from CHARLES. He holds on.)*

CHARLES. This is one of her pretty tricks.

FRIEDA. She's dying, Charles, can't you see?



*(FRIEDA goes to SURA and begins to free her from the thorns.)*

FRIEDA (*cont'd*). We will have you out in no time. Just a few more thorns. I cannot imagine how you entangled yourself so. There.

*(SURA fairly collapses but is caught by FRIEDA.)*

FRIEDA (*cont'd, to CHARLES*). Help me.

*(CHARLES and FRIEDA each take an arm and help SURA to the water's edge and carefully lower her into the water. After a moment, SURA bursts out of the water, completely restored, twirling and almost 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 ...

FRIEDA. We have done everything we could but without result.

CHARLES. We are growing older, we cannot wait much longer. We need an heir to the throne—a boy!

FRIEDA. 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 (*cont'd*). 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 flooding the river and drowning the village.

ERDA. And I remember well 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 her 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.

FRIEDA. How can we earn this wish?

CHARLES. Yes, at what cost?

ERDA. Your goodness has already paid the price. (*Beat. Firmly.*) Lower your sword or forever remain childless.

*(He does. ERDA motions for FRIEDA to come to her. CHARLES holds her for a moment, but FRIEDA moves to meet ERDA. CHARLES stands ready.)*

ERDA (*cont'd*). For your act of kindness, (*Places the rose in FRIEDA's hair.*) nature will soon fulfill your wish, (*Gesturing toward FRIEDA's abdomen.*) and you will bring a daughter into the world.

FRIEDA. A daughter? A daughter! Do you hear—we will have a daughter!

CHARLES. An heir to our throne.

FRIEDA. Bless you, Erda.

CHARLES. We thank you for your gentle gift.

SURA. I *do* like this game.

ERDA. Treat her well. She will be a blessed child, born out of kindness—a child to heal our separated realms. (*To CHARLES. Firmly.*) Father her with wisdom.

*(ERDA exits. SURA swims out of sight. CHARLES and FRIEDA exit. Lights dim. Lively court music is heard as the next scene is set. The following direction occurs during the NARRATOR's speech:*

*The tables for the celebration of baby's birth are brought into the garden. Banners are flown, gift tables and tables of bakery sweets are brought on. Candelabra, goblets, dishes and sumptuous food items decorate the banquet table.)*

NARRATOR. The forest fairy's prediction came true, and the queen gave birth to a girl who was so beautiful that the king decided to hold a ceremony to celebrate her birth. For this, he invited fairies.

*(OLINDA, DAGNA and BLUMA enter.)*

EDMUND. Fairies, again.

NARRATOR. Of course; this is a fairy tale.

EDMUND. And this Erda, she is a mystery—kind, generous, granting their wish, but still, like most fairies, a danger to all who meet her.

NARRATOR. Dangerous, for what reasons?

EDMUND. I cannot tell. But is there a princess in this tale, also?

NARRATOR. Sir, your interest is clear—therefore, we shall have a princess for you.

EDMUND. Please continue, forthwith.

NARRATOR. The king hoped the fairies would bestow generous gifts upon his daughter, as it was the fairy custom of those days.

*(CHARLES enters with FRIEDA, who carries a baby and places the child in a basket, DC. The GUARDS follow them. The music ends. SURA enters.)*

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

FRIEDA. Our princess!

EDMUND. That is our princess? *(Hopefully.)* Does she grow older, soon, I pray?

FRIEDA. And heir to the throne!

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

*(OLINDA moves to the baby in the basket.)*

OLINDA. For our Princess Rose, I give you: Health. Strong bones, strong mind, strong blood.

*(She gestures, there's a sound, and she waves her hand over the child.)*

CHARLES. Hyah!

ALL. Hyah!

DAGNA. To Rose, our princess, heir to the throne, leader of the people, I give you: Curiosity.

*(She sprinkles glitter on the baby.)*

FRIEDA. Curiosity! So will it be!

ALL. So will it be!

*(As DAGNA withdraws, BLUMA approaches the basket.)*

BLUMA. To Rose, princess and heir to the throne—the future queen—I give you: Wisdom.

*(She sprinkles glitter on baby.)*

FRIEDA. Wisdom above all!

CHARLES. Wisdom above all!

ALL. Wisdom above all!

*(BLUMA withdraws.)*

FRIEDA. In thanks, good fairies, I had 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!

CHARLES. And now, I command you to celebrate with us!

*(He claps his hands, he sits. Lively percussive music plays.*

*Dancers [the fairies] jump out and dance to the music. They focus their movements on and around the baby.*

*During dance, they pick the baby up and pass her around.*

*After a time, ERDA enters. CHARLES sees her and rises.)*

FIRST GUARD. The king rises!

*(All musical instruments cut out.*

*All whisper and murmur.*

*ERDA crosses to the basket, looks down at the baby and smiles.)*

ERDA *(warmly, lovingly)*. Nature has blessed you with a child.

FRIEDA. We are blessed; as you foretold.

ERDA *(still focused on the baby)*. So you remember; it was I who helped grant your wish.

CHARLES. We remember; and we thank you.

ERDA *(turning on CHARLES, moving into the group of fairies, breaking them apart)*. Yet, you do not invite me to the celebration of her birth with my sisters!

CHARLES. We ... we believed you would not care to come out of your deep forest to attend.

ERDA. After I helped nature grant your wish? What you say is a lie.

CHARLES *(he controls his anger at this)*. I see well that we were mistaken.

FRIEDA. Mistaken.

CHARLES. Your invitation should have been the first.

FRIEDA. The very first. We welcome you with open hearts and—

ERDA *(much softer, in genuine caring)*. You cannot hide this child from me.

FRIEDA. You may visit her as often as—

CHARLES. You are here, now, and we welcome you; therefore, there is no need of anger or enchantment.

ERDA. Enchantment, you say ...

CHARLES (*now challenging her*). This child is ours, we will protect her with everything in our power.

ERDA. From me?

CHARLES. From everything that would harm her.

ERDA. From me ... You are your father.

CHARLES. Who you crippled with disease.

ERDA. Because he shot the hawks out of the sky for sport.

CHARLES. You gave him no warning!

ERDA. You still make excuses! You are your grandfather.

CHARLES. Who you drowned in the river.

ERDA. Because he would steal the forest of its riches when it was not his to take. And this child; this is *our* child; our hope.

CHARLES. Ours? Guards!

*(The GUARDS move toward ERDA.)*

FRIEDA. Wait!

*(GUARDS halt.)*

FRIEDA (*cont'd*). There is no need for guards to be called. She was the one who helped us bring Rose into world.

ERDA (*quickly moves to the baby, lovingly*). Rose ... her name is Rose. Rose of the castle, Rose of the forest. You will know me, Rose.

*(She moves to pick up the baby.)*

CHARLES. Guards!

*(GUARDS approach ERDA and point their swords at her.)*

CHARLES (*cont'd*). Those are swords of iron, Erda. They will harm you.

*(FIRST GUARD touches ERDA's thigh with the flat part of his sword. It burns ERDA.)*

ERDA. Ah!

*(She backs away from the basket in pain and fear of the swords, with the GUARDS following her.)*

CHARLES. I forbid you to come near this child.

*(The GUARDS eventually back ERDA up the top of the bridge.)*

ERDA. Is there anyone who will speak for me?

*(Silence.)*

ERDA (*cont'd*). Do you not know how I helped nature grant their wish? And now this king forbids me to come near her.

*(No one speaks.)*

ERDA (*cont'd*). This child was born out of kindness—and hope!

SURA. The child was born out of kindness.

*(CHARLES gestures and glares at SURA.)*

ERDA. Are you all so afraid of this king that you do not dare to question his lack of wisdom?

*(Silence.)*



ERDA (*cont'd*). Not my sisters? You wish wisdom on this child but do not have the courage of wisdom yourself?

(*No answer.*)

ERDA (*cont'd*). Queen mother? You know most of all how this child came into the world.

FRIEDA. I—

(*She begins to speak, but CHARLES gestures, and she remains silent.*)

ERDA. You will all see the effect of your silence.

FRIEDA. Have mercy, Erda. She is but newborn.

ERDA. This child shall grow in fear; the fear in all of you; the fear in your king. (*Casting her spell, with a sound.*) Therefore, I declare that in her sixteenth year, Rose shall prick her hand on a spindle and fall down dead.

EDMUND. What? What did she say?

FRIEDA. That is not fair to the child. Punish me for not inviting you.

ERDA. I say again, this child will, in her sixteenth year, on a spinning wheel spindle, prick her hand. She will bleed, and she will die.

EDMUND. This is the tale your grandmother told?

NARRATOR. This is the true story.

EDMUND. But ...

(*ERDA throws a handful of glitter over the scene, then exits.*

*FRIEDA runs to the baby, picks it up and holds it close.*)

FRIEDA (*to CHARLES*). You cannot allow this to happen!

CHARLES. You, Sura, you once said you would grant us one wish. Here is our wish: Undo this enchantment.

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 that Erda decreed. But we can alter some of her enchantment. Help me sisters.

*(The fairies gather together. As they do, ERDA reappears but is unseen by the others. She watches the spell by the fairies.)*

*The four fairies stand around the baby, hold up their left hands and point their right to the baby. After each phrase, the fairies will bring their left arms down and point to the Earth.)*

SURA. In your sixteenth year ...

FAIRIES. In your sixteenth year ...

SURA. You will prick your hand on the spindle ...

FAIRIES. Your 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 grown within you ...

FAIRIES. Health, curiosity, wisdom ...

SURA. This we declare together:

ALL FAIRIES. So will it be!

SURA. So will it be.

FRIEDA. Sleep, a hundred years?

CHARLES. She is my daughter! Erda, this devil of nature, will not harm her. *(To everyone, as ERDA exits.)* I command 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 as an edict so all may know. I say again, under pain of death, there will be no more weaving; destroy all spindles.

*(All exit. The tables are taken off during the following narration.)*

NARRATOR. And so all the spinning wheels and spindles that could be found were burnt to ashes. Time passed. Princess Rose grew in health and curiosity, fulfilling the gifts the fairies bestowed on her. But the king, fearing Rose would be harmed, commanded: *(As the king.)* “Rose shall never walk outside the castle walls.” One day, in her thirteenth year ...

*(ROSE enters and runs to the pond. She’s carrying a large piece of honey cake. She’s followed by her two GUARDS. EDMUND stands bolt upright.)*

EDMUND. I know her!

NARRATOR. But this was long ago.

EDMUND. But I know this princess! ... Don’t I?

NARRATOR. She is but thirteen in our story; our story of:  
Once upon a time, long ago.

EDMUND. She is younger than I know, yes, but that is her.  
Will she grow older in your tale?

NARRATOR. If you allow me to continue my story.

EDMUND *(sitting)*. Heartily, I wish you to continue, forthwith.

NARRATOR. For on this day, Rose called—

ROSE. Sura!

FIRST GUARD. Stand further away from the pond, princess.

ROSE. Sura, 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. 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 I don't play that game with all my guests. Certainly not someone who brings me honey cake. Certainly not you, princess. That is not your fate.

ROSE. I have a fate?

SURA. Why yes. Of course. Come, come, come in!

ROSE. What is my fate?

SURA. What is your fate?

ROSE. My fate is to become queen.

*(No response.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Is not that to be my fate?

*(No response.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Sura, is not my fate to become queen?

SURA. Come make the trade. The honey cake—what is your wish?

ROSE. But what is my fate?

SURA. What do you want for the trade?

ROSE. I will trade you the honey cake for a dive down into your water, and into the river outside the castle walls.

FIRST GUARD. The king will not permit that, and we will not allow it.

SURA. This water does not flow to the river; it flows into the deep earth. What else would you like? Perhaps one of your guards, lured into the water, to water-dance with me?

GUARDS *(variously, overlapping each other)*. No. Not me. Not for a moment. You? You wouldn't do that. Would you, princess? She would not. Would you?

ROSE. I'll trade for ... your necklace.

SURA. My jewels?

ROSE. Yes, for your necklace.

SURA. Ah ... but ... my pretty earth stones?

ROSE. This honey cake was freshly made. *(She bites the cake.)* Mmm ... Perhaps I will eat it all.

SURA. I will find more jewels.

*(SURA removes her necklace and holds it out to ROSE.)*

FIRST GUARD. Go no further, princess.

ROSE. Stay back. I command you—both—to stay back.

*(FIRST GUARD backs off a little, but SECOND GUARD takes a large step back. FIRST GUARD sees this and yanks SECOND GUARD forward.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Further.

*(FIRST GUARD steps back, but SECOND GUARD takes a tiny step back. FIRST GUARD sees this and yanks SECOND GUARD back. ROSE moves to the pond and carefully offers SURA the cake. SURA grabs ROSE's wrist. ROSE tries to pull away, but SURA holds on. The GUARDS quickly move to ROSE.)*

SURA. You must know your fate!

ROSE *(stops pulling)*. What is it, if you know?!

SURA. It is not mine to tell.

*(The GUARDS hold on to ROSE, but she holds against them, trying to stay with SURA.)*

FIRST GUARD. Release her!

ROSE. Who will tell?

SURA. Ask the queen!

SECOND GUARD. Help us, princess!

ROSE. Is that why I'm forbidden to go outside?

*(The GUARDS pull ROSE away from SURA. SURA tries to grab ROSE's hands, feet, etc., as the GUARDS try to pull ROSE further away.)*

SURA. Ask them what lives in the forest!

ROSE. Why? What lives in the forest?

SURA. Ask them about your fine clothes!

ROSE. My clothes! What of my clothes?

SURA. Who makes your clothes? Where? Why?

ROSE. You speak in riddles.

SECOND GUARD. Of course; she is fairy folk.

ROSE. Speak plainly.

SURA. I have said what I can say. Except: you are blessed.

ROSE. How? ... By who? ...

SURA (*bites the honey cake*). Mmmm. I will eat it all. Bless you!

(*SURA exits.*)

ROSE. Oh! Nixies! She has the honey cake, and I have nothing but this necklace! ... Guard, what was her meaning? What will fate bring me?

FIRST GUARD. We can tell you nothing.

SECOND GUARD. We could tell her something, surely, that would—

FIRST GUARD. We can tell her nothing.

SECOND GUARD. We can tell you nothing.

ROSE. I command you to tell me.

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.

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?

*(ROSE pulls away from the GUARDS and puts on the necklace.)*

ROSE. Am I beautiful now?

SECOND GUARD. Oh, you have always been beautiful to me. I have often thought of you as something more beautiful than the queen's cat.

ROSE. But am I more beautiful now that I am wearing jewels?

FIRST GUARD. Oh, yes.

SECOND GUARD. More beautiful.

ROSE. I don't feel more beautiful.

*(She removes the necklace, considers, then puts it around FIRST GUARD's neck. SECOND GUARD laughs.)*

SECOND GUARD. You are more beautiful now.

*(ROSE exits as FIRST GUARD struggles to take off the necklace. The GUARDS follow ROSE off.)*

EDMUND. Did no one tell her?

NARRATOR. Although she pleaded with the king and queen, they told Rose nothing of the fairies, or Erda, or her fate.

EDMUND. She is but thirteen you say?

NARRATOR. Thirteen.

EDMUND. But even now I see she wishes to know the truth of herself and the world around her. Her wisdom grows as she grows.

NARRATOR. Time passed. One day, in her fourteenth year:

EDMUND. Fourteen ...

*(In the garden, COBB, the 14-year-old son of the castle gardener, enters. He works in the garden, pruning plants, firming soil, etc.)*



*ROSE enters, reading a book, silently. Her two GUARDS follow her. They will take positions and observe the following.)*

COBB (*bowing*). 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 thereupon will sicken and die. What is it you read?

ROSE. A dull story in a boring book; an ancient Italian tale that I have read three times before. I have almost memorized the story. Yet my tutor has demanded I read it to the end—again.

COBB. Perhaps I could help.

ROSE. I don't know how you could 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—

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

*(COBB holds book, looks at the pages.)*

COBB. There are ... there are no pictures to see.

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

COBB. I ...

ROSE. Begin.

COBB. In truth, I cannot read.

*(The GUARDS laugh.)*

ROSE. Ah. I see.

*(He hands the book back to her. He picks up his pruning tool. After a moment.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Ah! Now I see!—I shall read the story to you!  
That may help my interest.

COBB. I will listen well. And I thank you for not making sport of me, that I cannot read.

*(He puts down his tool. She reads.)*

ROSE. “Once upon a time, long ago, there lived a king ...”

*(COBB becomes the king, she sees this.)*

COBB *(as king)*. Hyah!

ROSE. “And queen ...”

*(COBB becomes the queen.)*

COBB *(as queen)*. Hyah.

*(ROSE smiles at him. The GUARDS are amused.)*

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 *(smiles and continues 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, waves, clapping, etc.*). Bravo ... fate was kind ... long live the princess ...

(*SECOND GUARD has become engrossed in the story.*)

SECOND GUARD & COBB. We are blessed. What a beautiful baby.

COBB. All hail our future queen!

(*FIRST GUARD motions for SECOND GUARD to stop joining in.*)

ROSE. “As the girl grew older, she grew more beautiful everyday ... ”

(*COBB becomes more beautiful.*)

ROSE (*cont'd, embellishing, not reading*). More beautiful—

(*COBB tries to become more beautiful.*)

ROSE (*cont'd*). More beautiful!

(*He does his best to be more beautiful, but fails.*)

COBB. Ah, but this princess, she must be played by you.

(*As COBB and ROSE change places, ERDA clearly appears in the background. ERDA sits and watches the following, enjoying what she sees. COBB, ROSE and the GUARDS do not see her.*)

ROSE (*putting the book down, quoting from memory*). “As the girl grew older, she grew more beautiful every day.”

*(ROSE becomes as ugly as she can. COBB and EDMUND laugh.)*

EDMUND. Ah!

NARRATOR. Yes?

EDMUND. She is funny!

COBB. Sometimes this princess became angry ...

*(She becomes angry. ROSE enjoys this game.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. Mischievous ...

*(She becomes mischievous with the GUARDS.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. Curious ...

*(She becomes curious.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. Wild.

*(She becomes wild. COBB laughs, as do EDMUND and the GUARDS.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. You prove a rare jester.

EDMUND *(impressed)*. Look how she plays with him, and he is no more than a servant. I could believe the fairies granted her a kind heart as well.

ROSE. “One day, when she was bored”—most likely reading a dull Italian story she has memorized—“when she was in her thirteenth year, she heard a calling ...”

*(COBB doesn't know what that is.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. A sound that called to her to come into the deep forest.

*(He makes a sound of the calling; a deep, long, masculine sound.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). “That day she did what the king and queen begged her never to do ...”

*(She acts out the following as the princess.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). “She ran from her guards—”

SECOND GUARD. No!

ROSE. “And followed the sound into the deep forest ...”

SECOND GUARD. No!

ROSE. “It was dark; yet she continued deeper into the wood. Soon the princess grew tired and wished to leave the forest, but did not know the way out. She saw a pixie!”

*(COBB is reluctant to be a pixie. ROSE demands he do so.)*

ROSE (*cont'd, forcefully*). She saw a green little pixie.

*(He becomes the pixie.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). “And the Pixie said—”

COBB. “Follow me and I shall lead you out of this wood, for I am a green little pixie.”

*(COBB pixie-leads her; he moves quickly around the stage as the pixie, she follows.)*

COBB (*cont'd*). Come—come—come—this way—this way—no this way—and then this way—

ROSE. “I am so happy I saw you, I’m so happy to leave this dark forest, I am a princess and my father, the king, will reward you!”

COBB. You are a princess?

ROSE. "I am! And I shall become queen!"

COBB. Then you must come *this* way! And *this* way! Pixie—  
pixie! I'm a nasty little pixie!

ROSE (*as the pixie leads her*). "But the pixie led the princess  
away from the castle and deeper into the forest. And then,  
the pixie disappeared."

COBB. Poof.

*(The pixie disappears.)*

ROSE. "The princess was suddenly lost in the dark, deep  
wood ... She wandered ..."

*(ROSE wanders.)*

COBB. Afraid.

*(ROSE is afraid.)*

ROSE (*in a small, quiet voice*). "Father?"

COBB. Tired.

*(ROSE is tired.)*

COBB (*cont'd*). More tired.

*(ROSE is more tired.)*

COBB (*cont'd*). More tired.

*(ROSE is extremely tired.)*

COBB (*cont'd*). Hungry.

*(ROSE becomes hungry and tired.)*

COBB (*cont'd*). Hungrier.

*(She is now starving and exhausted.)*

ROSE. “Finally the princess met a prince.”

*(She jumps up. COBB becomes a simpleton prince.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). “A handsome prince” ... More handsome ...  
*(A hint to COBB.)* Dancing ...

*(COBB dances strangely.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). You must ask me to dance.

COBB. Would you do me the honor of dancing with me?

ROSE. His voice was gruff because “this was a shapeshifting goblin pretending to be a prince.”

COBB (*in a gruff voice*). Would you do me the honor of dancing with me, princess?

ROSE (*as the princess*). “I would love to dance with you; and then you may show me the way out of this forest.”

*(They dance, but not well. This dance reflects—awkwardly—the final dance between ROSE and EDMUND. ROSE laughs and takes delight in how clumsy COBB is.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). “As they danced the girl looked down and saw—a tail! Then she saw the prince had the legs of a lion. The goblin/lion then kissed the girl on the cheek.”

SECOND GUARD. No—no—no—

*(Before the guards can stop him, COBB kisses ROSE on the cheek. She playfully slaps COBB in the character of the story they are acting out. The two GUARDS, satisfied, laugh.)*

GUARDS. Ha ha!

COBB. You shall marry me and no one else.

ROSE. “The Princess tried to run away, *(She runs.)* but, because she had danced with him, the goblin cast a spell on her—

*(COBB gestures.)*

ROSE *(cont’d)*. And she fell fast asleep.”

*(She falls to the ground, but hits her head on something.)*

ROSE *(cont’d)*. Ah!

COBB. Princess?

FIRST GUARD. Princess?

EDMUND *(rising)*. She is hurt.

ROSE. I hit my head on something. I ...

*(She rubs her head, then picks up something.)*

ROSE *(cont’d)*. Why, it’s a key.

COBB. A large key.

ROSE. To what door?

COBB. I’ve never seen such a key.

ROSE. Why did you never see it before, as you dig in the garden every day? *(Brushing it off.)* Is it gold? ... Surely there is some magic within the story of this key.

*(ERDA rises, exits.)*

COBB. There’s no door standing in the garden. Perhaps it is from long ago, before-times our castle was built.

ROSE. I shall clean it, and wear it about my neck on a gold chain. This shall be my necklace. *(Starts off.)* I will try the key in every door in the castle.



COBB. But how does our story end?

ROSE (*stops*). “The princess marries the goblin and is unhappy the rest of her days.” The end.

SECOND GUARD (*sadly*). Oh ...

*(ROSE runs off followed by her GUARDS.)*

COBB. Green little pixie ... I am a prince. I am a beautiful princess. I am—a LION!

*(COBB growls and runs off.)*

EDMUND. What door did the key open?

NARRATOR. The princess tried the key in every door inside the castle.

EDMUND. And did one open?

NARRATOR. In her fifteenth year, Princess Rose—

EDMUND. But did one open and reveal to Rose her fate?

NARRATOR. In her fifteenth year, Rose strolled in the garden, with her father, the king, followed by her loyal guards.

EDMUND. Fifteen ...

*(ROSE enters with the large, shiny, gold key around her neck. She holds hands with CHARLES as they walk. The two GUARDS follow.)*

ROSE. But I only wish to walk along the river. Perhaps as far as the great forest. Surely in the daylight nothing would dare harm me.

CHARLES (*genuinely concerned*). You may come upon some danger you will not understand.

ROSE. Then surely my guards would rescue me.

SECOND GUARD. I would let myself be cut to pieces for you, princess.

CHARLES (*with a smile*). We thank you, but it would be better if you cut some other to pieces.

SECOND GUARD. With pleasure, your highness.

CHARLES. And as for the dark forest, as you know from your reading, there are pixies, who lead you into danger; and horrible shapeshifting goblins that will cast a spell upon you and force you to ... marry them.

ROSE (*letting go of his hand, moving from him*). Then I will not enter the forest, I will stay on the riverside with the ducks and rabbits.

CHARLES (*warmly*). Be content, Rose; everything you need is here.

ROSE. Not everything!

CHARLES. What more do you need?

ROSE. I don't know; something ... new ... something ... old ... something ... free and ... exciting.

EDMUND. She is free-spirited. The wide world calls to her. Let her go—let her go, Father.

ROSE. Am I to live and die only within these castle walls?

*(No answer from CHARLES.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). What is my fate?

CHARLES. Your fate? Why do you ask me that?

ROSE. Yes, what is my fate, Father?

EDMUND (*to NARRATOR*). What is her fate?

ROSE. What trick will fortune play on me?

EDMUND. Ah, she senses the fairies' spell.

CHARLES. Your fate is to become queen.

EDMUND. Is it?

ROSE. Then let me walk out and learn of this land I am to rule!

CHARLES (*taking her hand, warmly*). Stay within the castle walls where you are safe and where you understand all there is to know. Someday you will take my hand and thank me for wisely protecting you from all harm. Be content. (*With a smile.*) I command you. Be content. (*As he exits.*) Guards.

*(GUARDS move closer to ROSE as she paces.)*

ROSE. Be content ... be content? How can I ... AH!

EDMUND. He does not hear her heart. Is there no one to fight for her? For neither do her guards know her.

*(ROSE paces as she fumes. The GUARDS follow her back and forth. She begins to exit, stops, turns and sees the GUARDS. They stop as she stops.*

*She walks on, stops. The GUARDS walk on, stop as she stops. She sits on a bench. The GUARDS stand at ease. ROSE then rises and takes a number of quick steps; the GUARDS do the same. She stops. The GUARDS stop.*

*She quickly runs behind the rose arbor, out of sight of the GUARDS. They wait for her to come out. She doesn't.*

*The GUARDS go one way and disappear. ROSE steps out the other way and hides.*

*The GUARDS reappear, but do not see her.)*

FIRST GUARD. Go after her.

SECOND GUARD. Which way?

FIRST GUARD. The way she went.

SECOND GUARD. Right ... What way was that?

FIRST GUARD. Must I think of everything?

*(SECOND GUARD runs one way, FIRST GUARD runs the other way. SECOND GUARD sees FIRST GUARD running the other way.)*

SECOND GUARD. Ah! That way, then.

*(FIRST GUARD stops, SECOND GUARD runs off FIRST GUARD's way. FIRST GUARD goes off in the opposite direction.*

*ROSE steps out, hums a song and wanders in the garden. ERDA enters, a distance from ROSE, and watches her. ROSE does not see ERDA.)*

EDMUND. Her, again. I tell you I know these two.

NARRATOR. But how could you?

EDMUND. My brain is full of foolish fancies, I know—

NARRATOR. You mistook me for a deer.

EDMUND. But I tell you, I have seen these two. This Erda ... what is she?

ROSE *(sings to a statue)*.

MY SWEET AND KINDLY FRIEND,

*(She curtsies to statue, then moves away.)*

ROSE.

PLEASE TELL ME IF YOU  
KNOW OF ME.

I BEG YOU PLEASE SPEAK  
FREELY

MY FATE IS MY OWN  
MYST'RY.

FOR ALWAYS WITHOUT  
FAILING—

EDMUND.

And this song ...

I know the melody ...

But not these words.

*(ROSE sees ERDA.)*

ERDA *(pleased to see her)*. Hello, Rose.

ROSE *(anxiously)*. Who are you? I haven't seen you in court before.

ERDA *(circling ROSE)*. Look at you ... The king and queen must be proud.

ROSE. Are you ... like Sura, the water spirit?

ERDA. I'm Erda, of the forest.

*(Afraid, ROSE backs away from her; ERDA sees this.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. They have told you of me.

ROSE. No.

ERDA. I have visited here, now and again. I have seen you.

ROSE. But I have not seen you. Why have you come?

ERDA. What is that?

ROSE. My necklace?

ERDA. This ... *(Approaching ROSE, who moves from her.)*  
That key.

ROSE. I found it in the garden. I think it is old. I tried it in every lock in the castle, but it couldn't open any door. Do you know this key? Is it yours?

ERDA. Do you think it wise to keep it?

ROSE. I'm curious to know what it will open.

*(ROSE moves from ERDA.)*

ERDA. Of course ...

*(ERDA steps toward ROSE, who, in fear of ERDA, takes a step away. ERDA sees this, stops advancing and turns away from ROSE.)*

ERDA (*cont'd*). What song were you singing?

ROSE. Oh, an old song, I think, but I am not sure of the words.

ERDA. And where were you going just then?

ROSE. Away from my guards. They are always with me!

ERDA. Like a game of hide and seek.

ROSE. Exactly!

ERDA. And what are you seeking?

ROSE. The king has commanded that I may not walk outside the castle walls.

ERDA. There are wonders in the world you have not seen; you cannot know them if you are a prisoner within these walls.

ROSE. I want to know the, the—wonders, as you say. I can see a river ... and a great forest in the distance. I watch hawks fly over the walls and want to fly with them. I want to see what the hawks see.

ERDA. If you are curious as to what is out there ... (*She makes a series of gestures.*) Under that bush there is now something to help you, if you want it. If not, it will disappear within the hour.

ROSE. I have been warned about fairy gifts. They can do great harm.

ERDA. Be wise, Rose. Look through your fear. See into your heart: Will this harm you?

EDMUND. It will not harm you, Rose. Find it.

NARRATOR. How do you know this?

EDMUND. I don't know how I know ... but I know.

*(ROSE considers for a time, then looks under the bush. She sees something and looks at ERDA, who gives her nothing. ROSE slowly picks the object up: it is a spyglass, partially expanded.)*

ROSE. Is this a fairy wand?

*(ROSE looks it over. She smells it, turns it over and wields it like a fairy wand, then like a sword. She pulls the two ends, which radiates the spyglass.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Oh ... *(She pulls it all the way out.)* A glass end ... what is inside? *(She holds it up to her eye.)* Ah! It can see far away!

ERDA. It is something of science from the Italians.

ROSE *(looking)*. I can see into the countryside—there, the forest!

ERDA. There are wild places in the wood, old places, animals you can't imagine, large and small, and fairies of all kinds.

ROSE *(looking through the spyglass)*. And that must be—that must be the marketplace. Look at all the people!

*(ERDA gestures, and a sound is heard as ROSE focuses the spyglass on EDMUND.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. Who is ... who is he? ...

*(EDMUND rises, looking at ROSE.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. He's looking ... Does he see me? ... Do I know him? ... He ... sees me. He sees me! And his look is ... like no one else.

ERDA. If you could speak to him, what would you say?

ROSE. Will you know me? ... Know me.

*(The GUARDS run on and see ERDA. They immediately draw their swords.)*

FIRST GUARD. Princess! Back away!

ROSE. But she has given me this. You can see—

SECOND GUARD. Back away! Drop the thing!

*(They advance on ERDA.)*

ROSE. But how can it hurt me if I—

FIRST GUARD. You don't know what harm she can do.

SECOND GUARD. Drop it!

*(GUARD gingerly takes the spyglass out of her hands and sets it on the ground. Both GUARDS stand ready, guarding ROSE.)*

SECOND GUARD. You know these swords are made of iron; you are not protected against them.

ERDA. Remember, you are wise, child. And that *(Indicating the spyglass.)* is an instrument of wisdom. *(To GUARDS.)*

You may inform the king I have returned.

*(ERDA exits.)*

FIRST GUARD. Do not touch that thing, princess.

ROSE. But why did you draw your swords? Why are you afraid of her?

SECOND GUARD. You should also fear her.

ROSE. But why?

*(The GUARDS look at each other for a moment.)*

SECOND GUARD. Are you going to ... ?

FIRST GUARD. No.

SECOND GUARD. Should I say—

FIRST GUARD. No.



SECOND GUARD. But Erda says—

FIRST GUARD. Nothing.

SECOND GUARD. She has returned.

FIRST GUARD. Quiet.

SECOND GUARD. But we could say—

FIRST GUARD. Nothing.

SECOND GUARD (*to ROSE*). We can say nothing.

FIRST GUARD. You need to ask that question of the king, your father.

SECOND GUARD (*carefully picking up the spyglass*). We will burn this, surely, as it came from Erda, and will do great harm, otherwise.

*(GUARDS begin to exit. ROSE follows them.)*

ROSE. You will not burn the thing; I will keep it and use it as often as I wish. It is Italian!

FIRST GUARD. Your father will command otherwise.

ROSE. Then I will make known to him it is not magical, it is science and will not harm me.

*(The GUARDS are off.)*

ROSE (*cont'd*). I must see again what I saw before!

*(ROSE exits. EDMUND stands abruptly.)*

EDMUND. Did Rose ever find out what door the key opened? And why did Erda take such an interest in the key? And why has she returned now? Did Princess Rose ever get to look through the spyglass again? Was she able to escape outside the castle walls? And why is the castle now shrouded in briars and vines?

NARRATOR. All will be answered, for those who bear my story with patience.

EDMUND. Patience ... this story ... acts on me, on my blood ... it makes me ... for mercy, come to the end, for there is something in the end that ...

*(EDMUND sits.)*

NARRATOR. Time passed. One day, in Princess Rose's sixteenth year:

EDMUND. Her sixteenth year ...

*(CHARLES, FRIEDA and the GUARDS run on, frantically searching for ROSE.)*

FIRST GUARD. Princess?

SECOND GUARD. Rose?

CHARLES. Rose!

FIRST GUARD. The king has forbidden you to play this game with us!

SECOND GUARD. Come out, princess, we have to know you are safe!

FRIEDA. How could you lose her?

FIRST GUARD *(to SECOND GUARD)*. How could you lose her?

SECOND GUARD. She befools me with dodging and running. Oh, she is cunning, she is like trying to catch a shadow; she is here—she is not—she is hiding—and she believes it is such fun! Ha ha ha.

FRIEDA. This is no game. Where is she?

FIRST GUARD *(to SECOND GUARD)*. The garden is where she would be. This is her favorite place.

CHARLES. Yet she is not here.

SECOND GUARD. She would not have climbed over the castle wall.

FIRST GUARD. Why did that fairy bestow curiosity on her. Why not beauty and obedience.

CHARLES. I will have your heads if something harms her.

SECOND GUARD. Our heads?

FIRST GUARD. He will have your head if something harms her.

SECOND GUARD. My head?

CHARLES. Where is she?!

SECOND GUARD. Ah— (*A thought hits him.*)

FRIEDA. Yes?

SECOND GUARD (*looking into the pond.*). Princess? ... Princess Rose? Are you down there?

FRIEDA. Would Sura dare pull Rose into her pond?

FIRST GUARD. Rose said she wished to dive into the deep water, but Sura—

CHARLES. Sura! Appear!

SECOND GUARD (*Looking into water*). Sura, is the princess—

*(SURA leaps out of the water, grabs SECOND GUARD by the head and pulls him into the pond.)*

SECOND GUARD (*cont'd*). AH!

SURA. Got you!

SECOND GUARD. Help! Help me!

SURA. Got you, you wicked boy!

SECOND GUARD. Help!

FIRST GUARD (*grabs SECOND GUARD's foot*). I have you!

SECOND GUARD. Pull, pull me out!

*(FIRST GUARD loses his grip, SURA pulls SECOND GUARD further into the pond.)*

FIRST GUARD. No—no—no—no—

SURA. Be still. You will stop fighting. You are mine, now.

*(SECOND GUARD stops struggling.)*

SURA *(cont'd)*. Oh, you wicked, wicked boy.

SECOND GUARD *(in a small voice)*. I'm not wicked.

FRIEDA. Sura, where is Rose?

SURA. Not in my water.

CHARLES. Where is she?

SURA. I do not know. May I have this guard? May he dance with me? He will turn blue like the sky.

SECOND GUARD *(small voice)*. I don't want to turn blue.

SURA. I know.

SECOND GUARD. Queen—My queen?

FRIEDA. Release him.

SURA. But I only just now pulled him in. We haven't danced, yet. Let me take him down into the deep water, and he'll splash, and he'll gasp, and he'll howl for you! It will be such fun!

FRIEDA. Sura, release him.

SURA *(sadly)*. Oh ... but ... *(Releasing him.)* Come back and play again.

SECOND GUARD *(as he scrambles to land)*. I will not. For I don't like you.

CHARLES. Where is Rose? Tell me, or you shall both go in the water.

SURA. Oh, yes, yes—both! What a dance we'll have!

FRIEDA. Rose likes to look out.

SECOND GUARD. Yes!

FIRST GUARD. To look out at the countryside.

SECOND GUARD. The castle tower!

CHARLES. Go! Find her, hold her, lock her in her room!

*(They run off; CHARLES and FRIEDA follow.)*

CHARLES *(cont'd)*. Ah, Rose, Rose—this must not be the time. This must not be the time!

*(Once they are off, ROSE enters the garden, dressed more womanly.)*

EDMUND. There ... yes, that is her, the one I know.

*(ROSE begins to hum to herself quietly. She begins to amuse herself by absently singing and dancing. This dancing will reflect the dance with EDMUND.*

*Once she is singing, EDMUND rises.)*

ROSE.

MY SWEET AND HANDSOME PRINCE,  
FOR MY SAKE DO NOT BELIEVE OF ME  
NO OTHER LOVE HAUNTS MY HEART

*(EDMUND hums along with her, seemingly knowing the song.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*.

BUT WHERE ARE YOU THIS EVE?

ROSE & EDMUND.

FOR ALWAYS WITHOUT FAILING  
I LOOK FOR YOU, HEAR MY CALL.

ROSE.

BUT ALAS, CAN YOU NOT SEE THAT THIS WALL  
SURROUNDING US

ROSE & EDMUND.

MUST BREAK AND FALL,  
MUST BREAK AND FALL.

*(ROSE has approached the rose arbor; which, as she nears it, splits open.*

*ROSE sees the split, then backs away. The arbor closes.*

*After a moment, ROSE approaches the arbor; it again splits open, revealing a tall, wide door. She moves to the door and pulls on it, but it is locked. She pulls harder; it doesn't move.*

*She knocks on the door. No answer. She pounds on the door. No response.*

*She thinks a moment, then remembers the key around her neck. She removes the key, inserts it into the door; it seems to fit. She turns the key, then pulls the door open.*

*She cautiously looks inside, then opens door wide. A platform rolls into the garden. On the platform sits the spinning wheel and what appears to be a robed and cowled peasant woman, with gray hair flowing out of her cowl. This is ERDA in disguise. She is spinning.)*

EDMUND. A spinning wheel ...

ROSE. Who are you? ... How long have you been in there?  
... Do you know why my key opened this door? ... Is this your key?

ERDA. That is your key.

ROSE. How old are you? ... Are you a fairy? ... No one has ever spoken of an old fairy ...

*(No answer.)*

ROSE *(cont'd)*. What is that you are doing?

ERDA. Spinning. Weaving threads out of the plants and animals of the earth. To make your fine clothes. This is wool, from sheep. You know sheep?

ROSE. Of course. What is that wooden wheel you are using?

ERDA. Ah, I see you are blessed with curiosity. This is a spinning wheel—and spindle—made of rosewood.

ROSE. How does it work?

ERDA. I tread my feet, the wheel spins, I tease the thread off the quill—that's this—and put it on the spindle, here. You see, it twists the wool to make a strong thread. To make your royal robes.

ROSE. It's like magic.

ERDA. Yes, like magic.

ROSE. May I sit there and spin?

ERDA. Of course, my dear.

*(ERDA rises and ROSE sits at the wheel. ERDA hands her the raw wool.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. First, with your foot, make the wheel go around.

*(ROSE does.)*

ERDA *(cont'd)*. See the wheel spin? ... And the wool runs from the quill, to the spindle, making the thread strong.

ROSE. Strong thread ...

ERDA. On the spindle.

ROSE. Thread the spindle.

ERDA. Spinning the wool ...

ROSE. Spinning around ...

ERDA. Spinning around ...

ROSE. The spindle.

ERDA. Spinning the wool—

ROSE. Spinning— *(She pricks her hand.)* Ah! It's sharp! ...  
I'm bleeding. *(She rises.)* You see? I'm bleeding.

ERDA. Yes, I see.

ROSE *(moving away from the arbor)*. My hand ... my head  
... do you see ... ?

*(ERDA removes the disguise, revealing her identity to ROSE.)*

ERDA. I see.

ROSE. You ... it's you ... why did you ... ? Oh ... *(She's becoming dizzy.)* What is happening to me?

*(SURA appears in the pond.)*

SURA. Erda ...

ERDA. It is like magic.

ROSE. Help me. Please.

ERDA. In time; in time.

ROSE. Guards! Father! FATHER!

SURA. You are blessed with health. You need not fear.

ROSE. Sura, help me!

ERDA. This is your fate.

SURA. This is your gift from long ago.

ERDA. No one dared tell you of your gifts.

ROSE. Sura, take me in your water, heal me.

SURA. I have done all I can for you.

ROSE. Oh ...



*(ROSE collapses into ERDA's arms. ERDA carefully lays her on the ground.)*

ERDA. Sleep ... dream ... dream ...

*(The GUARDS run on. They see ERDA and ROSE and draw their swords.)*

FIRST GUARD. Back away!

*(ERDA does. FIRST GUARD goes to ROSE and checks her.)*

SECOND GUARD *(training sword on ERDA)*. What have you done to her?

SURA. What was predicted; what we bestowed.

FIRST GUARD. She breathes.

*(COBB runs on, followed by CHARLES and FRIEDA. The GUARDS both hold ERDA back.)*

CHARLES. No!

COBB. Princess?

FRIEDA. Rose!

CHARLES. Who dared bring that spinning wheel inside the castle walls?

ERDA. It has always been there.

CHARLES. I should have hunted you down long ago.

ERDA. That would not have changed her fate.

FRIEDA. A hundred years! *(To ERDA.)* You cannot mean to fulfill this curse.

ERDA. Bear it with patience, for you are fortunate she just sleeps.

CHARLES *(softer)*. End this now, wake her to who she was, and I will give you whatever is mine to give.

ERDA. I cannot change what has happened to her. Neither can you, or anyone else. She cannot go back to who she was.

*(ERDA exits.)*

FRIEDA. Erda ... Erda! ... What must we do, now?

SURA. Take heart. She is in but a cocoon of sleep and will awaken.

CHARLES. Is there nothing to be done?

SURA. This enchantment is her fate.

FRIEDA. But ... she will awaken in a strange world she will not know.

CHARLES. The garden is her favorite place. We'll put her on a bed, here.

SURA. No rain shall fall; no snow will fall in the garden. The garden will sleep with her.

*(During the following narration, the bed is brought out. FRIEDA plucks a rose from the arbor. GUARDS place ROSE on the bed.)*

NARRATOR. You would have thought her an angel, so fair was she to behold. The trance had not taken away the lovely color of her complexion. Her eyes, indeed, were closed, but her gentle breathing could be heard, and it was therefore plain that she was not dead.

FRIEDA *(placing a rose with ROSE)*. She should sleep in peace until the hour of her awakening.

CHARLES. Sura, could you charm these guards to sleep, to awaken just before their mistress?

SECOND GUARD. Me, your majesty?

FIRST GUARD. But, I am not sleepy. You?

SECOND GUARD. Not tired at all. Fully rested. Ready to fight any enemy of the king.

FIRST GUARD. And, may I say, if I were gone a hundred years, my dog would not understand.

CHARLES. Thus they would be ready with their service whenever she should require it.

SURA. Yes, your majesty.

CHARLES (*to GUARDS*). You will remain asleep with her. Let no one touch her or come near her when she awakens.

SECOND GUARD. Yes, your majesty.

COBB. She will want to see me when she wakes.

FRIEDA. Her friend. The gardener's son. If he is willing ...

CHARLES (*assents*). We, however, cannot stay with her. We must rule our kingdom and keep it alive for when she awakens.

*(Under the narration below, the following actions occur simultaneously.)*

*ERDA is seen in isolation, casting a spell.*

*SURA exits the water and moves to the GUARDS and COBB. As she touches them one by one, she says something inaudible, and they slump down and fall asleep. SURA then exits.*

*FRIEDA takes off her crown and lays it on ROSE. She kisses ROSE one last time. CHARLES lifts ROSE's hand and kisses it, then carefully places her hand down. Then he escorts FRIEDA off.)*

NARRATOR. Erda caused a forest of briars to grow all around the garden. It grew higher each year. Eventually, it surrounded most of the castle.

EDMUND. That is the very castle! And does Rose remain there even now?

*(He rises, as if to go.)*

NARRATOR. Having heard of a beautiful princess asleep in the garden, princes came and tried to break through the hedge, but the young men got stuck on the thorns. Indeed, they could not pry themselves loose and died miserable deaths.

*(EDMUND sits.)*

NARRATOR *(cont'd)*. Years passed. And from time to time, Erda would visit Rose while she slept.

*(ERDA moves to ROSE.)*

ERDA. Rose ... You are dreaming. *(With a gesture.)* Let me see your dream ...

*(Lights change dramatically to dream lighting, isolating an area in the garden. Lyrical, slow, haunting music plays. ROSE and EDMUND move in slow motion within the music. At times, however, for short intervals, they break slow motion, move somewhat quicker, but then resume slow motion.)*

*EDMUND enters, slowly stalking the deer as ROSE rises and moves to the edge of the light. ROSE slowly circles around EDMUND, studying him.*

*She moves up behind him, touches him. He seems to sense something, turns to see her.*

*EDMUND slowly begins to aim, stops when he sees it is her. He carefully puts bow down. She motions for him to come closer; he does. She sees his sword, backs off. Confused, he tries to figure what is wrong; she indicates his sword. He slowly takes off his sword, lays it on the ground.*

*She motions for him to move closer. He does. She motions for him to come all the way up to her; which he does.*

*She takes off her key necklace, puts it around his neck.*

*She dances to the music, circling around him, spinning. He watches her closely as she spins around him. She moves to him and away, to him, and away, spinning.*

*He begins to spin himself; they playfully spin closer and then further from one another.*

*She positions them to dance, and they dance to the music, slowly. He follows her. They move slowly together.*

*She separates from him, still dancing. He stops dancing and watches her. She stops dancing and slowly moves to him and she kisses him warmly on the mouth.*

*She slowly backs away. He runs to her, picks her up and swings her around. She laughs, and he sets her down carefully.*

*She looks past him and sees CHARLES standing in the half light. She backs away from EDMUND. He turns to see what she sees, sees CHARLES.*

*CHARLES steps into the light and extends his hand to ROSE.*

*EDMUND takes a step toward CHARLES. ROSE moves close to EDMUND, puts her hand on his shoulder; stands with him.*

*CHARLES steps forward, slowly draws his sword, points it at EDMUND. ROSE moves toward CHARLES, past EDMUND. She stands in front of EDMUND, facing CHARLES.*

*CHARLES opens his arms to her; sword still drawn. ROSE does not move.*

*CHARLES slowly walks off, sword in hand. EDMUND follows him to the edge of the light. ROSE suddenly appears mournful at the loss of her father; starts to gesture to him, but stops.*

*She backs out of light and lies down on the bed.*

*EDMUND turns back to ROSE but can't see her. He searches, but she is gone.*

*He picks up his sword, then his bow, checks one more time to see if he can see her. He gives up, moves out of the light and rejoins the NARRATOR.)*

ERDA (*with a gesture and a sound*). Remember this prince ... remember the passing of time ... remember these dreams.

*(She exits. Music ends, and the lights come back up on the garden and forest.)*

NARRATOR. More time passed. The hour of Rose's awakening approached.

*(EDMUND resolutely rises. OLINDA appears in the forest ruins with EDMUND and the NARRATOR. EDMUND does not see her.)*

NARRATOR. Where are you going?

EDMUND. All this does not frighten me.

NARRATOR. But I have not finished the tale.

EDMUND. I will go and see this Briar Rose.

*(DAGNA and BLUMA appear in the forest, unseen by EDMUND.)*

NARRATOR. Did you hear what I said? The princes before you—and there were many—have all died miserable deaths.

EDMUND. I had thought I was called by Erda. But now I see it is Rose herself who has called me here. For I have had this same dream. That is how I know her.

NARRATOR. But ... *(Suddenly smiling.)* do you know the way to the castle through the dense forest?

EDMUND. I will find the way.

*(Again he starts off.)*

NARRATOR. My sisters will show you the way.

*(This stops him again. She removes her headpiece, her long hair falls down. She kicks off her boots, removes her dress revealing colorful, fairy-like clothes. She indicates the fairies. He now sees them.)*

EDMUND. You are ... ?

NARRATOR. Sometimes I am a peasant girl. At times I appear as you see me now. And sometimes people see me as a deer.

EDMUND. You ... the deer that I followed.

NARRATOR. Go to Rose. She longs to see you when she wakes.

*(He exits, following the fairies. NARRATOR turns to audience.)*

NARRATOR. Now the hundred years had just ended, and the day on which Briar Rose was to awaken had arrived.

*(The GUARDS begin to awaken.)*

NARRATOR *(cont'd)*. Hardly had the prince taken a step towards the wood when the tall trees, the brambles and the thorns, separated of themselves and made a path for him; he found nothing but beautiful flowers that opened and let him through.

*(COBB awakens. The three fairies enter the garden, leading EDMUND. EDMUND enters the garden and sees ROSE. The fairies indicate for him to go to her. He starts toward her. The GUARDS jump in front of him, and draw their swords.)*

SECOND GUARD. Halt!

*(EDMUND halts.)*

SECOND GUARD. You will keep your distance from the princess!

EDMUND *(starting for her)*. I have come for her.

SECOND GUARD *(stopping EDMUND)*. I just now said you will keep your distance. Did you not hear me?

FIRST GUARD. No one is to approach her! Back away!

EDMUND. She has called me to her.

SECOND GUARD. The king commanded that no one may approach her.

EDMUND *(drawing sword)*. The king died long ago and has turned to dust.

SECOND GUARD. Hold back. I have him.

*(EDMUND attacks SECOND GUARD. During EDMUND's attack, COBB speaks.)*

COBB. If the princess has called to him, as he says—

*(The fighters separate, then SECOND GUARD attacks. The fight breaks off. EDMUND tries to approach ROSE but is blocked by the GUARDS. During this, COBB speaks again.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. He is no goblin; no lion. Therefore, there is no need of swordplay.



*(SECOND GUARD attacks.)*

COBB *(cont'd)*. There is no need of swordplay!

*(EDMUND rallies, counterattacks SECOND GUARD, kicking him twice, knocking his sword away and stomping on his foot. EDMUND then chases him back toward FIRST GUARD.)*

SECOND GUARD. You have him.

EDMUND. I tell you again, Rose called me to her this very day. You are fighting the nature of her desire.

*(FIRST GUARD attacks. EDMUND counters but is pushed back.)*

EDMUND *(cont'd)*. I have no wish to hurt you. For I see two loyal guards fulfilling their duty to their king. But I will go to her.

*(FIRST GUARD lunges. EDMUND spins into him, elbowing him in the stomach, then punching him in the face. EDMUND then chases FIRST GUARD back toward ROSE.)*

FIRST GUARD. We will have him together.

EDMUND. I have not come all this way to be stopped by you or your king.

COBB. This must be part of the prophecy of the fairies. See—they surround him. Let him pass.

FIRST GUARD. We have our orders.

*(EDMUND attacks FIRST GUARD. At the same time, COBB jumps on SECOND GUARD's back. EDMUND spins out of his attack on FIRST GUARD and hits SECOND*

*GUARD in the head with the hilt of his sword. SECOND GUARD falls.*

*FIRST GUARD attacks EDMUND. EDMUND counters, but FIRST GUARD sweeps EDMUND's sword up, grabs his right wrist to restrain his sword hand overhead. FIRST GUARD steps in and knees EDMUND in the stomach, releases his arm, then punches EDMUND in the face. This knocks EDMUND around, and FIRST GUARD pushes him in the rear with his foot. EDMUND loses his sword.*

*EDMUND jumps back to his feet, now swordless, and boldly approaches FIRST GUARD, standing at the end of his sword with arms spread.*

*FIRST GUARD lunges at EDMUND, EDMUND dodges upstage, grabs FIRST GUARD's wrist, and performs a wrist disarm, spinning FIRST GUARD upstage and wresting his sword away. FIRST GUARD falls into a somersault.*

*EDMUND gives COBB the sword. COBB approaches FIRST GUARD and points the sword at him.)*

COBB. Stay back! I will hurt you.

*(As EDMUND quickly moves to ROSE, ERDA and SURA enter.)*

EDMUND. More beautiful than I imagined. Rose? ... Rose!

*(No response. He looks to the others for help; ERDA gestures to SURA, who gestures for him to continue.)*

EDMUND (*cont'd*). I return your kiss.

*(He kisses her. After a moment, she stirs.)*

COBB. She awakes. She awakes!

*(All cheer and react in amazement : “Rose; it’s her time; she awakens; he’s awakened her” etc.*

*EDMUND holds out his hand; she takes it and rises.)*

ROSE. You ... I know you.

EDMUND. Edmund.

ROSE. Edmund.

EDMUND. Rose.

ROSE. Will you know me?

EDMUND. If you will allow it.

ROSE. Know me.

EDMUND. With all my heart. What is your will?

ROSE. To walk out of these castle walls, along the riverside,  
and into the great forest.

ERDA. I will be your guide.

COBB *(bowing)*. Milady.

*(ROSE stays with EDMUND.)*

ROSE. Cobb ... my friend, you are with me, still.

COBB. We have more stories to act, my queen.

SURA. I also have a story to tell, and will finally answer your questions.

FIRST GUARD. We await your orders, your majesty.

ROSE *(to EDMUND)*. Will you come with me?

EDMUND. Wherever you go.

*(They embrace and kiss.)*

NARRATOR. The prince and Briar Rose were married, the wedding feast was given; and this time, *all* the fairies were invited.

ROSE (*to EDMUND*). Come with me!

*(ROSE takes EDMUND's hand, and they run off, following ERDA. All the others quickly follow. SURA disappears into the water.)*

**THE END**

# My Sweet and Handsome Prince

## Part 1

Traditional  
Lyrics, Max Bush  
Arr. Ric Averill

dm dm

My sweet and kind - ly

3 C dm

friend. Please tell me if you

5 am dm

know of me, I beg you please speak

# My Sweet and Handsome Prince

2

## Part 1

7 C dm am

free - ly My fate is my own

This system contains measures 7 and 8. The vocal line starts with a quarter note 'free', followed by a dotted quarter note 'ly', and a quarter note 'My'. In measure 8, there is a quarter note 'fate', a quarter rest, and a quarter note 'is my own'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a melody in the right hand that mirrors the vocal line.

9 dm

mys - t'ry. For al - ways with - out

This system contains measures 9 and 10. The vocal line has a quarter note 'mys', a dotted quarter note 't'ry.', and a quarter note 'For'. In measure 10, there is a quarter note 'al', a quarter rest, and a quarter note 'ways with - out'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and a right-hand melody.

11 dm

fail - ing.

This system contains measures 11 and 12. The vocal line has a quarter note 'fail' and a quarter note 'ing.'. The piano accompaniment continues with the same eighth-note bass line and a right-hand melody. The system ends with a double bar line.

# My Sweet and Handsome Prince

## Part 2

Traditional  
Lyrics, Max Bush  
Arr. Ric Averill

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a melody in the right hand.

**System 1:** Measures 1-2. Chords: *dm* (measures 1-2), *dm* (measure 2). Lyrics: "My Sweet and hand - some".

**System 2:** Measures 3-4. Chords: *C* (measures 3-4), *dm* (measure 4). Lyrics: "prince \_\_\_\_\_ For my sake do not be -".

**System 3:** Measures 5-6. Chords: *am* (measures 5-6), *dm* (measure 6). Lyrics: "lieve of me. That no oth - er love".

# My Sweet and Handsome Prince

2

## Part 2

7 C dm am

haunts my heart! But where\_\_ are you\_\_ this

Musical score for measures 7-8. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 7 starts with a C chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5. Measure 8 starts with a dm chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5.

9 dm dm

eve. For al - ways with - out

Musical score for measures 9-10. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 9 starts with a dm chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5. Measure 10 starts with a dm chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5.

11 dm dm

fail - ing. I look\_\_ for you, hear my

Musical score for measures 11-12. The system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). Measure 11 starts with a dm chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5. Measure 12 starts with a dm chord. The vocal line has notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4. The piano accompaniment has a bass line of G2, A2, Bb2, C3 and a treble line of G4, A4, Bb4, C5.



# My Sweet and Handsome Prince

## Part 2

3

13 am dm

call. But a - las, can you not

15 dm dm am

see this wall, Sur - round - ing us must break and fall.

18 C dm dm

— Must break and fall.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

### I

The Perrault version of *Sleeping Beauty* (1697) bears little resemblance to the Italian source material on which Perrault based his literary tale. The Brothers Grimm's version titled *Briar Rose* (1812) contains even less material from the Italian. Indeed, the story by Giambattiste Basile, *Sun, Moon, and Talia*, published posthumously in 1634, is so utterly repugnant to our contemporary sensibilities (as it was to Perrault, who sought to soften the lurid and violent content) that it is difficult to base any part of a contemporary family play on the Italian. This, even though Basile based his story on oral versions told at the time he wrote his tale. The softening continued over time; for Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*, few remember that a child-eating ogress inhabits the story, the grotesque second half of Perrault's tale being largely forgotten today.

The Brothers Grimm's version almost certainly represents an orally transmitted version based on Perrault's literary creation, as the brothers themselves believed. After the educated, 20-year-old storyteller, Marie Hassenpflug—whose first language was French—spoke the story to the brothers around 1810, the brothers wrote a note on the manuscript that the story was probably wholly based on the Perrault.

Perrault remade the tale from the Italian into something more palatable to his aristocratic audience. His version contains only distant references to the oral tradition. Most audiences and adapters know and retell Perrault's version—although the prince does not hack through the briars (the briars simply part, allowing him to proceed to the princess), nor does he kiss the princess awake, as in the Grimm. Here's the Perrault:

“Trembling in his admiration he drew near and went on his knees beside her. At the same moment, the hour of disenchantment having come, the princess awoke and bestowed upon him a look more tender than a first glance might seem to warrant.”

“Is it you, dear prince?” she said. “You have been long in coming!”

And the Grimm version:

“There she lay, fast asleep on a couch by the window. She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, so he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him; and they went out together.”

Perrault also created the 13 fairies, the action of the princess pricking her hand on a spindle, the sleeping for a hundred years, the entire sleeping castle, the prince who arrives as the princess awakens, as well as other of the story’s elements. For all intents and purposes, the tale exists as the product of a single psyche, that of Perrault.

Keeping this in mind, and also that more than any of the other famous Grimm tales, *Briar Rose* offers the least in terms of legitimate oral-tradition material, an adapter (who attempts, as I do, to stay as loyal as possible to the “original” source materials and still create a viable play) of the tale might feel a greater sense of latitude when it comes to interpretation and dramatic invention. This presents an easy trap to fall into, of course, and can seemingly justify all kinds of literary mischief—even violence—to the original sources of the adaptation.

On the other hand, an adapter might see that to the world, Perrault's version is the original version and should be followed closely.

## II

Finding through lines, motifs and symbols to develop into a coherent play requires that the adapter first glean from the original sources pertinent elements and organize them into an accessible, aesthetically integrated series of moments appropriate for today's audiences. But pertinent to what overall tone? What overall meaning?

As with any adaptation—particularly of a spare fairy tale—scenes and motifs will need to be expanded. Characters will necessarily be added and expanded. The tales are short (especially the Grimm's *Briar Rose*) and contain frequent time jumps, two-dimensional characters and seemingly unexplained actions and inactions.

For instance, Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty* and the Grimm's *Briar Rose* offer extremely little in terms of the character of the heroine. Especially in the Grimm we only see the following: first, the baby princess receives the gifts from the fairies; next, she wanders the castle and pricks herself on the spindle; then she promptly falls asleep for a hundred years; finally, the prince kisses her awake, and they marry. Perrault wrote to communicate his moralistic sense to aristocratic youth, but even in his version, she does little more. Who is she? What does she represent? In the Perrault, what set of morals is he hoping to communicate in his story?

At this point, an interesting question looms over the tale: who is the primary antagonist? The first and most obvious answer is the 13th fairy. For she cursed the infant princess. However,

after her brief appearance at the celebration of the princess' birth, she does not return in the story. The king, on the other hand, appears throughout the story: he longs for a child, he fails to invite the 13th fairy, he declares all spindles be destroyed, he never informs his daughter of the circumstances regarding her fate, and he fails to stop his daughter from pricking her hand on a spindle. His attempts to protect his daughter, through action and inaction, drive the complete narrative.

### III

What were the Grimms hoping to communicate, or the storytellers who told and retold the story between Perrault and Marie Hassenpflug?

Is this story, as Perrault himself tells us, a romantic, role-model tale delivered to aristocratic young females about how much wiser it is to wait? Although:

“Maids will be a-sighing still and young blood must  
when young blood will”?

Certainly Perrault thought so. And perhaps any adaptation based on the story of *Sleeping Beauty* should start and end there.

Some scholars have analyzed *Sleeping Beauty* in astronomical terms. They suggest the story represents the replacement of the lunar year—which takes 13 months (the 13 fairies) by the 12 month solar year (the 12 invited fairies).

Others propose that the story can be analyzed in seasonal terms, with the princess representing nature, the 13th fairy representing winter, and the prince representing the return of spring.

But are there other valid interpretations that can be borne out of the whole of the sources, including the Italian? And can the major story elements, which made this tale so compelling to generation after generation, remain: a maiden sleeping a hundred years, a castle suspended in time, an angry fairy, and a prince who appears at the right moment to marry the princess? What possible justifiable alternate interpretations could there be? Is there an underlying metaphorical psychology within the story—even in Perrault’s telling of the tale—that could be explored dramatically?

Here Perrault himself may have opened a door (although the story says nothing about it) when he states:

“It seems that the good fairy had beguiled her long slumber with pleasant dreams.”

This is where I began in the hope that an alternative reveal of the tale could surface out of the jumble of sources and individual psyches that told and retold the tale long ago and far away.

—Max Bush  
March 2017

## NOTES

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