

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

By

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## CHARACTERS

CLAVIERRE	Wandering minstrel. Clever, aesthetic, fanciful.
ROYAL HERALD	Announces the christening of Aurora.
KING ROBERT	King of Constantine. Strong, handsome, thrilled with the birth of his daughter.
QUEEN TASHA	Queen of Constantine. Beautiful, calm, in love with her husband.
LADY-IN-WAITING	Queen Tasha's personal lady-in-waiting.
SABRINA	Fairy of the Glen. Abundant, kind, a bit glamorous.
TODEWICK	Fairy of the Forest. Fanciful, clever, earthy.
SILLABUB/OLD WOMAN	Fairy of Moonlight and Darkness. Evil.
AURORA/BRIAR ROSE	Princess of Constantine. Beautiful, soft, charming, lovely.
PRINCE JOHN	From Norway. Macho, grand, used to privilege and much freedom. Brave.
ROYAL SUBJECTS	Live in Constantine under the rule of King Robert. Grand and stately. Chorus and extras.

## SETTING

Constantine, 1500's. Royal Castle and surrounding area.

## NOTE FROM PLAYWRIGHT

The legend of the Sleeping Beauty has been told through the ages, throughout the world. Using the Minstrel as storyteller, I have chosen to use music, games and riddles to add dimension to my tale. These muses were popular in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## DEDICATION

To my dear friend, Debra Carter, for the continued inspiration and love she brings to my life. Thank you for the vision you bring to my work.

ACT I

SCENE I

SETTING: Outside the castle

AT RISE: CLAVIERRE is downstage left, casually posed on a bench)

SONG – THE SLEEPING BEAUTY LEGEND/MINSTREL

IN A TIME LONG AGO LIVED A QUEEN FULL OF WOE  
T'WAS HER WISH AND DESIRE TO GIVE BIRTH TO A BEAUTIFUL MAID  
AS IN ALL MY SONGS DREAMS COME TRUE  
THE WISH WAS GRANTED AND THEREUNTO  
SHE SOON GAVE BIRTH TO THE LOVELIEST LITTLE GIRL CHILD THAT THE  
KINGDOM HAD SEEN

RING THE BELLS! SING IT FROM THE DELLS!  
LET US CELEBRATE WITH SONG AND DANCE.  
WE MUST INVITE THE TOWN TO HAIL THE CROWN AND BLESS THIS  
HAPPENSTANCE

AND IT WAS AS IT SHOULD  
FAIRIES CAME FROM THE WOOD  
BRINGING GIFTS FOR THE BABE

THE CHILD WAS BLESSED WITH GIFTS OF BEAUTY, GRACE,  
THE FAIREST FACE,  
AN ANGEL'S SONG HER WHOLE LIFE LONG  
AND THUS THE TALE OF SLEEPING BEAUTY LIVES

(Lights fade to dim on CLAVIERRE as HE observes. Lights up center stage to illuminate ROYAL HERALD)

R. HERALD

(Blows trumpet)

Here Ye! Here Ye! His Majesty King Robert and Her Majesty Queen Tasha announce the birth of their lovely daughter, the Princess Aurora. Christening will be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month at precisely 12:00 with a reception for all subject and admirers immediately following. Here Ye! Here Ye!

(Lights fade to black on R. HERALD. Lights up on CLAVIERRE who addresses audience)

CLAVIERRE

The legend begins . . .

ACT I

SCENE II

SETTING: An alcove in the castle

AT RISE: KING & QUEEN are preparing for christening. Queen holds Baby Aurora in her arms. KING is nervous.

KING

You don't think she's too hot, my dear?

QUEEN

No.

KING

You don't think she's too cold, do you?

QUEEN

No, dear.

KING

You don't think she might fall, do you?

QUEEN

You don't think you're nervous, do you?

(HE reacts. SHE laughs easily)

Darling, everything is in order. She's not too hot. She's not too cold. Goodness, you're beginning to sound like someone out of a fairytale. Come now, dear. Take a peek at her and you will see, she's juuuust right.

KING

(Peeks in the blankets at baby)

Oh, she IS beautiful.

(Calm for a moment. Then . . . .)

Look there. She's yawning. Oh dear. You don't think she's too tired, do you?

QUEEN

(Laughing)

Oh Robert.

(Enter LADY-IN-WAITING)

LADY

Your Majesty?

BOTH KING AND QUEEN

Yes?

LADY

Queen Tasha?

QUEEN

Yes, what is it?

LADY

Your Majesty, the Royal Tailor is ready with your cape. Is it convenient for Your Majesty to try it on?

QUEEN

Of course, I'll be right there. Here, Robert. Hold your daughter.

(Hands Baby to him. HE holds her like she might break)

KING

But Tasha . . .

QUEEN

She won't break, Robert.

KING

But what do I do with her?

QUEEN

Just do what comes naturally, Robert. If she fusses a bit, rock back and forth. She'll just go back to sleep.

(As she exits)

If all else fails, just sing to her.

KING

Tasha?

(Looks at Baby. Makes little faces. Talks to her)

Hello. Hello Baby Aurora. It's your Daddy.

(Like SHE might not recognize him)

The King.

(He's as stiff as he can be)

Once upon a time there was a handsome king who was abandoned by his queen in a time of need . . . Oh, now, don't fuss. Shh. Shhh.

(Music cue)

Oh dear. Shhh, now.

(Rocks)

KING

It's not work-ing . . . sing. Just sing, Robert.

SONG – SWEETEST BABY/KING

SWEETEST BABY SWEETEST CHILD  
TREASURED MOMENT SOFT AND MILD  
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

DARLING DAUGHTER DEAREST GIRL  
MOST IMPORTANT IN THE WORLD  
I SEE YOUR FACE I HOLD YOUR HAND  
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

LEAD A KINGDOM FIGHT A BEAR  
NOW LIKE CASTLES IN THE AIR  
TELL ME, DAUGHTER, IN MY EAR  
WHAT GOES ON FROM HERE?

(Enter QUEEN, who observes)

SWEETEST BABY CHILD OF MINE  
TINY DIAMOND IN MY LIFE  
I NEVER FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE  
DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO  
DO WITH YOU.....

QUEEN

(Softly)

Robert?

KING

(Still looking at Aurora, they answer dreamily)

Yes?

QUEEN

All is ready, Robert. Your subjects await.

ROBERT

(Still talking to the Baby. Soft and sweet)

We're ready to receive them, aren't we, baby girl?

(Realizes the LADY-IN-WAITING is there. Clears his throat)

Ah yes. Of course. Let them in!

(QUEEN just smiles. LIGHTS UP as music begins. SUBJECTS and FAIRIES enter over music)

SONG - PROCESSION/COMPANY

HAIL AURORA PRINCESS FAIR  
WE COME TO HONOR AND TO SHARE  
TO CELEBRATE THIS JOYOUS DAY  
ALL HAIL AURORA'S NAME

LORDS AND LADIES TRAVEL HERE  
TO BRING GOOD WISHES FAR AND NEAR  
GOOD FAIRIES JOIN THIS HAPPY DAY  
ALL HAIL, ALL HAIL AURORA'S NAME

(During bell interlude, action such as greeting each other, gossiping, gathering, displaying gifts, reactions to entrance of FAIRIES. When music broadens, enter KING and QUEEN with BABY AURORA)

HONOR NOW OUR KING AND QUEEN  
KINDEST SOVEREIGN TO BE SEEN  
WE JOIN TOGETHER NOW TO SING  
ALL HAIL AURORA'S NAME!

QUEEN

(Grandly)

Welcome to one and all. King Robert and I are so grateful you have joined this most joyous celebration. There will be food, dancing and merriment long into the evening, but first, let us hear a word from our special guests who have journeyed long and far to be here.

(Music cue)

Sabrina, I pray you, step forward and greet our friends.

SONG – THE WELCOME AND THE GIFTS/TASHA, SABRINA,  
TODEWICK

SABRINA

I AM SABRINA THE FAIRY QUEEN  
FROM THE GLEN I HAVE COME HERE TO CONSTANTINE  
SUCH SPLENDOR NO ONE COULD E'ER FORESEE  
AND I BOW TO YOUR GRACIOUSNESS KING AND QUEEN

I COME WITH PURPOSE THE MOST SUBLIME  
AND SO WILL NOT SQUANDER THIS PRECIOUS TIME  
THE GIFTS THAT I BRING FROM WINTER TO SPRING  
I NOW PRONOUNCE FORMALLY HERE.

(To BABY)

AURORA, I OFFER A BEAUTY RARE AND THE GRACE OF A SWAN WILL BE  
YOUR LAISSEZ-FAIRE  
THE GIFT OF SONG TO YOU BELONGS  
AS THE NIGHTENGALE JOINS FROM THE AIR

(SABRINA bows at the end of her presentation, and kisses the Baby in  
the cradle)

QUEEN

Kindest Fairy, you have been most generous. The gifts of beauty, grace and song are unlike any others. We are honored by your presence and delighted with your gifts.

SABRINA

It is only fitting that a child of true love be blessed with these gifts. The pleasure is mine.

QUEEN

I call upon Todewick to make her presentation. Todewick, we honor you!

TODEWICK

(TODEWICK crosses and bows to KING & QUEEN then stands center stage to deliver her presentation as SABRINA graciously moves aside)

FROM FOREST SEVENTY LEAGUES I COME  
TAKING TIME FROM MY BUSY CURRICULUM  
THE JOURNEY WAS QUITE ADVENTURESOME  
AND I'M PLEASED TO BE HERE AT THE MINIMUM

TRUE LOVE WARRANTS THE FINEST GIFT  
AND I'M NOT KNOWN FOR BEING AN OLD SPENDTHRIFT (laughter)  
THE GIFT THAT I BROUGHT IS VERY DEAR BOUGHT  
AND NO ONE CAN EVER REPLACE

(Spoken to Baby)

I give to you . . .

(CYMBALS CRASH and interrupt music. ALL gasp as SILLABUB enters in smoke)

SONG – THE CURSE – Instrumental/SILLABUB monologue

SILLABUB

Your invitation brought mockery and shame to my home. You are indeed the mother of a beautiful little girl . . . and you DARE to flaunt your happiness in front of all who serve you? This celebration is folly and you who have come are the biggest of fools! You present this precious child with gifts? Well, I, too, have a fitting gift for the child!

(SILLABUB moves ominously toward the cradle)

QUEEN & KING

(Reaction)

NO! Stop! Seize her!

(SILLABUB silences them as she continues)

SILLABUB

(To the Baby)

On your sixteenth birthday, you will stick your finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and you will . . . . DIE!!!!!!

(Wicked laughter as SILLABUB vanishes in a cloud of smoke. Chaos breaks out among the crowd. TODEWICK confers with SABRINA)

QUEEN

(Spoken over chaos)

What shall we do? Whatever can we do? My child. My precious child.

SABRINA

(Bows low before the KING & QUEEN, now holding their child)

Your Majesties, Todewick has something to say.

(The room quiets as TODEWICK moves center stage)

SONG – TODEWICK’S PROPHECY/TODEWICK

TODEWICK

(Spoken)

I SEE A MAIDEN WITH FLAXEN HAIR  
WALKING INTO A TRANCE AS SHE CLIMBS THE STAIR  
HER FATE APPEARS TO BE SOLITAIRE  
AS THE SORCERESS SILLABUB DID DECLARE

TODEWICK (Cont'd)

THERE IS A POWER TO CONQUER THIS  
TO RELIEVE AND TO SOFTEN THIS AVARICE  
THEY CALL IT TRUE LOVE  
INSPIRED FROM ABOVE  
TO BATTLE AND WIN OVER ALL

THE MOMENT YOU TOUCH ON THE SPINNING WHEEL  
YOU WILL FALL TO THE GROUND BUT NO PAIN WILL YOU FEEL  
YOU WILL NOT DIE . . . BUT INSTEAD WILL LIE  
AND WILL SLUMBER FOR 100 YEARS

SABRINA

To undo what has been done is impossible.

TODEWICK

To unravel this spell we cannot do. And yet, Aurora will be safe in her slumber.  
She will awaken only through the kiss of her one true love.

SABRINA

And it is with the knowledge that truth in all things is the real key to power.  
This gift is the greatest of all.

(The guests take their leave as CLAVIERRE strolls to his bench.  
Lights dim on castle, fade up on CLAVIERRE as he speaks. He  
tells the story to audience)

CLAVIERRE

The untimely arrival of Sillabub and the terrible curse which she pronounced  
over little Aurora left the kingdom in a state of chaos. Todewick softened the  
blow for the moment, but it was evident that the King and Queen were still  
upset. At the Queen's request, the King decreed that all of the spinning wheels  
in the kingdom be gathered and burned so that her precious child would be  
safe. Sabrina and Todewick bade farewell, but not before it was decided that  
Baby Aurora would go to live with them in the forest. The King and Queen  
could visit, of course, but Aurora, who was to be called Briar Rose, would be  
raised by her Fairy Godmothers, who vowed to keep her safe.

CLAVIERRE (Cont'd)

(Over introduction to song)

And so it was that Briar Rose blossomed and grew. Her only friends besides her godmothers were the creatures of the forest. So gentle and kind was Briar Rose, she was loved by one and all.

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ACT II

SCENE I

SETTING: The forest

AT RISE: CLAVIERRE is seated on a wall. It is twilight. A lantern is perched on the wall.

SONG – THE SLEEPING BEAUTY LEGEND/CLAVIERRE/  
Reprise – short

(Enter PRINCE JOHN in time to hear most of song. CLAVIERRE notices him and sings to him at the end)

JOHN

Well now, that's a pretty story, Minstrel. I am partial to such nonsense, but right now, I am more interested in some food and drink. I have been hunting for days and have eaten nothing but game and water. I am ready to find an inn with all the best comforts. Tell me, do you know of such a place nearby?

CLAVIERRE

I do.

JOHN

(Waits for more information)

Then speak, Minstrel. I am an impatient man and would like to reward this empty belly and this parched throat with a morsel and something to wash it down. Be quick. Where might it be?

2-1-23

CLAVIERRE

Down the road apiece.

(JOHN turns to go)

Beware of strangers.

JOHN

(Stops and turns, impatiently)

Now, what is that supposed to mean? First, you sing a song of a princess who sleeps for 100 odd years and now you warn me of strangers. Who could be stranger than you, pray tell?

(Enter SABRINA and TODEWICK, arguing)

SABRINA

If you were to travel East and then due West you will find the demarcation line on the tree just to the North and South of the well. It couldn't be any more clear.

TODEWICK

Clear as mud. You created that line yourself 2000 years ago and everyone knows it. There will be no more discussion about it until YOU admit . . .

(See CLAVIERRE)

Ho there! It is Clavierre!

(CLAVIERRE bows to the FAIRIES)

And who is this?

JOHN

A weary traveler whose simple wish it is for a bath and place to eat and drink. Do you know such a place?

SABRINA & TODEWICK

We do.

2-1-24

JOHN

(Waits a moment for information)

Can't a man get a straight answer from anyone around here? Who are you . . . people . . . anyway?

SABRINA & TODEWICK

(One on either side)

You go first.

CLAVIERRE

He is a legend in his own time. Only once in 100 years could he pass by here.

(SABRINA & TODEWICK exchange a knowing glance. They move closer to JOHN)

SABRINA

(Slyly)

And from where have you traveled?

JOHN

From a land of much ice and snow. Called Norway.

SABRINA

And why do you come so far?

JOHN

I am on a hunt for wild boar and venison. I was told the best hunting was here.

TODEWICK

(Steps in front of SABRINA)

Is your name John?

2-1-25

JOHN

Why, yes. How did you guess?

TODEWICK

(Pulls a little bird out of sleeve)

A little bird told me.

(SABRINA is irritated that TODEWICK cut to the chase. She pushes TODEWICK aside and speaks)

SABRINA

Prince John, you must be ready for some rest and entertainment. Perhaps a drink and a story or two? Of course, the minstrel here has some music to accompany our song. Do you enjoy riddles?

JOHN

(Laughs)

I am in search of adventure, ladies. But I guess a little rest won't hurt. Get on with your riddles, then. And I'll have a bit of that drink as well.

(Music cue. CLAVIERRE gives water flask to JOHN. He drinks and watches as SABRINA & TODEWICK perform)

SONG – THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM/SABRINA, TODEWICK,  
JOHN

SABRINA

IF YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED EVERYTHING THAT'S PLANTED  
YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ALONE AND WAITING FOR A LIFE UNKNOWN  
SO TAKE A LOOK AROUND YOU LIFE IT WILL ASTOUND YOU  
BUT YOU NEVER KNOW THE TRUTH FOR THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY  
SEEM

2-1-26

TODEWICK

(Spoken)

Take for instance, stories.

SABRINA

'SPECIALLY THE ONE ABOUT THE PRINCESS BEAUTY WHO HAS SLEPT FOR  
NEAR A HUNDRED YEARS

TODEWICK

It's derogatory!

SABRINA

BUT AGAIN IT MIGHT BE TRUE BECAUSE A FELLOW SAYS IT'S NOT  
FOR THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM

JOHN

LADIES THIS IS MOST AMUSING BUT I FEAR IT'S STILL CONFUSING  
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU SAYING? THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM?  
IF I WENT TO FIND THE BEAUTY IT WOULD NOT BE OUT OF DUTY  
I WOULD FREELY TAKE MY LEAVE AND GO TO FIND MY DREAM

I CAN DO WHAT E'ER I PLEASE  
FIGHT A BEAR OR JOURNEY EAST  
IT'S A MATTER OF DECIDING AND IT MUST BE LAW ABIDING  
DON'T CONVINC THIS WAYWARD PRINCE  
THAT THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM.

SABRINA

NO NEED TO ADVISE, SIR BUT THERE IS A PRICE, SIR  
THAT YOU PAY TO WIN THE BEAUTY (AND IT ISN'T SIMPLE DUTY)

TODEWICK

IT JUST TAKES A MAN, SIR

2-1-27

SABRINA

ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, SIR  
HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE FOR THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM.

TODEWICK

(Spoken)

Take, for instance, glory!

SABRINA

'SPECIALLY DISCOVERING THE PRINCESS BEAUTY WHO HAS SLEPT FOR A  
HUNDRED YEARS OR SO

TODEWICK

It is laudatory!

SABRINA

TO HAVE KISSED THE SLEEPING BEAUTY AND DISPEL THE CURSE THAT  
WAS PROCLAIMED SO LONG AGO.  
WILL YOU TAKE A DARE, SIR?

TODEWICK

SAVE A MAIDEN FAIR, SIR?

BOTH

NO ONE CAN COMPARE, SIR, TO A MAN WHO UNDERSTANDS  
THE GLORY OF THE STORY AND THAT THINGS AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM!

JOHN

I'll DO it! By my boots, I'll take your challenge, ladies! BUT, ah, what's in it for  
me at the end?

(The FAIRIES confer)

2-1-28

TODEWICK

If you find the Sleeping Beauty, and she awakens with your kiss, Sabrina and I will each pay you with your weight in gold.

JOHN

I'm off then! And good day to you, ladies . . .Minstrel . . . thank you for the sustenance AND the fun. See you soon!

(Exits)

SABRINA

We'd best be on our way, too. His first stop is not far away.

TODEWICK

(To audience)

I only hope he takes heart.