Once upon a time as a merchant set off for market, he asked each of his three daughters what she would like as a present on his return. The first daughter wanted a brocade dress, the second a pearl necklace, but the third, whose name was Beauty, the youngest, prettiest and sweetest of them all, said to her father:

"All I'd like is a rose you've picked specially for me!"

When the merchant had finished his business, he set off for home. However, a sudden storm blew up, and his horse could hardly make headway in the howling gale. Cold and weary, the merchant had lost all hope of reaching an inn when he suddenly noticed a bright light shining in the middle of a wood. As he drew near, he saw that it was a castle, bathed in light.

"I hope I'll find shelter there for the night," he said to himself. When he reached the door, he saw it was open, but though he shouted, nobody came to greet him. Plucking up courage, he went inside, still calling out to attract attention. On a table in the main hall, a splendid dinner lay already served. The merchant lingered, still shouting for the owner of the castle. But no one
came, and so the starving merchant sat down to a hearty meal.

Overcome by curiosity, he ventured upstairs, where the corridor led into magnificent rooms and halls. A fire crackled in the first room and a soft bed looked very inviting. It was now late, and the merchant could not resist. He lay down on the bed and fell fast asleep. When he woke next morning, an unknown hand had placed a mug of steaming coffee and some fruit by his bedside.

The merchant had breakfast and after tidying himself up, went downstairs to thank his generous host. But, as on the evening before, there was nobody in sight. Shaking his head in wonder at the strangeness of it all, he went towards the garden where he had left his horse, tethered to a tree. Suddenly, a large rose bush caught his eye.

Remembering his promise to Beauty, he bent down to pick a rose. Instantly, out of the rose garden, sprang a horrible beast, wearing splendid clothes. Two bloodshot eyes, gleaming angrily, glared at him and a deep, terrifying voice growled: "Ungrateful man! I gave you shelter, you ate at my table and slept in my own bed, but now all the thanks I get is the theft of my favorite flowers! I shall put you to death for this slight!" Trembling with fear, the merchant fell on his knees before the Beast.

"Forgive me! Forgive me! Don't kill me! I'll do anything you say! The rose wasn't for me, it was for my daughter Beauty. I promised to bring her back a rose from my journey!" The Beast dropped the paw it had clamped on the unhappy merchant.

"I shall spare your life, but on one condition, that you bring me your daughter!" The terror-stricken merchant, faced with certain death if he did not obey, promised that he would do so. When he reached home in tears, his three daughters ran to greet him. After he had told them of his dreadful adventure, Beauty put his mind at rest immediately.

"Dear father, I'd do anything for you! Don't worry, you'll be able to keep your promise and save your life! Take me to the castle. I'll stay there in your place!" The merchant hugged his daughter.

"I never did doubt your [love](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm) for me. For the moment I can only thank you for saving my life." So Beauty was led to the castle. The Beast, however, had quite an unexpected greeting for the girl. Instead of menacing doom as it had done with her father, it was surprisingly pleasant.

In the beginning, Beauty was frightened of the Beast, and shuddered at the sight of it. Then she found that, in spite of the monster's awful head, her horror of it was gradually fading as time went by. She had one of the finest rooms in the Castle, and sat for hours, embroidering in front of the fire. And the Beast would sit, for hours on end, only a short distance away, silently gazing at her. Then it started to say a few [kind](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm) words, till in the end, Beauty was amazed to discover that she was actually enjoying its[conversation](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm). The days passed, and Beauty and the Beast became good [friends](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm). Then one day, the Beast asked the girl to be his wife.

Taken by surprise, Beauty did not know what to say. [Marry](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm) such an ugly monster? She would rather die! But she did not want to hurt the feelings of one who, after all, had been kind to her. And she remembered too that she owed it her own life as well as her father's.

"I really can't say yes," she began shakily. "I'd so much like to..." The Beast interrupted her with an abrupt gesture.

"I quite understand! And I'm not offended by your refusal!" Life went on as usual, and nothing further was said. One day, the Beast presented Beauty with a magnificent magic mirror. When Beauty peeped into it, she could see her family, far away.

"You won't feel so lonely now," were the words that accompanied the gift. Beauty stared for hours at her distant family. Then she began to feel worried. One day, the Beast found her weeping beside the magic mirror.

"What's wrong?" he asked, kindly as always.

"My father is gravely ill and close to dying! Oh, how I wish I could see him again, before it's too late!" But the Beast only shook its head.

"No! You will never leave this castle!" And off it stalked in a rage. However, a little later, it returned and spoke solemnly to the girl.

"If you swear that you will return here in seven days time, I'll let you go and visit your father!" Beauty threw herself at the Beast's feet in delight.

"I swear! I swear I will! How kind you are! You've made a loving daughter so happy!" In reality, the merchant had fallen ill from a [broken heart](http://www.kidsgen.com/fables_and_fairytales/beauty_and_the_beast.htm) at knowing his daughter was being kept prisoner. When he embraced her again, he was soon on the road to recovery. Beauty stayed beside him for hours on end, describing her life at the Castle, and explaining that the Beast was really
good and kind. The days flashed past, and at last the merchant was able to leave his bed. He was completely well again. Beauty was happy at last. However, she had failed to notice that seven days had gone by.

Then one night she woke from a terrible nightmare. She had dreamt that the Beast was dying and calling for her, twisting in agony.

"Come back! Come back to me!" it was pleading. The solemn promise she had made drove her to leave home immediately.

"Hurry! Hurry, good horse!" she said, whipping her steed onwards towards the castle, afraid that she might arrive too late. She rushed up the stairs, calling, but there was no reply. Her heart in her mouth, Beauty ran into the garden and there crouched the Beast, its eyes shut, as though dead. Beauty threw herself at it and hugged it tightly.

"Don't die! Don't die! I'll marry you . . ." At these words, a miracle took place. The Beast's ugly snout turned magically into the face of a handsome young man.

"How I've been longing for this moment!" he said. "I was suffering in silence, and couldn't tell my frightful secret. An evil witch turned me into a monster and only the love of a maiden willing to accept me as I was, could transform me back into my real self. My dearest! I'll be so happy if you'll marry me."

The wedding took place shortly after and, from that day on, the young Prince would have nothing but roses in his gardens. And that's why, to this day, the castle is known as the Castle of the Rose.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sleeping BeautyGrimm's Fairy Tale version - translated by Margaret Hunt - language modernized a bit by Leanne GuentherLong ago there lived a King and Queen who said every day, "If only we had a child!"  But for a long time they had none.One day, as the Queen was bathing in a spring and dreaming of a child, a frog crept out of the water and said to her, "Your wish shall be fulfilled.  Before a year has passed you shall bring a daughter into the world."   | http://www.dltk-teach.com/rhymes/sleeping-beauty/s-story-image.gif |

And since frogs are such magical creatures, it was no surprise that before a year had passed the Queen had a baby girl.  The child was so beautiful and sweet that the King could not contain himself for joy.  He prepared a great feast and invited all his friends, family and neighbours.  He invited the fairies, too, in order that they might be kind and good to the child.  There were thirteen of them in his kingdom, but as the King only had twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of the fairies had to be left out.  None of the guests was saddened by this as the thirteenth fairy was known to be cruel and spiteful.

An amazing feast was held and when it came to an end, each of the fairies presented the child with a magic gift.  One fairy gave her virtue, another beauty, a third riches and so on -- with everything in the world that anyone could wish for.

After eleven of the fairies had presented their gifts, the thirteenth suddenly appeared.  She was angry and wanted to show her spite for not having been invited to the feast.  Without hesitation she called out in a loud voice,

"When she is fifteen years old, the Princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead!"

Then without another word, she turned and left the hall.

The guests were horrified and the Queen fell to the floor sobbing, but the twelfth fairy, whose wish was still not spoken, quietly stepped forward.  Her magic could not remove the curse, but she could soften it so she said,

"Nay, your daughter shall not die, but instead shall fall into a deep sleep that will last one hundred years."

Over the years, the promises of the fairies came true -- one by one.  The Princess grew to be beautiful, modest, kind and clever.  Everyone who saw her could not help but love her.

The King and Queen were determined to prevent the curse placed on the Princess by the spiteful fairy and sent out a command that all the spindles in the whole kingdom should be destroyed.  No one in the kingdom was allowed to tell the Princess of the curse that had been placed upon her for they did not want her to worry or be sad.

On the morning of her fifteenth birthday, the Princess awoke early -- excited to be another year older.  She was up so early in the morning, that she realized everyone else still slept.  The Princess roamed through the halls trying to keep herself occupied until the rest of the castle awoke.  She wandered about the whole place, looking at rooms and halls as she pleased and at last she came to an old tower.  She climbed the narrow, winding staircase and reached a little door.  A rusty key was sticking in the lock and when she turned it, the door flew open.

In a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax.  The old woman was so deaf that she had never heard the King's command that all spindles should be destroyed.

"Good morning, Granny," said the Princess, "what are you doing?"

"I am spinning," said the old woman.

"What is the thing that whirls round so merrily?" asked the Princess and she took the spindle and tried to spin too.

But she had scarcely touched the spindle when it pricked her finger.  At that moment she fell upon the bed which was standing near and lay still in a deep sleep.

The King, Queen and servants had all started their morning routines and right in the midst of them fell asleep too.  The horses fell asleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the doves on the roof and the flies on the wall.  Even the fire in the hearth grew still and went to sleep.  The kitchen maid, who sat with a chicken before her, ready to pluck its feathers, fell asleep.  The cook was in the midst of scolding the kitchen boy for a mess he'd made but they both fell fast asleep.  The wind died down and on the trees in front of the castle not a leaf stirred.

Round the castle a hedge of brier roses began to grow up.  Every year it grew higher until at last nothing could be seen of the sleeping castle.

There was a legend in the land about the lovely Sleeping Beauty, as the King's daughter was called, and from time to time Princes came and tried to force their way through the hedge and into the castle.  But they found it impossible for the thorns, as though they were alive, grabbed at them and would not let them through.

After many years a Prince came again to the country and heard an old man tell the tale of the castle which stood behind the brier hedge and the beautiful Princess who had slept within for a hundred years.  He heard also that many Princes had tried to make it through the brier hedge but none had succeeded and many had been caught in it and died.

The the young Prince said, "I am not afraid.  I must go and see this Sleeping Beauty."

The good old man did all in his power to persuade him not to go, but the Prince would not listen.

Now the hundred years were just ended.  When the Prince approached the brier hedge it was covered with beautiful large roses.  The shrubs made way for him of their own accord and let him pass unharmed.

In the courtyard, the Prince saw the horses and dogs lying asleep.  On the roof sat the sleeping doves with their heads tucked under their wings.  When he went into the house, the flies were asleep on the walls and the servants asleep in the halls.  Near the throne lay the King and Queen, sleeping peacefully beside each other.  In the kitchen the cook, the kitchen boy and the kitchen maid all slept with their heads resting on the table.

The Prince went on farther.  All was so still that he could hear his own breathing.  At last he reached the tower and opened the door into the little room where the Princess was asleep.  There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her.  He bent down and gave her a kiss.  As he touched her, Sleeping Beauty opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

Throughout the castle, everyone and everything woke up and looked at each other with astonished eyes.  Within the month, the Prince and Sleeping Beauty were married and lived happily all their lives.