

SLEEPING BEAUTY

By Michele L. Vacca

*(Based upon the famous
Perrault romance)*

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CLASSICS ON STAGE! – ON STAGE!

P.O. Box 25365

Chicago, IL 60625 (USA)

Tel: 1 773 989-0532

Website – <http://www.classiconstage.com>

E-mail: classtage@aol.com

CHARACTERS:

KING PHILIP OF PHAROFFLAND

QUEEN ELEANOR, THE ELEGANT, his wife

PRINCESS ROSALIND, their daughter

COUNT FREDERICK OF FREDERICKBURG, the Prime Minister

PRINCE STEPHEN OF STRATFORD, the “right” Prince

THE GOOD FAIRIES:

ROSE PETAL

MOON BEAM

TWINKLETOES

BELLADONNA, the evil fairy

PRINCES WHO TRY AND FAIL:

PRINCE EGBERT ALBERT

PRINCE ORLANDO LEONARDO MALVOLIO SMITH

THE NARRATOR

PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS:

KING PHILIP – the well-loved, efficient ruler of the Kingdom of Pharoffland.

QUEEN ELEANOR THE ELEGANT – King Philip’s co-ruler and devoted spouse.

ROSALIND – the beloved, long awaited princess, who’s a perfect daughter in every way, except on one fatal occasion, when she exhibits too much curiosity.

COUNT FREDERICK OF FREDERICKBURG – the loyal and devoted Prime Minister of Pharoffland.

ROSE PETAL – the most intelligent and practical of the three good fairies.

MOON BEAM – the most sentimental and romantic of the three good fairies.

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TWINKLETOES – the masculine member of the good fairy staff.

Although good and kind-hearted, he's not the most competent or coordinated member of the group.

BELLADONNA – the evil fairy of Pharoffland. She has a terrible disposition, and an unpredictable temper. Thunder and lightning follow her wherever she goes.

PRINCE EGBERT ALBERT – an extremely timid fellow, whose only interest in the princess seems to be to learn the spell details so that he can put them into a book.

PRINCE ORLANDO LEONARDO MALVOLIO SMITH – who decides not to awaken the princess, not caring to spoil his suit. He's late for a tailor appointment, anyway.

PRINCE STEPHEN OF STRATFORD – the RIGHT Prince. Little more needs to be said about him.

NARRATOR – the gracious host (hostess)\story-teller, who remains on stage throughout the play. he/she carries a large storybook, which the characters consult from time to time in order to see how the story is progressing.

SETTING:

A simple, single setting works best for this play. All the action takes place in the garden\courtyard of the King's castle. THE ROSE HEDGE: In a proscenium production the hedge was a series of light folding trellis flats. In an arena production the hedge was a large green net (fish netting) covered with cloth roses and hooked around the chaise upon which the Princess slept. Both methods worked very well. THE SPINNING WHEEL: An essential prop, though it does not have to be realistic or even functional in any major way. It is helpful if the wheel can actually turn, but this, too, is not strictly necessary.

COSTUMES AND SPECIAL MAKEUP:

Graceful costumes from almost any period will suffice; Gothic styles could work, as could Renaissance fashions. Keep in mind, though, that 100 years do pass, and an indication of this fact helps with the illusion of time

passing. The four fairies should use some type of fantastical makeup and clothing styles, so they are distinguishable from the “human” characters in the play.

ENLARGING THE CAST OR DOUBLING:

If the casting director desires to increase the size of the cast, there are many opportunities to add courtiers, guests at the party, and even more princes who come to inspect the poor sleeping princess behind the hedge of thorns. If the casting director desires to reduce to total cast size by doubling: One actor can play the COUNT, EGBERT and STEPHEN. The King can play PRINCE SMITH.

MUSIC, SOUND EFFECTS, CHOREOGRAPHY:

The use of music, live or taped, greatly enhances the production of this play. Sound effects records will provide a source for Belladonna’s thunder effects. Some ideas for choreography can be found in the script.

The specific dance pieces mentioned in the script can be found in the Tchaikovsky SLEEPING BEAUTY ballet. The ballet score also provides many other delightful musical selections (such as the famous Sleeping beauty Waltz) which can be used for various backgrounds and effects within the play. The ending of the ballet (the Apotheosis) is an especially wonderful piece to use at the end of the play; this segment is approximately two minutes long, and it works very well as a combination wedding ceremony and finale\curtain call.

The classical music works very well with the play, but for those who prefer a more contemporary sound, modern music, music with strong ethnicity, synthesized music or a combination of them all can work well, too. The most important thing is that the music choices are fun for all concerned – director, choreographer, actors and audience.

If the ballet music is not used in the production then the portion of the narrator’s opening speech that refers to the Tchaikovsky ballet would need to be cut. Other notes can be found on pages 16-17 of the script.

SLEEPING BEAUTY

By Michele L. Vacca

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ACT I

(THE LIGHTS ARE DIM. OVERTURE. ON ONE SIDE OR ON A CERTAIN PORTION OF THE STAGE THERE IS A COMFORTABLE CHAIR. ON THE CHAIR THERE IS A LARGE BRIGHTLY COLORED STORYBOOK. POSSIBLY A BACKDROP OR SERIES OF FLATS OR CUT OUTS SUGGESTING A COMFORTABLE LIBRARY OR SITTING ROOM. THIS SETTING IS FOR THE NARRATOR. AS THE OVERTURE ENDS, THE NARRATOR ENTERS. HE IS DRESSED IN “MODERN” CLOTHES HE ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.)

NARRATOR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls. How do you do? I am your storyteller. Today I am going to tell you the story of Sleeping Beauty. This story is a classic, which means that it has been told over and over again, in many countries and in many different languages. More than eighty years ago, a Russian composer named Tchaikovsky wrote a ballet called The Sleeping Beauty. In a ballet the performers do not speak – they dance. In a play the performers speak lines, but usually they do not dance. Our players, as you will see, will speak many lines, and they will also dance to some of the music from the famous ballet. Now settle back in your chairs, and make yourselves comfortable. Are you comfortable? And I will begin the story of The Sleeping Beauty . . . Like many stories, this one begins with – Once upon a time – there was a small and quiet kingdom, which was called Pharooffland. King Philip was the ruler of Pharooffland, and he and his wife, Queen Eleanor, the Elegant, ruled very wisely indeed.

(THE KING AND QUEEN ENTER.)

NARRATOR: The King and Queen were well loved by the people in the kingdom, and for the most part life proceeded happily enough. But King Philip and Queen Eleanor had one great sorrow in their lives – they had no children.

QUEEN: (SIGHS.) Oh, dear, if only we could have just one child!

KING: (SIGHS.) I know, my dear. I know.

NARRATOR: And when the King and Queen were sad, the rest of the kingdom was sad as well.

(COUNT FREDERICK OF FREDERICKBURG ENTERS. HE IS THE PRIME MINISTER. HE CROSSES TO THE KING AND QUEEN AND BOWS.)

COUNT: Your Majesties.

NARRATOR: The King's loyal Prime Minister was Count Frederick of Frederickburg. The Count also grieved for the royal couple.

KING: Ah, Count Frederick.

COUNT: When Your Majesties are sad, then I am sad also.

KING: (SIGHS.) I know.

COUNT: When Your Majesties are sad, the entire kingdom is sad.

KING: Yes

COUNT: The people stop singing in the streets, the palace cook burns the roast beef, even the weather is gloomy, and then everyone in the whole kingdom catches a cold, and then the whole kingdom is sick in bed, and the entire economy is ruined –

KING: What are you trying to tell us, Count Frederick?

COUNT: Your Majesties simply must – well – you simply must cheer up! For everyone's sake.

QUEEN: How can we?

COUNT: Your Majesties simply must – well – try!

KING: Count Frederick, we appreciate what you're saying, but I'm afraid that Queen Eleanor and I will never be able to "cheer up," as you put it, until we have a child.

COUNT: Well, then, it's obvious that Your Majesties simply must have a child!

QUEEN: If only we could!

KING: I know, my dear. I know.

(THE KING AND QUEEN AND THE COUNT REMAIN IN A SAD POSE AS THE NARRATOR CONTINUES.)

NARRATOR: And so, year after year the situation continued. However, there were three good fairies who lived in the kingdom. Their names were Rose Petal, Moon Beam, and Twinkletoes.

(THE THREE FAIRIES ENTER – THE TWO LADIES GRACEFULLY, BUT TWINKLETOES MANAGES TO TRIP AND FALL. THE THREE OF THEM BEGIN TO DANCE ABOUT, AND AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, THE NARRATOR CONTINUES TO SPEAK.)

NARRATOR: Now most of the time the three good fairies spent their days deep in the woods, where they had a great deal of work to do – such as collecting dewdrops, polishing sunbeams, teaching birds to sing, and crickets to chirp, as well as designing snowflakes, and waking the morning glories every day. Once in a while, though, they would take a day off and dance throughout the kingdom – just to see what was going on in other places. On this particular day Rose Petal, Moon Beam, and Twinkletoes happened to pass by the royal gardens just when the King and Queen and Count Frederick were again discussing –

QUEEN: Oh, dear, if only we could just have one child!

KING: (SIGHS.) I know, my dear, I know.

COUNT: (GLOOMILY.) The cook burned the roast beef again.

ALL: (SIGH.)

ROSE PETAL: Oh, Moon Beam, isn't that sad?

MOON BEAM: Yes, Rose Petal. Very sad.

TWINKLETOES: What's sad?

ROSE PETAL: Oh, Twinkletoes, don't you ever pay attention to anything?

TWINKLETOES: Sure, I do. I pay attention to lots of things. I pay attention to the frogs in the lily pond, and I pay attention to teaching the butterflies how to fly, and I pay attention to the daisies – I like daisies – and I –

MOON BEAM: Oh, for goodness sake, Twink!

TWINKLETOES: What?

ROSE PETAL: (TO HIM.) Be quiet.

TWINKLETOES: Oh. All right.

ROSE PETAL: Good.

TWINKLETOES: So, anyway, what's so sad?

MOON BEAM: Oh! I almost forgot.

ROSE PETAL: Well, I didn't.

TWINKLETOES: What didn't you forget?

ROSE PETAL: King Philip and Queen Eleanor are very unhappy.

MOON BEAM: (SNIFFLES.) Very unhappy.

TWINKLETOES: Gee, that's too bad. How come?

ROSE PETAL: They are sad because they have no children.

TWINKLETOES: Oh.

MOON BEAM: Poor Queen Eleanor.

(THE KING, QUEEN, AND COUNT FREDERICK
START TO LEAVE THE GARDEN.)

KING: (TO QUEEN.) Come, my dear.

ROSE PETAL: (WATCHING THEM.) Poor King Philip.

QUEEN: (SIGHS, TAKES KING'S HAND.) Yes, my dear.

COUNT: (FOLLOWING THEM, MUTTERS TO HIMSELF
GLOOMILY.) I suppose the cook will burn the chicken
tonight. If their Majesties don't have a child soon, my
digestion will be ruined. (HE GOES OFF.)

TWINKLETOES: Gee, poor Count Frederick.

MOON BEAM: I wish there was something we could do.

TWINKLETOES: About the chicken?

ROSE PETAL: Of course not!

TWINKLETOES: Oh.

MOON BEAM: (TO ROSE PETAL.) Isn't there something we could do?

TWINKLETOES: Right. It's a shame to let the cook go ahead and burn a
perfectly good chicken.

ROSE PETAL: Twinkletoes!

TWINKLETOES: Well, it is a shame. Burned chicken tastes really
terrible.

ROSE PETAL: We are not talking about chickens!

TWINKLETOES: We're not?

ROSE PETAL: No!

TWINKLETOES: Oh, (PAUSE.) That's funny. I was sure we were
talking about chickens. Well, then, what are we talking
about?

ROSE PETAL: The King and Queen have no children, and we want to
think of a way to help them.

TWINKLETOES: Oh, so that's what we're talking about.

MOON BEAM: Rose Petal, do you think it would do any good if all three of us combined our powers, and wished very, very hard?

ROSE PETAL: Of course that would help, Moon Beam. I was just going to suggest it myself.

TWINKLETOES: Me, too!

ROSE PETAL: Be quiet, Twink.

MOON BEAM: Should we try it?

ROSE PETAL: Certainly. Now, all three of us must wish at the same time. And we have to wish as hard as we can.

MOON BEAM: Oh, I hope this works!

ROSE PETAL: So do I.

TWINKLETOES: Me, too!

ROSE PETAL: (AS THEY FORM A CIRCLE.) Ready?

MOON BEAM: Ready!

TWINKLETOES: Ready!

ROSE PETAL: "All three together we make a wish – "

MOON BEAM: "That with the spring so soft and mild – "

TWINKLETOES: "Rose Petal, Moon Beam, and Twinkletoes wish – "

ALL: "THAT THE KING AND QUEEN WILL HAVE A CHILD!"

ROSE PETAL: I wish!

MOON BEAM: I wish!

TWINKLETOES: Me, too!

(ALL THREE OF THEM DANCE THE CHARM, AND WHEN THEY FINISH . . .)

ROSE PETAL: There! That should do it!

MOON BEAM: I hope so!

TWINKLETOES: Now can we do something about the burned chicken?

ROSE PETAL: Oh, all right. We might as well.

MOON BEAM: Or we'll never hear the end of it.

TWINKLETOES: Good! Let's go. I hope we're not too late! (HE DASHES OFF.)

ROSE PETAL: Wait for us, Twink!

MOON BEAM: Wait for us! (THEY FOLLOW HIM OFF.)

NARRATOR: (AS THE LIGHTS COME BACK UP ON HIM.) The charm worked, and the fairies' wish came true. The following spring the King and Queen had a lovely little daughter, whom they named Rosalind. The royal couple was overjoyed. The King gave everyone a week of vacation from work and distributed gold pieces and enormous baskets of wonderful food to all the people.

(A FANFARE. PROCESSION MUSIC FOLLOWS. DURING THE NARRATORS SPEECH OR DURING THE PROCESSION A ROYAL BASSINET IS PLACED UPON THE STAGE. THE KING AND QUEEN ENTER, FOLLOWED BY COUNT FREDERICK. THEY ALL SMILE HAPPILY. THE QUEEN CARRIES HER BABY IN HER ARMS. THEY SMILE AND BOW TO THE AUDIENCE AS THOUGH TO THE POPULACE OF THE KINGDOM.)

COUNT: (TO KING.) Your Majesty has made his people very happy.

KING: Well, why not? I'm very happy.

QUEEN: We both are.

KING: Yes, indeed, we are. (LAUGHS.) We're happy! Happy, happy, happy!

COUNT: Yes, Your Majesty. So am I. And you know, the cook hasn't burned the roast beef or the chicken since the little Princess was born.

KING: And the weather has improved, too, I've noticed.

QUEEN: (ADMIRING HER BABY.) Isn't she absolutely wonderful?

COUNT: Yes, Your Majesty.

KING: Wonderful? She's adorable! And she looks just like me! (WAGGLES HIS FINGERS AT THE BABY AND TALKS BABY TALK TO HER.) Gootchie – goo – goo – goo! (TO QUEEN.) My dear, we simply must have a grand celebration in honor of our new daughter!

QUEEN: Of course! That's a wonderful idea!

COUNT: (TO HIMSELF.) Sounds expensive. (PULLS OUT A SCROLL AND QUILL PEN TO TAKE NOTES.)

KING: Take some notes, Count Frederick. Let's see now . . . we must invite the whole kingdom –

QUEEN: Indeed we must.

COUNT: (WRITING.) I was right. It will be expensive.

QUEEN: And of course the King and Queen of Highlandia.

KING: And we can't forget the King and Queen of Lowlandia.

QUEEN: Don't leave out the Duchess of Midlandia.

KING: Not to mention the Baron of Inlandia, and the Czar of Outlandia.

(AS THE THREE CONTINUE TO WORK SILENTLY ON THEIR GUEST LIST.)

NARRATOR: The King and Queen and Count Frederick spent long hours working on the guest list. It was very important that no one be slighted. Naturally, the three good fairies, Rose Petal, Moon Beam, and Twinkletoes were among those to be invited.

(THE THREE FAIRIES ENTER, HOLDING THEIR INVITATIONS HAPPILY, PERHAPS SHOWING THEM TO THE NARRATOR. THEN THE FOCUS SHIFTS BACK TO THE KING AND QUEEN AND THE COUNT AND THEIR LIST.)

COUNT: (TO KING.) Is that everyone?

KING: (CHECKS LIST.) Hmm. Yes. Yes. Uh-huh. Hmm. Um-hmm. Yes, I say so. Wouldn't you say so, my dear?

QUEEN: (GLANCES AT THE LIST.) Oh, yes, indeed. I can't think of anyone we could've possibly left out.

KING: Neither can I.

COUNT: Well, then that must be everyone.

(THE KING AND QUEEN AND COUNT GO OFF. THE FAIRIES CONTINUE TO ADMIRE THEIR INVITATIONS.)

MOON BEAM: Oh, Rose Petal, isn't it wonderful!

ROSE PETAL: I knew we could do it.

TWINKLETOES: Me, too.

MOON BEAM: (SIGHS.) A little princess.

ROSE PETAL: Rosalind is a pretty name, don't you think?

MOON BEAM: I'm glad the King and Queen invited us to the party tomorrow.

ROSE PETAL: Well, of course they invited us, Moon Beam. Fairies are always invited to parties.

TWINKLETOES: I'm glad. I like parties.

MOON BEAM: So do I.

ROSE PETAL: I like the dancing.

MOON BEAM: And the flowers, and –

TWINKLETOES: – And the food! That's the best part!

ROSE PETAL: We should all think about the gifts we're going to present

to the little princess tomorrow.

MOON BEAM: Beauty, of course.

ROSE PETAL: Naturally. Princesses should always be beautiful.

MOONBEAM: And happiness, too.

ROSE PETAL: Yes, happiness. Princesses are supposed to live happily ever after. All the books say so. What else?

MOON BEAM: Well, what about –

TWINKLETOES: A good appetite!

ROSE PETAL: Oh, Twink, really!

TWINKLETOES: Well, why not? You said she should be happy. So I thought that if enjoying good food makes me happy – why wouldn't enjoying good food make the little princess happy? Right?

MOON BEAM: You must admit he has a point, Rose.

ROSE PETAL: Well, I suppose so, but –

(SUDDENLY THERE IS A CRASH OF THUNDER, A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, AND FOG BEGINS TO CREEP IN SLOWLY.)

MOON BEAM: Oh, no!

ROSE PETAL: Can it be?

TWINKLETOES: Where can I hide?

(THE THREE OF THEM HUDDLE TOGETHER TREMBLING IN FEAR.)

NARRATOR: Unfortunately, there was someone the King and Queen forgot to invite. You see, there was another fairy who lived in the kingdom. No one saw her very often, which was just as well, because she wasn't at all like the other three fairies. Belladonna was her name, and in case you didn't know, Belladonna is a name for a very deadly kind of poison. Now that I've told you that, you probably have a fairly good idea why Rose Petal, Moon Beam, and Twinkletoes were so frightened when they heard the crash of thunder. Thunder and lightning follow Belladonna wherever she goes.

(ANOTHER CRASH OF THUNDER, LOUD MUSIC, AND MORE FOG. THE LIGHTS GROW DIMMER.)

ROSE PETAL: It's her!

MOON BEAM: Oh, no – !

TWINKLETOES: Oh, I'm frightened!

(WITH ANOTHER CLAP OF THUNDER
BELLADONNA APPEARS. SHE SOMEWHAT
RESEMBLES A POISONOUS SPIDER.)

ALL: BELLADONNA!!

BELLADONNA: That's right, my dears. It's Belladonna.

ALL: (TREMBLING.) Ohhhhhh!

BELLADONNA: (SWEETLY.) Well? Isn't anyone going to say hello?

– END OF E-MAIL SEGMENT –

(There are 48 pages in the complete playbook.)