Sleeping Beauty

I.

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who were very unhappy because they had no children. But at last a little daughter was born, and their sorrow was turned to joy. All the bells in the land were rung to tell the glad tidings. The king gave a christening feast so grand that the like of it had never been known. He invited all the fairies he could find in the kingdom—there were seven of them—to come to the christening as godmothers. He hoped that each would give the princess a good gift. When the christening was over, the feast came. Before each of the fairies was placed a plate with a spoon, a knife, and a fork—all pure gold. But alas! As the fairies were about to seat themselves at the table, there came into the hall a very old fairy who had not been invited. She had left the kingdom fifty years before and had not been seen or heard of until this day. The king at once ordered that a plate should be brought for her, but he could not furnish a gold one such as the others had. This made the old fairy angry, and she sat there muttering to herself. A young fairy who sat near overheard her angry threats. This good godmother, fearing the old fairy might give the child an unlucky gift, hid herself behind a curtain. She did this because she wished to speak last and perhaps be able to change the old fairy’s gift. At the end of the feast, the youngest fairy stepped forward and said, “The princess shall be the most beautiful woman in the world.” The second said, “She shall have a temper as sweet as an angel.” The third said, “She shall have a wonderful grace in all she does or says.” The fourth said, “She shall sing like a nightingale.” The fifth said, “She shall dance like a flower in the wind.” The sixth said, “She shall play such music as was never heard on earth.” Then the old fairy’s turn came. Shaking her head spitefully, she said, “When the princess is seventeen years old, she shall prick her finger with a spindle, andshe-shall-die!” At this all the guests trembled, and many of them began to weep. The king and queen wept loudest of all. Just then the wise young fairy came from behind the curtain and said: “Do not grieve, O King and Queen. Your daughter shall not die. I cannot undo what my elder sister has done; the princess shall indeed prick her finger with the spindle, but she shall not die. She shall fall into sleep that will last a hundred years. At the end of that time, a king’s son will find her and awaken her.” Immediately all the fairies vanished.

II.

The king, hoping to save his child even from this misfortune, commanded that all spindles should be burned. This was done, but it was all in vain. One day when the princess was seventeen years of age, the king and queen left her alone in the castle. She wandered about the palace and at last came to a little room in the top of a tower. There an old woman—so old and deaf that she had never heard of the king’s command—sat spinning. “What are you doing, good old woman?” asked the princess. “I am spinning, my pretty child.” “Ah,” said the princess. “How do you do it? Let me see if I can spin also.” She had just taken the spindle in her hand when, in some way, it pricked her finger. The princess dropped down on the floor. The old woman called for help, and people came from all sides, but nothing could be done. When the good young fairy heard the news, she came quickly to the castle. She knew that the princess must sleep a hundred years and would be frightened if she found herself alone when she awoke. So the fairy touched with her magic wand all in the palace except the king and the queen. Ladies, gentlemen, pages, waiting maids, footmen, grooms in the stable, and even the horses—she touched them all. They all went to sleep just where they were when the wand touched them. Some of the gentlemen were bowing to the ladies, the ladies were embroidering, the grooms stood currying their horses, and the cook was slapping the kitchen boy. The king and queen departed from the castle, giving orders that no one was to go near it. This command, however, was not needed. In a little while there sprang around the castle a wood so thick that neither man nor beast could pass through.

III.

A great many changes take place in a hundred years. The king had no other child, and when he died, his throne passed to another royal family. Even the story of the sleeping princess was almost forgotten. One day the son of the king who was then reigning was out hunting, and he saw towers rising above a thick wood. He asked what they were, but no one could answer him. At last an old peasant was found who said, “Your highness, fifty years ago my father told me that there is a castle in the woods where a princess sleeps—the most beautiful princess that ever lived. It was said that she must sleep there a hundred years, when she would be awakened by a king’s son.” At this the young prince determined to find out the truth for himself. **The wood turned out to be too thick; so that the prince could not handle it. In addition, he discovered a free Wi-Fi connection with excellent strength nearby and thought he would check Wikipedia to see what the thick wood could hide. However, he was so engrossed in surfing that the curse stuck to him and he fell into a deep sleep. Centuries had passed. No one remembered what could be behind the thick wood. Environmentalists declared it as a protected area, so no one ventured near it. However, it happened that the participants of the Literacy for the future Erasmus + project decided to put down their mobile phones and spend their time with reading and going on trips and nature walks. They had also heard about the protected dense wood and thought that this was a great challenge for them. They made very difficult progress, but since they were determined and didn't have their mobile phones with them, they quickly found the old castle. Passing through the cobwebbed halls, memories of horror movies flashed before them, but they overcame their fear and entered the last room. A beautiful girl was sleeping there. Her face was ruddy, even though she wasn't wearing any make-up because she was asleep. They were very surprised. Several people thought it was a zombie, but then seeing the sweet face of the sleeping girl, they dismissed it. While they were debating what to do everyone slowly started reading. They had brought a lot of books with them on the trip. They were so engrossed in reading that they didn't even notice when the princess opened her eyes. She looked around in shock. There were a lot of students around her. She also screamed softly, because the sight of the reading children was very scary. Everyone put the book down at that sound. The initial fear quickly disappeared. Since the princess did not remember anything and did not seem dangerous; the project participants took her with them. To cut my story short: the princess enrolled in the 9th grade of one of the schools participating in the project. The problem was that the sciences were definitely not for her, so she decided to take a job instead of studying, even though she didn't even have her final exams. She got a job as a weaver in a textile factory. Weaving and spinning brought her great joy. She thought he had finally found the meaning of her life. However, one day there was an industrial accident. The bobbin falling from the weaving machine pierced her hand, causing her to fall into a deep sleep. Everyone in and around the factory also fell asleep. No one moved for a long, long time. A thick hedge of wild roses sprouted all around, grew taller year by year, wrapped itself around the factory and finally ran into the factory so that nothing could be seen anymore, not even the factory’s chimney. So what happened next? We will have to wait for the answer until the next Erasmus project.**