



Sleeping Beauty, Indeed & Other Lesbian Fairytales

*JoSelle Vanderhooft (Editor) , Catherynne M. Valente (Contributor) , Amal El-Mohtar (Contributor) ,
Erzabet YellowBoy (Contributor) , Julia Talbot (Contributor)*

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Fairy tales never leave us. Romantic and sensual, dark and terrifying, old and new, these ten stories move beyond the old trope of prince and princess living happily ever.

Sleeping Beauty, Indeed offers readers imaginative tales based on the classic works - Cinderella, the Pied Piper - but retold through the lavender lens of lesbian experience.

With such talented contributors as Meredith Schwarz, Catherynne M. Valente, and Erzebet YellowBoy, turning a page is like taking a bite of that luscious apple. Sweet and dangerous but fated.

Sleeping Beauty, Indeed & Other Lesbian Fairytales Details

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From Reader Review Sleeping Beauty, Indeed & Other Lesbian Fairytales for online ebook

Wendy says

I thought this take on fairy tales was good, and would be something I would recommend you read. Free through Goodreads First Reads.

Nikki says

Third book of the readathon.

As with all collections of stories, there were some I liked more than others, but really I'm just glad to see collections of stories out there where people turn the usual, heteronormative fairytales into something new. Catherynne M. Valente's story stood out: lyrical and enchanting, and sensual despite all the odd imagery. It was a nice mix of fairytales, too: I was aware of the origins of most of them, but there were some that are less well known, and some that were harder to guess than others.

It was a surprisingly quick read, too. Perfect for a bit of fluff to make you smile.

Annette says

Some were just so darn romantic and dreamy. You know, everything a fairy tale should be. Then some were dark and twisty, they were good just not my cup of tea.

Catherine says

Well-written and haunting stories presenting fairytales in new skins, with lesbian protagonists.
Recommended!

Adam Bourke says

"Sleeping Beauty, Indeed" is a book of fairy tales, with the exception that the "Damsels in Distress" are into women rather than men. Some of them are original stories, and others are lesbian versions of traditional fairytales. The idea intrigued me, which is why I decided to read/review it, and I'm glad I did, as two of the stories really left an impression on me. Also, it had the rather pleasant mild scent of apples.

1: Two Sisters by R. Holsen (Rating 2/10)

I didn't feel like I properly understood this one. It was written in the first person in the girl's local dialect, which I felt was a bit of a jarring one to start off with. But the main problem I had was that I'm not sure how

it really fitted in with the theme of the book. It had lesbians in, although to be honest, it took me a while to realise that, I thought they were sisters, but i'm not sure how it was related to fairytales. If it's a retelling, then I had never heard the original I guess. It wasn't a bad story, but it seems to just be a romance, rather than a fairy tale. Fortunately, the rest of the stories were much more clearly linked to fairy tales.

2: Bones Like Black Sugar by Catherynne M. Valente (Rating: 5/10)

I enjoyed this very short story - but it was really weird. It's essentially about Gretel after the events of the original fairy tale. The woman she likes is the witch from the gingerbread house - who is of course, dead. You might think "Oh, she comes back from the dead?". No. This story verges on necrophilia. But there is some quite vivid description, which makes up for that. Right?

3: The Mute Princess by A.J.Grant (Rating 10/10)

Based on the fairytale of the same name, this story is the one that reads most like a fairytale. I've never actually heard the original fairytale, so this lesbian version will remain with me. The writing is the simple fairy-tale style, characters called "The King", "The Queen", "The Princess" etc, and could easily have been passed down for generations. It's a nice read, and one I wouldn't hesitate to read to children. I think this one really captures the spirit of what I think the book is about, and it's easily my favourite in the book.

4: The Seduction and Secret Life of Deirdre Fallon by Fran Fadella (Rating 10/10)

This is the second of the two stories that left a lasting impression on me. It's the only one in the book which is erotica, and it's written in letter/diary form. To me, both of these things suggested that it wouldn't be amongst the highest quality writing that I've read. I'm happy to say that I was wrong. This story managed to stir emotions in me to the point I wasn't entirely sure they weren't my own. Not a lot of writing can achieve that, and I've never encountered it in short stories before. This was an incredible story, and although it ended a bit quickly, It was to me, the best story in the book (although not my favourite, because it was more of a Faerie story than a fairy tale). The emotions were before the erotica part of the story, but that was actually done well too, which kind of surprised me.

5: Sleeping Beauty, Indeed by Regan M. Wann (Rating 6/10)

At first I wasn't sure about this one. The first page had me thinking negative thoughts about it, which continued for maybe two pages, before I started to enjoy it more. as the title would suggest, it's a retelling of sleeping beauty - except instead of pricking her finger, she pricks her hymen. This is discussed in the first couple of paragraphs, and kind of put me off. But when it tells it in more detail, it's better than it sounds. The twist at the end was unexpected, and overall, the story wasn't as bad as I had first thought it would be.

6: Future Fortunes by Kori Aguirre-Amador (Rating 4/10)

One of the longer stories, 'Future Fortunes' was interesting, but not particularly outstanding. The "twist" was quite predictable, and the fact that the prince had been promised the princess' hand was quite confusing, as the king apparently didn't want her to be touched by any man. Also, I was confused as to whether the prophecy said "she WILL not be touched by man" or "she MUST not be touched by man", as the king seems to think the latter, and takes preventative measures, and the princess assumes the former, as she just thinks fate will save her. Overall, not one of the best - although it did seem more like a fary tale than some of the others.

7: Undertow by Meredith Schwartz (Rating 7/10)

This was probably the most interesting idea of all the stories. It combines Cinderella and the Little Mermaid in that the prince from both fairytales is the same man. You can probably guess who ends up with who, but it's quite a sad story, and possibly the second most emotional in the book. I quite liked this one.

8: Voce by Kimberly DeCina (Rating 4/10)

This one dragged on a bit. It's about a mother and daughter, and a Trader and his daughter. The mother and Trader get married, and the two daughters find each other attractive. But the mother is a bit of a weird character, and for some reason seems to hate the trader's daughter. And maybe the trader too, I'm not really sure. I got quite confused in this one, and then the "fay folk" seemed to be a random addition to make it fit in the "fairly tale" category. Bits of it were nice to read, but it took a while to get through it.

9: Bird's Eye by Erzebet YellowBoy (Rating 9/10)

This was an interesting retelling of rapunzel - kind of. It's not about the hair, but she is trapped in a tower. It's a short story, but nicely written, with a quite unexpected ending. It's hard to say anything about it without spoilers, so I'll just move on to the last story.

10: Coyote Kate of Camden by Julia Talbot (Rating 5/10)

This one is based on the Pied Piper. Except instead of rats, it's coyotes. And there isn't so much emphasis on the music. I felt a little let down by this one, as it had little depth, but a bit more depth than your standard fairy tale. But again, it's a nice story, but average.

Overall, it was a nice selection of stories, despite the fact that a few of them weren't very fairy tale-y. The two stories that I rated 10/10 were extremely good, although quite different, and along with Bird's Eye, I would say that they the book is worth considering for them alone. There were few things I didn't like about the book as a whole, so the editor has done well there - except the font choice. It appears to be normal, but every time the combination "ct" appears, something curly happens to the 't', which was quite annoying. But as with most formatting issues, I quickly got over that, and found the book to be quite enjoyable.

Emily says

Fairly enjoyable, except for the title tale, where Sleeping Beauty falls into her enchanted sleep because she got fisted. Fisted.

Katie Harris says

Gorgeous collection of stories!

Ruby Ridge says

Good Selection - enjoyed all the stories

I. says

Bones of black sugar by Valente was a dark and rich Hansel and Gretel retelling, the best story of the

collection.

The mute princess by aj grant was cute enough, I guess.

Frank fadella's fae story had an interesting thread re true names/calling oneself a lesbian but it didn't go where I wanted it to go.

Undertow was an interesting take on ugly stepsisters and recovery from abuse.

Coyote Kate could have been good but the virgin thing was off.

Cissa says

Although this is a fairly slim book, all 10 of the stories in it are quite good. Most re-tell fairy tales of some kind, although perhaps I should correct that to "folk tales", like the first one was.

"The Mute Princess" was the most classically re-told of all of them, and the mannered style worked beautifully with the tale.

The ending story was the least traditional- based on the Pied Piper, it was set in the Old West, and was a lot of fun! The title story was also fun- we have a Fairy Godmother whingeing about her lot in life, a fairly explicit cause of the sleeping to come over everyone, and a surprising and amusing ending.

The rest are all very different from each other, and mostly excellent in their own styles.

The stories are mostly not particularly sexually explicit, though a couple do have their moments; it's nothing like what's routine these days in a heterosexual romance novel, though!

All in all, an excellent read with some fascinating tales and re-imaginings. I only wish it had been longer!

Morgan says

Just couldn't get into this and it wasn't the type of collection of stories I was expecting.

The Rainbow Zebra says

(This review refers to the hardback edition)

While a worthy effort, Sleeping Beauty, Indeed fell short of my expectations. Some of the stories I was able to connect to its origins, others I had no clue. I enjoyed one story that paired Cinderella with The Little Mermaid. However though the title indicates Lesbian Fairytales, some stories are so vague on the sexuality between the characters that they wind up being a let-down.

As other reviewers have noted there are several typos within the book. The titled short story is missing a page at the end. There are inconsistencies with fonts, and just plain sloppy editing.

However, if you are a fan of fairytales, regardless of origin--story or sexuality--you should find this a good read. It won't change your life, but it's not a waste of time either.

Denae says

4 poignant moments

Well, really, more than 4. With only 1-1/2 exceptions these stories were excellent. Very glad I stumbled across and read this.

David says

Two Sisters by R. Holsen - I didn't particularly like this.

Bones Like Black Sugar (Catherynne M. Valente) - a hauntingly original sequel to Hansel and Gretel

The Mute Princess (A.J. Grant) - This story is a beautiful retelling of a traditional Yemeni folktale. I plan to check out her other works.

The Seduction and Secret Life of Deirdre Fallon (Fran Fadella) - a fairy romance

Sleeping Beauty, Indeed (Regan M. Wann) - a humorous retelling of Sleeping Beauty narrated by one of the fairies

Future Fortunes (Kori Aguirre-Amador)

Undertow (Meredith Schwartz)

Voce (Kimberly DeCina)

Bird's Eye (Erzabet YellowBoy)

Coyote Kate of Camden (Julia Talbot) - the Pied Piper set in the American west
