

## Sleeping Beauty in the Modern Era

Once upon a recent time, lived a Wicked Witch but this was no ordinary witch. She was ambitious and determined not to live the same life as her mother of drudgery and servitude to men. She had been motivated by being told by warlocks, that she would not be allowed to join the local coven. From that day on, she set out to prove that she could cast spells and make potions as effective as any man. Nevertheless, she was annoyed at herself by being fixated on her appearance and was aware that her biological clock was ticking even though she knew that motherhood was not something to which a modern witch should aspire.

Every morning, she looked in her magic mirror, recently purchased from Amazon with the very latest in voice activated artificial intelligence, and asked, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" Once she had the answer (that she pretended to herself was unimportant), she went about collecting poisonous toadstools. Everything was well until the day when the mirror informed her that her appearance had been surpassed. "Right", said the modern witch, "We'll see about that!"

The Witch set about formulating a spell that would outdo anything a man could create. She told herself that this was not about feminine rivalry as that would be bad for the sisterhood -<sup>4</sup> this was to demonstrate girl power. The Witch formulated a spell that would render her rival comatose for a hundred years and Sleeping Beauty (formally just known as Beauty) took to her bed. Fortunately, a more moderate fairy lived in the forest who was better adjusted and without an axe to grind. The good fairy was unable to undo this powerful spell but had a limited ability to make autonomous modifications. The good fairy changed the spell so that everyone in the kingdom (they never had republics in once upon a time) also fell asleep for a hundred years.

One of the first awake from hibernation was a Handsome Prince. He told his valet, "Saddle my charger. At last I have a purpose in life. All I did prior to the big sleep was open a few bridges and shake hands with the common people." The Handsome Prince rode out to Sleeping Beauty's house and kissed her gently on the cheek to wake her from her slumber.

The following day, the Handsome Prince was back in his castle waiting for the 'old man' to die, when up rode a messenger with a summons accusing the Prince of indecent assault. The Prince turned to his valet and said,

"I don't understand what women want anymore."

"No, your highness" replied the valet, "I don't think anybody does, not even the women."