



2015

The Sleeper and the Spindle

Kiersten Carr

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Carr, Kiersten (2015) "The Sleeper and the Spindle," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 36 : Iss. 6 , Article 52.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol36/iss6/52>

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Book Review

Title: The Sleeper and the Spindle

Author: Neil Gaiman

Illustrator: Chris Riddell

Reviewer: Kiersten Carr

Publisher: Harper

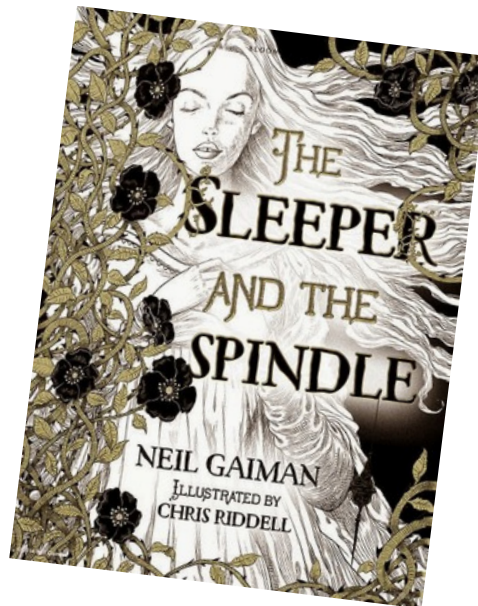
Publication Year: 2015

ISBN: 9780062435033

Number of Pages: 68

Interest Level: Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding



Review

When the dwarfs come to tell a young queen on the eve of her wedding that the neighboring kingdom is plagued with a magical sleep, she postpones her nuptials, calls for her sword and mail shirt, and sets out to investigate. She herself has slept a magical sleep for a year, and if anyone can resist the spell and rescue the princess at the heart of it, it's her. In the castle surrounded by roses and thorns, a very old woman lives out a lonely existence surrounded by sleepers, including one beautiful young girl in the tallest tower whom she very much wishes she could bring herself to kill. The young queen is haunted by the spectre of her wicked stepmother, a woman who was once the fairest in the land. The old woman was once a young princess who pricked her finger on a spindle. And the sleeping girl in the tower is the evil enchantress who started the spell years and years ago, in order to regain her power and youth. At the end of the story the spell is broken, the sleepers awake, the old woman gets to rest at last, and the young queen continues her journey with the dwarfs beyond the lands they know.

Gorgeously illustrated, *The Sleeper and the Spindle* is one of those books that lingers in the mind of a reader long after the final page is turned. Neil Gaiman, Newbury Award Winner, is in top form here, and his elegant, stark prose perfectly accompanies Chris Riddell's lushly detailed black-and-white illustrations. The story itself is sparing with details, making what is not said almost as important as what is said, and allows readers to make connections and form their own interpretations of a fairy tale they thought they already knew.

*Contains one non-romantic same-gender kiss.