

Sleeping Beauty Woke: Agency into Activism in Fairy Tale Revisions

In two recent science-fiction YA novels, *Sleeping Beauty* wakes not to a long-dormant castle, but to a powerful capitalist society where insidious governmental policies affect global quality of life. Anna Sheehan's *A Long, Long Sleep* and Karen Healey's *When We Wake* both tackle governmental overreach and challenge their fairy tale heroines to use the past to guide the future. In these texts, readers learn along with the protagonists to question the status quo and imagine political alternatives.

Sheehan's main character Rose and Healey's protagonist Tegan, both teenage girls, respectively wake 100 years into a seemingly improved future. But as each protagonist becomes more aware of her new environment, she learns of her own generation's impact on society. While Rose considers her wealthy family's involvement in a corrupt global empire, Tegan questions how her country's past scientific advancements now strangle foreign policy. Shocked that their future societies are still troubled by the same issues from the past, both Rose and Tegan take responsibility for their behavior and exhort their communities to do the same.

Instead of waking up to marriage, these *Sleeping Beauties* wake up to activism. I argue that the blending of fairy tales with science fiction explores possible futures, offering young readers new understandings of what a happy ending could mean. These *Sleeping Beauty* revisions use familiar tales to interrogate how the past resonates into the future and to emphasize for young readers the importance of being awake and aware in their own increasingly technological world.