

## Beauty Sleep

Emma Chigbu

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Nobody - absolutely no one - wakes me up in the middle of my beauty sleep. You know that unwritten rule book that says, "Don't cough into your hands and then touch a door knob". Well, I'm pretty sure somewhere after "Don't steal", it says "Don't wake people when they're comfy and passed out in bed." After all, anyone who does should be burnt at the stake.

Yeah. I'm serious about catching my zzz's. You'd think after one-hundred years of slumber I'd try and get out of this castle tower. But I'm perfectly fine never doing anything else until I die. I mean, this bed is SO warm now. In fact, the door of my vine and moss-covered stone room stays locked. No one comes in, no one comes out.

Isolation. Tranquility.

I shut my eyes and lean back into my pillow, but before I get there an unholy knocking fills my room. It's coming from the windows. Not worth getting up for. The best thing I can do is sink a little deeper into my pillow... hug my teddy bear a little tighter... and drift off... back into a land of fairy godmothers and magic wands and...

*WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THAT BANGING?* I sit up with a zombie-esque groan and lift up my sleep mask without opening my eyes. I don't keep a clock in my room because every hour is the same time to me - sleep time.

*Who knows how bright it'll be if I open the windows?* If the sunlight illuminates my room with all its annoying yellow glory I won't be able to fall back asleep. I can't risk that. Instead, I heave myself off my soft, cottony bed and reach for the lamp on my nightstand. The red light from the lamp illuminates my room, but its warm red glow is tolerable in my dark cave.

I slip into my fluffy, pink slippers to shield myself from the cold floors of my bedroom. As I stagger dazedly through to my storage closet, I twitch with irritation at the pounding. *Breathe in. Breathe out.* The noise cancelling headphones I pull out of the closet should do the trick!

Satisfied with my creativity I walk back to my beloved bed, take off my slippers, and crawl back into place. With my headphones placed snugly over my ears, I'm off to my fairytale land within seconds. *Take that, you stupid –*

I'm jerked awake by that terrible sound once more. With my heart racing and hair in my face, I rip off my headphones furiously.

I scream in disgust. "I hate you - you - you piece of junk!" I chuck the headphones across the room with a surprising amount of force for someone who sleeps constantly. After five seconds of glaring across the room I burst into hysterical laughter - the kind people give after they curse babies or commit psychopathic crimes. I don't know why I'm laughing, but I don't care. Normally, I'm a lot less moody than this. Screaming at inanimate objects? That, I do regularly.

I have to find some way to fall asleep before I have another intense mood swing. *If I can't block out the noise, maybe I can learn to ignore it.* There must be some way to find such a deep calm that the furious knocking at my window doesn't bother me. A way to achieve inner peace.

I grab one of my sequin bedazzled pillows, and set it down in front of my footboard. Like a monk attempting to reach Enlightenment, I position myself criss-cross on the pillow.

I imagine that I'm laying on a magic blanket, soaring through the sky over cotton clouds. I slow my breaths going in through my nose and out through my mouth, focusing intensely on the warm air from the humidifier in my room. My shoulders slump. My eyelids become heavy and my thoughts become foggy. Every sight, taste, and sound is fading away.

I have reached nirvana. I am encased in an impenetrable wall of peace. Nothing can ever break it.

Thump... thump... thump...

*Ignore it.*

Thump! Thump! Thump!

**IGNORE IT.**

**THUMP! THUMP! THUMP!**

*That. Is. It.*

I am the tired version of hangry. The exhaustion in me has taken on a form of its own. I'm a worn-out, sleep-deprived monster. I shall kill whatever it is that is plaguing my sleep - I swear it. Judge if you want but sleeping is my life's purpose, my favorite pastime, my only hobby. Anything or anyone that seeks to wake me must pay an expensive price.

Throwing inner peace out the window, I push myself up from the floor. I march over to the sole window of my stone tower and rip open the curtains with a reckless abandon I soon regret. I gasp like a vampire and stumble back, instantly blinded by that hideous glow.

"It is quite sunny out here, Miss. I've nearly burnt to a crisp trying to break your window."

I nearly jump out of my pajamas.

Below me, hanging on to an overgrown vine is a little girl's dream but my worst nightmare. His hair is milk chocolate and his smile sickly sweet. There's something about him that sends shivers down my spine. It's the look in his eyes, the shine in his teeth. He's an armed huntsman who's spotted a deer. "Do you mind if I climb in?" It isn't a question. "I fear I'm losing grip on this vine."

Before I can open my mouth to respond, he's climbing up the side of the tower and hopping through my window. *The nerve!*

My feelings of shock are replaced with blazing rage. Is this thing - this abominable creature running its hands through its hair the same thing that woke me up? I feel my hands lifting themselves to strangle him.

"So," the monster says, oblivious to my fury. "You are the legendary Aurora."

"Who in the world are you?" I hiss.

He turns to me and I'm taken aback by his stare once more.

"Oh, dear. Have I not introduced myself? I'm Prince Phillip." He bows low but keeps his devilish eyes fixed on me. "I have come to claim you as my prize."

"Prize?" He straightens and scans my room. "Well, yes. It's a legend amongst my people that whatever man climbs this tower and kisses the sleeping damsel gets to marry her." Phillip pulls me towards his chest and cups my face. "You're no longer sleeping - but I'll still take that kiss," he whispers.

I scoff. Prince Pretty Face must have hit his head scaling my castle. I sigh. *Doesn't matter anyway.* I reel my hand back and in one foul blow bring my fist up to his face, punching him as hard as I can. The crunch of his nose breaking against my hand should have made any princess cringe, but not me. I look down at him scornfully.

"I - am not - your prize."

Phillip looks up at me, confused. I'm pleased to see a stream of blood flowing from his nose.

"You must not understand. I'm going to make you my own - my wife. Every man in the kingdom is going to be drooling with temptation when they see you in the pink gown I'm already having my seamstresses make." Phillip's eyes travel down my pajama top. "It will certainly reveal your... beautiful features."

I open my mouth to give him some very strong words but a yawn escapes instead. *This man is a waste of time that could be spent resting. I should wrap this up.* In one swift movement I shove him back through the window he came from. A couple seconds later I hear a satisfying crunch come from below me.

"Ta-ta, Prince Phillip," I whisper to myself. *I'm sure he'll be sleeping for a while too.*