

A U.S. Premiere and Kennedy Center Co-Commission

Written by Amaranta Leyva

Performed by Marionetas
de la Esquina of Mexico



Once upon a time, there was a puppet company in Mexico that wanted to tell the timeless tale of Sleeping Beauty in a new way. No witches...no spinning wheels...but with the same king and queen who simply wanted to keep their daughter safe from danger. Possible? See what happens when an adventurous princess and the handsome boy next door set out on their separate quests.

Use this *Cuesheet* to get ready for the new puppet version of the classic fairy tale Sleeping Beauty. Be sure to check out page five for activities you can do with other students, friends, or family.

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A Dreaming Princess in

What Happens in the Story?

Once there was a childless queen who was very jealous of her maid because she already had a baby. But one day, a magical frog appears and grants the queen her wish to have a child. The queen and her king name their baby princess Sleeping Beauty and promise to keep her safe after a scary curse is placed on her.

As the years pass, Sleeping Beauty becomes curious about the world outside her window and wants to escape the castle. At the same time, the maid's son is planning to sneak inside the castle so he can spend more time with his mother who works for the queen all day and all night.

Exactly how do the dreams and adventures of these two young people become a story for all time? You're about to find out!

Meet the Main Characters

Here are some of the characters you'll meet in the story:

Sleeping Beauty is a princess who wants to explore the world

The King and Queen are parents who want to protect their daughter from a spell

Octavia works in the castle every day as a maid

Mateo is Octavia's son who misses his mother and a mischievous (ribbit!) **Frog**



How the Tale is Told

In this performance, a group of puppeteers—people who make and use puppets—tell Sleeping Beauty's story by using large puppets made by hand. These puppeteers will be dressed in all black clothes to make the puppets seem more real when they move.

a Magical World

Meet the Playwright and the Puppetmaker

Amaranta Leyva (pronounced ah-mah-RAHN-tah LEY-va) has always loved puppets. When she was a little girl, she would sit backstage and watch her parents perform shows with their puppet company. When she grew up, Amaranta joined the company that her parents started—the very same company that you’re watching today! Amaranta also began writing plays for the company. For *Sleeping Beauty Dreams*, she took the original fairy tale that we know

and imagined what it would be like if it happened in a world that’s not so different from our own.

Amaranta’s father, Lucio Espindola (LOO-see-oh eh-SPEEN-doh-lah) made the puppets for this play. He has been making puppets for many years and uses different kinds of materials to build the puppets. Read on to learn a little more about how the puppets are made!

A Story from Mexico

Amaranta and Lucio are from Mexico, just south of the U.S. border. *Sleeping Beauty Dreams* happens in a fairy tale world that really could take place anywhere. Even though the story isn’t specifically set in Mexico, there are Mexican details in the story. For example, the characters wear traditional Mexican clothing and the stage has the look and feel of any city in Mexico. So keep an eye out for Mexican costumes and scenery during the performance.

Where in the world
is Mexico?



Here Come the Puppets



Bringing Puppets to Life

Some of the puppets you'll see have full bodies with parts that move. They can bend at the wrist, elbow, and knee. The puppeteers move the puppets with little sticks or rods at the end of the hand or behind the head that allow for extra space between the puppet and puppeteer. Make sure to listen closely to how each puppet speaks in his or her special voice.

Making the Puppets

Before Lucio makes a puppet, he asks Amaranta about each character and what happens in the story. Then, he uses a special kind of clay to make each puppet's head. Lucio's team of artists makes a mold of the head and fills it with clay. Finally, they make the puppet's body from wood and create its costume.

A Puppet Primer: Many Sizes, Many Shapes

People have used puppets to tell stories, entertain, or teach lessons for thousands of years.

The main types of puppets include:

- **Finger**—the puppet body fits on one finger
- **Hand/glove/sock**—one hand moves the puppet from inside
- **Rod**—named for the rods and sticks used to move the puppet
- **String or marionette**—held up and moved by strings
- **Body**—life-sized or bigger, they're often seen in parades or on stage
- **Shadow**—a light shines on a cut-out shape and creates a large shadow on a screen

In this performance, you will mostly see rod puppets.





For Teachers and Parents

Dear Grownups:

Please help your young theatergoers read and understand the information throughout this *Cuesheet*. This page features more background information for you and some activity ideas designed to add to the overall experience.

The Lessons of the Story

This story has lessons for both children and their parents. For example, in order to protect Sleeping Beauty, the king and queen tell the princess a dangerous dragon lives just outside the castle. Octavia does the same for Mateo. Of course, parents naturally want to protect their children, but what if parents prevent their child from exploring their world?

Another lesson is that it is important to face your fears, even when you think it might be impossible. Both *Sleeping Beauty* and *Mateo* bravely face their fears in the story. *Sleeping Beauty Dreams* teaches children to be brave and have confidence in their own decisions.

Further Exploration

After the performance, discuss with children what they learned from the story. Touch on the main themes:

- Protection and safety
- Independence
- Being curious about the world around us

Sleeping Beauty Dreams Activities

Make Your Own Puppet

Make a puppet to represent a person or animal from your favorite fairy tale. Use simple materials from your home or school, like paper, cardboard, socks, crayons, tape, and glue. Perform a part of the story for friends and family using your puppet.

Change It Up

Now you're the storyteller. Imagine another possible ending for the story. Use puppets, pictures, and your storytelling skills as you share your new version with friends and family.

Picture This!

Draw the characters from *Sleeping Beauty Dreams*. If you have the original story of *Sleeping Beauty* in a book at home or school, compare its pictures to the puppets you drew from the performance. How are they similar? How are they different?



A Few More Things

During the Performance

Watch for...

- the similarities and differences of Sleeping Beauty and Mateo growing up next door to each other
- the sights, sounds, and bright colors of Mexico
- how the royal family's clothes differ from those worn by the maid Octavia and her son Mateo
- the amount of flowers on the queen's dress to show her wealth

Listen for...

- the calls from the street vendors selling their goods
- the sound the frog makes
- how each puppet has his or her own voice

After the Performance

Think about...

- which puppet was your favorite? Why?
- if you ever tried to do something that you were told was dangerous? What happened?
- what you are afraid of? How can you conquer that fear?

Remember...

A good audience—
stays quiet (unless you want to laugh)
doesn't eat,
doesn't sleep,
listens,
and claps at the end.

About Marionetas de la Esquina

Marionetas de la Esquina (mah-ree-oh-NEY-tas dey la eh-SKEE-nah) is known internationally for its inventive puppetry. The company performs shows in both English and Spanish. Since 1975, they have given more than 11,000 performances and over 50 workshops and seminars to teachers, students, and audiences about puppetry, playwriting, theater, and design.



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