

# *Beauty Sleeps*

*A Sleepy Sensory Story by Jo Grace, on behalf of Simple Stuff Works*



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Simple Stuff Works are proud to work with The Sensory Story Project  
Please share and enjoy these stories with everyone you think would like them

*A sleepy sensory*

Story

*brought to you by:*




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### **Contents**

Introduction to Sensory Stories and Simple Stuff Works.	Page 3
Introducing Beauty Sleeps.	Page 4
Resourcing the story.	Page 6
Facilitating the sensory stimuli for Beauty Sleeps.	Page 7
Beauty Sleeps: Sensory story.	Page 10

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## **Sensory stories**

Sensory stories convey a narrative using a mixture of words and sensory experiences.

Sensory stimulation supports cognitive development, learning, memory and communication.

Narratives are an enriching part of life, we all enjoy stories, and within the story telling space we find ourselves better able to understand concepts and try new things.

Sensory stories can be used to support individuals with a range of needs and disabilities, they are particularly beneficial to individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

You can download a free guide called **Sharing a sensory story** from:

<http://jo.element42.org/sensory-stories>

The best thing about sensory stories is they are fun.

## **Postural care**

Good postural care helps to prevent people who find it hard to move from developing damaging body shape distortions. With the right information and by using the right equipment and positioning techniques you can protect and restore a person's body shape. Body distortion does not have to be an inevitable consequence of disability.

Night time positioning is especially important as we spend so much time in bed over the course of our lives. Getting used to a new night time position can take time, practice and patience. Supporting someone to learn to lie comfortably on their back can be challenging but there are recognised benefits which will make your efforts all worthwhile.

Please remember to use a comprehensive safety checklist, if you have concerns for the person's safety while they lie on their back ensure that there is someone with them at all times. This story has been written to form part of a bed time routine however it can easily be used during the day to help the person practice a new position before this is introduced at night.

Simple Stuff Works are an award winning equipment and training provider. You can find out more about them at [www.simplestuffworks.co.uk](http://www.simplestuffworks.co.uk)

## **“Together we are better”**

We (Sarah Clayton from Simple Stuff Works and Joanna Grace from The Sensory Story Project) have teamed up to bring you a sensory story designed to support the delivery of good postural care. We hope you will benefit from, and enjoy, sharing it. Everything you need to know to tell the story is in this booklet, combine this with your knowledge, the advice you have from your therapist and you will be ready to go.

## **Introducing Beauty Sleeps**

We all know the story of Sleeping Beauty, and if you want the Beauty in this story to be Sleeping Beauty then she can be that for you; but this story does not have to be read as Sleeping Beauty. We all also know about the need to get our beauty sleep. Multiple beauty sleeps will surely make us all the more beautiful, so this story could be part of a bedtime routine aimed at waking up a little more beautiful each day. The Beauty in the story is clearly loved by the world around her, as plants and animals work together to make her comfortable. Here we can take the word Beauty to mean more than the thin surface that covers us, this Beauty is one of spirit, she must be beautiful inside for everyone to care about her so much.

As you tell the story to your Sleeping Beauty, you will be playing the role of the enchanted world around her as you move through your postural care routine. As Beauty lies in the flowers your story experiencer will lie on their back, next their leg supports are put in place . As the vines grow around Beauty you will be moving side supports in place. Toes will need to be pointing towards the ceiling to allow for the birds to alight on them. Your touch on the toes can be the tiny claws of the birds as they fly down to rest. This is a story designed to be soothing and to lead an individual into sleep, it is not a rushed process of getting everything into place as quickly as possible so take the gentle breathing opportunities to imbue calm into the situation. As daylight fades to night you will be making any head adjustments that are needed so that your story experiencer can watch as the light above fades (if you have a dimmer switch in the bedroom you are going to be great at this part!) The birds (you again) lay a cover over the Sleeping Beauty and again you share in gentle breathing as you check body alignment in the bed and leave the gentle smell of flowers in the room.

This story is to be used in conjunction with the postural advice you have received from your therapist. The story pages have prompts in italics indicating the sensory stimuli to be used with each section of the story. Make your own notes to remind you of key points for postural care.

It is well worth remembering the recognised advantages of supporting people to learn to lie on their back and remember there is no rush. The advantages published in an article called 'The Biomechanics of Body Shape Distortion' include: the person's head can be supported centrally; their shoulder girdle can lie symmetrically in a level, neutral position; their arms and hands can be gently supported in a functional position; the weight of their spine is lowermost and on the supporting surface, the softer more delicate part of their chest is uppermost and can be protected; their pelvis can be gently brought into a level position; the gap and their waist, between pelvis and lower ribs, can be brought into a position to lie symmetrically; their hips can be supported and protected in secure abduction, with the legs slightly apart; gravity can be used to gently help the knees to straighten; and finally their feet can be supported in a secure neutral position. For a copy of the article please contact Sarah [Training@simplestuffworks.co.uk](mailto:Training@simplestuffworks.co.uk)

4

At first you may feel like you are trying to remember a hundred things at once but it will quickly become routine, hopefully an enjoyable soothing routine. There are so many benefits to be gained here: good postural care, a relaxing bedtime story, the benefits of sensory stimulation and more, so fear not – it will be worth your effort. To learn more about the particular benefits to be gained from sensory stories do download the free guide **Sharing a sensory story** from: <http://jo.element42.org/sensory-stories>

## Resourcing the story

To tell this story you will need to gather a few simple sensory resources. If you can find a marvellous box to keep these resources in that will help to make the story more captivating for the person with whom you are sharing the story.

Be aware of any sensory preferences, needs or allergies the person you will be sharing the story with may have and feel free to substitute more suitable resources as required.

### Resource shopping list:

**Essential oils.** You will need two different essential oils, many shops sell essential oils, typically they cost around 80 pence per bottle and a bottle will last you a very long time. If you can't find essential oils then you can consider room fragrances or perfume. You are aiming to have one woodland smell, I recommend Sandalwood as it is a very gentle soothing scent, and one floral smell, choose from: Camomile, Jasmine, Lavender, Rose or Vanilla as all of these scents are said to have soporific properties. If you are not keen on floral scents try Bergamot instead (also said to be soporific in small doses) which has a citrus smell.

**Velvety fabric.** This can be a cushion, a covering on your story experiencer's leg supports, or simply a swatch of fabric to be touched. Fur fabric or Minky fabric would be suitable alternatives.

### Additionally:

**Bird song.** You have many options here: whistle or sing a lullaby yourself, choose a suitable piece of music, or find a clip of birdsong on Youtube (or similar site, try Soundcloud for snippets of songs).

### Optional:

**A cotton pad and a small plastic container:** if you drop a couple of drops of essential oil onto a cotton pad and keep it sealed in a plastic container the air inside the container will become fragranced and taking the lid off will be an effective way of delivering the scent. It will also mean you can reuse the smell on many occasions, topping it up with an extra drip as required.

**A dimmer switch:** Having a dimmer switch for the bedroom light would be a wonderful addition to this story, but is not necessary.

Once you have collected your resources keep them together and try to use the same stimulus each time you tell the story. This will help it to become predictable and increase feelings of security and comfort. Encourage your story experiencer to create a unique experience each time the story is told by imagining what dreams are dreamt by Beauty as she sleeps.

### Facilitating the sensory stimuli for Beauty Sleeps

Get everything ready before you start. Set out the sensory resources and the postural support resources you will need somewhere where you will be able to reach them easily as you share the story. Prop up the story pages somewhere where you can see them as you move about.

**Beauty sleeps lying back amongst the flowers.** Lie your story experiencer on their back in bed following the advice you have received from your therapist. Waft the scent of flowers around them and allow them time to enjoy the fragrance. If you have the fragrance on a cotton pad in a plastic container then simply remove the lid of the container and move it around the body of the story experiencer. Alternatively you could add a couple of drops of fragrance to a piece of fabric with flowers on and waft this over your story experiencer. Real flowers are also an option, but it can be tricky to ensure you have the same fresh flowers for each telling of the story.

**Her legs rest on velvet cushions.** Adjust the leg position of your story experiencer following your therapist's advice. If the support you are using is soft to touch then this alone can be the sensory experience to accompany this section of the story. (Touch experiences can be had with the knees, it does not always have to be finger tips). If your support is not particularly soft then you can allow your story experiencer to touch a swatch of velvety fabric as you adjust their legs. Remember this story is part of a going to sleep routine so try to keep your movements fluid and unhurried.

**Vines grow around her, embracing her torso in a woodland hug.** Your arms will be the vines embracing the story experiencer as you move any side supports they need into place. The floral scent from the beginning of the story is also the scent that you want to last in the room once the story has been told. This woodland scent can be stronger as it is delivered but is also going to be a briefer experience than the floral scent. You can deliver it in the same manner as the floral scent using a few drops of essential oil on a cotton pad in a plastic container, or you could be a little more creative and scent something that you then wear on your hand or wrist as you see to your story experiencer's torso support. This could be a glove, or simply a hair scrunchie worn around your wrist. Make sure it is something you can take off as you only want this scent present during this phrase of the story. The item could be kept in a plastic container as with the scent on cotton pads to concentrate the fragrance.

**Birds alight upon her toes to sing her lullabies.** Your hands are the birds and as you alight upon the toes of your story experiencer you will be ensuring that their toes are pointing in the direction advised by your therapist. Touch of any kind is very soothing so you can keep your hands resting on your story experiencer's feet as you sing/whistle a lullaby or play the song or music clip of your choosing. If your choice of music is quite long you can continue the story whilst it plays in the background.

**She breathes as gently as the sea lapping the beach on a summer's day.** The story is coming to a close; you want your story experiencer to be as relaxed as possible. Slow controlled breathing helps people to relax. Model this kind of breathing to your story experiencer by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly. To enhance this experience inhale through your nose and exhale making a 'shhh' sound. Encourage your story experiencer to mimic your breathing pattern. If your story experiencer needs head support as part of their postural care, or needs to have their head moved, this is the point in the story when you can make those movements. With the understanding of your story experiencer you could move your face so that you could feel their breath upon your cheek. The positioning of your face will then send a cue as to where their face should be pointing.

**The daylight fades to night.** A dimmer switch would be a wonderful thing to have to facilitate this part of the story. Your aim for this sensory stimulus is simply to turn off the light in the room. The transition from darkness to light that happens during this section of the story is in part a cue to your story experiencer as to where they should be facing i.e. with their head in the correct position they will be able to see the light as it fades, and in part a signal to them to close their eyes and get ready for sleep. As you move to adjust the lighting in the room you will be checking the alignment of your story experiencer's body as you have been advised to do by your therapist.

**The birds draw a coverlet of moss over her.** Once again you play the part of the birds as you draw your story experiencer's blanket gently over their body.

**Beauty's mind dances in the land of dreams.** There is no stimulus associated with this line, but still take your time as you deliver it. It is an invitation for your story experiencer to begin to imagine the dreams of the Beauty in the story.

**She breathes as gently as the sea lapping the beach on a summer's day,** You have already modelled calm breathing to your story experiencer. Return to it again and breathe with your story experiencer to generate a relaxed sleepy state in them.

**and the flowers grow about her until the dawn.** There is a small amount of research that shows that faint floral scents of the kinds recommended in the 'Resourcing the stimuli' section of this booklet promote peaceful pleasant sleep and can have a soothing soporific effect in a bedroom. You can waft the floral scent over your story experiencer and then leave the scented item in the room so that it gives off a very gentle floral scent through the night. This continuation of the sensory experience is also intended to support your story experiencer in continuing to imagine themselves in the dreams of the sleeping Beauty.



*Beauty sleeps.*

*Beauty sleeps lying back amongst the flowers.*

*Floral scent*

*Her legs rest on velvet cushions.*

*Velvet fabric*

*Vines grow around her, embracing her torso in a woodland hug.*

*Woodland scent*

*Birds alight upon her toes to sing her lullabies.*

*Birdsong/lullaby*

*She breathes as gently as the sea lapping the beach on a summer's day.*

*Breath*

*The daylight fades to night.*

*Bedroom lights*

*The birds draw a coverlet of moss over her.*

*Blanket*

*Her mind dances in the land of dreams.*

*She breathes as gently as the sea lapping the beach on a summer's day,*

*Breath*

*and the flowers grow about her until the dawn.*

*Floral scent*