

6B THREE THINGS YOU (PROBABLY) DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SLEEP Student A

Sleeping Beauty

In 2008, when Louisa Ball was fourteen, she had symptoms of the flu, and soon after she began falling asleep in class. Then one day she went to sleep and didn't wake up...for ten days. Doctors diagnosed her as having a rare neurological disorder called Kleine-Levin Syndrome, also known as "Sleeping Beauty Syndrome." People who have this medical condition often sleep for long periods without waking up.

Louisa regularly misses long periods of school, her weekly dance lessons, and, once, a whole week of a family vacation because she is asleep. On one occasion she even missed her final exams. When she sleeps for several days, her parents have to wake her up once a day to give her something to eat and take her to the bathroom. But then she immediately falls back into a deep sleep.

People who have this syndrome often complain that they lose their friends because they disappear for such long periods of time. Fortunately, Louisa's friends have stayed loyal, and they even visit her on days when she is asleep.

Although she sometimes feels frustrated, Louisa says, "I've gotten used to it now, and I've learned to live with it." Doctors have told her that the syndrome will eventually disappear, but maybe not for ten or fifteen years.