



By Charles Way

Directed by Samantha K. Wyer

Scenic Design by Robert Klingelhoffer

Costume Design by Cathy Hunt

Lighting Design by Tracy Odishaw

Sound Design by David Temby

Choreography by Laurie Trygg

Fight Direction by David Barker

Stage Manager: Sam Ries

The Cast

Branwen. . . . . Jodie L. Weiss  
Modron. . . . . Katie McFadzen  
Gryff. . . . . Jon Gentry  
King Peredur/Spider King. . . . . Dwayne Hartford  
Queen Guinevere/Tylwyth Teg. . . . . Debra K Stevens  
Princess Briar Rose. . . . . Alette Valencia  
Prince Owain/Bishop. . . . . D. Scott Withers

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Herberger Theater Center

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Preview Guide for Parents and  
Teachers to Childsplay's  
Production of  
Sleeping Beauty

We hope you find this guide helpful in preparing your children for an enjoyable and educational theatrical experience. Included you'll find things to talk about before and after seeing the performance, classroom activities that deal with curriculum connections and education standards, and resource materials.

The Story

Similar to the Grimms' Brothers version but with several twists! King Peredur and Queen Guinevere desperately want a baby and have all but given up on their wish when they discover a baby girl abandoned in the forest. Sisters (and witches) Branwen and Modron fight over the destiny of the child. While Branwen wants the King and Queen to have the child, Modron wants the child for her own. During the christening of Briar Rose, Branwen is asked to bestow thirteen blessings upon the child. Angry that she wasn't invited to the christening, Modron appears anyway to bestow a blessing of her own: on her sixteenth birthday, Briar Rose will prick her finger on a spinning wheel's spindle and die. Branwen cannot destroy her sister's spell but she can amend it: instead of death, Briar Rose will sleep for one hundred years, to be awakened only by the kiss of her true love. Terrified for his daughter's safety, the King has all spinning wheels banished and keeps the young girl behind the castle walls. Branwen sends her servant Gryff, half man half dragon, to watch over and befriend Briar Rose. Since there are no spinning wheels, there is a shortage of cloth so the King has to rely on nearby kingdoms for cloth. As a favor to one of the cloth supplying kingdoms, the King agrees to take in a prince for the summer. Prince Owain has low self-esteem and really isn't good at anything. He and Briar Rose develop a strong friendship. On her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, Briar Rose does indeed fall under Modron's spell and is imprisoned by her. It is Owain (with the help of Gryff) who finds his inner strength and overcomes obstacles as he makes his way through the forest to rescue Briar Rose. In the end it is obvious that the two young friends will indeed live happily ever after.

## Things to Talk About and Do Before Seeing the Show

**Theater Etiquette:** (2AT-R2, 3AT-R2) It's helpful to review the rules of theater etiquette before seeing a show, especially since this may be the first live theater experience for some of your students. Please take a moment to discuss the following pointers prior to seeing the performance.

- ~Stay seated during the performance.
- ~ Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance.
- ~ Appropriate responses such as applause or laughter are always welcome.
- ~Use of cell phones, cameras or any other recording device is *not allowed in the theater at any time!*

### The Characters

Reviewing the list of characters before seeing the play will help the students to better follow the story:

- ~*Branwen*, The Bright Witch
- ~*Modron*, The Dark Witch, sister to Branwen
- ~*Gryff*, half dragon, half man; Branwen's servant
- ~*King Peredur & Queen Guinevere*, adoptive parents of Briar Rose
- ~ *The Bishop*, performs the christening of Briar Rose
- ~*Princess Briar Rose* (a.k.a. Sleeping Beauty)
- ~*Prince Owain*, Briar Rose's best friend, awkward and not confident
- ~*The Tylwyth Teg* (tu-LOO-uth TEG) manipulative fairy people
- ~ *The Spider King*, evil, likes riddles

### Preview the Story

Read one or more of the story versions of *Sleeping Beauty*

and/or watch the Disney film (internet links to Perrault's and Grimms' version can be found on the back page of this guide). Talk about what you think the live production will be like.

### The History of *Sleeping Beauty*

The play that you and your children will see has many similarities to the familiar version of *Sleeping Beauty* with many twists. Variations of the story have been documented since the 13<sup>th</sup> century and have evolved over time into the popular version we know today.

- \* **13th century:** *Volsunga Saga*. A Nordic tale describing the banishment of Brynhilde to the earth. Contains the most basic aspects of the plot.
- \* **1528:** *Perceforest*. An Arthurian romance known as *Histoire de Troylus et de Zellandine*. A vast tale linking legends of Alexander the Great with King Arthur of Great Britain. The story of Zellandine, who falls into an enchanted sleep while spinning flax, is recognizably similar to *Sleeping Beauty*.
- \* **1636:** *Sun, Moon, and Talia*. Giambattista Basile's Italian tale from *Il Pentamarone (Day 5. Tale 5)*. This tale is the most explicit and violent. While she is in her enchanted sleep, Talia is raped by a married king and gives birth to twins. The king's wife finds out and is jealous, and attempts to eat Talia's children, Sun and Moon.
- \* **1697:** *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*. Charles Perrault's tale from his book *Histoires ou contes du temps passe*. Very similar to Basile's tale, except that Sleeping Beauty's enchanted sleep lasts for 100 years, and she is rescued by a prince instead of a king. This is the first version where she is awakened by a prince. The

jealous wife is replaced by the prince's jealous ogress of a mother.

- \* **1729:** *Histoires, or Tales of Past Times*. Robert Samber translates Perrault's tales to English for the first time.
- \* **19th century:** *Little Briar Rose*. From *Children's and Household Tales* (1812-1815). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm publish their 'sanitized' version of *Sleeping Beauty*, although they deny the connection to Perrault's tale. Briar Rose is awakened when a prince kneels by her side, and the story ends when the Prince and his bride get married.
- \* **1959:** *Sleeping Beauty*. Walt Disney's animated film based on Perrault's and the Grimms' versions of the story.

### Fairytales

In general, fairy tales are short, gripping narratives that evolved from the oral tradition of storytelling. The stories were passed on from generation to generation and across cultures and countries. Fairytales are filled with fantastical characters like witches, queens, giants, elves, princes, dragons, talking animals, ogres, princesses, and sometimes even fairies. Magic is a big part of fairytales. The plots are very improbable and good almost always wins over evil. French fairy tales were the first to be written down, but there are fairy tales from practically all cultures. There are amazing similarities in fairy tales from different cultures: For example, stories from two distant cultures, recorded around the same time period can be very much the same. The stories probably spread across cultures by storytellers and changed ever so slightly with every re-telling.

## Things to Talk About And Do After the Performance:

①(3AT-R1) All plays have three P's: *People* in a *Place* with a *Problem*. Where does the play take place (setting)? Who are the people (or characters)? What are the problems (conflicts)? What happens at the beginning of the play? The middle? The end?

②For older students: Identify the five components of story structure in the play: Exposition (character and setting), rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.

③How is this stage version of *Sleeping Beauty* different or similar to the movie or any written version you know?

④(3AT-F2) Throughout the whole play, Briar Rose wants to leave the castle to explore the woods. When she finally has a chance to do it at the end of the play, she is afraid. Why do you think this is so? What do you think happens next?

### Creative Drama Activities:

**Frozen Pictures** (1AT-F1, 1AT-R2, 3AT-R1) In groups of three or four, create three frozen pictures that each represent a moment from the beginning, middle and end of the play. Try and keep your "pictures" interesting to look at by exploring high and low shapes as well as active body positions. Each picture should tell a mini-story about what's happening at that moment. Share with the class and see if they can figure out which moments you chose.

**Dance!** (1AT-R3, 1AT-F2, 1AT-E1, 1AT-E3, 1AT-F3) Briar Rose says "dance as if your life depended on it." In groups of two or three, come up with a scene in which you must use dance to solve a problem. For example, Owain out dances

the Tylwyth Teg so that he doesn't have to stay with them for eternity. Brainstorm ideas for the scene, rehearse and share with the rest of the class.

### Art Activities:

**Half and Half** (1AV-R1, 1AV-R6) Gryff is half man half dragon. What other interesting creature/person combinations can you come up with? If you were half-person, half-creature what would you look like? Draw a picture of your creature or find pictures from magazines or the internet that you can combine to create a creature. Give the creature a name and hang them in your classroom.

**The 100 Year Forest** (1AV-R1, 1AV-F6, 1AV-E1, 3AV-R2) Think about a forest and how much it could grow and change in one hundred years. Using colored pencils, crayons and/or markers, draw before and after pictures of your forest. Create a wall of forests in your classroom.

**My Castle** (1AV-F3, 1AV-R1, 1AV-F4) Briar Rose lives in a castle surrounded by beautiful gardens and tall walls. Design your own castle. Draw a detailed picture of what it looks like from the outside. Then, draw a "birds-eye" view of the castle (as though you were above the castle looking down on it). Label the different areas or rooms of the castle. Give your castle a regal name and display in the classroom.

### Writing Activities:

**Magic Spells** Branwen and Modron use spells to change the course of action in the play. Branwen's spells are positive and Modron's are negative. Think about something in our world that you would like to

improve. Write a spell that would make that something happen! Perform your spell (add movements if you want) for the class.

**A Time for Bravery** Owain has low self-esteem and thinks he is not good at anything until he discovers his strength and courage on his quest to find Briar Rose. Write about a time when you did something brave.

**Letter of Support** Write Briar Rose a letter encouraging her to explore the world beyond the castle. Explain to her what she might see and experience. Focus on the positive but also make her aware of what she should be cautious of.

**Riddles** Owain guesses the answers to three riddles from the Spider King in exchange for directions to the castle. A riddle is a question or statement requiring analytical thought to answer or understand. For example, "What is most like a half moon?" "The other half." Use your imagination and write three riddles. Compile them all into a classroom riddle book.

### Reading Activities:

**Fairies** Fairy Folk are a big part of Irish and Welsh mythology. The Tylwyth Teg are one type of fairy folk. Find other types of fairy folk by reading celtic folktales or by researching them on the internet or in the library. Share your findings with the class.

**Same But Different** In small groups of two or three, find at least three versions of the same fairytale in the library or on the internet. Read them all and make a list of similarities and differences. Decide which one you like best and why.

## Sleeping Beauty Booklist

Prepared with the help of Tim Wadham, Youth Services Coordinator for the Maricopa County Library District

### Other versions of *Sleeping Beauty*

*The Sleeping Beauty* by Mercer Mayer

*The Sleeping Beauty* by Trina Schart Hyman



### Chapter-book retellings:

*Princess Sonora and the Long Sleep* by Gail Carson Levine

*Sleeping Beauty* by Adele Geras

### En español:

*The Sleeping Beauty/La bella durmiente* by Miquel Desclot

*La bella durmiente* by Eric Blair

## Talk Topics

### Fairy Folk

*The Hidden Folk: Stories of Fairies, Dwarves, Selkies and Other Hidden Creatures* by Lisa Lunge-Larsen

*The Little People: Stories of Fairies, Pixies and Other Small Folk* by Neil Philip

### Friendship and Imaginary Friends

*My Friend the Monster* by Clyde Robert Bulla

*The Three Funny Friends* by Charlotte Zolotow

*Rosy's Visitors* by Judy Hindly

### Mythical Creatures

*Mythica Birds and Beasts from Many Lands* by Margaret Mayo

*Eric Carle's Dragons Dragons and Other Creatures that Never Were* by Eric Carle

*Dragon Rider* by Cornelia Funke

*Island of the Aunts* by Eva Ibbotson

*No Such Things* by Bill Peet

### Riddles

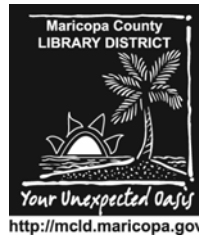
*Riddles and More Riddles!* by Bennett Cerf

### Self-Confidence

*Princess Academy* by Shannon Hale

*The Two Princesses of Bamarre* by Gail Carson Levine

*Permanent Rose* by Hilary McKay



## Arizona Academic Standards

Your visit to the theater as well as the preparation and follow up activities can involve many content areas from the Arizona Department of Education K-12 Academic Standards. Many of the suggested discussion topics and activities can be tied to standards in several areas. We have included some standard connections in the Arts that are noted in parenthesis. *If you would like a more detailed list of standard connections for your particular grade we would be happy to assist.* Simply email Katie McFadzen at [kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org](mailto:kmcfadzen@childsplayaz.org) or call 480-350-8105.

## Want Some Drama in Your Classroom?

If you would like help incorporating drama into your curriculum by having an actor teach in your classroom, Childsplay can help. We offer a variety of artist-in-residence and teacher training experiences. We can also help with pre and post-show activities related to the production. For more information, contact Debra K. Stevens at [dstevens@childsplayaz.org](mailto:dstevens@childsplayaz.org) or 480-350-8105

## Internet Sites of Interest

[www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/briar\\_rose.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/briar_rose.html)

An online edition of the Grimms' Brothers version

[www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/index.html](http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/sleepingbeauty/index.html)

An annotated version of Perrault's story

[www.longlongtimeago.com/llta\\_fairytales.html](http://www.longlongtimeago.com/llta_fairytales.html)

About fairytales

[www.sparknotes.com/film/sleepingbeauty/section1.html](http://www.sparknotes.com/film/sleepingbeauty/section1.html)

More on the history and evolution of *Sleeping Beauty*

[www.balletmet.org/Notes/Sleeping.html](http://www.balletmet.org/Notes/Sleeping.html)

A synopsis of the ballet version of the story and more history on *Sleeping Beauty*

## About Childsplay

Childsplay is a non-profit professional theatre company of adult actors, performing for young audiences and families.

Our Mission is *to create theatre so strikingly original in form, content or both, that it instills in young people an enduring awe, love and respect for the medium, thus preserving imagination and wonder, the hallmarks of childhood, which are the keys to the future.* We love to hear from our audience members! Send letters, drawings or reviews to:

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