



P.L.A.Y.

PERFORMING FOR LOS ANGELES YOUTH



Sleeping Beauty Wakes

Book by Rachel Sheinkin
Music and Lyrics by
Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda

World Premiere Musical
March 31–May 13, 2007
Kirk Douglas Theatre




How to Use this Discovery Guide

Welcome to the magical, mysterious and sometimes **contradictory** world of fairy tales! *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* is a musical **adaptation** of the **classic** fairy tale about Sleeping Beauty, the princess who sleeps for a hundred years after being cursed by a vengeful fairy. The play is enhanced by the music of the band GrooveLily and features both hearing actors and deaf actors. Set in both modern times and “once upon a time,” *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* shows what happens when an anxious father tries too hard to protect his rebellious teenaged daughter.

This guide will help you to learn about fairy tales, what they mean to you, why they are rewritten and how they can be adapted for the theatre. Because *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* is a co-production with Deaf West Theatre, Los Angeles’ premiere theatre group for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing audiences and artists, we hope that you will also gain an appreciation for the **collaboration** between deaf and hearing actors.

Vocabulary words are in **bold** type.
Definitions are located within each section.



Right after touching the tip of the spindle, the girl collapsed on a nearby bed and fell into a deep sleep. Her slumber spread throughout the castle. The king and the queen, who had just returned home and were entering the great hall, fell asleep, and the entire court with them.

—“Sleeping Beauty” by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Objectives of this Discovery Guide

Appreciate how important storytelling is to every culture

Discover what theatre brings to us as hearing and deaf audiences, and how the unique way in which this story is told makes it even more special

Build on what you have learned so that you can adapt a fairy tale of your choosing to express your concerns about life

Define how adaptation works and examine how fairy tales can be re-told to serve different purposes

Explore the idea of collaboration: what it means to work together as friends, classmates, an audience and a community

Learn about fairy tales—their origins, what they teach us and how they have changed throughout the years

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The Magic of Once Upon a Time

Fairy tales have existed for many centuries and are present in every culture. Although they do not know exactly when fairy tales were first told, many historians think that fairy tales began in the tenth century as stories about magic, violence and complicated family relationships told by adults for other adults to make the time go faster during boring work. These stories were then passed down through the generations in spoken versions in what is known as **oral tradition**. Eventually they were written down, and as the years passed, other writers from different countries borrowed bits and pieces from them to create their own versions. During the last two or three centuries, fairy tales were rewritten for children and modified to teach a lesson.

Have you ever wondered *why* fairy tales are told over and over and are passed down from generation to generation? Aside from being entertaining, fairy tales often have a **moral** that instructs people on how to fit into society. Fairy tales also address issues in society that bother us, such as the relationship between the rich and poor, how outsiders are treated, what constitutes evil and what defines courage. Additionally, fairy tales from every culture deal with basic values

such as learning obedience, the importance of doing work well, nurturing creativity, modeling **gender roles** and offering ways to cope with scary situations.

One of the most important lessons that “Sleeping Beauty” teaches is that our behavior has both good and bad consequences that affect other people. For example, if the King and Queen had been more gracious and invited the Fairy who had been left out, Beauty would not have been cursed. However, because the last Fairy was patient and thought carefully about her wish, Beauty did not die.

Different cultures also share fairy tale **motifs**, such as sleeping for long periods of time, having unusual dreams, being transformed into an animal or being tested by a complicated journey or task. Each culture emphasizes values, objects and special people that are unique to it, and which an outsider might not understand. Have you seen the movies *Spirited Away* or *Howl’s Moving Castle*? They contain fairy tale motifs recognizable to Americans, including a transformed prince or a child separated from his or her parents, but there are specific figures from Japanese culture that non-Japanese audiences might not recognize, such as the many gods and spirits.

Everything Old Becomes New Again

Fairy tales can be adapted and told in many different ways. They can be set in modern times or different cultures, told from other **points of view** or in different languages, or rewritten to emphasize changing **societal values**. “Cinderella” has been updated many times, including the 2004 film *A Cinderella Story* starring Hilary Duff, who plays a modern-day high school student orphaned after her father dies in the Northridge earthquake.

Fairy tales are sometimes told through the eyes of another, usually secondary, character. Gregory Maguire’s book *Wicked* is a good example; it is based on L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Maguire’s story is told from the point of view of Elphaba, the supposedly “Wicked” Witch of the West. Actually, Elphaba is an activist who is working hard to protect Oz and its inhabitants. In creating this type of re-imagined “fractured fairy tale,” it is important that people already know the story well, so that the changes created by the writer will be a fun surprise and, in

some cases, stir up thought and discussion. When he described working on *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, writer/performer Brendan Milburn said that because people are so familiar with “Sleeping Beauty,” the writers “felt that [they] had a little more room to roam when it came to adapting it as a piece of musical theatre.”

When fairy tales are translated into other languages, things like character names and even story lines are often changed so it makes more sense to that culture. This is a form of adaptation. In *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, you will see a unique language adaptation: American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is now the fourth most commonly used language in the U.S. It helps deaf and hard of hearing people communicate with others, and like other languages, has its own grammar and **syntax** and supports its own culture. It is particularly suited for use in the theatre—and even more so for musical theatre—because the visual rhythms of sign language emphasize emotion while being artful and beautiful.

[Actor] Troy Kotsur can say more with one raised eyebrow than I can say in a paragraph of spoken text.

—writer/performer Brendan Milburn



The motifs of sleep and dreaming are found in “Sleeping Beauty,” and *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* incorporates sleep and dreaming stories from other cultures, too. One of the characters mentioned in the play is Urashima, a Japanese fisherman who was welcomed into a fantastical underwater kingdom for three years as a reward for his kindness. When

he became lonely for his family and returned home, however, he discovered that he had been gone for three *hundred* years. Also in the play is Chuang-tzu, a real-life Chinese philosopher who dreamed that he was a butterfly. When he awoke, he began to wonder if he was a man who dreamed that he was a butterfly, or if he was a butterfly who dreamed that he was a man.

Exercise

What is your favorite fairy tale? _____

What culture is it from? _____

What fairy tale motifs does it contain? _____

What moral(s) does it teach? _____



Disney films based on fairy tales are a good example of adaptations emphasizing changing values. In the Disney animated film *Beauty and the Beast*, the heroine is much more **assertive** and more in control of her destiny than she was in earlier versions of the story.

Authors use fairy tales to address other important issues too, such as racism or the inequality between rich and poor. Adaptation is a great way to give something old a new, fresh purpose.

Exercise

Has the fairy tale you chose ever been adapted? Has it been told from a different point of view or set in a different time period? What worked and what didn't? Look in your library or online for examples before planning your version.

How would *you* like to adapt it? Who is the main character? When and where is the story set? Will you change the behavior of the characters or the course of the story? Give it a new moral, a new purpose? Describe your changes to the traditional story.

Working Together to Build a Dream

One of the most exciting parts of working in the theatre is the opportunity to collaborate with others. The chance to build upon one another's unique experiences can be a challenge because you have to be willing to accept someone's criticism and make **compromises**. At its best, collaboration is a rewarding process that helps each person learn about him- or herself and others while creating something new. Collaboration in theatre can be seen as a **microcosm** of the collaborations surrounding you in your everyday life. *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* is a perfect example of how artists from many disciplines—writers, composers, actors, musicians, designers and a director—come together to make something that none of them could create on his or her own. You, as an audience member, are a part of that collaboration. Because you “know” the story of “Sleeping Beauty” already, you are going to have ideas about where the story is headed and how it will be told. Your expectations of how the characters *should* act influence your reaction to how they *do* act. The playwright is counting on this in order to either fulfill your expectations or surprise you with a **plot twist** or change in **characterization**.

Create a Living Storyboard

Here is your chance to collaborate with your classmates. Separate into teams of two. One of you will tell your story adaptation while the other illustrates it in your Discovery Guide. The illustrator is not just drawing what the storyteller says; he or she may add details or move ahead in the story, modify the action or introduce new ideas. The storyteller must watch the illustrator and respond to the drawing, even as the illustrator is responding to the storyteller's tale. Together, you will build on each other's ideas to create a more complete story. It will not be exactly the story either person imagined—it will be a collaboration, a combination of both people's ideas. When you have finished telling one story, switch roles and tell the other.

It is a risky endeavor when two or three minds get together to make a new story, but it can be far more rewarding than writing alone. Other people think of things that you wouldn't dream of. —writer/performer Brendan Milburn

VOCABULARY

ADAPTATION: A reworking or modification of an existing work

ASSERTIVE: Confident, positive and self-assured; able to take charge

CHARACTERIZATION: How a person, animal or thing is portrayed or described in a story

CLASSIC: Of the first or highest quality, class or rank; serving as the model for other things

COLLABORATION: The process of two or more people working together to create something new

COMPROMISE: To settle differences by mutual agreement; an idea or course of action that is agreed upon by people who disagreed at first

CONTRADICTORY: Seeming to be inconsistent or the opposite; illogical

FIRST DRAFT: The first form of any writing, which is to be edited or corrected

GENDER ROLES: The different ways that boys and girls, and men and women, are expected to act

MICROCOSM: A world in miniature

MORAL: A statement that instructs the reader/listener in the correct, honest way to behave in a particular situation

MOTIF: A subject, theme or idea that comes up again and again, especially in literature, music or art

ORAL TRADITION: The passing of history, information and entertainment down the generations through the spoken word

PLOT TWIST: An unexpected change in a storyline

POINT OF VIEW: The perspective from which a story is told

SOCIETAL VALUES: What a large group of people considers to be important attitudes and behaviors; what helps to make a group function smoothly in a cooperative manner

SYNTAX: The rules or patterns for the formation of sentences and phrases



Share Your Experiences

To make sure that all audience members can enjoy the play, the deaf and hearing actors speak and sign every lyric and line of dialogue. Coordinating that effort is the job of the director, Jeff Calhoun. Jeff says that using American Sign Language in a musical “makes everyone focus and create something better” than would be found in a regular musical, and that it “enhances the storytelling in much the same way that dance does.”

In discussing how the deaf and hearing actors work together, Jeff notes that their collaboration requires “total concentration” so that the hearing actors can translate exactly what the deaf actors are signing, and the deaf actors can see the visual cues that help them keep time with the music. When the non-hearing actors could not see what was happening on all parts of the stage, could you see how they kept track of the action? Did the hearing actors cue them?

It’s mighty satisfying to sing a song and see it spring to life before your eyes as you sync up with another person acting and signing the same material you’re singing. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

—writer/performer Brendan Milburn.

VOCABULARY

BILINGUAL: Using two languages

CUE: A word, sound or visual signal that tells an actor or technician that it is time to perform a particular line or action

Express Yourself

An important part of any theatrical experience is talking about it afterward. Critics and reviewers can tell you what they think and why they think it, but you are the only one who can say what *you* think. You can gain deeper understanding both by really listening to other people’s opinions and by clearly expressing your own ideas. Break into small groups to discuss *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*. Pick a representative of your group to present your ideas to the class and compare them with what others think.

Describe one instance of collaboration that you saw onstage in *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*.

How did the **bilingual** presentation add to or detract from the play?

What motifs did you notice?

Three horizontal lines for writing.

List the moral(s).

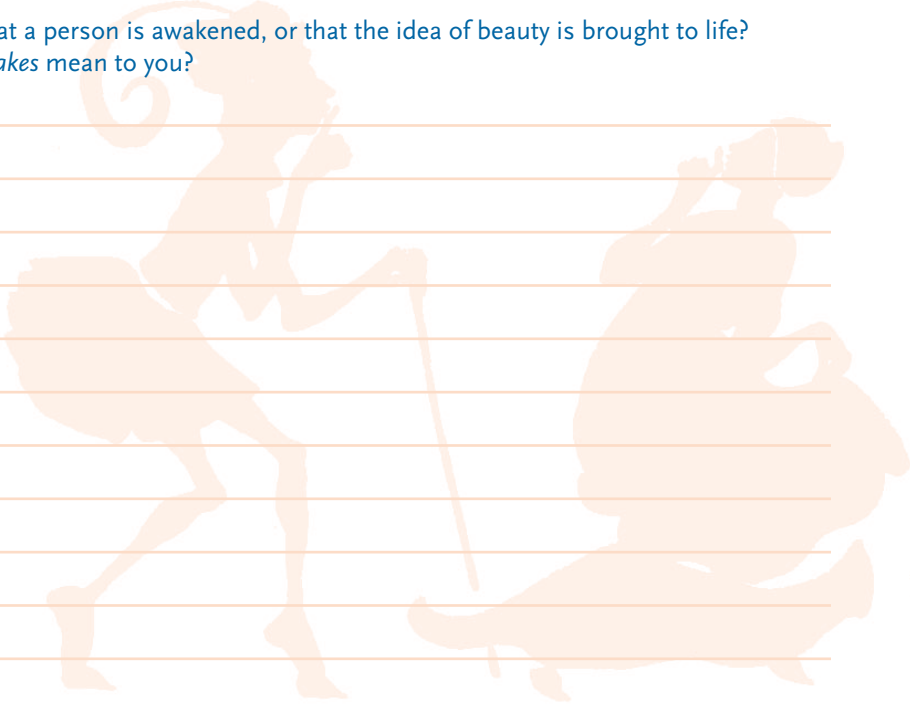
Five horizontal lines for writing.

What were the similarities and differences between *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* and the traditional fairy tale?

Five horizontal lines for writing.

Think about the title. Does it mean that a person is awakened, or that the idea of beauty is brought to life?
What does the title *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* mean to you?

Eleven horizontal lines for writing.





It's Special Because It Belongs to You

Write a second, polished draft of your narrative. Before you begin, consider what you found to be most the effective parts of the "Sleeping Beauty" adaptation that you saw. Be sure to include a moral, recognizable motifs and strong characters, and to express your own special point of view. Also give some thought to your title. What does it express about your story?

Title: _____

A large, faint, light-orange illustration of a thorny branch with two silhouettes of a character and a ballerina. The character on the left is wearing a hat and a cape, and the ballerina on the right is in a tutu. The illustration is positioned over a background of horizontal orange lines.

The Building Blocks of Your Story

Every story must have a beginning, middle and end in order to be satisfying for the reader or viewer; this is called the dramatic structure. The beginning introduces the characters and the setting (a princess, some fairies and a castle). Included in the beginning will be an action that motivates the rest of the story, such as a fairy casting a curse. In the middle, we learn more about the characters and how they relate to one another. There will be an event that complicates the situation, such as the princess finding the spindle and pricking her finger on it. At the end, or the climax, the problems that have grown throughout the story are resolved, as when the prince kisses the princess and wakes her up.

Beauty trying to escape her overprotective parental environment is what ultimately leads to her pricking her finger and falling asleep. What transpires while she is sleeping proves a great lesson for how to live while we are awake.

—Director Jeff Calhoun

Think about the beginning (inciting action), middle (complicating event) and ending (climax) of *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, then identify these components in your story.

Inciting action: _____

Complicating event: _____

Climax: _____

Write one line of dialogue for each moment above.

Inciting action: _____

Complicating event: _____

Climax: _____





Making It Come to Life

Now that you have a few lines of dialogue, choose one of your building blocks (inciting action, complicating event, climax) and write an entire scene for it. First set up the situation in a brief descriptive paragraph, particularly if it is in the middle of the story. Then imagine what happens next and begin to write the conversation. You may want to include stage directions to indicate the characters' actions. Your scene will end up looking something like this:

In a small, neat room with a feminine flair, a young, athletic-looking woman is confronted by a man with a bushy mustache and a very ugly hat.

Woman: I can't pay the rent.

Man: You must pay the rent.

Woman: I can't pay the rent.

[Hero, wearing surfer shorts and a torn t-shirt, bursts through the door.]

Hero: I'll pay the rent with the money I made working at Build-A-Bear.

Woman: Buzz off, buster! I can handle this on my own.



Concluding Remarks

One of the most difficult but rewarding things we learn as we grow up is that our parents are ordinary people. Although they have a unique ability to comfort and guide us, they make mistakes and have feelings just like everyone else. Writer/performer Brendan Milburn expressed his hope that young audience members viewing *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* will come away from it “with a perspective of what it must be like for their parents.” He thinks that “Sleeping Beauty” is a perfect fairy tale for teenagers, who are on a journey to become “their own people.” We all want to be treated fairly and with respect, no matter what we look like or how much money we have, and that may be the ultimate lesson of fairy tales. Whatever fairy tales mean to you, we hope that this Discovery Guide has expanded your understanding of them, increased your enjoyment of *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* and inspired you to attend the theatre again soon.

Resources

BOOKS

A Wolf at the Door: And Other Retold Fairy Tales and ***Swan Sister: Fairy Tales Retold***
Edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling
(Simon & Schuster, 2000 and 2003)
Collections of re-imagined fairy tales

Wicked by Gregory Maguire (HarperCollins, 1995)
Maguire’s re-imagining of the Land of Oz

The Annotated Brothers Grimm and
the Annotated Classic Fairy Tales
Edited by Maria Tatar
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2004 and 2002)
Lavishly illustrated compendiums of various
fairy tales, with annotations

Mirror, Mirror: Forty Folktales for Mothers and Daughters to Share
Edited by Jane Yolen and Heidi E. Y. Stemple
(Penguin Books, 2000)
A multi-cultural collection of fairy tales and poems,
all of which emphasize positive portrayals of women

WEBSITES

www.surlalunefairytales.com
A portal to the realm of fairy tale and folklore studies
featuring 45 annotated fairy tales, including their
histories, similar tales across cultures and illustrations

www.groovelily.com/index2.html
Welcome to GrooveLily. Rock Band? Musical Theatre?
The Best of Both.

www.deafwest.org
Deaf West Theatre’s website: learn more about the
creation of the first original deaf musical, *Sleeping
Beauty Wakes*.

commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/aslweb/browser.htm
A basic ASL dictionary with video clips of each word

FILM & TELEVISION

La Belle au Bois Dormant
Directed by Pierre Cavassilas
(Warner Music Vision, 2000)
A filmed version of Tchaikovsky’s
beloved ballet about “Sleeping Beauty”

La Belle et la Bête
Directed by Jean Cocteau
(The Criterion Collection, 1946)
A stunningly beautiful, live-action version
of “Beauty and the Beast”

A Cinderella Story
Directed by Mark Rosman (Warner Bros., 2004)
An updated “Cinderella” in which the lonely heroine
finds her happy ending by being true to herself

Ever After
Directed by Andy Tennant (20th Century Fox, 1998)
A playful account of “Cinderella” presenting
Ella as a forceful heroine

Faerie Tale Theatre
Presented by Shelley Duvall, multiple episodes
(Playhouse Home Video, 1982—1987)
An inspired, witty television series depicting
numerous fairy tales

Hoodwinked
Directed by Corey Edwards, Todd Edwards and
Tony Leech (The Weinstein Company, 2005)
A fractured fairy tale version of “Little Red Riding Hood”
told from conflicting points of view

Sleeping Beauty
Directed by Clyde Geronimi
(Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 1959)
The classic, animated version from
Walt Disney Studios

A lot of what
we’ve written
comes from our
own feelings about
parenthood.

—writers/performers Valerie Vigoda
and Brendan Milburn

ABOUT P.L.A.Y.

Now in its 36th year, Performing for Los Angeles Youth (P.L.A.Y.) is Center Theatre Group's award-winning youth theatre and theatre education program. P.L.A.Y. serves more than 35,000 young people, teachers and families annually through a variety of performances, residencies, discount ticket programs and innovative educational experiences. P.L.A.Y. offers programs that allow young people, teachers and families to attend productions at the Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson and Kirk Douglas Theatres for low or no cost. P.L.A.Y. is dedicated to artistic excellence and innovation in its theatrical productions and to the development of young people's skills and creativity through the exploration of theatre, its literature, art and imagination.

ANNENBERG MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Now in its third year, the Annenberg Middle School Program is an enrollment-based educational partnership that provides exemplary long-term theatre arts education over a three-year period. It is aligned with state standards and is a model of student and teacher participation and theatre education innovation. Participating students see theatre performances accompanied by a sequential curriculum in theatre arts and English-language arts. This year, Annenberg Program schools are attending *13* and *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*.

PERFORMING FOR LOS ANGELES YOUTH

Corey Madden, Producing Director
Celeste Thompson, Department Manager
Kimiko Broder, Educational Programs Manager
Rachel Fain, Editorial Manager
Dan Harper, Educational Programs Associate and Annenberg Middle School Program Manager
Emily Weisberg, Educational Programs Associate
Jennifer Hartmann, Education Services Agent
Kate Coltun, Production Supervisor

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Brendan Milburn, Valerie Vigoda, Jeff Calhoun, Amy Dunkleberger, John Glore and Howie Davidson.

DISCOVERY GUIDE CREDITS

Laura Lee McKay, Writer
Rachel Fain, Managing Editor
Jean Kling, Proofreader
Charity Capili, Graphic Designer

Classic fairytale illustrations
by **Arthur Rackham**, from the book
The Sleeping Beauty by C.S. Evans
(The Viking Press, 1920).



FUNDER CREDITS

Performing for Los Angeles Youth receives generous support from the Center Theatre Group Affiliates, a volunteer organization dedicated to bringing innovative theatre and creative education to the young people of Los Angeles.

Major support is provided by the Annenberg Foundation.

Additional support for P.L.A.Y. is provided by the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California, The Sascha Brastoff Foundation, the Brotman Foundation of California, Citibank, The Dana Foundation, the James A. Doolittle Foundation, the Lawrence P. Frank Foundation, The Rosalinde and Arthur Gillbert Foundation, The Green Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Education Endowment, the Walter Lantz Foundation, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, the Music Center Fund for the Performing Arts, the Kenneth T. & Eileen L. Norris Foundation, the Dwight Stuart Youth Foundation, Target, the Weingart Foundation, Wells Fargo and the Zolla Family Foundation.



L.A.'s Theatre Company



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
City of Los Angeles



WRITE TO US

We hope that this Discovery Guide is fun to use and increases your enjoyment of *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*. Please write to let us know what you liked, what you didn't and any suggestions you have. We are writing for you, so we need to know what you think! You can write to us at:

P.L.A.Y./Center Theatre Group
601 W. Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

P.L.A.Y.

PERFORMING FOR LOS ANGELES YOUTH



Take the whole family to the theatre and go home talking! And humming!

Target Family Performances

LIVE THEATRE BRINGS a particular joy and excitement unmatched anywhere. With a wide range of stories and styles, there's a play for everyone this season at the Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson and Kirk Douglas Theatres. Center Theatre Group's P.L.A.Y. has chosen these special shows for your family to enjoy together. A new musical and a classic drama! In addition to the plays, take advantage of online Discovery Guides and post-show activities.

Twelve Angry Men

A lone dissenter holds up the jury in the case of a boy accused of killing his father.

Sunday, April 1, 2007, 2pm, Ahmanson Theatre
Age 11+

Sleeping Beauty Wakes

You think your parents are overprotective? A 21st century spin on the fairy tale, set to music by GrooveLily.

Saturday, April 21, 2007, 2pm, Kirk Douglas Theatre

Have questions?

Call Audience Services at 213.628.2772 or check out the parent guide on our website.

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