Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors’ production of From Hair to Eternity. We are offering this study guide as a way to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production. Included in this guide are a synopsis of our story, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, as well as some audience protocol reminders. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production. Thank you for your interest in and support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you soon!

History and Synopsis

Jacob Grimm, born in 1785, and Wilhelm Grimm, born in 1786, were two of nine children born to Philipp and Dorothea Grimm in Hanau, Germany in the last two decades of the 18th century. They spent their lives as librarians, linguists, and folklorists. Between 1812 and 1814, they published two collections of fairy tales numbering 200 in total. These collections have since become known as Grimms’ Fairy Tales, the most famous of which have been the basis for countless books, plays, and films ever since. Titles from the Grimm collection that still spark the imagination of children today include Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Rumpelstiltskin, Beauty and the Beast, Rapunzel, and Hansel and Gretel.

Our story begins as the Narrator introduces the Farmer and his Wife, who are happy with the news of a baby on the way. The evil and jealous Tula enters and entices the farmer’s wife with enchanted radishes. Tula declares that the radishes were laced with a spell and the farmers must give the newborn over to Tula or face dire consequences. The farmers sadly agree to the witch’s demands. The girl is born, christened Rapunzel, and relinquished to Tula.

Rapunzel spends sixteen years in a forest tower before garnering the courage to ask Tula permission to leave. Tula refuses the request. A Prince is riding through the forest when he spies the tower with the beautiful maiden inside. He observes the enchantress leaving the tower by
Rapunzel's long, blonde locks and decides to try and meet the girl. He succeeds in climbing the golden hair and begins a clandestine relationship with Rapunzel. The Prince races to tell his parents, the King and Queen, about his new found love. They are less than thrilled with Rapunzel, since she is a mere commoner. Nevertheless, the King suggests that the Prince offer Rapunzel a series of scarves in order to create a ladder with which Rapunzel can escape her doorless tower. The plan is going well until Tula gets wise to the scheme. As punishment for trying to escape, Rapunzel is banished from the tower, but not before Tula curses her by cutting her long locks into the dreaded “Mullet of Doom!”

After offering some dry stand-up comedy, the Prince returns to the tower to visit Rapunzel, only to find that Tula has taken her place. Tula summons a gust of wind and the Prince falls from the tower, landing in rose bushes and losing his sight. Tula realizes she is stuck in the tower after the Prince fell with the hair and scarf ladder in hand.

While banished to wander the kingdom for eternity, Rapunzel meets the Farmer and his Wife and learns that they are her parents. Rapunzel enters the forest to pick some berries and surprisingly spies the Prince wandering aimlessly. They share their awful stories of Tula and profess their true love for each other. This causes the Prince to regain his sight and Rapunzel to lose her Mullet of Doom. The pair are married and all live happily ever after.

**Cast of Characters**

**Narrator**, the storyteller

**Rapunzel**, the heroine in need of rescue

**Farmer**, Rapunzel’s father

**Prince**, the hero and a poor comedian

**Wife**, Rapunzel’s mother

**King**, the Prince’s father

**Tula**, a witch and Rapunzel’s captor

**Queen**, the Prince’s mother

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSION (PRE-PERFORMANCE)**

1. *How many of you have experienced a live dramatic performance? What did you see?*

2. *What are some of the differences between seeing a live performance and watching television or going to a movie?*

   • Theater features live actors on stage. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.

   • The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the proper times. The success of the play often depends on the audience.

   • The atmosphere of a live performance is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.

   • It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.

   • Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they play.

   • There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.
3. Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:

- Box Office
- Acts & Scenes
- Producer
- Program
- Costumes
- Props
- Director
- Stage
- Curtain Call
- Stagehand
- Lobby
- Usher
- Musical Theater
- Orchestra Pit
- Playwright
- Scenery
- Makeup
- Actor
- Balcony
- Cue
- Play

4. Introduce your students to the following terms found in our story:

- bestow
- dastardly
- coddle
- altercation
- irrevocable
- dull
- reluctant
- confinement
- steed
- curious
- intrigue
- weave
- eclipse
- primp
- adieu
- nonsense
- far-fetched
- representation
- maiden
- reasonable
- acquaint
- courtship
- eloquent
- rash
- nincompoop
- nuptials
- clockwork
- circumference
- shoddy
- nonexistent
- exhausting
- resound
- artificial
- abysmal
- appalling
- desperate
- wrack
- schmaltz

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable. Lights may go out before the performance begins and seating is very difficult after that time.

- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.

- Try your best to remain in your seat once the performance has begun. There is no intermission during the performance of From Hair to Eternity, which is 50 minutes in length.

- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.

- Sing or participate if and only if you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.

- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song, dance, or joke.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES (POST- PERFORMANCE)

1. Write an Epilogue: Predict what happened next in the story. Write an article in which you tell the readers what happened after the Prince and Rapunzel get married. What happened to the other characters in the story? Be as specific as possible and keep with the spirit of the original story.

2. Discuss real life situations that reflect the moral in From Hair to Eternity.

   a) Ask the children what important traits they value in another person, their friends, parents, teachers, coaches? Why is it important to cultivate inner beauty? What is meant by the phrase “beauty is fleeting (vain)”?
b) Discuss the lessons we can learn from the villain, Tula. Why should we not envy others? How does contentment lead to happiness? Share some healthy ways in which we can achieve what we want in life—hard work, saving, helping others, being honest and fair.

c) Reflect on the characters in the play. Ask your students which character they identify with the most. Why? List positive and negative traits of each character. What might each character do to improve his or her flaws?

3. **Music:** Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music were used? Identify musical instruments that were played. Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings? When a play is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some? A musical costs much more to produce. Can you name some additional expenses? (e.g., orchestra, a practice piano, a score, a choreographer, etc.)

4. **Sets:** Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Suggest a simple scene (a farm, a school yard, a classroom, a shopping center, a neighborhood, a city street, a castle, an amusement park, a forest) and ask students to describe a basic set for the scene.

5. **Costumes:** What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (historical accuracy, sewing, theatrical effects, knowledge of fabric, etc.)? Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

6. **Art activities:**
   - Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
   - Draw a picture of what the audience might look like from on-stage.
   - Re-create a scene from the play using clay forms in a box.
   - Design a program cover for the play using the title, date, and an illustration inspired by the play.
   - Draw an advertisement for the play.
   - Create a tower for Rapunzel!

7. **Language arts:**
   - Choose a character that you liked and write a one-day's diary for that character. Write a letter to a cast member telling what you liked about her or his character.
   - Discuss the play. Was there a hero or heroine? A villain? The setting? Was there a moral to the story?
   - In 25 words or fewer, describe the plot of the play.
   - Discuss the work of a movie or theater critic. Write a newspaper-type review of the play.
   - Read the original fairy tale from a Brothers’ Grimm collection. Expand that into other Grimm stories. Assign various stories for the students to read and investigate.

8. **Theater**
   - Discuss live theater. Are the actors aware of the audience? Why might an actor change his presentation because of audience reaction? Would it be easy to be an actor? Conduct an interview with a classmate pretending to be one of the actors and discover the actor’s feelings about being on stage, memorization, rehearsals, costumes, audience, etc.
• Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play (director, actors, musicians, author, designers—set, costumes, lights, sound—stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc). What do these different jobs contribute to the theatrical production?

9. History

• Research the history of fairy tales. Discuss oral and folk tradition in the dissemination of fairy tales.
• Research the history and biography of the Brothers Grimm.

Resources

Books


Internet

The story of Rapunzel: https://germanstories.vcu.edu/grimm/rapunzel_e.html
Information about the Grimm Brothers: https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html
A list of over 200 Grimm fairy tales: http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmtales.html
Classroom fairy tale activity guide: http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/tguide/

Much of this material is contributed with the kind permission of the *Cincinnati Children’s Theater, Pioneer Drama Service*, and *Plays for Young Audiences*. This study guide was compiled by Billie J. Little, a former Board member of New Mexico Young Actors, Inc., and Paul Bower, Executive Director of NMYA.