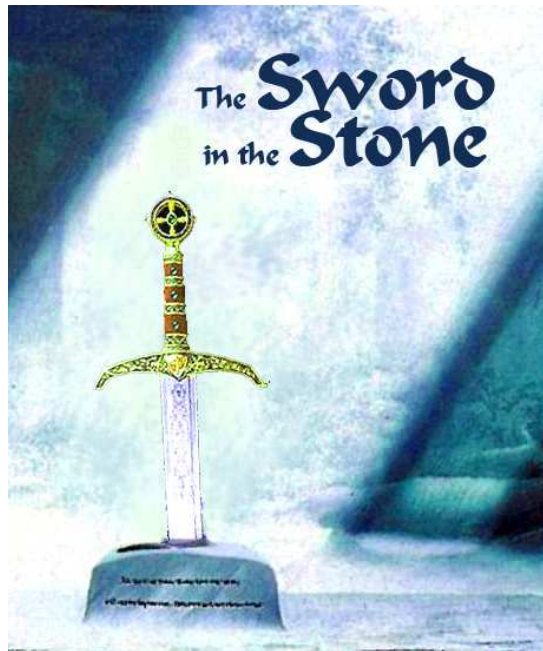


Timber Lake Playhouse Presents



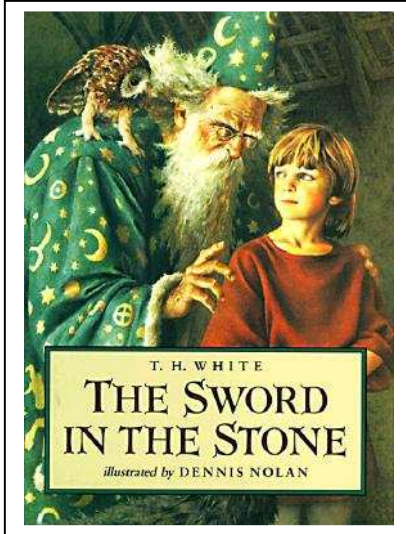
Preview Guide for Teachers and Parents

May 8-11, 2011

TIMBER LAKE PLAYHOUSE
www.timberlakeplayhouse.org

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

A Little Background



About *The Sword in the Stone* (the book!)

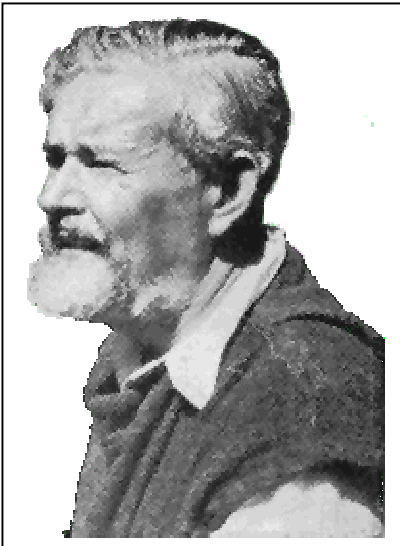
Timber Lake Playhouse presents *The Sword in the Stone*, adapted from the novel by T. H. White published in 1939. TLP gives you the unique page-to-stage experience with this story that makes up the first part of White's tales of King Arthur he collected in his series of books, *The Once and Future King*. The source material has inspired countless other books, films, plays, television production and two Broadway musicals over the last 75 years. Walt Disney Productions adapted the story to an animated film, and the BBC adapted it to radio.

The novel is about a boy named Wart who befriends a magician named Merlyn. As most readers will realize all along, but is only confirmed at the end, Wart is actually the future King Arthur. The

title refers to the sword that was magically embedded in a stone so that only the future, true-born king of England would be able to remove it.

The premise is that Arthur's youth, not dealt with in Malory, was a time when he was tutored by Merlyn to prepare him for the use of power and royal life. Merlyn magically turns Wart into various animals at times. He also has more human adventures, at one point meeting the outlaw Robin Hood. The setting is loosely based on medieval England, and in places it incorporates White's considerable knowledge of medieval culture (as in relation to hunting, falconry and jousting). However it makes no attempt at consistent historical accuracy, and incorporates some obvious anachronisms (aided by the concept that Merlyn lives backwards in time rather than forwards, unlike everyone else).

About the Author of the Book, T.H. White



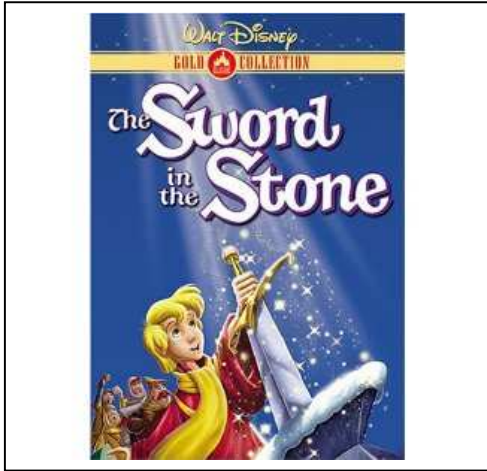
Full Name: Terence Hanbury White

T. H. White was born on **May 29, 1906** in Bombay, India, where his father was a member of the Indian Civil Service, and was educated at Cheltenham and Queen's College, Cambridge. He was an English master at Stowe School from 1930 to 1936, and while there, completed his first real critical success, *England Have My Bones*, which was an autobiographical account of his country life.

He afterward devoted himself exclusively to writing and to studying such obscure subjects as the Arthurian legends, which were to provide the material for his books. White was reclusive by nature, often isolating himself for long periods from human society, and spending his time hunting, fishing, and looking after his often strange collection of pets.

He was a novelist, a satirist, and a social historian who probably was best known for his brilliant adaptation of Sir Thomas Malory's 15th-century romance, *Morte d'Arthur*, into the quartet of novels called *The Once and Future King*. He wrote books about hunting and other sports, a detective novel, books of adventure and fantasy, and many short stories and poems. He published a book of poems while still at Cambridge (*Loved Helen and Other Poems*), and continued to write poetry throughout his life. He died on **January 17, 1964** aboard ship in Piraeus (Athens), Greece while returning home from his American lecture tour. His last book, *America At Last*, which was published after his death, records the tour.

The Sword in the Stone DISNEY MOVIE!



The Sword in the Stone is an American animated fantasy comedy film produced by Walt Disney and originally released to theaters on **December 25, 1963**. The eighteenth animated feature in the Walt Disney Animated Classics, it was the last Disney animated feature released while Walt Disney was alive. It is part of the "English Cycle" of Disney animated films, which include *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, *The Jungle Book*, *Robin Hood*, *The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh*, *The Great Mouse Detective*.

Questions from the Movie:

- * Where did Merlin go on vacation to?
- * What was NOT a symptom of Madam Mim's virus?
- * What is the name of Merlin's owl?
- * What did everybody call Arthur?
- * What was the direction from Merlin's house to the castle?



The Sword in the Stone
at Disneyland in California

Different Types of Medieval Swords



single edge

The different types of Medieval swords ranged from the smallest Broadsword measuring from 30 inches to the Greatswords which measured up to 72 inches. The weight of Medieval swords are usually presumed to be a lot heavier than they actually were! Facts and a description of the different types of Medieval swords follow.

The Broadsword - The earliest of the Medieval swords from the 6th Century. The Broadsword had a two-edged blade measuring 2-3 inches wide at the base and tapering to a point. The length of the Broadsword ranged from 30 - 45 inches and weighed between 3 - 5 pounds

The Falchion Sword - A Falchion sword was favored by some Medieval Knights who had been on Crusade. This sword was similar to a heavy scimitar. The Medieval Falchion swords had a short, heavy blade with a

The Greatsword - The Greatswords were large two-handed swords. The length of the Greatsword ranged from 50 to 72 inches, with a handle that measured 18 - 21 inches in additional length. Greatswords weighed between 6 - 10 pounds. The Greatsword featured an extended handle that allowed the blade to be used in two hands

The Longsword - Longswords are also known as Hand and a Half swords. The length of the Longsword ranged from 44 to 50 inches in length.

The Scimitar - The scimitar was a type of sword most commonly associated with the Saracens in the Holy Land who fought against the Crusaders. Scimitars had a distinct curved blade ending with a sharp point

The Cutting sword - These swords were at first used by early Medieval Knights and were also particularly favored by the Vikings. A slashing stroke would be used but this became ineffective against heavy body armor.

Source: <http://www.middle-ages.org.uk/medieval-swords.htm>



About Timber Lake Playhouse

- ☆ The actors and actresses you will see in the performance were hired in nationally through theatre conferences or through private auditions in New York or Chicago. Some of the actors and actresses you see in the performance will be staying at Timber Lake Playhouse ALL SUMMER to be in many of our shows! They will live in cabins behind the theatre.
- ☆ Timber Lake Playhouse was founded in 1961 by Andy Bro and Donald MacKay. TLP is a not-for-profit summer theatre with a Board of Directors of 15 people.
- ☆ Timber Lake Playhouse has many alumni that went on to do great things. Famous actress Jennifer Garner spent a summer at Timber Lake Playhouse as an intern!

Before you go to the play...

A Little Bit About Theater Etiquette...

Whether going to the theater or having theater come to you, there are a few important things to communicate to your students before seeing a play. 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.
- ☆ Please do not grab an actor's costume if they come close to you.
- ☆ Remember that the performers can hear and see the audience just like the audience can hear and see the performers. Be respectful to the performers and other people in the audience by not talking during the performance, unless the actors ask you a question...then it's ok to answer.
- ☆ Appropriate responses such as clapping or laughter are always welcome!
- ☆ Please, please, please turn off all cell phones and remember photography of any kind is not permitted in the theater!

THE SWORD IN THE STONE LESSON PLAN

For grades 6-8. Source: <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/tales-king-arthur#sect-activities>

Activity 1. Setting the Stage

Begin the lesson by asking who has heard of King Arthur. Discuss with students to determine how much they know about him and what sources—movies, books, and so on—inform their ideas. Then ask whether they think King Arthur was a real person. (Most people believe he was mythical.) Explain that the stories about Arthur are based upon the exploits of a chieftain who really lived many centuries ago. Discuss the background material provided at the beginning of this lesson plan, stressing how the stories evolved and changed over the years. You might want to create a timeline on the board to help the students better understand the chronology. Indicate the period of the Middle Ages (from the 5th century to the 15th), and then point out when the "real" Arthur lived and when the major versions of the legend appeared.

Next, locate the geographical setting of the stories. Access the map of Europe available through Labyrinth and locate southwestern England. Explain that this is where the battles were fought between the Celts and the Saxons in the 6th century. Now go to Anglo-Saxon England in 10th century also available through Labyrinth. Find Winchester and Glastonbury. These cities are closely connected with the legend of King Arthur. Note how closely southern England lies to France. This is where the Saxons crossed the Channel to invade England during the Dark Ages. (William the Conqueror took the same route in 1066!) The proximity of the two countries also encouraged the spread of the tales from Britain to France.

Now that the students have a general idea of the setting behind the evolution of the tales of King Arthur and where they took place, tell them they will be reading and sharing opinions about some of the more famous episodes.

Activity 2. The Sword in the Stone

In this activity the students will read together a passage describing how Arthur became king taken from *King Arthur's Knights* by Henry Gilbert. Like many tales derived from folklore, the stories of King Arthur are a blend of history and fantasy. As the students read this passage, they should think about which aspects seem realistic and which are more fanciful or unrealistic.

Access Gilbert's King Arthurs Knights Chapter 1 available through Internet Public Library. Gilbert's book, published in 1911, was intended to offer a more "kid-friendly" version of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. It is indeed a gripping, beautifully written version of the legend, but because the style and vocabulary can present a challenge for modern students, you might consider having passages read aloud as a group under your guidance. If you do so, consider pausing after each paragraph or two to discuss specific images, characters, or events. You should write any difficult words on the board and explain their meanings.

Begin by calling upon a student or students to read aloud up to the paragraph that begins "As it neared the feast of Christmas." Remind the class that the Saxons were tribesmen who invaded England in the 6th century (when the "real" King Arthur lived). Point out that "pagans" were non-Christians. (You might

use this word to begin your vocabulary list on the board.) After this section has been read, ask for a volunteer to explain the meaning of the red and white dragons.

Select students to continue reading the text, ending at the paragraph that begins "So that the kings and lords should be kept together..." Then ask what event in this passage seems most unrealistic or fanciful. (The sudden appearance of the sword in the stone.) Doesn't this add a measure of suspense that makes one want to read further?

Read together the rest of the passage. Then ask the students their opinion of the character of Sir Kay. What causes him to confess that he has lied. (Remember the influence of the Christian church in the stories.) Once he realizes he is king, what promise does Arthur make to Sir Kay? What does this tell about Arthur's character? View an illustration of this famous scene by accessing Arthur Draws the Sword from the Stone available through Labyrinth.

Next, arrange the students in groups. Hand out a copy of the chart History/Fantasy in the Tales of King Arthur available in pdf format to each group. Instruct the students to discuss in their groups the story they have just read. They should select four elements of the story that seem realistic and note these in the first column of their chart. Then they should consider elements that seem unreal, magical, or mythical, noting them down in the second column of the chart. After all the charts have been completed, call upon a volunteer from each group to describe realistic and one fanciful element appearing on the group chart. Ask students to discuss what effect including fantastic elements has on the story. How does it both add to and detract from Arthur's legitimacy as king? What is the general effect of mixing realistic and non-realistic elements?

(More activities at the website provided.)

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

How did u like the play? What were your favorite parts?

Who was your favorite character?

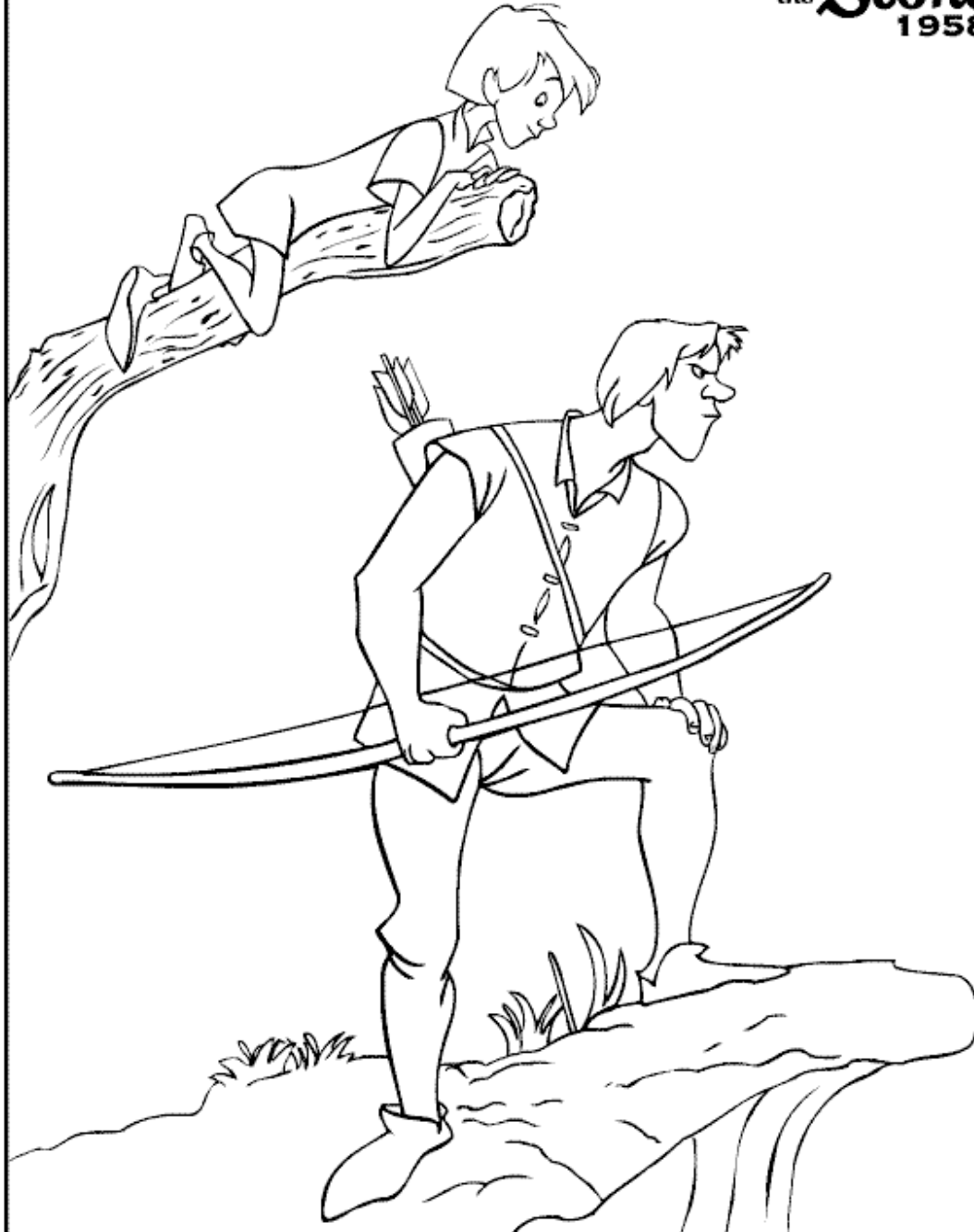
**Send us your response at
Timber Lake Playhouse
8215 Black Oak Rd
Mount Carroll, IL 61053**

OR email boxoffice@timberlakeplayhouse.org

PRINT
CENTER

Disney
COLLECTORS
SERIES

The **Sword**
in the
Stone
1958



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ACTIVITIES

ARTHUR & SIR KAY

VOL. 8