



**THEATER
COMPANY**

1973 **50** YEARS 2023

SPELLS OF the Sea

A NEW MUSICAL



World Premiere by special arrangement with Megan Ann Rasmussen Productions

Book, music, and lyrics by **Guinevere Govea**
with additional creative contributions by **Anna Pickett**

Based on the podcast created by Guinevere Govea

Directed by Julia Flood | Music Direction by Deborah Wicks La Puma

INTERACTIVE LEARNING GUIDE

This guide is for educators, parents, guardians, and caregivers. You name it - you can use it!

This guide is filled with activities and conversation starters that can be used before or after your visit to the theater. Whether you are an educator, parent, or caregiver, the materials inside have been curated to extend the experience with this show.

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TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

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with Common Core, Missouri GLE and National Core Arts Standards

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SYNOPSIS

Finley Frankfurter is a 15-year-old fisherwoman who is terrible at fishing. H.S. Crank is a grumpy old lighthouse keeper who has been sitting for 20 years in the dark. Together, this unlikely pair begins an adventure through the ocean to find the Elixir of Life, an elusive remedy that may save Finley's father from a mysterious illness. On their journey, the pair encounter mermaids and pirates, whirlpools and their worst fears, and finally a new understanding of the meaning of family, friendship, and belief in yourself.

Guinevere "Gweny" Govea began *Spells of the Sea* in quarantined isolation and, with Anna Pickett, developed it into a podcast during the pandemic. Now, this unique tale breathes new life on the stage in this world premiere!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Guinevere Govea

Guinevere Govea (she/her) is an award-winning actress, writer, and composer from Austin, Texas. She is a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Austin, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in theatre and dance as well as a bachelor's degree in journalism. Guinevere's first musical, *Trash! The Musical*, was a semi-finalist for the O'Neil National Musical Theatre Conference in 2021. Her second, *Spells of the Sea*, won Best Original Script at the B. Iden Payne Awards in Austin. Recent acting credits include "Seph" in the short film *Summa Culpa Laude* (dir. Echo Nguyen), which she won Best Actress for at the ATX Short Film Festival, "Anne Steele" in *Sense and Sensibility* (UT Theatre and Dance), and multiple roles in network television and commercials. Guinevere currently works as a marketing and communications consultant for The Alchemy Theatre in Austin.



Anna Pickett

Anna Pickett (she/her) is thrilled to be working with Metro Theater Company for this production! After directing the original podcast version of *Spells of the Sea*, she is excited to help bring the piece to life onstage. She is a theater-maker and educator originally from Dallas, Texas. Her focus involves creating immersive and impactful experiences for children and families, both in theatrical and museum settings. She holds a Bachelor of Science in applied learning and development from the University of Texas at Austin.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR



Julia Flood

Julia Flood became artistic director of Metro Theater Company in February 2014 and has directed more than a dozen productions during her tenure. Prior to her move to St. Louis, she spent 16 years as artistic director of Eckerd Theater Company, a nationally touring Theater for Young Audiences (TYA) company in Florida and many years as a freelance actor, director, teaching artist, and playwright. A graduate of Northwestern University, Julia was a resident member of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, an artist-led ensemble founded under the guidance and artistic direction of legendary acting teacher Alvina Krause, for seven years. Julia is passionate about the power of theater to change the course of a young person's life, and about developing and encouraging new voices in the theater. She has commissioned, produced, and directed many new plays, including the AATE Award-winning play *The Girl Who Swallowed a Cactus* by Broadway playwright Eric Coble, which was developed as part of New Visions/New Voices 2018 at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, and now *Spells of the Sea* which she directed in a workshop at the Pegasus PlayLab at University of Central Florida in 2022. Julia served on the national board of Theatre for Young Audiences/USA from 2011 until 2019 and continues to work to support the national field of TYA.



Photo by Jennifer A. Lin



SOUNDS OF THE SEA

Music and sound play a critical role in *Spells of the Sea*. Discuss the musical elements and sound effects your students remember from the play. Invite them to bring an environment to life using their voices and imaginations.

EXAMPLE ENVIRONMENTS

The beach, a classroom, a playground - or use a photograph to inspire a soundscape!

- Ask students to share what they might see and hear in the chosen environment (e.g. kids playing in the sand and waves crashing).
- Ask students to sit in a circle and let them know that you are going to step into the role as the Music Director, who brings all the musical components together to bring the environment to life through sound.
- Model some example sounds: clapping hands, blowing wind, rushing water, etc.
- Point to a student to let them know that it is their turn to add in a sound.
- One at a time, students will add a sound to the soundscape and commit to their sound throughout the activity.
- Select hand cues to represent louder, softer, and stop.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What was the experience like?
- What sounds stood out?
- What sounds were surprising?



MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS LS1B K-8 :
Demonstrate listening behaviors LS2A K-8
Share ideas or experiences verbally or using communication systems

MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS LS1B K-8:
Demonstrate listening behaviors

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS ANCHOR STANDARD 1:
Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.



TONGUE TWISTERS

In the play, Finley teaches the pirates a tongue twister that her father used to say. A tongue twister is a series of words that may be tricky to say correctly. Tongue twisters use alliteration. Alliteration is when two or more words that start with the same sound are used repeatedly.

The *Spells of the Sea* tongue twister:

***FIE, WHAT A FICKLE FEELING FERMENTED FOR FEAR OF FEELING
FOOLISH FEAR THAT FROZE THAT FEELING FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS
FIX THE FRIGHT AND FREE THE FEELS BY FEELING FIVE TIMES FAST
AND FRUSTRATION, FEAR AND FORMER FEELINGS WILL FALL FAR AND FAST***

Your turn to try! Here are some tongue twisters that will surely help you set sail!

- A sailor went to sea to see what he could see. And all he could see was sea, sea, sea.
- Fresh fried fish, fish fresh fried, fried fish fresh, fish fried fresh.
- She sells seashells by the seashore.
- Toy boat, toy boat, toy boat, toy boat, toy boat.

Make your own tongue twister!

Write a sentence or phrase that uses words that start with the same sound.

HINT: Try using words that start with the same letter.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS ANCHOR STANDARD 5:

Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. TH:Pr5.1.3. a. Participate in a variety of physical, vocal, and cognitive exercises that can be used in a group setting for drama/theatre work.

K-12 ELA MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS: GRADE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS –

GRADE 3: 2.: Theatre Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. TH:Re8.1.3. c. Examine how connections are made between oneself and a character's emotions in drama/theatre work.



DIVING FOR DIFFERENCES

During the *Spells of the Sea*, Finley, Crank, and the townspeople all have strong opinions about themselves and others, but as time passes those opinions shift and change. Take some time to work with your students to see what opinions they might have!

Inform students that there is an imaginary line on the floor that represents a spectrum. Explain that one end of the line represents “agree” and the other is “disagree.” You will read a series of statements. The students will position themselves on the line depending on the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statement. After reading a statement, call upon students to share why they are positioned at different points of the spectrum.



1. I prefer cats over dogs.
2. I think people are good at listening to each other.
3. I believe that a family is made up of people who are blood-related.
4. It's easy to control your emotions.
5. Older people are braver than younger people.
6. You must keep trying when something is difficult.

Remind students that their opinions may be different than others. It is important that they respect each other's thoughts. They may not agree, and that is okay, but they must be kind to each other.

MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS THEATRE SCOPE – GRADE 3:

Anchor Standard 10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. a. Use personal experiences and knowledge to make connections to community and culture in a drama/theatre work.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:

Theatre Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. TH:Re8.1.3. c. Examine how connections are made between oneself and a character's emotions in drama/theatre work.



THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER



H.S. Crank is the lighthouse keeper of the Old Town Lighthouse. A lighthouse is a tall building that has a light near the top. They are built on the coast of an ocean or lake. A lighthouse protects ships from crashing into the shore by shining light out towards the sea. If that light is turned off, it may no longer be safe for those ships to set sail.

H.S. Crank decides to look out for Finley on their adventure. He protects her, gives her advice, and keeps her company on the search for the Elixir of Life. By doing so, he is acting as a lighthouse for her on the journey.

How are you like a lighthouse for the people in your life?

Ask students to take time to write about how they are Lighthouse Keepers in their community, or ways they might try to be a Lighthouse Keeper moving forward. Students can share their work with the class, in a small group, or in partners!

K-12 ELA MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS: GRADE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS – GRADE 3: 2. Compose well-developed writing texts for audience and purpose. C. Write fiction or non-fiction narratives and poems that: c. develop sensory details.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS THEATRE ANCHOR STANDARD 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. TH:Re8.1.3. c. Examine how connections are made between oneself and a character's emotions in drama/theatre work.



MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Finley goes on an adventure and learns about the power of believing in herself. Sometimes it helps to remind ourselves that we are capable of greatness! Write a message to yourself and open it at the end of the school year. You may use the questions and prompts below to help you get started!

K-12 ELA MISSOURI LEARNING STANDARDS: GRADE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS – GRADE 3:
2. Compose well-developed writing texts for audience and purpose. C. Write fiction or non-fiction narratives and poems that: a. establish a situation/topic based on the student's experience or imagination.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:
Theatre Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. TH:Cn10.1.3. a. Use personal experiences and knowledge to make connections to community and culture in a drama/theatre work.

1. What is one thing you'd like to accomplish this year?
2. Describe how you feel right now and what you enjoy doing.
3. What are you most proud of in your life so far? What do you want to be proud of at the end of this school year?
4. Write 3 things you like about yourself. What are your strengths?
5. Give your future self some encouragement and love!

OPTIONAL: Cut out the students' bottle along the dotted line, fold flap over answers, and hang in the classroom!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. What character in *Spells of the Sea* do you relate to the most and why?
2. The playwright, Gwenny Govea, created *Spells of the Sea* in the spring of 2020 during the COVID-19 outbreak. Did you try any new hobbies or skills during that time? If so, what were they?
3. Many people help Finley during her quest for the Elixir of Life. Can you think of a time someone else helped you solve a problem? How did they help? Have you ever helped someone else solve a problem?
4. In *Spells of the Sea*, the pirates take other people's feelings because they have a hard time feeling their own feelings. Have you ever had a hard time expressing how you feel? How did you work through that?
5. Crank has a difficult time coping after the loss of his daughter, Pearl. Have you ever had to let go of something? What was that experience like? What are some ways that can help with processing loss?
6. Do you think H.S. Crank and Finley could be considered family?
7. Is there someone in your life who isn't blood-related that you consider family? What do you admire about that person?
8. How is the town different at the end of the play when compared to the start of the play?



RESOURCES FOR READERS AND EDUCATORS

SPELLS OF THE SEA PODCAST LINKS

Website

<https://www.spellofthesea.com/>

Instagram

<https://instagram.com/spellofthesea?igshid=YmMyMTA2M2Y=>

Podcast on Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/show/4mQtZycqtx2VYMBunN4Ofi?si=05dcf582f9064b2a>



TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT SELF-IMAGE

ReachOut

<https://parents.au.reachout.com/common-concerns/everyday-issues/self-esteem-and-teenagers>

Kidshealth

<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/body-image.html>

TALKING TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT GRIEF

TherapyWorks

<https://mytherapyworks.com/grieving-children>

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St. Louis, Missouri 63103
P: 314.932.7414 F: 314.932.7434

metroplays.org

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

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