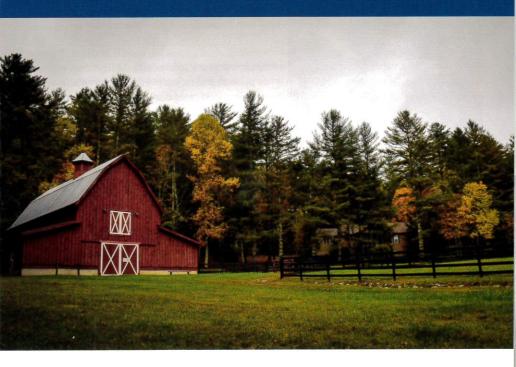
CHARLOTTE'S WEB



STUDY GUIDE

Jessa Cunningham, Dramaturg

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Dramaturg's Note: The Value of Friendship

Who is or was your best friend growing up? What made that friendship so special to you? Why was that friendship so important for you to have?

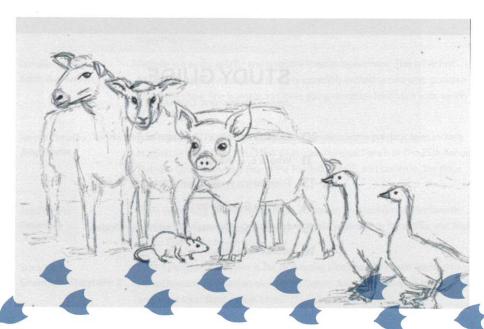
For Wilbur in Charlotte's Web, the answers to these questions are simple. Wilbur learns what it means to be a true friend from his relationship with Charlotte and the other animals on Zuckerman's farm

When Wilbur first arrives at Zuckerman's, he longs for someone to play with. As he meets each animal, he sees how they band together in times of need, and he adopts this compassion and cooperation into his own life. Above all, he learns to love and care for others as Charlotte and the other animals loved and cared for him. In the end, his new friends offer more than a cure for his loneliness. They help him strengthen his character.

Directors Shawnda and Bradley Moss want to stress this effect of friendship on all of the characters. Every animal, from loving Charlotte to independent Templeton, has their life touched by friendship. I mean, this motley crew of a family evolves into a closer knit group just from the arrival of some pig! As you watch this play, pay attention to each animal and see how their interactions change as the show progresses. How have their countenances changed because of the love that was fostered between them?

At the end of the show, ask yourself these questions: How have you changed because of friendship in your life? Which of the friendships in the play remind you of you and your best friend? Like the animals, are there ways you could improve your friendship?

-Jessa Cunningham, Dramaturg

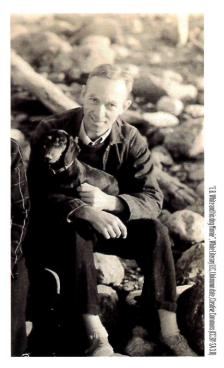


Who is E. B. White?

Elwyn Brooks White was born July 11, 1899, in Mount Vernon, New York. He was the youngest of six children of Samuel Tilly White and Jessie Hart White. Though he was a shy boy, he found his voice through

Young E. B. White started out writing in his journal, as well as writing letters and short poems to his older brothers. After high school, White went to Cornell University to study English and graduated with his degree in 1921. After many different writing jobs all over the country, White decided to go back to New York. He started writing at The New Yorker, which is where he met his wife, Katharine Angell White. After the birth of their son Joel, the Whites decided to move to a farm in Maine.

This farm would hold a special place in E. B. White's heart for the rest of his life and was actually his inspiration for writing Charlotte's Web! After a successful career and a happy life, E. B. White passed away on October 1, 1985. Although he mainly wrote essays and articles, White made quite a name for himself in the world of children's literature.



Enjoying Charlotte's Web? Here are some other children's books by E. B. White:

- · Stuart Little (1945): A mouse named Stuart is adopted into a family of humans, and he has all sorts of adventures as he learns to navigate his unique life.
- The Trumpet of the Swan (1970): Louis the swan trumpets like the rest of his family, but can't seem to find his voice. His family help him to find his sound and give him the happiness he deserves.

Do either of these catch your eye? If so, check them out from your local library and give them a read!



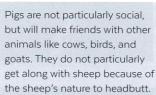
Friendships on the Farm: Matching Game

"You have been my friend. That in itself is a tremendous thing."

Like in the play, real animals create relationships with each other. Read the descriptions of each animal below and then listen closely to the play in order to match each quote to the correct animal!



4. "It will help save Wilbur's life."

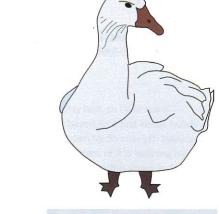


3. "How about 'terrific, terrific, terrific'?"

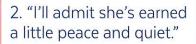


Rats are very wary of new people and animals, so they prefer to be among their own kind. They very rarely stay out in the open during the day and do most of their eating during the night so they won't be spotted.

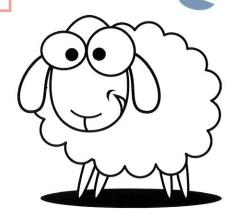
1. "It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both."



Geese are known as friendly and social animals on the farm. They get along with most livestock and other farm animals.

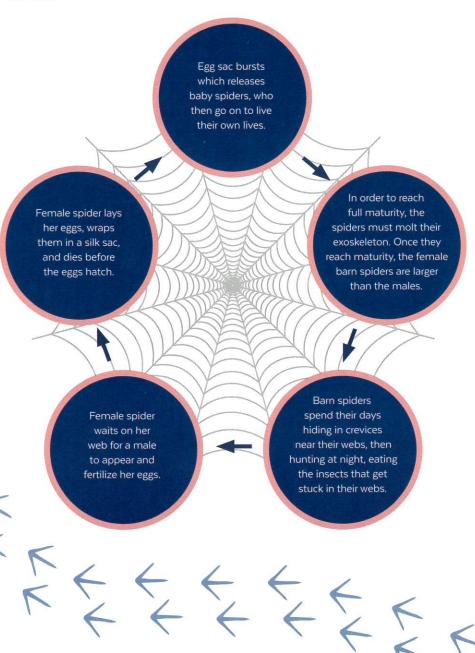


Sheep are social, herding animals, but they typically enjoy being with their own kind.



Life of a Barn Spider

Charlotte is a great friend to Wilbur. However, most barn spiders are not very social creatures. So, what do they do with their days? Check out the diagram below to see the life of an average female barn spider.



Life as a Spider: Interview with Meg Flinders

Our resident Charlotte has had to do a lot of work to become the beloved spider. I was fortunate to go see what Meg Flinders had to do for her training on the aerial silks. Afterward, we sat down to chat for a little bit about this experience of becoming Charlotte.

What is this training experience like?

Well, you obviously have to start with the basics. But we move pretty fast, so I just learn something new every time I come in, and a lot of it is progression based so it just keeps building on top of each other. I also have to do a lot of outside work on my own to do strength training because this takes a lot of strength because you get tired really fast. Most of it is learning by doing which is actually great because it's not something you can really do by reading about it. So you just have to go for it and figure it out and hope it works.

Do you feel like this is helping you understand Charlotte more?

Yeah, in a way it is. And actually it's interesting, because in the play a lot of people forget about Charlotte and the work she puts into it. They focus on the word and how it exemplifies Wilbur. They think the word is beautiful and the web is beautiful and they connect it to Wilbur and think it's great. But they forget how much Charlotte is working night after night. It's just interesting because I am not quite at the professional level yet, but watching some of these other people who can do a lot more and have routines already—it looks gorgeous and effortless. But then I try some of the basic moves and it's so hard. So it's just interesting to connect that, because by the end of the play Charlotte is really tired and worn out, so I can do method acting in that way.

What are you most excited about with the aerial silks?

I am excited to feel comfortable with it! I am excited for when it gets to the point where we can do choreography and when that choreography can help enhance the character and the show. Because I think it is going to be





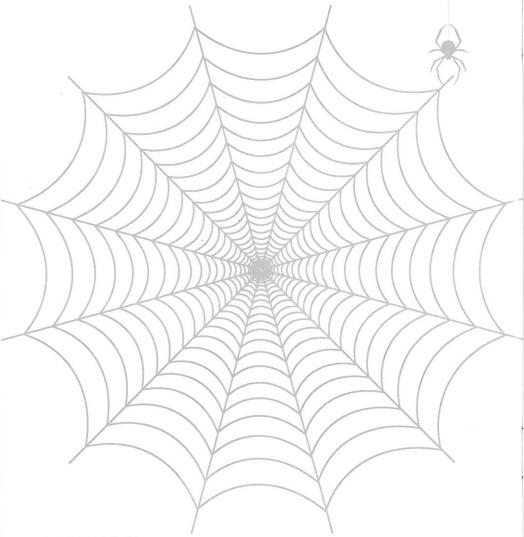
such a different experience to not be a spider walking on the ground, but to be in the air. I think it is going to affect the character a lot, which I am really excited about. It's going to help me make a lot of discoveries as well as just being really exciting to learn a new skill and have that experience of working hard to get good at it, because that's always so rewarding. I'm just really excited to see how it plays into the show and the character.

For the full interview, check out this 4th Wall post by snapping the QR code



Word in the Web

Charlotte wrote words in her web to help out her friend. Now it's your turn! Write a word to describe your best friend in your own spider web below! Or get members of the cast to autograph your web for you!



TO LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more about this production of *Charlotte's Web*? Check out The 4th Wall, BYU's dramaturgy blog: 4thwalldramaturgy.byu.edu/category/charlottes-web



PRODUCTION STAFF

Jessa Cunningham

Dramaturg

From Charleston, SC. Junior in theatre arts studies with a minor in history. Recent credits include dramaturg on the BYU Mask Club productions of *Persephone* and *Wait Until Dark*. This is her first BYU mainstage production. She feels blessed to be a part of this wonderful show working alongside such talented artists!

Michaela Fordham Makeup Designer From Dallas, TX. She is an upcoming senior in theatre arts and studying makeup design. Michaela has enjoyed designing the hair and makeup for productions at BYU such as *The Winter's Tale* and *Misalliance* and is looking forward to *Mary Poppins* in the next season. She works as the hair and makeup supervisor for the department of arts production and is so grateful for the many opportunities BYU has provided for her.

Madeline Gregersen Assistant Costume Designer From Bountiful, UT. Senior in media arts with an emphasis in production design. She helped design last year's production of *The Winter's Tale*, and has recently worked on BYU senior capstone films *Conflicted Felons* and *No Walk in the Park*.

Alecia Holmes Production Stage Manager From Cedar Hills, UT. Junior in theatre arts studies with an emphasis in stage management. Her past credits include the production stage manager of Contemporary Dance Theatre, production stage manager of *The Nightingale*, and stage manager of the doTERRA global convention.

Bradley Moss Director Bradley teaches in the theatre education program at BYU, along with being a theatre teacher at Maple Mountain High School. He has worked as a director at Hale Center Theatre Orem and Provo Theatre Company, in addition to his work as an actor at HCTO, HCTWV, Sundance Theatre, ARTE, and Mortal Fools. Bradley also just concluded his time serving as an associate director of the Hill Cumorah Pageant. He and Shawnda live in Springville and have three children.

Shawnda Moss Director Shawnda received degrees in theatre education and theatre for young audiences from BYU. She teaches in the BYU theatre education program, conducts workshops at national theatre education conferences, and serves as the Drama Academy Artistic Director for Pioneer High School for the Performing Arts. She has served as an associate director for the Hill Cumorah Pageant and as the conference administrator for the annual Utah Theatre Association theatre conference. She directs and acts on local stages whenever she can.

Marianne Ohran Lighting Designer Marianne is the assistant resident lighting designer for BYU Arts Production. She enjoys teaching and working with the lighting students, as well as designing. Recent design credits include *Princess Academy, The Diary of Anne Frank,* and *The Giver* for BYU, as well as *Snow White* and other productions for Utah Regional Ballet.

PRODUCTION STAFF (CONT.)

Marneé Porter Asst. Makeup Designer

From Provo, UT. Senior in theatre arts studies, with an emphasis in makeup design. She has been involved in many productions at BYU, which include The Count of Monte Cristo, Manon, Beauty and the Beast, and Alice in Wonderland. In addition to Charlotte's Web, Marnee' is also designing for the opera world premiere of The Lost Children of Hamelin, and is looking forward to designing for Travesties next season.

Rory Scanlon Scenic Designer

Rory completed theatre design degrees at Idaho State University, BYU, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 1984 he returned to BYU as a professor in the Department of Theatre and Media Arts. His professional credits include a range of television, film and theatre projects from Disney to the Hill Cumorah Pageant. His book Costume Design Graphics with Costume Fashion Press in New York was released in 2001. He and his wife, Deanna, have five children and eleven grandchildren.

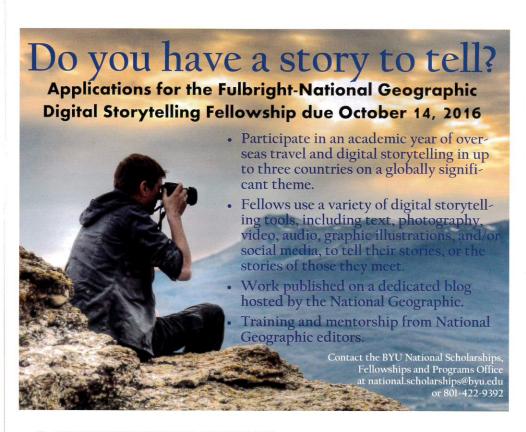
Jessica Theriault Assistant Stage Manager

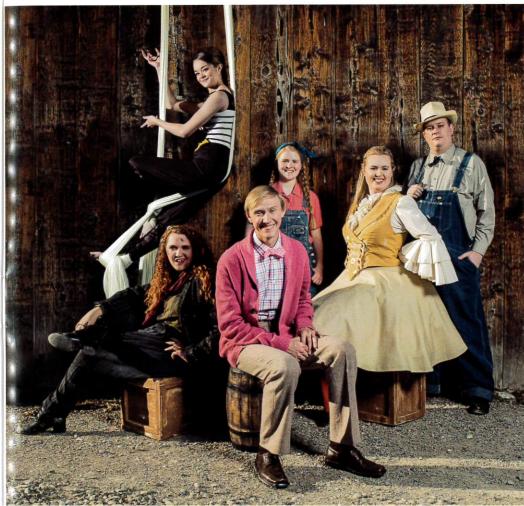
From Bakersfield, CA. Majoring in theatre education. She has acted in 24-hour theatre twice, in winter 2014 and fall 2014.

Meredith Walsh Assistant Stage Manager

From Seattle, WA. Junior in theatre education. Recent credits include UVU's A Night of Blacker Darkness and BYU Mask Club's The Alchemist. She loves theatre, baking, and wordplay.

Kirsten Watkins Costume Designer From Lehi, UT. She is a senior in theatre and media arts with an emphasis in costume a makeup design. Recent credits at BYU include costumes and makeup for theatre ballet's Alice in Wonderland and makeup design for The Taste of Sunrise. Charlotte's Web is her final design at BYU.





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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the

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