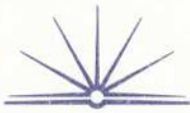




The idea of journey in Jane Yolen's Briar Rose is presented ~~several~~ ^{two} ways. Firstly with the characters and secondly through the historical fiction.

The characters in this novel are made to each have a story, but none more than Becca, Gemma, and Josef Potocki. To begin with, Gemma or rather 'Ksienizka' is the reason to why a journey is made. She is the grandmother of Becca, who tells her of the wonderful story of 'Briar Rose' or more widely known as "Sleeping Beauty". With the common "Once upon a time" and "happily ever after" clichés, it is no wonder Becca had never realized that her grandmother could be in fact telling her own story; a journey which brought her through turmoil in World War II and all the way to safety in the "land of Opportunity", America. So, Gemma kept quiet about her mysterious past until her deathbed where she revealed to Becca "I am Briar Rose".

The statement made by Gemma soon catalyzes the events to follow. Not only does Becca want to find out if Gemma was telling the truth but it also brings



a sense of resolve for Becca on finding out her own past and how it links with her almost "black sheep" feeling in the family. This is the journey that is presented mostly in this novel.

The journey itself relates to the fairytale, with elements of a protagonist, mystery, quest, fighting evil, and love. In a literal sense, Becca journeys to Poland and links the pieces of her puzzle past to find Joseph Potocki, who like Gemma, has a story to tell. His story bases itself to the truth and describes his and Gemma's past. The reality of his journey to escape the Nazis and their evil sinks in to Becca's imagination and concludes her ideas of the past and her journey.

To end all these journeys though, one thing is common all end with a "kiss of life". Sleeping Beauty or the princess "Ksieniezka" is awakened by a kiss. In Potocki's story, he administers the "Kiss of Life" and Gemma falls in love with the "Avenger" who marries her. With Becca, her relationship with Stan, a coworker, blossoms and begins with a kiss at the end of the



novel. All of which add to the timeless clichés of fairytales.

When historical fiction is related though, the journey is no longer fairytale-like. Yolen's intentions on the concept of the novel were to relate the fairytales to how you would convey the truth to a child without frightening them. By contrasting the story and journey of Brian Rose as told by Gemma and seeing the reality. The journey of Brian Rose seems more appealing. The use of journey in this sense is important because it not only allows the reader to understand the journey of Brian Rose but of the Gemma who was subjected to the hardships of war.

Overall, journey is a concept which is presented in several ways through several instances and must be looked at with open views.