Tuck Everlasting
Casey Nicholaw, Director/Choreographer
Claudia Shear, Book – Chris Miller, Music – Nathan Tysen, Lyrics
Based on the Novel by Natalie Babbitt

Study Guide
Created by Alliance Theatre Staff, Residency Teaching Artists & 8th Grader, Margaret Onsager

Tuck Everlasting is a world premiere musical adapted from the novel by Natalie Babbitt.
The play can be seen on the Alliance Stage from January 21, 2015 to February 22, 2015.

1 “TUCK Infinity.pdf by Maggie Onsager,” n.d.
Synopsis of *Tuck Everlasting*

About 200 years ago, in rural New Hampshire, Winnie Foster lived with her mother and grandmother on a small, fenced in farm. Little did she know that another family had existed beside theirs on the other side of the fence. That family was called the Tucks, and – many years before – they had unknowingly taken a drink from an enchanted spring. The water from the spring made them live forever.

There was a mother (Mae) a father (Angus), and two sons (Miles and Jesse). They were frozen in time – they never aged another year so they were the same ages as they were when they first drank from the spring. Winnie came across the Tucks on an unplanned adventure in the woods.

However, there was a man in a yellow suit who knew about the enchanted spring and he tried to get it for himself. This caused a lot of trouble, and in the end the Tucks had to go. Before they left, they offered Winnie water from the enchanted spring. When they returned, the Tucks discovered Winnie’s final decision.²

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² “TUCK Summary.docx by Maggie Onsager,” n.d.
Tuck Timeline

1775: American Revolution begins

1777: Jesse born.

1783: American Revolution ends

1788: New Hampshire becomes a state

1789: Constitution comes into effect, George Washington inaugurated President

1794: Tuck’s drink from the creek and stop aging

1796: John Adams elected president

1800: Library of congress founded

1804: Lewis and Clark begin their expedition

1823: Monroe Doctrine proclaimed

1836: Battle of the Alamo

1838: Trail of tears

1846: The Mexican American War begins

1848: Treaty of Hidalgo ended Mexican American War

1858: Lincoln Douglas Debates were held

1861: Beginning of Civil War

1865: End of Civil War, Lincoln assassinated

1867: African American men win the right to vote

1870: Winnie Born

1876: Telephone invented

1877: End of Reconstruction

1879: Invention of the light bulb

1881: Winnie meets Tucks

1887: Winnie turns 17, was supposed to meet Jesse

1890: Wounded Knee Massacre

1893: Chicago world’s fair—referenced in play in when Jesse says, “They built a whole city, you know, all white, spread out”

1898: Beginning and end of Spanish American War

1907: Height of immigration at Ellis Island

1914: Start of WWI.

1917: US begins involvement in WWI

1918: End of WWI.

1920: Women win the right to vote, prohibition is enacted

1929: Stock market crashes—beginning of the Great Depression.

1933: Prohibition ends

1939: Recovery from Great Depression, beginning of WWII.

1941: Pearl Harbor and beginning of US involvement in WWII.

1945: End of WWII.

1947: Start of the Cold War

Facts About New Hampshire

- New Hampshire is situated the most northern of the thirteen original states and lies between latitude 42-40 and 45-18 north and longitude 70-37 west. It is about 180 miles long and 50 miles wide, although the extreme width is 93 miles.

- New Hampshire is bounded on the north by Quebec province in Canada, on the east by Maine and the Atlantic ocean, on the south by Massachusetts, and on the west by Vermont. The Connecticut River is the western boundary.

- Geographies sometimes speak of the state as the "Mother of Rivers." Five of the great streams of New England originate in its granite hills. New Hampshire has 1300 lakes or ponds and 40,000 miles of rivers and streams which provide year round fishing and recreation in scenic surroundings, as well as power for the State’s many industries.
• Connecticut River
• Contoocook River
• The Pemigewasset River
• Winnipesaukee River
• Merrimack River, which at one time turned more spindles than any other river in the world.

• New Hampshire is commonly known as the Granite State
• One of the original 13 colonies
• First colony to vote for independence at the Continental Congress
• Known for its Alpine skiing
• The Appalachian Trail runs through New Hampshire
• The famous rock formation “The Old Man of the Mountain”, a rock profile of a man’s face, collapsed in 2003 after efforts to preserve it failed.
• Mount Washington is the highest peak in the Northeastern United States at 6,288 ft.
• Site of the first presidential primary during election season.
• Known for maple syrup and the beautiful leaves of fall.

Art And Culture In The 1880s:

Music
Goodbye, Tosti and Whyte Melville: (later 1904 recording found here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhxhMN0H0FE)
The Torpedo and the whale—sheet music below
http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/sheetmusic/id/32126
Wait till the Clouds Roll By, 2006 recording here (begins at 2:13):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl_nPjsXkSQ

Art
Barbizon period—pastoral landscapes that started to become popular in the 1880s but reached the height of their popularity in the 1890s.
• “Pasture by a Pond” William Morris Hunt, 1875
• “Niagara Falls” William Morris Hunt, 1878

Winslow Homer and Realism
American Impressionism (began in 1880s, though didn’t reach widespread popularity until the 90s)—Mary Cassatt, William Merritt Chase, John Singer Sargent

Literature
The Portrait of a Lady
The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass
Uncle Remus
Toads & Frogs in New Hampshire

Bullfrog

*Description:* The largest frog in North America at 3.5-6 inches. Color is generally green but may range from brownish to bluish to yellowish. The belly is whitish and may have gray or yellowish molting. They have a large circular disc behind the eye but lack ridges on the back (Green frogs have ridges).

*Habitat:* Found near larger bodies of water such as the shorelines of lakes, ponds, bogs, and slow-moving rivers. Requires emergent vegetation for cover. Often seen at water’s edge sitting on partially submerged logs.  

American Toad

*Description:* A small 2-3.5 inch toad that may appear brown, olive, reddish, or gray. Have 1-2 large warts in each dark spot on the body. Chest usually spotted with dark pigment; enlarged warts on tibia; parotid gland either separated from ridge behind eye or connected with it by a spur.

*Habitat:* Forested and open areas, uplands, wetlands, and suburban backyards.

The Ash Tree, Where the Tuck’s Story Begins & Fresh Water Springs

The *ash tree* is a handsome, native, deciduous tree. There are over 60 ash tree species—the white ash being the largest of the family. The ash tree is a strong, medium to very large tree, depending on type, and

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7 “TUCK Tree-Page-001.jpg by Maggie Onsager,” n.d.
a relative of the olive tree. Ash trees have an opposite branching structure, with multiple leaflets. Depending on species, ash tree leaves are green, turning yellow or purple-burgundy in the fall. Spring flowers are inconspicuous, but the fruit that follows is more noticeable, hanging in clusters of winged seeds which turn light brown and linger on the tree until early winter. The ash tree has a lovely rounded crown and gray diamond-shaped furrowed trunk when mature. An interesting fact about the ash tree is its characteristic agile wood is used to make baseball bats.

**How to Grow**: Most ash tree varieties grow best in moist, rich soil; require full sun and plenty of space.

**Size of Tree**: 50 to 80 feet high / 50 to 90 foot spread.

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**Fresh Water Springs**

A spring is typically where a water source has bubbled up due to water quantity or underground pressure. Spring water may gush from its source, or seep, depending on the conditions and amount or water hidden at its source.

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**Tuck Everlasting Glossary**

**Bacchanalia**: The Bacchanalia were Roman festivals of Bacchus, the Greco-Roman god of wine, freedom, intoxication and ecstasy… Like all mystery cults, the Bacchanalia were held in strict privacy, and initiates were bound to secrecy; what little is known of the cult and its rites derives from Greek and Roman literature, plays, statuary and paintings.

**Chicago World Fair**: 1893, to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in the New World. The play mentions “They built a whole city, you know, all white, spread out,” which refers to White City, what they called the architecture constructed for the World Fair in Chicago. They used white stucco on the outside of the classically inspired buildings, which stuck out as incredibly bright in comparison with all the tenement buildings around them

**Dray horse**: A horse adapted for drawing heavy loads; also used for plowing, hauling, and other heavy labor. It’s essentially a work horse.

**Gatka**: A traditional South Asian form of combat training where wooden sticks are used to simulate swords in sparring matches.

**Habeas Corpus**: A writ, also known as the great writ that is a summons that brings a prisoner and a custodian before a court to determine whether the custodian has lawful authority to detain a prisoner.

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8 Photograph by Chris Howes/Alamy, “Deadly Fungus Promts Ban on Ash Tree Imports | Environment | The Guardian.”
High Buttoned Shoes: A Victorian fashion in the mid to late 1800s--Boots that are made out of a combination of leather and fabric with a long row of buttons going up the ankle.


Jujitsu: Japanese martial art and method of close combat for defeating an armed and armored opponent in which one uses a short weapon or no weapon at all. It was developed originally by the samurai of feudal Japan.

Midas Touch: Reference from Greek mythology of King Midas, who had the ability to turn everything he touched with his hand to gold.

Music Boxes: developed in the 19th century, and interestingly were originally powered by clockwork and were made by watchmakers. You have to turn them with a key the same way you do to an old clock.


Silo: A structure frequently used on farms for storing materials in bulk. In agriculture especially, they're used to store grain or a type of fermented seed known as silage.

Termagant: An imaginary deity of violet or turbulent behavior who frequently appeared in morality plays. The word is also used in reference to an overbearing woman.

Ursa Major: Latin for “larger bear”; a constellation best seen in the month of April that is dominated by an asterism known as the Big Dipper in the United States and the Plough in the United Kingdom. (An asterism is a pattern of stars recognized in the sky; an asterism is sometimes a complete constellation, but in the case of Ursa Major, it is only part of the complete constellation.)

Yokels: An uneducated and unsophisticated person from the countryside; synonym of words such as “bumpkin”, “hayseed”, and “redneck”.

You can lead a horse to water… but you can’t make him drink

The Creative Team

Casey Nicholaw’s (Director/Choreographer) creative credits include Aladdin, recently opened on Broadway. 2014 Olivier winner for The Book of Mormon as choreographer. 2011 Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards winner for The Book of Mormon as co-director with Trey Parker (also nominated for Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards as choreographer), currently running on Broadway. Other Broadway credits as Director/Choreographer: ELF: The Musical, The Drowsy Chaperone (2006 Tony, Drama Desk & Outer Critics Circle nominations); Monty Python’s Spamanol directed by Mike Nichols (2005 Tony, Drama Desk & Outer Critics Circle nominations for Best Choreography). Television: A 2013 episode of NBC’s “Smash.”

11 Ibid.

Chris Miller’s (Music) creative credits include *The Burnt Part Boys* (Playwrights Horizons/Vineyard Theatre, Lucille Lortel Nominee Best Musical, Barrington Stage Co.); *Fugitive Songs* (Drama Desk Award Nominee Outstanding Revue); *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Barrington Stage Co). *The Whipping Man* (Actor’s Theater of Louisville); *Anna Christie* (Old Globe); Co-composer with Michel Friedman, *Angels in America* (Signature Theatre, NY; Michael Greif, Director). Various songs for *Sesame Street, Elmo’s World*, and *The Electric Company*. Upcoming with lyricist Nathan Tysen: commissions from Lincoln Center Theatre and Playwrights Horizons. In addition, *Ravello* (Signature Theatre (VA) American Musical Voices Project), two other stage musicals & a song cycle for soprano Rebecca Luker. Cast albums of *The Burnt Part Boys* and *Fugitive Songs* available at iTunes and Amazon. Winner of Richard Rodgers, Jonathan Larson, Kitty Carlisle Hart & Fred Ebb Awards. Proud graduate of Elon University and NYU.15

Nathan Tysen (Lyrics) creative credits include *The Burnt Part Boys* (Playwrights Horizons/Vineyard Theatre, Lucille Lortel Nominee Best Musical, Barrington Stage Co.); *Fugitive Songs* (Drama Desk Award Nominee Outstanding Revue); *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Barrington Stage Co). *The Whipping Man* (Actor’s Theater of Louisville); *Anna Christie* (Old Globe); Co-composer with Michel Friedman, *Angels in America* (Signature Theatre, NY; Michael Greif,
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**The Actors & Their Characters**

Can be found at [http://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/tuck-everlasting](http://www.alliancetheatre.org/production/tuck-everlasting)

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**Creative Writing Prompts**

**Before the Play:**

- If you have read the book or seen the movie, what is your strongest memory of it?
- If you have not and after reading this Study Guide, what do you think the play is about?
- Do you believe in magic? Why or why not?
- List three things all families should do or should have, and explain why.

**After the Play:**

- Who was your favorite character? Why?
- Do you think Winnie made the right decision?
- Would you make the same decision?
- If there's anything you could change about the storyline, what would it be?
- How did the music affect the story, if at all?
- Would you drink from the spring if given the chance? Why or why not?

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