



THORNTON
WILDER'S

THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

SEPTEMBER 1-29, 2024

DIRECTED BY
Julia Rodriguez-Elliott
and Geoff Elliott



 aNoiseWithin

Dear School Partner,

Welcome to A Noise Within Theatre! We are thrilled to welcome you to the 2024-25 season—a season that we like to call **True Grit**—with stories that delve into the depths of tenacity and determination. In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the Antrobus family faces numerous obstacles that threaten the very basis of their survival, posing the essential question: *how deeply can one family unite in the face of disaster?*

In this study guide, you will find articles, classroom activities, behind-the-scenes interviews, and other exciting materials, all crafted to align with the Common Core and the California VAPA Standards. This study guide can be enjoyed by teachers and students alike, our hope being that teachers and students enjoy it together!

We offer this study guide as a free resource for contextualizing the show and drawing parallels with our modern world, and you can find guides from our past seasons available for download on our website.

We hope this study guide will prepare you to enjoy the show to its fullest potential and to create a lasting memory of a fantastic day at the theatre. We are happy to have you!

Warmly,

A Noise Within Education



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Credits

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The Skin Of Our Teeth

Lily Sabina Fairweather:

The Antrobuses' maid, who alternates between good sense and silliness. She frequently breaks the fourth wall to comment on the play.

George

Antrobus: An influential man and an inventor who is a leader both at home and in his community.

Maggie Antrobus:

George's wife. She is a devoted wife and mother with a strong sense of her own value within her family and within society.

Dinosaur, Woolly

Mammoth: The Antrobus family's household pets in Act 1.

Henry Antrobus:

Son of George and Maggie. He is rebellious and does not easily fit in with the rest of the family.

Gladys Antrobus:

Daughter of George and Maggie. She has a daring streak but also wants her parents' approval.

Fortune Teller: A sardonic observer of human nature who drives much of the action of Act 2.

FUN FACTS ABOUT

The Skin Of Our Teeth

Thornton Wilder himself played Mr. Antrobus in several productions of *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Wilder also frequently played the Stage Manager in *Our Town*.

Mildred Marie Langford, Fredrick Stuart, Trisha Miller, and Christian Henley by Daniel Reichert.



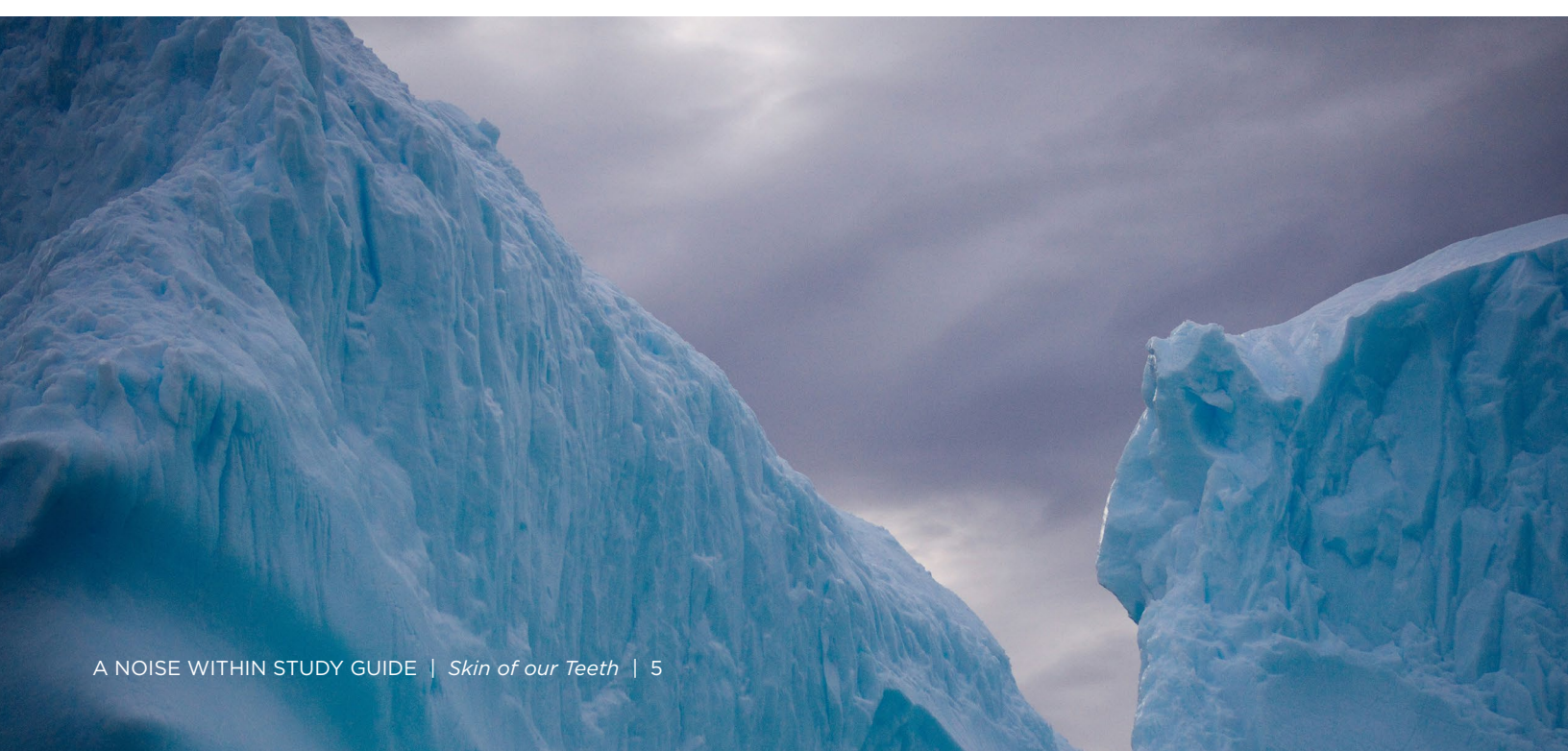
Play Synopsis

ACT 1

An announcer reports the news, including an update on **the coming of a second Ice Age** and the glacier approaching **New Jersey**. The scene transitions to the home of **“a typical American family”**: **George and Maggie Antrobus**; their children, **Henry and Gladys**; and their maid, **Sabina**, whose opening monologue describes the family. The time period is deliberately, almost playfully, unclear, to the irritation of Sabina (**who frequently breaks the fourth wall**). Mr. Antrobus is expected home soon from the office, yet he has spent his day inventing the wheel and the alphabet. At the Antrobus home, **a dinosaur** and **a woolly mammoth** are household pets. When George returns home, he is accompanied by a large group of **refugees**, who could be contemporary unhoused individuals, but whose names include “Homer” and “Moses.” The scene concludes with everyone huddled around the dying fire, **hoping to survive** the cold.

ACT 2

The announcer sets the scene: **Atlantic City**, where Mr. Antrobus has just been elected President of the **Human division of the Order of Mammals** at their annual **convention**. It is ambiguous whether the action occurs before or after Act 1. We learn that George has awarded the title of **Miss Atlantic City 1942** to Sabina, who hopes to entice him to divorce his wife and marry her. Convention attendees celebrate, while **a fortune teller warns of an impending storm**. Henry and Gladys go exploring, but only Gladys returns, and she is wearing **red stockings**, to her mother’s horror. George flirts with Sabina as the storm



Play Synopsis *continued*

worsens. He then attempts to tell Maggie that he is leaving her, but Maggie responds calmly with an **eloquent speech** in defense of women. The fortune teller warns George that the storm means the end of the world, and at her urging **George herds all the animals** that are attending the Convention of mammals **onto a nearby boat**. Realizing that he is about to **lose his family**, George quickly hustles them aboard the boat as well. Henry returns when his mother calls for him by his former name. Sabina begs Maggie to take her with them, and they all **sail off to safety** and, perhaps, a new world.

ACT 3

(Spoilers ahead!)

Sabina enters, calling to Mrs. Antrobus and Gladys that **“the war’s over,”** but the scene is interrupted by the stage manager and the actor playing George. They break the fourth wall to inform us, the audience, that seven actors are ill, and that **backstage crew members** will be coming on in the play’s final moments to represent **the planets and various philosophers**. The scene resumes, and Sabina **reunites** with Maggie and Gladys **(who now has a baby)**. Sabina tells them that **Mr. Antrobus is alive** and will return home that afternoon, and that he has forbidden Henry to set foot in the house. But when **Henry returns** soon after, Maggie welcomes him. When George arrives, he and Henry **agree to an uneasy truce**. The crew members cross the stage, speaking the words of the philosophers, and **Sabina repeats her opening monologue** before addressing the audience **one last time**.

FUN FACTS ABOUT

The Skin Of Our Teeth

The name “Antrobus” closely resembles the Greek work for “man”: *anthropos*.



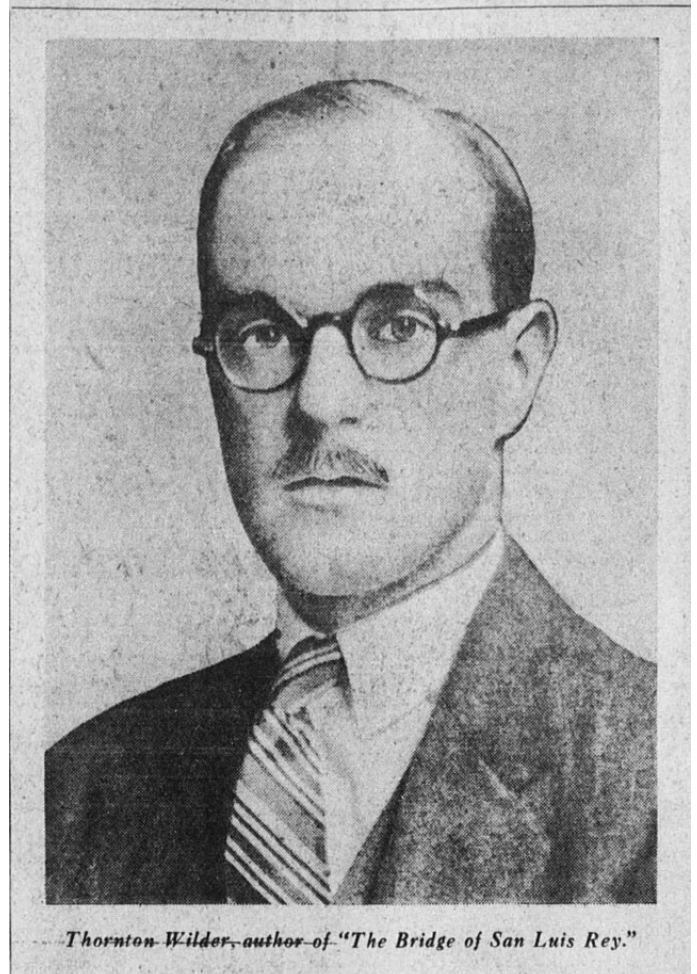
Woolly mammoth model Royal BC Museum in Victoria Thomas Quine.
Ice image: torsten-dederichs unsplash.com.

Thornton Wilder

Thornton Niven Wilder (1897-1975) was an enormously influential American playwright, novelist, translator, and man of letters. He spent part of his childhood in China, where his father was a diplomat. Wilder and his four siblings were all highly educated and accomplished; several were writers and teachers. Although Wilder never married, he remained devoted to his family for his entire life, and he supported them with generous financial assistance (including building a lavish house for his mother and sisters).

Educated at Yale and Princeton, Wilder was proficient in four languages, and he was a popular and respected teacher (of everything from French to poetry to English literature) at various institutions, including the Thacher School, Harvard University, and the University of Chicago.

His 1927 novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* earned him his first Pulitzer Prize (for fiction). He went on to win two more Pulitzer Prizes (for drama) for his plays *Our Town* (1938) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942). His play *The Matchmaker* (1954) was eventually made into the enormously popular musical *Hello, Dolly!* (1964). Wilder was a prolific author who wrote many other plays,



Thornton Wilder, 1928 photo by Detroit Free Press.



Walter Matthau and Barbara Streisand in *Hello Dolly!*

Thornton Wilder *continued*

short stories, and essays, as well as lengthy entries in his private journals and hundreds of letters to his many friends, including Ernest Hemmingway, Walt Disney, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Mia Farrow.

Despite his many accomplishments, however, Wilder is probably best remembered for his plays, especially *Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Many theatre historians and reviewers believe that on any given day, one of these two plays is being performed somewhere in the United States. The contemporary playwright Paula Vogel (herself the winner of numerous awards, including the 1998 Pulitzer for Drama) wrote in her foreword to the 2003 edition of *The Skin of Our Teeth* that “For an American dramatist, all roads lead back to Thornton Wilder.”

Certainly Wilder’s influence on American playwriting cannot be overstated, but it is his enduring appeal with audiences of all ages that sets him apart from many other American playwrights. His humor, his wit, and his indomitable optimism about the ability of human beings to survive against all odds continue to speak to us today. Wilder’s optimism was grounded in realism; he was clear-eyed about human frailty, and this pragmatism rendered his plays relevant as well as hopeful. Indeed, Wilder’s plays have never *not* felt relevant; and as long as we continue to need our faith in humanity restored, we will find ourselves turning to his all-too-human characters, over and over again, with fondness and also with gratitude.

FUN FACTS ABOUT **The Skin of Our Teeth**

Thornton Wilder remains the only author who has won Pulitzer Prizes for both fiction and drama.

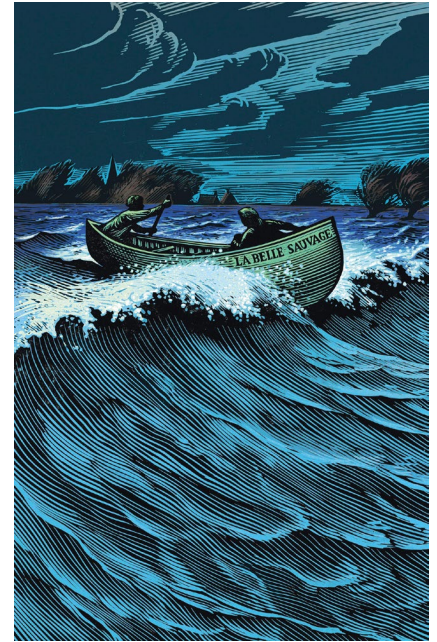
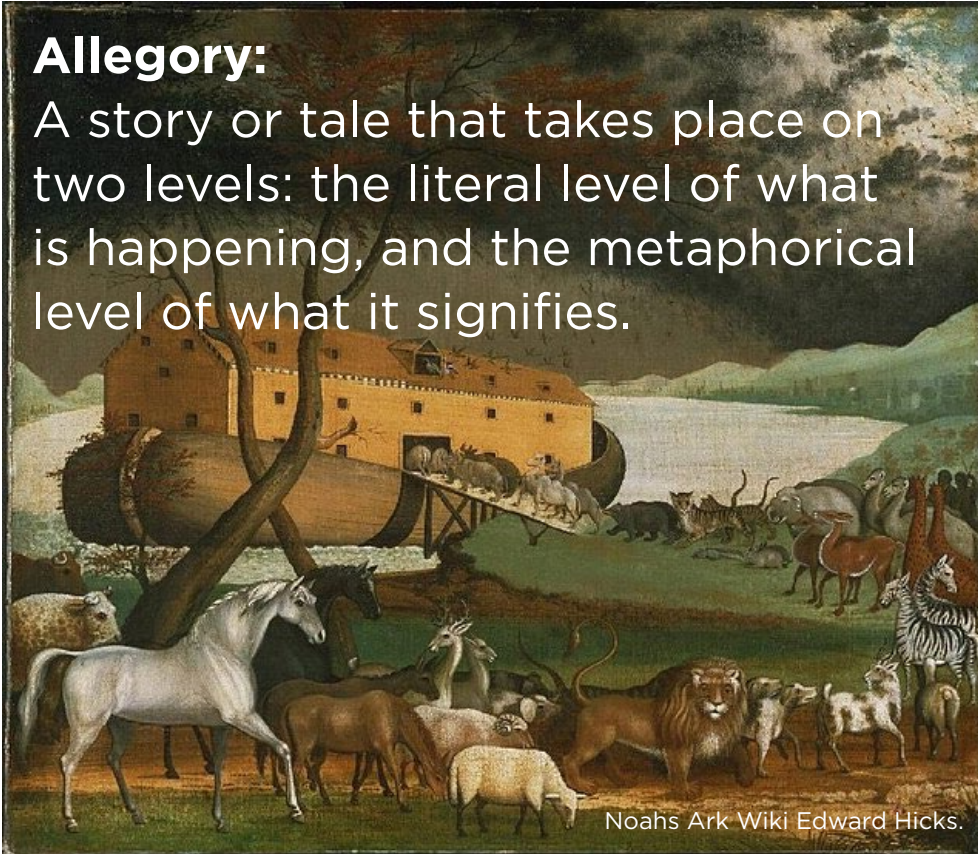


Original Broadway Production 1942
Skin of Our Teeth Handbill.

Themes & Motifs

Allegory:

A story or tale that takes place on two levels: the literal level of what is happening, and the metaphorical level of what it signifies.



Wormell, Chris, La Belle Sauvage book jacket

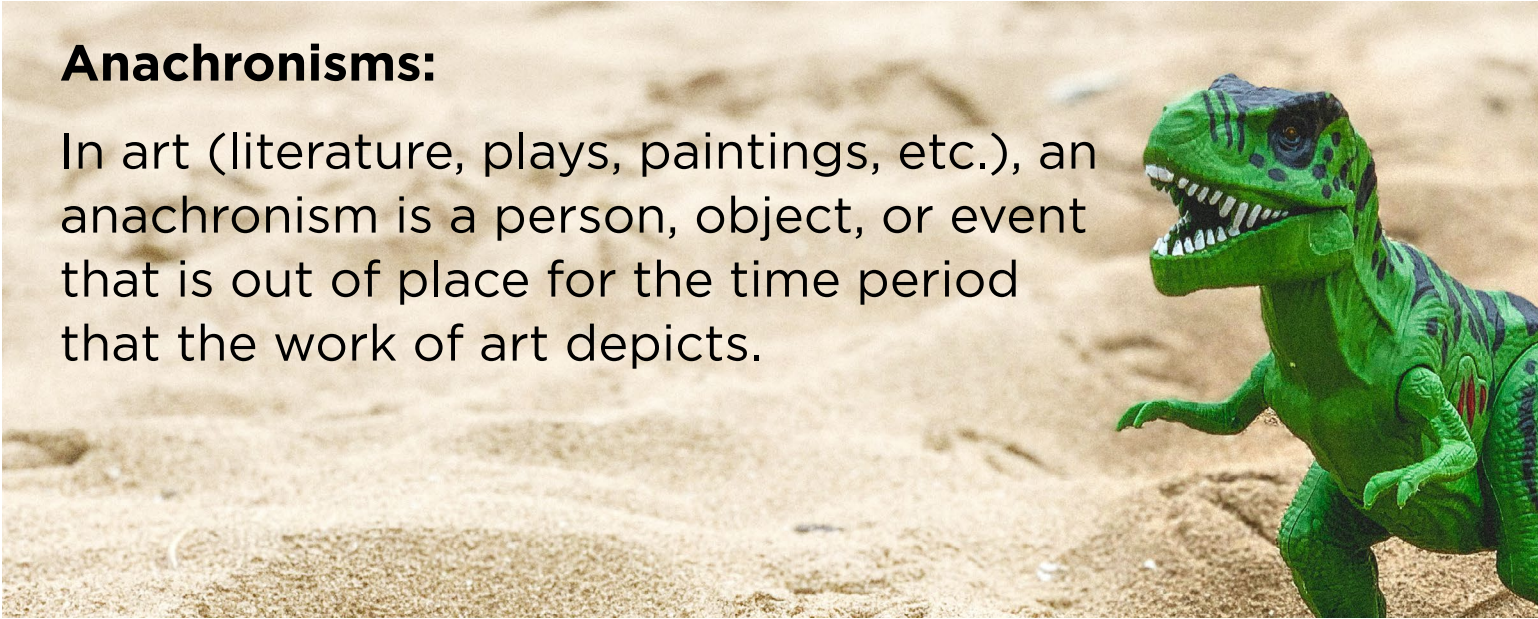
Religious and Mythological Allusions:

- Cain and Abel: the sons of Adam and Eve. Cain murders his brother out of jealousy.
 - The story appears in almost identical form in Judaism (the Old Testament Bible, Genesis 4:1-18) and in Islam (the Qu'ran, 5:27-31). In both sources, it is an injunction against murder.
- Noah and the Flood: In Genesis, chapters 6-9, mankind becomes so wicked that God sends a flood that wipes out all human beings except the virtuous Noah and his family, who at God's instruction ride out the flood with a pair of every kind of animal in an ark. Many religions and mythologies include some type of flood narrative.
- Lilith/Jezebel: Lilith is a feminine demonic figure from Mesopotamian and other ancient mythologies who is sometimes said to have been Adam's first wife. Jezebel is a figure from the Old Testament and other mythologies accused of various sins. Recent depictions of a once-in-a-lifetime flood include Philip Pullman's *The Book of Dust, vol. 1: La Belle Sauvage*

Themes & Motifs *continued*

Anachronisms:

In art (literature, plays, paintings, etc.), an anachronism is a person, object, or event that is out of place for the time period that the work of art depicts.



[hannah pemberton unsplash.com.](https://unsplash.com/photos/hannah-pemberton)

In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the playwright, Thornton Wilder, puts this literary device of anachronism to work. Some examples include:

- A dinosaur and a woolly mammoth as household pets.
- A contemporary suburban household that is threatened by an Ice Age.
- Mr. Antrobus sends a telegram to his family informing them that he has spent the day at his office inventing the alphabet.
- Sabina is one of the so-called Sabine Women: In ancient times, the city of Rome was constantly at war with its smaller neighbors. One famous episode in these wars was the “Kidnapping” or “Abduction” of the women in these smaller cities (in the Sabine region).
- The refugees who arrive in Act 1 include Homer, Moses, and the Nine Muses.
- Philosophers: In Act 3, two of the philosophers (Plato and Aristotle) lived in ancient Greece, and Spinoza lived during the seventeenth century in what is now Holland.

FUN FACTS ABOUT

The Skin Of Our Teeth

There is no town in New Jersey named “Excelsior.” The word is Latin, and it means “ever upward.”

Themes & Motifs *continued*

Archetype: The original character who serves as the model for countless later characters, for example: Achilles as the archetypal warrior; Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons, as the archetypal woman warrior; and Merlin as the archetypal wizard/magician. Later examples of these three archetypes include Luke Skywalker, Wonder Woman, and Albus Dumbledore.



Wonder woman goldenred logo.

Survival: In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the characters struggle to survive one disaster after another. In Act 1, they are confronted with a second Ice Age, which they survive by sheer willpower. In Act 2, they face a storm that brings a flood of literally Biblical proportions, which the characters will ride out thanks to George Antrobus’s resourcefulness (with a little help from the Fortune Teller). And in Act 3, the characters have outlasted (barely) a seemingly endless, unwinnable war. The characters, like the human race, survive these threats by the skin of their teeth – but they do survive.

War: Thornton Wilder does not specify what the war is about, or even who the enemy is, choosing to leave these details deliberately vague.

Pattern Plot: The same plot elements occurring repeatedly to create a cycle. In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the Antrobus family keep facing disaster, but they also keep surviving.

FUN FACTS ABOUT

Breaking the Fourth Wall

Sabina frequently ***breaks the fourth wall*** to address the audience, and in Act 3 the Stage Manager and the “actor playing George Antrobus” do as well. Many recent movies, including *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* and the *Deadpool* movies, include characters who break the fourth wall. Can you think of other movies or shows that do this? Why might an author or screenwriter do this? How do you, as an audience member, respond when you see this?

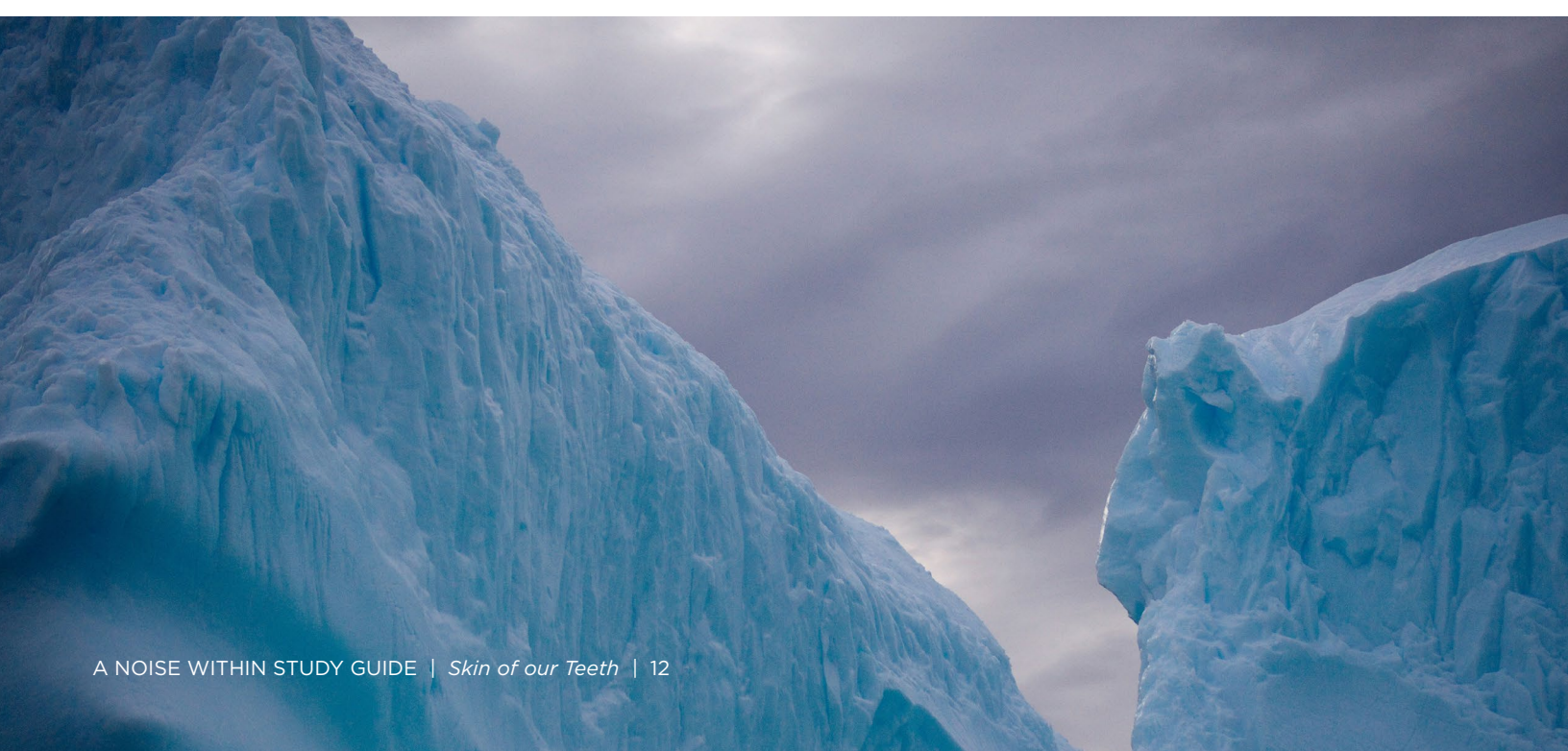
It's The End Of The World As We Know It... AGAIN

What would you do if you knew that the world was about to end? Would you even believe it was ending? What if you were the only person who did?

Climate change so severe that a glacier moves as far south as New Jersey. A second Ice Age so harsh that dogs are freezing to the sidewalks—in August. Refugees seeking shelter from extreme weather in a suburban living room. Party animals who continue to celebrate, even though an impending hurricane has just caused a weather signal to register “The End of the World.” And a war that everyone believes will finally end all wars, but only because they also believe that this war will never end, not because they expect that it will usher in an age of peace.

And yet the war does end. The human race survives the hurricane. And even though at the end of Act 1 of *The Skin of Our Teeth* everyone seems in imminent danger of freezing to death, by the beginning of the very next Act the Antrobus family are alive and well and partying like there's no tomorrow. The human race continues to be confronted, over and over again, with alarming existential threats. But as Sabina notes at the play's conclusion, “The end of this play isn't written yet,” and her words reflect playwright Thornton Wilder's conviction that the end of the human race hadn't been written yet either.

Wilder's optimism is all the more persuasive because it isn't grounded in denial or in sentimentalism. He knew perfectly well that human beings are hopelessly flawed, and that if the human race keeps confronting disasters, it's because the human race keeps creating them. Wilder began writing *The Skin of Our Teeth* in 1940, at the start of World War II. By



It's The End Of The World As We Know It... **AGAIN** *continued*

the time the play opened on Broadway, in November 1942, the United States had been at war for almost a year, with no end in sight. For the play's earliest audiences, Act 3 must have provided a welcome spark of hope, for it begins with the end of a war that has lasted seven years, and that the characters feared might never end.

In the roughly eighty years since the play opened, many more global disasters have occurred that have destroyed families, communities, and even entire countries. Some of these calamities have been depressingly familiar, such as wars and pandemics. Others are relatively new, such as the rapidly accelerating threats posed by climate change (although the denial that some people demonstrate about our shared global peril is, unfortunately, nothing new). The challenges that the Antrobus family repeatedly confront have never stopped feeling relevant, and paradoxically the characters seem immortal because they are so very human.

It therefore makes sense that *The Skin of Our Teeth* continues to be performed frequently; yet the play's ongoing relevance could not, by itself, account for its enduring popularity. With rare exceptions, most plays that are merely bleak without offering any hope aren't very well-liked, let alone fun, yet *The Skin of Our Teeth* is both. The play offers us hope not in spite of human frailty, but because, as Wilder shows us, human foolishness can sometimes lead to human resilience. The play leaves us with a deep appreciation for people's ability to find a way forward by forgiving each other and trying again. In *The Skin of Our Teeth*, the inevitability of human mistakes fosters the very strength and optimism that allow us to fight against the existential threats that repeatedly come our way, and to face bravely the end of the world as we know it—over and over again.

The Skin Of YOUR Teeth

Objective

Compose a speech that explores the concept of survival.

Step 1. Group Discussion

What is the meaning of the idiomatic phrase *the skin of our teeth*?

Step 2. Group Brainstorm

Over the past century, humankind survived numerous major disasters, some naturally occurring and some human-made. Brainstorm and identify three more examples for each of the following categories:

A. Naturally Occurring Disasters

i. Covid-19 Pandemic

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

B. Human-Made Disasters

i. World War I

ii. _____

iii. _____

iv. _____

Step 3. Individual Creative Writing

Select one of the examples above. CONGRATULATIONS—you have been appointed the leader of all humankind right as your selected disaster has struck! Your assignment—write a speech that will be televised to the world. This speech should address the disaster at hand. What do you think the human race needs to hear at this critical moment?

As leader of all mankind, what is your **tone** in this speech? Inspirational? Hopeless? Fearful? Resilient? What **tone** do you think will most prepare humankind for this disaster?

Use the lined paper on the following page!

The Plagiarism Controversy

Thornton Wilder was widely regarded as an expert on the Irish author James Joyce, and Wilder freely acknowledged that he wrote *The Skin of Our Teeth* partly as a tribute to Joyce's final novel, *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). But despite Wilder's openness about the influence of Joyce's work on his play, two literary critics—Joseph Campbell and Henry Morton Robinson—accused Wilder of having written “an Americanized recreation, thinly disguised” of Joyce's novel. Although they did not use the word “plagiarism” in the two articles they wrote for *The Saturday Review of Literature*, that was clearly what they meant, and it didn't take long for the word to appear in press reports about the controversy.



Mirko Toller Star Wars characters at Madame Tussaud.

The charge was not only baseless; it was ridiculous as well, and the accusations were promptly rejected by literary experts. Wilder responded by writing a letter to the *Review*, but he ultimately decided not to send it; consequently, the letter wasn't discovered until after Wilder's death. In the letter, Wilder thoroughly debunks his detractors' arguments and demonstrates, with characteristic intelligence and humor, that they not only misunderstood *The Skin of Our Teeth*, but also *Finnegan's Wake* and most of Western literature as well.

Wilder understood that all literature is inevitably influenced by the writings that precede it, and that this is especially true of works such as *The Skin of Our Teeth* that deal in myths and archetypes. As Wilder wrote in his rebuttal letter, “It is not necessary to go to Joyce's novel to find the motive of Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Lilith and Noah.” No single author can claim to have actually “invented” a mythic hero such as Achilles or Professor X or Harry Potter, or a mythic heroine such as Hippolyta or Kitty Pryde or Ellie (from *The Last of Us*), any more than a musician can claim to have “invented” jazz or rock or metal.

The Plagiarism Controversy *continued*

Sometimes individuals try to make these claims, often to the point of bringing absurd lawsuits against artists such as playwright Tom Stoppard and singer-songwriters Ed Sheeran and Taylor Swift, who they maintain stole “their” work. But these assertions reveal a profound lack of understanding about how creativity actually operates. Powerful works of literature or drama or music resonate not because their characters or lyrics or melodies are new, but because their creators use them in new ways to represent fundamental human struggles. Ironically, Joseph Campbell himself would go on to establish a reputation as an expert on myths and archetypes; George Lucas credited Campbell’s best-known work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), with inspiring Lucas’s own creation of the character Luke Skywalker in the *Star Wars* movies.

Fortunately for us, Thornton Wilder understood exactly how creativity works, and the members of the Antrobus family in *The Skin of Our Teeth* still resonate with audiences today because, as the characters themselves observe, they’re thousands of years old. George, Maggie, Henry, Gladys, and Sabina feel familiar not because Wilder copied them from a novel that had just been written a couple of years before, but because they’ve been around forever. Wilder’s genius lies in his ability to achieve the delicate balance between presenting characters who are universal enough to be relatable, but who are distinctive enough to seem real. We feel deeply for all of them, because even though they are completely believable as themselves, at the same time they also seem to resemble each and every one of us.

For more on the controversy, including Thornton Wilder’s letter, see the Afterword by Tappan Wilder to the 2003 edition of *The Skin of Our Teeth*. For a satirical piece by the American editor and humorist Wolcott Gibbs that skewers Campbell and Robinson’s “discovery,” see “Finnegan’s Teeth,” *The New Yorker Magazine* (December 26, 1942).



Taylor Swift The 1989 World Tour Ford Field.

Discussion Questions

1. *The Skin of Our Teeth* was written nearly a century ago, and yet many of its themes, such as **disaster** and **survival**, are still relevant in modern society. Are there parallels between the challenges faced by the Antrobus family and challenges faced by people today?
2. How do the characters in the play embody different character **archetypes**? Mr. And Mrs. Antrobus? Sabina? The Fortune Teller?
3. Throughout the play, various characters **break the fourth wall** and speak directly to the audience. How does this technique make you feel as an audience member, and how does it affect the overall message of the play?
4. Thornton Wilder employs numerous **anachronisms** throughout the play. How do they contribute to the play's themes of survival and human resilience? What might they suggest about the cyclical nature of history and the human experience?
5. Discuss the role of the **mammoth** and the **dinosaur** in the play. What do they symbolize?
6. Consider Thornton Wilder's use of **humor** in his exploration of serious themes. Do you feel his use of humor elevates the play's messages or detracts from them?



Christian Henley by Daniel Reichert.

A Conversation with the Costume Designer

Can you tell us about your journey towards becoming a costume designer?

I've been interested in costumes all my life. I grew up watching all the 1970's variety shows, particularly *The Carol Burnett Show* and even at a young age I could see that the clothes were part of what made it all work. I mean, the classic 'Went With the Wind' dress did so much storytelling and provided an amazing laugh before Carol said a word!

I was around theatre a lot. My parents helped to run a community theatre, and I caught the bug. I did everything throughout my teen and college years—Acting, Costume Design, Stage Management and Directing. In college I really focused on Design and Directing, it could have gone either way but I ended up in graduate school at West Virginia University for Costume Design. I love designing characters and their wardrobes. And I think that Directing and Design are so intertwined—you have to know the play, how it works, how it's constructed in order to do both jobs well.



Left to right:
Bingo caller design sketch.
Bingo caller inspiration.
Mr. Antrobus, act 1 inspiration.

A Conversation with the Costume Designer

continued

What were your initial design ideas after reading *The Skin of Our Teeth* for the first time?

It's been a long time since I had read the play but upon re-reading it, I was struck by how timely it is. It could have been written this year. How did Thornton Wilder conceive of this show in 1942 that speaks so clearly to our current state of affairs?

Which character are you the most excited to design in this show?

I would have to say Sabina. I'm not even sure why I say that but in my mind she's a survivor, an every-person who is just trying to get from day to day, and she struggles with the big questions. Plus, she speaks out against injustice, there are things she will not do and actions she will not repeat. She is in control of her destiny... well, until she's not. Although I think all the characters are interesting and complex, they all have nuances that are fun to think about and visualize.



Sabina, act 2 design sketch.

Images 2-3: Sabina act 2 inspiration.

Dinosaur research.



Thornton Niven Wilder Chronology



1897	Born in Madison, Wisconsin (April 17)
1906	Moves to Hong Kong in May and to Berkeley, California in October
1906-10	Emerson Public School in Berkeley
1910-11	China Inland Mission School, Chefoo, China (one year)
1912-13	Thacher School, Ojai, California (one year). First play known to be produced: <i>The Russian Princess</i>
1915	Graduates from Berkeley High School; active in school dramatics
1915-17	Oberlin College; published regularly
1920	B.A. Yale College (3-month service in 1918 with U.S. Army in 1918); many publications
1920-21	American Academy in Rome (8-month residency)
1920s	French teacher at Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey ('21-'25 & '27-'28)
1924	First visit to the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire
1926	M.A. in French literature, Princeton University <i>The Trumpet Shall Sound</i> produced off-Broadway (American Laboratory Theatre) <i>The Cabala</i> (first novel)
1927	<i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> (novel- Pulitzer Prize)
1928	<i>The Angel That Troubled The Waters</i> (first published collection of drama—playlets)
1930s	Part-time faculty, University of Chicago (comparative literature and composition); lectures across the country; first Hollywood screen-writing assignment (1934); extensive foreign travel
1930	<i>The Woman of Andros</i> (novel) Completion of home for his family and himself in Hamden, Connecticut
1931	<i>The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays</i> (six one-act plays)
1932	<i>Lucrece</i> opens on Broadway starring Katharine Cornell (translation of André Obey's <i>Le Viol de Lucrece</i>)
1935	<i>Heaven's My Destination</i> (novel)
1937	<i>A Doll's House</i> (adaptation/ trans.) opens on Broadway with Ruth Gordon
1938	<i>Our Town</i> (Pulitzer Prize) and <i>The Merchant of Yonkers</i> open on Broadway
1942	<i>The Skin of Our Teeth</i> opens on Broadway (Pulitzer Prize) Screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's <i>The Shadow of a Doubt</i>
1942-45	Service with Army Air Force in North Africa and Italy (Lieut. Col. at discharge –Bronze Star and O.B.E.)
1948	<i>The Ides of March</i> (novel); performing in his plays in summer stock in this period <i>The Victors</i> opens off-Broadway (translation of Sartre's <i>Morts sans sépulture</i>)
1949	Major role in Goethe Convocation in Aspen; lectures widely.
1951-52	Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard
1952	Gold Medal for Fiction, American Academy of Arts and Letters
1953	Cover of <i>Time</i> Magazine (January 12)
1955	<i>The Matchmaker</i> opens on Broadway starring Ruth Gordon <i>The Alcestiad</i> produced at Edinburgh Festival with Irene Worth (as <i>A Life in the Sun</i>)
1957	German Peace Prize
1961	Libretto for <i>The Long Christmas Dinner</i> (music by Paul Hindemith—premieres in Mannheim, West Germany)
1962	"Plays for Bleecker Street" (<i>Someone from Assisi</i> , <i>Infancy</i> , and <i>Childhood</i>) premiere at NYC's Circle in the Square Libretto for <i>The Alcestiad</i> (music by Louise Talma—premieres in Frankfurt, West Germany)
1963	Presidential Medal of Freedom
1964	<i>Hello, Dolly!</i> starring Carol Channing opens on Broadway
1965	National Book Committee's Medal for Literature
1967	<i>The Eighth Day</i> (National Book Award for Fiction)
1973	<i>Theophilus North</i> (novel)
1975	Dies in sleep in Hamden, CT on December 7. Buried at Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Hamden, Connecticut

For more information, please visit www.thorntonwilder.com and www.thorntonwildersociety.org.

Bonus Material

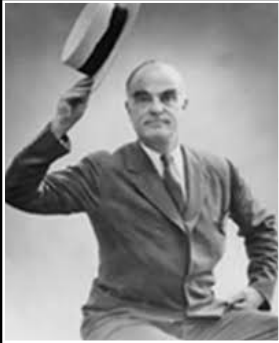


Photo of Thornton Wilder as George Antrobus.



Here's his graduation photo from Yale.

Images: Wilder Family LLC

- Highly recommended: Ann Patchett's 2023 novel *Tom Lake* is about a summer theater festival that centers around a production of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*. Set during the pandemic, the novel concerns families, mothers and daughters, and personal secrets. (NOTE: Mature themes.)
- Here's a wonderful, short (18 minutes), highly watchable documentary from 2022 ("Thornton Wilder: It's Time") about Wilder's best-known works that includes interviews with a number of contemporary playwrights, actors, and directors, as well as some great photos and videos of Wilder himself. (Keep watching through the closing credits for more photos.)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x28RMW6UkSM&t=954s>
- Here's the link for the Official Website by the Wilder Family about Thornton Wilder: <https://www.thorntonwilder.com/> This excellent resource is regularly updated.
- Vivien Leigh played Sabina in a London production of the play in 1945-46. She played the role again in 1959 in a production that was recorded and aired on television on March 17, 1959. Here's the link to Act 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc-9ntEII1Q> (NOTE: For reasons that I don't understand, this production pronounces the name of Leigh's character as "Sabeena," which is incorrect.)

ABOUT

A Noise Within

A Noise Within produces classic theatre as an essential means to enrich our community by embracing universal human experiences, expanding personal awareness, and challenging individual perspectives. Our company of resident and guest artists immerses student and general audiences in timeless, epic stories in an intimate setting.

Our most successful art asks our community to question beliefs, focus on relationships, and develop self-awareness. Southern California audiences of all ages and backgrounds build community together while engaging with this most visceral and primal of storytelling techniques. ANW's production of classic theatre includes all plays we believe will be part of our cultural legacy. We interpret these stories through the work of a professional resident company—a group of artists whose work is critical to their community—based on the belief that trust among artists and between artists and audience can only be built through an honest and continuing dialogue.

In its 30-year history, A Noise Within has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

More than 45,000 individuals attend productions at A Noise Within annually. In addition, the theatre draws over 18,000 student participants to its Education Program. Students benefit from in-classroom workshops, conservatory training, subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, post-performance discussions with artists, and free standards-based study guides.



aNoiseWithin
Classic Theatre, Modern Magic

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