

book by THOMAS MEEHAN and BOB MARTIN

music by MATTHEW SKLAR | lyrics by CHAD BEGUELIN

based upon the new line cinema film written by DAVID BERENBAUM

*the rep*

ARKANSAS REPERTORY THEATRE

DEC 5, 2014 - JAN 4, 2015 | TICKETS ONLINE AT [THEREP.ORG](http://THEREP.ORG)

# Introduction

In 2003, director Jon Favreau and actor Will Ferrell introduced the world to an unlikely new Christmas hero in the movie *Elf*. A contemporary fable for a weary post-9/11 world, this comic film charmed audiences and critics alike, and Buddy the Elf soon became the unofficial mascot for the holiday season in 21st Century America.

Gangly, good-hearted, wide-eyed Buddy, played to childlike perfection by Saturday Night Live alumnus Ferrell, reminds us that there is still room for magic in our world of social media and Black Friday sales and that the most precious gift of all is the love of family.

In 2010, the story took on a new dimension as it was adapted into a rollicking seasonal musical for the stage by the creators of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The Wedding Singer*, *Annie* and *Hairspray*. *Elf: The Musical* broke Broadway box office records and toured the country before being snatched up by regional theatres across America, like the Arkansas Repertory Theatre.

Now in 2014, Buddy the Elf is a familiar part of the holiday theatre season, alongside the Whos of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and the leg lamp of *A Christmas Story* (both movies have also been transformed into popular stage musicals in the past few years).

We are proud to bring you this wonderful show for the whole family that is sure to set your feet to tapping and your heart to soaring as you celebrate this festive time of year with your family, friends and neighbors.

Don't be a Cotton-Headed-Ninny-Muggins. Transform your "Ho hums" and "Humbugs" into "Ho Ho Hos".

Come sing a "Sparklejollytwinklejingley" Christmas song with The Rep!

-Robert Neblett, Dramaturg

## Special Note for Educators:

Throughout this Study Guide you will find words, names and phrases in this **color**. These items are key terms and phrases to understanding the world and context of *Elf* in greater detail. We encourage you to identify these items as vocabulary terms and as suggestions for further research and study among your students, both before and after you attend the performance at The Rep.

# Synopsis

## ACT I

Lights come up on the **North Pole** as Santa begins to read us a story about Buddy the Elf. Though he's bigger than all the other elves, it's clear that Buddy's favorite place is "Christmastown." At the workshop, Buddy is shocked to learn that he is actually a human who crawled into Santa's sack many years ago. Santa informs Buddy that his real father, Walter Hobbs, lives in a far off place known as New York City. Buddy sets off to find his father, confident that Walter is the "World's Greatest Dad."

In New York, book publisher Walter is so busy with work that he has forgotten a date he'd made to go Christmas shopping with his wife Emily and son Michael. ("In The Way") Buddy shows up and stuns the Hobbs family by announcing that he is Walter's long-lost son. Walter calls security and has Buddy removed from the building. Unsure where to take a guy dressed as an elf, the security guards take Buddy to **Macy's**.

At the department store, Buddy meets Jovie, a no-nonsense Macy's elf who hates Christmas. Buddy is smitten but Jovie is less than impressed. When the other employees begin to half-heartedly decorate the store, Buddy convinces them that they need to make everything look much more "Sparklejollytwinklejingley." With the store decorated and ready for Santa, Buddy finally gets up the courage to ask Jovie out on a date. Jovie reluctantly agrees.

The next day, Buddy starts an altercation with the Macy's Santa and the police take him to the Hobbs apartment. While there, Buddy convinces Emily and Michael to write a letter to Santa. ("I'll Believe in You") The next morning, everyone is stunned to find out that Buddy actually is Walter's son. ("In The Way (Reprise)")

Walter is forced to take Buddy to work with him. Buddy is so thrilled to get to spend the day with his dad that he tells the entire staff how he plans to grow up and be "Just Like Him." Walter's boss Mr. Greenway shows up and demands that Walter come up with a blockbuster children's book by Christmas Eve or his days at the company are numbered.

Later that night, Buddy takes Jovie skating at **Rockefeller Center**. Jovie admits that she does have a little Christmas spirit. Thrilled, Buddy convinces her that all she needs to do is spread it around by singing "A Christmas Song." As the song ends, Jovie and Buddy share their first kiss under the **Rockefeller Christmas Tree**.

Buddy heads back to Walter's office to tell his father that he's in love, but while there he inadvertently destroys the manuscript that was going to save Walter's job. Furious, Walter throws Buddy out, claiming he never wants to see him again. Sad and afraid, Buddy ends up on the streets of New York without a friend in the world. ("World's Greatest Dad" (Reprise))



## ACT II

It's Christmas Eve and Buddy ends up in a **Chinese restaurant** with a bunch of out-of-work Santas. Buddy is surprised to learn how little respect Santa seems to get these days. ("Nobody Cares About Santa") The Santas convince Buddy to try and make up with his father. Buddy agrees to try but suddenly remembers he was supposed to have a date with Jovie that night.

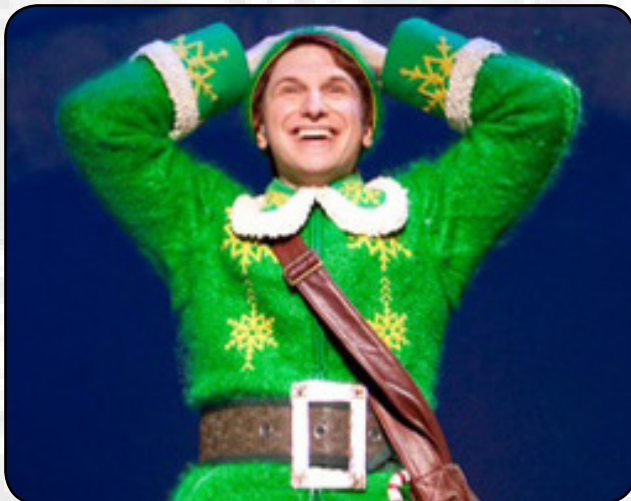
Outside the restaurant, a furious Jovie waits for Buddy. ("Never Fall in Love (With an Elf)") Buddy shows up full of apologies but Jovie is fed up and tells Buddy it's over. At the Hobbs apartment, Michael sees Santa's sleigh zoom past the window. After Emily sees it as well, they are sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that "There Is a Santa Claus."

Meanwhile Walter and his staff are nervously awaiting the arrival of their boss, Mr. Greenway. Emily and Michael show up looking for Walter, but before they can explain what's happened, Mr. Greenway arrives to hear the book idea. Just as it becomes clear that Walter has nothing to pitch Greenway, Buddy appears and saves the day. ("The Story of Buddy the Elf") Buddy learns that Emily and Michael have seen Santa, which can only mean that there was trouble with the sleigh. They rush off to find him.

In **Central Park**, Santa tries to get his sleigh to fly. ("Nobody Cares About Santa (Reprise)") Buddy and Santa reunite and Buddy promises to raise enough Christmas spirit to make Santa's sleigh fly again. He finds a crowd but can't rally them into believing. Suddenly Jovie appears and with the help of the Hobbs family, Santa's sleigh is soon on its way again. ("A Christmas Song (Reprise)")

The show ends with everyone celebrating Christmas at the North Pole. ("Finale")

Synopsis taken from the CD Booklet for the Broadway Cast Recording of "Elf: The Musical."



# Characters

**Buddy:** A human orphan taken in by Santa and the elves at the North Pole and raised as an elf. When he discovers that he is human, he journeys to New York City to find his biological father. Buddy is overwhelmingly optimistic and full of energy, which sets him apart from the jaded inhabitants of Manhattan who he encounters along his adventure. His Christmas spirit is infectious.

**Jovie:** An elf/sales clerk at Macy's department store in New York City who becomes the object of Buddy's romantic affections. A native of Southern California, she is disenchanted with the holidays in the city and sets her expectations as low as possible to avoid disappointment. Buddy reawakens a spirit of hope inside of her.

**Walter Hobbs:** An editor at Greenway books who is Buddy's father. He is on Santa's Naughty List and is a pragmatist who is first and foremost concerned with the bottom line at his job. He has lost touch with his family and the Christmas spirit until Buddy enters his life.

**Emily Hobbs:** Walter's wife who is dedicated to healing the emotional wounds that separate her and Michael from Walter's affections. She believes in the power of family and ultimately opens her heart and home to Buddy.

**Michael Hobbs:** Walter's 12-year-old son who has become disillusioned by his distant father and wants something more emotionally substantial than mere material possessions for Christmas - he wants his family to be whole again.

**Deb:** Walter's good-natured secretary at Greenway Books.

**Sam:** One of Walter's employees.

**Chadwick and Matthews:** Two of Walter's employees who attempt to pitch ideas for Christmas books, which all turn out to be horrible.

**Manager:** Oversees the toy department/North Pole at Macy's. He is grouchy and focused on pleasing his Macy's bosses "up north."

**Mr. Greenway:** Owner of the publishing house where Walter works. He is a gruff elderly businessman.

**Charlotte Dennon:** News reporter for television station New York 1 who reports on the "UFO" that has crashed in Central Park.

**Santa Claus:** Numero Uno jolly guy at the North Pole.

**Security Guards, Employees at Walter's Office, Fake Santas, Various salespeople and customers at Macy's, Policemen**

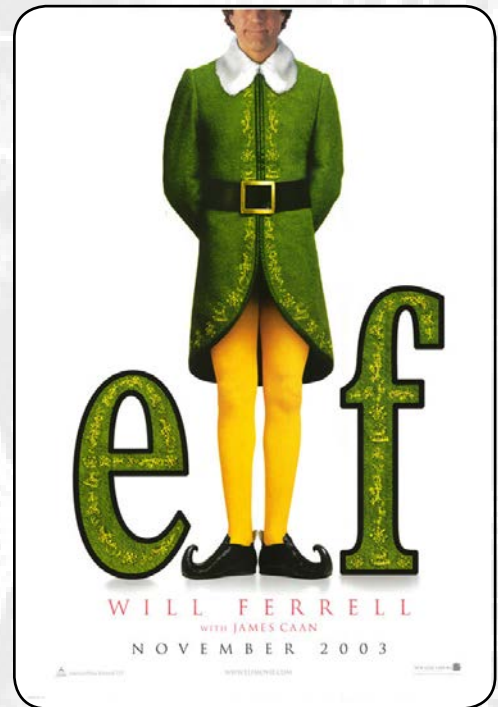


## Film

After 10 years of development and pre-production, the film of Elf was finally released in November 2003, with a script by David Berenbaum and direction by Jon Favreau (Iron Man, Iron Man 2, Chef). It starred Will Ferrell in his first post-Saturday Night Live role as Buddy, James Caan (The Godfather) as Walter, Zooey Deschanel (The New Girl) as Jovie, Arkansas native Mary Steenburgen (What's Eating Gilbert Grape) as Emily, Ed Asner (The Mary Tyler Moore Show) as Santa and Bob Newhart (The Bob Newhart Show) as Papa Elf.

The film opened at No. 2 at the United States Box Office and went on to gross more than \$220 million worldwide.

It received relatively favorable reviews from critics and audiences for its good-natured humor and positive message. Ferrell's childlike performance catapulted it to an audience favorite, and Buddy is now a regular fixture in Christmas decorations and holiday television offerings.



## TU







On December 16, 2014, NBC will air a new stop-motion animated special entitled "Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas" based on the original film and on the Broadway musical, featuring songs from the stage show. Buddy will be voiced by Jim Parsons, who is best known as Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory.

# Musical Adaptation

Seven years after the original movie's premiere, in November 2010, *Elf: The Musical* opened on Broadway at the **AL Hirschfeld Theatre**. It starred *Cheers*'s George Wendt as Santa Claus, Stephen Arcelus as Buddy, Amy Spanger as Jovie, Mark Jacoby as Harry, and Beth Leavel as Emily. It was directed by Casey Nicholaw, with a book by Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin, music by Matthew Sklar, and lyrics by Chad Beguelin.



## Differences Between Film and Musical

-  Papa Elf's (Bob Newhart) role as the film's **narrator** is replaced by Santa Claus onstage.
-  Buddy does get a job in the mailroom at the publishing house. The snowball fight that endears Michael to Buddy is replaced by a science project onstage.
-  The role of temperamental author Miles Finch (played by Peter Dinklage), whom Buddy mistakes as an elf, is excluded.
-  The musical does not reference the apocalyptic Central Park Rangers, who chase Santa's sleigh in the movie.

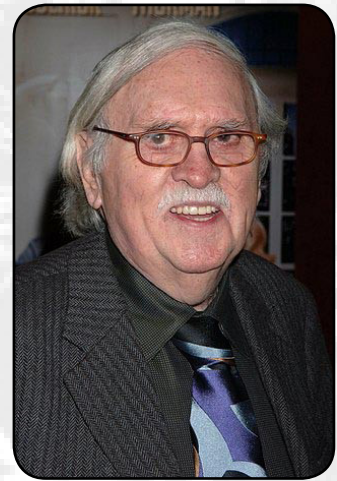
*Elf* was nominated for a **Drama Desk Award** in 2011 and received generally positive reviews from New York theatre critics. The Broadway **cast recording** was released in November 2011.

In 2012, a Broadway revival of the musical was mounted, which included a new opening number ("Happy All the Time" replaced "Christmastown") and other changes to the script.



## Who's Who

**Thomas Meehan** co-wrote the book for *Elf: The Musical* with Bob Martin. Meehan has won three **Tony Awards** and is most famous for writing the book for the smash hit musical *Annie* in 1977. Other works include screenplays for *Spaceballs* and *One Magic Christmas*, as well as the book for stage musical versions of *The Producers*, *Hairspray*, *Cry-Baby*, *Young Frankenstein*, and *Rocky*.



**Bob Martin** co-wrote and starred in the 2006 Broadway musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*, for which he won a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical. Martin is one of the creators of the television cult hit ***Slings & Arrows*** (2003-06), which chronicles the hilarious and heartbreaking exploits of a Canadian Shakespeare Theatre Festival fighting against the odds to survive.

The composer of *Elf*, **Matthew Sklar**, is a Tony-nominated musician who also created the score for the Broadway production of *The Wedding Singer* (2006) and the dance arrangements for the stage version of *Shrek: The Musical* (2008). He is the recipient of the ASCAP Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award, the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theater Award and the **Jonathan Larson** Performing Arts Foundation Award.

*Elf*'s lyricist, **Chad Beguelin**, most recently was nominated in 2014 for a Tony Award for writing the book and additional lyrics to Disney's *Aladdin* on Broadway. Other works for the stage include *The Wedding Singer* (lyrics and co-book) and Disney's *On the Record* (book). Beguelin has also received nominations for Drama Desk Awards, as well as the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Award, the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Award, and the Edward Kleban Award for Outstanding Lyric Writing.



Beguelin, from left, and Sklar at the Broadway premiere of *Elf The Musical*



# Fun Facts

## FILM



- 🍭 The role of Buddy was originally offered to Jim Carrey.
- 🍭 Buddy's costume in the film was originally designed to resemble that of misfit elf/dentist Hermey from the 1964 **Rankin-Bass** stop-motion version of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.
- 🍭 Director Jon Favreau appears in a cameo as the pediatrician who performs Buddy's DNA test, as well as the voice of the stop-motion **Narwhal** at the North Pole.
- 🍭 No **computer-generated imagery (CGI)** was used in the film, outside of a few snow effects. **Stop-motion animation** and **forced perspective** are used to achieve all of its visual tricks.

- 🍭 Actor Peter Billingsley, most famous for his portrayal of Ralphie in the 1983 movie *A Christmas Story*, appears in an uncredited role as an elf named Ming Ming in Santa's workshop.
- 🍭 The cotton balls that Buddy swallows repeatedly in the doctor's waiting room were made of cotton candy.
- 🍭 The brief TV news clip showing Buddy walking in Central Park (just before Buddy's dad and brother find him), and the still picture of Buddy in the news clip, closely mimic the famous 1967 film of an alleged Bigfoot ("Patty") taken by Roger Patterson and Robert Gimlin.
- 🍭 Gimbels Department Store closed in 1987.



## MUSICAL

- 🍭 The production broke the weekly box office record for the Al Hirschfeld Theatre three times during its limited runs in the 2010 and 2012 holiday seasons.
- 🍭 The actor who originated the role of Buddy on Broadway, Stephen Arcelus, is descended from the **Romanovs**, the Russian royal family that was violently overthrown in the **Russian Revolution**.

# History of Santa Claus



## 4th Century



Santa Claus as we know him today is a relatively recent development in Christmas traditions, not reaching his most familiar characteristics until the publication of **Clement C. Moore's** poem "**A Visit from St. Nicholas**" (better known as "**'Twas the Night Before Christmas**") in 1823.

Santa Claus's origins trace back to the 4th Century Greek Christian **Saint Nicholas**, who lived in what is modern-day Turkey. According to legend, Nicholas learned of a poor man who could not afford a **dowry** for his three daughters, so he secretly threw bags of money through the man's window in the middle of the night to cover these expenses. An alternate version of this story (which has correlations to modern Christmas traditions) is of Nicholas dropping the money down a chimney, where it lands in one of the daughter's stockings, which is drying by the fire.

One of the reasons Nicholas is associated with the Christmas season is that his **feast day** occurs on December 6. **Medieval** traditions maintain that British nuns would anonymously donate food and clothing to the poor each year on this date in celebration of the saint. **Sinterklaas** would deliver presents on the evening before the feast of St. Nicholas.

In 16th Century England, a rejection of Catholic values and symbols resulted in the creation of a character named **Father Christmas** during the reign of **King Henry VIII**. A further separation from Catholic tradition saw the celebration of this figure coinciding with Christmas feasts of December 25th rather than the Feast of St. Nicholas earlier in the month. Portrayed as a large man in fur-lined green or red robes, he assumed characteristics of the Greek god of wine and revelry Dionysus during this period. **The Ghost of Christmas Present** from **Charles Dickens'** 1843 novel **A Christmas Carol** is patterned after Father Christmas, particularly as depicted by illustrators **John Leech** and **Thomas Nast**.



## 16th Century





## 20th CENTURY

Between 1920 and 1942, fantasy author **J. R. R. Tolkien** (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) wrote a series of illustrated letters to his children from Father Christmas that depicted Father Christmas's adventures at the North Pole. These escapades often featured the character of the North Polar Bear, a clumsy but well-intentioned companion, as well as battles against Goblins. Some critics consider Tolkien's depiction of Father Christmas to be an early character sketch for the wizard Gandalf.

In 1947, 20th Century Fox released **Miracle on 34th Street**, starring Maureen O'Hara, an 8-year-old Natalie Wood, and Edmund Gwenn. The film was a modern fable about the power of faith in a cynical modern world and featured Gwenn as Kris Kringle, who insists that he is the real Santa Claus, despite the skepticism of the world around him, including Wood's juvenile character. He is subsequently institutionalized and placed on trial, to be exonerated when the U. S. Post Office delivers thousands of letters from its **dead letter office** to the courtroom, all addressed to "Santa Claus."

Beginning in 1955 with an accidentally misprinted phone number in a Sears advertisement, the **North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)** has provided "tracking information" for Santa's journey around the globe from the North Pole, using telephone hotlines, newspapers, radio and television broadcasts, and the internet as resources to inform the world's children of St. Nick's progress.

In 1978, the **Children's Television Workshop** produced **Christmas Eve on Sesame Street**, in which the character of Big Bird is teased by Oscar the Grouch into doubting Santa's existence. Questioning how Santa can visit all the world's children in a single night and how he can fit down tiny chimneys (and baffled by the fact that most urban households do not even have chimneys), a distraught Big Bird spends the night on a snowy rooftop waiting for Santa to arrive, while his friends desperately search for him on Sesame Street below. Kermit the Frog, in reporter mode, asks the children of the neighborhood if they have any answers to Big Bird's questions. In a nod to **O. Henry's** short story "**The Gift of the Magi**," Bert and Ernie sell beloved possessions to Mr. Hooper so that each can afford a Christmas present for the other.



## Q&A with Ethan Paulini

Actor Ethan Paulini will be performing the role of Buddy the Elf in The Rep's production of Elf. Neblett took a few moments to ask him some questions about the show and his role of playing the loveable character!



Why do you think Elf (the film) has become such a contemporary holiday classic?

Every generation seems to have a classic Christmas film. Films like *It's a Wonderful Life*, *A Christmas Story* and now *Elf*. I think *Elf* came out at a time when people wanted to laugh. The idea of family and togetherness is a common theme for the holiday season, but I think that combined with the out and out, over-the-top comedy of *Elf* really resonated with audiences. Laughing makes people feel good and people want to feel good at Christmas.



How would you describe the biggest differences between the film and the musical version of Elf?

Well, singing and dancing for one thing. There are slight variations in the story to support a musical number or a slightly modified comedic bit. The original story is there and many iconic moments are represented on stage, but it also explores the relationships between these characters slightly differently, especially the family. They all have a different experience while trying to accept this 30-year-old, 6'2" tall grown up who things he is one of Santa's elves.



What do you think the ultimate message of the piece is?


There is a lyric in the song "The Story of Buddy the Elf" that I sing with my father - "maybe the point of the story is it's never too late to grow." The beauty of this line is that I don't think it means growing in a traditional sense. I think it is more about that willingness to change and evolve as a person. Buddy doesn't apologize for who he is and rather than caving in to the pressures to conform, he makes others rediscover the




child inside them. He pushes them to in many ways be themselves.

 Is there a little bit of Buddy in you?

Absolutely. I would like to hope I am a bit more mature and aware, but I do like to think I have maintained some of the youthful optimism that Buddy has in spades.


 How do you prepare for a role like Buddy? What do you hope to bring to it that no one else can?

I think this is a role, more than some others, that is about building up my stamina. I am onstage for virtually the entire show, so for me it's about staying healthy. I have been exercising, trying to eat right and get plenty of sleep. As far as the actual role, of course, I watched the movie. I definitely want to make Buddy my own so I am trying to find a way to bring what Will Ferrell brought initially but I also want to put my own stamp on the role. We just started rehearsals, so I am still finding that balance. One of the great things about Arkansas Repertory Theatre is that they aren't interested in carbon copies or replicating a particular production or movie, so that gives me the freedom to bring all of my own ideas about who Buddy is and where is comedy comes from. I hope to bring a sense of authenticity to him. The comedy comes from his earnestness, he doesn't try to be or even realize he is being funny, and I like to think as a comedic actor that is something I understand and do well.


 You've played many roles onstage at The Rep. Do you have any favorites? How would you describe Little Rock audiences, compared to other audiences around the country?

This is the toughest question. I have loved them all for different reasons. I gained a lot from each and every experience in both personal and professional ways. I suppose The Full Monty will always hold a special place for me since it was my first show here.

The rehearsal process for my most recent show, *Complete Works of William Shakespeare ABRIDGED* was special because the process was so personal. Nicole Capri (our director, and the director of *Elf*) really allowed us and encouraged us to bring ourselves to the characters. That is not only so rare, but also makes it a lot of fun. For me, I guess each experience boils down to the people and each show has provided me the opportunity to work with such remarkable collaborators that it is nearly impossible to narrow it down to just a couple of memorable moments. The audiences here are so generous. It takes a lot of energy to get out there and do this sort of work and the audiences here give it back. It makes it that much more rewarding for us to do our jobs.

 What was your favorite Christmas movie or television program when you were growing up and why?

Well, I used to countdown the minutes until Frosty and Rudolph and all of those great television specials that would come on during Christmas. But without a doubt, *A Christmas Story* is not only my favorite Christmas movie, but one of my very favorite movies. When it is on for 24 hours on Christmas, I generally average 3 or 4 viewings. I just find that family so warm. I really feel like it captures that childlike excitement that occurs during the whole holiday season. It didn't sugarcoat it, either. It showed those characters as flawed and funny and human and totally lovable.

 What do you want Santa to bring you this Christmas?

Continued success and challenging and rewarding collaborations, health for me and my family and friends and the strength to follow my path wherever it may lead me...and if he has an extra iPhone 6 laying around, I'd take it off his hands.

# Questions for Further Discussion and Writing

## QUESTIONS



Look at the lyrics for "Christmastown" below. Trace each example of the irony behind the words that Buddy is singing, since he is actually not an elf and does not belong in Christmastown. Where does Buddy fit in, since he also seems to be a misfit in modern New York City?

BUDDY:

When you're born a Christmas elf, you wake up every morning feeling like a lucky so and so. Knowing there are toys to make and trees that need adorning makes you laugh from head to mistletoe.

Life is just so Christmassy it's hard to grow a callus. Who could look at gingerbread and frown?

And since I love Saint Nick and the aurora borealis - It's clear that I belong in Christmastown.

I always get a special glow when the snow comes falling down, so without a doubt I know I belong in Christmastown.

Being Santa's helper means that you refuse to settle.

Never let your smile be just a grin. I once smiled for six whole months and won a fancy medal.

It's nice to have a place where I fit in.

I always get a special glow when the snow comes falling down, so without a doubt I know I belong in Christmastown.

ELVES:

Jing-a-ling-a-ling.

BUDDY:

I belong.

ELVES:

Jing-a-ling-a-ling.

BUDDY:

I belong in Christmastown.

ELVES:

Jing-a-ling-a-ling.

BUDDY:

I belong.

ELVES:

He belongs in Christmastown.

BUDDY:

And I feel sad for people who have to grow up human. I've never met a human, but I can't help assumin' they want to be exactly like me and have Christmas all year through!



What are your favorite holiday movies, songs, books, and/or television programs? What makes them special for you? Which ones do you never want to see/hear/read ever again, and why?





Have the holidays become too commercial? How do stores and corporations make their profits from values of love, peace, and understanding? How would you change this trend if you could?

## SPECIAL NOTE TO TEACHERS:


Many of the questions and activities included in this Study Guide are based upon both the secular and religious traditions associated with contemporary celebrations of Christmas in America. Not all students may come from households or belief systems that celebrate Christmas, so please alter your lesson plans accordingly to be as inclusive as possible, particularly since this time of year can be overwhelming when surrounded by the non-stop images of a holiday one may not observe. It is also important to emphasize to students that other cultural traditions that may occur at this time of year have their own histories and customs, and that they are not simply "alternate versions of Christmas." For example, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, Solstice, and Bodhi Day all exist outside of any comparative ideological context of Christmas, although similarities may exist. Be careful, also, when including references to pop culture celebrations like Seinfeld's "Festivus" so that you are not inadvertently demeaning deeply held beliefs.




 Research a representation of Santa from a nation/culture outside of America. How is he different from the Santa you grew up with?


 Choose a Christmas song from the following list. Research its origins and present your findings to the class. Are there any particular artists who are best associated with the song you chose?

- The Coventry Carol
- Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
- We Need a Little Christmas
- Silent Night/Stille Nacht
- Baby It's Cold Outside
- The Little Drummer Boy
- Do They Know It's Christmas?
- River
- Christmas Time is Here
- In the Bleak Midwinter
- Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
- Blue Christmas
- Holly Jolly Christmas
- Sleigh Ride
- The Carol of the Bells
- Pat-a-Pan
- White Christmas
- The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)
- Winter Wonderland
- I Saw Three Ships
- The Hallelujah Chorus


 Compare the differences between the film and stage versions of Elf. Are there moments in the film that you feel are impossible to stage in the theatre? Now, imagine someone has told you to brainstorm a way to stage those moments; how would you do it? Are there missing elements from the film that lessen the story's impact? Are there moments that you feel the musical improves upon?


 Research the origins of the folklore associated with Santa, elves, the North Pole, etc. Where did these symbols and characters come from and why? How have they changed over time?


## ACTIVITIES

 Interview another person in your class about the specific holiday tra-

ditions that may be unique to his/her family. Then have that person interview you about your own holiday traditions. Share your findings with the class and discuss the similarities and differences. Is there anything that you take for granted as something "everyone" does for the holidays that you are surprised to discover is distinctive to your family's customs?

 Write an original story about Santa and/or his elves, set in contemporary America. How do these magical creatures react to cell phones, laptops, hybrid cars, and reality TV? How do modern Americans react to the inhabitants of the North Pole? How does this collision of cultures define your story's moral or emotional compass?

 Research a winter holiday tradition from outside America that is not specifically associated with Christmas. What are the specific rituals and history behind this practice (be thorough in your investigation)? Are there any shared values in this celebration with the reasons you observe your holiday festivities? If you were to adopt any aspect of this celebration into your own life, what would it be and why?

 Divide into groups and brainstorm ways to increase the Christmas Spirit in your community to power Santa's sleigh by at least 50%. Make sure that your solutions are practical and can be actualized in the real world. How would you deal with social opposition to your plan? Each member of your group should create his/her own plan, then you should share ideas, discussing the pros and cons of each. Arrive at a plan as a group (either inspired by one of your group member's ideas or derived as an original idea agreed upon by group consensus). Delegate responsibility for different aspects or action bullet points among group members. Share your ideas with the class, making sure that each member of the group takes responsibility for presenting his/her delegated tasks.

# Arkansas Curriculum Framework

## Taught in Study Guide, Attending the Show and Show Discussion



### FINE ARTS

- 1.1.13 Acknowledge the point of view of others.
- 1.1.14 Explore empathy for the character in the literature.
- 1.1.28 Exhibit comprehension of and sensitivity to cultural diversity through peer response.
- 1.1.29 Extrapolate empathy for the characters in the literature.
- 1.1.30 Expand appropriate terminology to develop theatre vocabulary.
- 2.1.7 Explain how characters are similar to and different from the students' own culture.
- 2.1.21 Identify significant time periods in theatre history including major people and events.
- 2.1.34 Demonstrate good citizenship and function as positive members of a theatre audience.
- 2.1.36 Demonstrate listening, observing, focusing, and concentration skills.
- 2.1.51 Respond appropriately as an audience member.
- 3.1.5 Express and compare personal reactions to theatrical art forms.
- 3.1.9 Evaluate performances through critical observation for the purpose of self-improvement.
- 3.1.13 Understand, interpret, and evaluate theatrical performances using basic theatre terminology.
- 3.1.21 Determine and demonstrate appropriate aesthetic responses to dramatic performances.
- 3.1.22 Use thinking and problem-solving strategies to explain and analyze how technical elements contribute to the effectiveness of a production.



### DRAMATIC LITERATURE:

- DE.1.DL.1 Analyze the historical influences and contexts of various time periods on plays and playwrights.



### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

- R.10.12.12 Evaluate stage, film, or television adaptations and interpretations of a drama.
- R.10.12.15 Compare and contrast ways in which character, scene, dialogue, and staging contribute to the theme and the dramatic effect.



## Our Story

Founded in 1976 and enjoying its 39th season, Arkansas Repertory Theatre is the state's largest non-profit professional theatre company. A member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT D), The Rep has produced more than 280 productions including forty world premieres on its 385-seat Main-Stage and 99-seat black box Second Stage located in its historic Galloway building in downtown Little Rock. The Rep relies on season subscriptions, special events, foundation support, corporate and individual donations, Shakespeare in American Communities, The Shubert Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts and Arkansas Arts Council funding.

## Our Mission

Arkansas Repertory Theatre exists to create a diverse body of theatrical work of the highest artistic standards. With a focus on dramatic storytelling that illuminates the human journey, The Rep entertains, engages and enriches local and regional audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

## Contact Information

For questions or comments concerning this production of Elf or the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, contact our offices at (501) 378-0445. Additional information may also be found at [www.therep.org](http://www.therep.org). The Box Office may be reached at (501) 378-0405.

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