

GRANDTHEATRE STUDY GUIDE

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ELF - THE MUSICAL

Book by Thomas Meehan & Bob Martin

Music by Matthew Sklar

Lyrics by Chad Beguelin

Based upon the New Line Cinema film written by David Berenbaum
Directed by Dennis Garnhum



THE MUSICAL

BEGINS
NOVEMBER 22
EMBRACE YOUR INNER ELF.

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Elf: The Musical STUDY GUIDE

The Creators of Elf

Elf: The Musical is by Tony-winning book writers Thomas Meehan and Bob Martin and the Tony-nominated song writing duo of Matthew Sklar and Chad Beguelin. *Elf* is based on the popular 2003 New Line Cinema Film of the same name.

Curriculum Connections

Elf supports learning in the subject areas of:

- The Arts (Music, Visual Arts, Dance, Drama)
- Language/English/Writers' Craft
- Canadian and World Studies
- Social Studies and Humanities

Themes

- * FAMILY
- * FRIENDSHIP
- * IDENTITY
- * BELIEVING IN THE POWER OF GIVING
- * TRUE MEANING OF THE SEASON

Synopsis

Act I

The show opens with Santa at home in front of the TV watching a hockey game, preparing to share the story of Buddy the Elf. We learn that Buddy was an orphan, crawled into Santa's sack of toys and was accidentally transported to the North Pole one Christmas Eve 28 years ago. The elves at the North Pole raised Buddy and so he believes he's an elf.

One day, Buddy learns that he is, in fact, human and that his human father, Walter Hobbs, is alive in New York City! With Santa's encouragement Buddy embarks on a journey to New York City to meet his father. In the big city of New York, Buddy meets his dad Walter, stepmom Emily, and half-sibling, Michael/Michelle at his dad's office in the Empire State Building. Walter is a busy businessman with little time for family and no time for holiday spirit. Walter has security escort Buddy to the nearest North Pole ... in Macy's Department Store. With cheer and song, Buddy inspires the workers at Macy's to get into the Christmas spirit as they decorate and prepare for Santa's arrival. Adding to his excitement, he falls in love with Jovie, a part-time elf at Macy's.

Buddy is very confused the next morning when he meets a fake Santa. After a tussle in Macy's, Buddy is taken by the police to the Hobbs' household. Buddy convinces Emily and Michael/Michelle to write a letter to Santa. On their date, Buddy and Jovie ice skate at Rockefeller Centre. Jovie shares her Christmas dream with Buddy: dinner at Tavern on the Green on Christmas Eve. Buddy promises Jovie that his dad can get them a table. However, Walter is under stress at



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work. He needs a Christmas story to save his job. When he thinks that he has found it, Buddy unknowingly shreds the manuscript to make fake snow to cheer his father. Frustrated, Walter tells Buddy to pack up and leave. Buddy writes a farewell note to his new family and departs on his own.

Act II

Buddy, alone and hungry in NYC on Christmas Eve, wanders into a Chinese restaurant filled with disgruntled and disillusioned fake Santas. At the restaurant, the Macy's manager teaches Buddy that in order to 'make up' he needs to give his dad a present. Meanwhile, Jovie has waited for hours outside Tavern on the Green. Buddy arrives very late for their date, admitting that he forgot the date. He seeks her forgiveness by giving her a snow globe. Emily and Michael/Michelle find Buddy's goodbye note and want to help him. They see Santa's sleigh flying out their window, renewing their belief in all things magical. Everyone ends up at Walter's office in the Empire State Building. Buddy helps pitch a new story to Mr. Greenway to save his dad's job, but after Greenway insults Buddy and Michael/Michelle, Walter stands up for his family and quits his job.

The Hobbs family rush to Central Park where Santa's sleigh has landed, having run out of power from lack of Christmas spirit. Buddy has an idea and borrows Santa's iPad to meet with New York citizens and remind them of a time when they believed in Santa. With Buddy's genuine show of optimism and infectious holiday spirit, he brings heart and hope and Christmas to everyone.

The Characters

Buddy	Born human, raised at the North Pole as an elf, Buddy is eager to find his place in the world. He is a child at heart and has a childlike curiosity that is endearing but gets him into trouble.
Jovie	Buddy's girlfriend. She works at Macy's and has a bit of a cynical outlook on life and love because of the men she has dated. She is caught off guard by Buddy's genuinely big heart.
Walter	Buddy's workaholic father. He is a children's book publisher, but lacks the childlike spirit that Buddy has. He is selfish, tense, and generally angry at life.
Emily	Walter's wife. Though she is sweet and willing to take him in, she thinks Buddy is crazy at first.
Michelle	Buddy's stepsister who is excited to have a new friend and sibling. She doesn't take much convincing to have Christmas spirit. She wishes her father would spend more time with her.
Deb	Walter's secretary. Takes an instant liking to Buddy simply for the novelty of it.
Mr. Greenway	Walter's boss. He is what Walter will become if he continues down the path he is on. A tyrannical workaholic who cares nothing about the people around him or who work for him.
Santa	Just another workingman. Loves his job and Christmas, but also likes to relax. A natural storyteller.
Chadwick	One of Walter's right-hand men. He is desperate to keep his job, and is the more simple-minded one.
Matthews	One of Walter's right-hand men. He is desperate to keep his job and is the schemer of the two.
Store Manager	A manager at Macy's. A good, friendly person just trying to do the job and get by.
Ensemble	They play elves, New Yorkers, office workers, etc.



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CAST & CREDITS

CAST

Jovie	MICHELLE BARDACH
Shawanda	KIH BECKE
Souvlaki Vendor/Emily Understudy	MEG BUCHANAN-LUNN
Walter	SHANE CARTY
Santa Claus/Mr.Greenway	AADIN CHURCH
Charlie/Jovie Understudy	ALICIA D'ARIANO
Sam/Buddy Understudy	MARCO DELUCA
Michelle	RILEY DELUCA
Emily	MA-ANNE DIONISIO
Buddy	IZAD ETEMADI
Macy's Santa/Walter Understudy	SWEENEY MACARTHUR
Deb	CHARLOTTE MOORE
Matthews	JAMIE MURRAY*
Chadwick	SHAKEIL ROLLOCK
Store Manager	TAURIAN TEELUCKSINGH
Charlotte Dennon/Deb Understudy	MARGARET THOMPSON

*Dance Captain

CHILDREN'S CHORUS

JIYA AGRAWAL
MIRAYA AGRAWAL
RAYA CAMPBELL
MARINA DAMINELLI KRIECK
ANTHONY FRESCURA-DENOMME
LEAH GLIDDON
NICO HILTZ
ISABELLE HILTZ
LACHLAN MACLEAN
PAXTON NAIR

The Grand Theatre is an active member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association. The Grand Theatre acknowledges with thanks the co-operation of Locals 105 and 828 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists, and Allied Crafts of the United States, its Territories and Canada, and The London Musicians' Association Local 279.

GET TO KNOW *Your Buddy*

What's the best part about playing the iconic Buddy the Elf?

That's an easy one. I get to meet Santa!

What's your favourite scene in the musical?

The one where I get to eat spaghetti on stage. Who doesn't love binge-eating spaghetti with syrup and then singing and dancing for two more hours?

What are the similarities between you and Buddy the Elf?

We're both extremely good looking. But beyond that, we both love Christmas. This is my favourite time of year. There's nothing I love more than Christmas music, decorations, and lights! When I was younger, my parents would drive around our hometown looking at all the houses with extravagant lights and decorations. I sat in the back seat staring through the window in awe. Even now, a beautifully decorated storefront gives me that same warm and tingly feeling.

Audiences were captivated by your innocent, lovestruck character of Samuel in *Grow*, a World Premiere production in the Grand's 2021/22 season. Do you think there are any similarities between Buddy and Samuel?

I think there are a lot of similarities between Buddy and Samuel. Both are very innocent, naive, and optimistic. They've ever only known one world and way of life. Through their journeys, they break out of their sheltered shells, discover new parts of themselves, and grow to accept their new normals.

Beyond "singing loud for all to hear," what do you think is the best way to spread Christmas cheer?

Listening to Mariah Carey's Christmas album and watching Jennifer Coolidge in *Single All The Way* on Netflix.

Elves try to stick to the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corns, and syrup. What are your main food groups?

Greens, greens, nothing but greens! As long as it's dairy-free, it's in my food group. Seriously, if you see me eating dairy, yank it out of my hands.

What are the ideal toppings for spaghetti and syrup?

Ketchup.

Buddy the Elf: what's YOUR favourite colour?

Yellow because it's like the sun :)

Izad Etemadi



PICTURED: IZAD ETEMADI
PHOTO BY MAI TILSON
COSTUME DESIGN BY DANA OSBORNE



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CREATIVE TEAM

Director	DENNIS GARNHUM
Music Director	ALEXANDRA KANE
Choreographer	LISA STEVENS
Set Designer	SCOTT PENNER*
Costume Designer	DANA OSBORNE*
Lighting Designer	KIMBERLY PURTELL*
Sound Designer	BRIAN KENNY*
Stage Manager	KELLY LUFT
Assistant Stage Manager	JORDAN GUETTER
Assistant Stage Manager	ANDREA SCHURMAN
Apprentice Stage Manager	CONNER BUSTAMANTE
Child Supervisor	CINDI ARMER-ALMEIDA
Child Supervisor	CHRISTINE GRUENBAUER
Child Supervisor	LINDA MARTIN
Child Supervisor	LAUREN REBELO

ORCHESTRA

Conductor & Keyboard 3	ALEXANDRA KANE
Keyboard 1	ÉRIC CHARBONNEAU
Bb Clarinet, Alto & Tenor	
Saxophone, Flute	TONY DE LUCA
Trombone	DENIS JIRON
Drums	ROB LAROSE
Bass	WILLIAM LI
Trumpet	PAUL STEVENSON

*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.



Meet Set and Costume Designers Scott Penner & Dana Osborne

What is your favourite Christmas or holiday tradition?

Scott: I would have to say decorating the tree. I love going to pick out the tree in the lot and bringing it home and watch it come to life as each ornament (some old, some new) is placed on it. This is usually when I break out all my favorite Christmas albums. The evening is usually wrapped up with a little eggnog and spiced rum.

Dana: Favourite tradition is a real fir tree. I love how the house smells and it reminds me of growing up in B.C.

Have you worked on *Elf*: *The Musical* or a holiday show before? How do you think theatre helps us get into the Christmas spirit?

Dana: I've never done *Elf* but I worked on a few Christmas shows over the years. I think theatre during the holiday season really fosters community - sharing an live experience with family, friends and strangers. It's also a great opportunity to bring generations together.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1, 2, 3. OUTSIDE THE TOY FACTORY.
STORYBOARD DESIGNED BY SCOTT PENNER

Which costume/set piece are you most excited to see realized on stage and why?

Scott: I am really excited to see the huge billboards which are based on the nostalgic Christmas illustrations I mentioned earlier. The scenic art team here at the Grand are some of the best painters I get to work with and I'm really excited to see them take these festive illustrations and make them sing for the stage!

Dana: I'm most excited about creating our Elves. I'm hoping to create a lot of personality with each actor yet keeping them still looking like a collective. Get ready for lots of colour!



COSTUME SKETCH BY DANA OSBORNE

This show requires a lot of Sparklejollytwinklejingley! How did these words provide inspiration for the design of this show? Where else did you draw inspiration from?

Scott: I was inspired a lot by vintage Christmas cards and artwork from the 1960's and the artwork of Mary Blair. Mary was an artist and illustrator who spent much of her career creating concept art for Walt Disney.

Dana: Sparkle was the word for me creatively and also reacting to Scott's wonderful design! I was inspired by old vibrant holiday commercials using graphic winter prints like plaids, snowflakes and nordic pattern.





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MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

Happy All The Time	<i>Santa Claus, Buddy, Elves</i>
World's Greatest Dad	<i>Buddy</i>
In the Way	<i>Deb, Walter, Michelle, Emily, Chorus</i>
Sparklejollytwinklejingley	<i>Buddy, Jovie, Store Manager, Chorus</i>
I'll Believe in You	<i>Michelle, Emily</i>
In the Way (reprise)	<i>Emily, Walter</i>
Just Like Him	<i>Buddy, Walter, Deb, Chorus</i>
A Christmas Song	<i>Buddy, Jovie, Chorus</i>
World's Greatest Dad (reprise)	<i>Buddy, Chorus</i>

ACT TWO

Nobody Cares About Santa	<i>Buddy, Store Manager, Fake Santas</i>
Never Fall in Love (With An Elf)	<i>Jovie</i>
There is a Santa Claus	<i>Michelle, Emily</i>
The Story of Buddy	<i>Buddy, Michelle, Walter, Greenway, Chorus</i>
Nobody Cares (reprise)	<i>Santa Claus</i>
A Christmas Song (reprise)	<i>Emily, Walter</i>
Finale	<i>Company</i>





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Activities & Discussion Questions

Pre-show

1. **Critical thinking:** Discuss the role of beliefs in society; the need for something greater than you. Ask students to journal about their personal experiences with imaginary or spiritual beliefs and reflect upon them in the context of their upbringing and current lives.
2. **History:** Have students compare and contrast the world histories of Santa Claus, St. Nick, and Kris Kringle, Sinterklaas, etc. Research the origins of the folklore associated. Where did these symbols and characters come from and why? How have they changed over time?
3. **Visual Art:** Select a scene from *Elf* or major event in Buddy's story and create a comic strip about it.
4. **Dance:** Turn your classroom into a winter wonderland. Play *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky, encouraging your students move about the space in two contrasting ways: the graceful skating rink Rockefeller Centre vs. the hustle and bustle of New York City streets OR the peaceful falling snowflakes of the North Pole vs. the rapid busy elves in Santa's workshop! **Hint for primary classes: hand out silk scarves for the young students to help express their interpretations of the music.*
5. **English/Language/Writer's Craft:** Have your students pitch a book idea! What holiday story would be the next best seller? Have them create a story board of their idea! *(This activity works pre- or post-show!)*
6. **Canadian and World Studies/Geography:** Make a map from The North Pole to New York City, marking the route that Buddy might have taken. *(This activity works pre- or post-show!)*
7. **Humanities/Religion/Social Studies:** Research a winter holiday tradition from outside your family 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? *(This activity works pre- or post-show!)*



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Activities & Discussion Questions

Post-show

1. **Visual Art:** Design a new set or recreate the set on a small scale. What elements are important to include?
2. **Drama:** Divide into groups and create tableaux of scenes from the play. Arrange these in order and perform, turning classroom lights dim and then on for each transition; it adds to the magic!
3. **Drama/Writing:** Write a review of the *Elf* performance you attended. Include a synopsis, themes, and critique of the theatrical elements production (direction, acting, lighting, set, costume, music). Consider including why certain songs and scenes were highlighted. Compare your review to other theatre reviews of *Elf*.
4. **English/Language/Writer's Craft:** In groups, research the genre of children's literature featuring adolescents and power of belief. How does *Elf* fit into this category?
5. **Social Sciences and Humanities:** How does Buddy share his upbeat and positive spirit with others? What are first and final reactions by the people of New York City?
6. **Social Sciences and Humanities:** Consider the fact that Buddy is on the outside. He doesn't fit, figuratively or literally, in The North Pole. By the end of *Elf*, Buddy's open, giving, and infectious spirit has changed the people of NYC. Have students write a personal reflection on why we as humans create masks, shields, and layers to seemingly protect ourselves even when deep down we might all want to believe.



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DYK? Volunteering at the Grand counts towards your 40 hours of community service!

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Become an important part of our Grand community with other like-minded students from across the city, and enjoy six plays on the Spriet Stage for as little as \$16 per ticket!

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HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT

An awesome opportunity for hands-on training and mentorship by professional artists and coaches in all departments of the Theatre. This program is open to any high school student from the London area and no costs are associated! Visit our website to learn more.

STUDENT RUSH

Same-day Student Rush tickets are available for all Grand Theatre Spriet Stage and Auburn Stage shows, starting at only \$29.95!

You Are Welcome.



We are building a community that future generations can be proud of. A community where everyone is welcome. A community where you can be yourself.

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