

The Winni Players Community Theatre Presents

The Skin of Our Teeth

By Thornton Wilder

About the Play:

The story centers on George Antrobus, his wife and two children, and their maid, Lily Sabina: the 'first family of the human race' who clamor to survive a series of disasters. In stark contrast to Wilder's "Our Town", "The Skin of Our Teeth" is a comedic allegory of durable but optimistic characters fighting to survive an ice age, a flood, and a war, all by the skin of their teeth.

Directed by Ken Chapman

Audition Dates: Sunday, November 11, 2018 at 6pm
Monday, November 12, 2018 at 6pm

You do NOT need to attend both days.

What to Prepare: Auditioners will be asked to read sides from the script. Sides are included at the end of this packet and familiarity with the material is recommended. Memorizing is not necessary.

Rehearsals: This production will rehearse **Sundays from 4:00PM-8:00PM as well as Tuesdays from 6:00PM-9:00PM and Wednesdays from 6:00PM-9:00PM beginning on Sunday November 18th at 6PM. Thursdays from 6:00PM-9:00PM will be added starting January 3rd.**

Tech Week: **Tech and Dress Rehearsals are Sunday, January 27th - Wednesday, January 30th**

All tech/dress rehearsals and performances are mandatory and may, therefore, only be missed in the case of the most extreme illness or emergency.

Performances: Thursday, January 31st, 2019 at 7:30PM (tentative 6:30PM call)
Friday, February 1, 2019 at 7:30PM (tentative 6:30PM call)
Saturday, February 2, 2019 at 7:30 PM (Tentative 6:30PM call)
Sunday, February 3, 2019 at 2:00PM (tentative 1:00 call)

Commitment: It is, of course, preferred that each cast member is available for every rehearsal. That said, we acknowledge that people have a lot going on and need to fit this production into already busy schedules.

Not every cast member will be called to every rehearsal. The theatre will publish a detailed schedule taking conflicts into account.

Auditioners will be asked to put their schedule conflicts on the form at auditions. The theatre agrees to work with all conflicts indicated on the back of the audition form. Additional conflicts (that were not disclosed at the time of auditions) may lead to dismissal from the production without a refund of participation fee.

All tech and dress rehearsals as well as performances are mandatory and may, therefore, only be missed in the case of the most extreme illness or emergency.

Use of Images: Permission to use cast members' images in promotional materials (including but not limited to all printed and digital publications in still or video format) is implicit in your agreement to participate in this production. Please note the photograph and/or video using the participants' likeness is property of the Winnepesaukee Playhouse and may be edited, altered, exhibited, published, and distributed for the purpose of publicizing this or any other Playhouse program in perpetuity, and that there will be no compensation of any kind for the use of these images.

Membership Fee: Every cast member is required to become a member of the Winni Players. The yearly fee to become a member is \$20 (\$35 for household). This covers any show you participate in during the calendar year.

CHARACTERS:

Sabina: mid 20s to mid 30s (or able to play). Sabina has been called the eternal seductress. Playing a maid during the ice age, a Bingo hall hostess and beauty queen before the great flood, and a maid again after the great war. This is a major female character with lots of speaking lines, humor (she speaks directly to the audience regularly), and hysterics. A classic character of mid-century American theatre.

Mrs. Antrobus: 40s or able to play. This character has been married to her husband for more than five thousand years! due to her strength and commitment to the survival of her family. She has a backbone of steel and many wonderful speeches! "Mrs. Antrobus is as fine a woman as you could hope to see. She lives only for her children; and if it would be any benefit to her children, she'd see the rest of us stretched out dead at her feet without turning a hair, that's the truth. If you want to know anything more about Mrs. Antrobus, just go and look at a tigress, and look hard."

Gladys Antrobus: mid teens. The character starts as a young child learning from her mother (and sometimes Sabina!) what she needs to survive. By the end of the play, she is a mother proving that the family survives and goes on. Appearing in all acts, this part is a good role for a young actress.

George Antrobus: 40s or able to play. Mr. Antrobus is the inventor of the wheel, the alphabet, and later he becomes the president of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Mammals, Human Subdivision. He goes on to save the world's creatures, two by two, from a flood, saving the world a second time. A wonderful part.

Henry Antrobus: teens to early 20s. It is rumored that his name was changed from Cain after he killed his brother Abel. "A real clean-cut American boy who will graduate from high school one day if they make the alphabet any easier." This character has an edge as he progresses through the play until the final act when he has a strong confrontation with his father. Wonderful complex part for a younger man.

Fortune Teller: a strong female character of an indeterminate age. Featured prominently in the middle of the play, she encourages George Antrobus to "think it over. A new world to make. Think it over."

Telegraph Delivery person: younger teen. One really good funny scene with Sabina and Mrs. Antrobus. A fun part. Can transition to other parts.

There are eight-to-ten other speaking characters (male and female of any age or experience) that will be cast. Needed are two early teens who will play a woolly mammoth and a dinosaur, then transition to other characters.

Additional roles (use of actors in more than one act will depend on auditions).

Fitzpatrick (Act II and III) The stage manager of the production. Interacts with the actor playing Sabina when she doesn't want to continue, and in Act III, comes onstage to find actors to fill in for several who have fallen ill.

Refugees (Act I). The refugees include Homer(who speaks in ancient Greek), Moses(who speaks in Hebrew and English), and three of the mythological Muses (brief lines in English). May also include a small number of non-speaking extras.

Dinosaur and Woolly Mammoth (Act I). The Antrobus family pets. They speak just a few words.

Ushers (Act I). Non-speaking extras appear at the end of the act.

Conveeners (Act II). Primarily extras attending the political convention on the beach at Atlantic City. One conveener has a brief scene in which he fights with Henry.

Broadcast Official (Act II). Becomes frustrated while setting up Mr. Antrobus's boardwalk press conference. Several lines.

Ivy, Hester, Fred Bailey, and Tremayne (Act III). The final four speaking characters are backstage workers who are called out to deliver some of the final speeches of the play –quotes from Aristotle, Spinoza, Plato, and the Bible. Ivy has more to say early in the act.

Some names of other characters to be cast (speaking parts): Homer, Moses, conventioners, amusement park patrons, the muses, a judge, doctor, and many others. Some characters may spend some time in and deliver lines from the audience. Most of these characters will not need to be at every rehearsal and may be released early from rehearsals.

Audition Materials

Mrs. Antrobus:

I have been asked by this kind gentleman—yes, my friends, this spring Mr. Antrobus and I will be celebrating our five thousandth wedding anniversary.

I don't know if I speak for my husband, but I can say that, as for me, I regret every moment of it.

(Laughter of confusion)

I beg your pardon. What I mean to say is that I do not regret one moment of it. I hope none of you catch my cold.

We have two children. We've always had two children, though it hasn't always been the same two. But as I say, we have two fine children, and we're very grateful for that.

Yes, Mr. Antrobus and I have been married five thousand years. Each wedding anniversary reminds me of the times when there were no weddings. We had to crusade for marriage. Perhaps there are some women within the sound of my voice who remember that crusade and those struggles; we fought for it, didn't we? We chained ourselves to lampposts and we made disturbances in the Senate,—anyway, at last we women got the ring.

(She adjusts her girdle)

A few men helped us, but I must say that most men blocked our way at every step: they said we were unfeminine. I only bring up these unpleasant memories, because I see some signs of backsliding from that great victory. Oh, my fellow mammals, keep hold of that. My husband says that the watchword for the year is Enjoy Yourselves. I think that's very open to misunderstanding. My watchword for the year is: Save the Family. It's held together for over five thousand years: Save it! Thank you.

Mr. Antrobus:

Fellow-mammals, fellow-vertebrates, fellow-humans, thank you. Little did my parents think,—when they told me to stand on my own two feet,—that I'd arrive at this place. My friends, we have come a long way. During this week of happy celebration it is perhaps not fitting that we dwell on some of the difficult times we have been through. The dinosaur is extinct —the ice has retreated; and the common cold is being pursued by every means within our power.

In our memorial service yesterday we did honor to all our friends and relatives who are no longer with us, by reason of cold, earthquakes, plagues and—and
—

(Coughs)

differences of opinion.

As our Bishop so ably said—uh—so ably said—

'They are gone, but not forgotten.'

I think I can say, I think I can prophecy with complete —uh—^with complete—

With complete lack of confidence,

that a new day of security is about to dawn.

The watchword of the closing year was: work. I give you the watchword for the future: Enjoy yourselves.

Before I close, however, I wish to answer one of those unjust and malicious accusations that were brought against me during this last electoral campaign.

Ladies and gentlemen, the charge was made that at various points in my career I leaned toward joining some of the rival orders,—that's a lie.

As I told reporters of the *Atlantic City Herald*, I do not deny that a few months before my birth I hesitated between—uh—between pinfeathers and gill-breathing, --and so did many of us here,--but for the last million years I have been viviparous, hairy and diaphragmatic.

Fortune Teller:

(Rises, unfurls her voluminous skirts, gives a sharp wrench to her bodice and strolls towards the audience, swinging her hips like a young woman)

I tell the future. Keck. Nothing easier. Everybody's future is in their face. Nothing easier.

But who can tell your past,—eh? Nobody!

Your youth—where did it go? It slipped away while you weren't looking. While you were asleep. While you were drunk? Puh! You're like our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Antrobus; you lie awake nights trying to know your past. What did it mean? What was it trying to say to you? Think! Think!

Split your heads. I can't tell the past, and neither can you. If anybody tries to tell you the past, take my word for it, they're charlatans. But I can tell the future.

(She suddenly barks at a passing Chair-pusher who is just passing the Bingo Parlor)

Apoplexy! .

Nobody listens.—Keck! I see a face among you now. I won't embarrass him by pointing him out, but, listen, it may be you: Next year the watch spring inside you will crumple up. Death by regret,— It's in the corners of your mouth. You'll decide that you should have lived for pleasure, but that you missed it. Death by regret. Avoid mirrors. You'll try to be angry,—but no!—no anger.

(Far forward, confidentially)

And now what's the immediate future of our friends, the Antrobuses? Oh, you've seen it as well as I have, keck,—that dizziness of the head; that Great Man dizziness? The inventor of beer and gunpowder. The sudden fits of temper and then the long stretches of inertia? "I'm a sultan; let my slave-girls fan me"? You know as well as I what's coming. Rain. Rain. Rain in floods. The deluge. But first you'll see shameful things—shameful things. Shameful things. Some of you will be saying: "Let him drown. He's not worth saving. Give the whole thing up." I can see it in your faces. But you're wrong. Keep your doubts and despairs to yourselves. Again there'll be the narrow escape. The survival of a handful From destruction,—total destruction.

(She points, sweeping with her hand to the stage)

Even of the animals, a few will be saved : two of a kind, male and female, two of a kind.

(To the audience:) And *you!* Mark my words before it's too late. Where'll *you* be?

Yes, stick out your tongues. You can't stick your

tongues out far enough to lick the death-sweat from

your foreheads. It's too late to work now—bail out the flood with your soup spoons.

You've had your chance and you've lost.

They're coming, the Antrobuses. Keck. Your hope. Your despair. Your selves.

Gladys, Mrs. Antrobus, Mr. Antrobus, Henry, Sabina:

Gladys :

Papa—Papa—I was very good in school today. Miss Conover said right out in class that if all the girls had as good manners as Gladys Antrobus, that the world would be a very different place to live in.

Mrs. Antrobus:

You recited a piece at assembly, didn't you? Recite it to your father.

Gladys:

Papa, do you want to hear what I recited in class?

"The Star," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Mrs. Antrobus:

Wait!!! The fire's going out. There isn't enough wood! Henry, go upstairs and bring down the chairs and start breaking up the beds.

Gladys:

Look, Papa, here's my report card. Lookit. Conduct A Look, Papa. Papa, do you want to hear "The Star," by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow? Papa, you're not mad at me, are you?—I know it'll get warmer. Soon it'll be just like Spring, and we can go to a picnic at the Hibernian Picnic Grounds like you always like to do, don't you remember? Papa, just look at me once.

(Her head on his knee.)

Antrobus:

You recited in assembly, did you? **(She nods eagerly)** You didn't forget it?

Gladys :

No!!! I was perfect.

Antrobus :

Build up the fire. It's cold. Build up the fire. We'll do what we can. Sabina, get more wood.

Come around the fire, everybody. Bring up your benches. At least the young ones may pull through.

(Pulling Henry to his Left) Henry, have you eaten something?

Henry:

Yes, Papa.

Antrobus :

Gladys, have you had some supper?

Gladys: I ate in the kitchen, Papa.

Antrobus:

(Sits chair Left of table Center, holding Gladys's and Henry's hands)

If you do come through this—what you be able to do? What do you know? Henry, did you take a good look at that wheel?

Henry :

Yes, Papa,

Antrobus :

Six times two are

Henry :—twelve; six times three are eighteen; six times four are— Papa, it's hot and cold. It makes my head all funny. It makes me sleepy.

Antrobus :

(Gives him a cuff) Wake up. I don't care if your head is sleepy. Six times four are twenty-four. Six times five are—

Henry: Thirty. Papa!

Antrobus: Maggie, put something into Gladys' head on the chance she can use it.

Mrs Antrobus: What should it be, George?

Antrobus : Six times six are thirty-six. Teach her the beginning of the Bible.

Gladys: But, Mama, it's so cold and close.

Mrs. Antrobus : 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the

Earth **(Gladys repeats each phrase. Antrobus continues**

with the table. Henry repeats after him. Sabina

enters from Right with pieces of furniture)

and the earth was waste and void; and the darkness

was upon the face of the deep—

Sabina: (Coming down to the footlights, tossing wood in fireplace)

Will you please start handing up your chairs? We'll need everything for this fire. Save the human race.

—Ushers, will you pass the chairs up here? Thank you.

Henry: Six times nine are fifty-four; six times ten are sixty,

Gladys: "And God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night."

Sabina: Pass up your chairs, everybody. Save the human race.

Mr. Antrobus, Henry:

Henry:

You don't have to think I'm any relation of yours. I haven't got any father or any mother, or brothers or sisters. And I don't want any. I'm alone, and that's all I want to be: alone. And what's more I haven't got anybody over me; and I never will have. So you can shoot me.

Antrobus:

You're the last person I wanted to see. The sight of you dries up all my plans and hopes. I wish I were back at war still, because it's easier to fight 3'ou than to live with you. War's a pleasure—do you hear me?—War's a pleasure compared to what faces us now: trying to build up a peacetime with you in the middle of it.

Henry:

I'm not going to be a part of any peacetime of yours. I'm going a long way from here and make my own world that's fit for a man to live in. Where a man can be free, and have a chance, and do what he wants to do in his own way.

Antrobus: Henry, let's try again.

Henry :

Try what? Living here?—Speaking polite downtown to all the old men like you ? Standing like a sheep at the street-corner until the red light turns to green? Being a good boy and a good sheep, like all the stinking ideas you get out of your books. Oh, no. I'll make a world, and I'll show you.

Antrobus : How can you make a world for people to live in, unless you've first put order in yourself? Mark my words : I shall continue fighting you until my last breath as long as you mix up your idea of liberty with you idea of hogging everything for yourself. I shall have no pity on you. I shall pursue you to the far corners of the earth. You and I want the same thing; but until you think of it as something that everyone has a right to, you are my deadly enemy and I will destroy you. I hear your mother's voice in the kitchen. Have you seen her?

Henry: I have no mother. Get it into your head. I don't belong here. I have nothing to do here. I have no home.

Antrobus : Then why did you come here? With the whole world to choose from, why did you come to this one place: 216 Cedar Street, Exxcelsior, New Jersey—Well?

Henry: What if I did? What if I wanted to look at it once more, to see if--

Antrobus : Oh, you're related, all right—When your mother comes in you must behave yourself. Do you hear me?

Henry: (Wildly) What is this?—*must behave* yourself. Don't you say *must* to me.

Antrobus : Quiet!

Henry: Nobody can say *must* to me. All my life everybody's been crossing me,--everybody, everything, all of you. I'm going to be free, even if I have to kill half the world for it. Right now, too. Let me get my hands on his throat. I'll show him.

Sabina:

Oh, oh, oh ! Six o'clock and the master not home yet.

Pray God nothing serious has happened to him crossing

the Hudson River. If anything happened to him, we would certainly be inconsolable and have to move into a less desirable residence district.

•The fact is I don't know what'll become of us. Here it is the middle of August and the coldest day of the year. It's simply freezing; the dogs are sticking to the sidewalks;

(To audience)

can anybody explain that? No.

But I'm not surprised. The whole world's at sixes and sevens, and why the house hasn't fallen down about our ears long ago is a miracle to me.

Every night this same anxiety as to whether the master will get home safely: whether he'll bring home anything to eat.

In the midst of life we are in the midst of death, a truer word was never said.

...

We've managed to survive for some time now catch as catch can, the fat and the lean, and if the dinosaurs don't trample us to death, and if the grasshoppers don't our garden, we'll all live to see better days on wood.

Each new child that's born to the Antrobus seems in them to be sufficient reason for the whole universe's set in motion; and each new child that dies seems to have been spared a whole world of sorrow and what the end of it will be is still very much an Open question.

We've rattled along hot and cold, for some time now,

(To audience)

and my advice to you is not to inquire into why or whither, but just enjoy your ice cream while it's on your plate; that's my philosophy.

Don't forget that a few years ago we came through the depression by the skin of our teeth!

One more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?

(This is a cue line. Sabina looks at the door and repeats:)

—we came through the depression by the skin of our teeth; one more tight squeeze like that and where will we be?

(Flustered, she starts the act over)

Oh, oh, oh! Six o'clock and the master not home yet.

Pray God nothing has happened to him crossing the Hudson.

(Speaking to the audience) Oh I can't invent any words for this play, and I'm glad I can't. I hate this play and every word in it.

As for me, I don't understand a single word of it, anyway,—all about the troubles the human race has gone

through, there's a subject for you.

Besides the author hasn't made up his silly mind as to whether we're all living back in caves or in New Jersey, and that's the way it is all the way through.

Oh—why can't we have plays like we used to have like *Peg O' My Heart* and *Smiling Thru*, and *The Bat*, good entertainment with a message you can take home with you?

*** (A quick look off Left)**

I took this hateful job because I had to. For two years I've sat up in my room living on a sandwich and a cup of tea a day, waiting for better times in the theatre.

And look at me now: I—I who've played *God of Carnage* and *Proof* and *August: Osage County*—God!

Telegraph Boy, Mrs. Antrobus, Sebina:

Mrs. Antrobus :

What about this cold weather?

Telegraph Boy:

Of course, I don't know anything—but they say there's a wall of ice moving down from the North, that's what they say. ^

We can't get Boston by telegraph, and they're burning pianos in Hartford.

It moves everything in front of it, churches and post offices and city halls.

I live in Brooklyn myself.

Mrs. Antrobus:

What are people doing about it?

Telegraph Boy:

Well—uh— Talking, mostly.

Or just what you'd do a day in February.

There are some that are trying to go south and the roads are crowded; but you can't take old people and children very far in a cold like this.

Mrs. Antrobus:

What's this telegram you have for me?

Telegraph Boy: If you wait just a minute; I've got to remember it. (POSING) This telegram was flashed from Murray Hill to University Heights! And then by puffs of smoke from University Heights to Staten Island. And then by lantern from Staten Island to Plainfield, New Jersey. What hath God wrought! "To Mrs. Antrobus, *Excelsior, New Jersey: My dear wife, will be an hour late.* Busy day at the office. Don't worry the children about the cold just keep them warm. Burn everything except Shakespeare."

Mrs. Antrobus: He knows I'd burn ten Shakespeares to prevent a child of mine from having one cold in the head. What does it say next?

Telegraph Boy: "Have made great discoveries today have separated em from en"

Sabina: I know what that is, that's the alphabet, yes it is. Mr. Antrobus is just the cleverest man. Why, when the alphabet's finished, we'll be able to tell the future and everything.

Telegraph Boy: Then listen to this: "Ten tens make a hundred semicolon consequences far-reaching."

Mrs. Antrobus: The earth's turning to ice, and all he can do is make up new numbers.

Telegraph Boy: Well, Mrs. Antrobus like the head man at our office said: a few more discoveries like that and we'll be worth freezing.

Mrs. Antrobus: What does he say next?

...

Sabina: Mrs. Antrobus, I want to take sback the notice I gave you. Mrs. Antrobus, I don't want to leave a house that gets such interesting telegrams and I'm sorry for anything I said. I really am.

Mrs. Antrobus: Young man, I'd like to give you something for this trouble; Mr. Antrobus isn't home yet and I have no money and no food in the house—

Telegraph Boy: Mrs. Antrobus—I don't like to -appear to—ask for anything, but—do you happen to have an old needle you could spare? My wife just sits home all day thinking about needles.

Sabina: We only got two in the house. Mrs. Antrobus, you know we only got two in the house.

Mrs. Antrobus: *(a look at Sabina, taking a needle from her collar, hands it to him)* Why, yes, I can spare this.

Telegraph Boy: Thank you, Mrs. Antrobus. Mrs. Antrobus, can I ask you something else? I have two sons of my own; if the cold get worse, what should I do?

Sabina: I think we'll all perish, that's what I think. Cold like this in August is just the end of the whole world.

Mrs. Antrobus: I don't know. After all, what does one do about any thing? Just keep as warm as you can. And don't let your wife and children see that you're worried.

Telegraph Boy: Yes. Thank you Mrs. Antrobus. Well, I'd better be going. Of, I forgot there's one more sentence in the telegram—"Three cheers have invented the wheel."

Mrs. Antrobus: A wheel? What a wheel?

Telegraph Boy: I don't know. That's what it said. The sign for it is like this. *(Gestures large circle)* Well, goodbye. *(Looks at Sabina, clicks his tongue. Leaves)*

Sabina: Mrs. Antrobus, it looks to me like all the nice men in the world are already married; I don't know what that is. *(Sobs. Exits.)*