

Chapter 1 : Our Town () - IMDb

Our Town is a metatheatrical three-act play by American playwright Thornton Wilder. The play tells the story of the fictional American small town of Grover's Corners between and through the everyday lives of its citizens.

But alas, the movie sucked although Deniro was funny. And then I got to remembering that the finale of that show was one of the best ever simply because it was not really meant to be the finale. That the series ended like this just stunned me. It went like this if you care to know. Oh, you can remember it like this: You see, Emily is dead. The life she had is over. And that she never really appreciated what she had. So all that was going on, and Back to the hill, to my grave. Goodbye to clocks ticking. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? Saints and poets, maybe they do so. I should have listened to you. Angela turns the other way and exits: I guess I was just too young to understand. I went to the bookstore that night and I bought a copy of the play. In the introduction that very feeling is addressed, how many young people are introduced to this play when they are deficient in experience and short on attention. People tend to lump it into a Kapra or Rockwell kind of kitsch. At least, I fell into that trap. But now, reading it again closer to 40 makes me understand what a wonderful work of art that play really is. And I loved it. I loved everything they did and everything they said. That a character can come in, be given all the aspirations and talents in the world then be destroyed by a few words from the Stage Manager dumbfounds me. How terrible, how casual, how like real life. The saints and poets, maybe. Morden says, "One does not go to the dead for wisdom". It seems that Thornton Wilder would disagree.

Chapter 2 : Calliope - Our Town

Our Town is a play by Thornton Wilder that was first performed in

Professor Willard speaks to the audience about the history of the town. Joe Crowell delivers the paper to Doc Gibbs, Howie Newsome delivers the milk, and the Webb and Gibbs households send their children Emily and George, respectively off to school on this beautifully simple morning. Love and Marriage[edit] Three years have passed, and George and Emily prepare to wed. The day is filled with stress. George pays an awkward visit to his soon-to-be in-laws. Emily confronts George about his pride, and over an ice cream soda , they discuss the future and their love for each other. In the present, George and Emily say that they are not ready to marryâ€”George to his mother, Emily to her fatherâ€”but they both calm down and happily go through with the wedding. Death and Eternity[edit] Nine years have passed. Gibbs pneumonia , while traveling , Wally Webb burst appendix, while camping , Mrs. Soames, and Simon Stimson suicide by hanging. Once the funeral ends, Emily emerges to join the dead; Mrs. Gibbs urges her to forget her life, warning her that being able to see but not interact with her family, all the while knowing what will happen in the future, will cause her too much pain, but she refuses. Ignoring the warnings of Simon, Mrs. Gibbs, Emily returns to Earth to relive one day, her 12th birthday. Emily watches with joy at being able to see her parents and some of the people of her childhood for the first time in years. However, her joy quickly turns to pain as she realizes how little people appreciate the simple joys of life. The memory proves too painful for her, and she realizes that every moment of life should be treasured. When she asks the Stage Manager if anyone truly understands the value of life while they live it, he responds, "No. The saints and poets, maybeâ€”they do some. Gibbs and watches impassively as George kneels weeping over her. The Stage Manager concludes the play and wishes the audience a good night. He joins in the action of the play periodically, as the minister at the wedding, the soda shop owner, a local townsman, etc. Dies while visiting her daughter in Ohio. Both he and his brother Si hold marriage in high disdain. Played by Wyatt Allen. Later elopes with a traveling salesman and settles in Ohio. Dies of a burst appendix on a Boy Scout camping trip.

Chapter 3 : Thornton Wilder (Author of Our Town)

Thornton Wilder wrote that part of his motivation in writing Our Town was to illustrate that even the seemingly mundane moments of our daily lives have value beyond price. I think that in Our Town, Wilder succeeds in showing that each and every day has meaning and significance.

The idea for the Pulitzer Prize-winning play first occurred to Thornton Wilder during a visit to Rome. Princeton University Library Shortly after 8 p. Eventually acknowledged as a classic American drama, it would win Wilder his second Pulitzer Prize, the first of two he received for playwriting. Wilder, 23, was a student at the American Academy, studying Italian, Latin and, notably, archaeology. While visiting a local dig, a first-century tomb, he was struck by the vivid juxtaposition of past and present. In a letter to his parents, cited by Penelope Fitzgerald in her biography of Wilder, he described the formative experience: We were clutching at the past to recover the loves and pieties and habits of the Aurelius family, while the same elements were passing above us. But Wilder had been writing plays that experimented with untraditional and surreal stage techniques for some time, even as he published the novels that established his reputation. The promise took years and miles to keep: When two acts were complete, Wilder, true to his word, offered them to Harris in Harris could be unyielding and cavalier, and Wilder, perhaps uncomfortable with the collaborative nature of commercial theater, became frustrated and angry about cuts and adjustments in his script. As late as the afternoon of opening night in Princeton, a doubtful Wilder wrote and sealed a letter listing many last-minute reservations. Despite his concerns, the production was solid. Lighting and sound glitches marred the sold-out premiere. Applause interrupted scene after scene. Laughter swept the house. Due to poor ticket sales Harris pulled the show after five performances. In a great risk, Jed Harris invited Brooks Atkinson, theater critic for The New York Times, to a rehearsal, hoping early exposure would give the critic extra time to savor and reflect on the play. The risk paid off. When the original production closed on November 19, it had played more than performances. It was first licensed for amateur production in He writes often about music and the other performing arts, and is currently enrolled in the Oral History Master of Arts Program at Columbia University.

Chapter 4 : SparkNotes: Our Town: Plot Overview

Our Town is a short powerful play by Thornton Wilder. It portrays our environment, lives, and death within the very few pages. The story is so vivid, it draws one into the town, and the lives of the characters.

In the opening scene, the stage is largely empty, except for some tables and chairs that represent the homes of the Gibbs and Webb families, the setting of most of the action in Act I. The set remains sparse throughout the rest of the play. Howie Newsome, the milkman, and Joe Crowell, Jr. Gibbs returns from delivering a set of twins at one of the homes in town. Webb make breakfast, send their children off to school, and meet in their gardens to gossip. The two women also discuss their modest ambitions, and Mrs. Gibbs reveals that she longs to visit Paris. Throughout the play, the characters pantomime their activities and chores. This deliberate abandonment of props goes hand in hand with the minimal set. The Stage Manager interrupts the action. He calls Professor Willard and then Mr. Afternoon arrives, school lets out, and George Gibbs meets his neighbor Emily Webb outside the gate of her house. The Stage Manager thanks and dismisses Emily and Mrs. He tells us that he wishes to put a copy of *Our Town* into this time capsule. Gibbs, and their gossipy friend Mrs. The women return to their respective homes. George and his sister Rebecca sit at a window and look outside. Webb, who insist that it is bad luck for the groom to see the bride-to-be on the wedding day anytime before the ceremony. Webb goes upstairs to make sure Emily does not come downstairs. George is left alone with Mr. The young man and his future father-in-law awkwardly discuss marriage and how to be a virtuous husband. The Stage Manager interjects and introduces a flashback to the previous year. George and Emily are on their way home from school. George has just been elected class president and Emily has just been elected secretary and treasurer. George has also become something of a local baseball star. The two stop at Mr. We return to the day of the wedding in Both the bride and groom feel jittery, but their parents calm them down and the ceremony goes ahead as planned. The Stage Manager acts as the clergyman. Act III takes place nine years later, in a cemetery on a hilltop overlooking the town. Emily has died in childbirth and is about to be buried. The funeral party occupies the back of the stage. The most prominent characters in this act, the dead souls who already inhabit the cemetery, sit in chairs at the front of the stage. Among the dead are Mrs. Soames, Wally Webb, and Simon Stimson. As the funeral takes place, the dead speak, serving as detached witnesses. Death has rendered them largely indifferent to earthly events. Emily joins the dead, but she misses her previous life and decides to go back and relive part of it. The other souls disapprove and advise Emily to stay in the cemetery. With the aid of the Stage Manager, Emily steps into the past, revisiting the morning of her twelfth birthday. Howie Newsome and Joe Crowell, Jr. Webb gives her daughter some presents and calls to Mr. Emily now has a nostalgic appreciation for everyday life that her parents and the other living characters do not share. She becomes agonized by the beauty and transience of everyday life and demands to be taken back to the cemetery. As Emily settles in among the dead souls, George lays prostrate by her tomb.

Chapter 5 : Our Town by Thornton Wilder

Our Town, a play written by Thornton Wilder, is a story that, for awhile, may seem to drag on and be slightly dull, but, at the same time, captures the attention of the reader/viewer and provides an insightful and unique view about humanity.

All of the Wilder children spent part of their childhood in China. His older brother, Amos Niven Wilder , became Hollis Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School , was a noted poet, and was instrumental in developing the field of theopoetics. His sister, Isabel, was an accomplished writer. According to a classmate, "We left him alone, just left him alone. And he would retire at the library, his hideaway, learning to distance himself from humiliation and indifference. He attended the English China Inland Mission Chefoo School at Yantai but returned with his mother and siblings to California in because of the unstable political conditions in China at the time. He received several awards for his military service. Though he considered himself a teacher first and a writer second, he continued to write all his life, receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in Also, Alfred Hitchcock , whom he admired, asked him to write the screenplay to his thriller, Shadow of a Doubt. Philosophically, the book explores the question of why unfortunate events occur to people who seem "innocent" or "undeserving". It won the Pulitzer Prize [1] in , and in it was selected by the editorial board of the American Modern Library as one of the best novels of the twentieth century. The book was quoted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair during the memorial service for victims of the September 11 attacks in The book is the progenitor of the modern disaster epic in literature and film-making , where a single disaster intertwines the victims, whose lives are then explored by means of flashbacks to events before the disaster. Our Town employs a choric narrator called the Stage Manager and a minimalist set to underscore the human experience. Wilder played the Stage Manager on Broadway for two weeks and later in summer stock productions. The play won the Pulitzer Prize. It was a failure, closing after 39 performances. Again, the themes are familiar " the timeless human condition; history as progressive, cyclical, or entropic; literature, philosophy, and religion as the touchstones of civilization. Three acts dramatize the travails of the Antrobus family, allegorizing the alternate history of mankind. He had met Jean-Paul Sartre on a U. This time the play opened in and enjoyed a healthy Broadway run of performances with Ruth Gordon in the title role, winning a Tony Award for Guthrie, its director. It became the basis for the hit musical Hello, Dolly! A Life, she provides considerable epistolary evidence that the third act of "Our Town" was not written in response to any walk, conversation or affair with Samuel Steward but was begun before Wilder ever met Steward and was not finished until several months afterward. His sister Isabel lived there for the rest of her life. This became his home base, although he traveled extensively and lived away for significant periods. He died in that house on 7 December , of heart failure.

Chapter 6 : Our Town () - Rotten Tomatoes

A short summary of Thornton Wilder's Our Town. This free synopsis covers all the crucial plot points of Our Town.

The act opens with the appearance of the Stage Manager, who speaks directly to the audience. After the introduction by the Stage Manager, the milkman and paper boy arrive and signal the official opening of the action of the play. Then the representative families begin to assemble for breakfast. First, the mother in each family tries to get her children up, dressed, fed, and off to school. After the children leave, the two mothers Mrs. Gibbs meet for a chat. The Stage Manager returns and states more facts about the town. By this time, the day has passed by. Emily Webb and George Gibbs come home from school. George is struggling with schoolwork; Emily is the best student in her class. The two young people arrange a way so that Emily can assist George. The Stage Manager returns and tells more about the town. Gibbs attend weekly choir rehearsal. The constable strolls by on patrol. This passage signals the end of a typical day. The second act occurs some years later. After more comments by the Stage Manager, Mrs. Webb return to the stage to prepare for a wedding. Both receive deliveries from the milkman and invite him and his wife to the ceremony. George Gibbs comes downstairs and tells his mother that he is going across the yard to see Emily, his girl; they are to be married later that day. Webb reminds him that the groom should not see the bride on the day of the wedding. George talks to his future father-in-law until Mrs. Webb reappears and sends George home so that Emily can come downstairs to breakfast. The Stage Manager then turns back time to the day when George and Emily first discover their love for each other. George stops Emily on their way home from school. He has just been elected president of the senior class; Emily is secretary-treasurer. He asks her why she is mad at him. Emily admonishes George for immersing himself in baseball and forgetting his friends. He assures Emily that he has not forgotten her. George emphasizes that Emily is special to him and that she remains in his thoughts. Emily feels that she is mistaken about George and returns his affection. They part after having acknowledged their mutual love. The Stage Manager enters and explains that he will serve as minister and makes further comments about weddings. Webb expresses fear about losing her daughter. Then George owns up to momentary doubts about getting married. In the meantime, Emily relates her qualms to her father. As soon as George and Emily see each other, they overcome their fears. The ceremony takes place in the background while the audience hears the comments of Mrs. Soames, a wedding guest. Then the Stage Manager returns in his original persona to make closing remarks. The third act occurs in the cemetery at the burial of Emily Webb Gibbs, who has just died in childbirth and left her husband and four-year-old son. Like any newcomer, she is uneasy among the dead; she wonders how long the feeling will last. After the mourners leave the cemetery, she longs to return to life for a single day. The other spirits try to dissuade her, but she insists. Emily chooses to relive her twelfth birthday, but when she returns to earth, she discovers that people live their lives without appreciating or sharing the moment of living. They overlook the joy found in simple everyday activities. Emotionally unable to endure a full day of her past, Emily returns to the cemetery. There, at night, she watches George come to grieve at her grave. Emily perceives that the living understand little about death and even less about being alive.

Chapter 7 : Our Town | Samuel French

Wilder's greatest and best-known work as a playwright, Our Town opens with the Stage Manager's introduction to Grover's Corners, a fictional town based on Peterborough, New Hampshire where Wilder often spent his summers.

Chapter 8 : Our Town by Thornton Wilder | The College

OUR TOWN by THORNTON WILDER This is a definitive edition of Thornton Wilder's best-known and most frequently performed play. First produced and published in, at which time it won the Pulitzer Prize, its reputation as an American

Chapter 9 : Our Town | Thornton Wilder Society

OUR TOWN is a timeless classic, and this film version captures the major themes from Thornton Wilder's great play. At once simple and profound, unsentimental and heart-breaking, the story of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, and its citizens is a time capsule of early 20th Century America.