



What's Inside?

- 1 Table of Contents & Setting
- 2 The Playwright/Works of L&T
- 3 Lewis and Tolkien
- 4 The Players/Characters
- 5 Oxford, England & Oxford University
- 6 Timeline of Friendship
- 7 The Eagle and Child
- 8 The Inklings
- 9 Activity Page
- 10 About Taproot
- 11 Education Programs

Sonja Lowe - Production Dramaturg

The Setting

The Eagle and Child Pub
Oxford, England

Autumn, 1963

A classic English pub.
The "Rabbit Room" is a large side
room connected to where the
actual bar is located.



The Playwright: Dean Batali

Dean Batali has been a writer and producer on more than 350 episodes of television (including *That 70s Show* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*). As a showrunner he was executive producer for Hallmark's *Good Witch* and Great American Pure Flix's *Destination Heaven*. A graduate of The Evergreen State College, Dean's musical *Noah* premiered in Olympia, and he directed a later production of that show in his hometown of Tacoma. Before moving to Los Angeles, Dean and his wife, Beth, were members of Taproot Theatre's Road Company, and during that time they performed in Dean's one-act Christmas musical, *In Those Days*. His most recent play is the one-man *Charles Dickens: Speaking of Scrooge*. Dean is also an author, having co-written the book *Watching TV Religiously*, which examines television from a spiritual perspective.



What was the inspiration for this show for you and how did it develop along the way?

"I had been thinking about writing a play about the younger Lewis and Tolkien, but then was asked by a producer to consider writing something about them later-in-life. As I learned more about how their friendship deteriorated (and the main conflict that contributed to their separation) I got excited about writing a play about how complicated and difficult maintaining relationships can be — but that the work it takes to reconcile is well worth it. I was then able to get more specific about their issues while being able to universalize their experiences, addressing issues of grief and feelings of being abandoned, but also writing about the efforts and value of investing in friendships. Then when I was done I realized I had created this "fly on the wall" experience for audiences to feel like they were in the room while these two great authors discussed myth, language, inspiration, meaning — and love."

Works of C. S. Lewis

Chronicles of Narnia:
including *The Lion, the Witch,*
and the Wardrobe

The Space Trilogy

Mere Christianity

Miracles

The Great Divorce

Surprised by Joy

The Screwtape Letters

The Problem of Pain

Works of J. R. R. Tolkien

The Hobbit

The Lord of the Rings

The Silmarillion

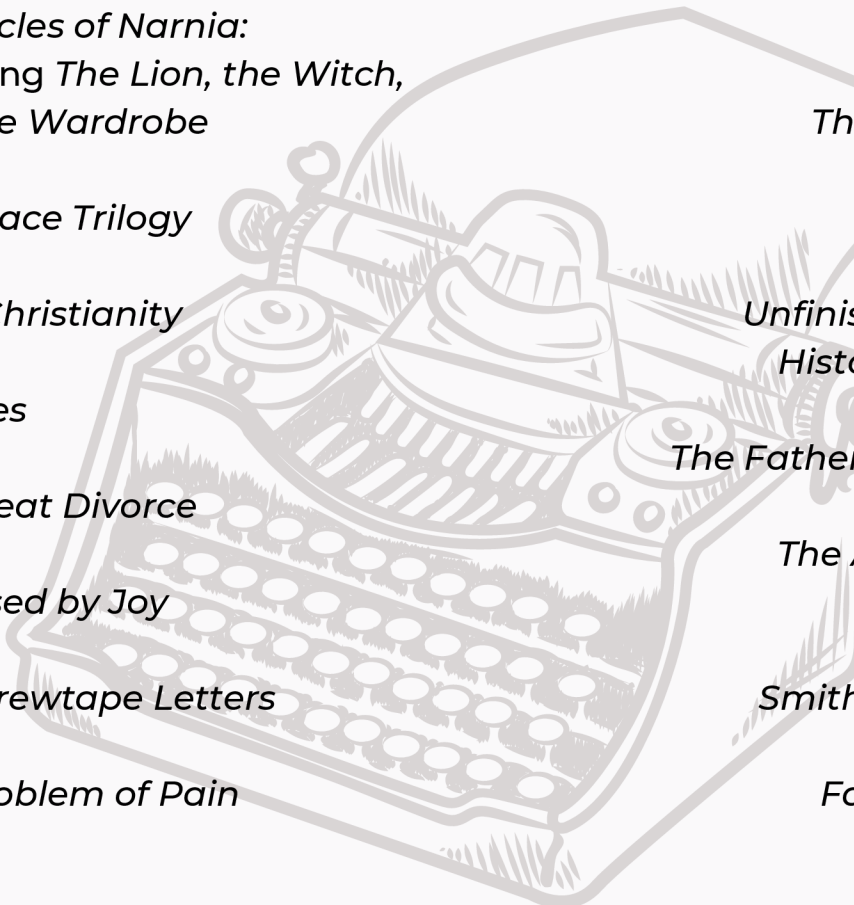
Unfinished Tales and The
History of Middle-earth

The Father Christmas Letters

The Adventures of Tom
Bombadil

Smith of Wootton Major

Farmer Giles of Ham

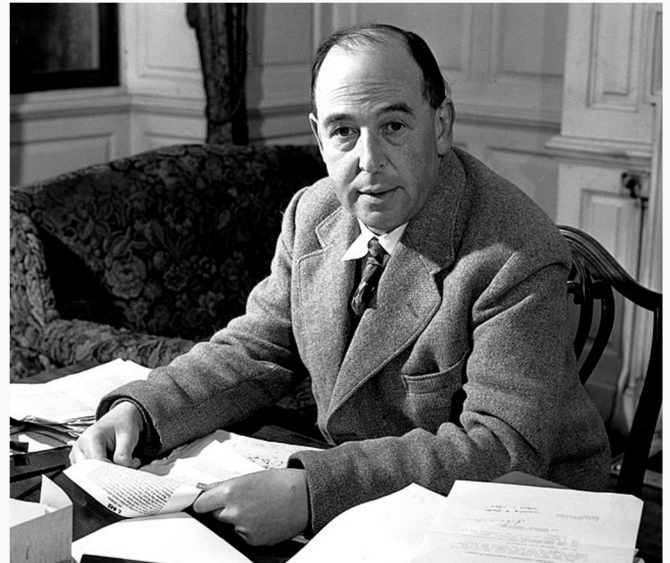


C. S. Lewis

Clive Staples Lewis FBA (29 November 1898 – 22 November 1963) was a British writer, literary scholar, and Anglican lay theologian. He held academic positions in English literature at both Magdalen College, Oxford (1925–1954), and Magdalene College, Cambridge (1954–1963). He is best known as the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, but he is also noted for his other works of fiction, such as *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Space Trilogy*, and for his non-fiction Christian apologetics, including *Mere Christianity*, *Miracles*, and *The Problem of Pain*.

Lewis was a close friend of J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*. Both men served on the English faculty at Oxford University and were active in the informal Oxford literary group known as the Inklings. According to Lewis's 1955 memoir *Surprised by Joy*, he was baptized in the Church of Ireland but fell away from his faith during adolescence. Lewis returned to Anglicanism at the age of 32, owing to the influence of Tolkien and other friends, and he became an "ordinary layman of the Church of England". Lewis's faith profoundly affected his work, and his wartime radio broadcasts on the subject of Christianity brought him wide acclaim.

Lewis wrote more than 30 books which have been translated into more than 30 languages and have sold millions of copies. The books that make up *The Chronicles of Narnia* have sold the most and have been popularized on stage, TV, radio, and cinema. His philosophical writings are widely cited by Christian scholars from many denominations.



In 1956, Lewis married American writer Joy Davidman; she died of cancer four years later at the age of 45. Lewis died on November 22, 1963 from kidney failure, at age 64. In 2013, on the 50th anniversary of his death, Lewis was honoured with a memorial in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._S._Lewis
[1] Fellowship of the British Academy [2] Lewis, C.S. (1952). *Mere Christianity*. New York: Harper Collins. p. viii. [ISBN 9780061947438](#)

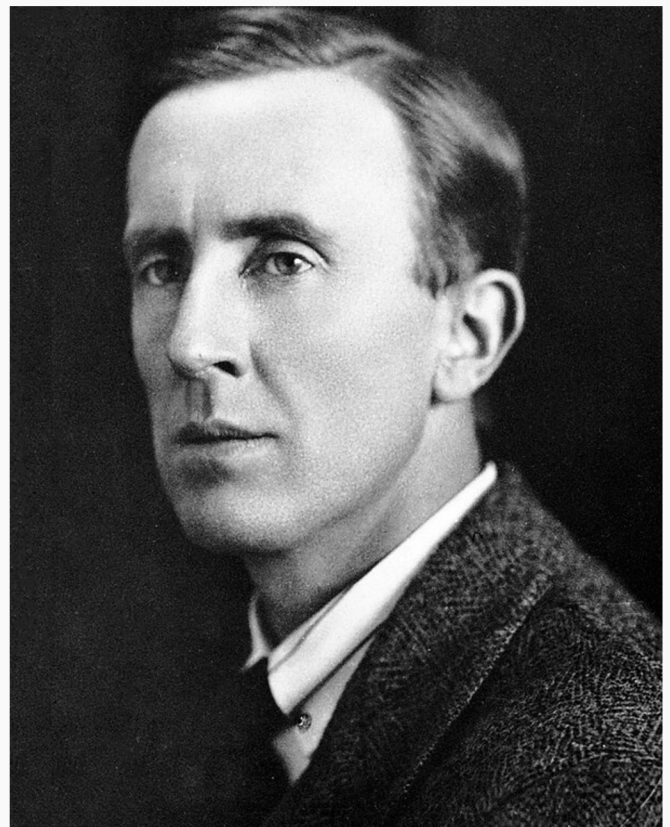
J. R. R. Tolkien

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (January 1892 – 2 September 1973) was an English writer and philologist. He was the author of the high fantasy works *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

From 1925 to 1945, Tolkien was the Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon and a Fellow of Pembroke College, both at the University of Oxford. He then moved within the same university to become the Merton Professor of English Language and Literature and Fellow of Merton College, and held these positions from 1945 until his retirement in 1959. Tolkien was a close friend of C. S. Lewis, a co-member of the informal literary discussion group The Inklings. He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II on March 28, 1972.

After Tolkien's death, his son Christopher published a series of works based on his father's extensive notes and unpublished manuscripts, including *The Silmarillion*. These, together with *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, form a connected body of tales, poems, fictional histories, invented languages, and literary essays about a fantasy world called Arda and, within it, Middle-earth. Between 1951 and 1955, Tolkien applied the term *legendarium* to the larger part of these writings.

While many other authors had published works of fantasy before Tolkien, the tremendous success of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* ignited a profound interest in the fantasy genre and ultimately precipitated an avalanche of new fantasy books and authors. As a result, he has been popularly identified as the "father" of modern fantasy literature and is widely regarded as one of the most influential authors of all time.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien

The Players/Characters



Peter Cook
as
C. S. Lewis

Author and scholar.
Best known for "The Chronicles of Narnia".

Lewis (his friends call him "Jack") is thoughtful and quite opinionated. He makes declarations with the measured authority of a professor but is not at all pompous, and enjoys a good laugh. Also speaks publicly on issues of faith.



Mark Allen Pierce
as
J. R. R. Tolkien

Author and academic.
Best known for "The Lord of the Rings".

Tolkien is "Tollers" to his friends, and he's equally as thoughtful as Lewis and just as opinionated. He can come across as quite set-in-his-ways because, well, he's quite set in his ways. Also speaks Elvish.



Chloe Michele
as
Veronica Edwards

A server at the pub.
Best known for her pints of beer.

Veronica – whose job it is to make customers feel at home – genuinely does enjoy her interactions with the pub patrons that she serves. She's energetic and curious and a big fan of Lewis but... J.R.R. who?

Understudies (u/s)



Michael Ramquist
as
C. S. Lewis



James Lyle
as
J. R. R. Tolkien



Ays Garcia
as
Veronica Edwards

Oxford, England

and

Oxford University

Oxford is a cathedral city and non-metropolitan district in Oxfordshire, England, of which it is the county town. Founded in the 8th century, it was granted city status in 1542. The city is located at the confluence of the rivers Thames (locally known as the Isis) and Cherwell. It had a population of 163,257 in 2022. It is 56 miles (90 km) north-west of London, 64 miles (103 km) south-east of Birmingham and 61 miles (98 km) north-east of Bristol. The city is home to the University of Oxford, the oldest university in the English-speaking world; it has buildings in every style of English architecture since late Anglo-Saxon. Oxford's industries include motor manufacturing, education, publishing, science, and information technologies.



The University of Oxford is a collegiate research university in Oxford, England. There is evidence of teaching as early as 1096, making it the oldest university in the English-speaking world and the world's second-oldest university in continuous operation. It grew rapidly from 1167, when Henry II banned English students from attending the University of Paris. After disputes between students and Oxford townsfolk, some Oxford academics fled northeast to Cambridge, where they established the University of Cambridge in 1209. The two universities share many common features and are jointly referred to as Oxbridge.

The University of Oxford is made up of 43 constituent colleges, consisting of 36 semi-autonomous colleges, four permanent private halls and three societies (colleges that are departments of the university, without their own royal charter), and a range of academic departments which are organized into four divisions. Each college is a self-governing institution within the university, controlling its own membership and having its own internal structure and activities. All students are members of a college. The university does not have a main campus, but its buildings and facilities are scattered throughout the city center.



Photos: Left to Right: J.R.R. Tolkien's home, Map, C. S. Lewis's home (The Kilns)

Timeline of Friendship

January 1892 - John Ronald Reuel Tolkien born in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

1895 - Tolkien's mother, Mabel Tolkien, moves back to England with her two boys. Tolkien's father stays to work in South Africa.

February 1896 - Tolkien's father, Arthur Tolkien, dies in South Africa. The Tolkien family moves to Sarhole Mill, just outside of Birmingham.

November 1898 - Clive Staples Lewis born in Belfast, Ireland.

November 1904 - Death of Mabel Tolkien from diabetes, aged thirty-four. Tolkien and his brother are cared for by Father Francis Xavier Morgan.

August 1908 - Lewis's mother, Flora Hamilton Lewis dies of cancer on her husband's birthday.

October 1912 - Tolkien enters Exeter College, Oxford, to read Classics. He takes up studying Welsh, discovers Finnish and begins to invent Quenya, a variant of Elvish based on Finnish.

1914-1918 - World War I - Both Tolkien and Lewis are enlisted as officers in the British Army, serving in France.

March 1916 - Tolkien marries Edith Bratt, his childhood sweetheart.

May 1926 - Lewis is elected a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, where he serves as tutor in English language and literature for twenty-nine years.

October, 1926 - Tolkien is appointed Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford.

May 1926 - The first recorded meeting between Tolkien and Lewis.

September 1931 - After a long night conversation on Addison's Walk in Oxford with Tolkien and Hugo Dyson, Lewis becomes convinced of the truth of Christian faith.

September 1937 - Tolkien publishes "The Hobbit".

1939 - 1945 - World War II

September 1939 - Evacuee children are sent to the Lewis's home in Oxford to escape the bombing in London.

1940 - Lewis begins lecturing on Christianity for the Royal Air Force, which he continues to do until 1941.

August 1941 - Lewis broadcasts the first of twenty-five talks about Christianity on BBC radio.

1950 - Lewis receives a letter from a thirty-four-year-old American writer, Helen Joy Davidman Gresham. Publication of "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe".

1954 - Lewis accepts the Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge. Tolkien publishes the first two volumes of "The Lord of the Rings". Tolkien dedicates this first edition to the Inklings.

October 1955 - Publication of the final volume of "The Lord of the Rings".

April 1956 - Lewis enters into a civil marriage with Joy Davidman at the Oxford Registry Office. Lewis publishes "The Last Battle", which is awarded the Carnegie Medal, a prestigious award for children's books.

July 1960 - Joy dies, at the age of forty-five, not long after the couple's return from a vacation in Greece.

June 1963 - Lewis admitted to Acland Nursing Home following a heart attack.

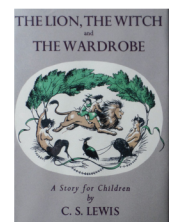
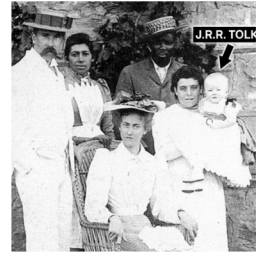
November 1963 - Lewis dies, at home, one week before his sixty-fifth birthday.

1965 - Increasing popularity of Tolkien on American college campuses after an unauthorized paperback edition of "The Lord of the Rings" is issued by Ace, using a loophole in copyright law. The book sparks college campus craze that spreads around the world. "Frodo Lives" and "Gandalf for President" buttons are seen everywhere.

November 1971 - Death of Tolkien's wife, Edith.

March 1972 - C.B.E. honor is conferred on Tolkien by the Queen Elizabeth II.

September 1973 - Tolkien dies in Bournemouth.



Photos: Top to bottom-A baby J.R.R. Tolkien in what is now South Africa with parents Arthur (left) and Mabel Tolkien (sitting). The Lewis family at Little Lea in 1905. Back Row (left to right): Agnes Lewis (aunt), two maids, Flora Lewis (mother). Front Row (left to right): Warnie, C. S. Lewis, Leonard Lewis (cousin), Eileen Lewis (cousin), and Albert Lewis (father), holding Nero (dog). Tolkien (smoking pipe at window) with friends at Exeter College, Oxford, May 1914. The undergraduates of University College, Oxford - Trinity Term 1917. C S Lewis (1898-1963) is standing on the right in the back row. Edith Mary Tolkien (née Bratt) Joy Davidman Lewis and C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, First Edition The Lord of the Rings Trilogy, First Edition,

The Eagle and Child

The Eagle and Child, nicknamed "the Bird and Baby", is a pub in St Giles', Oxford, England, owned by the Ellison Institute of Technology and previously operated by Mitchells & Butlers as a Nicholson's pub. The pub had been part of an endowment belonging to University College since the 17th century. It has associations with the Inklings writers' group which included J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.



The first record of the pub's name is from 1684, and is variously said to derive from the legend of Ganymede being abducted by the eagle of Zeus, or from the crest of the Earl of Derby, with a story of a noble-born baby found in an eagle's nest. The child was called Oskatel and was found by Sir Thomas Latham, who became father-in-law to Sir John Stanley. The pub's long-standing nickname is the Bird and Baby.

The college placed it on the market for £1.2 million in December 2003, saying that it needed to rebalance its property portfolio. It was bought by the nearby St John's College, which also owns the Lamb and Flag pub opposite. The Eagle and Child is a Grade II listed building.

Literary connections

The Inklings were an Oxford writers' group which included C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, and Hugo Dyson. From late 1933, they met on Thursday evenings at Lewis's college rooms at Magdalen, where they would read and discuss various material, including their unfinished manuscripts. These meetings were accompanied with more informal lunchtime gatherings at various Oxford pubs, and coalesced into a regular meeting held on Monday or Tuesday lunchtimes at The Eagle and Child, in a private lounge at the back of the pub called the "Rabbit Room".

The formal Thursday meetings ended in October 1949 when interest in the readings petered out, but the meetings at the Eagle and Child continued, and it was at one of those meetings in June 1950 that C.S. Lewis distributed the proofs for "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe".

The membership of the Inklings changed over the years. Tolkien, for example, drifted away from the meetings in the late 1950s, whereas Lewis, who had lived around Oxford since 1921, was a central figure until his death in 1963. When The Eagle and Child was modernized in 1962, with the pub being extended to the rear, the Rabbit Room's former privacy was inevitably destroyed; the group reluctantly changed its allegiance to the Lamb & Flag on the other side of St Giles'. The meetings in the Lamb & Flag were soon abandoned after Lewis's death.

The Inklings

The Inklings were an informal literary discussion group associated with J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis at the University of Oxford for nearly two decades between the early 1930s and late 1949. The Inklings were literary enthusiasts who praised the value of narrative in fiction and encouraged the writing of fantasy. The best-known, apart from Tolkien and Lewis, were Charles Williams, and (although a Londoner) Owen Barfield.



Meetings

A corner of The Eagle and Child pub, formerly the landlord's sitting-room where Lewis's friends, including Inklings members, informally gathered on Tuesday mornings.

"Properly speaking," wrote Warren Lewis, "the Inklings was neither a club nor a literary society, though it partook of the nature of both. There were no rules, officers, agendas, or formal elections." As was typical for university groups in their time and place, the Inklings were all male. Readings and discussions of the members' unfinished works were the principal purposes of meetings. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings", Lewis's "Out of the Silent Planet", and Williams's "All Hallows' Eve" were among the novels first read to the Inklings. Tolkien's fictional Notion Club (see "Sauron Defeated") was based on the Inklings. Meetings were not all serious; the Inklings amused themselves by having competitions to see who could read the notoriously bad prose of Amanda McKittrick Ros for the longest without laughing.

The name was associated originally with a society of Oxford University's University College, initiated by the then undergraduate Edward Tangye Lean around 1931, for the purpose of reading aloud unfinished compositions. The society consisted of students and dons, among them Tolkien and Lewis. When Lean left Oxford in 1933, the society ended, and Tolkien and Lewis transferred its name to their group at Magdalen College. On the association between the two 'Inklings' societies, Tolkien later said "although our habit was to read aloud compositions of various kinds (and lengths!), this association and its habit would in fact have come into being at that time, whether the original short-lived club had ever existed or not."

Until late 1949, Inklings readings and discussions were usually held on Thursday evenings in C. S. Lewis's rooms at Magdalen. The Inklings and friends also gathered informally on Tuesdays at midday at a local public house, The Eagle and Child, familiarly and alliteratively known in the Oxford community as The Bird and Baby, or simply The Bird. The publican, Charlie Blagrove, let Lewis and friends use his private parlour for privacy; the wall and door separating it from the public bar were removed in 1962. During the war years, beer shortages occasionally rendered the Eagle and Child unable to open and the group instead met at other pubs, including the White Horse and the Kings Arms. Later pub meetings were at The Lamb and Flag across the street, and in earlier years the Inklings also met irregularly in yet other pubs, but The Eagle and Child is the best known.

For Further Discussion

Both Lewis and Tolkien would agree that true friendship is vital, but never easy. They write about friendship under many different circumstances. They also describe friendship as a gift that comes to us regardless of whether we expect it or deserve it. Compare and contrast these two descriptions of Friendship. What truths about friendship do each of these quotes celebrate?

J.R.R. TOLKIEN: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

"'But it does not seem that I can trust anyone,' said Frodo.

Sam looked at him unhappily.

'It depends on what you want,' put in Merry. 'You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin- to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secret of yours- closer than you keep it yourself. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone and go off without a word. We are your friends, Frodo. Anyway: there it is. We know most of what Gandalf has told you. We know a good deal about the Ring. We are horribly afraid- but we are coming with you; or following you like hounds.'

C.S. LEWIS: THE FOUR LOVES

"...Especially when the whole group [of friends] is together, each bringing out all that is best, wisest, or funniest in all the others. Those are the golden sessions; when four or five of us after a hard day's walking have come to our inn; when our slippers are on, our feet spread out towards the blaze and our drinks at our elbows; when the whole world, and something beyond the world, opens itself to our minds as we talk... Life—natural life—has no better gift to give. Who could have deserved it?"

FROM OUR PLAY: Playwright, Dean Batali, includes this moment in the script where Tolkien describes a friendship. How would you describe a good friendship? What metaphors would you use?

TOLKIEN: For centuries — going back to ancient Greece, and even beyond — cities would build a fortified structure in the center of the community. At the highest point on a hill, or in a place not vulnerable to assault. It would be positioned as the last line of defense, should the enemy succeed in breaching the other fortifications. And all the members of society understood that during the worst of attacks, amidst the fear of defeat, that is to where they would run. And there they would make their final stand, together. So it was understood that, should they ever have occasion to gather there, it would definitely be the worst of times, with the greatest need to rely on one another. And in preparation for such troubles they would stock in advance, within their citadel, supplies and weapons of defense and the sundry of provisions necessary to survive. That is what — Olivia, is it? (Veronica nods.) That is what Olivia is to you. And I suspect you, equally, to her. That place where you go when you need a warrior alongside.

VERONICA: A warrior. She is that, for sure.

TOLKIEN: Now, it should be noted that the occasion to supply one's citadel is not during those periods of attack, but during times of peace. Which is how it is with friendships, as well. Go to those people, nurture the friendship, fill the relationship with the supplies that it will most certainly some day need. Tell them — and I do mean announce — "You are my citadel." And that there will come a day when you are going to be under attack, and you will come running to them with a desperate need to stand side-by-side. And because you have invested so properly, you will be able to stand firm. Together. And survive.

TAPROOT THEATRE

C O M P A N Y

Mission Statement:

Taproot Theatre Company tells stories of hope, serving the Pacific Northwest through live theatre and educational programs.



Taproot Theatre Company was founded in 1976 by six friends, five of them graduates from Seattle Pacific University. From its humble beginnings as a touring group, the company is now Seattle's largest mid-size theatre company. Today Taproot Theatre serves over 150,000 people annually throughout the Pacific Northwest with its Jewell Mainstage season, Isaac Studio Theatre season, Touring programs and Acting Studio.

Producing Artistic Director
Karen Lund

Associate Artistic Director
Bretteney Beverly

Director of Production
Mark Lund

Director of Marketing
Nikki Visel

Director of Development
Gina Cavallo

In-school Residencies, Workshops and Tours

Jeremy Ehrlich, Education and Outreach Manager
206.329.3674

Karissa Chin, Education and Outreach Associate
206.529.3669

Midweek Matinees

Jenny Cross, Marketing Associate
206.529.3676

Box Office: 206.781.9707
Administrative Office: 206.781.9705

taproottheatre.org

Education Programs

In-School Residencies & Workshops

From drama games to acting classes to putting on a production, Taproot Theatre's residencies can range from several weeks to months, or an entire school year. Whether during the school day or after school as an enrichment program, let Taproot's trained teaching artists introduce a whole new world to your students.

Our theatre arts professional will visit your classroom for a workshop that will inspire and excite your students. They will develop basic acting skills and explore non-theatre curriculum using theater as a medium.



Camps & Classes

Taproot Theatre Company's Acting Studio is a year-round instructional program for theatre artists of all ages and experience levels. We are devoted to the wholeness of the artist with the goal of creating a nurturing environment to help each student develop his or her unique gifts.



Touring Productions

The Road Company performs social-emotional learning plays for elementary and secondary schools, focusing on bullying prevention and social responsibility.

Taproot also provides touring Christmas productions during the holidays and Improv comedy year-round for churches, clubs, office parties, and other groups.

