



# *Almost, Maine*

## Study Guide



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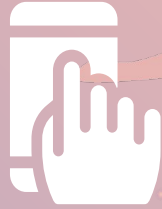
01

# Getting Started

Theater Etiquette, Play Summary,  
The Cast, and Scene-by-Scene

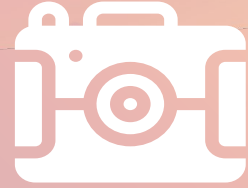
# Theatre Etiquette

We are so glad you chose to join us for this performance! Here are some things to know before the show starts...



## Please Turn Off All Devices

There's no reception here  
in Almost, Maine!



## No Photography or Video

These are prohibited.



## Please No Talking

Don't disrupt the show for  
the people around you.



## Enjoy the Show!

And Welcome to  
*Almost, Maine!*



# Play Summary

A fictional town in northern Maine called “Almost” experiences a magical night under the northern lights. Throughout a series of vignettes, the citizens of Almost, Maine are given unlikely second-chances at love.



# The Cast



**Bee Peyton**  
**Ginette**



**James Bradshaw**  
**Pete/Jimmy**



**Evan Owens**  
**East/Dave**



**Taylor Herndon**  
**Glory**



**Lily Holmes**  
**Sandrine/Hope**



**Layla Rorem**  
**Waitress/Gayle**

# The Cast



Haven Foster  
Marvalyn



Atticus Wiginton  
Steve



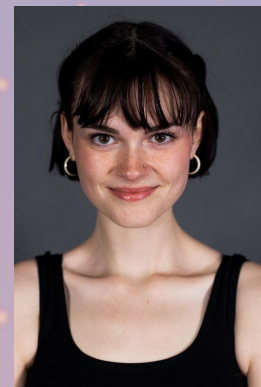
Spencer Kasselmann  
Lendall/Chad



CJ Rosado  
Randy/Daniel



Ryan Shupe  
Phil



Karis Cox  
Marci/Rhonda



# The Cast



**Denim Atkins**  
*Female Swing*



**Ben Polk**  
*Male Swing*



**Courtney String**  
*Female Swing*



**Ty Naicker**  
*Male Swing*



# Scene-by-Scene

Let's take a look at each vignette.



# Prologue, Interlogue, and Epilogue

Production photos from regional, college, and high school productions.



**Bee Peyton as Ginette**  
**James Bradshaw as Pete**

Pete and Ginette are sitting outside on a bench together. While she tries to draw him closer, he pushes her away.

# “Her Heart”

**Taylor Herndon as Glory  
Evan Owens as East**

Glory camps out in East’s front yard, carrying a bag holding something special: her heart.



# “Sad and Glad”

**James Bradshaw as Jimmy**  
**Lily Holmes as Sandrine**  
**Layla Rorem as Waitress**

Jimmy runs into his ex,  
Sandrine, at the Moose  
Paddy. He still has feelings for  
her, but has she moved on?





# “This Hurts”

**Haven Foster as Marvalyn  
Atticus Wiginton as Steve**

Marvalyn accidentally runs into Steve in a laundry room—literally. Fortunately (or unfortunately) for him, he cannot feel pain.



# “Getting It Back”



**Layla Rorem as Gayle**  
**Spencer Kasselmann as Lendall**

Gayle decides she wants to give back all the love Lendall gave her in their relationship, and she wants all the love she gave him back too.



# “They Fell”

**Spencer Kasselmann as Chad  
CJ Rosado as Randy**

Two friends start falling for one another—literally.



# “Where It Went”

**Ryan Shupe as Phil**  
**Karis Cox as Marci**

Phil and Marci may not get along as a married couple, but they have teamed up to find her shoe, which has mysteriously disappeared.



# “Story of Hope”

**CJ Rosado as Daniel**  
**Lily Holmes as Hope**

Hope returns to rekindle her lost love with Daniel, but she does not recognize him.





# “Seeing the Thing”



**Karis Cox as Rhonda**  
**Evan Owens as Dave**

Dave and Rhonda have been friends for years, but now he has decided he wants more. He gives her a gift: a painting.



02

# Play History

About the Playwright,  
An Interview with John Cariani,  
and Production History





# About the Playwright

Who is John Cariani?

# Where in the World is John Cariani?

- Born July 23rd, 1969 in Brockton, Massachusetts
- Eight years old when he moved to **Presque Isle, Maine**



- Graduated from Amherst College (MA) in 1991
- First big break was Off-Broadway in *It's my Part (and I'll Die if I Want To)*

# John Cariani on Television

Julian Beck (*Law and Order*)

Hank (*The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*)



# John Cariani on Broadway

Nigel Longbottom (*Something Rotten!*)

Itzik (*The Band's Visit*)

Motel (*Fiddler on the Roof*,  
2004 Tony Nomination)





# An Interview with John Cariani

Here is the link to an interview  
he did with Syracuse Stage  
about *Almost, Maine!*





# Production History

October 29th, 2004

Professional  
Premiere at Portland  
Stage Company



January 21st, 2014

Revived  
Off-Broadway



2002

Developed by the  
Cape Cod Theatre  
Project



January 12th, 2006

Opened  
Off-Broadway



2020

Published  
as a novel

03

# General Information

Map of Maine, Aroostook County, ME,  
Northern Lights, The Magical Moments,  
and Glossary

# Map of Maine



## Presque Isle

Where John Cariani was raised



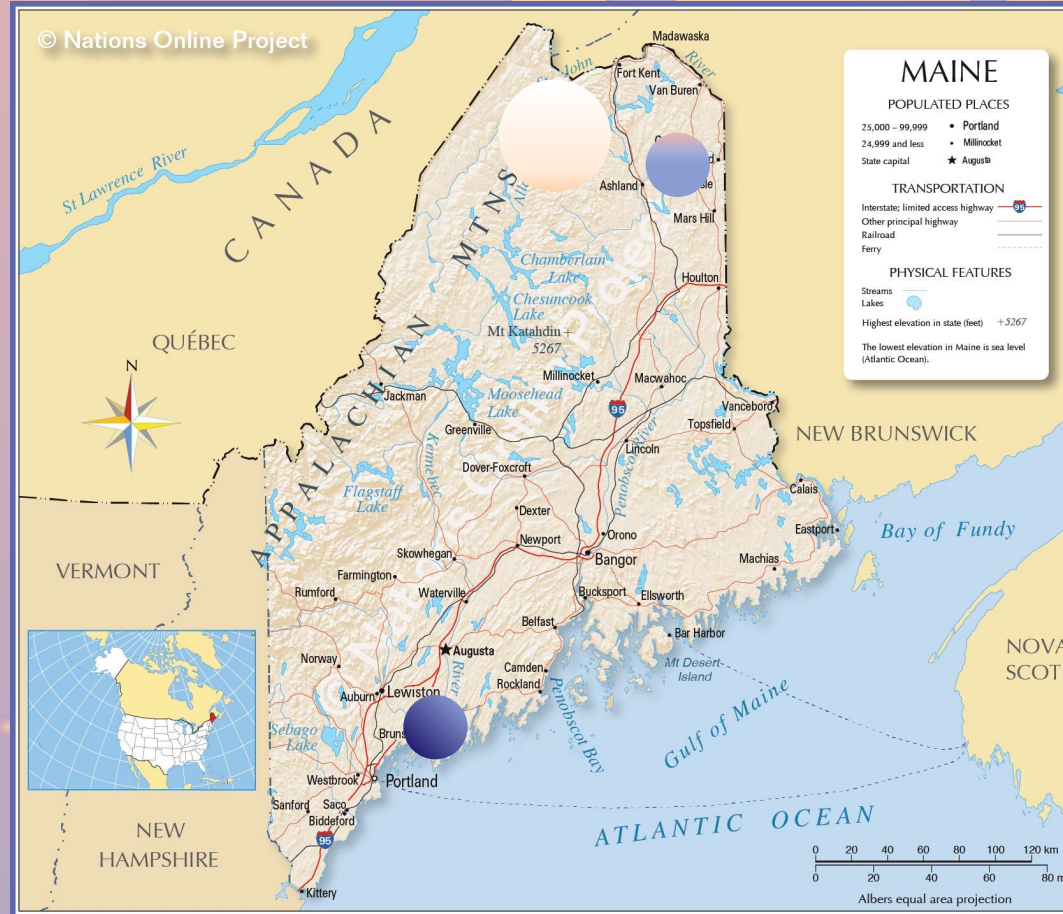
## Aroostook County

Top 25% of Maine, where  
Almost, Maine is located



## Portland

First performed professionally







# Aroostook County, ME

- According to John Cariani, *Almost, Maine* takes place in **Aroostook County**.
- Aroostook County comes from an Indian word meaning “beautiful river.”
- Potato farms cover lots of land.
- There are lots of big skies.
- Long winters last from October through May.
- Northern lights are a “Maine” feature.





# Northern Lights

- During solar storms, electrons shoot from the sun into Earth's atmosphere. They “excite” or “charge” atoms by knocking an electron out. Northern lights appear when countless atoms are “charged” in this way.
- Author's Metaphor: Citizens of *Almost, Maine* are “charged” or “excited” by extenuating—even magical—circumstances, like the atoms in the northern lights.
- Every vignette in *Almost, Maine* occurs at the exact same time: 9 o'clock on a Friday night in the middle of winter.
- All of the magical moments in *Almost, Maine* happen simultaneously, along with the appearance of the northern lights.



# The Magical Moments

## SPOILER WARNING!

A list of all the moments when magic, spurred on by the northern lights, occurs.

- Prologue/Interlogue/Epilogue - Ginette travels around the world in eighty \*seconds\*.
- “Her Heart” - Glory entrusts her heart to East.
- “Sad and Glad” - Villian introduces herself to Jimmy.
- “This Hurts” - Steve feels pain for the first time.
- “Getting it Back” - Lendall proposes with a ring he bought using all the love Gayle gave him.
- “They Fell” - Chad and Randy both fall for each other.
- “Where it Went” - Marci’s shoe falls from the sky.
- “Story of Hope” - Hope confesses her love for Steve.
- “Seeing the Thing” - Rhonda sees the image in the painting.

# Glossary

- **Slate:** metamorphic rock easily split into smooth, flat pieces (see image)
- **Buds:** Budweiser
- **“Jeezum Crow”:** a polite way to say “Jesus Christ!” most commonly used in Vermont
- **Congenital analgesia:** a condition where a person cannot feel pain
- **Hereditary sensory neuropathy type four:** condition of nerve abnormalities





# Glossary (cont.)

- **Polaris** and **Arctic Cat**: types of snowmobiles (see images)
- **Pointillism**: technique of painting many multi-colored dots to create one image (e.g. *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, see image)
- **Natty Lite**: another beer





# Takeaways

Playwright's Notes, Purposes of the Vignettes,  
Themes, So why "Almost," Maine?, What does  
"Almost" mean?, Questions to Consider, and  
An Extra Treat!



# Playwright's Notes

A page at the beginning of the script reads:

*"... the sentimental person thinks things will last — the romantic person has a desperate confidence that they won't."* —F. Scott Fitzgerald

*Almost, Maine* is for romantics — not sentimentalists.

# Purposes of the Vignettes



Different vignettes with different characters show how different kinds of people react in different ways to hurt and love based on personality, experience, etc.



Having many vignettes shows that it's not through coincidence or "luck" that all these people were able to open themselves back up to love after being hurt.



Hope: If it isn't just coincidence or luck, then it's more attainable for us, too.

# Themes of

## Hurt

The citizens of Almost, Maine frequently push the people they love out of feelings of self-insufficiency and fear of hurt.

## Looking at the sky

The citizens of Almost, Maine frequently look towards the sky. They might be watching out for an incoming snow storm or hoping for the magical assistance of the northern lights.



## Love

The citizens of Almost, Maine are given second-chances at love, even when they don't know how to respond.

## Your choice

You may be given second-chances at love through negative or positive circumstances, through snow storms or northern lights. It is useless to waste energy complaining about the circumstances themselves. It's how you respond that matters.



# So why Almost, Maine?

## What made John Cariani choose Maine? What makes it different?

- Maine is connected to only one other state, and it is far removed from everything else in America.
- Maine is this secluded place, the last place you would expect to find real connection, yet here are all these unexpected stories of people in Maine finding love.

## Why does he make it up instead of choosing a real place?

- Many authors in the past have created fictional locations for their stories (e.g. St. Thomas More's *Utopia*). It allows them to give a deeper look into one specific aspect of life, rather than juggle the many considerations that come with a real location.
- In "Her Heart," East says, "You're in unorganized territory. Township 13, Range 7. It's not gonna be on your map, cause it's not an actual town, technically. . . See, to be a town, you gotta get organized. And we never got around to getting organized, so. . . we're just Almost."
- These are people who don't have the capability to take initiative and become a real town. They give into their circumstances and resign to calling the town "Almost." Yet, through magical moments in each scene, they are forced to confront the opportunity to open themselves up to love once more.

# What does “Almost” mean?

- The word “almost” was defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as: “Slightly short of; **not quite**; **nearly**.”
- “**Not quite**” represents the insufficiency the characters carry with them. It bogs them down, and stops them from reaching out for the love they really need.
- “**Nearly**” represents the hope that these characters can still feel in the midst of their insufficiency. As much as “not quite” means the glass is half empty, “nearly” means the glass is still half full.
- The name “Almost” is the reality for people who have not yet taken action. But throughout *Almost, Maine*, we get to see people get another chance at love, so maybe, if they act on it, it won’t be “Almost” anymore.

# Questions to Consider

To which character or scene did you most relate?

Is hurt just for the “unlucky” in love, or is it inevitable?

Why or why not?

Are you letting hurt stop you from attaining love?

Do you believe “hurt people hurt people”?

Why or why not?

Is there someone you can reconcile with?

# An Extra Treat!

Here is the link to a video of John Cariani performing “Sad and Glad” from *Almost, Maine* with Transport Group!





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