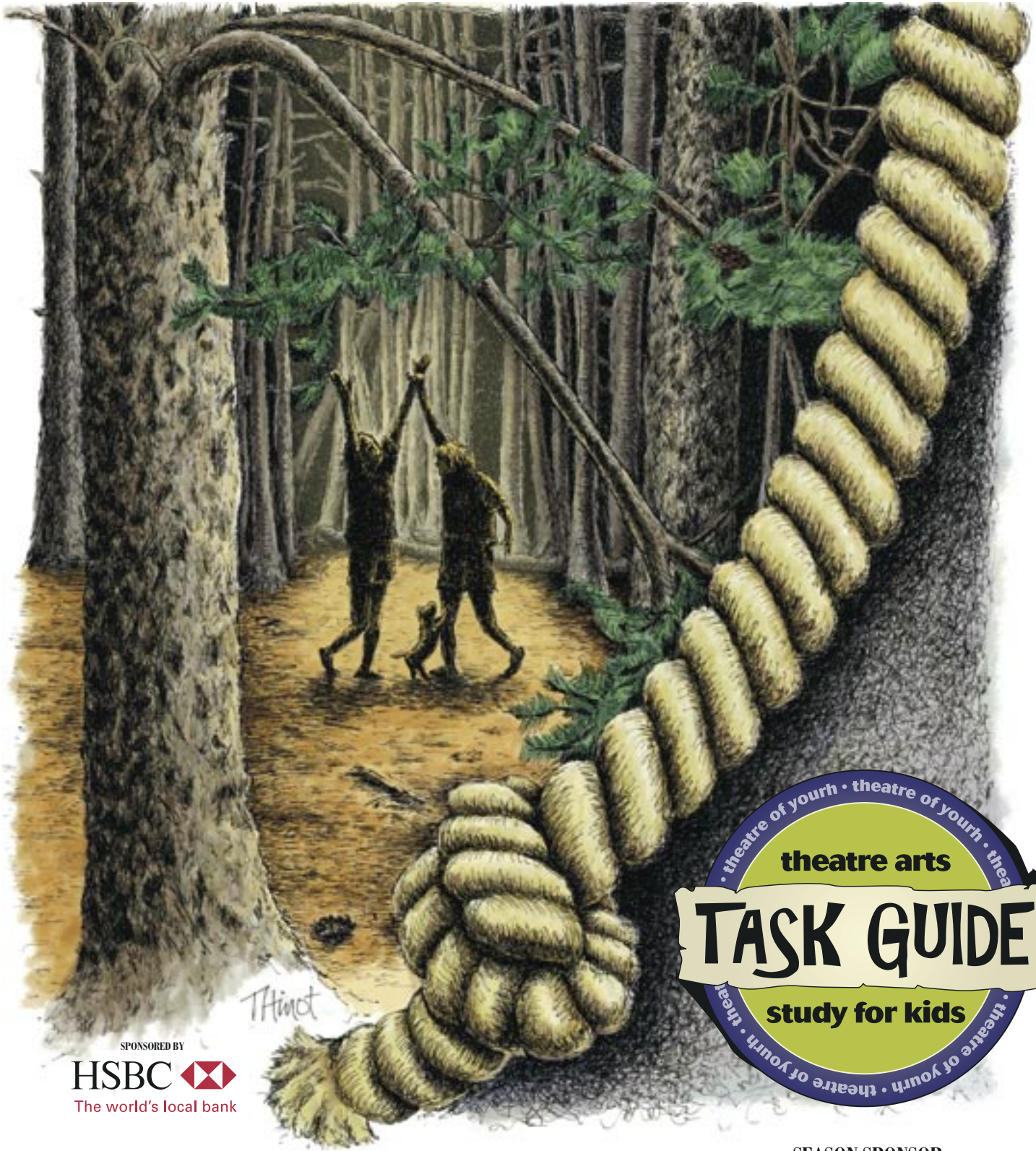


JANUARY 17, 2007 - FEBRUARY 11, 2007

# BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA



SPONSORED BY  
**HSBC**   
The world's local bank

theatre of yourh • theatre of yourh • thea

**theatre arts**

**TASK GUIDE**

**study for kids**

theatre of yourh • theatre of yourh • thea

# THEATRE OF YOUTH

SEASON SPONSOR



A Division of HealthCare for America, An Equal Opportunity of The National Business Group on Health Care

# BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

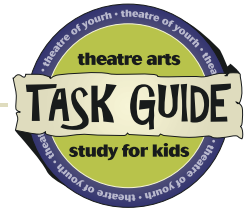
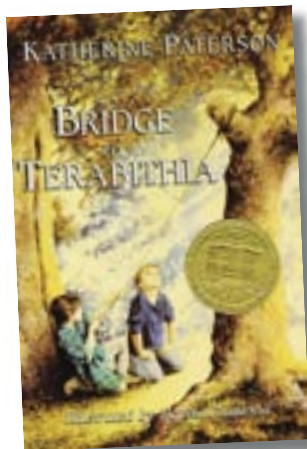
By Katherine Paterson.

Adapted for the stage by Katherine Paterson  
and Stephanie S. Tolan.

## “Terabithia”

Jess Aarons had to be the fastest runner at Lark Creek Elementary School, the best, but when he was challenged by Leslie Burke, a girl, that was just the beginning of a new season in Jess’s life. Leslie and her parents were new comers to the rural community where Jess lived, and were thought to be a bit odd, for they didn’t even own a TV, though their house was filled with books. Somewhat to Jess’s surprise, he and Leslie became friends, and the worlds of imagination and learning that she opened to him changed him forever. It was Leslie’s idea to create Terabithia, their secret Kingdom in the woods where they reigned supreme. There were no enemies - not their teacher Monster Mouth Meyers, their schoolmates Gary Fulcher and Janice Avery, Jess’s four sisters, or even Jess’s own fears and Leslie’s imaginary foes - could defeat them. The Legacy that Leslie finally brought to Jess enabled him to cope with the unexpected tragedy that touched them all.

*–From HarperCollins  
Children’s Books*



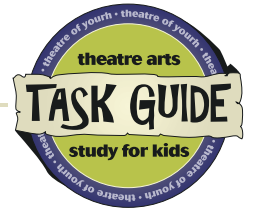
## The woman behind the story: About Katherine Paterson

By Katherine Paterson

People are always asking me questions I don’t have answers for. One is, “When did you first know that you wanted to become a writer?” The fact is that I never wanted to be a writer, at least not when I was a child, or even a young woman. Today I want very much to be a writer. But when I was ten, I wanted to be either a movie star or a missionary. When I was twenty, I wanted to get married and have lots of children.

Another question I can’t answer is, “When did you begin writing?”

# BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA



I can't remember. I know I began reading when I was four or five, because I couldn't stand not being able to. I must have tried writing soon afterward. Fortunately, very few samples of my early writing survived the eighteen moves I made before I was eighteen years old. I say fortunately, because the samples that did manage to survive are terrible, with the single exception of a rather nice letter I wrote to my father when I was seven. We were living in Shanghai, and my father was working in our old home territory, which at the time was across various battle lines. I missed him very much, and in telling him so, I managed a piece of writing I am not ashamed of to this day.

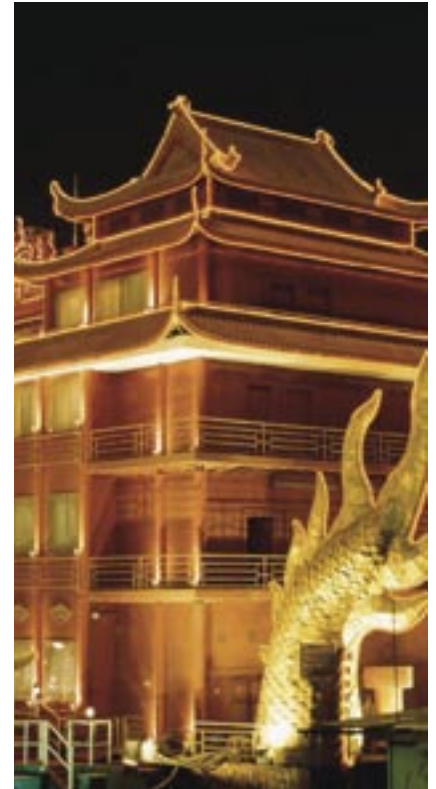
A lot has happened to me since I wrote that letter. The following year, we had to refugee a second time because war between Japan and the United States seemed inevitable. During World War II, we lived in Virginia and North Carolina, and when our family's return to China was indefinitely postponed, we moved to various towns in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia, before my parents settled in Winchester, Virginia.

By that time, I was ready to begin college. I spent four years at King College in Bristol, Tennessee, doing what I loved best-reading English and American literature-and avoiding math whenever possible.

My dream of becoming a movie star never came true, but I did a lot of acting all through school, and the first writing for which I got any applause consisted of plays I wrote for my sixth-grade friends to act out.

On the way to becoming a missionary, I spent a year teaching in a rural school in northern Virginia, where almost all my children were like Jesse Aarons. I'll never forget that wonderful class. A teacher I once met at a meeting in Virginia told me that when she read *Bridge to Terabithia* to her class, one of the girls told her that her mother had been in that Lovettsville sixth grade. I am very happy that those children, now grown up with children of their own, know about the book. I hope they can tell by reading it how much they meant to me.

After Lovettsville, I spent two years in graduate school in Richmond, Virginia, studying Bible and Christian education; then I went to Japan. My childhood dream was, of course, to be a missionary to China and eat Chinese food three times a day. But China was closed to Americans in 1957, and a Japanese friend urged me to go to Japan



instead. I remembered the Japanese as the enemy. They were the ones who dropped the bombs and then occupied the towns where I had lived as a child. I was afraid of the Japanese, and so I hated them. But my friend persuaded me to put aside those childish feelings and give myself a chance to view the Japanese in a new way.

If you've read my early books, you must know that I came to love Japan and feel very much at home there. I went to language school, and lived and worked in that country for four years. I had every intention of spending the rest of my life among the Japanese. But when I returned to the States for a year of study in New York, I met a young Presbyterian pastor who changed the direction of my life once again. We were married in 1962.

I suppose my life as a writer really began in 1964. The Presbyterian Church asked me to write some curriculum materials for fifth- and sixth-graders. Since the church had given me a scholarship to study and I had married instead of going back to work in Japan, I felt I owed them something for their money. So I began writing. By the time the books were published, I had moved three more times, acquired three children, and was hooked on writing.

But I decided I didn't want to write nonfiction. I wanted to write what I love to read - fiction. I didn't know that wanting to write fiction and being able to write fiction were two quite separate things. In the cracks of time between feedings, diapering, cooking, reading aloud, walking to the park, getting still another baby, and carpooling to nursery school, I wrote and wrote, and published practically nothing.

A friend in the church in Maryland, where we were living, felt sorry for me. There I was, four babies in just over four years (two adopted and two home-made), trying to write but with no success. So she decided to take me to an adult education course in creative writing one night a week. Eventually the novel that I wrote in the course was published, and I had become a writer.

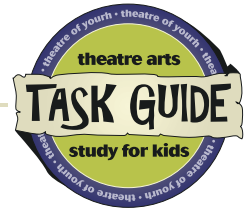
Do I like being a writer? I love it. I often tell my husband that it's the only job I could hold now. I'm spoiled. I work at home in my own study, wearing whatever I please. I never have to call in sick. From time to time, I get to go to schools and other places where I meet delightful people who love books as much as I do.

But there are days when I wonder how on earth I got involved in this madness. Why, oh why, did I ever think I had anything to say that was worth putting down on paper? And there are those days when I have finished a book and can't for the life of me believe I'll ever have the wit or will to write another.

Eventually a character or characters will walk into my imagination and begin to take over my life. I'll spend the next couple of years getting to know them and telling their story. Then the joy of writing far outweighs the struggle, and I know beyond any doubt that I am the most fortunate person in the world to have been given such work to do.

*- From [www.terabithia.com](http://www.terabithia.com)*

# BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA



## The Day of the Performance

Plan to arrive 15 to 20 minutes early so that the play may begin promptly. Our theatre holds almost 500 people. Unloading and seating that many people takes time.

Review proper audience behavior with students. Remind them that it is acceptable to clap and laugh when appropriate, and any unnecessary noise is distracting to the performers on stage. As it is a live performance, it cannot be stopped and restarted.

Inform the students that there will be a “talk back” session following the performance. Cast members will come out to answer questions from the audience regarding the play.



### The Characters

### The Actors

Leslie.....	Sara H. Churchill
Jesse .....	James R. Finan
May Belle.....	Faith Sheehan Gallivan
Gary.....	Jack Holahan
Mr. Aarons .....	Peter Jaskowiak
Janice .....	Amy Jakiel
Boy .....	Chris LaBanca
Mrs. Aarons .....	Mary McMahon
Brenda .....	Caroline Parzy
Billy Jean .....	Anne Roaldi
Miss Edmunds.....	Tanya Shaffer



## “On your mark. Get set. Go!” Activities to do in the classroom

- Read book as a class or in small groups.
- Friendship. Discuss what it means to be a true friend to someone.
- What does friendship look like? Ask the students to create a picture, through collage or paint, of what they feel friendship looks like. Create a display.
- A symbol of friendship: Make friendship bracelets using different colors of thread. Have students make 2-one to keep and one to give to someone special.
- Go on a nature walk (weather permitting) and notice the surroundings. Select a tree that would make the perfect bridge into Terabithia. Return to class and have students write about it.
- Create Terabithia. Ask students to think about what their perfect place would look like. Have them brainstorm words to describe it and a name for this fantastical place. Have students create a diorama of their “Terabithia”.
- A picture is worth 1,000 words. Inform the students that they have been hired to design a new book cover for the book. Use the following website to create a cover. Vote for the most creative! <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/bookcover/planningsheets.html>



