

**JOHN
STEINBECK'S
EAST OF
EDEN**

ADAPTED BY
FRANK GALATI



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.

John Steinbeck's EAST OF EDEN
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East of Eden
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EAST OF EDEN was commissioned by and its world premiere presented at Steppenwolf Theatre Company (Martha Lavey, Artistic Director; David Schmitz, Managing Director), Chicago, Illinois, on September 17, 2015. It was directed by Terry Kinney, the costume designer was Mara Blumenfeld, the scenic designer was Walt Spangler, the lighting designer was David Weiner, the sound design and original music were by Rob Milburn and Michael Bodeen, and the stage manager was Malcolm Ewen. The cast was as follows:

SAMUEL HAMILTON	Francis Guinan
ADAM TRASK	Tim Hopper
CATHY/KATE	Kate Arrington
LEE	Stephen Park
CALEB TRASK	Aaron Himmelstein
ARON TRASK	Casey Thomas Brown
ABRA BACON	Brittany Uomoleale
ENSEMBLE	Alan Wilder
	Elizabeth Laidlaw
	Dan Waller

CHARACTERS

SAMUEL HAMILTON

ADAM TRASK

CATHY/KATE

LEE

CALEB TRASK

ARON TRASK

ABRA BACON

WILL HAMILTON } *may be*
JOE } *doubled*

MR. BACON } *may be*
DR. MURPHY } *doubled*

MRS. BACON } *may be*
EVA } *doubled*
NURSE }

PLACE

The Salinas Valley and the town of Salinas, California

TIME

1900–1918

EAST OF EDEN

ACT ONE

1900

1.

the valley

Sagebrush blows in the afternoon sunlight. Yellow dust runs into the sky. Samuel Hamilton and Adam Trask are out inspecting the land. Samuel uses a forked walking stick.

SAMUEL. Oh, it's a good piece. It's a rare piece of land.

ADAM. Seems to me it's blowing away bit by bit.

SAMUEL. No, it's just moving over a little. You lose some to the James ranch, but you get some from the Southneys'.

ADAM. Well I don't like the wind. Makes me nervous.

SAMUEL. Nobody likes wind for very long. It makes animals nervous and restless too. I don't know whether you noticed, but a little further up the valley they're planting windbreaks of gum trees.

ADAM. Good idea. What I really want is water. This wind would pump all the water I could find. I thought if I could bring in a few wells and irrigate, the topsoil wouldn't blow away. I might try some beans.

Samuel squints into the wind.

SAMUEL. I'll try to get you some water if you want. And I've got a little pump I made that will bring it up fast. It's my own invention. A windmill is a pretty costly thing. Maybe I could build them for you and save you some money.

ADAM. That's good. I wouldn't mind the wind if it worked for me. And if I could get water I might plant alfalfa.

SAMUEL. You're going to bring credit to the valley. You're going to be a real joy to the future.

ADAM. If I can get water.

SAMUEL. I'll get the water if there's any to be got. I'll find it. I brought my magic wand.

Samuel raises his stick. Adam points out into the distance.

ADAM. Think you could get water here?

SAMUEL. I don't know. I'll see.

Samuel walks slowly, his arms out and stretched before him and the stick tipped up. His steps take a zigzag course. He frowns, backs up a few steps, shakes his head and goes on. The stick quivers and jerks. The point of the stick is then pulled strongly downward against Samuel's straining arms. He sighs, relaxes, and drops his stick on the ground.

I can get water here. The pull was strong. Plenty of water.

ADAM. Good. I want to show you a couple more places.

SAMUEL. Yup, there's a whole world of water here. I knew it was a good place. Anyone can see that. But I didn't know it was that good. You must have a great drain under your land from the mountains. You know how to pick land, Mr. Trask.

ADAM. Tell me about your stick. How does it work?

SAMUEL. I don't really believe in it save that it works. Maybe it's this way. Maybe I know where the water is, feel it in my skin. Some people have a gift in this direction or that. Suppose—well, call it humility, or a deep disbelief, in myself, forced me to do a magic to bring up to the surface the thing I know anyway. Does that make any sense to you?

ADAM. I'll have to think about it. Can you stay the night?

SAMUEL. I can but better not. I didn't tell Liza I'd be away the night. I'd not like to give her a worry.

ADAM. But she knows where you are.

SAMUEL. Sure she knows. But I'll ride home tonight. It doesn't matter the time. If you'd like to ask me to supper I'd be glad. And when do you want me to start on the wells?

ADAM. Now—soon as you can.

SAMUEL. You know it's no cheap thing, indulging yourself with water. I'd have to charge you fifty cents or more a foot, depending on what we find down there. It can run into money.

ADAM. I have the money. I want the wells. Look, Mr. Hamilton—

SAMUEL. Samuel would be easier.

ADAM. Look, Samuel, I mean to make a garden of my land. Remember my name is Adam.

SAMUEL. It's the best reason I ever heard for making a garden.

ADAM. The best reason is my Cathy. I don't think anyone can know her goodness. I came out of the army like dragging myself muddy out of a swamp. I wandered for a long time before going home to a remembered place I did not love.

SAMUEL. Your father?

ADAM. He died, and home was a place to sit around or work around, waiting for death the way you might wait for a dreadful picnic.

SAMUEL. Alone?

ADAM. No, I have a brother. Charles.

SAMUEL. Where is he—waiting for the picnic?

ADAM. Yes—yes, that's exactly what. Then Cathy came. Maybe I will tell you some time when I can tell you want to hear.

SAMUEL. I'll want to hear. I eat stories like grapes.

ADAM. First time I saw her she was a dirty bundle of rags and mud trying to crawl up the steps of our front porch. My brother Charles held up the lantern. Her face was caked with mud, her lips were cracked. Her forehead was laid open oozing black blood into her matted hair. She was a broken thing when we took her in. But we nursed her and she got well and a kind of light spread out from her. And everything changed color. And the world opened out. And there were no limits to anything. And I was not afraid any more. All this coming out of a little hurt girl.

SAMUEL. And not out of you?

ADAM. Oh no. No, Cathy brought it, and it lives around her. And now I've told you why I want the wells. I have to repay somehow for

value received. I'm going to make a garden so good, so beautiful, that it will be a proper place for her to live and a fitting place for her light to shine on. I don't know why I tell you this.

SAMUEL. (*In a dry voice.*) I can see my duty. I can see it plainly before me if I am any kind of a man, any kind of a friend to you.

ADAM. What do you mean?

SAMUEL. (*Satirically.*) It's my duty to take this thing of yours and kick it in the face, then raise it up and spread slime on it thick enough to blot out its dangerous light. I should hold it up to you muck-covered and show you its dirt and danger. I should ask you to think of inconstancy and give you examples. I should give you Othello's handkerchief. Oh, I know I should. And I should straighten out your tangled thoughts, show you that the impulse is gray as lead and rotten as a dead cow in wet weather. If I did my duty well, I could give you back your bad old life and feel good about it, and welcome you back to the musty membership in the lodge.

ADAM. Are you joking? Maybe I shouldn't have—

SAMUEL. It is the duty of a friend. And I'll dig your wells if I have to drive my rig to the black center of the earth. I'll squeeze water out like juice from an orange.

They approach a large oak tree as the sun nears the western mountains and the shadows lengthen. Lee, a Chinese servant, has set a long wooden table and chairs under the tree. He pads back and forth from the kitchen, carrying cold meats, pickles, potato salad, coconut cake, and peach pie.

Cathy emerges from the kitchen with a pitcher full of milk.

ADAM. There she is.

SAMUEL. Even at this distance she looks beautiful.

ADAM. (*Shouting.*) Cathy, he says there's water—lots of it.

Cathy places the pitcher in the center of the table. Adam turns to Samuel.

Did you know she's going to have a baby?

Adam dashes over to the table and holds a chair for Cathy.

You haven't met Mr. Hamilton, dear.

Cathy holds out her hand.

CATHY. How do you do.

Samuel inspects her.

SAMUEL. It's a beautiful face. I'm glad to meet you.

Samuel takes Cathy's hand.

You are well, I hope?

CATHY. Oh, yes. Yes, I'm well.

Cathy sits. The men follow.

ADAM. She makes it formal whether she wants to or not. Every meal is a kind of occasion.

CATHY. Don't talk like that. It isn't true.

ADAM. Doesn't it feel like a party to you, Samuel?

SAMUEL. It does so, and I can tell you there's never been such a candidate for a party as I am. And my children? They're worse. My boy, Will, wanted to come today. He's spoiling to get off the ranch.

A silence falls. Cathy looks down at her plate and cuts a sliver of roast lamb. She looks up and puts it between her small sharp teeth.

ADAM. It isn't cold is it?

SAMUEL. Cold? No. A goose walked over my grave, I guess.

ADAM. Oh, yes. I know that feeling.

A silence falls again. Samuel waits for someone to speak.

SAMUEL. Do you like our valley, Mrs. Trask?

CATHY. What? Oh, yes.

SAMUEL. If it isn't impertinent to ask, when is your baby due?

ADAM. In about six weeks. My wife is one of those paragons—a woman who does not talk very much.

SAMUEL. Sometimes a silence tells the most.

Lee brings a teapot to the table and shuffles away. Samuel bolts down his supper and folds his napkin.

Ma'am, if you'll excuse me, I'll ride off home. And I thank you for your hospitality.

CATHY. Good night.

Adam jumps to his feet.

John Steinbeck's EAST OF EDEN

adapted by Frank Galati

7M, 3W

Escaping a turbulent past, Adam Trask is determined to make a new start in California's Salinas Valley. Adam and his wife, Cathy, settle on a beautiful farm, and soon Cathy gives birth to twins Caleb and Aron. But family history, sibling rivalry, and the impending danger of World War I will threaten their little piece of paradise. EAST OF EDEN is an American epic, grand in scope yet deeply personal, that asks if it is possible to escape the mistakes of previous generations.

"Rich in symbolism and substance... a significant achievement..."

—Chicago Tribune

"Steinbeck's novel, in [an] adaptation by Frank Galati, is an intriguing combination of Old Testament severity and new-fangled Freudian analysis, with a nature-versus-nurture overlay. A story of the catastrophic relationship between a man who loved blindly, and a woman incapable of loving anyone..."

—Chicago Sun-Times

"Galati brilliantly emphasizes sibling rivalry, family secrets and the struggle to be good... [He] indulges us with short scenes that are engrossing, well-paced and captivating."

—Northwest Herald

Also adapted by Frank Galati
A FLEA IN HER EAR
THE GRAPES OF WRATH

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