

Melville Drama Club
Lake Melville School
North West River
Labrador

presents

HOLD ON

Scene I - The Past

CAST:

Carolyn Baikie	Mother
Bryan Lyall	Father
Fred Riche	Junior
Duane Michelin	Johnny
Amanda Blake	Ellie
Morgan Michelin	Trapper I
Wayne McLean	Trapper II

Scene II - The Present

CAST:

Gail Baikie	Mother
Morgan Michelin	Father
Fred Riche	Son
Elizabeth Riche	Daughter
Darren Michelin	Grandfather

Scene III - The Future

CAST:

Brenda Michelin	Mother
Greg Matthews	Father
Duane Michelin	Son
Gail Baikie	Announcer
Carolyn Baikie	Mrs. Watson

Guitarist: Gail Baikie
Singer: Carolyn Baikie

"HOLD ON!"

SCENE I: Open with part of the song "Hold on to what you got!"
(The scene opens in the main room of a Labrador home about 30 years ago. The mother and daughter are busy preparing a meal.)

John: (coming in excitedly) Mom, where's the spyglasses? I think I see Dad and the trappers comin'.

(Mother passes him the glasses and he runs out.)

Mother: Elli, we must hurry and finish preparing the supper. For sure they will be starving. You make the redberry pie and I'll cook the trout. (They work together)

Elli: I hope they got a porcupine, that's my favourite.

Mother: That would be nice!

Elli: M mmm, I can just taste that porcupine now!

Mother: It'll be so good having your brother and father home again. They've been gone for a long time.

(John runs in again)

John: That's them, they're just coming out of the portage.

Mother: John, make sure there's enough sealmeat in the feed house for the dogs.

(John goes out; dogs are heard barking)

Elli: They're here, they're here!

(Mother and Elli tidy things away, enter father, son, John and trappers. Father kisses mother & daughter, mother kisses son, son shakes hands with Elli.)

Mother: How was the trip?

Father: Just great! Real good going!

Mother: How was the hunt? Many furs?

Father: (proudly) Average year!

Son: I killed a caribou you know! (Trappers remove deerskins and leggings and hang behind stove to dry)

Mother: That's great and only your first year out with your father. Hope you brought some back with you.

Son: Uh-huh. (pause) I keep the skin on my bunk.

Mother: Well, I'll have to make some meat cakes, wouldn't I!

Trapper I: Hear any news from Mary at Mulligan?

Mother: Yes, as a matter of fact just a week ago. Everything's fine.

Trapper II: Do you know if Bill got his supplies from the Hudson Bay?

Mother: Oh yes, about a month ago. He said he got everything he needed.

Trapper II: Was he able to pick up something for the little ones for Christmas?

Mother: Uh-huh. Oh, by the way, I saved some candy for both your young ones like you asked. I'll get it for you after supper.

Trapper II: Much obliged.

Mother: You fellas can put your sleeping gear in the other room to warm. (Trappers exit briefly and return. Mother puts more wood in the stove)
Johnny, you forgot to fill the woodbox. (Johnny exits, Chopping is heard)

Trapper I: That son of yours is some good cook, you know. He gave us a great feed of marrow bones when we got to their tilt.

Father: He was a good help too. He fixed up the tilts on father's path for me. Couldn't handle it myself. He had a four tilt distance and he covered it in two days. Got a little bit lonesome too, I think.

Junior: Ah, Dad! I wasn't really lonesome.

Mother: I certainly would have expected you to be a little nervous.

Trapper II: We were all a little nervous at first. Worst thing for me all the time was I didn't like weasels.

Junior: I don't like weasels either but Spot used to look after them for me. Nothing like a dog for company! What I didn't like worst of all was horn owls after dark.

Father: Yes, boy. Horn owls are about one of the worst. One grabbed Bill once by the head when he was coming out of the tilt. Fred happened to be there at the time and had to kill him with a stick.

Trapper I: How'd you make out on your path, Junior?

Junior: Not bad! There were some beavers. I got what was allowed. Not too many cats around or minks. Martens took bait real good.

Trapper I: Otters are about the hardest to catch. Sounds as though you done okay.

Father: Yes, Junior got more otters than I caught in ten years. I don't know what it is but he sure got the hang of it somehow.

Mother: Junior, how did you manage to cook for yourself?

Junior: Not too good at first. Burnt a lot. First I was so tired I used to fall asleep, wake up cold with everything burnt on. Got a little better after a while.

Mother: Supper'll soon be ready.

Father: You know, Junior cooked Christmas dinner.

Mother: Oh, what did you cook, Junior?

Junior: Oh, just a fat old goose I killed last fall.

Mother: That must have been some good!

Father: Sure was, but Junior forgot to put in any salt. (laughter)

Junior: I brought one goose home -- a big old one.

Mother: Did you? Well, that'll be just what's going into the pot on Sunday.

(Johnny re-enters with wood for the woodbox. Trapper II picks up the fiddle.)

Father: John and Elli, I got some squirrel and weasel for you. You can take them to the Bay tomorrow. Should fetch you a few dollars each.

Junior: I got some too you can have.

Johnny & Elli: Gee thanks! (Mother places a pie on the table)

Trapper I: Hey, redberry pie. My favourite! (Grabs mother. Trapper II breaks into a tune. General step-dancing and laughter.)

Mother: Come to the table now. Everything's ready.

Trapper II: We'll be leaving first thing in the morning. You don't need to bother getting up. We'll cook our own breakfast.

Mother: Fine. There's rounders in the porch you can cook up.

Father: It's been a pretty good year. But I've been thinking, you can't always count on having a good year. So, I figure I won't be going trapping next year. Best thing for me to do would be to get a job in Goose Bay where I'd be sure of money.

Trapper II: I agree with you. Better nowa days to take a regular job that pays steady. Trapping sure isn't as dependable as it used to be.

SCENE II: Scene opens in the living room, kitchen area of a modern, middle class home. Grandfather is sitting quietly in the corner in a rocking chair mending an old dog harness. He appears to be absorbed in his work and doesn't seem to notice the commotion around him, only to eye the parents occasionally. The mother is busy preparing a grub bag for her husband to take hunting. The father is sitting next to the kitchen table cleaning his gun. The girl is constantly in the way of her busy mother.

Mother: Denise, for goodness sakes go outside and play!

Denise: It's too cold outside.

Mother: Well, then, go and watch some TV.

Denise: Oh- Mom! Can't I help you?

Mother: No, you're only in my way.

Denise: But I wanna see what Dad is taking hunting with him. After all, someday, I might want to pack for my husband when he goes hunting.

Mother: Stop talking that way. Little girls shouldn't concern themselves with such things.

Denise: Well, then, can I punch down the bread dough?

Mother: Why, Denise, whatever has gotten into you? You should be grateful for all the spare time you have to play and enjoy yourself. When I was your age I had very little spare time. I was always learning how to cook, or clean or sew. I had no choice. Anyways, by the time you're married they'll probably have robots or something to do that for you.

Denise: (hopefully) Then I can help you?

Mother: Of course not. Now run along and stop bothering me.
(Denise decisively leaves. Skidoo arrives. Grandfather eyes mother. Boy comes in and he goes over to his father.)

Boy: Gosh, its some boring! Nothing to do except ride around all day.
(He looks over his father's shoulder to watch what he is doing)

Father: Do you have to breathe down my neck?

Boy: Gee Whiz! I only wanted to see what you were doing.

Father: I'm only cleaning my gun.

Boy: Can I hold it?

Father: Of course not. It's not a toy for little boys. (checks the aim of the gun)

Boy: What are you doing now?

Father: Why don't you go outside?

Boy: Can't I help?

Father: No, you're too young.

Boy: Can I go hunting with you Dad, can I?

Father: Of course not, it's a man's sport and not for foolish little boys.

Boy: But you told me that when you were my age you used to go hunting with Grandfather.

Father: We had no choice in them days. We had to learn how to hunt in order to survive and to put meat on the table. Today it's different. If you want meat you go down to the Bay and buy it.

Boy: Then it is important to know how to hunt?

Father: Not any more. Now it's just a game.

Grandfather: See what I fixed up for you. Boy! A harness!

Boy: (pauses & asks enthusiastically) Dad, will you help me and Jim harness up Trickys to go for a sled ride?

Father: Why do you want to harness up that old mutt for? I just bought a brand new two thousand dollar ski-doo. Go for a ride on that.

Boy: Oh Dad!

Father: Stop bothering me. (father gathers up some of his equipment and goes outside with it. Boy pauses a moment and then walks over to his mother)

Boy: Why won't Dad take me hunting with him? He used to go hunting all the time when he was young.

Mother: Oh but he had to learn to hunt. He only wants to go hunting now so as to enjoy himself with his friends.

Boy: There's nothing to do now. I'm bored. Sometimes I think it would have been better to live in the old days.

Mother: I don't think you'd say that if you had to. It was a lot of hard work.

Boy: Yeah! But at least you were doing something useful. At least your life had purpose.

Mother: But there is a purpose to your life.

Boy: Maybe, but I feel so useless. What if someday, I had to know how to hunt. What would I do then?

Mother: Well, I don't think you'll have anything to worry about. Things will never be the same as they were. Anyway, we wouldn't want you to have to work as hard as we had to. The past is dead.

Boy: Maybe! (father re-enters)

Mother: Now run along. Why don't you hook up the komatic box to the ski-doo for your father.

Boy: Yah. Sure. (leaves)

Mother: I wonder what has gotten into those children. It seems strange that they should be so anxious to 'work'.

Father: Must be some stage they're going through. They'll soon forget about it. They wouldn't be so enthusiastic if they really did have to work hard.

Mother: I just don't understand.

Father: They'll come to their senses soon enough.

Grandfather: Perhaps they already have.

Father: What's that supposed to mean?

Grandfather: I'm just saying that perhaps they're not caught up in all the technology stuff. Maybe they realize that the "good" fortunes they got now will not last forever.

Father: What are you saying? Of course it will. They'll continue to develop new and better things and life will continue to get easier.

Grandfather: Maybe.

Father: Well then..

Grandfather: Maybe not. In the old days we never left anything to chance. We were always prepared. Anyways how can you be so sure that there technology will continue to develop at the rate it is. Once something reaches its limit there's only one place to go - down. Remember how when you were his age, you were just as foolish about everything as he is. But I didn't hold you back. Then it was important and you needed it to survive. I would take you hunting and trapping with me. Think about it for a minute. Think of what would happen if he did need those skills to survive someday. Oh yes the future! Things are sure different today but how long can it last!!!

SCENE III: Scene opens in a rather dull, poorly furnished kitchen of a family 25 years in the future. Mother is sitting at the table, with a heavy shawl wrapped around her shoulders, her head is laid on the table and her hands obviously hold a letter. Father enters looking depressed, boy is sitting huddled in the corner.

Father: Another hard day at the office. Oh, Helen, what's the matter?

Mother: We got this letter today from the power company. (holds it to father) They're cutting off our electricity because we can't afford to pay our bills.

Father: But they can't do that, not in the middle of winter.

Mother: They can and they will. And I don't know what we're going to do. (sobs)

Father: I know. Some of the neighbours are using wood to heat their homes but I wouldn't know the first thing about it.

Mother: It's almost time for the news report. Maybe there'll be some good news for a change. (turns on the radio..the end of a song is heard and the announcer cuts in...)

Announcer:"Oh yes, and what an appropriate song to bring us up to the news report for January 25, 2006 -

Food shortages are reported to be in many of the supermarkets in communities across the country. Those who learned the skills of hunting in their youth are turning to the practice in order to supply food on their tables ... Many residents are having their electricity cut off because their bills are too high for them to pay. The electricity is especially needed to run the nation's industries. Gas rations have been lowered again. Only those with the numbers 25 at the end of their stamps can collect their gas at the local gas stations today. Authorities recommended a return to the old way of life in order to combat the rising inflation costs. Now for a look at weather. Temperatures are expected to drop again tonight to a cold -35...."

(father shuts off radio)

Father: (angrily) More setbacks, more shortages! When is it ever going to end? How does she expect us to return to the old way of life when we've been pampered with all those conveniences since we can remember. Don't they realize that most of us never learned the skills of our forefathers?

Mother: Well, we can't dwell on the past. We got to work out something for us to do now.

Father: Yes, but what? I don't know how to live off the land.

Son: Dad, couldn't we go hunting like your father used to do?

Father: (shakes head) No, my father never took me hunting with him. I just don't know how. I guess I'm just useless.

Son: But we could learn. We could go with Mr. Watson. He can hunt real good. He got six partridges the other day!

(knock on door, mother answers)

Mother: Why, hello Mrs. Watson.

Mrs. Watson: Hello Helen, I just brought over some extra flour I had. I thought you just might be able to make good use of it.

Mother: Thank you. But what do I do with it?

Mrs. W: You use it to make bread.

Mother: Bread?

Mrs. W: Certainly. My, your house really feels chilly. And your boy there looks so cold.

Mother: They're cutting off our power soon and we'll be left with none at all.

Mrs. W: We been burning wood at our house. Why don't you people do it! Well, I must be off. Goodbye.

(Mother comes back with the flour looking stunned)

Mother: Mrs. Watson brought me over some flour to make bread with.

Father: That was kind of her. It certainly is a lot cheaper to make your bread than buy it!

Mother: Yes, but I don't know how to make bread. I'm afraid I'm just as useless as you feel you are.

Father: What are we going to do?

Son: Couldn't we at least try to hunt for food and gather wood for a fire, like Mr. Watson?

Father: It's not easy. You have to trap inland where it is even colder than it is here and where a man could easily get lost. We have no gas for our ski-doo. And I wouldn't know how to survive in those freezing conditions. I don't know the first thing about swinging an axe. If only father had shown me how to use a dog-team. I can remember asking him once but he never had the time to help me. If he had there would be a chance now. As it is, well, I don't know. (long pause) I'll try the radio again.

Son: But, Dad, how will we survive?

(Father has the radio turned on. The last part of the song "HOLD ON" is heard.)

THE END