

"CHEMICAL TO LET"

by

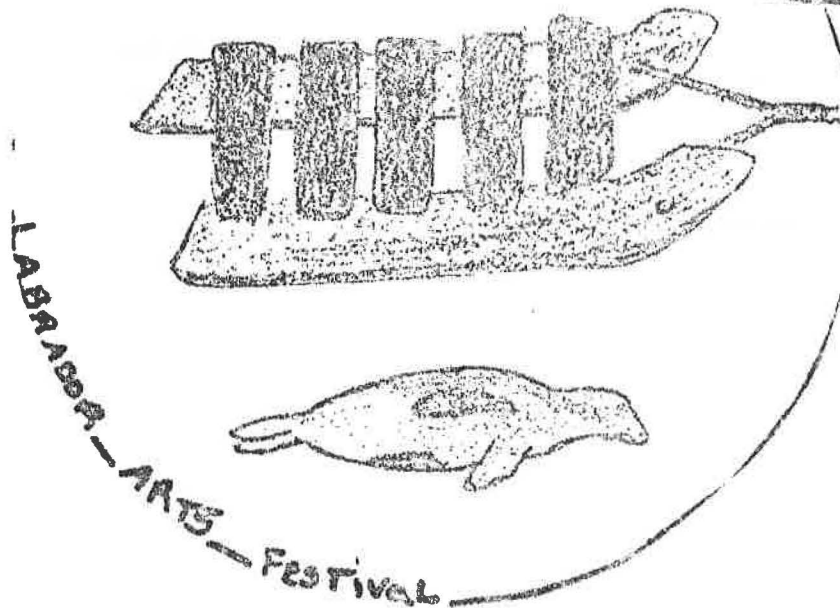
THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF BLACK TICKLE

A skit about people in a small community on the coast of Labrador and the problems they encounter with sewage disposal.

CAST:

Ronald Keefe
Mable Dyson
John Morris
Brenda Morris
Eileen Lane
Chesley Keefe
Madonna Keefe

Teacher: David Furlong



A LIST OF PROPS

PLAY: "CHEMICAL TO LET"

1. Kitchen Table and Chairs (sitting space for eight people,
four chairs and a sofa [minimal])
2. Phone
3. Clock
4. Teapot
5. Cups and Saucers
6. Water Bucket (5 gallon bucket)
7. Stove

Any items that pertain to a kitchen setting.

"CHEMICAL TO LET"

PLACE: A kitchen in a house in Black Tickle.

TIME: Early morning to noon

CHARACTERS: RONNIE - a young fisherman
LEENIE - Ronnie's wife
CHES - Ronnie's brother
BRENDA - a neighbour
MAMIE - Ronnie's & Leenie's daughter
UNCLE BILL - an old fisherman
MARY MARGARET - a neighbour

SCENE: (Ronnie has just gotten up after a late night appearing in a state of disarray, yawning, scratching, hauling up pants.)

RONNIE: (In a not too pleasant manner) "Leenie! Where's me boots?
(no answer from Leenie, so Ronnie repeats only louder) Leenie!
Where's me boots?"

LEENIE: (Leenie coming into kitchen, just after getting up. In an agitated voice) "There under the couch where you always kicks em."

RONNIE: (Fumbling under a couch he finds his boots) "There must be a better place to put me boots. (he looks at them disgustedly)
"I thought you'd have them in front of the stove heating up now."

LEENIE: (at the table arranging breakfast things) "It's a wonder you got any boots after last night, I'm surprised you remembered to come home."

RONNIE: (appearing very thirsty, as if hung-over) "Don't talk to me about last night. (he goes to water barrel) "What, no water again!"

LEENIE: (with some agitation) "Yes boy! Do you think we have a brook in the house?" (Ronnie looks at Leenie with a smile on his face) "You're going to have to make a trip to Martin's Pond. I have washing to do today."

RONNIE: (appearing not to want to go to Martin's Pond) "You loves to see me suffer don't you? I was all ready to go in the Bay with Ches. What's more important wood or water?"

LEENIE: (in a somewhat humourous vein) "If you had to drink water last night, you would not feel the way you do now!"

RONNIE: (sarcastically) "How observant you are Leenie, you should have been a detective." (In a self-pitying way) "But how true you are."

LEENIE: (seeing Ronnie looking around for a beer) "Now, you know Ronnie, you wouldn't find a spare beer in this house with the likes of you around."

RONNIE: (sarcastically) "Leenie, how could you think such a thing, I'm looking for gold dust."

LEENIE: (at the kitchen table) "Ronnie boy, I don't care how or where you get it, but I've got to have water this morning. Tomorrow is Saturday and you haven't got a clean set of underwear. Church tomorrow night."

RONNIE: (with some sarcasm) "I wonder what happened to all the wells the government drilled last summer? It's not my fault there is no water. Why don't you ask them dainty politicians who fly in here on planes now and then. Ask Eugene to bring you some the next time he comes."

LEENIE: (sarcastically) "I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for the government to get us water and you can forget you're going in the Bay till you get some."

CHES: (Enter in a light mood) "Morning everybody! Grand morning Ronnie. This is the proper day to go in the Bay."

LEENIE: (excitedly) "For God's sake don't mention Bay until he gets me some water. Why don't you go with him you lazy galoot."

RONNIE: (embarrassed) "For God's sake woman, give it up!"

CHES: (with humour) "That's all right boy, I'm used to that. That sounds like music to my ears."

RONNIE: (teasing Leenie) "What do you think Ches? Think we can get her some water?"

CHES: (getting up to go) "I suppose boy."

RONNIE: (getting his coat) "Okay Ches, lets get a move on."

BRENDA: (enter, in a light mood) "Morning Leenie, my God I'm some sore this morning. I had an awful night. I'm sore all over."

LEENIE: (bringing the tea pot over to the table) "What were you up to last night to cause that?" (smiling) "There must have been some jack-pot at the Bingo last night."

BRENDA: (excitedly) "No my maid, I was playing floor hockey in the school last night. I ran into Marsella and you know the size of her!"

LEENIE: "I suppose it's too late to join a team now?"

BRENDA: "No my maid, the principal is having a meeting tonight, to talk about some other teams. You know Leenie, that hockey league is a wonderful thing. I never saw such excitement."

LEENIE: "Yes, I know all about it. That's all Ronnie talks about. You wouldn't know but it was the Canada-Russian series."

BREANDA: "It's good for him too. I think he could use the exercise."

LEENIE: (with some humour) "Yes, my maid you can say that again. My God I can't keep the bread to him."

A FEW HOURS LATER AT LUNCH TIME

BRENDA: (getting up to leave) "Well my maid I think it's time for me to get on home and get some dinners for me young ones."

LEENIE: (somewhat surprised looking at the clock) "My goodness, this morning went fast for sure. I wonder where that Ronnie went. They must have gone to Cartwright for water."

BRENDA: "Maybe they had some trouble with the ski-doos. The way they drive mad around here it's a wonder they can go at all."

LEENIE: (with a worried look) "I don't suppose those two are after running into some beer. Ronnie will sniff it out for sure."

BRENDA: "I'll bet Ches has a brew on."

LEENIE: (somewhat angry) "If that Ronnie comes back drunk, I'll cleave him open with a junk of wood."

BRENDA: (looking out the window) "You can save your wood, here they come now. Looks like they have water too and they seem to be in proper order. See you later." (she leaves)

LEENIE: (all smiles) "Oh there you are, you're late for dinner, where have you been?"

MAMIE: (full of excitement) "We was playing tag and Jimmie chased me half way to Domino."

LEENIE: "And then you had to chase him back."

MAMIE: "No I didn't, when I turned around he was gone home to his dinner."

LEENIE: (with a look of hopelessness) "Oh God help me! How are we ever going to rear ya? Mamie tell your father to get in here to his dinner, and tell him to bring a bucket of water."

MAMIE: "What are we having for dinner?" (looking at the table with disgust) "Oh no! fish again."

LEENIE: (irritated) "Listen my maid, you eat that good fish, and be glad to get it. Newfoundland and Labrador women greater than you were reared up on fish."

MAMIE: "They'd have to be greater than me to get that stuff down and like it."

ABOUT AN HOUR LATER

RONNIE: (laughing, joking, light comes on) "Boys oh boys, what a time we had up to Uncle Tom Joes last Saturday night! It was their 40th wedding anniversary."

LEENIE: "Yes Ronnie you had a wonderful time. It was funny about that snow back in front of Mary Margarets. You always saw it before."

CHES: "He probably figured the Department of Highways removed it during the party."

RONNIE: "Leenie were you still in the coachie box when the Kamotik broke clear of the ski-doo? I knew you weren't in it when the Kamotik went through the side of Don's fish store."

LEENIE: "No! Ronnie, I was not in the coachie box when you hit the bank. I have more regard for my life than that."

RONNIE: "I wonder who was in the coachie box?"

LEENIE: (angrily punching Ronnie on the back) "Why you son of a pup! Whoever she was she picked a real dandy."

CHES: "Its always good to keep em guessing, Ronnie Boy."

RONNIE: (looking off in space) "I wonder who it was?" (with a big grin on his face) "She must of had class."

BRENDA: (entering kitchen) "Well Lennie I see by the line of clothes out there you got your water, and its a good day for drying too. What was all that laughing a while ago?"

LEENIE: "Oh that was Ronnie telling lies again."

RONNIE: "It wasn't me telling lies, I never told a lie in my life."

LEENIE: "No? But you certainly can handle the truth carelessly. Like last year when you told the priest you were giving up beer for Lent and didn't tell him about the case of 40 ouncers."

RONNIE: "Well he never spoke about Rum and I didn't want to offer him any unnecessary information. I thought it would confuse things."

LEENIE: "My, how thoughtful!"

RONNIE: "Thoughtful or not he was damn glad of a drop of stuff I gave him last year when he was storm bound in Black Tickle for a week during Lent." (after a pause) "and he didn't speak about where I got it either."

LEENIE: "I guess he didn't want to confuse things."

RONNIE: (looking away in space) "Yeah, I guess that was it." (looking toward the door) "Well Uncle Bill, long time no see. Come in sir and sit down." (he comes over to sit down by the table) "and how have you been all winter? It's been a pretty rough one so far."

UNCLE BILL: "Yes Ronnie boy, its been many a year since we see one like this. I heard they had alot of snow in Cartwright."

LEENIE: (looking out the window) "Looks like Mary Margaret coming down the road. Looks like she got alot of mail."

RONNIE: "I should go up to the Post Office to get our mail. I'm expecting me cheque."

LEENIE: "Wait a minute, Mary Margaret might have ours, she's coming in."

MARY M. (coming in kitchen) "Some lot of mail today Tom had to make three trips to the pond."

CHES: "I guess that's all the mail from before those storms, when we had no planes."

MARY M. "Here's your mail Ronnie."

RONNIE: "Thanks." (looking through the mail) "and I got me cheque."

LEENIE: "Sign it and leave it on the table!"

RONNIE: "Such a sweet woman, she's all heart.

CHES: "Your a lucky man Ronnie."

LEENIE: (with some sarcasim) "Thanks Ches and kindly get your feet off the chair."

RONNIE: (looking at a strange envelope) "My that's a fancy envelope."

CHES: "It must be from the government."

RONNIE: "You're right Ches (glancing to the last page) its from our M.H.A. Eugene."

LEENIE: "I'm surprised the government can afford postage stamps these days especially the opposition. I wonder what he's got to say anyway?"

RONNIE: "He should have lots to say after his last visit here. He had a great time at Martin's Pond, Lab. Airways plane dug right in."

CHES: (in a funny mood) "Any wonder she'd dig in with such political heavy weights on board, like our member and the leader of the opposition."

LEENIE: "Come on Ronnie, read the letter boy."

RONNIE: (lookin as if he needs glasses) "He says that he had a wonderful visit to Black Tickle. The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Neary, was really impressed with the place, especially the airport ground crew especially of the Lab Airways at Martin's Pond.

Steve was specially interested in the honey bucket sewage system. He thinks it is a wonderful invention and a great saving for the government. There is one think he wanted to know. What do you do with the bucket when it is filled? And I said "Why Mr. Neary, you flush it down the toilet." Then I said, "What do you think man? You knows you must have slung honey buckets on Bell Island.

Mr. Neary says that in some places they use what they call Chemical To Let. Each family has one and they are not too expensive. They seem to work very well. He thinks they should be the real thing for Black Tickle. We will be sending you all the necessary information later. If you have any questions write or call me at the Confederation Building in St. John's."

Sincerely, Eugene.

CHES: "Well boy! You can get a honey bucket for nothing over to George's. It sounds pretty complicated to me. What does chemical to let mean anyway."

BREANDA: "I believe "to let" means to rent."

LEENIE: "It's bad enough now emptying your own honey bucket without having to rent one."

RONNIE: "Now you know Leenie girl, we're not going to have to rent honey buckets. I know politicians are pretty thick but they're not that thick. And what does he mean by this chemical?!"

CHES: "I never even heard of chemical before. Are you sure he's not talking about something for the fish plant?"

LEENIE: "Maybe the government wants to rent out a place like the Community Hall."

CHES: "Yeah! That's what it is. Maybe they're going to hold another meeting about the water problem."

RONNIE: "Them government fellows loves meetings."

CHES: "Ronnie boy! Anybody who loves to talk has to have people to talk to. So that's why they fly all the way in here to have meetings."

LEENIE: "Maybe they can't get anyone to listen to them anywhere else. Mary's young one is working out in Goose Bay in a place she calls the conversation building. She says all they do is talk and drink coffee. Mary says it's part of their nature for government people to talk all the time."

RONNIE: "Don't be foolish my maid, that's the Goudie Building, not the conversation building."

LEENIE: "Well whatever they calls it, there is an awful lot of talking done there."

RONNIE: "They says now you'll soon have to get a degree in talking, to get a job with the government."

CHES: "If that's the case then, there are lots of women in Black Tickle well qualified for degrees."

LEENIE: "So Ronnie, what are we going to do about this letter?"

CHES: "Why don't we have a meeting to figure out just what the man is trying to say on his letter?"

RONNIE: "Now Ches, there is some sense to that! Having a meeting to figure out just what the man's letter says."

BRENDA: "Why not call up the Principal. He should be able to explain it to you."

RONNIE: "There you go Brenda, always thinking. I always knew you were smart. Give the Principal a ring Leenie, you know him better than I do. You're always knitting him socks. I wish I could get a pair. But then again, I'm not from the Island."

LEENIE: (picking up the phone) "I used to know his number. Do you know it Brenda?"

BRENDA: "I think it's 817."

RONNIE: "You'd better wait a minute." (looking out the window) "I see him down on the land wash with a salt beef bucket. My! Those teachers are awful tidy, they use plastic bags in their honey buckets." (looking out again) "He's just going in now."

LEENIE: (picking up the phone, dials, waits a moment) "Hello, who's this? Sir! What? This is Leenie. We got a letter from our member Eugene. No! There is nothing wrong with the member, not that I know of. It is a letter from the member. We just got a letter from him today and we can't seem to understand what he is talking about. Yes! I know some politicians don't make sense. Yes that's right. He says he can solve our sewage problems. That's exactly what he said." (a slight delay) "Hello, are you still there? On the letter it says something about "Chemical To Let" ... that's the part we don't understand. And what are they?" (listens to the Principal) "Oh yes." (a moment later) "I see, well thanks, good-bye, sir."

RONNIE: "Well, what did he say about it?"

LEENIE: "Sir says a letter was probably left out and it should read "Chemical Toilet" and he said chemical toilets run on electricity and don't run on water."

RONNIE: "It will never work. The electricity is off half of the time, and I've seen the one the priest got. There's near a handle on it and you'll never be able to get it down to the land wash to dump it."

CHES: "I know it. There's always something to arse you up."