

St. Peter's School  
Black Tickle

presents

"LIFE IS A FIELD OF HONOR"

CAST

Nurse Bailey-----Anastasia Keefe  
News Reporter -----Fanny Keefe  
Dr. Grenfell (Jr.) -----Mildred Keefe  
Dr. Grenfell (Sr.) -----Judy Keefe  
George/Jarge -----Esther Keefe  
Henry -----Corey Elson  
Muck -----Anastasia Keefe  
Old Fella -----Corey elson  
Dr. Sturges -----Esther Keefe  
Nurse Bean -----Loretta Keefe  
Aunt Gertie -----Mildred Keefe  
Bud -----Laura Keefe  
Jim -----Judy Keefe  
Husband/wife -----Laura Keefe/Judy Keefe

CREW

The cast

TEACHER

Brian Witty

The play considers the medical services in Black Tickle, its advances, present day concerns. It celebrates the work of Dr. Grenfell in Black Tickle.

Dermet Morris, Gr. 5 Black Tickle



Rap Song (Introduction)

Howdy folks it's good to be here.  
We've got a little story that we would like to share.  
So welcome neighbours and welcome friends.  
This issue we hope you'll comprehend, please listen carefully to  
our song.  
It won't be short, but it won't be long.  
It's in between that will catch your eye.  
It's gonna have sorrow and it's gonna have joy.  
It's the present now along the coast.  
Black Tickle is our focus and we can boast.  
About the good and bad times we've shared.  
The medical services can be compared.  
From them days, olden days the present days are seen.  
We're talkin' medical services and we'll keep it clean.  
Many died on our island home.  
We cried for help but there were no phones.  
We lost some families and we lost some friends.  
But our memories will never end.  
There was no need for us to die.  
Too much neglect and not enough try.  
So let's open our hearts and take a chance.  
Our medical services must advance

{ SCENE 1 }

Characters:

Nurse Bailey -  
News Reporter -

Setting: It is the year 1989 in Black Tickle. The school newspaper reporter has chosen to write an article concerning the medical services in the community.

News Reporter: Why did you become a nurse?

Nurse Bailey: I became a nurse because I wanted to help people and at the time it seemed to be the right thing to do.

News Reporter: How long have you been a nurse?

Nurse Bailey: I have been a nurse for over thirty years.

News Reporter: How long have you been in Labrador?

Nurse Bailey: I have been in Labrador for a total of twelve years altogether I came here in 1960.

News Reporter: Have you enjoyed your stay in Black Tickle?

Nurse Bailey: I have been in Black Tickle for three years, and it has been a very enjoyable time for me.

News Reporter: Do you think that the medical services in Black Tickle are adequate?

Nurse Bailey: Yes, I do think that the medical services are adequate in Black Tickle to meet the needs of the people living here.

News Reporter: Would you comment on medical services during summer in comparison to the winter months?

Nurse Bailey: Medical services during the winter months differ from summer months because the clinic is equipped with supplies for the permanent residents of Black Tickle. They cannot cope with the number of injuries that occur during the summer months, especially with only one nurse stationed here full time.

News Reporter: What some types of medical problems that the people in Black Tickle experience?

Nurse Bailey: Some types of problems common to people in Black Tickle in general are related to lungs, ears, respiratory system, etc..

News Reporter: How do you diagnose whether someone is sick enough to be sent out or not?

Nurse Bailey: I diagnose if someone is sick enough to be sent out on whether the treatment is available here in Black Tickle.

News Reporter: What are the responsibilities of the Grenfell Association in terms of medical care?

Nurse Bailey: The Grenfell Association's responsibilities in terms of medical care in Black Tickle include trying to provide what is expected of medical care, trying to meet the health needs of the people, and providing the best possible health care that the circumstances will permit.

News Reporter: Why are nurses reluctant to make housecalls?

Nurse Bailey: Nurses are not reluctant to make housecalls. There are certain factors to be considered before a nurse consents to make a housecall. These include: 1) you can't make a proper assessment because the proper facilities are not available in the patients home, 2) there isn't always enough time to make a housecall everytime someone calls you, 3) while you are away from the clinic an emergency may come up, time can be crucial and the nurse is still responsible for any events that happen at the clinic.

News Reporter: Why isn't there a doctor stationed full time in Black Tickle?

Nurse Bailey: A doctor isn't stationed here full time because for a doctor to be stationed at a clinic full time there has to be a ratio of one doctor to a minimum of two thousand residents. In the case of Black Tickle it would not be economical or practical as there isn't enough work for a doctor to do. As a result a nurse stationed here full time would be more practical and economical.

News Reporter: How do you think the medical services in Black Tickle could be improved?

Nurse Bailey: I think that medical services could be improved in a number of ways. These include 1) people should be willing to take some responsibility and work together with Grenfell to improve services. 2) by not abusing the clinic's services ( ex. making appointments and not keeping them ), 3) by organizing or meeting to form an advisory committee to meet with Grenfell three or four times a year to present the needs of the people of Black Tickle from a medical perspective.

News Reporter: I guess medical services have changed a great deal in Black Tickle from what they were when Dr. Grenfell first came to the coast.

Nurse Bailey: Yes and as a matter of fact, I've managed to dig up a copy of an interview that was done with Dr. Grenfell a number of years ago. You might be interested in looking at it.

{Scene 2}

Characters:

Dr. Grenfell-

News Reporter-

Setting: It is the year 1935 in Vermont. Sir Wilfred Grenfell has recently retired. A news reporter has come to his home to interview him. ( The scene is divided into two sections. )

News Reporter: This afternoon we are pleased to be at the home of Sir Wilfred Grenfell who has recently retired from his work as a doctor and a missionary. Good afternoon, Dr. Grenfell, it is indeed a privilege to be here with you this afternoon. I am sure there are many interesting facets of your life's work. However my main interests lie in the contributions you have made along the Labrador coast. Would you care to share with us some of your more significant experiences?

Dr. Grenfell: There have been many memorable events that have occurred in my life. Probably the best way I can summarize them for you is through a poem I have written which highlights many touching moments in my life.

In 1892 I Sir Wilfred Grenfell said;  
To Newfoundland and Labrador, I must go this year instead.  
To see those weak and hungry, who've suffered pain and death.  
To give my strength and courage, that's undivided yet.

So in the year 1892, I sailed to Labrador.  
On the boat they called the Albert, which roamed the coastal shores.

In St. John's I spent a night, upon it's grassy dew.  
I then headed out for Labrador, to the islands in my view.

But to my outward surprise, things were so much worse.  
The people lived in little huts and cried as if a curse had,  
suddenly come upon them.  
Until all hope was gone and all they felt was agony.  
Those neglected for so long.

After arriving in Spotted Islands, I there advanced in my role.  
To feed those that were hungry and give warmth to those who  
were cold.

But I was living constantly, in fear of things I had to face.  
Famine upon this little land and starvation among this human  
race.

So I applied my swabs and bandages, stitched ,cut and mended.  
I comforted little children, who lost families and friends.  
I was their solem blessing, for I gave to those in need.  
I returned them from their weakened conditions to a  
fine and hardy breed.

And now I've helped to advance their services, where  
medicine is concerned.  
But I don't think I'm superior, for it's their respect I've had  
to earn.  
Now on those little islands in Labrador this year.  
The young and old are healthy with very little to fear.

I don't regret my visit, although I was surprised.  
To see those weak and helpless, lying right before my eyes.  
Some may say it was me that retrieved them from their helpless  
state.

But in my honest opinion, they survived because of faith.

News Reporter: Dr. Grenfell could you give us more detail about  
one community in particular which you may have  
visit.

Dr. Grenfell: ( Thinking back, slowly recalling. ) Ah, let me  
see.....

{ SCENE # 3 }

Characters:

Dr. Grenfell -  
George (Jarge) -  
Henry -  
Muck -

Setting: A fishing stage at Black Tickle. Dr. Grenfell is  
arriving accompanied by Jarge, one of the local men.

Dr. Grenfell: By the way George, is there anyone really sick  
here?

Jarge: Well me son poor old Muck sure got a sore throat, smurtin'  
somethin' awful. She hasn't moved out of the house in a  
week or more.

Dr. Grenfell: Well George I guess that will be the first place  
we'll visit.

( They continue on until they come to a house where Dr. Grenfell  
knocks. Muck's husband opens the door. )

Henry: Good day me son, come right in! How's ya gettin' on, Jarge? Never seen ya fer a long time. How's the fishin'? Who's yer friend, Jarge?

Jarge: (startled) Oh, I almost forgot you Sir! Henry, I brought along the doctor here because I figured he might be able to help Muck.

Dr. Grenfell: It's good to meet you Henry. May I see your wife?

Henry: Sure me son, right this way.

Jarge: Well I must be goin' now, see ya all later.

( Jarge exits. Dr. Grenfell and Henry go to Muck's bedroom. )

Dr. Grenfell: Hello Mary, my name is Dr. Grenfell. I'm the doctor now stationed along the coast. What seems to be the problem?

Henry: I'll leave ye now, I'll be back the once, Muck will tell ye everything ye wants to know anyway.

( Henry exits. )

Muck: Well Sir, I haven't been feeling very well for the past week or so. My throats been hurtin' sometin' awful and I haven't been able to eat any solid foods, even tryin' to get a drop of water down tears the throat outta me.

Dr. Grenfell: Let's take a look shall we? ( He leans over Muck and examines her. ) Ah - ah, um - um.

Muck: ( concerned ) Is it really that serious, doctor?

Dr. Grenfell: You have a serious case of tonsilitis, one of the worst I've seen in a long time. You're lucky I came along when I did.

Muck: Well what are ya gonna do about it, Sir. I haven't eaten in days and I'm goin' right off the earth. I can't take much more of this pain doctor, it's just about drivin' me crazy.

Dr. Grenfell: Well seeing as we don't have the time to take you to a proper medical facility, we're going to have to take your tonsils out right here.

Muck: I don't care where ya takes them out, Sir, 'cause I'd rather have a kick in the gut then havin' to put up with this pain fer another minute.

( Dr. Grenfell goes out and calls to Henry.)

Dr. Grenfell: Henry, could you come here quickly please?

Henry: (upset) What's the word ,Sir, is she really that bad?

Dr. Grenfell: I'm afraid so, Henry. She has a bad case of tonsillitis. We won't have time to take her to a hospital. I will have to operate here in the house.

Henry: ( anxious ) Isn't that dangerous, doctor? I mean do ya have the right stuff with ya to operate on me Muck?

Dr. Grenfell: Well, Henry, we do not the proper facilities but we'll have to manage with what we do have.

Henry: Is there anything I can do to help?

Dr. Grenfell: Yes as a matter of fact there is, Henry. Can you make sure there is plenty of hot water and fresh towels on hand. If this operation is going to be successful we've got to work together and we've no time to waste.

( Henry and Dr Grenfell go into Muck's bedroom.)

Henry: Don't you worry, Muck. All this'll be over before ya knows it. The doctor here'll take real good care of ya.

Dr. Grenfell: ( Preparing for the operation. ) Henry, before anything else happens, do you have anything sturdy enough to serve as an operating table?

Henry: Well me son the only sturdy thing in this house is the old kitchen table, ya can use that if ya wants.

( They go into Muck's room, carry her out and place her on the kitchen table. The operation begins. )

Dr. Grenfell: Henry, pass me that tray.

( Two hours later the operation is completed.)

Dr. Grenfell: Okay, Henry, let's take her back into her bedroom and get her settled.

( The men lift her back to her bed. The scene fades back to the interview. )

News Reporter: Well Dr. Grenfell, I'm beginning to see just how scarce medical services were along the coast. Dr. Grenfell, wasn't a part of your work involved with recruiting people to work on the Labrador coast? Was their work always easy?

Dr. Grenfell: I found many dedicated people who were interested in this type of work. I remember with great fondness Nurse Ruth Bean and Dr. Warren Sturges. Many interesting tales are associated with those two. I remember one in particular....

{ SCENE # 4 }

Characters:

Old Fella -  
Dr. Sturges -  
Nurse Bean -  
Aunt Gertie -  
Bud -  
Jim -  
Muk -

Setting: The community of Black Tickle around 1915

( Scene is divided into two sections, the harbour and Aunt Gertie's bridge.)

Old Fella : Dr. Sturges, you and nurse Bean is some lucky to be vistin' Black Tickle on such a beautiful July day, any other day the lops would have yer stomachs turned inside out by now.

(Looks up at the sky, and then turns back to the old fella.)

Dr. Sturges: Well Skipper by'e, the Labrador weather is really treatin' us good. I hope the people are as friendly as the surrounding atmosphere today.

Nurse Bean: I will never forget the year of 1915, when we delivered some medical supplies to Black Tickle in a punt.

(Lights fade down and people freeze.)

( Aunt Gerties Bridge Scene )

Aunt Gertie: Is dere any truth in all dat gossip dat's been going 'round the harbour the past few days.

Bud: (turning to Gertie) Well Gertie maid, it gotta be true, I think they was over to Spotted Islands the last couple of days, and dere's talk of dem coming here today.

Muk: Well it's only useless fer dem to come over 'ere. They won't be checkin' me over, cause as long as I got me health and strength I'll be runnin' to the hills at the near sight of em'.

Bud: Why do you say dat Muk? Fer God's sake stop beatin' around the bush and let us in on what yer talkin' about. Land sakes woman, yer drivin' us all bananas.

Jim: Just up and out with it so we can get on with our business, and get out to our nets. We still works fer a livin' ya know.

Muk: I don't care how often a doctor comes 'ere, but he's not goin' to shoot me with any of the 'ol cram dey got.

Bud: I knows I'm not goin' to stay 'round waitin' fer the doctor to come and shoot me.

Jim: Gather up yer things and spread the news 'round the harbour, so that we'll be all out of sight when them doctors get here.

( As the people of the community begin to run for the hills, two old ladies stay behind to find out who this doctor is, and what he is supposed to do. )

( Harbour Scene )

Old Fella: ( Points to the house up ahead. ) Dat's the community right up ahead. Do you see that house there on the point ?

Nurse Bean: Yes, and from this view of it I can tell that it is very small.

Doctor Sturges: ( Turns to Nurse Bean ) We should be finished by the evening if the people cooperate and understand the meaning of our visit.

Nurse Bean: The friendly smiles and chatter from the people will certainly make our mission worthwhile.

Old Fella: ( Nodding to a piece of rope ) Grab dat dere in da cutty and tie it to dat warf.

Doctor Sturges: ( Looks at the skipper confused ) How do you do that Skipper ? I'm sorry but I don't understand.

Old Fella: Give me da rope sir until you and Miss. Bean get up on da warf, den I'll show you how to tie her on. First you wrap dis rope around da post and tie a regular knot. Den you let her drift off on her grappling. Den you tie da stern tight to da warf so she won't wash up on the rocks.

( They are leaving the wharf and making their way up the path when they meet two old ladies. )

Aunt Gertie: ( Gives a harsh look to the doctor and nurse ) I suppose yer da fellers comin' down here to give us da shots, but yer not gonna find anyone here, me son, dey're all up in da hills.

Doctor Sturges: Are they on some sort of expedition, ma'am ?

Muk: A what pedition is ya tryin' to put through ya me son ? I don't understand any of dem ol' fancy words ya know.  
( Waving both hands ) Expedition, illpedition, I don't know what in God's name yer talkin' about.

Nurse Bean: Ma'am, let's just say their gone on some kind of trip.

Aunt Gertie: Have you ever been in da hills yerself dere Doctor ? Dere mighty safe from ye fellers.

Nurse Bean: Oh, whatever do you mean ?

Muk: Ye knows what were talkin' about, comin' here goin' shoot us all.

Doctor Sturges: Gonna what ? Shoot you, there must be some mistake ma'am. I'm sure you don't mean with a weapon ?

Aunt Gertie: Well, what else do you think dey're gone to da hills fer ? Berrypicking !

Nurse Bean: After all this confusing business, I think I could use a shot myself.

( Scene fades back to the interview. )

News Reporter: ( laughing ) With all that shooting, did they ever manage to shoot any food for themselves?

Dr. Grenfell: Well there wasn't enough time for things like that. We were usually very busy.

News Reporter: Yes, that is true. I guess there were many times when the situation wouldn't have been quite as comical.

Dr. Grenfell: Yes indeed, there were many times when the work wasn't so pleasant.....

{ SCENE # 5 }

Characters:

Doctor -

Nurse -

Woman -

Husband -

Setting: Clinic in Black Tickle around 1926.

We see a woman rushing into the clinic. She is bent over, holding her stomach, motioning for help. Dangling from her neck we see a gold cross on a chain. Wrapped tightly around her hands, is a set of rosary beads.

A nurse and doctor run to her side and bring her over to lie down on a couch. The nurse rushes around gathering things that the doctor will need to make the delivery.

The delivery occurs, and the nurse immediately realizes that something is wrong. The nurse calls the doctor over to the corner and speaks with him. When she turns around the mother immediately suspects that something is not right, she demands an answer from the nurse. The nurse goes to her, puts her arms around the woman's shoulders and tries to comfort her. The mother picks up her rosary beads, takes her cross from her neck, and thrusts both objects towards the nurse begging her to baptize the baby. The nurse eagerly agrees and the ceremony is performed. The mother cradles the baby in her arms, sobbing.

( The lights fade for thirty seconds. The scene switches to early morning and both parents are at the cemetery. )

The mother falls to her knees and begins to cry; the husband bends down and holds his wife. She reaches out and places a bouquet of flowers on her child's grave.

( The scene is slowly fading away. There is sad music in the background. )

Rap Song ( Conclusion )

Well thank you folks  
We hope you liked our play.  
It wasn't perfect.  
But it was o.k.  
It expressed our feelings up to the present days.  
About hardships endured in different ways.  
From flu~~s~~to cramps .  
There was no relief.  
It didn't matter if you were a Dyson or a Keefe.  
There were no cures, for the piercing pains.  
That vanished our people.  
And banned their names.  
In our times of turmoil we fought together.  
Combined our strength to make it all the better.  
No nurses or doctors to run to our aid.  
No swabs on our cuts not even band-aids.  
We fixed ourselves with baccy so strong.  
That took out the pain that was there for so long.  
Medical services is being improved through a new generation.  
But we couldn't have done it without education.  
It taught us to fight to gain health instead.  
To protect all our people and honor those dead.  
For Dr. Grenfell life was a field of honor.  
He worked so our hardships would persist no longer.  
He sacrificed and sustained a lot of pain.  
But you have to suffer if you hope to gain.