

NUKUM MANI SHAN SCHOOL, DAVIS INLET

presents

THE QUEST FOR FOOD

CAST

Shirley Jacobish
Mary Anne Nui
Jerry Gregoire
Jerry Pasteen
Raphael Rich
Willy Piwas
Jimmy Pasteen
Dennie Piwas

NARRATOR

Raphael Rich

TEACHER ADVISOR

Jennifer Snow



Jason Urquhart
Peacock Elementary School
Goose Bay



Kelly Dyson, Gr. 6
St. Peter's School
Black Tickle

NARRATOR - (sitting in armchair with book and lamp, telling story)
Once upon a time in a small village on the North Coast of Labrador, there lived a small group of Naskapi Innu. The people in this village enjoyed their life and spent many hours hunting, playing and singing. They were happy.

In the late 1960's, they decided to move their village so that it was more accessible to outsiders and more sheltered for the people living there.

Up to this point, the villagers depended largely upon their own means to obtain food. During the winter months, they hunted caribou to feed their families, always careful not to waste any of the kill, as the spirit of the caribou is sacred to them. In the summer months they fished, and again they were careful not to waste their food. The only supplies they depended on from outside were flour, sugar, and other staples needed to supplement their diets. These things they obtained from the Hudson Bay Trading Post.

Gradually, an evil villain worked its way into the community. At first, it fooled the people into believing it would make them happier and healthier. Over the years, through its wicked methods, it made the villagers more and more dependent on it, although some people resisted.

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Setting - Two hunters, dressed in hunting gear, are returning from a caribou hunt, with no caribou. Walking slowly, with heads down.

PIEN - I don't know what happened. I heard there were lots of caribou in Sango Bay, but there was just nothing there.

SHANIS - You know, this is the third time we've gone hunting and have had to return home with nothing. How can we feed our wives and children?

PIEN - Thank goodness the government store is there. At least we won't starve.

SHANIS - The government store - Ha! Our people are not used to that kind of food. It could never be as good as caribou and bannock!

PIEN - But at least the government store is reliable. The caribou aren't always there when we need them.

SHANIS - I want to be able to support my family by hunting. The government store is the white man's way.

PIEN - Maybe it is the white man's way, but at least if we can't get any caribou there's lots of food at the government store that's good. It must be good; the government says it is.

CURTAINS CLOSE AND LIGHTS FADE

NARRATOR - So you see, there was some resistance in the beginning. Although most people placed their trust in the evil villain as soon as it arrived in the village. A few people were still fighting against it. Unfortunately, what seems like progress almost always wins in the end.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

Setting - Friday afternoon at the government store. Two women with shopping bags are picking up groceries for their families. The excitement is great and people are enthusiastic. Light in background on evil villain.

MANISHAN - I don't know what I'm going to do, Agathe. Shanis came back from Sango Bay without any caribou again. I need to feed the kids something.

AGATHE - This may be a good thing. I'm sick of eating caribou all the time. Look at all the different things you can buy here.

MANISHAN - Well yes, I suppose you're right, but Shanis gets upset if we buy too much from this store. He's so determined to find caribou for us.

AGATHE - But Manishan, the kids love the cookies, and it's a lot less work for us to buy this bread and roll mix instead of making bannock. Think about how long it takes us to prepare the caribou for eating when we can just come here and buy a box of chicken and throw it in the oven.

MANISHAN - Yeah, I guess you're right. I've done that a couple of times. The kids really enjoyed the chicken and I had more time for my beadwork.

AGATHE - Oh look Manishan!! I haven't seen those cookies before. Let's go take a look.

WOMEN LEAVE STAGE (STAGE LIGHTS FADE AND CURTAINS CLOSE)

NARRATOR - As the years faded into each other, more people like Shanis and Manishan were won over by innocent people who had been tricked by the evil villain. The power of the evil villain grew until finally, people relied upon it almost totally. The tradition of hunting was still important but people were not so devastated when the caribou herds were scarce. The evil villain would provide for them. At least, the villagers trusted that it would provide for their needs.

ACT 2, SCENE 1

NARRATOR - Twenty years later, the novelty of the government store had worn off. More and More members of the community visited Goose Bay and were able to see what was offered to its residents by the supermarkets there.

Setting - A supermarket in Goose Bay. Nympha and Prote (a young couple) are shopping.

NYMPHA - Prote, look at these things next to the apples ! They look so weird! What are they?

PROTE - The sign says they're pin - pin - pineapples. I wonder what they taste like?

NYMPHA - Look at the price of the potatoes!! It must be a mistake. Fifty pounds for ten dollars! I paid nine dollars for ten pounds last week at the government store. That sign can't be right!

CLERK WANDERS PAST. PROTE GOES TO HIM AND ASKS THE PRICE OF THE POTATOES.

PROTE - Nympha, that's not a mistake. Too bad we can't buy a sack to bring back to Davis Inlet with us. But the shipping on Lab Air would cost too much.

NYMPHA - Why are we paying so much at home for potatoes when they are so cheap here in Goose Bay? What about the Native Agreement?

LIGHTS FADE AND CURTAINS CLOSE

NARRATOR - As you can see, the people of Davis Inlet gradually began to realize there were many problems with the package that the evil villain was offering. Back in Davis Inlet...

ACT 2, SCENE 2

NOTE - this is a double scene. The first part of the premier scene takes place on one half of the stage. Lights fade at end and fade into other half of stage for baby scene. Following this scene, fade out and into the premier's scene again.

SETTING - Chief and two Councillors are sitting at table with Premier, discussing Native Issues. There is tea, coffee, long-life milk and cookies on the table.

CHIEF - Mr. Wells, would you like a cup of tea?

PREMIER - Yes, that would be nice. All these talks on Native Issues are making us all tired and hungry, I think.

CHIEF - Here, there are lots of cookies. Have some. (Chief hand box of cookies to Wells)

Wells pours milk into cup of tea and begins to look embarrassed.

PREMIER - (cough) Excuse me, Chief Poker, but this milk seems to be spoiled.

1ST COUNCILLOR - Oh, that's okay Mr. Piwas. We all drink it. It doesn't taste any different. It just looks weird. Anyway, it's only been expired a couple of months and it's all we can get at the government store.

PREMIER - (laughs) It doesn't seem to bother you too much. Okay, I'll drink it too, but how long has this been going on?

2ND COUNCILLOR - Quite a while actually. We've complained to many different people about it but nothing ever seems to get done.

FADE OUT AND INTO BABY SCENE

ACT 2, SCENE 2

SETTING - Mother and Baby in blanket, in mother's arms, at kitchen table. Husband enters and sits at table with his wife.

SHUNEE - I wonder how the talks are going? Do you think the Chief was able to find any good milk for the Premier? Kananesh, "I didn't know what to do with the baby. He's still throwing up.

KANANES - Well, what did the nurses say?

SHUNEE - They said it seems that he's eaten something to make him sick. But all Alvei been giving him is Similac.

KANANESH - Shunee, you know what the store is like. Did you check the expiry date on it?

Kananesh walks offstage to check date on milk. Calls out as he walks back on stage. Shunee, it expired two months ago!!

SHUNEE - Oh no! I didn't even check the can. I didn't think a store, especially one owned by the government, could sell food that was expired. They didn't even mark the price down! I'd better call the nurses right away. Shunee gives baby to Kananesh and walks offstage to telephone.

FADE OUT AND INTO PREMIER SCENE

ACT 2, SCENE CONT'D

SETTING - As before.

CHIEF - (Entering from offstage with platter of meat) Mr. Wells, my wife just dropped off some caribou she just cooked. Would you like to try some?

PREMIER - I've never tried caribou before. Yes, I'd love to have some.

Chief serves caribou to Premier. Premier tries some. This is delicious! Do you eat this a lot?

1ST COUNCILLOR - We used to eat it more than anything. But when the government store arrived, we started eating more thing from there.

2ND COUNCILLOR - But you know, over the last couple of years, our people are eating more and more caribou.

PREMIER - Why the change?

CHIEF - Well, I guess We're eating more caribou, and enjoying it, because what small amount of frozen meats that is in the store is usually freezer burnt and has a greyish color. It doesn't look very appetizing, not like caribou.

1ST COUNCILLOR - And half the time, there's nothing in the freezers.

2ND COUNCILLOR - Yeah, even the fresh fruit and vegetables that come in are usually spoiled.

CHIEF - You know, some people can't afford to pay the prices that are charged by the government store either.

PREMIER - This is a serious, isn't it?

CHIEF - Yes, and like we said before, we've discussed it with many people but nothing has changed. It just seems to get worse.

FADE OUT AND CURTAINS CLOSE

ACT 3, SCENE 1

SETTING - People standing around waiting for the boat to arrive.

JIM - (Pointing) Look! There's the boat!

BOB - Thank goodness! We'll finally get some food. I thought the ice would never clear out of the harbour.

RAFAEL - At least the government knows we've been waiting for food. There should be lots of freight on the boat for the government store.

FADE OUT

SETTING - Same scene, later that day. Everyone looking very disappointed.

JIM - I can't believe it! The boat was half empty. There was nothing there for the government store.

RAFAEL - I don't know what we're going to do. This fishing season has been really bad. The nets are usually almost empty.

BOB - And most people are running out of caribou meat.

JIM - And the government store shelves are still empty.

FADE OUT AND CURTAINS CLOSE

FINAL NARRATION

NARRATOR - The evil villain still has its claws deep in the souls of the people in Davis Inlet, that small village on the Northern Coast of Labrador. Twenty years ago they were a happy and content group of people, satisfied to live off the land and the many treasures it provided. The arrival of the evil villain, the government store, produced many changes in the traditions of the Naskapi Innu. They began to grow more and more dependent on the material things it, at first, was able to provide.