

ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, PARADISE RIVER

presents

"To Be Or Not To Be"

Cast

Melisa Learning	Herself; Lydia (a tourist); Contestant; Corby Cod
Marilyn Brown	Herself; Aunt Rose; Contestant; Cora Cod
Emily Higgins	Herself; Joey; Arthur (a tourist); Quiz Show Host; Corny Cod
Allister Morris	Himself; Grim Reaper; Uncle Bill; Contestant; Hero of Paradise River;
Jordan Brown	Himself; Fisherman; Contestant
Teacher Advisor	Ms. Patty Way

Music

1. "The River" - written by Eldred Mesher; performed by Eldred Mesher and Selby Mesher.
2. "Paradise River" - written by Eldred Mesher and played on keyboard by Marilyn Brown.



Jeanine Cooper
Lake Melville School
North West River

To Be or Not to Be

(Music plays. Lights are down but come up slowly on two stools placed near centre stage. Enter two girls who sit. Spot.)

Melisa: (To audience) Hello! I'm Melisa , and this is Marilyn. (Points to her)

Marilyn: Hi, everyone! (Waves)

Melisa: Marilyn and I are students at St. George's School in Paradise River. This fall, as we do every fall, we began to work on our play for the Creative Arts Festival.

Marilyn: We thought of lots of things but, the truth is, with only Four students, our possibilities were pretty limited.

Melisa: Then, we realized that, sometimes, truth can be as interesting as fiction, and perhaps we could tell you our story.

Marilyn: For that, Melisa, we'll have to begin at the very beginning.

(Lights dim)

Melisa: In 1774, the year before George Cartwright moved from Cape Charles to Cartwright, he sent a ship to winter in Sandwich Bay. The men were to catch fur and, in the spring, prepare for the salmon fishery. When George Cartwright arrived there himself, the following spring, he wrote in his journal:

Marilyn: "June 19,1775. At daylight, I sent the people on shore to build a wharf on a point which I named Paradise."

(At the time of the readings, a fisherman carrying a sign which reads 1775 passes slowly behind in the background.)

Melisa: And so it was that the community was born. It continued, first with Cartwright's workers, and then with settlers who avoided press-gangs by jumping ship , or who were apprenticed to a company and saw a chance to live a free life in a free land.

Marilyn: The trapping and the salmon were

to be the mainstays of the village into the twentieth century. By the time of the First World War, Paradise River was the largest community in Sandwich Bay, even larger than Cartwright.

Melisa: Then came 1918, bringing with it the Spanish Flu. One quarter of the people of Paradise River died, both young and old.

(Enter the grim reaper in the background, carrying a scythe and a lantern labeled 1918.)

Marilyn: It was a setback from which the community took a very long time to recover. Actually, if it weren't for Joey and his resettlement program.....

(Enter "Joey" carrying sign saying: Cancel Separation Point; White Bear River; Dove Brook.)

Melisa: The resettlement program boosted the population of Paradise River to 200 people and there were more than sixty students in the school. A new school had to be built.

Marilyn: Melisa, What has happened? Why are there fewer students each year?

Melisa: Well, it has to do with job opportunities mostly. People with younger families who have school aged children are moving to Cartwright and Goose Bay. I have to go away myself next year, in order to attend high school. I guess each person who leaves makes it a little harder for those who are left to continue to stay as well.

Marilyn: I can understand that alright. When I found out Emily was moving to St. John's last spring, it was a pretty tough time for me. When you leave, well, I'll just have to go too.

Melisa: All of this brings us right back to the Creative Arts Festival. Every year, we really look forward to attending. We have such fun working on our plays and getting to meet and mix with so many different people. It is the highlight of our school year and has been as long as I remember. I came for the first time when I was in Grade Three.

Marilyn: We are the only school that brings every student and actually closes down for the entire visit. We all work on the script, the set, the costumes, the fund-raising, everything.

Melisa: It was so important to Emily that she made her parents promise to allow her to fly in from Newfoundland and

join us in doing our play which includes a couple of flashback memories.

Marilyn: Flashbacks are part of what we decided to do. We wanted to share with you some of our fondest memories since it is possible that our school will not perform again in future.

Melisa: And that could happen if our future students are either too young or too few in number or perhaps nonexistent.

Marilyn: Let's not think about that! Let's get on with the show... I love Flashbacks!

Melisa: So do I. One of my favorite plays was "Welcome to Paradise". Emily was a riot as Arthur.....

(Lights down. Music)

Music while set is being prepared. Aunt Rose is standing ready in the kitchen.

(lights up on table, four chairs and a window.)

Enter Bill with Lydia and Arthur.

Bill: I brought home a couple of them tourists ,Rose maid.

Rose: They better not be too grand...(Sees them) Why, Hello! I'm real glad you could come. Like I was just saying to Bill here, we can't have visitors enough! You're just in time for dinner. I'm Rose, everybody around here calls me Aunt Rose.

Arthur: Are you related to all of them?

Rose: Nah,bye. That's our custom. Sit down now and I'll dish you up some partridge and dumplings that'll knock your socks off!

Arthur: (Looks at feet) Pardon me??

Lydia: (Jabbing him) Isn't this charming, Arthur? Thank you, Aunt Rose. I'm always eager to try something new!

Arthur: Partridge and dumplings? But, Lydia, I'm a vegetarian, remember?

Aunt Rose: Well, like I tells the kids, if you're going to be fussy, there's always bakeapple jam and bread.

Arthur: What's bakeapple?

Rose: None of your joking, now. Just help yourself to anything you sees....and whatever you don't see, don't ask for!

Arthur: (To Bill) Excuse me,which way is the bathroom? I need to freshen up a little before lunch.

Bill: Bathroom? Rose, maid, I hope you remembered to empt that pail after you was finished this morning. My, that was a bad one!

Rose: Bill! Get on with you ,bye. You knows I always empts it. You're only getting on with that foolishness trying to tease. Well, it's not going to work. Right this way,sir. Don't mind Bill!

Looking a bit leery,he leaves. Everyone else begins to eat and make small talk. Arthur re-enters and sits by Lydia.

Arthur: Lydia, I couldn't find the toilet. I'll have to hold it until later. (Looks at food and visibly shakes) I'm not that hungry anymore.

Rose: A bit of this good feed will get your appetite going. (She dishes some up and Arthur looks pretty squaemish.

Bill: Where's you fellers from, anyway?

Lydia: We're from Boston.

Bill: Where?

Rose: Bill, bye. Don't be pestering them with all kinds of questions. Boston, bye. Up around Toronto and that.

Lydia: I don't mind his questions. We just came in on the boat tour, my dear. We're ashore for only a few hours.

Arthur: That boat was a bit unnerving, Lydia. I think I would rather fly back. There is an airport here?

Rose: My, golly, yes! Our airstrip must be 30 or 40 feet long and we gets at least three planes a week, don't we, Bill?

Bill: Long as the weather is good. We got it made these days.

(Looks towards window) There goes Mary now. Best Lab Air agent we ever had. Course she's the only agent we ever had. She puts out a wonderful line of clothes to help guide them pilots in. They hardly ever misses the strip.

Arthur: Oh, Lydia, what are we going to do? I dread the thought of that cruise ship.....Still I suppose it's the only way.....

(Lights down)

Lights up. Re-enter Melisa and Marilyn and get back on their stools.

Marilyn: Aunt Rose sure was a typical old-time Labrador housewife. There's not so many like her anymore..I suppose that's partly why people are less content to stay in an isolated place like Paradise River.

Melisa: I'm sure that's part of it. People want to have all the basic things in life like good health care and roads and education. These things are not easily available in places with very few people.

Marilyn: Certainly not the road part. I had to wear my rubbers to go to school every day last year!

Melisa: You should have seen the visitors from the School Board last spring. Ha! It was the first time I ever saw Mr. Patey and Mr. MacLean in rubbers.

Marilyn: That must have been a sight, all right!

Melisa: You know, Marilyn, I think one of the things that brought the most changes to isolated places was television.

Marilyn: It certainly brought changes to life in Paradise River...People couldn't go to their nets when wrestling was on..and everyone ate dinner watching "The Price is Right".

Melisa: "The Price is Right" sure must have made an impression, because one year the school based their play around that show.

Marilyn: Perhaps we could show the people here our favourite scene?

Melisa: Great idea! Let's go!

(They exit. Lights down. Stools are removed and the stage is set up with a lectern and a table with chairs for four contestants.)

Music. (Lights come up on Host lectern with three contestants at a table clearly for four.) Music fades.

Host: Good evening, and welcome to Paradise River's most popular quiz show, "The Price is Wrong". I'm your host, Emily Higgins, and now it's time to meet the contestants. First, there's Jordan Brown, our token intelligent person; Next we have Allister Morris, who's just recovering from brain surgery, and here we have Marilyn Brown, who is certainly not too bright.

Somewhere out there among you, audience, is a lucky participant waiting to be chosen to be our fourth contestant. And the fortunate one is... (suspense builds) Melisa Learning... Come on up!

(Melisa emerges from the crowd amidst her screams and cheers.. and goes on stage to take the fourth place.)

Congratulations, Melisa. Good luck to all of you. Let's give them a big hand... (Takes a "big hand" out from behind table...) Sorry, folks. Just can't resist them!

Now, for your first question. Jordan, here is the question... How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? You have five seconds....

(Jordan scribbles frantically... Bell rings..)

Time's up. You certainly blew that one. Allister, your question has two parts. Part one, what is the population of New York City?

Allister: Seven and a half million

Host: Correct! Name them! You have ten seconds.

Allister: Ah... John Smith.... are you kidding?

(Bell rings)

Host: Sorry, that's the way the cookie crumbles. Now, Marilyn, here is your question... Name Canada's ten provinces.

Marilyn: Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, British...

(Bell rings)

Host: Sorry. Your time is up. Now for our last question. If you can answer correctly, Melisa, you will be the proud winner of six genuine plastic flowers, and, if you give us a big smile, we'll throw in a genuine plastic vase. (Melisa

gives an idiotic grin) Okay, Melisa, here is your question... In which sport, hockey or chess, do you hear these words: "He shoots! He scores!" You have one minute...

Melisa: (Thinking hard, then says doubtfully..) Hockey??

Host: You're a winner. Congratulations and we'll see you all the next time where the "Price is Wrong"...and so is everything else....

(Host begins to shake hands, contestants file out ..lights go down.)

(Emily now joins them on stage as well.)

Melisa: There's no doubt about it, that was a riot. Of course, we miss Bryce and the others who were a part of it back then.

Marilyn: That's for sure. It was really great that you could come back for this, Emily.

Emily: I insisted. Like I told my parents, I'll move with you ONLY if you'll agree that I can go to the Festival still. After all, I told them, it's only from St. John's. A small price to pay for all the great times we've had here.

Melisa: I see that they saw it your way.

Emily: Scary, isn't it? (They laugh)

Marilyn: The craziest part of playing all those roles in flashbacks and having so few people to take part is all the costume changing. It's been like a madhouse back stage every year.

Melisa: I'll say. But I really lucked in last year when I had Dorrie Brown help do my costume. Her hands could really move.

Emily: You mean when we all had to get into those fish outfits. That was such fun.)

Marilyn: You think so? Because we're going to redo that next. Hit the lights and turn on the lively music, boys. We're gone! (Lights down)

Lights up. Enter three cod fish.

Cora Cod: Thank goodness we're OK !

Corny Cod: They were right on our tails, ha! ha!

Corby Cod: Your jokes are a bit green around the gills,
Corny!

Cora Cod: I knew we would end up in trouble if we vandalised
those nets. How are we going to get out of here now that the
people have barred off the entrance to the river?

Corby Cod: We won't be able to work on increasing our stock!
We'll be as gone as the rest of them.

Corny Cod: Loosen up, you guys! The bits of damage I did
are nothing compared to all they've done to us. They had it
coming. Thanks to them, our species has just about had it.

Corby Cod: There's been so much destruction.

Corny Cod: Yeah, you could say we're FIN-ished!! (He pauses
to see if the others will laugh.) Come on, guys...I
know...let's relax and dance a little to that rap we were
singing off the Grand Banks earlier this summer!

Corby and Cora: Oh, all right.
I suppose.

Corny: Ready? and a-one and a-two....

We travelled round the world
From Cartwright up the Eay
It's been real hard for us to find
A place where we can stay

SWIMMY TIME

Too many nets are out
To catch us as we roam
How can we ever hope to find
Somewhere to call our home?

SWIMMY TIME

Our families have been murdered
By companies with greed
All we want is just a chance
To be alone and breed

SWIMMY TIME

Too many caplin were caught up

It isn't fair to us
We couldn't just stand idly by
We had to make a fuss

SWIMMY TIME

We cod just try to do our best
So now we'll do our thing!
We'll back off if you will too
We'll multiply next spring

SWIMMY TIME!!!

(They continue to dance as the music fades back.)

Enter the Hero of Paradise River.

Hero: AHA! Just as I suspected.....Cod with REVENGE on their minds. I have the very weapons at hand..(He pulls out a bag of hard bread and a package of salt and advances towards them. The cod shrink back from him and he takes some of the salt and begins to sprinkle it on them. They "melt" to the floor. He then puts his foot on them and raises his muscles.)

TADA!!! (To the audience) Now you can see why I'm the hero of Paradise River... Well, this and my charm, of course. I must be off. I think I hear a maiden in distress. Probably only a black bear chasing her...GIRLS!!!

He exits. The lights go down. Music of "I'se the bye".

Lights back on the stage with the three stools as before.

Enter Melisa, Marilyn, and Emily.

Enter Melisa, Marilyn and Emily, to the stools. Lights up.

Melisa: That was our final flashback...and perhaps our final performance.

Marilyn: Hopefully not, but just in case it is, there are a few last minute thoughts we'd like to share with all of you.

Melisa: There's no doubt about that. We've had some wonderful memories....

Emily: Remember Marilyn's face when she found out that her design was chosen for last year's button? We were all so proud.

Melisa: And we've made such wonderful friends here, like Budge Wilson...She came to Paradise River twice now and still writes us every month.

Marilyn: Werner Zimmerman was a pretty special person too..and Lorne....and Fonz....and Libby...and Penny

Melisa: And let's not forget all the students we've met from other communities along the coast.

Emily: I've always enjoyed the music and the artists best, though some of the workshops were really good, too. Seems like we always learned a few new things.

Marilyn: The chance to go swimming or skating or bowling is pretty important too, girls!!!

Melisa: That's for sure, those are things we could never get to do on the coast in a small place like Paradise River.

Emily: Seems to me there are a few thank you's that ought to be made..Just in case???

Marilyn: Thanks go to everyone who's helped in anyway but especially to Cal and Tim .

Melisa: Cal and Tim have always gone out of their way to make sure that things are in order for us. Theirs are some of the familiar faces we look forward to seeing each and every year.

All: Thanks ,guys.

Emily: Now we'd like to ask Allister and Jordan to come out and join us. (They enter)

Melisa: Thanks for being a great audience tonight, and always. Goodnight,and perhaps,goodbye. (They bow. Lights down.)