

Black Tickle's Fighting Spirit

By The Taylor-Made Players



LABRADOR
creative
Arts
Festival

Play By:

Abigail Keefe

Zachary Keefe

Brady Morris

Victoria Keefe

Victor Dyson

Jaiden Keefe

Lucas Keefe

Character List

Old Albert (Present Self) – Zachary Keefe
Young Albert (Past Self) – Jaiden Keefe
Tom (Albert's Father) – Brady Morris
Jerry (fisher) – Victoria Keefe
Addison (Albert's Wife) – Victoria Keefe
Darren (government Official) – Victor Dyson
Sydney (council member) – Abigail Keefe
Nick (council member) – Lucas Keefe
Jack (oil company employee) – Victor Dyson
Jenny (Nurse) – Abigail Keefe
Darrel (Hospital Official) – Victor Dyson
Bill (Sick Person) – Lucas Keefe
Edward (Albert's and Addison's first born child) – Victor Dyson

Prop List

Rocking Chair
Table
Cup
Newspaper
Bucket
Fishing lines and poles
Cardboard fish and rock
Table and 4 chairs
Briefcase
Baby Doll
Wood
Nurse Bag
Medical Items
Protest Signs

Scene 1

(The Lights are on Old Albert)

(Old Albert is sitting in a rocking chair facing the audience, with a table next to him. A blanket is thrown across his legs and he is reading a newspaper and sipping on a cup of tea)

(As lights are pointed at him, he waits a few seconds before noticing the audience. He lays down his newspaper and take on last sip of tea and places the cup on the table.)

Old Albert (to the audience): Oh! I'm so sorry youngsters! I never noticed you were there! My hearing isn't like it used to be you know. Well, I'm Albert. I've heard from your teacher that you wanted to ask me a few questions about resilience, and I can't seem to think of a better example of resilience than, uhm, let's see, oh! The best example I can think of is ole Black Tickle, a few decades ago. It was a bad few years for us back then, uncertainty and fear was a part of everyday normalcy, but we were never one for giving up. No sir, we were not.

(Old Albert fixes his blanket, sits up straight, and clears his throat).

Old Albert (to the audience): I always had fond feelings for the small island; lived there all my life I did. I grew up there so I had many fond memories of that place. One of the most memorable times I can recall was fishing on the dock with my old man, catching skullys and rock cods. Just like yesterday it seemed, clear and salty aired...

(Lights move to the opposite side of stage)

(A young Albert and his father, Tom, are sitting on a wharf, fishing)

Young Albert: *(sighs)* I can't get a fish! How come you're so good at this?

Tom (Holding up his line with a fish on the end): You got to keep your mouth closed, my son. You're scaring the fish with all your moving around and shouting! We'll be here all day if you keep this up!

(The two boys stay quiet and still for a few seconds. Suddenly, Young Albert's fishing line is tugged on and he pulls it up, with a big fish on the end.)

Young Albert (overcome with joy): Yay! Dad look! It did it! I caught a fish the size of a whale!

(Young Albert places fish in a bucket beside him)

Tom: *(laughs)* you did do it! That's the biggest rock cod I ever saw! Keep this up, Albert, and you'll be working with the fishery in no time!

(Footsteps are heard and Jerry, a young fisher, comes up behind the two boys)

Jerry (out of breath): Tom, I had to tell you! I just came from the meeting with the Fisheries. They're closing down the ole dock and there will be NO cod fishing at all anymore!

Tom (*upset and angry, jumps up*): WHAT?!? They can't do that to us! That's our livelihood, and if we don't have fishing, we can't make a living, or even provide for our families! It's not fit!

Jerry: I know! After all we did for those fisheries and this is how they repay us?!

Young Albert (*Confused and upset*): dad? What's going on? What's happening?

Tom (*gives his son a weak smile*): it's nothing my ole boy, now you go on up with your mudder, I got to go and give those fisheries officials a piece of my mind!

(Tom and Jerry runs off the dock and runs behind the curtain leaving Young Albert sitting on the dock, wondering what's going on. He places his fishing line back in the water.

Young Albert (*quietly*): what's going on?

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert (*sighs sadly*): I never really understood what was going on back then, when I was small. My old man never really wanted to talk about it, 'cause fishing was how we got our money and he loved fishing very much. *(Pause)* Those fisheries, they never understood what they were doing to us, how much it affected us in such a negative way. We tried to stay strong, we hoped the fish will come back to us *(laughs)*. The fish did find their way home, in the end, and then I knew everything would be okay.

Scene 2

(Lights are on Old Albert)

Old Albert *(thinking and scratching his head)*: The next job I think that government tried to have at us was when they decided to relocate us to a bigger community. That's only if I remember correctly, but don't quote me on it. I was a young man then, when they made a vote around the spring of 2013 to see who would like to leave Black Tickle and who would like to stay. They promised a large amount of cash to those who would leave to pay for a new home, but my family and I was too strong-willed to accept the money and leave. There was so many families who also denied the offer. This community was way too important to give up just for a little bribing and a large amount of money. There was a meeting at the community hall to see would give up their homes, but it didn't really go the way the government planned.

(Lights go to Young Albert's side of the stage)

(There is a table in front of a few rows of chairs. Darren, the government official, is standing behind the table, talking to the Town Council, which are Sydney and Nick. Tom and Young Albert are there too, including Jerry.)

Darren: for anyone who decides to leave Black Tickle, you will be compensated for your new home in your new community. It will cover all expenses for you to be extra comfortable for where you all end up. If there is any questions, we will cover them at the end of-

Tom *(standing up to talk to Darren, cutting him off)*: Do you really think that we are stupid enough to fall for your little bribes?! Your money means nothing to us!

Sydney: Really, how shallow do you think we are? Allowing ourselves to be pushed around just for a little money?

Young Albert: What do you really think this money will do for us? What will we do when it runs out? We'll be left in the dust, worse off than we already were.

Darren *(Slightly annoyed)*: Now, now. People, I'm sure you're all just overreacting. We should all calm down and talk through this toget-

Sydney *(angry)*: Overreacting!?! *(Laughs)* Overreacting? Let me tell you, my lovely, we are not fighting on who gets the last cookie in the cookie jar. We are talking about our homes, the place we grew up in, the place our grandparents grew up, where we want our children to grow up in. This place is all we know, all we wanted to know.

Young Albert *(standing and clenching his fists)*: Did you every have to worry about not waking up in your own bed, in your own house, in your own community. I never been to another town in my life before, and I don't know what to expect. I'm only young after all, and I don't ever want to be scared and alone and have to worry about what will happen next. Think about it, do you want to make *your* children

go through that? New friends, having to deal with the bullies, God knows there is no bullies here, a new house? *(Pauses as he stares down Darren)* Huh? No, I bet you won't.

(Darren sits down slowly, and Young Albert, not taking his glare away from Darren, still stand firmly.)

Young Albert *(very powerful)*: I don't think you really understand that, Darren. After all, we're just *overreacting*, as you put it. You don't care for us, as long as you get that paycheck you're drooling over, everything is okay for you. *(He chokes and wipes tears from his red cheeks)* You don't GET IT DO YOU?! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE PAIN YOU PUT US THROUGH! THE PAIN YOU'RE PUTTING ME THROUGH!

(Tom rises now, and puts his hand on his child's shoulder, who is now crying hard. They all stay quiet for a moment as they all take in what Young Albert said and all on Young Albert's side of the stage claps for him. Young Albert shakily sits.)

Darren *(stuttering as he don't know what to say)*: W-well, those were, were some p-powerful words, young man. But I-I didn't decided this, I'm just the messenger.

Jerry *(clearly angry)*: Well, Mr. *Messenger*, you can take your money and your message and stick it up where the sun don't shine. We are NOT leaving, so tell that to the press.

(Darren, not speaking a word, picks his papers off the table and leaves swiftly. All on the stage applauds for getting rid of him.)

Sydney: Albert that was some speech. I loved how you stood up for yourself and for our town. I think I speak for all of us in offering you a job in the Town Council.

Nick: So what do you think?

Young Albert *(wonders and then clenches his fist)*: Nothing would make me happier than to help you guys out, and see the government become speechless and frazzled every day because of what I say. I accept.

(Lights go back to Old Albert's side of the stage)

Old Albert: I'm sorry if I got a little emotional as I told you guys that tale. *(Wipes eyes)* It still gets to me to this day, how close we were to being kicked out of our homes. It's something about leaving your home, which makes it hard on ya. I bet you'll feel the same, youngsters, if you had to leave *your* home. You wouldn't understand at first, but it's terrible, I tell ya. *(Pauses)* The government never really left us alone after that. They tried and tried with that relocation bribe so many times I got tired of telling them off. *(Laughs)*. But no sir, that wasn't close to being the end.

Scene 3

(Lights are on Old Albert)

Old Albert: it was only a few years after all that racket with the fishing and the relocation when we were hit hard again. It was the summer of 2015, if I remember correctly, when that big name oil company decided to pull out of Black Tickle and take away our oil and gas. I was a little older now, about 25 I think. I had signed my name up on the Town Council, and we were holding a meeting with our oil company to try to get them to change their minds.

(Lights move to the opposite side of the stage)

(There's a table set down with 4 chairs around it. Albert, Sydney, and Nick are arguing with a man from the oil company, Jack)

Jack: I told you already that the oil company had already decided. We are pulling out of Black Tickle because we can't make enough money to support *our* company!

Sydney (enraged): You can't do this! You don't understand! Our oil and gas is too important! Your company shouldn't have the right!

Jack (sighing): It's not your decision, and I'm sorry but we have our reasons for taking our business elsewhere.

Nick: What about our families? I have two small boys at home that needs the gas and oil to keep our family and home going! What would you do if you didn't have any oil or gas?

Young Albert: Yeah, my wife is pregnant with our first child. *(Pause as Sydney congratulates Young Albert with the news of his first child)* Our oil and gas plays an important role with our families! We need the gas and oil to keep our homes warm, our vehicles going! We need it to go in the Bay to get wood, to get water to drink and use, and even to get our food.

Sydney: See all the reasons why you should keep your oil business here?! We may not be able to make as much as bigger places like St. John's, but there is business here! What will you tell the community?!

Jack (closing his briefcase with a bang): I'm sorry, but now I must leave to catch the plane outta here. Please, now do understand our decision.

(Jack leaves quickly and the three are left to talk among themselves)

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert: that was a very stressful day, and imagine having to tell the community the bad news! My wife, Addison, was very upset, worrying about what will happen to our community and our child, Edward. He was only an infant, and it was a cold winter for all of us.

(Lights go back to the opposite side of the stage)

Young Albert (carrying wood): here, I got some more wood from the pile.

Addison (carrying Edward): Albert, we can't have that much wood every day! We need to preserve the wood and make it last until the boat runs. That way we can order some and have it shipped in!

Young Albert (sighing and wiping his forehead): I know Addison, I'm sorry, I'm just trying to keep poor Ed warm. The baby will get cold if we don't have enough wood in the stove, and my father, Tom, isn't doing so well either. You know how bad his arthritis is. And if there was any oil left, it'll be too expensive to buy...

Addison: I know you're trying Albert, but we don't have enough wood now. Did you get a hold of that oil company on the phone yet?

Young Albert: No, they won't respond to calls or emails. The lard-dine, stupid, god-

Addison: Albert, don't swear around the baby! Just face it, we're doomed. They don't care. They tried to make us leave, they're taking the oil and gas and threatening to take the teachers! How in the name of God are we supposed to raise our kids here?

Young Albert (patting his wife on the shoulder): *(sighing)* I'm sorry about swearing, hon. But don't count us out yet! I'll find something that will fix this problem, there's too many people here *dying* of the cold to give up! You can count on me.

(Edward cries from the cold. The couple sighs)

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert: The oil company changed their mind after that! *(Laughs)* I know that memory wasn't the most joyful, but I learned that there must be rain before a rainbow. I pushed the government to the limit, writing letters to news reporters to tell everyone what was going on and to make people aware how we were treated. We got our oil back that summer and everyone's homes were warm and people had enough wood, and water, and food. The feeling of winning back what we deserved felt wonderful. It was a great day to finally have gas for our vehicles and being able to just drive around for fun again. I was so happy with what the council and I were able to do, I mean, we practically saved our community. But we weren't in the clear yet...

Scene 4

(The Lights are on Old Albert)

Old Albert (*fixing himself in his chair*): sitting comfortably, children? Ugh, let see here, the next thing I remember for resilience is probably the time when our Clinic was going out of business. I think this was the biggest battle we had to face, and it really impacted us the worse. There was nothing left then, too many people rely on the Clinic to keep them healthy, including my own father, Tom. People were already leaving in fear of being kicked out. I remember the meeting very clearly...

(Albert rubs his chin and looks off toward the opposite side of stage)

(Light move to the opposite side of stage)

(Young Albert, Jenny, Addison, and Darren are standing in the middle of the stage talking loudly)

Jenny (*in shock*): What? What about all the people who need the clinic to get their treatments? I know a lot of people who need medicine daily so they wouldn't be in pain. There's lupus, and COPD, diabetes...

Darren (*interrupting*): The budget cut doesn't have enough money to provide you with a full-time nurse. I know there are problems that come with this decision, but we can provide you some help...

Addison (*very angry*): Help with what!? Darren, without a nurse, so many people will have to move just to get the treatments they need to keep them healthy! Besides pain meds, there is high risks of heart attacks, strokes, and there is mental illnesses...

Young Albert (*laying hand on wife's shoulder to quiet her*): And what if someone got the flu? They'll have to get medicine somehow, or else they'll sick as a dog for ages. And what about the people who has asthma? Their puffers...

Darren: Guys, look, I'm sorry, I know how this is so difficult to understand, but we have our reasons...

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert (*sadly*): I never knew the reason that old Darren tried to explain. What makes a person take a nurse away from an isolated community with sick children, elders, or even normal people who just need a few pain meds every once in a while? It put so many people under large amounts of stress. There was so many people who were confused and helpless and angry. I know poor Addison had depression for a while, along with many others, and I know she's struggling with it ever since. I don't know why they will take a nurse away from a place with only one nurse while there was communities with more than one. And it hurt us bad too, it felt like we were being bullied, like one time a year later...

(Lights goes back to the opposite side of the stage)

(In a building with a small desk with Jenny behind and a few chairs behind it)

(Jenny trying to talk to Tom and Addison about the shortage of medicine)

Jenny: I'm sorry Tom, there hasn't been a shipment of medicine in a few months. We just ran out of the rest of our painkillers.

Tom: *(grunts in pain)* really? I was hoping for some, this has been a bad day with my ole arthritis acting up.

Addison: I guess that's all we can do, but it would have been nice to get something for your arthritis and something for my hip.

(Young Albert enters)

Young Albert: So, this is where you are dad. Did his meds come in, Jenny?

Jenny: no, they stopped all planes from coming here a week ago, we have nothing left.

(The phone next to Jenny rings and she answers it)

Jenny *(talking into phone)*: Hello, Black Tickle Clinic, Jenny speaking. *(Pause)* What? Oh my god, okay, okay! How bad is it? *(Another Pause)* Okay I'll be right there!

(She hangs up the phone and starts shoving things into her bag behind the desk in a rush)

Young Albert: What's going on!?

Jenny *(breathing heavily)*: Bill just had an accident and is hurt really bad! He's out in the middle of the road, all beat up! The poor girl who called seemed pretty shook up, so it must be terrible. I have to go get him now!

Addison *(in shock)*: Oh my God! Can a plane come and get him?

Jenny *(gravely)*: No, there is no plane. We'll just have to pray.

(Young Albert covers his face, sobbing. His wife comforts him)

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert: that was a...bad day. *(Sniffs)* He was one of my best friends, Bill. He struggled for a long time, trying to get better, and Jenny was worked to the bone to try to get him back into good shape. He had an accident with something and it brought along a stroke. If we had proper meds or even a plane to bring him to Gcose Bay for treatment, he might be in better condition today. With the what-ifs and the could-haves that constantly hovered over our heads about poor Bill, it was hard on all of us. And with that, we had enough of being picked on, and we had made a plan to change Black Tickle for the better.

Scene 5

(Lights are on Old Albert)

Old Albert *(sitting up straight)*: We made a plan for the next time Darrel, a hospital official and a friend of Darren, was going to come to Black Tickle, which was only a few days after Bill had his stroke. It was getting hard on us without any medicine or healthcare whatsoever, especially Addison and I. Ed was getting sick more and more and Addison was pregnant for our second child, and she was sick too. We decided that the whole community would gather up by the clinic when Darrel was having his meeting to figure out a solution to our problem. I have to give it to Darrel, he was trying to bring back the clinic to the best of his abilities. We will always be grateful to him for doing what he did. And if I remember correctly, this is kinds how it went...

(Lights go to the opposite side of stage)

(Young Albert, Addison, Tom, Sydney, Nick, are in the middle of the stage with signs in their hands. Darrel enters and is watching the crowd before going inside clinic)

Young Albert *(chanting)*: Bring back our health care! Bring back our health care!

Darrel: Come on guys, louder, make them hear you!

(The group chants together and Darrel joins in)

(Darrel leaves behind curtain)

(The chanting is played quietly in the background as the group is talking)

Addison: I hope Darrel can get something figured out for us. I can't raise our children without meds, I just can't! We'll have to leave if nothing is gonna be done. *(She pats her stomach)*

Young Albert: it's okay, as long as we'll all be together, it'll be alright.

Tom: yeah, Addison, we've been through a lot lately, and we're too strong to crack under pressure now.

Sydney: if this doesn't work, we'll figure out something.

(Darrel slowly re-enters, his head lowered. The chanting dies out as everyone waits for his decision.)

Young Albert: What's wrong, Darrel, did it work?

(Darrel stays quiet)

Sydney: Come on guys, keep chanting! *(Half-crying)* I can't lose my home now, I lived here all my life!

Tom *(angrily)*: I was born here and I'm going to die here!

Addison: I have children to think about, what will you do if you don't have any health care to help support your family?!

Young Albert: What are we supposed to do now? How can you do this?

Darrel (sullen face): the meeting had just concluded. They heard you in the meeting room, through the windows and the walls. They decided what they'll do for all of you.

Young Albert: Then what is it?! Stop beating around the bush!

Darrel (waits a few seconds before replying): They decided that the clinic will... re-open and send planes back and forth, giving you complete health-care once again!

(The group is overjoyed and dances across the stage. The hug each other and pats Darren on the back)

Young Albert (half-crying and laughing): D-Darrel?! How did you do it?

Darrel: I didn't do anything! They heard how powerful you guys felt about your particular situation. They decided they'll have to make a change and have to find the money elsewhere.

Addison (crying with joy): Albert, we don't have to leave after all. Ed and the baby will be alright. *(Rubs her stomach once more and wipes her face as if wiping off tears)*

Sydney: I never felt such a weight come off of my shoulders! We're going to be okay!

Tom: Guys, we won!

(They group-hug and cheer as the lights slowly dim)

(Lights go back to Old Albert)

Old Albert: It was a long time coming. I knew so many people had already left before that meeting took place that day. But, it was still very important to me to get equality back in my home community. I mean, I never heard of a community in *all* of Newfoundland and Labrador not to have a nurse, or even a little bit of healthcare. Not to mention, the gas and oil or even when they tried to take our teachers, but that's another story and I don't want to take too much of your time, youngsters.

(Lights go out and "Hall of Fame" by The Script plays)

Scene 6

(Lights open up on Young Albert's side of the stage)

(Young Albert, Addison (holding her newborn child, Shelly), Sydney, Bill, Tom, and Edward are sitting on the dock, some with fishing poles in their hands. Young Albert and Addison is comforting Shelly.)

Tom: you did good Albert, you brought back the community. And you have such a sweet daughter.

Young Albert (proudly): thanks father. But I didn't do this all on my own. You guys helped out too. And little Shelly can be a handful, though.

Edward (kicking his feet against the dock): Dad, I'm gonna catch the biggest fish, bigger than Bill's!

Bill: you're on little man, I caught many fish in my day, way bigger than you!

Tom: Don't leave me out, bhyes, I can catch the biggest and the best!

(Bill, Tom and Edward tosses their lines overboard and jiggles them wildly, hoping to catch a fish the fastest)

Sydney (sighing): it feels great not having to worry with all that stuff that went on with the clinic, and oil, and...

Addison: I know, Sydney, my hair was starting to fall out. But I think it was because of the children though. And maybe Albert could have caused it too.

(Everyone has a little laugh and Addison hugs Shelly tightly)

Young Albert: I think that the only reason that all of this worked out was because we were too stubborn to let things go the way they wanted to go.

Addison: what do you mean?

Young Albert (Leaning back and stretching): I mean that things could have went a lot rougher than it would of if we didn't try to stop it. Remember what Darrel said, it was because it was our protest that the clinic officials changed their minds and let us keep the clinic. You guys did great.

Sydney: You goof! Don't be so modest, we wouldn't be sitting on this dock right now if you didn't take a stand and try to make things different. You were so resilient, it made us not give up when things got rough!

Young Albert (turning very red): You never know how strong you really are until being strong is the only choice you have, huh?

Addison: huh? Albert, I didn't know you were so poetic!

(Young Albert shrugs. The three boys who were fishing holds up their lines to show their prize catches)

Bill: I caught a skully!

Tom: I caught a rock cod!

Edward (sadly): I caught a rock...

(The group laughs and Young Albert claps his son on the back proudly.)

(Lights are brought up on both Old Albert's and Young Albert's sides of the stage. The two Albert's stand and meet each other in the middle and hugs. They face the crowd.)

Old Albert: I was just telling the children about our old adventures.

Young Albert: You're still dwelling on those old stories, old man?

Old Albert: Old man? We're the same person, and I'm that old! And let me finish, the kids I bet is getting impatient *(waves hand toward the audience)*

(The past characters come to the middle and meets up with Young and Old Albert. Addison hands Young Albert Shelly as they get ready to listen)

(All characters turn to talk to the audience.)

Old Albert: As you may know now, kids...

Young Albert *(cutting in)*: Resilience is never giving up, even in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threat, or even sources of stress...

Sydney: ...because life doesn't get easier or more forgiving, we get stronger and more resilient...

Addison: ...because being patience and persistence make an unbeatable combination for success.

Old Albert: And just remember, never let no one stop you from what you think is right. I never let anyone stop me, and look where that brought us. Now, get going youngsters. I think I wasted enough of your time, and my old self really likes to talk...

Young Albert: Hey!

Old Albert: ... And make sure you tell your teacher that you've learned a lot from me and my past experiences. If you ever need help with your homework again, you know where to find me.

(The group all group-hug)

(Song "On Top of the World" By Imagine Dragons plays as the group bows)

The End

Being resilient is a way of life in Black Tickle. Told through the eyes of Old Albert, the Taylor Made Players reflect upon the tough situations that have faced this community over the past few decades. Albert's memories of what happened in the 1990s and 2000s are enacted by the cast, who aim to show what happens when the people of a place embody a true fighting spirit: they unite, they stand for what they believe to be right, and they come out on top.