

Our Story of Hope

Jens Haven Memorial School

Original Synopsis

This play is a slice-of-life narrative of life in Nain. It depicts the obstacles the Indigenous people have faced, and still do today. Through older generations telling stories of the dark days before and during colonization, younger generations learn the resilience of their people and look to brighter days ahead.

The play follows four students after walking home from school. Each scene of the play takes place inside the home of this younger generation. The final scene is an assembly at school with an Indigenous teacher giving a speech. The purpose of her speech is to convey the message that damage to one generation is transmitted to the next (“intergenerational trauma”) and therefore injustice to a human being is an injustice to humanity.

Original Cast

Multiple roles

Chloe Blake Student Three

Kaysha Hay-Jenkins Teacher/ Grandmother

Serena Blake Student Two

Angel Dyson Student 1

Scene 1

The front view of JHMS. The school bell goes off, students are leaving the school and you can hear their murmurs in the hallway. Three students enter the stage as if they are walking home from school talking to each other.

Student 1 *(annoyed)* Did you hear what she said to me? Who the hell does she think she is?

Student 2 *(sarcastic)* Jeez! You're making a big deal out of it. All he said was he liked what you were wearing Finally *(a short pause here)*

Students 2, 3 *(together)* FINALLY *(laugh together except Girl #1)*

Student 3 *(sarcastic)* It could have been worse. Imagine if she told you how he didn't like what you wore every day.

Student 1 *(annoyed)* Shut up you guys! I've heard enough.

Student 3 Yeah, people are free to wear what they want. He is just a dummy giving opinions on people's clothes, let it go.

Student 2 *(sarcastic)* a girl telling a guy that what he wears is nice... flirt alert!

Student 1 Shhh...I don't know who raised these girls... No respect

Student 3 Here's our Anânsiak's place by the way. I can't wait to throw a surprise birthday party for her! *(Turning back to the audience, they head toward the back of the stage.)*

Student 2 Yeah! Same here! Let's make a chocolate cake

Student 3 oh, no no, her favorite is vanilla

Scene 2

While Student 1 stands in front of the house and try to unlock a door, the lights on the stage dim, and we hear a wooden door creaking open. The students enter the house. The lights are off when Grandmother appears on stage wearing an old lady's costume and taking a nap. As the door closes, the lights turn on. With her keys in hand,

Student 1 Shhh... (while pointing to the grandmother) seems like Anânsiak's napping

Student 2 *(with a quiet tone)* Oh, that's even better! She will get super surprised when

She wakes up.

Student 1 I'll bake the cake and you two do the decorations

(While student 1 is baking the cake and the other two are decorating)

Student 3 Big test tomorrow!

Student 1 I don't even care!

Student 2 Don't you wanna make Anânsiak proud? I do!

Student 1 She's already proud of me. I helped her cook the chir-fish the other day.
She thinks I'm the best cook.

Student 3 Ok, we don't have time to waste chef. (*Starts blowing up a balloon*)

Let's put the balloons over there.

Student 1 No, I think it looks better (*a pause*) over here.

Student 3 Don't be bossy!

Student 1 I'm the oldest cousin anyways

Student 3 Oldest but not the wisest and I am the funniest cousin.

Student 2 or the meanest one and I think I'm the tallest cousin.

(Dim lights, bring the balloons to the stage)

Scene 3

Student 2 Cake smells good

Student 1 Yummy! (*a pause*) but I'm gonna fail tomorrow

Student 3 (*say it loud*) Yeah, probably

Student 2 Shhh, she's sleeping

Student 1 Oh ok, social studies has never been my subject.

Student 3 Social studies is easy, you just talk about old people

Student 2 I disagree! "those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Student 1 So, what have you learned this year?

Student 3 I liked the story Miss. Mackenzie told us the other day about trauma!

Student 1 I can't remember anything of that.

Student 2 Obviously, you were on your phone talking to them as usual

Student 1 Don't be jealous! What was the story about?

Student 2 It's a fictional story, but I like it very much. In the world of circles, a circle crashes and loses a part of itself.

Student 1 A part like a cake slice?

Student 2 Exactly. Years pass and the circle spends every day rolling around trying to find its missing part. It travels to the sea, the mountains, the plains, and the desert looking for it until it finds that piece and becomes complete again. But the circle was still not happy because it had lost its ability to speak.

Student 1 Oh, so that missing part let the circle talk. right?

Student 3 Uhum, but the circle didn't know it. Yet it was still able to have great adventures that it otherwise wouldn't have had. The point is, sometimes our wounds and our difficult days, and our pains give us more strength to move and get what we want.

Student 1 Like why? Such a stupid story, I guess I didn't miss much

Student 3 I think you're gonna miss passing this year.

Student 2 Shh, be nice!

Students 1 As if I care!

Student 3 Oh, you are the oldest and dumbest at the same time.

Student 1 Oh you think so! At least Anânsiak likes me the most

Student 3 I doubt it! You may be good at cooking but nothing else yet

Student 2 Shut up guys. You are too loud.

Student 1 *(While sniffing)* Cake's burned!

(All run towards the oven to check on the cake and they take the burned cake out of the oven)

Student 3 Great job! Another yummy cake!

Student 2 Worst birthday ever! Thank you, everyone, good job.

Student 1 That was her fault

Student 3 My fault? Don't blame it on me.

Student 2 *(Annoyed)* Enough. It was all of us. We ruined her birthday)

(The balloon pops, students become scared, and grandma wakes up. she screams in her sleep while being scared.)

Grandmother No, I don't want to leave here. Our mothers and fathers are buried here.
No... no... I'm staying here. No... no... this is my homeland... this is my
home... no... no...

Student 1,2,3 *(rush to her and try to calm her down)*

Student 2 Calm down Anânsiak, It's alright...

Grandmother *(Looks frightened while panting and screaming.)* Get away from me... don't touch me... you have no right to force us out of our land... *(and pushes student 1 back)*

Student 1 *(says in a trembling voice as she starts to cry)* Anânsiak, it's me... did you have a nightmare again? We are in Nain, not Hebron. No one is taking anything. No one is forcing us to leave here. It was only a dream.

Grandmother holds her head between her hands and breathes rapidly. Student 1 brings her a)
(glass of water

Student 2 Drink this, Anânsiak.

Grandmother *(drinks water and calms down. she says with shame)* Forgive me, my children. These nightmares do not allow me to sleep well, and they are bad lately. I see my mother's tears and father's screams every night. It seems like only yesterday that we all gathered in the church and were forced out of our houses. A house that was a part of our identity, a part of our existence, peace, and happiness. Since that day, happiness, peace, identity, and life are unknown to me.

Student 3 *(The girl looks at her grandmother's face and holds her hands and says sadly)* I'm sorry. We're sorry. I wish we could help you.

Grandmother *(while caressing the girls' hair)* You can. You can help us all by being a strong woman. Stand up for humanity and don't be silent in the face of

injustice. I lived injustice. Work hard for the future and don't give up. We are a generation full of pain and wounds, but never forget that the light shines through the cracks in the wall.

Student 1 *(while hugging his grandmother)* I get it now. We'll never give up.

Student 2 We're blessed to have you Anânsiak.

Grandmother *(Hug all of them)* I'm the one who's all blessed with three of you. *(a pause)*

Oh look at those decorations, it must be someone's birthday today!

Student 3 Yeah grandma, we made you a cake but it's burned

Student 2 I'm so sorry.

Student 1 It's my fault. I'm sorry.

Grandmother You all cared for me and that's all that matters and don't worry someone old made herself a cake this morning.

Student 2 *(surprised)* Really?

Grandmother It's in the fridge.

(They all go to the fridge to get the cake)

Student 1 *(While getting the cake out of the fridge)* Cake time!

(Student 1 puts candles on the cake and lights them. They put the cake in front of their grandmother and sing the happy birthday song in Inuktitut. Grandmother blows out the candle. Dim lights)

Scene 4

(The teacher and student 1 with their orange shirts are sitting in the class until students 2 and 3 also show up.)

Student 1 Why are you late

Student 2 I needed to iron my orange shirt for the assembly today.

Student 3 Oh, I forgot mine

Student 1 What do we have this period?

Student 2 Social Studies I guess.

(Miss's voice and the morning song. Students stand up.)

Teacher *(Standing right in front of the audience and talking loudly)* Good morning everyone, today I would like you to answer this question: If your life was a book and you were the author how would you want your story to go?
(no one answers, and they look at each other)

Teacher Does anyone have an answer?

Student 1 If I were the author of my own life story, I would find a treasure somewhere in the story *(everyone laughs)*

Teacher Good.

Student 2 I would be the best hunter around.

Student 3 I would change the past and write a different one instead.

Teacher (*Surprised*) Interesting, and why?

Student 3 I think that when our previous generation got hurt, the wounds remain for generations to come.

Teacher And do you all think that the hardships of the past can make future generations weak and even hopeless?

Student 2 It sometimes can, yes. As an Indigenous person I know we have gone through so much and our everyday life is itself a story of survival.

Student 1 That's right, we are still struggling; however, if you ask me today if I would ever want to change my situation; I would have to say no.

Teacher Interesting. Can you tell me why?

Student 2 Because my history, our history, our past, our culture hasn't disabled us. If anything, they enabled us. They forced us to rely on ourselves more and to stick together like a big family.

Teacher Great, so instead of looking at our challenges as limitations, we can begin to look at them as what makes us strive for what is right. They can ignite our imaginations and help us go further than we ever knew we could go. It's not about breaking down borders, it's about pushing off them and seeing what amazing places they might bring us.

Student 1 Exactly! I am proud to be Indigenous. And I am proud to be of this generation because I feel we have a voice. We can scream, "we are barrier

breakers” and that we are fighting hard to unlock doors that we may never walk through, but we do it anyway because we're standing on the shoulders of those that did it for us like my grandmother.

Student 3 Yeah! We are the generation that can change the world. Doesn't it feel like that? It feels more and more like the barriers are in our minds. We just have to believe that and unite to figure out why it feels like they are there in the first place.

Teacher I'm impressed! Good job everyone! I too am optimistic in this generation, that you will take our struggles, our insecurities, our challenges, and our boundaries and not see them as obstacles but as opportunities. Our life on this land is already an amazing story. It's dramatic, and often tragic, but isn't that how heroes are born? This is a story of us that belongs to this land the same way we belong to our land and out there in Nain, with our eyes open we will find the strongest form of success we could ever hope for we will find more than just a land, we will find survival in a story of us that can be an inspiration for people around the world. A story that I like to call Our Story of Hope.

(Miss asks students to join the assembly of truth and reconciliation in the gym).

Teacher Ok, now let's go and join the assembly.

(All students and the teacher leave the stage and for the last time we hear the door close. Dim lights)

The End