

WRITTEN BY **LISA NASSON** DIRECTED BY **MIKE PAYETTE** WITH **JOELLE PETERS** FROM **JAN 15 - FEB 8, 2026**

MISCHIEF



TARRAGON THEATRE



**Native
Earth**
Performing Arts

Neptune THEATRE

A TARRAGON, NATIVE EARTH PERFORMING ARTS, AND NEPTUNE THEATRE CO-PRODUCTION

January 15 - February 8

Mainspace

Table of Contents

- 3** About the Team
- 5** About the Play
- 7** Mi'kmaq Mythology
- 8** Edward Cornwallis
- 9** Monuments & Reconciliation in Canada & Toronto
- 10** Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls
- 11** Contemporary Indigenous Theatre in Canada
- 12** Additional Resources
- 13** Activities
- 14** Conversation Starters

Please Note: icons highlighted in yellow may be of particular interest to educators.

About the Playwright

Lisa Nasson is a Mi'kmaq actor, director and storyteller from Millbrook First Nation, Nova Scotia. She studied acting at George Brown College in Toronto, and studied Classical Theatre with the Birmingham Conservatory at the Stratford Festival. Lisa has taught at the Neptune Theatre School in Halifax, and the Young Peoples Theatre in Toronto. Lisa was the Associate Artistic Director at Native Earth Performing Arts in Toronto. She began her journey with Fatty Legs as Maragret-Olemaun's voice with Xara Choral Theatre in 2012, and has played the role many times since then. Oleamaun's voice has echoed in all of Lisa's work since her first run of the theatre production, and is forever grateful for her courage, strength, and resilience.

Creative Team

Mike Payette - Director

Joelle Peters - Associate Director

Andy Moro - Set, Costume & Video Designer

Leigh Ann Vardy - Lighting Designer

Maddie Bautista - Sound Designer & Composer

Farnoosh Talebpour - Stage Manager

Stephanie Taylor - Apprentice Stage Manager

Tayla Paul - Regalia Consultant and Builder

Mitchell Saddleback - Smudge Man

Cast

Lisa Nasson - Brooke

Jeremy Proulx - Chris

Trina Moyan - Tammy

Devin MacKinnon - Fisherman Fred/Good Guy

Nicole Joy-Fraser - Emily*

*role of Emily previously played by Yolanda Bonnell

About the Play

Synopsis

Brooke is perfectly content with her job selling cigarettes to the local fisherman at her uncle's convenience store on the Rez. But what happens when a woman appears in a utility closet and claims to have known her mother? And where can she turn when one act of mischief derails her peace?

A heartwarming story where ancestry and the cost of justice collide, *Mischief* is a gentle comedy from lauded Mi'kmaw artist Lisa Nesson that celebrates the power of community.

Playwright's Note

I am excited and giddy to present to you my first ever full-length play. *Mischief* is a mixture of all things I love about theatre. Comedy, tragedy, heart, weirdness, peculiar questions, truth, when we decide to steer away from truth, metaphor, fools, and really great acting. I wrote *Mischief* in my Toronto apartment in the west end during a cold and isolating January. I was homesick for Nova Scotia, painfully single, and in-between gigs. During these times of loneliness, it is most important to create stories if you're bored of your own. I stayed put in my apartment, with my roommate's popcorn bowl as a co-writer, and created characters out of people I loved or have been versions of before. I wrote the majority of this play in one month. I then went on tour as an actor, finished the play on my plane ride home from Yellowknife- then went right into a workshop the next day with Native Earth Performing Arts to have brilliant artists read it out loud. Mike Payette was appointed dramaturg of *Mischief* by Artistic Director Joelle Peters during the Weesageechak Festival of New Works. His thoughtful and precise eye on my work was magic, and I knew his relationship with *Mischief* was meant to be. When I approached Tarragon Theatre and Native Earth with the idea to program my piece, it all felt really easy. I spent many of my formative years at Native Earth in my twenties, learning from some of the greatest Indigenous artists in the country, surrounded by new works and constant support. I am really excited you, audience member, decided to come see a play driven by native rockstars, strong women, and a lot of heart. This story is yours to take home with you. Thank you to my loving partner Mitchell Saddleback, for being the first person to ever read it, and for uplifting me ever since. I dedicate this play to my family. Thank you for being my number one support. Thank you for teaching me that being mischievous is the most fun way to deal with life. Grammy Grey, Auntie, Uncle Gordon, Granny, Roddy, Mom, Dad, Tracy, Tim, Emily and Melanie- this is for us.

Director's Note

Three years ago, I had the good fortune of being invited by Artistic Director Joelle Peters to join Native Earth's Weesageechak Festival to support playwright Lisa Nasson on a new play. During the process of developing *Mischief*, I was immediately taken by Lisa's love letter to her community and the compellingly fresh discussion she proposed around an intergenerational response to resistance and self-identity.

When NEPA, Neptune and Tarragon decided to join forces - bringing together collaborators from the East Coast and here at home - and as we continued developing the story further, I was continually struck by Lisa's ability to blend heartfelt drama with much-needed laughter; both reflecting the unique qualities of a family and a community that deeply resonates and feels like our own.

Family is at the core of this journey - our relationship to it, our desire to individualize from it, and the quest to reconnect to it. And it's in the spirit of those feelings where *Mischief* takes us from a recognizable convenience store to an ancestral world that is not-so-distant, and invites us on a quest to celebrate our personal power against adversity and injustice.

I'm grateful for an incredible team of actors who have given so much of their heart and ability in making this story feel like home, and to the creatives who have heightened the everyday to a sensorial theatrical experience that lingers long after leaving the theatre. And to Joelle Peters - a leader beyond compare - who has helped guide this story with such care and artistry.

And thank you all for being with us today - for starting the new year with a little mischief. I am so happy you're here.

- Mike

Mi'kmaq Mythology

1

The Mi'kmaq Creation Story As Told by Hereditary Chief Stephen Augustine



2 hour video
created for Seniors'
College Association
of Nova Scotia



2 page curriculum
created for the
Government of
Nova Scotia

2

Animal Personhood in Mi'kmaq Perspective

12 page article written by Margaret Robinson, a Mi'kmaq woman who grew up in the woods of Nova Scotia and now lives in Toronto.



3

Traditional Stories from Mi'kmaq Nation (Maine)

Wiklatmuj
(Little
People),
Bird Signs,
Owls &
Eagles



Brown Ash,
Glooscap,
Morality,
Personality,
Whale, Cave
& Leaves



Skunk,
Rabbit
Dance,
Spirit World
& Animal
Size

4

Mi'kmaq Myths & Canadian Lore

With Mi'kmaq poet Julie Pellissier-Lush,
Toronto-based author Amir Aziz, & Canada's
History magazine senior editor Kate Jaimet.



Edward Cornwallis

1

History Decolonized:

A Look at Edward Cornwallis and Why His Statue Toppled



24 min video from
APTN Investigates



Article by Trina
Roache for APTN
Investigates

2

Not Perfect

Halifax's poet laureate Rebecca Thompson addresses the Halifax Regional Council in 2016 on the Edward Cornwallis Statue.



3

Indefensible:

The Troubling Legacy of Edward Cornwallis

The history of Edward Cornwallis and the modern day controversy surrounding his statue.



4

CBRM Wants 266-year-old Scalping Proclamation Removed from the Books

The lasting power of racist laws.



Monuments & Reconciliation in Canada and Toronto



1

Buildings Renamed, Monuments Fall

Seven short looks at renamings across the country.

2

What Other Cities Have Renamed Streets or Landmarks in the Name of Reconciliation?

Five examples from Regina Leader Post.



3

Sir John A. Macdonald Statue at Queen's Park to be Uncovered After 5 Years

This statue was covered after it was vandalized in 2020 amid protests & residential schools reckoning.



4

Renaming Ryerson to TMU



From Heritage
Toronto



From BBC

5

Sankofa Square



From CBC



From World
Cities Cultural
Forum

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



1

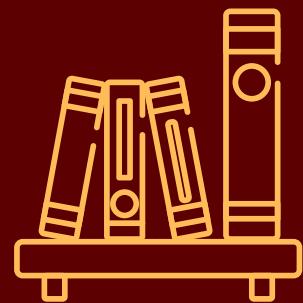
Reclaiming Power and Place

The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

2

Resources from Canadian Museum of Human Rights

Including information for teachers, young audiences, community members & artists.



3

Our Sisters In Spirit

A short, personal documentary with an Ontario focus.

4

We Are More Than Murdered And Missing

In this TEDxThunderBay talk Tamara Bernard encourages hope, love, empowerment.



5

Missing & Murdered: The Unsolved Cases of Indigenous Women and Girls

A database created by CBC with information about over 300 MMIWG2S cases.

Contemporary Indigenous Theatre in Canada



1

Native Earth Performing Arts

Canada's oldest and most prominent home for
contemporary Indigenous performance.

2

Shining in the Spotlight: Indigenous Theatre in Canada

From the Library of Parliament.



3

Looking at Indigenous Performing Arts

A research project by Primary Colours with NAC
Indigenous Theatre & Canada Council for the Arts

4

Storytelling and Strength: Voices from Indigenous Theatre in Canada

A panel discussion with award-winning artists.



5

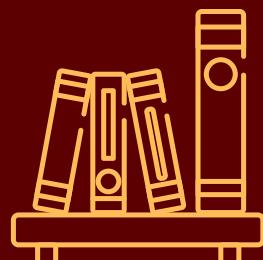
Dancing the Land

Short digital works from NAC Indigenous Theatre.

6

18 Indigenous Theatre Companies to Follow

From Associate Director Joelle Peters.



Additional Resources

1



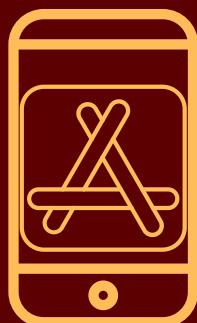
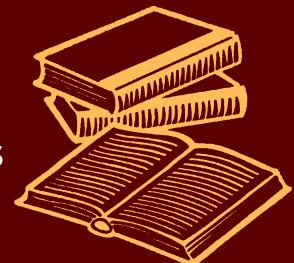
Lisa Nesson: Mischief, Mi'kmaw Roots, and Making Space for Story

From the "Make It with Mike and Kristen" Podcast – where creative people talk about what they make, and what "making it" means to them.

2

The Child Is Capable: Anishinaabe Pedagogy of Land and Community

This article promotes understanding of Indigenous Knowledge processes, pedagogies, and ways of Being to disrupt educational inequities.



3

First Story

Engage with Toronto's significant Indigenous history and presence using the Driftscape App.



Journalist Trent Weston shares his experience using First Story to explore Toronto.

4

Indigenous Humour



From Drew
Hayden
Taylor



TedxTalk



LOLing Is
Good
Medicine

Activities

Using the resources below, find out what Indigenous group's traditional territories you are currently residing in.

<https://www.whose.land/en/> : Canada

<https://native-land.ca/> : The World

Repeat the exercise for different places you have lived or traveled to.

Follow steps 1 - 9 in the *How to Share Stuff: A Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant* exercise found at the link below.

<https://canadianart.ca/features/how-to-share-stuff/>

*This resource was created by Ange Loft

Learn about the LANDBACK movement

<https://landback.org/>

Take some time with the
United Nations Declaration on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Consider what
“free, prior, and informed consent” (FPIC)
by Indigenous peoples before economic development
projects can take place on lands they inhabit or to which
they have a claim would mean for your local area, so-
called 'Canada' and for Turtle Island.

Conversation Starters

Share your thoughts on the recent activism around removing and renaming monuments.

How did the use of animal imagery effect your understanding of the play?

What do you think happens to Brooke after the end of the play?

How did the projection and lighting design support the storytelling?