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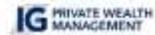


FEB 20 — MAR 17

# HOCKEY MOM HOCKEY DAD

BY MICHAEL MELSKI

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## Hockey Mom Hockey Dad Enrichment Guide

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Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre is proud to call Manitoba home. Royal MTC is located in Winnipeg on Treaty 1, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Inninewak, Anishinewak, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. We are thankful for the benefits sharing this land has afforded us, acknowledge the responsibilities of the Treaties, and embrace the opportunity to partner with Indigenous communities in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

## The Role of the Audience

Theatre needs its audience! We are happy to have you here. Every staff person, actor, and crew member backstage plays an important part in your experience, and you also have a role in the experience of cast, crew and the people around you.

**Arrive Early:** Please make sure you give yourself enough time to find your seat before the performance starts. Latecomers may not be admitted to a performance. We ask schools and other groups to arrive at least 20-30 minutes before the show.

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:** Please **turn off** your cell phone/mp3 player /gaming system/camera/smart watch. Texting, surfing, and gaming during performances is very distracting for the performers and other audience members. Using cameras and recording devices during a performance is **never** allowed.

**Talking During the Performance:** Even when you whisper, you can be heard by performers and people around you. Unless it is a relaxed performance, disruptive patrons will be removed from the theatre. Please wait until after the performance to share your words with others.

**Food/Drinks:** Food and outside drinks are not allowed in the theatre. When there is an intermission, snacks and drinks may be available for purchase. There is complimentary water in the lobby.

**Dress:** There is no dress code at the Royal MTC, but we respectfully ask you not to wear hats in the theatre. We strive to be a scent-free environment and thank all patrons for their cooperation.

**Leaving During the Performance:** If you leave the theatre during a performance, you will be readmitted at the discretion of Front of House staff. If readmitted, you may be placed in an empty seat at the back of the auditorium instead of your original seat.

**Being Asked to Leave:** The theatre staff has, and will exercise, the right to ask any member of the audience to leave if that person is being inappropriate or disruptive including (but not limited to): talking, using devices that produce light or sound, and deliberately interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.).

**Talkbacks:** A short question and answer period with the actors takes place after student matinees, first Tuesday evening shows, and some public matinees. While watching the show, make a mental note of questions to ask the actors about the production or life in the theatre. Our artists deserve to be treated with respect! It's okay to have a negative opinion, but this is your chance to ask questions and understand the performance or process, not to criticize. If you have a concern, see the house manager after the show and they will make sure your feedback gets to the appropriate Royal MTC staff.

**Enjoy the show:** Laugh, cry, gasp – responding to the performance is part of the nature of theatre! As you get involved in the story, try to balance your reactions with respecting the people around you. The curtain call is part of the performance too – it gives you a chance to thank all the artists for their hard work with applause, and for them to thank you for your attention. We all appreciate when you stay at your seat and join in the applause!

## About the Playwright

Michael Melski was born on May 19, 1969 in Sydney, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and died on July 18, 2025 at the age of fifty-six. Melski was introduced to theatre through Mermaid Theatre's puppet productions that toured to his elementary school, and his dad instilled in him a love of horror movies and their origin stories. As a result of these influences, Melski knew he wanted to be a filmmaker by the time he was around 14 or 15, recalling in 2019, "I remember my friend at the time saying you may as well want to be an astronaut" (<https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/a-huge-loss-friends-family-pay-respects-to-cape-breton-born-playwright-filmmaker-michael-melski>). He certainly made "space" for himself in the industry by becoming an award-winning playwright and filmmaker, one of those honours being the Halifax Mayor's Award for Achievement in 2006. However, he first graduated King's College, "having written and produced seven plays," and "paid [his] dues in the real world, working in everything from muffler shops, to packaging bean sprouts, to canvassing for Greenpeace to bartending" (<https://halifax.citynews.ca/2019/01/23/play-revival-marks-25-years-of-success-for-halifamous-filmmaker-1207902/>).

It was his eleventh play, *Joyride*, first performed at the Halifax Film Festival, formerly known as the Atlantic Film Festival, that launched his career. When Glen Walton from the Canadian Film Centre saw a later production of it, Melski was asked to write a screenplay and was consequently accepted into the Canadian Film Centre. Throughout his career, he wrote several plays including *Hockey Mom*, *Hockey Dad*; *The Fly Fisher's Companion*; *Miles from Home*, and films (*Growing Op*, *Charlie Zone*; *The Child Remains*) and directed documentaries (*Perfume War*, *Rare Bird Alert*). He also served as artist-in-residence at Shaw Festival, Neptune Theatre, and Eastern Front Theatre.

*Hockey Mom*, *Hockey Dad* was first produced by Two Planks Theatre Company on tour throughout Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick in 1999, and across the rest of Canada from 2000-2001. In 2003 it was produced at the Factory Theatre in Toronto and was named one of the Top Ten Plays of the Year by the Toronto Star that year. In an interview with Off the Leash host Jeremy Webb, Michael Melski shared his inspiration for the play: "I thought of two parents I knew when I played minor hockey. Two single parents and watching them kind of fall in love in the stands and our team kind of got a big kick out of that. Um, and then later, uh, I thought, wow, there was as much theatre watching them in the stands as there was on the ice" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEDfb3QaeGE>). Much of his inspiration for the play—and his other works—came from his interests. In his obituary, his family pronounced him as a "passionate Leafs fan"—and he was even seen wearing a Toronto Maple Leafs hat in a Sea and Be Scene interview with Stephanie Beaumont on his film, *The Child Remains* ( <https://www.pierfuneralhome.com/2025/07/melski-michael-andrew/>). His family said he also often sought inspiration in Margaree, where he "restored his family's...cabin with his own hands" and where his "heart was always

anchored” (<https://www.pierfuneralhome.com/2025/07/melski-michael-andrew/>). In their beautiful tribute, they said that “his work on stage and screen reflected his sharp wit and deep humanity” ( <https://www.pierfuneralhome.com/2025/07/melski-michael-andrew/>).

## Plot Summary

*Hockey Mom, Hockey Dad* begins how many Saturday mornings do across Canada: at a hockey arena. Teddy and Donna are two single parents watching their eight-year-old sons, Troy and Matthew respectively, play minor league hockey from the stands. While the “ol” rink may be “on its last legs,” Teddy and Donna are on their feet cheering for their sons throughout the play—in both senses of the word (Melski 8)! Donna initially comes across as a bit *icy* towards Teddy but warms up—perhaps in part thanks to her steel travel mug of coffee but largely due to Teddy’s charisma and sheer persistence. His *goal* isn’t just for the boys’ team, the Leafs, to finally win a game but also to *win* Donna’s heart. He doesn’t *skate around* much either; he’s quite *forward* about the fact that he wants a “family skate kinda family—and with her (Melski 40). However, her past relationship makes her fear being “like that zamboni guy out there, goin in circles” (Melski 47). Will they be a *match* made in....the arena?

## Characters

### DONNA

Donna is reserved, slow to make new friends, warm, and funny, but has difficulty talking about her recent separation from her husband of eight years. She used to be a full-time teacher but can only find substitute jobs in town. She sits alone in the bleachers and cheers on her son, Matthew, though she is concerned that one day he is going to hurt himself... or someone else.

### TEDDY

Teddy is gregarious, outspoken, quick to have a laugh, and lives and breathes the sport of hockey. Teddy is the custodian at the local high school. He used to coach his son's team back in Atom... and is still doing quite a bit of coaching in the bleachers. Teddy’s son Troy is the team's grinder, and Teddy is sure that Troy could be the next Chris Neil, if everyone would just listen to him.

## Playwright’s Notes

This is a play for my friends then. We were a dirty bunch, deserving of the litter thrown at us by the rink rat girls we teased. No Guy Lafleur’s goldilocks or Sittler’s Wheatabix for us. We were ten-and-under pretend-flyers spat from exhaust pipes, splayed arse over tit across ice in Coachie’s fierce diagrams. Bobbie Clarke, our idol, his gap-toothed diabetic brilliance made our lives sweeter. We picked fights for the fans, the moms and dads, swore a blue-line streak to dead last, and the shit really hit the fan when we got

home. This is also a play for my Uncle Ches. He was a kid from the Pier who made it all the way to the Montreal Junior Canadiens, once faced Jacques Plante on a breakaway and missed, later crashed into a goal post in full flight, ruptured a kidney, then took eight years to die on dialysis. But he almost made it. This is a play for my friends now. Some of them married some of the girls who threw garbage at us. Some of them are raising their own little Bobby (and Bobbie) Clarkes now. For whole families of rink rats, new generations of broken hearts, playing the great game... Play on.

– Michael Melski <https://mqllit.ca/plays-musicals/hockey-mom-hockey-dad>

## Glossary and Mentions

**ATeams-** Teddy explains to Donna that Troy “can’t go anywhere upwards in hockey unless he gets outta this crappy house league an onto the A teams. The A teams are the best players in the league” (14). A Teams are more competitive and players are selected from tryouts rather than simply signing up and therefore require higher levels of commitment, higher costs, and higher skill levels.

**Atom-** Atom, now referred to as U11, is a division of minor hockey for players ages 10 and under.

**Beliveau-** Teddy reflects, “All my life I wanted to drink from the same cup that Gordie Howe, Beliveau, and Lafleur and Gretzky...all those legends...” (47). Jean Beliveau was a Canadian hockey player who won ten Stanley Cups as a player for the Montreal Canadiens and then ten as the executive vice president of the team.

**Big Leagues-** Teddy says he was “down at Big Leagues having some beers” (21). Big Leagues is a pub and

eatery with a couple of locations in Nova Scotia.

**Blueliner-** another term for a defenceman in hockey.

**Brad Marchand-** Teddy says to Donna, “So we gotta win some games. We gotta get the A coach out here. We gotta get his attention. That’s how it happens. That’s how it happened with Brad Marchand from the Bruins” (14). When Donna asks, “Is he someone I should know?” Teddy responds, “Brad Marchand! 2011 Stanley Cup Winner! That nose-face is from Hammond Plains!” (14). Born in Nova Scotia, Marchand played sixteen seasons for the Boston Bruins, including two as captain, and currently plays for the Florida Panthers.

**Break the shutout-** A shutout means that the opposing goalie has not let in any goals so breaking the shutout in this context means scoring a goal.

**Butterball-** On a couple of occasions Teddy refers to Troy as “[m]y little butterball” (11). Butterball can refer to a

well-known brand of turkeys as well as round, individual servings of butter and is a derogatory and informal way of suggesting that someone is chubby.

**Canada Cup-** When Teddy encourages the players to be in bed by nine-o'clock, Donna says, "Teddy. It's a regular-season house game, not the Canada Cup" (45-6). Canada Cup was an international ice hockey tournament held on five occasions between the years 1976 and 1991 and has since been replaced with the World Cup of Hockey.

**Chatelaine-** a Canadian women's magazine founded in 1928.

**Child's Play-** Teddy lets Troy and Matthew watch "a couple of those old Child's Play movies" (34). Child's Play, or what has become known as Chucky, is a slasher movie franchise.

**Chucky-** When Donna reminds Teddy that she doesn't let Matthew watch horror movies, Teddy says, "They're not scary. It's just that little Chucky guy" (34). Chucky is a killer Good Guy doll and the antagonist of the Child's Play franchise.

**Coaches' Corner-** Teddy calls out to Troy, "Hey, I don't care what ya seen on Coaches' Corner. This! This right here where your dad is? This is Coaches' Corner" (20). Coach's Corner was a segment that aired during the NHL broadcast *Hockey Night in Canada* hosted by Don Cherry as well as Dave

Hodge from 1982-86 and Ron MacLean from 1986-2019.

**Defenceman-** Matthew is a defenceman. A defenceman is responsible for preventing the opposing team from scoring.

**Deflection-** Deflection is a strategy for getting the puck past the goalie by using one's stick to redirecting a shot or pass.

**Deke and feint-** Shortly after Teddy moves to kiss Donna and she shies away, she says, "Gentle. I could use a little romance. Some deke and feint would be nice" (33). A deke is a type of feint or fake-out technique to get a player out of position by quickly changing direction.

**Enforcer-** Teddy says, "Troy, you're the enforcer. So *enforce* a little, huh?" (12). He explains to Donna that he "[figures] every team needs an enforcer" (15). An enforcer is a player known as the "fighter" or "tough guy" whose role it is to protect and stand up for their teammates, especially star players, and deter dirty, violent play by intimidating opponents. Chris Neil and Georges Laraque are examples of enforcers that Teddy mentions.

**Faceoff-** The play begins with Teddy exclaiming, "Faceoff!" (1). Faceoffs occur to resume play in a hockey game. The referee drops the puck and two players, typically the centers, try to gain possession of the puck.

**Fire-wagon hockey-** Teddy, referring to Troy, says, “it’s kinda hard to play fire-wagon hockey when you’re built like a fire hydrant” (14). ‘Fire-wagon hockey’ is a term first used in the 1950s but has come to refer to the high-scoring era of play in the 1980s.

**Forecheck-** Teddy calls out, “Forecheck! That’s your man! Pester him” (51). Forechecking refers to a strategy where a team pursues the puck in the defensive or a neutral zone to regain possession.

**Fresh legs-** Fresh legs refers to players who haven’t been on the ice, either for the most recent shift or the game in entirety.

**Goaltender interference-** This occurs when an opposing player interferes with the movements of the goalkeeper through physical contact with either their body or stick.

**Gordie Howe-** Gordie Howe, known as “Mr. Hockey,” was a Canadian professional hockey player from Floral Saskatchewan who played in the NHL for twenty-six years and had a record-breaking career.

**Gretzky-** Nicknamed “The Great One” and often called by his jersey number 99, Wayne Gretzky is a Canadian hockey player from Brantford, Ontario and revered as one of the greatest hockey players of all time.

**Grinder-** Teddy calls out to Troy, “If you’re gonna be a grinder, ya still gotta be a skater too” (13-14). A grinder is a player who is more known for his dedication to the team, including by doing what would be considered the “dirty work,” such as checking and board battles.

**Headfake-** A head fake is a type of deke where a player moves their head in order to deceive or confuse an opposing player about the direction they intend to move in.

**Holding-** Holding is when one player grabs, or holds, another player’s jersey, body, or stick in an attempt to slow them down or prevent them from fully engaging in the play.

**Housekeeping-** Teddy instructs Troy, “Alright, when Adam gets set up for the big shot, I want ya to get in the crease with her, set up for a deflection...just move in there with her, set up housekeepin” (20). By telling Troy to set up housekeeping, he is suggesting that Troy be a physical presence in front of the goaltender in order to create a scoring opportunity.

**Ken Dryden -** In reference to the opposing team’s goalie, Teddy says to Troy, “She might be built like Ken Dryden, but we aren’t gonna treat her like no hall of famer, are we?” (20). Ken Dryden was a professional goaltender from Hamilton, Ontario who stood six foot four and described by Eric Engels for SportsNet as having a “mammoth presence on and off the ice”

<https://www.sportsnet.ca/nhl/article/ken-drydens-mammoth-presence-on-and-off-the-ice-leaves-an-enduring-legacy/>

**Lafleur-** Lafleur, nicknamed “The Flower,” was a Canadian professional hockey player born in Thurso, Quebec who was honoured as one of the 100 Greatest NHL Players in history in 2017 and was named a Distinguished Honouree of Order of Hockey in Canada in 2022.

**Left winger-** After Troy’s goal, he calls out to Troy, “Troy! Left wing, Troy! Left wing! You’re a left winger!” (50). A left winger is a player who plays forward on the centre’s left side. The primary responsibilities of a left winger are scoring goals as well as intercepting and passing the puck.

**Mooseheads game-** Teddy is referring to the Halifax Mooseheads, a team in the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League.

**Nathan MacKinnon-** Teddy names Nathan MacKinnon when listing players who “all made it from here” (14). Nathan MacKinnon is a professional hockey player from Halifax, Nova Scotia who currently plays with and is alternate captain for the Colorado Avalanche.

**Offsides-** An offside in is when an attacking player enters the offensive zone—crosses the blue line—before the puck.

**Patrick Kane-** Named one of the 100 Greatest NHL Players.

**Peewees-** Peewees, now renamed U13, is a division of junior hockey for players ages 12 and under.

**Pokecheck-** a defensive tactic wherein a player extends their stick to knock, or poke, the puck away from an opponent.

**Power play-** This is a period of time when a team has an advantage due to the opposing team’s penalty/ penalties.

**Rebound-** when the puck bounces off or is stopped by the goalie but goes back out into play. Sometimes players take shots with the intention of a rebound to create a scoring opportunity.

**Rimouski-** Teddy tells Donna he called her because he was offered two Moosehead tickets and “they were playin Rimouski, an it was probably gonna be a good game” (21). Teddy is referring to the Rimouski Océanic in the Quebec Maritimes Junior Hockey League.

**Rookie-** Rookie means new recruit or first year participant in a sport.

**Siberia-** Teddy shouts to the goalie on an opposing team, “Hope they don’t send ya off to SIBERIA or nothin! (24). Teddy is referring to the mass deportation of hundreds of thousands of people from various groups to labour

camps in Siberia by the Soviet Union after they invaded Poland.

**Six-forty-nine-** Teddy calls out, “C’mon Dunner! I got a better chance hittin the six-forty-nine, than you got scorin with that wimpy little shot” (11). He’s referring to winning Lotto 649.

**Spin-o-rama-** A term coined by Danny Gallivan but that refers to the trademark move of Denis Savard: spinning at least one full rotation while maintaining control of the puck.

**Sidney Crosby-** Teddy names Sidney Crosby when listing players who “all made it from here” (14). Sidney Crosby was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia and is considered one of the greatest hockey players ever. He has played his entire NHL career for the Pittsburgh Penguins, of which he is the Captain, and is also the Captain of Team Canada.

**Teddy Bundy-** When Donna asks Teddy not to call her, he says, “Just cause a guy goes out of his way to find your number doesn’t mean he’s a friggin...Teddy Bundy or somethin” (22). Ted Bundy was an American serial killer who murdered what is suspected to be dozens of women between 1974 and 1978.

**The wave-** Teddy is determined that he and Donna are “gonna get the wave” (31). The wave is a movement performed by crowds where successive groups of participants stand and raise their arms and the result is a the appearance of a wave that travels through the venue.

**Tretiak-** Vladislav Tretiak is a Russian former goaltender for the Soviet Union national team and is recognized as one of the greatest goaltenders in history.

## Discussion and Writing Prompts – for schools and public patrons!

1. What surprised you about the play?
2. Did any part of the play make you feel uncomfortable?
3. Do you think this play would be easy to produce? Why or why not?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a two-person show?
5. What do you think is the intended message of the show? What did you take away from the play?
6. Explore the symbolism/ significance of the following items: Donna’s steel travel mug, Teddy’s old hockey jacket, the newspaper, the shoulder pads, Teddy’s glove
7. Choose one of the allusions in the play and explore its significance.
8. What are things you associate with being at a hockey rink?
9. Did/ do you or someone else you know play hockey?
10. Matthew decides to play hockey since all the other boys were playing. Have you ever joined something to fit in?

11. Do your parents have certain expectations of you to be skilled at or achieve something specific?
12. Donna is described as a “modestly dressed young woman with pretty, un-made-up features.” What is the significance of Donna entering wearing lipstick in Act 1, Scene 2?
13. What is the significance of each of the characters’ names?
14. Do you think Teddy and Donna end up together? Why or why not?
15. How necessary is it to be familiar with the rules of hockey to understand or appreciate the play?
16. How did the set, lighting, and sound designers create the atmosphere of a hockey arena?
17. Why do you think Melski named Troy and Matthew’s team “Leafs”?
18. What benefits of playing hockey does the play highlight?
19. How does the show comment on violence within hockey and/ or sports in general?
20. How does Donna’s history of domestic abuse influence her perspective on violence in hockey?
21. In what ways does the “ol rink” bring people together (8)? What other venues bring people together?
22. What does Donna wearing a poppy at the beginning of Act II signify? Explore other ways costume designers can indicate other aspects of setting or character through dress.

### **Suggested Classroom Activities**

These activities are specifically designed for this show. On our website are [additional general activities suitable for any MTC production](#).

### **Anticipation Guide**

Prior to viewing the play, have students indicate whether they agree or disagree with the following statements (sentiments inspired or expressed by characters in the play). They can also form the basis for an argumentative piece and/or debate:

1. Playing sports is about winning (12)
2. Hockey is the greatest sport of all time
3. Contact sports helps get frustrations out in a constructive way (36)
4. Everyone should know how to protect themselves (57)
5. Getting angry makes people human (47)
6. It’s better to avoid being hurt than take a chance on love (27)
7. There’s nothing better you can do than start a family (27)
8. If you work hard, you can make your mark (49)
9. Ice cream is a great motivator (13)

10. Eight is old enough to watch horror movies (34)

### **Hype Song Playlist**

When Teddy describes his dream to Donna, he sings “We are the Champions” (46). Ask each student in the class to contribute to a communal hype-up playlist that can be played as students are entering/ exiting the class each day.

### **Song Analysis**

Have students complete a song analysis of “We are the Champions” by Queen, asking them to consider features such as the title, tone and mood, musical elements, structure, figurative language, and theme/ message:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04854XqcfCY&list=RD04854XqcfCY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04854XqcfCY&list=RD04854XqcfCY&start_radio=1)

### **Warm-ups**

1. Teddy is determined that he and Donna are “gonna get the wave” (31). Have students warm-up by doing the wave.
2. When cheering on the Leafs, Donna says, “It sounds silly, though. It sounds like we’re cheerin for ‘sleeves” (31). Ask students to practice projecting and enunciating as they say: “Go Leafs! Leafs Leafs Leafs Leafs!” (31).

### **Board Not Bored**

Have students create an advertisement for one of the boards at the rink. This could be for an existing product or their own invention.

### **Product Placements**

Ask students to identify opportunities for potential product placements/ sponsorships in the play.

### **Improv Warm-Up**

Have students improvise being a spectator for different sports (baseball, horse racing, etc.) or even different spectator events (attending a play, seeing a movie etc.) and ask the other students to guess where they are. Ask students to consider how their body language and use of voice would vary depending on the location/ event.

### **Advice Column**

Donna says that she read, she believes in Chatelaine, that you should not “talk about your ex ta other people” (17). Ask your students to write an advice column on either an assignment topic or one of their choice. If you would like them to demonstrate what they learned in the play, they could write a column along the lines of “How to Win Over Someone at a Hockey Arena.”

### **Much to Debate**

Have students debate at what age and/or in what league(s) contact in hockey should be permitted, if at all.

and/or

Have students debate at what age people should be allowed to see horror films with and without a parent.

### **The Greatest Hockey Player—and Research Paper—Ever**

Have students research and report on one of the hockey icons mentioned in the play—or any hockey legend. Prompt them to consider their contributions to hockey (such as setting records, changing the game etc). You can also ask them to write an argumentative piece or present a speech on who is the greatest. hockey player ever.

### **EILIPSeS**

Ask students to explore how Melski's use of ellipses dictates the delivery and adds to the comedy in the following lines:

TEDDY: ...We're down by six and there's seven minutes left. Youse don't worry about that. Youse can still do it. That's...less than a goal a minute. (1)

TEDDY: No no no! You're fine. You're fine. You're...so fine. (3)

### **For the Fun of It**

Ask students to identify what makes each of the following lines funny. Afterwards, get them to reflect on how they could apply that in their own writing or performance:

TEDDY: Duncan Keith! The all-star defenceman!

DONNA: Oh, I wasn't sure if that was a cake or a beer. (6)

TEDDY: Yeah. With the registration, the gear, the skates...my kid's skatin around out there with a friggin second mortgage on his feet. (7)

TEDDY: Wait til next time you little Whaler goons! Are you ever gonna get the blubber stripped offa youse! (8)

TEDDY: I had my senior prom in this very rink. *(pause)* I remember, up in the rafters? There were these big pink clouds madea toilet paper. I went with my ex-wife, who wasn't my ex-wife then. We danced crazy. All night, under those friggen paper clouds. *(pause)* Then we got married. *(pause)* And it rained shit. (10)

TEDDY: We're gettin worse every game and we're already playin like it's next month!  
(38)

### **Puppet Production**

Melski was introduced to theatre through Mermaid Theatre's puppet productions that toured to his elementary school. Have students write and produce a puppet production to present to younger grades. It could be on a topic inspired by the play, or a topic of the students' choice.

<https://www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/a-huge-loss-friends-family-pay-respects-to-cape-breton-born-playwright-filmmaker-michael-melski>

### **People-Watching**

Michael Melski was inspired to write the play by two parents who fell in love while he played hockey as a kid. Ask students to be intentional about (safely) people-watching (either in the daily life or supervised at school) and produce a piece of creative writing inspired by their observations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEDfb3QaeGE>

### **Write What You Know**

According to his obituary, Melski was "a lifelong fly-fisherman" and "passionate Leafs fan." These interests were reflected in his plays, "The Fly Fisherman's Companion" and "Hockey Mom, Hockey Dad" respectively. Have students produce a piece of creative writing inspired by one of their own interests.

<https://www.pierfuneralhome.com/2025/07/melski-michael-andrew/>

### **Influenced**

According to the Canada Theatre Encyclopedia, Michael Melski was influenced by David Mamet and Sam Shepard. Select age and stage appropriate excerpts from Mamet and/or Shepard and ask students to consider how it might have influenced Melski.

<https://www.canadiantheatre.com/dict.pl?term=Melski,%20Michael>

### **Ghost Stories**

In an interview with Sea and Be Scene's host Stephanie Beaumont, Melski described how his horror film, the Child Remains, came to be: "Well my dad was a big horror movie buff...and he took me to movies in Sydney...the Vogue Theatres in the Paramount Theatre. I was way too young to see some of these movies but...my dad encouraged me to read up and watch up and I was kind of his movie buddy...and he made the horror movie love sort of happen early and I also was raised on, you know, Nova Scotia ghost stories. Helen Creighton's Bluenose Ghost...and I said, you know what, we've got so much great material here, I'd love to do a movie about how haunted

Nova Scotia is and the butter box babies story tied right into...the Helen Creighton's-esque sort of approach I wanted to take.”

Have students research a local ghost story and produce an adaptation in the form of a creative writing piece (poem, script, etc) OR write an original ghost story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5e5pzHLk53s>

**Fun Fact:** Three of the players mentioned in the play (Sidney Crosby, Nathan MacKinnon, Brad Marchand) are currently playing for Team Canada in Olympics

## **Curriculum Connections**

### **Dramatic Arts:**

DR–C1 The learner develops understandings about people and practices in the dramatic arts.

DR–C2 The learner develops understandings about the influence and impact of the dramatic arts.

DR–C3 The learner understandings about the roles, purposes, and meanings of the dramatic arts.

DR–R1 The learner generates initial reactions to drama/ theatre experiences.

DR–R2 The learner critically observes and describes drama/theatre experiences.

DR–R3 The learner analyzes and interprets drama/ theatre experiences.

DR–R4 The learner applies new understandings about drama/theatre to construct identity and to act in transformative ways.

DR–CR2 The learner experiments with, develops, and uses ideas for creating drama/ theatre.

### **English Language Arts:**

#### **Strand A**

Oral Language Communication

- Listening (Receptive)
- Interacting
- Speaking (Expressive)

#### **Strand B**

Acquire New Information

- Active Prior Knowledge and Inquire
- Engage with a Variety of Text (Read, View, Listen)
- Review Information

Construct Meaning

- Identify Text Cues
- Make Connections

- Monitor Understanding- Check and Adjust
- Monitor Understanding- Summarize
- Consolidate New Knowledge

Think Critically about Multimodal Text and Respond

- Analyze Text
- Recognise Facts, Bias, and Viewpoints
- Respond to Text

### **Strand C**

Generate Ideas, and Create a Plan and Draft/ Prototype

- Generate Ideas
- Research Sources
- Create Plan
- Choose Form
- Create Draft/ Prototype

Enhance the Clarity and Artistry of Multimodal Texts

- Organize Ideas
- Sentence Structure
- Word Choice
- Voice/ Style
- Revision

Edit and Publish

- Legibility and Word Processing
- Spelling
- Punctuation and Capitalisation
- Publish Final Text

### **Strand D**

Share Ideas and Information

- Express Ideas and Engage Audience

## **Enrichment Guide Contributor Biography**

Sarah Farrant is thrilled to be maintaining a long-distance relationship as a study guide creator with the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre from Hamilton, Ontario. She is very passionate about the incorporation of arts in education, as she graduated from Western University with an Honours Specialization in English and Drama, as well as a Bachelor of Education. Sarah has been involved with a number of theatrical productions, both on and off stage. She recently played the role of Alex in Dundas Little Theatre's production of *Home, I'm Darling* by Laura Wade. She has experience working with youth in a variety of capacities, including at a childcare centre, tutoring service, and day camp, as well as in elementary and secondary schools locally and overseas. This summer, Sarah saw *Macbeth* at the Stratford Festival and highly recommends you see a show there if you're ever in Ontario!

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