

= What It 's Like Being Alone =

What It 's Like Being Alone is a Canadian television program which aired on CBC Television in 2006 . It is a black comedy created by Brad Peyton , and combines clay animation with voice work by Stacey DePass , Adam Reid , Dwayne Hill , Julie Lemieux , Peter Cugno , and Andrew Sabiston .

Having debuted on 26 June 2006 , the series lasted only until 18 September of that year . The storylines of the thirteen episodes that aired during this timeframe center on the many attempts of fictional mutant children living in an orphanage to get adopted . Princess Lucy , a grey , fat , and warty orphan , is the main character , and the plot begins with her arrival at the orphanage . Critics regarded the series as unusual , and it received notably poor ratings . Commentators considered these ratings to reflect a generally poor performance of CBC programming in 2006 .

= = Characters = =

The storylines of What It 's Like Being Alone revolve around the residents of the fictional Gurney Orphanage , a dark , run @-@ down building . The orphanage has been described by a columnist as Victorian , and it may be set in a bog on the Canadian island of Newfoundland .

Aldous is the eldest of the orphans . She is tall , depressed , very gothic and obsessed with her own death , and carries a black umbrella . She spends most of her time moping about the orphanage and writing depressing poetry . It is insinuated that she actually cares for the other orphans , without letting this on too much . Aldous is voiced by Stacey DePass .

Armie is a boy with no limbs , except for his left arm . He glides around on a skateboard , and often falls over when he uses his arm for something . He is happy and hopeful , despite his obvious handicap . Armie is voiced by Adam Reid .

Brian Brain is an incredibly intelligent 9 @-@ year @-@ old boy with two brains and three eyes . He is often seen inventing things , or gloating about his superiority . His voice is provided by Andrew Sabiston .

Byron and Beasly is a blue baby with two heads . Byron is constantly teased by Beasly , the more demonic head . They vomit acid , and are nearly impossible to bathe . No one is credited with voicing this character .

Charlie is a somewhat homosexual boy who is always on fire . Though he tries not to harm other people , someone or something always ends up burning . Like the other orphan characters , Charlie was part of the story from the beginning , and was specifically inspired by one of Peyton 's jokes , " What ? s it like being alone ? Like a sunset , but only if you 're on fire . " Charlie is voiced by Peter Cugno .

Princess Lucy is a short , fat , warty and grey girl who believes she is a princess . She is ego @-@ centric , and quite crude , and has a long , lizard @-@ like tongue ; she often carries a lollipop . She firmly believes that she is the most deserving of parents . Princess Lucy is voiced by Dwayne Hill , who was also part of the " Story Department . " Peyton has said that she is his favourite character .

Sammy Fishboy resembles a swamp monster . Outside of his tank , he must always keep a running hose over his head . He often is very rude , especially when he is drunk . He is in love with Isabella , a stone mermaid aquarium decoration , and becomes depressed when it is not around . Sammy is voiced by Julie Lemieux .

Seymore Talkless is an eleven @-@ year @-@ old boy with no mouth and one giant eye . He expresses his emotions through his violin or a variety of signs that have a word or phrase written on them , and expresses panic through crazed hand gestures . No one is credited with voicing this character .

Nanny Goodapple is the orphans ' caretaker . She never speaks , and glides around the other characters . When out , she leaves the welfare of the other children in Aldous ' hands . Nanny Goodapple is also something of a souse . No one is credited with voicing this character .

= = Plot = =

= = = Pilot = = =

The pilot of the series aired with some anticipation . Beforehand , columnist Randall Denley had written that " I suspect [it] will be the highlight of the evening , " noting the series had been described as " wondrous and fiendishly humorous . " The first episode , titled " The Gurney Orphanage For Beginners , " features Princess Lucy and her suitcase falling from the sky in front of the orphanage and killing three rabbits . Upon getting up and seeing the orphanage , Princess Lucy believes she has found her castle and royal family . Instead , she is surprised to find the building is full of mutant orphans , and devastated to learn she is an orphan herself . She tries to escape , but finds any way out blocked by a lake monster and a dangerous forest , among other things .

Eventually , a woman agrees to adopt Lucy . However , the other orphans see that the woman will probably not provide the best home for her , and intervene . Lucy ultimately decides that she belongs in the orphanage more so than her ideal castle .

= = = Series = = =

The series was continued with twelve more episodes : Themes explored include " social issues , pop culture references and humour . " Due to the show having the visual appearance of a children 's television series , each episode was preceded by a content warning , stating that the show was intended for an adult audience and that " parental discretion " was advised .

" Do Orphans Dream of Electric Parents ? " is the second episode . It is about Brian Brain inventing robots and making them his parents , only to find that the robots want to divorce each other . In the next episode , " An Orphans Life Indeed " , Princess Lucy seeks a best friend , but her vanity causes her to decide that only she can be her own best friend . Lucy then clones herself , but the clones prove troublesome . Seymore , who is in love with Lucy , ultimately solves the problem by slaughtering the clones with a chainsaw . One critic remarked that this was a particularly " disturbing " scene for the series .

The fourth episode , called " The Perfect Lesson " , sees the orphans trying to perform a play to impress visiting prospective parents . It is from this episode that the show 's title is derived , as the play repeatedly refers to " what it 's like being alone " . This was followed by the episode aired on 24 July , " The Poster Child " which is about a corporation that attempts to adopt Aldous to use her in advertisements . Aldous , under a witch 's curse , must accept this shallow adoption or die .

In the episode " Fire the Reverend " , a religious speaker visits the orphanage and confuses Charlie with Satan ; the real Satan and his son later emerge , and Charlie finds out that while he is mistaken for being evil , Satan 's son is trying to shed the perception that he is good . Eventually Charlie saves the day by persuading Satan and his son to leave the orphanage . The seventh episode is entitled " Red , White and Orphanage " . It is about another orphanage abducting Brian Brain in order to exploit him in their plans for world domination . This was followed by " Sammy 's Episode " , which is about Sammy taking various medications , as well as shock therapy . The ninth episode is " A Tale of Almost Unbearable Sadness , " which is focussed on declining morale in the orphanage and exploration of the dangerous forest .

Alternate names for the tenth episode are " Lucky Lucy " and " You Gotta Know When to Hold ' em " . In it , Princess Lucy bets that Byron and Beasley cannot be cleaned and wins . She afterwards gambles more but nearly loses the orphanage in the process . The episode " Armie Loves Cigarettes " sees Armie taking up smoking . According to the Internet Movie Database , the second last episode and season finale aired on the same day , 18 September . The twelfth and second last episode is called " A Frightful Flu , " and in it Aldous entrusts care for the ailing orphans to a witch . The final episode , " Silver Screen Lucy " or " The Sweet Stink of Success , " is about the orphans making short films to impress a prospective parent , but he ends up adopting Nanny Goodapple and Beasley and Byron , leaving the orphanage to Aldous .

= = Production = =

The show was created by Brad Peyton of Newfoundland and Labrador , who explained that he identified himself as a " freak " growing up , and was thus motivated to try " celebrating flawed characters " in his work ; he also employed stereotypical views of orphanages in the series . Peyton had previously made a black comedy short film called Evelyn : The Cutest Evil Dead Girl , and afterwards declined to shoot a major film . Instead , he turned to What It 's Like Being Alone . He described the genesis of the series :

I had a friend who was depressed , so I went over to her house and started drawing . I made her a little book . She liked it and said I should try to sell it . So I photocopied 200 at Kinkos and sold them at Pages Books . Made like \$ 150 dollars . That book turned into What It 's Like Being Alone .

Peyton explained the writing by saying " it always comes out of an emotional place . " One of the writers was Karen Walton , who had previously written the Canadian werewolf film Ginger Snaps . The producers chose the type of animation due to Peyton 's personal interest in it , although he later claimed that a day 's work could lead to seconds ' worth of material . A factory was needed with 8 to 10 teams , with some of the animators having previously worked on the Tim Burton film Corpse Bride . The characters were made out of plastic and foam . Additionally , some animation was done through computers . Each character 's figure had a number of add @-@ on lips to express various sounds , and their eyes and eyebrows were also adjusted frequently during production . The figures could also be fastened into a surface , moved and fastened in again to portray movement . Peyton remarked that " The hardest thing is timing and pacing . " Still , he also liked to emphasize that the series did not cost too much money to produce .

The airing of the series had been stalled for a year , perhaps due to difficulties within the CBC . To get CBC to adopt the series , Peyton showed the company a commercial with the CBC logo in blood , remarking that " It 's been way too long that you 've waited to have your logo covered in blood . " He had also said that What It 's Like Being Alone was meant to attract university and high school students as an audience , and he felt that these people did not ordinarily watch the CBC . CBC itself was looking for original material , and was enthusiastic about the series because it seemed to stand out among Canadian television productions . Peyton 's co @-@ producer was Fred Fuchs , who later rose in the CBC staff ; one critic believed Fuchs ' promotion to be a reason why CBC adopted the series .

= = Reception = =

Critics generally found the series to be unusual . CBC critic Stephen Cole commented that What It 's Like Being Alone has " arguably the most surreal opening sequence in TV history " with a shift in view from a black and white Canadian flag to the orphan characters . He questioned whether the show indicated the CBC had adopted " Addams Family values " and said that it was " the wildest CBC comedy since Twitch City . "

One television critic briefly said that What It 's Like Being Alone is a " weird show , " and simply advised individual viewers to see it for themselves . If they " relate " to it , the critic added , " a ' Yikes ! ' is in order . " Bill Brioux of the Toronto Sun commented that in combining a feel one would usually expect from Tim Burton with elements of Sesame Street , What It 's Like Being Alone would probably not appeal fully to any demographic , despite its originality . Additionally , he felt Princess Lucy would be tiresome , and said he had hoped the show were more amusing .

In terms of ratings , the series did not do well . The Toronto Star described it as one of CBC 's " prime @-@ time dogs " with an audience of 78 @,@ 000 people . The executive Richard Stursberg was blamed for cancelling the more popular Da Vinci 's City Hall and This is Wonderland to make room for this and other shows , and in general for being a " one @-@ man wrecking ball " for the CBC (the series The One : Making a Music Star had also flopped on CBC in 2006) . On 18 September , the series finale had only 163 @,@ 000 viewers , part of the perceived " shocking " low ratings CBC received that year , along with the low ratings of the documentary series Hockey : A People 's History and a mini @-@ series about former @-@ Quebec premier René Lévesque .

