

# Tomato Plant Girl

*By Wesley Middleton*



**GEORGE STREET PLAYHOUSE**



# George Street Playhouse

WORLD-CLASS THEATRE IN NEW JERSEY™

# Tomato Plant Girl

*Written By Wesley Middleton*

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Illustrations by Sara Greco



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## SYNOPSIS

This play follows a young girl as she learns about the trials and tribulations of friendship and growing up. Little Girl has just moved from Thereville to Heretown. She loves to read and talk to her plants, but she is lonely. Soon she meets Bossy Best Friend who tells her she must have a friend so she won't act like a "foreigner."

The girls share a garden where time moves to the rhythm of Bossy's commands until the day Little Girl can no longer obey. Bossy has forbidden Little Girl to touch her precious tomato plant. But if the plant doesn't get watered soon, it will die. Dominated by Bossy Best Friend, Little Girl, who lacks self-confidence, does whatever she is told, even though she is not always happy.

When Bossy leaves to visit her grandma, Little Girl uproots the plant in a valiant rescue, and a messy girl-creature springs out of the earth, spitting up dirt. Soon, Little Girl is playing crazy new games with Tomato Plant Girl and teaching her to say "please." But when Bossy returns her friendships collide and Little Girl has to choose.

She discovers the power of making up her own rules, the true meaning of "sorry," and the self confidence to not be bullied.

Wesley Middleton, playwright, writes, "This play [was created] from a seemingly small incident that happened over 20 years ago in a garden I had as a child. I remembered the friendship I'd had when I planted that garden, and how it had made me feel when my friend decided that I should give her my tomato plant to replace hers that had died. I realized that something important had happened with that friend in that garden. I decided that it would be valuable to share the story—but in a way that made it new. *Tomato Plant Girl* is the story of what might have happened if the impossible magic of a plant spirit came to life and revealed a new way of looking at friendship and the world. *Tomato Plant Girl* is an 'imaginary' character, but my need to create her was very real. I hope that you take something away from this play that makes you see yourself and your world in a way that helps you say, 'Grow I.'"



## Preshow Information

### Theatre Etiquette

1. DO talk quietly and stretch before the show. It is easier to sit quietly during the performance once all the chatting and movement is out of the system.

2. DO laugh and clap at appropriate times of the show. Actors get energy back from the audience and use the audience response as part of their performance.

3. DO NOT talk, whisper, sing, make unnecessary or rude noises during the performance. It is distracting to the actors and annoying for the other audience members.

4. DO NOT eat or drink during the performance. It's too distracting, and inconsiderate to the actors and your neighbors.

5. DO keep feet on the floor, not on the seat in front of you.

6. DO use the restroom before the performance begins.

7. DO NOT use cameras or videotape during the performance.

8. DO NOT put things on the stage. The stage is not a resting spot for your backpack or your playbill or your feet.

9. DO NOT riffle your playbill/program or other papers.

10. DO remain in your seat until the end. The end means the end of the post play discussion with the actors. If you are ill and must leave before the show is over, leave as quietly as you can and at an appropriate interval.

11. DO watch for special effects, sounds and other moments that stand out in your mind.



## Post Show Information

### Are you a Bully?

*This activity should be done in a way that will allow students to keep their writing private.*

Have you ever wondered if you're a bully? Here's a quick way to tell if you are or might be. Read each question and circle "Y" (for yes) or "N" (for no). When you're through, give this handout to the teacher. Be honest! Your answers will be kept private.

1. Do you pick on people who are smaller than you, or on animals? Y N
2. Do you like to tease and taunt other people? Y N
3. If you tease people, do you like to see them get upset? Y N
4. Do you think it's funny when other people make mistakes? Y N
5. Do you like to take or destroy other people's belongings? Y N
6. Do you want other students to think you're the toughest kid in school? Y N
7. Do you get angry a lot and stay angry for a long time? Y N
8. Do you blame other people for things that go wrong in your life? Y N
9. Do you like to get revenge on people who hurt you? Y N
10. When you play a game or sport, do you always have to be the winner? Y N
11. If you lose at something, do you worry about what other people will think of you? Y N
12. Do you get angry or jealous when someone else succeeds? Y N

Read this after you answer all of the questions! If you answered "Yes" to one or two of the questions, you may be on your way to becoming a bully. If you answered "Yes" to three or more, you probably are a bully, and you need to find ways to change your behavior. Good news: Bullies can get help dealing with their feelings, getting along with other people, and making friends. Parents, teachers, school counselors, and other adults can all give this kind of help. **JUST ASK!!!**

Excerpt from *Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain*, by Trevor Romain, © 1997. Used with permission from Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, MN; 1-800-735-7323; [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com) ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



## Friends

**Friend**—noun. A person one knows, likes and enjoys being with.

(from The American Heritage Children's Dictionary)

How would you define the word friend? Make a list with your class. Think about the people who are your friends and how they fit the qualities on the list. How do you choose your friends? Do you choose them or do they choose you? Most people would agree that friends are important. Why do you think it is important to have friends? What kinds of things hurt a friendship or make it hard to be friends with someone?

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### FRIEND WANT AD

How could Bossy Best Friend have become a better friend? What kind of friend would you like? Write a Friend Wanted Ad. Write what you are looking for in a best friend. Then share the ideas with the class.

## Best Friend Wanted!!!

A best friend should...

A best friend should not....



## Something Everyone can do About Bullies

Most bullying does not happen in front of grown-ups. But that doesn't mean that no one sees it happen. If you see someone being bullied you can do something to make the bullying stop. That may require courage to do. Below is a short list of things you could do to stop a bully.

- Tell one of your friends to stop teasing a kid you don't know very well.
- Tell one of the popular kids to stop teasing a kid you don't know very well.
- Tell a bully to stop picking on a kid you don't like.
- Tell a bully to stop teasing a kid who has bullied you in the past.
- Tell a bully to stop picking on someone who doesn't have many friends.
- Include a new boy or girl in a game.
- Tell someone to stop bullying if you are very popular.
- Confront a group of bullies who are pushing a kid around.
- Confront a bully who is your age who is teasing a younger kid.
- Tell an older kid to stop saying mean things to a kid your age.
- Tell a grown-up about someone who is bullying another student.
- Say something to a boy who is picking on a girl.
- Say something to a girl who is picking on a boy.

Which situations require the most courage? Why?

What would make these situations easier?

Which situations require the least courage? Why are these situations easier?

Is courage influenced by how old you are, how popular you are, or whether you are a boy or a girl?

(From Keys to Dealing with Bullies by Barry E. McNamara, Ed.D., and Francine J. McNamara, M.S.W., C.S.W.)



# Word Find

## Tomato Plant Girl Word Search

S T L C M H Y H F F E A P  
 Z I B S U N P L A N T Q N  
 W R U U E C A Y C H A S W  
 A N I S L E O I T M H O E  
 V P F S T L T U O T J H I  
 K D S O R R Y H R A B R N  
 F R I E N D Q A E A Y I P  
 P E L R E O E R S A G I G  
 L S B N T C E S P G T E K  
 A N O L I T T L E G I R L  
 Y L S H A R E A C R L X E  
 A E S W T O M A T O R M E  
 H E Y O L T K I A W F P D

Find the following hidden words:

- |         |             |         |         |
|---------|-------------|---------|---------|
| Friend  | Little Girl | Sun     | Water   |
| Earth   | Bully       | Sorry   | Respect |
| Courage | Play        | Theatre | Grow    |
| Share   | Actor       | Tomato  | Plant   |
| Bossy   | Dirt        | Alone   |         |

# Coloring Page

Little Girl has just grown a new plant. Can you draw the rest?



## Six WAYS to FIX IT Quick

*Are you angry? Is someone else mad? Does it look like there might be a fight?*

Sometimes you can fix it quick. Here are six things you can do to solve problems and keep the peace.

1. **Walk Away.** If somebody else is fighting mad, you can just walk away. No one can make you fight.
2. **Share.** Do you both want the same thing? Maybe you can share.
3. **Talk it Out.** You don't have to argue. Just talk about it—see what you can work out.
4. **Flip a Coin.** If it's not too important, let the coin decide!
5. **Laugh it Off.** If you get into an argument about something silly, laugh about it! Make a joke. Lighten up.
6. **Say You're Sorry.** If you did something that upset somebody, it's OK to say you're sorry. A lot of times, that makes the other person feel better, and you avoid a fight.

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## Our CLASSROOM is a Place Where...

We don't all have to think the same.

We don't all have to act the same.

We don't all have to talk the same.

We don't all have to dress the same.

We don't all have to believe the same things.

We have the right to be ourselves.

We like it that people are different.

We know that our differences make us interesting and UNIQUE.

We honor different ways of being, acting, and believing—even when we don't agree with them.

We do our best to solve problems peacefully.

We speak up if we see others being treated unfairly.

We treat each other the way we'd like to be treated.

We treat each other with respect.

Excerpt from *The Bully Free Classroom*, by Allan L. Beane, Ph.D., © 1999. Used with permission from Free Spirit Publishing, Minneapolis, MN; 1-800-735-7323; www.freespirit.com. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

## GSP Essay Contest Winner

George Street Playhouse is pleased to announce the winner of the 2005-2006 GSP Touring Theatre Essay Contest for the production of *Tomato Plant Girl*. Students were asked to submit an essay regarding themes related to the GSP production presented to their school. The essay contest was designed to promote literacy and self-expression through theatre arts and writing, as well as provide GSP a tool to evaluate its production and study materials. GSP is committed to providing quality theatre programming and to understanding the needs of young adults in our region.

Our best goes to the winner and all who submitted entries to the essay contest.

**David**  
**Grade 2**  
**Governor Rogers School**  
**Ms. Fallon's Class**

My friend, Justin, is kind to me because he tells me the truth. My friend cheers me up when I am hurt. Me and my friends like the same things. He likes football. I like football. He likes pizza. I like pizza. He likes movies, and I like movies. My friend keeps a promise when I have a secret. If I fall down, he will pick me up and cheer me up.

Bossy Best Friend learned that everyone doesn't have to be the same. She learned that she should take turns when playing "Mother May I?" and by sharing her Barbies. Bossy learned not to be a bully and she learned how to play a new game. Bossy learned how to be a good friend by saying "sorry" to Little Girl who she was bossing around. Bossy learned that she should not blame Little Girl for what she did.



## About George Street Playhouse

9 Livingston Avenue • New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
Box Office: 732-246-7717 • [www.GSPonline.org](http://www.GSPonline.org)  
David Saint, Artistic Director • Mitchell Krieger, Managing Director

George Street Playhouse's nationally recognized Touring Theatre, now in its nineteenth season, reaches more than 80,000 students in over 300 schools annually. The Touring Theatre currently has five plays in its repertory: *Peacemaker*, *New Kid*, *In Between*, *Tomato Plant Girl*, and *Wasted*. Each play is targeted for a specific age group and addresses such issues as tolerance, prejudice, bullying and substance abuse. In addition to traveling throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, GSP and its Touring Theatre produce an annual Focus on Youth Issues symposium (FYI) and a week of student matinees at the theatre. For further information on George Street Playhouse's Touring Theatre, Theatre Classes, workshops and other educational programs, call 732-846-2895 x115.

George Street Playhouse, New Brunswick, New Jersey's first professional theatre, was established in 1974. Since then, its body of work has been marked by a strong sense of community and a commitment to new work. Under the leadership of Artistic Director David Saint, GSP has become a nationally recognized theatre, presenting an acclaimed five-play mainstage season while providing an artistic home for established and emerging theatre artists.

## About the New Jersey State Bar Foundation

Dedicated to educating the public about New Jersey law, the New Jersey State Bar Foundation provides a wide variety of free, law-related education services to the public and school community. Our seminars, publications and video loan library offer information on many legal topics, and our Speakers Bureau fills requests for attorneys to speak to school and community groups. The Foundation also sponsors school-based initiatives, such as our Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation Program for educators and administrators, and mock trial programs for students in kindergarten through high school. As part of our violence prevention initiative, the Foundation also offers its Teasing and Bullying Program where teachers and administrators are educated about the myths and facts of bullying and developing a school-wide approach to combat the problem. Our legal newspaper for kids, *The Legal Eagle*, which is geared toward fifth through eighth grade students and published three times a year, featured a special Diversity Issue. The special edition of the newspaper contained articles on hate crimes, eyewitness identification and affirmative action. As a result of the popularity of this special issue, the Foundation launched a new publication intended for middle and high school students that highlights the issues of tolerance and diversity. The newsletter, which is called *Respect*, is published three times a year and has featured articles on such issues as hate speech in music lyrics, Arab-American discrimination and human rights.

For more information about the Foundation or to order any of our publications, visit our Web site at [www.njsbf.org](http://www.njsbf.org) or call 1-800 FREE LAW.



The New Jersey State Bar Foundation  
One Constitution Square • New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1520  
1-800 FREE LAW • 732-249-5000 • [www.njsbf.org](http://www.njsbf.org)