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*Dramatic Publishing*

# TOMATO PLANT GIRL

A Play for Young Audiences

by

WESLEY MIDDLETON



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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(TOMATO PLANT GIRL)

ISBN: 1-58342-087-8

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*Tomato Plant Girl* was originally produced and premiered by Metro Theater Company, St. Louis, Mo., Carol North, Producing Director, and Idaho Theatre for Youth, Boise, Idaho, Pamela Sterling, Artistic Director with major support from the Theatre for Youth Endowment at the University of Texas at Austin.

Metro Theater Company, Fall 1998

Bossy Best Friend . . . . . Carlyn Armintrout  
Little Girl . . . . . Monica Holeczy  
Tomato Plant Girl . . . . . Kate Frank  
The Facilitator. . . . . Eddie Webb  
(role specific to Metro Theater Company production)

Director: Carol North  
Assistant Director/Music Director: Christopher Gurr  
Composer: Al Fisher  
Costume Designer: Clyde Ruffin  
Set Designer: Nicholas Kryah and Jennifer Cassidy  
Props: Jennifer Cassidy  
Dramaturg: Suzan Zeder  
Associate Dramaturg: Tamara Goldbogen

Idaho Theatre for Youth, Spring 1999

Bossy Best Friend. . . . . Karen Wennstrom  
Little Girl . . . . . Leonda Clendenen  
Tomato Plant Girl . . . . . Sara Bruner

Director: Pamela Sterling  
Production Manager: Monica Coburn  
Composer/Music Director: Michael Keck  
Costume Designer: Anne Hoste  
Set Designer: Dean Panttaja  
Dramaturg: Tamara Goldbogen

# **TOMATO PLANT GIRL**

A Play for Young Audiences  
For 3 Women  
(may be expanded with “stagehand” roles)

## **CHARACTERS**

**LITTLE GIRL:** A small girl, about 10 years old. Recently moved to Heretown from Thereville. Loves books and tomatoes.

**BOSSY BEST FRIEND:** Older, richer and girlier than Little Girl. Has always lived in Heretown. Loves Barbies and clothes.

**TOMATO PLANT GIRL:** A tomato spirit who appears in Heretown in the shape of a girl. Does not understand Heretown’s rules.

## **VOICE OF BOSSY BEST FRIEND’S MOTHER**

**SETTING:** Heretown, a small American town where foreigners are suspicious and rules are important.

**TIME:** Summertime.

Set requirements: Simple tourable set, props.

Approximate running time: 60 minutes

# TOMATO PLANT GIRL

## SCENE 1

SETTING: *The action takes place in a makeshift garden. The garden is a fenced vacant lot on a small-town residential street. It belongs to LITTLE GIRL and BOSSY BEST FRIEND. Mostly BOSSY BEST FRIEND. There are two tomato plants in the garden. One is dry and wilted. A sign beside it says: "DO NOT TOUCH!" The other is healthy and green, with a single young tomato.*

AT RISE: *We hear the sound of quick, rhythmic ticking. BOSSY BEST FRIEND enters. Everything matches on BOSSY BEST FRIEND: her cute summer dress, the big bow in her hair, her bag. She carries a parasol to shade her from the sun. BOSSY BEST FRIEND looks around the garden. Takes a deep breath. Smiles. Consults her big plastic watch.*

### BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Four fifty-eight and thirty seconds.

*(She straightens her bow. Looks back at her watch.)*

Four fifty-eight and forty-eight seconds.

Four fifty-eight and forty-nine seconds.

*(She looks off, then back at her watch.)*

Four fifty-eight and fifty-two seconds. Fifty-three.  
Fifty-four. Fifty—

*(LITTLE GIRL runs in, excited and anxious. She wears overall shorts, a T-shirt and a hat. She carries a big book, Tales of Tomatoes, with a tomato on the cover.)*

LITTLE GIRL

Five? Is it five o'clock?

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND holds out her watch, points at it, then hides it, fast. She's lying.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

And 10 seconds.

You're late!

LITTLE GIRL

I was reading!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You're late.

LITTLE GIRL

About tomatoes! *(Holding out the book.)* Grandma gave it to me. When she was alive.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Poor dear. Put it out of your mind.

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND tries to take the book. LITTLE GIRL holds on.)*

LITTLE GIRL

We could read to the plants!



## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

It is *not* time to read!

Give me the book *now*, Booknose. *Please*.

*(LITTLE GIRL lets BOSSY BEST FRIEND take the book. BOSSY BEST FRIEND puts it with her things.)*

## LITTLE GIRL

Grandma used to read to me.

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Well, maybe you'll meet *my* grandma someday.

## LITTLE GIRL

Really?

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

If you're a *very* good friend. We'll see.

Now hurry. We're late for your favorite game!

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND smiles and claps twice.)*

Mother May I!

*(LITTLE GIRL, who does like this game, walks several paces away from BOSSY BEST FRIEND and turns to face her.)*

Ready?

Good. Two queenly curtsies.

## LITTLE GIRL

Mother may I?

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Yes you may.

*(LITTLE GIRL curtsies twice.)*

Lovely!

Three ballerina twirls.

LITTLE GIRL

Mother may I?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Yes you may.

*(LITTLE GIRL does three twirls.)*

Gorgeous!

Five giant steps.

LITTLE GIRL

Mother may I?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Yes you may.

*(LITTLE GIRL starts giant-stepping toward BOSSY BEST FRIEND.)*

*Backward.*

*(LITTLE GIRL freezes mid-step, then steps backward with the same foot, almost losing her balance. She does the five steps.)*

Now hop eight times on your lefthand foot.

Forward. Hurry up!

LITTLE GIRL

Mother may I?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Yes you may.

*(LITTLE GIRL starts to hop. BOSSY BEST FRIEND interrupts.)*

Now stand on your tippy tiptoes and eat dirt!

*(LITTLE GIRL quickly picks up some dirt, stands on tiptoe, and starts to bring the dirt to her lips.)*

Ha! Quit, silly girl! We don't eat dirt!

LITTLE GIRL *(freezes)*

I forgot.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Poor Booknose. Still—you did *very* well.

You get a gold star!

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND takes a big gold star from her pocket and sticks it on LITTLE GIRL's forehead.)*

Ta-da!

*(They do a very proper "buddy" handshake.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND, LITTLE GIRL

Best friends forever—Number One!

*(LITTLE GIRL smiles proudly and curtsies, removing her hat. As she does, she feels the sun on her face and hair.)*

LITTLE GIRL

Mmmm.

*(She closes her eyes, stretches upward, breathes.)*

The sun!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Booknose! *Careful!* The ultraviolet rays!

LITTLE GIRL

But—

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Sunburn is *wrong!* Put on your hat!*(LITTLE GIRL puts on her hat.)*

Now. What time is it?

LITTLE GIRL

Book time!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

No—

LITTLE GIRL

Tomato plant time!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

No. Not five-fifteen.

What time is it?

LITTLE GIRL

Barbie.

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND smiles, snaps her fingers once. LITTLE GIRL gets in place for the game. BOSSY BEST FRIEND takes out two Barbies. One wears a fancy dress. The other wears a plain dress and has bad hair. BOSSY BEST FRIEND hands the latter Barbie to LITTLE GIRL.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You're this one.

LITTLE GIRL

I know.

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND and LITTLE GIRL place their Barbies in stiff standing positions.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

One-two-three!

*(Both speak, in quick rhythm, as their Barbies.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Dena!

LITTLE GIRL

Lena!

*(The Barbies cheek-kiss loudly, three times. Rhythm:  
"Dena! Lena! Kiss kiss kiss!")*

LITTLE GIRL

How are you?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Just grand!

LITTLE GIRL

And your job?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Unsurpassed!

LITTLE GIRL

And your boyfriends?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Ooh la!

LITTLE GIRL

You look lovely.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Can't hear you!

LITTLE GIRL

Just *lovely*.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Why thanks.

Are you wearing that dress to my party tonight?

LITTLE GIRL

Of course.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

But it's ugly!

LITTLE GIRL

Oh. Then I'll wear—a satin ball gown with rose petticoats!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You can't have a new dress!

LITTLE GIRL (*as herself*)

But I've got a gold star!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND (*as her Barbie*)

Guess all the young beaus will be looking at me!

LITTLE GIRL

Beaus?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Young *beaus*. At the party! The *boys*!

LITTLE GIRL

Oh.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You're jealous!

LITTLE GIRL (*matter of fact*)

I'm not.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Yes you are.

LITTLE GIRL (*as before*)

No. You can go. I'll read.

*(LITTLE GIRL reaches for her book. BOSSY BEST FRIEND stops her, snatches her Barbie.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND (*as herself*)

Your Barbie loves parties and would *die* for a beau. Your Barbie wants what *my* Barbie wants but *my* Barbie can have it and your Barbie can't. That's the game! Now what do you say?

## LITTLE GIRL

I'm sorry.

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

What time is it?

## LITTLE GIRL

Tomato plant—

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

NO!!

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND composes herself to lecture.)*

Booknose: who were you three months ago?

*(LITTLE GIRL starts to speak.)*

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You were no one. You were the new girl, just moved here from Thereville. Always alone—reading, walking, talking to plants...till I found you and told you: you need a friend. I taught you not to act like a (*lowers her voice*) *foreigner*.

*(LITTLE GIRL gasps at the word. BOSSY BEST FRIEND points to LITTLE GIRL; LITTLE GIRL recites the definition with military precision.)*



## LITTLE GIRL

Foreigner: Anyone who looks acts speaks appears seems or suggests themselves to be in any way different from the glorious ways of the virtuous people of Heretown!

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You're lucky I've taught you. Don't forget to play right. You're this one.

*(She holds out LITTLE GIRL's Barbie. LITTLE GIRL looks at her, doesn't take it.)*

What?

LITTLE GIRL *(matter of fact)*

It's tomato plant time.

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You're *this* one!

## LITTLE GIRL

It's time! It's past five-fifteen!

*(Reluctantly, BOSSY BEST FRIEND checks her watch.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND *(annoyed)*

All right. No Barbie.

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND puts the Barbies in the bag.)*

You'll do better next time. Now—

## LITTLE GIRL

Now for the glorious harvest! Hurrah!

*(LITTLE GIRL starts to run toward her planter.)*

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Hold your little ponies.

*(LITTLE GIRL stops.)*

We go at the *same* time. Remember?

*(Slowly, the two turn together toward the garden plots and walk toward them. They stand in front of their respective garden plots. Both gasp.)*

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND.

Oh! This can't be right!

## LITTLE GIRL

Wow. Velvet green leaves and flowers of gold!

Look! Come look.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND *(approaches the plant)*

Well, Little Girl. What a *beautiful* plant.

Look at mine.

## LITTLE GIRL

Oh! It's—um, it's—

## BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Dead. It's *dead*.

It's all your fault.

## LITTLE GIRL

My fault?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND *(mocking her)*

“Put it in the sun!”

LITTLE GIRL

Sun's good for them!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

It's withered!

LITTLE GIRL

Did you water it?

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

What?

LITTLE GIRL

Plants need water!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Since when?

LITTLE GIRL

I told you!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You don't water yours.

LITTLE GIRL

I do.

*(BOSSY BEST FRIEND is shocked. LITTLE GIRL realizes she said the wrong thing.)*

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You've been coming in *secret* to water your plant?

LITTLE GIRL

To make sure it lived.

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

And make sure mine died!

LITTLE GIRL

No!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

You didn't water *my* plant.

LITTLE GIRL

You said never touch it! You said "DO NOT TOUCH!"

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

Give me your plant.

LITTLE GIRL (*shocked*)

I couldn't!

BOSSY BEST FRIEND

If I had a gorgeous green plant, Little Girl, and yours was wilted and withered and dead, I'd give you my plant if you wanted it.

(*LITTLE GIRL says nothing.*)

Little Girl?

LITTLE GIRL

I wouldn't want that.