



Tim O'Brien

Norman Maine Publishing

THE GARDEN

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Norman Maine Publishing
P.O. Box 1400
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*In memory of the late Pat O'Brien,
my father,
who taught me the love of music.*

THE GARDEN

CHILDREN'S MUSICAL. In search of a new home, Lenora the ladybug comes across a beautiful garden. But Bennie the bean plant and Special the rose tell poor Lenora to bug off and go live in a nearby English garden. Rejected, Lenora ventures off to find a new home. But in the meantime, some rascally aphids invade the garden and begin chewing up all the plants. Can Bennie and Special, with the help of the other garden insects, convince Lenora to come back and scare away the aphids before the garden is destroyed? Not only does this play have an important message about accepting others who are different, but it is a fun way for children to learn about photosynthesis and ecology.

Performance Time: Approximately 30-45 minutes.

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CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 f, 2 flexible, extras)

BENNIE: Bean plant.

SYLVIE: Spider.

LENORA: Ladybug.

WILLIE: Worm.

SPECIAL: Rose.

APHIDS 1, 2: Non-speaking.

CHORUS: Bean plants, worms, roses, spiders, ladybugs, aphids, garden creatures.

EXTRAS: As assorted insects, plants, and flowers (ants, geraniums, tulips, carrots, etc.)

SETTING

A backyard garden with an open wooden gate. A spider web is stretched across the open gate. The painted backdrop has the usual garden variety of crawling things (worms, slugs, potato bugs, centipedes, millipedes, etc.) spread out amongst a lush assortment of plants. The central focus of the garden is a rose bush with one flowering rose.

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MUSIC

For each song, the character who has been assigned that song will remain center stage. When the song starts, the other characters split, some going stage left while the rest go stage right. After the song, all characters return to their original speaking position.

If desired, other classes can be assigned a song that they can sing with one of the main characters. Each chorus member will be dressed to portray the character whose song they are singing. For example, one class will all be dressed as bean plants and will sing with Bennie the bean plant when it comes to his song "Photosynthesis." This is true for every class except the first one, which does the opening and closing song. This class will be dressed in an assortment of various garden creatures (e.g. ants, geraniums, tulips, carrots, etc.).

Each class will assemble behind the curtain as the dialogue takes place. When the curtain opens, they will be in position, sing their song, and then exit. After they exit, the curtain will close behind them, the dialogue will continue, and the next class will assemble behind the curtain. The Aphids 1, 2 will appear in the play at the same time as the class representing them. All other characters will appear before their class.

PROPS

Sunglasses, for bean plant chorus
Plastic gardening tools, for worm chorus
Plastic scissors, for Special
Handkerchief
Roses, for aphid chorus

THE GARDEN

EVERY CREATURE
IS WELCOME IN OUR GARDEN,
EVERY PLANT AND ANIMAL
SINGING ONE BIG SONG.

NEWCOMERS ARE WELCOME
TO OUR GARDEN
BIG OR SMALL,
WHAT FLIES OR CRAWLS,
WE ALL BELONG.

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THE GARDEN

(AT RISE: A backyard garden with an open wooden gate. Bennie, Sylvie, Willie, Special, and the Garden Creature Chorus gather center stage. Song: "Garden Theme Song.")

ALL: *(Sing.)* Everyone here, welcome to my garden,
A symphony of harmony for every living thing,
Many creatures live inside my garden,
Centipedes and millipedes jitterbugging.

Geraniums, chrysanthemums,
Tulips, catnip, pansies, daisies and black ants.
Carnations, Impatiens,
Roses, bean plants, earthworms in one big dance.

The gardener's tender care, touches my garden
She pulls out weeds and plants seeds with her loving hand.
Only the best soil she puts in my garden,
With spiders, fertilizers, she looks after the land.
With spiders, fertilizers, she looks after the land.

(All exit except Sylvie, Bennie, Willie, and Special. Sylvie crosses front stage center toward Bennie. Special and Willie drift off to stage right conversing with each other.)

SYLVIE: Hi, Bennie. What a beautiful day in the garden.

BENNIE: It sure is, Sylvie. Perfect weather for growing.
What are you going to do today?

SYLVIE: I think I'm going to finish making my web. What about you, Bennie? What are you going to do?

BENNIE: Well, with all this sunshine, I think I am going to do some photosynthesizing.

SYLVIE: Photo what?

BENNIE: Photosynthesizing.

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SYLVIE: Oh, right. Isn't that when you plants just sit out in the sun and soak up the sunshine?

BENNIE: Well, it's a little more than that, Sylvie. We take the sun's energy and turn it into food energy.

SYLVIE: (*Looks puzzled.*) How do you do that?

BENNIE: It's easy. Let me show you.

(Bennie takes center stage. Curtain rises to reveal Bean Plant Chorus assembled and wearing sunglasses. Song: "Photosynthesis.")

BENNIE/BEAN PLANTS: (*Sing.*)

(Verse 1)

Now you may think that I am just standing still,
When I'm out here in the sun tryin' to get my fill,
While light energy activates my chlorophyll,
And raises my electrons to a higher level.

With that energy that comes from the sun,
We mix a little water and some oxygen,
It's what they call the dark reaction,
And it makes a sugar molecule with six carbons.

(Chorus)

Photosynthesis,
It's a growing business,
Happens in plants,
Makes electrons dance,
Photosynthesis,
Photosynthesis.

(Verse 2)

You can be cultivated and well seeded,
Take insecticides and pesticides and all that crud,
Be watered every day until you're in a flood,
But without photosynthesis, you'll stay a bud.

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For every living thing in the biosphere,
From the smallest amoebae to the white-tailed deer,
Depend on photosynthesis somehow, somewhere,
Without it they would very soon disappear.

(Chorus)
Photosynthesis,
It's a growing business,
Happens in plants,
Makes electrons dance,
Photosynthesis,
Photosynthesis.
Photosynthesis.

(Curtain. Bean Plant Chorus exits.)

SYLVIE: Wow, Bennie! I didn't know you plants could do all that.

BENNIE: It's what we do best. *(Looks at the sun.)* Well, I best be going. *(Turns to group.)* Goodbye.

(Sylvie, Willie, and Special wave to him.)

SYLVIE/WILLIE/SPECIAL: Bye!

(Bennie exits. Willie stops waving, turns, and bumps into Sylvie. As they collide, Sylvie falls down.)

WILLIE: *(To Sylvie.)* Hey, why don't you watch where you are going?

(Sylvie is still laying on the floor and looks puzzled.)

SYLVIE: Excuse me?

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(Special rushes over to Sylvie and helps her up.)

SPECIAL: Be careful, Willie!

(Willie comes right up to Sylvie's face as Special helps her to her feet.)

WILLIE: What do you mean, "Be careful"? She ran into me!

SPECIAL: I don't think so, Willie. And you don't have to stand so close to her. Haven't you ever heard of personal space?

(Willie is still in Sylvie's face, as Sylvie is trying to recover.)

WILLIE: Personal space? What are you talking about? The space in the garden is free for everyone.

SPECIAL: That may be true, Willie. But there is a boundary line around all of us, about ten or twelve inches... *(Pulls Willie away from Sylvie.)* ...that no one should go past.

WILLIE: I don't see any boundary line.

SPECIAL: It's invisible. And besides, when it comes to personal space, I'd be especially careful around Sylvie.

WILLIE: Why? She's just a little spider.

SPECIAL: Yeah, but she spins a pretty big web. Right, Sylvie?

SYLVIE: *(More herself now.)* I suppose.

(Sylvie takes center stage. Curtain goes up to reveal Spider Chorus. Song: "Sylvie the Spider.")

SYLVIE/SPIDERS: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 1)

Insects can fly where they want to high or low,

Bugs can jump just as they like, fast or slow,

Crawly things can creep around in zigzags or in a row.

But, don't invade Sylvie's space because she won't want you to go.

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(Chorus)

Don't get in Sylvie's web,
Better to lose face than lose your head,
You can talk to her, but don't embrace
Be considerate, show some etiquette, respect her personal
space.

(Verse 2)

She spins in crosses like a star with her silk threads,
And goes around and around and around until she's made
her web,
Then right in the middle, she puts her bed,
And waits until some fly comes by to use for sandwich
spread.

(Verse 3)

Even though she is just a little spider,
Even Miss Muffet won't sit too close beside her,
She'll fill you with delicious juice until you swoon,
And roll you up into a custom fit silk cocoon,

(Chorus, repeat last line.)

Be considerate, show some etiquette, respect her personal
space.

(Curtain. Spider Chorus exits.)

WILLIE: I see what you mean. Better stay out of her personal
space, or I might end up in a silk suit.

(Special crosses to Willie.)

SPECIAL: Well, that wouldn't be a big loss. After all, you are
only a worm.

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(Willie looks dejected and slumps his shoulders. Sylvie crosses in front of Willie to speak to Special.)

SYLVIE: Special, that wasn't very nice. You hurt Willie's feelings.

SPECIAL: Well, it's true.

SYLVIE: It isn't true. Right, Willie? *(Willie, still downcast, nods his head.)* Worms are very important to the garden.

SPECIAL: Ha! That's a laugh.

SYLVIE: It's true, Special. Worms keep the soil loose so that roots can breathe and grow.

SPECIAL: I don't believe that.

(Sylvie goes over to Willie and puts one of her arms around him.)

SYLVIE: Go ahead and tell her, Willie.

(Willie rubs his eyes and takes center stage. Curtain goes up. Worm Chorus holds an assortment of plastic digging implements like spades, shovels, hoes, etc. Song: "Worms Are Really Cool.")

WILLIE/WORMS: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 1)

You can hoe the garden 'til your hands are sore,
You can rake it up until you burn,
But if you want to really loosen up the soil,
Better get yourself a lot of worms.

(Chorus)

Worms are really cool,
The very best digging tool,
When it comes to aeration (burp!), we rule,
Worms are really cool.

Worms are really cool,
The very best digging tool,

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When it comes to aeration (burp!), we rule,
Worms are really cool.

(Verse 2)

Our inside muscles move the swallowed dirt,
Our outside muscles hold us like a girdle,
We have a gizzard for grinding up the earth,
Excreting it, making it more fertile.

(Curtain. Worm Chorus exits.)

SYLVIE: You see what I mean, Special? Without Willie, it
would be impossible to grow anything in the soil.

SPECIAL: You're right. I'm sorry, Willie. Anything that helps
beautiful plants like me to grow must be important.

SYLVIE: *(Rolls her eyes.)* I think it's time for me to leave.
Goodbye, you two.

*(Willie waves goodbye as Sylvie exits. Special is too busy pruning
herself with a plastic scissors to wave. Suddenly, Bennie enters,
running.)*

BENNIE: *(Exhausted.)* Help! I'm being chased by a monster.

SPECIAL: *(Irritated.)* A monster?

(Bennie grabs a hold of Willie.)

BENNIE: Yes, a red monster with big black spots. *(Turns and
screams.)* There it is now!

*(Terrified, Bennie runs offstage. Lenora, a ladybug, enters from the
opposite side of the stage, skipping happily. Lenora approaches
Willie and Special. Willie and Special look puzzled.)*

LENORA: Hello.

WILLIE: *(Tentatively.)* Hi. I'm Willie.

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SPECIAL: *(Coolly.)* And I'm Special.

LENORA: *(Puzzled.)* Oh! Aren't we all special?

(Special crosses her arms and refuses to answer.)

WILLIE: No. That's her name. "Special" is her name.

LENORA: Oh. Why do they call you Special?

(Willie looks embarrassed as he tries to convey to Lenora that she has just made a huge social faux pa in the garden hierarchy. Special uncrosses her arms and crosses them the other way.)

SPECIAL: *(Annoyed.)* Anyone with eyes can see. *(Relaxes a little as she smiles at the audience.)* I'm the most beautiful plant in the garden!

(Special takes center stage. Curtain goes up to reveal Rose Chorus. Song: "The Most Beautiful Plant in the Garden.")

SPECIAL/ROSES: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 1)

You may think that I am rather uncouth,
When actually I am just telling the truth,
I can't help it if I am the fountain of youth,
And the most beautiful plant in the garden.
(The most beautiful plant in the garden.)

(Verse 2)

Some would say that my words are only in jest,
But beside me the prettiest is second best,
I can't help it if I am just not like the rest,
And the most beautiful plant in the garden.
(The most beautiful plant in the garden.)

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(Chorus)

Other plants bud, other plants grow,
That's the way the season goes,
But the reason gardens are planted is,
To show off the very best rose (That's me!)

(Verse 3)

For all the other plants I do mourn,
Beside me they all look a little forlorn,
I guess you could say in their side I'm a thorn,
And the most beautiful plant in the,
I just can't recant, I'm...
(The most beautiful plant in the garden.)

*(Curtain. Rose Chorus exits. Special still refuses to look at Lenora,
who now looks a little embarrassed.)*

[End of Freeview]