



2004

Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, and Tommy Tune

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Daugherty, Linda. *Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, and Tommy Tune*. Anchorage Press Plays, 1998. ISBN 0876024118. Amateur royalty fee, contact Anchorage Press Plays. 72 pp.

Reviewer: Hilary Barnett

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction; Science fiction plays; Fantasy plays;

Subject: Down syndrome--Juvenile drama; Family--Juvenile drama; Imagination--Juvenile drama; Drama--Reviews;

Theme: The importance of family and accepting the inevitable.

Production Requirements: Musical selections contained in stage directions are suggestions only. Set moves between science classroom (overhead or slide projector is needed), the living room, Tom's room, and Tom's imaginary world which requires space for Tom and Tommy to dance. Lighting for Tom's imagination should be different and creative, opposed to the ordinary classroom and living room settings. Costumes are modern day apparel. Tom's specialized costume: tap shoes, top hat, and tuxedo tails.

Acts: 2

Run Time: 1 1/2 hours

Characters: 6-9 roles (3M (ages15-17), 2F (one 65 and one 15-16), 1 either with doubling/ OR 5M, 3F, 1

Cast: Children and adults

Time Period: Modern

A young girl, Cricket, struggles with Tom, her older and imaginative brother, having Down syndrome. Tom and Cricket have a desirable bond as brother and sister, but Cricket becomes caught up in embarrassment and hurts her family's feelings. However, Tom is constant and never wavering in his love for his sister. Cricket finds herself in a world of confusion when it becomes clear that family and love, and not being embarrassed, are most important.

Schedules can easily be worked around in this cast of six. The cast is required to partake in some doubling, but it can be handled stress-free. Tom and Tommy Tune annoy the family; but, they are fun to imagine and are easily brought to life through Tom's lines, stage instructions, and tap dancing to Fred Astaire. Students will find it easy to relate to Cricket and her feelings of embarrassment since she is a dynamic protagonist who changes and rediscovers her love for her brother. The play is fast-paced because of Cricket's rapid-fire one-liners, Tom's obnoxious and constant tap dancing, and Reese's persistent behavior. The upbeat dialogue flows well and is genuinely entertaining. Stage directions are clear, and if done accurately, promote the proper and respectful effect of this touching play. Though the script is weak and uneven near the end, ample character work by cast and director can make up for it. These characters do not sit idly. They help educate about Down syndrome and help students understand it is necessary to accept everyone.