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*Dramatic Publishing*

**BLESS  
CRICKET,  
CREST  
TOOTHPASTE,  
AND  
TOMMY  
TUNE** by Linda Daugherty



Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, and Tommy Tune

IUPUI / IRT Bonderman Award  
Dallas-Ft. Worth Critics Forum Award  
SWTA's Orlin Corey Outstanding Playwright  
Children's Script Award  
Coleman A. Jennings Children's Script Contest Award

**Drama. By Linda Daugherty.** *Cast: 6 minimum (3m., 2w., 1 either gender) with doubling, or up to 9 (5m., 3w., 1 either gender).* Cricket, a young teenage girl, struggles to come to terms with her relationship with her older brother, Tom, who has Down syndrome. Cricket is the new girl at school, and tries hard to keep her school and home life separate. When her classmate Reese drops by for a visit, Cricket is mortified that he finds out about Tom's disability. But Reese just sees a young man who likes to dance and play his music loudly. Gram tries to give Tom the attention he needs while facilitating enough space and quiet for Cricket to work out her issue around her brother. When a science project goes well, Reese encourages Cricket to think about being a research scientist. Cricket desperately tries to discover a solution for Tom through science, but only becomes more discouraged. Reese shows up again; this time he's offering a gift that delights everyone—his old CD player and headphones for Tom. With the help of Reese's creativity and Gram's patience, Cricket realizes Tom isn't deficient, but rather has "something extra" to offer the world. *Contemporary settings and costumes. Approximate running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes. Code: BF2.*

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Crest Toothpaste,  
and Tommy Tune



*Dramatic Publishing*

311 Washington St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098-330  
Phone: (800) 448-7469

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# **Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, And Tommy Tune**

By

LINDA DAUGHERTY



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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For Jon Gary Martinsen

*Bless Cricket, Crest Toothpaste, and Tommy Tune* won the Waldo M. and Grace Bonderman/Indiana University/Purdue University/Indiana Repertory Theatre Playwriting Competition, the Southwest Theatre Association's Orlin Corey Outstanding Playwright Children's Script Award and Coleman A. Jennings Children's Script Contest, the Dallas-Ft. Worth Critics Forum Award for New Plays, and is excerpted in Dramatic Publishing Company's book, *Scenes and Monologues for Young Actors*.

The play premiered at the Dallas Children's Theater on May 5, 2000, directed by Robyn Flatt, choreographed by Nancy Schaeffer and stage managed by Terrell Roykouff.

### **Original Cast**

|             |                 |
|-------------|-----------------|
| CRICKET     | Kelly Abbott    |
| REESE       | Matthew Hutches |
| MS. BENNETT | Amy Seale Moore |
| TOM         | Derik Webb      |
| GRAN        | Sally Fiorello  |
| TOMMY TUNE  | Tommy Rapley    |

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Play book design by Randy Blevins.



## **Cast of Characters**

(in order of appearance)

CRICKET, young teenage girl

REESE, young teenage boy

MR./MS. BENNETT, science teacher

(may be played by a man or woman)

TOM, CRICKET's older brother with Down syndrome

GRAN, CRICKET's and TOM's grandmother

TOMMY, an elegant, imaginary tap dancer in top hat and tails,

TOM's visualization of his inner self

## **Doubling**

YOUNG GIRL (Prologue) is played by CRICKET.

BOY (Prologue) is played by TOM.

VOICE OF BOY STUDENT is played by TOMMY.

VOICES in classroom are played by TOM, GRAN and TOMMY.

PLAYGROUND MOTHER is played by GRAN or MS. BENNETT.

PLAYGROUND CHILD is played by REESE or TOMMY.

## **SETTING**

The play moves between a science classroom, the living room and Tom's room in Cricket and Tom's house, playground in Cricket's memory, and Tom's imaginary world. The set must clear quickly for Tom's imaginary world which requires space for Tom and Tommy to dance. In the classroom, an overhead or slide projector is needed.

## **MUSIC**

The musical selections contained in the stage directions are suggestions only.

## **NOTE**

Examples of illustrations referred to in Act I, Scene 1 begin at page 12.

# BLESS CRICKET, CREST TOOTHPASTE, AND TOMMY TUNE

by Linda Daugherty

## Act One Prologue

AT RISE:

*In blackout, a chorus of the song, "Rubber Ducky," from "Sesame Street" plays. Song volume fades but continues to play softly under prologue. Lights rise upstage of a screen upon which shadows will be projected from the rear. GIRL's hands appear and cast a large shadow of a duck whose mouth opens and closes, accompanied by VOICE OF YOUNG GIRL.*

VOICE OF YOUNG GIRL

Quack! Quack! See the duck. Quack! Quack!. Now you ... you ...

*(Hands of BOY appear, casting quirky shadows without meaning.)*

*(Enthusiastically)*

Make the duck. Make a duck! You can do it!

*(GIRL's hands take the BOY's hands and try to mold them to make duck's shadow but it is impossible.)*

Look, this one is easy. Really easy. Open your fingers like me.

*(GIRL's hands cast shadow of a turkey with her thumb and index fingers making the turkey "speak.")*

See the turkey? Gobble, gobble. Gobble, Gobble. You do it. Do it!

*(BOY's fingers spread and wave wildly.)*

*(More insistently)*

Hey, we can make a bunny! See how I do it.

*(GIRL's hands cast shadow of a hopping bunny. BOY laughs at shadow.)*

VOICE OF YOUNG GIRL

It hops. The bunny hops. See? You can do it! Try. Try hard!

*(GIRL's hands take BOY's hands but BOY's hands resist. Music volume increases.)*

*(Angrily)*

Do it! Do it! Why can't you do it?! Why can't you just do it?!

*(BOY stands. Dancing wildly and laughing, HE moves closer to the screen, casting a giant shadow.)*

Do it! Please! Make the bunny, Tom! Please, Tom! Please!!!

*(Sound of a needle scratching across record interrupts underscoring song. Blackout.)*

**Act One**  
**Scene One**

SETTING: *A science classroom.*

AT RISE: *In blackout, sounds of noisy class of students before bell rings. Lights up on CRICKET who is intently studying before class begins. Student sounds fade.*

**CRICKET** *(Reading from her textbook)*

"A cell is the basic unit of life. Each of us is made up of trillions and trillions of cells - each with its own, very special job."

*(REESE enters.)*

**REESE**

Hey, Cricket!

**CRICKET**

Hi, Reese!

*(She looks up from the textbook, gives him a quick smile and returns to her reading.)*

"Simple one cell organisms produce offspring identical to the parent through asexual reproduction."

**REESE**

Come on, you know all of this.

**CRICKET**

Do you?

**REESE**

Hey, we made an "A" on the frog.

**CRICKET**

What do you mean "we?"

**REESE** *(Enthusiastically)*

Cricket, you are the best lab partner! You don't get grossed out and you can find all the body parts.

**CRICKET** *(Still reading)*

Thanks.

**REESE**

Hey, Cricket ... uh ... would you ... You want to go to the movie Saturday? My mom'll take us. I already asked her. She'll call your mom.

**CRICKET**

Reese! Can't you see I'm studying?

**REESE**

Yeah, I can see that. We could pick you up, see? Where do you live?

**CRICKET**

No.

**REESE**

And we could bring you home. No problem. Do you live near school?

*(The bell rings as MR./MS. BENNETT enters. From time to time during following scene, CRICKET and REESE converse furtively.)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Reese? Reese.

**VOICE OF BOY STUDENT**

Hel-lo, Reese's Pieces. Hel-lo!

*(VOICES giggle in background.)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT** *(To class)*

We don't need that. Reese, will you please distribute these handouts to those who need them?

*(REESE goes to pick up handouts.)*

Good morning, class. Before we begin today's lesson, I want to remind you that your science reports on inventors are due tomorrow. No excuses for being late. And I certainly hope no one has waited until tonight to begin. I encourage you to be original and inventive. Surprise me.

**REESE**

Hey, Cricket, ...

*(HE gives CRICKET a handout and looks at her notebook which SHE covers.)*

**REESE (CONT.)**

... how about "The Man Who Invented the Peanut Butter Cup?"

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Thank you, Reese. Keep digging. This is an opportunity to be creative and raise your grade.

**REESE** (*Sliding into desk*)

Boy, my average could use another "A." This stuff is way too hard. Was your other school hard?

**CRICKET**

No.

**REESE**

Wow. So, have you started it?

**CRICKET**

The report? Yeah, I'm nearly done.

**REESE**

You're kidding?! Who's it on?

**CRICKET**

Marie Curie.

**REESE**

Who's she?

**CRICKET**

Ssssh!

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Now class, heads up. Someone, please get the lights.

*(Lights off as MR./MS. BENNETT projects a photograph of students of different races and with different hair and eye colors.*

*The photograph is entitled "Genetics.")*

Today we begin our unit on genetics. Thank you for helping with the hand-outs, Reese.

**VOICE OF BOY STUDENT** (*Teasing*)

What a sweet boy.

*(VOICES giggle again.)*

**REESE**

Man, I hate my name.

**CRICKET**

Hey, it could be worse. You could be named after a bug.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Now, class, as you already know, each of you resembles your biological parents in many ways but you have many differences, too. Genetics is the branch of biology that tries to explain how this process happens. With advancing technology, the study of genetics becomes more exciting and challenging every day.

*(MR./MS. BENNETT projects an illustration of a single human chromosome [Illustration #1].)*

Now, this is a picture of a single human chromosome. How many chromosomes ... we remember chromosomes, don't we? ... how many chromosomes are in each of our cells?

**CRICKET** *(Raising her hand)*

Forty-six.

**REESE** *(A beat after CRICKET)*

Yeah, forty-six.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

That's right. Forty-six chromosomes. Each tiny chromosome is loaded with genetic information.

**CRICKET**

Actually, I like your name.

*(REESE shrugs, not looking at her.)*

And I like the candy, too.

*(REESE smiles at CRICKET.)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Unlike simple organisms, the offspring of humans - and animals - are not identical to their parents.

Do you like me? **REESE**

Ssssh! **CRICKET**

You like me. I know you do. **REESE**

Yeah, right. **CRICKET**

Admit it. **REESE**

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Now, if we inherit chromosomes from both parents, why don't our cells have ninety-two chromosomes?

*(MR./MS. BENNETT projects an illustration of the process of meiosis [Illustration #2].)*

That is because the only cells in our body that have less than forty-six chromosomes are sex cells.

**VOICE OF BOY STUDENT**

Hey, check out those sex cells!

*(Embarrassed VOICES giggle.)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT** *(Tapping pointer for quiet)*

I hope most of you are mature enough to take notes on this material and be ready for a test next week. Do I make myself clear? I suggest you sketch these illustrations.

*(CRICKET and REESE sketch, looking up at illustration and down at their sketches.)*

**CRICKET**

And why do you think I like you ... I mean, like that?

**REESE**

'Cause I am so sweet.



**CRICKET**

Oh, please.

**REESE**

And because you have hearts and junk and my name written all over the last page of that notebook.

**CRICKET**

I do not!

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Reproductive cells are formed by a special process called meiosis. Spelled how, Reese?

**REESE**

Uh ... meiosis?

*(MR./MS. BENNETT taps on the wall where word, "meiosis," is projected with illustration.)*

Oh, yeah! Meiosis. M, E, I, O, S, I, S.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Trust me. That will be on the test. Meiosis is a type of cell division that produces sex cells with half as many chromosomes as other body cells. This is covered in chapter seven. Please read it before Friday. And read it how?

**CRICKET, REESE, AND VOICES**

Carefully.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Thank you.

*(MR./MS. BENNETT projects an illustration of twenty-three pairs of chromosomes [Illustration #3].)*

**REESE** *(Teasing)*

Let me see your spiral.

**CRICKET**

Ssssh!

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

So each of us receives twenty-three chromosomes from our mother and twenty-three from our father ... totaling?

**CRICKET AND REESE**

Forty-six.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Yes.

*(Pointing to illustration)*

Here, scientists have cut up and paired normal chromosomes from both parents.

**REESE**

Come on. Show me your notebook.

**CRICKET**

Ssssh!

*(MR./MS. BENNETT projects an illustration which compares normal and Down syndrome chromosomes each of which is labeled. The twenty-first chromosome in the Down syndrome set is circled. [Illustration #4].)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Usually meiosis works perfectly but sometimes a mistake occurs. Take a look at the circled twenty-first set of chromosomes in the illustration on top. There's an extra one. See? An extra one. There are three chromosomes in the twenty-first set. This extra chromosome causes a condition called Down syndrome.

*(CRICKET stops taking notes and stares intently at projected image.)*

**REESE (Teasing)**

Let me see your notebook.

**MR./MS. BENNETT** *(Demanding his attention)*

Reese! See the three?

**REESE**

Yeah, three chromosomes, right.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Thank you.

**REESE**

So, Cricket, —

**CRICKET**

Stop, Reese! I want to hear this!

**REESE**

Yeah, right, it's so interesting.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Down syndrome is caused by extra genetic material. Individuals with Down syndrome have the characteristics of both parents plus those of the extra gene.

**REESE**

Forget the spiral. About the movie, my mom'll pick up.

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Individuals with Down syndrome have limited mental abilities - ranging from mild to severe - flattened bridge of the nose, epicanthal folds over the eyes and other physical problems.

**REESE** *(Putting his notebook on  
CRICKET's desk)*

Just write down your address. I mean, you're new and I don't know —

**CRICKET** *(Harshly pushing notebook away)*

Reese, will you be quiet?!

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Down syndrome is the most common serious birth defect in the United States - affecting about one out of every seven hundred children.

*(MR./MS. BENNETT continues to lecture as  
REESE tries to talk with CRICKET.)*

**MR./MRS. BENNETT**

There are many other kinds of genetic problems. I'm sure you've heard of Cystic Fibrosis. In 1992, the gene that causes Cystic Fibrosis was identified and scientists are working on ways to correct this defect. Sickle Cell Anemia is another genetic disorder that scientists are working on. It affects one out of every six hundred twenty-five African-Americans in the United States.

**REESE**

Hey, it was a mistake - looking at your notebook. I didn't mean to see it. I was just giving out Mr./Ms. Bennett's handouts and —

**CRICKET**

Can't you understand?! Don't talk to me now!

*(Embarrassed, REESE puts his head in his hands. CRICKET realizes SHE has mistreated him but is mesmerized by the information being imparted by MR./MRS. BENNETT.)*

**REESE**

I'm really sorry, Cricket. I'm really sorry about —

**CRICKET** *(Distracted)*

... the movie ... maybe ... maybe ... I could meet you there ...

**REESE**

Yeah? Oh, that would be great!

*(CRICKET slowly moves from her chair to the projection on the wall and stands in front of it.)*

**MR./MS. BENNETT**

Someday, perhaps many of these genetic problems ... Is that you, Cricket? Sit down please ... You're in the way, Cricket. We can't see.

*(CRICKET puts her hand on the wall, touching the illustration of the extra chromosome.)*

Cricket, are you all right? ... Cricket? ... Cricket?

*(CRICKET turns around in a daze, barely hearing MR./MS. BENNETT call her name. SHE looks down and sees the chromosomes projected on her body as lights fade.)*