



# Basmati Basmati

## by Jonathan Hall

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A Play in a Day for Primary School Pupils, focusing on Biodiversity

### Staging

Every school space is different in some way and of course teachers must adapt to their own space.

One of the key elements of staging a play in a day is to have somewhere the children move to when they're not directly involved in the action. For example with a class of thirty children you could use 3 PE mats, ten children on a mat.

### Cast

Village Chief 1

Village Chief 2

Child (several)

Villagers (several)

Buyers (several)

Parents (several)

Supermarket sellers (several)

Food scientists (several)

### Movement and Sound

Download and use Alex Parson's original music and sound effects for your performance; it is clearly marked in the script where to use the music or sound cues. However, feel free to add your own spin on things or incorporate the pupils' own live sound effects for certain moments.

Take a look at Movement Director Robin Guiver's movement videos for ideas and starting points; you can always teach the movement in the week leading up to your Play in a Day performance so the pupils are familiar with it.



The children run in to the energetic Bollywood style music.

MUSIC CUE ONE SOWING AND TILLING.MP3

They run to their mats and stand moving in time to the music.

**Village Chief 1:** The sweet, sweet plains of Northern India

**Village Chief 2:** And the sun shines  
(*Children make 'shining' movements with their hands*)

**Village Chief 1:** And the rain falls  
(*Children make 'rainfall' movements with their hands*)

**Child:** And there were two villages growing rice

**Child:** As they had done for years and years and years

**Village Chief 1:** And the workers till the ground

(*One mat of children become the workers who run out and till the ground in as Bollywood style movement as possible*)

**Village Chief 2:** And the workers sow the seed-

(*A second mat of children become the workers who run out and till the ground- again in as Bollywood style movement as possible*)

**Villager:** Now see our rice grow!

(*The third mat become rice plants*)

MUSIC CUE TWO: BASMATI DRONE (NO SARANGI) -2 .MP3

**Villager:** Field upon field upon field of rice

**Villager:** Red and black

**Villager:** Green and brown

**Villager:** Waving in the warm Indian breeze

(*All the children become fields of rice- except the Village Chiefs who contemplate the fields before them*)

**Village Chief 2:** So many different types of rice!

**Child:** Jarah

**Child:** Langi

**Child:** Khato Dosh

**Child:** Red and black

**Child:** Green and brown



**Village Chief 1:** We work hard to grow our rice-

**Buyer:** Stop!

*(A group of five become the **Buyers**, with mobile phones and ipads)*

*(They repeat the following lines:*

- Is this definite?*
- Is this certain?*
- How much?*

**Village Chief 2:** Who are you?

**Buyer:** We're the people who are buying the rice-

**Buyers:** You have to stop!

**Village Chief 1:** What is it?

**Buyer:** We only want **one** sort of rice, Great Grower

**Village Chief 1:** One sort of Rice?

**Buyer:** One sort of rice-

**Buyer:** Basmati!

**Village Chief 2:** Basmati?

**Buyers:** Basmati!

**Villager:** What about Jarrah?

**Villager:** What about Langi?

**Villager:** What about Lollypop?

**Buyer:** It's not what people want-

**Buyer:** Let us show you!

*(The rest of the children form three groups orchestrated by the Buyers, watched by the bemused Great Grower.*

*Group 1 Children sat for dinner, maybe holding knives and forks expectantly*

*Group 2 Parents – preparing dinner- perhaps wearing oven gloves*

*Group 3) Supermarket workers: carrier bags denoting the store they work for)*

THE SNIPPETS OF SCENES ARE LINKED WITH MUSIC CUE THREE: BRIGHT BREEZY MUSIC-REPRISE OF SOWING AND TILLING.MP3

**Children:** What's for tea?

**Parent:** Meatballs

**Parent:** Curry



**Parent:** Chicken

**Parents:** -with rice

**Children:** **White fluffy** rice like we always have?

**Parents:** You mean Basmati?

**Child:** We want Basmati!

**Children:** We want Basmati!

*(The Parents turn to the supermarkets)*

**Supermarket Seller:** We sell brown rice

**Supermarket Seller:** Lovely yellow rice-

**Supermarket Seller:** Try risotto rice-

**Parents:** It's got to be Basmati!

**Supermarket Seller:** Just Basmati?

**Parents:** Just Basmati!

*(The Supermarket people and the Buyers turn to the Village Chiefs)*

**Supermarket Seller:** We only want to buy Basmati!

**Village Chief 1:** What about Jarrah?

**All:** Basmati!

**Village Chief 2:** What about Opus?

**All:** Basmati!

**Village Chief 2:** What about Digha Dhan?

**All:** Basmati! Basmati!

**Buyer:** That's what people want-  
Fields and fields and fields of Basmati...

**Buyer:** Then all will be well-  
And you will all be rich!

**Buyer:** You can send your children to school.

*(One Village looks excited; one looks unconvinced)*

**Villager Chief 1:** We'll grow Basmati rice for you.



**Villager Chief 2:** We'll grow rice like we always have.

**Food Scientist:** Wait!

**Food Scientist:** You've got to be so so careful!

**Food Scientist:** Soon there'll be nothing **but** Basmati!

**Villager Chief 2:** That's what people want

**Villager Chief 1:** What's wrong with that?

**Food Scientist:** Always eating the same thing isn't good for you

**Village Chief 1:** We're not going to eat it-

**Villagers:** We're going to sell it!

**Child:** **So** - the two villages tilled the fields and sowed the seed as they had done for years and years and years -

**Child:** **One** village grew all different kinds of rice because that was what they'd always done

**Child:** **One** village grew Basmati- because they wanted the money selling the rice would bring them-

(MUSIC CUE FOUR: BASMATI DRONE-2.MP3

The children put on rice hats- become the fields of Basmati)

**Scientist:** Look at your fields of **different** rice-

**Rice plant:** Opus Rice

**Rice plant:** Hamim Rice

**Rice plant:** Diga Dhan...

**Food Scientist:** But watch out... here comes some rice blight!

(SOME CHILDREN BECOME RICE BLIGHT- THEY MARCH ON TO MUSIC CUE FIVE MENACING MUSIC. CROP DECIMATION-2.MP3

The blight moves around the rice... some of it is felled- but some of it remains)

**Food Scientist:** (*To Village Chief 2*) Don't worry-  
Because the rice is all **different** types- it's not all killed

**Food Scientist:** There's plenty of rice left-

**Food Scientist:** But look at the **other** village's rice...  
Fields and fields and fields of Basmati-

*(The children all become basmati)*

**Food Scientists:** And here comes the rice blight!

**MUSIC CUE SIX: SAD MUSIC REPRISÉ CROP DECIMATION**

*(The rice blight attacks. But this time all the rice is felled)*

**Village Chief 1:** All our rice is gone...

**Food Scientist:** Because all your rice was just **one** kind it was **all** killed...

**Food Scientist:** You just need a blight that attacks Basmati-

**Food Scientist:** All your Basmati rice is gone-

**Village Chief 1:** No rice... no money!

**Villager:** No money, no food

**Villager:** No food...

**Villager:** We go hungry

**Villager:** We get sick

**Villager:** Our children won't grow-

**Village Chief 2:** We'll help you. (The other Villagers nod in agreement)

*(The children return to their mats)*

*(The Buyers survey the decimated crop)*

**Buyer:** Hang on- what about pesticides?

**Buyer:** What about herbicides?

**Food Scientist:** You don't want to use too many of them on the food you eat.

**Food Scientist:** And anyway- they can't kill **every** pest

**Food Scientist:** It just takes one strong strain of rice blight.

**Food Scientists:** Bye bye Basmati!

**Food Scientist:** We all have to be careful.

**Food Scientist:** It's like a battle that never ceases...

*(On the mats the children have become- well, children, concerned about the scenario they're seeing)*

**Child:** But people don't **only** eat rice-

**Child:** People eat lots of **different** things-



*(Here the teacher can choose how to show that the majority of what this planet eats comes from three basic foodstuffs, rice, corn and wheat.*

*Each mat can*

*a) Shout out different types of food, one mat saying corn-based products (cooking oil, soda, ketchup), one mat saying rice products (noodles, coco pops, risotto), one mat saying wheat based products (cakes, biscuits, bread)*

*or*

*b) Hold up pictures of corn, rice and wheat based products*

**Food scientist:** You over there- you're all made from wheat-

**Food scientist:** You over there- you're all made from corn

**Food scientist:** You over there- you're all made from rice-

**Village Chief 1:** Just **three** types of food, to feed a whole planet?

**Food scientist:** We need to eat some **different** things, Great Grower!

**Village Chief 2:** But it's not **just** up to us-

**Children:** (*to the audience*) It's up to you-

The children stand still, bow- and end on a burst of Bollywood style movement...

REPRISE SOWING AND TILLING.MP3

**The End**