



The Lament of the Green Bean

by Elinor Cook

A Play in a Day for Primary School pupils focusing on Food Security - the access to healthy food and optimal nutrition for all.

Staging

Minimal set required. Pupils create freeze frames to represent locations and situations. Some token costume needed e.g. green tops.

Cast

Green Beans (four or more)
Mother
Father
Brother
Sister
Kenyan Farmer
Kenyan Children (four or more)
Orangutan
Foreman
Indonesia
Poland
Kenya
Brazil
Ugly Fruit (four or more)
Trees
Grandchildren Two

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 on 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.



*Four Green Beans – dressed in green, of course! - form a tableau.
They step forward as they each say their line*

Green Bean 1: I am a delicious Green Bean from Kenya.

Green Bean 2: This is our story.

Green Bean 3: It's a little bit sad, I'm sorry to say.

Green Bean 4: But listen carefully...

Altogether: And you may find a clue to a better future.

SFX 1: RADIO TUNING

RADIO (England): And now, for the weather.

It's been sunny all across England today – an excellent day for a spot of gardening!

MUSIC: A SPOT OF GARDENING (BIRDSONG).MP3

A family tableau is established.

Mum and Dad are setting the table for dinner

The brother and sister are watching television/playing computer games

Mum: Dinner's ready!

The children groan and carry on with what they are doing

Dad: It's sausage and chips!

The children cheer and rush to the table

Mum: And delicious green beans!

The green-beans leap to attention

Green-beans: Yesssss!

(high-fiving)

The children groan.

Green-beans: But we came all the way from Kenya?!

SFX 2: RADIO TUNING

RADIO (Kenya): It's another boiling hot day in Kenya.

If you're working outside, don't forget to wear a sun hat!

SFX 3: SENEGAL INSECTS & BIRDS.MP3

SFX 4: LION ROAR.WAV, ELEPHANT TRUMPET.WAV

The family in England freeze.

A tableau is now set up to establish that we are in Kenya, on a field harvesting green beans.



*Four children use string to create a rectangular field – the string sets up the parameters of this field
The orangutan watches them from his tree.*

A movement sequence of the Farmer working on the land, assisted by his four children:

They dig the ground.

The sow the seeds.

They hoe the crops.

Then the four children stand in a line and each receive a bucket from the farmer

They walk over to a waterhole (this can be something as simple as a blue mat) and fill their water buckets (this doesn't need to be real water! It can just be mimed.)

Farmer: Come on children – we need to water these green beans.

They then mime pouring their buckets of water over the fields

SFX 5: HUGE SPLASH.WAV

Farmer: Good work, kids!

Children: But we're so thirsty...

The children try and drink from the buckets of water but the Farmer reprimands them.

Farmer: This water isn't for you, it's for the beans.

Children: Are the beans for us?

Farmer: No, they're for the children in England.

The family in England un-freeze.

Brother: I HATE green-beans!

The Brother and Sister approach the green beans, select one, and march him/her into a giant recycling bin.

Green bean 1: Noooooooooooo

Green bean 2: Ouch! That hurt!

At the exact moment that the bean goes into the bin, one of the Kenyan children drops a bucket of water

SFFX 6: HUGE SPLASH.WAV

Farmer: Be careful!

Kenyan Child: Oh no!

The Kenyan Children chase after the water but it's too late...

Kenyan Child: It's too late...



*This is repeated with the rest of the green beans
Each one is put in the bin, and each bucket of water is dropped*

Mother: (tutting) What a lot of waste!

Orangutan: I don't like the look of this.

The four children holding the string move in closer – the Farmer and his children have noticeably less room.

Kenyan Child: Is it just me, or does it seem smaller in here?

Sister: I want a chocolate bar instead!

Brother: Me too!

Mother: OK! Whatever you want, my darlings.

Action Sequence:

*All the different countries scurry to provide the ingredients for the chocolate bar.
A Foreman, and all the different countries (Indonesia, Brazil, Poland, Ivory Coast)*

SFX 7: WHISTLE BLOW.WAV

A marching sequence.

The Orangutan watches them from his tree.

Foreman: One chocolate bar requested!

Countries: Ay ay captain!

Foreman: Indonesia! Palm oil!

Indonesia: Yes, sir!

Foreman: Brazil! Sugar!

Brazil: Yes sir!

Foreman: Poland! Milk!

Poland: Yes sir!

Foreman: Kenya! Cocoa beans!

Kenya: Yes sir!

Orangutan: Hey!
This is my land!

Foreman: And forward MARCH!

The countries march around the stage



Brother: Hurry UP!

SFX 8: AEROPLANE DRONE

*The children playing all the different countries run around the stage, getting faster and faster. Eventually they line up in front of the Foreman, who takes a perfect chocolate bar from whoever is at the front of the line
The Foreman hands the chocolate bar to the Brother with a bow and a flourish*

Brother: Pah, finally!

*He snatches it from the Foreman and chomps it down greedily.
The Foreman beckons to the countries, and they all slope sadly away, exhausted*

Green beans: What about a different pudding for a change?
(*shouting from the recycling bin*)

Sister: Like what?!

The Green Beans clamber out of the recycling bin, and gesture excitedly

Green beans: Please welcome our friends, the Ugly Fruits!

The Ugly Fruit enter – they can have fun being as ugly as possible!

Ugly Fruit: I'm much healthier for you than all this chocolate-y rubbish.

The Brother and Sister make disgusted faces at them

Brother: You look weird!

Fruit: I got a bit bruised when I was picked, that's all...

Sister: I only eat perfect fruit.

Brother: No bumps or bruises.

Fruit: But I taste just as good!
And I'm really good for you, too!

Brother & Sister: Yuck!
We're going to play outside!

The Ugly Fruit is man-handled into the bin – the same bin the green-beans went into earlier.

SFX 9: Clocks ticking.wav

Green Bean 1: Time passed.

Green Bean 2: More of us were thrown into the giant bucket.

Green Bean 3: More water was spilled.



Green Bean 4: And the world got hotter and hotter...

Mother and Father clap their hands

MUSIC: TOO HOT IN 2040.MP3

Mum: Come on children, we don't play outside anymore.

Dad: It's far too hot!

Brother: We never go outside now.

Sister: Now we live underground.

Brother: With non-stop air-conditioning!

Sister: We grow our food in vertical farms!

Brother: Under lights that are all the colours of the rainbow!

SFX 10 – SOUND OF AXE WHIRRING.WAV

MUSIC: RAIN FOREST DIMINISHING.MP3

*The four children holding the string step in even closer –
the Farmer and the children are really squashed now.*

Trees: Uh oh....

Foreman: TIMBER!

The Farmer and his children try to get out of the way of the crashing trees

Farmer: Look out!

The drills whine, the trees tumble, the branches snap

SFX 11: RADIO TUNING

RADIO: It's another boiling hot day in 2040!

Kenyan Child 1: Ow, don't push!

Kenyan Child 2: There's no room in here.

The children holding the string step in EVEN closer

THE CLOCK TICKS – REPRISÉ CLOCK TICKING.WAV

SFX 12: RADIO TUNING

RADIO: And relax! Another perfect, temperature-controlled day in 2050!

*Brother and Sister transform into Grandpa and Grandma – they stoop and someone brings them walking sticks which they lean on
The two Grandchildren cluster around them.*

Grandma: Oof, my old bones!
Grandchild: We love you, Grandma!
Grandpa: (*deaf*) What's that you said?
Grandchild: Love you too, Grandpa!
Grandpa: (*deaf*) Beg yer pardon?!

The grandchildren laugh.

SFX 13: GROUND CRACK.WAV (DESCRIPTION SCORCHING HEAT.
GROUND CRACKING. PLANTS WILTING AND DYING.)
MUSIC: TOO HOT IN 2050.MP3

*Movement sequence: Farmer and his Children are boiling hot –
wiping their brows, panting, fanning their faces with their hands.*

Kenyan Child: Phew, it's BOILING hot out here.
Kenyan Child: We need to try and get inside that underground lair.
Kenyan Child: They've got air-conditioning, I heard!
Kenyan Child: And all the food they can eat!

*They knock on the door to the underground lair.
Grandma motions that she has heard something.
The grandchildren ignore the sounds.
They knock louder and louder.
The green beans shake their heads in sorrow.
Music: Very, very loud*

Grandma: Can you hear something?

The children play loud music to drown out the sound of the knocking

MUSIC: TOO HOT IN 2040 or 205

Child: Nope.
Grandpa: Beg yer pardon??
(*deaf*)

The Kenyan Children lie on the ground in exhaustion

Green Bean 1: This calls for some emergency magic...

Movement sequence:

Green Bean 1 transforms into a bird and flies in front of Grandma

Silence while she watches it

Grandma: Oh! I haven't seen one of those for years and years...

Grandchild: What's that?

Grandma: It's a... Oh now, what are they called?

Grandchild: It's so beautiful.

Grandchild: Look at its wings...

Grandma: A BIRD! That's what they're called.

Grandpa: Pardon?
(*deaf*)

Grandchild: How come I've never seen one before?

Grandma: Because... they're extinct.

Grandchild: Why?

The Green beans hold their breath

Grandma: Because... because I wasted all that food when I was a little girl... We all did...
Oh if only we could go back in time and change our ways!

One of the green beans hands Grandma a remote control.

Grandchild: Do it, Grandma, go on!

Grandchild: I don't want to live in a world without, what are they called again...?

Grandchild: BIRDS!

Grandpa: Oof, no need to shout!

Grandma presses the button

SFX 14: TAPE REWINDING.WAV

MUSIC: RAIN FOREST RISING.MP3

Increasing score – all the sounds that were lost (animals, birds etc.) are reintroduced.

Action sequence: Going back in time!

The rainforests leap back up

Trees: Woo hoo, we're back!



The Orangutan swings happily from the trees.

Green beans: Look, an Indonesian Orangutan!

The Orangutan waves.

The Farmer and his Children return to tending their fields.

The Grandparents stand up properly and drop their sticks – they are Brother and Sister again!

SFX 15: RADIO TUNING

RADIO: And it's another lovely Summer's Day in 2015!

*We return to the family tableau of the beginning of the play – Mother, Father, Brother and Sister
Sister rubs her eyes, slightly confused – after all, she has just travelled back in time...*

Mother: Dinner time!

Father: Come on kids, time for tea!

Brother: What's for dinner?

Dad: Sausage and chips.

Brother: Yum!

Mum: And delicious green beans.

A bird lands close by.

The Sister watches it. She waves at the bird, who nods.

The Green beans hold their breath.

Sister: My favourite!

Brother: Um... yeah... yeah they're my favourite too!

Sister: I'll eat every single one – I don't want to waste ANY of them.

The Green beans cheer!

*The children holding the string step back and create a big space for the
Farmer and his children, who cheer as well.*

The bird flies round and round happily.

They all watch it, smiling..

MUSIC: A SPOT OF GARDENING (BIRDSONG).MP3

The End