



Beloved Burger

by Rhiannon Tise

A Play in a Day for primary school pupils focusing on Sustainable Diets and the impact food consumption has on the planet's resources

Staging

There are different settings in this play – e.g. Lucy's bedroom, the rain forest, a UK farm.

Scenes should flow into each other just as a dream does - rather than ending one scene, clearing the stage, beginning the new scene.

The performance does not need to happen on a stage with the audience sat in rows in front of the stage. A more successful solution of capturing the dream-like, collective quality of the piece is to position the audience in a horse shoe around the outside of the school hall and have the performers inside that horse shoe (no need to use a stage at all) all the performers could be 'on stage' at all times – in their little groups according to which ever setting they are part of and they could sit when not performing.

During the performance therefore there could be 4 groups of children around the performance space:

1. Lucy, Mum, Super Burger Man/Woman
2. Eartha, the rain forest animals, trees
3. The South American Farmers
4. Peter, the Cows

Cast

Lucy, a girl in year 4

Lucy's Mum

Eartha, the rain forest guide

Animals of the rain forest

Jaguar

Monkeys

Macaw

Trees

Super Burger Man/Woman

Peter, A farmer from the UK

Speaking cows

Farmers, South America

Focus: Sustainable Diets - The impact food consumption has on the planet's resources.



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.



Dinner time.

All performers could be involved in this scene. They create different family groups. Everyone has a paper plate with pictures/images of the food they are eating. Other than the paper plates, no additional props needed.

They address the audience directly: they hold up their plates, showing the food:

They turn plate over to reveal image of Earth:

All: This is my plate
This is my planet
What am I going to eat?

A handful of children leave the stage (they will return as the rain forest)

A girl of eight, LUCY, stands in the middle of the stage with other groups – families – of children around her.

Child: Once there was a girl called Lucy

Mum: And she was a very fussy eater.

All: Dinner time Lucy!

Mum: It's shepherd's pie!

Lucy: Yuk! I want a burger.

Mum: It's chicken curry

Lucy: Burger!

Child: It's sausages and mash

Lucy: Still want a burger

Mum: Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding?

Lucy: Burger, burger, burger

Child: Then one night Lucy had a dream (that changed everything...)

Lucy yawns, stretches out. 'Sleeps'

All other performers yawn and 'sleep'

MUSIC: DAWN OVER THE AMAZON.MP3 INTO SFX: RAINFOREST ATMOS.MP3

Eartha, a field scientist, dressed all in greens and browns enters through a gap in the audience with a group of children dressed as animals. Some are all in greens and browns, others all in blues.

The group create a rain forest in Lucy's bedroom: some become trees (simply by stretching their arms out at particular angles and stretching out their fingers like 'leaves').

Others could create waterfalls with flowing blue material.

Other children are Macaws, Jaguars, Tamarins, Spider Monkeys and Capuchin monkeys. Any animals/insects of the Amazonian rain forest the children want to be – all these could be represented by simple masks or hats or, if there isn't time to make this, simply with movement and appropriate coloured clothing (e.g. Brown for the monkeys, green for the trees etc.)

The children could create the animal sounds and running water with their own voices. It's a beautiful place, full of wildlife.

Lucy wakes

Eartha: Welcome Lucy.

Lucy: Who are you?

Eartha: I am Eartha. I am the guide of the rain forest. Would you like to meet my friends?

Lucy: Yes please.

Lucy is lead around the 'rain forest' meeting all the beautiful creatures who live there. As Lucy meets the animals, they move about showing their distinct movements.

Jaguar: I am the Jaguar, beautiful and solitary.

Macaw: I'm the Macaw, I've lost all my friends.

Tamarin: I'm a Tamarin monkey, the size of a squirrel.

Spider Monkey: And I'm a spider monkey.

Tamarin: We can run and jump through the trees with ease.

Lucy: What an amazing place.

Eartha: The rain forests are important for everyone in the world.

Lucy: Really?

Eartha: Many products you use at home come from the rainforests

Jaguar: Chocolate

Tamarin: And spices

Monkey: Wellies for the rain

Macaw: And life-saving medicines

Eartha: The rain forest is like a fridge for the whole the world.

Lucy: I don't understand. How?

Eartha: Well, when you put something in the fridge, like a drink on a hot day, what happens to it?

Lucy: It gets cold.

Eartha: Exactly. Like the rain forests. They keep our planet healthy. Not too hot not too cold. But there is a problem.



Lucy: What's that?

They demonstrate

The group of South American farmers start a chant. It's quiet at first. A stage whisper.

MUSIC: SLASH AND BURN.MP3

This frightens the rain forest and all the animals who live there.

Farmers: Slash and burn
Slash and burn
Grow the soy
To feed the cows
Slash and burn
Slash and burn
We must make money
To feed our children
Slash and burn
Slash and burn –

Lucy: What's happening?

The farmers stand, their chant gets louder.

They all make their way to Lucy's bedroom and the rain forest. Cont. –

Farmers: Slash and burn
Slash and burn
Grow the soy,
Feed our children
Slash and burn
Slash and burn

The animals, trees and waterfall children flee scared.

Chaotic fast music could support this action if felt needed. Eartha leads Lucy to safety

A few children create a dense canopy of trees to shelter under.

Eartha: Quick, we can shelter under that tree.

Lucy: Why are they doing this?

Eartha: Because everyone in the world wants to eat more and more meat.

Tree: That's why we are not safe because you want to eat your beloved burger and won't try anything else!

SFX: EMERGENCY SIREN 2.MP3.

Super Burger Man whizzes round the performance space, dressed in a super hero's cape with a big burger emblem on the back. He could also wear an eye mask.

Super Burger Man: Did someone call?

Eartha: I don't think so. Who are you?



Super Burger Man: Super Burger Man Mam

Lucy: Super Burger man I love burgers

Super Burger Man: Come on I'll get you one.

Lucy: Thanks Supy Burger man.

Eartha: Wait, what about us?

Super Burger Man: You can have one too.

Eartha: No thank you.

Super Burger Man: You coming?

Lucy: Sorry Eartha. I'm really hungry.

Lucy follows Super Burger Man to see Peter, a UK farmer wearing wellies. He is feeding his field of mooing cows.

Super Burger Man: Peter, we need more burgers. This child is hungry!

Peter: But I can't produce any faster. I haven't got enough cows.

Super Burger Man: Then get more cows!

More cows come into the field. The cows don't have a lot of space. They all moo at the farmer - they are hungry.

SFX: BURPING COWS.WAV

They moo at everyone. Lucy and Super Burger Man are squashed by the cows. Lucy thinks it's funny, but Super Burger Man doesn't like them, much preferring to see cows as slabs of meat inside a bun, rather than in the animal state.

Super Burger Man: Feed these cows! They are hungry!

Peter: But I can't afford to buy any more food for them.

Super Burger Man rushes off, relieved that he has an excuse to get away from the cows.

Lucy: This all seems like such a lot of effort for one burger.

Peter: It is a lot of effort. These cows eat such a lot of food.

Cow 1: And you humans eat such a lot of meat. All the time. Every day.

Cow 2: These days everyone in the world wants to eat more and more.

Peter: A lot of red meat which isn't the healthiest option for either people

Cow 3: Or the planet.

Lucy: But it tastes so nice!

SFX: BURPING COWS.WAV

Cow 4: But all the time we're eating and digesting we breathe (*Burp*) out this dangerous gas called methane.

Lucy: Why is it dangerous?

Cow 1: Because it warms up the Earth.

Lucy: But don't we like it when it's warmer? Mum always moans when it's raining.

Cow 3: But it's getting toooo warm

Cow 4: And toooo warm is bad for the Earth.

Lucy: So all these new cows means a lot more methane?

Cows: (they nod) Mooooooo (*Burp*)

Lucy: So if we eat less meat, that's good for us and good for the planet?

Cows: Mooooooo (*burp*)

Lucy: So where is Super Burger Man going to get your cheap food from?

Cow 1: Somewhere very far away.

As the cows describe the place, the rain forest group return to the stage and they create the rain forest again right in front of Lucy's eyes. Eartha is with them looking very tired

Cow 1: Jaguars

Cow 2: Tamarins

Cow 3: Spider Monkeys

Cow 4: Capuchin monkeys

Cow 5: And beautiful birds like the endangered Macaw

Lucy: You mean the rain forest?!

Cows: (*nodding*) Moooooooooooo (*Burp*)

Lucy: But hold on - what about all the animals?

A group of poor South American farmers enter. Their feet are bare. They check the crops of soya beans (could be marked with a big sign in the 'ground' saying UK SOYA BEANS). Their farm is right on the edge of the rain forest.

Super Burger Man is with them, Lucy joins him.

Super Burger Man: Here in South America they grow soya beans and sell it very cheaply. Don't worry, you'll have your burger soon.

Lucy: Well you know, it really doesn't matter that much...



Super Burger Man: Of course it matters! It's my mission to feed the world burgers. Come with me.

Super Burger Man goes to the farmers.

Super Burger Man: Everyone wants to eat more and more meat. We need more cattle feed (soya beans)

Farmer 1: But we can't chop more of the rain forest down.

Super Burger Man: If you won't do it I'll find someone who will...

Farmer 2: But I need (the money I make from selling soya) to feed my family–

Super Burger Man: Then clear the forest and plant more soya beans. (I've got millions of cows that need feeding and millions and millions of hungry people who want to eat meat every day.)

Lucy: But they can't chop the rain forest down, what about all the animals...?

The farmers 'set fire' to the forest.

The 'Slash and Burn' approach, used to destroy the forest quickly, can be created with sound effects and movement:

MUSIC SLASH AND BURN.MP3

The children release coloured streams of paper representing 'the fire' spreading throughout the forest.

SFX: FIRE.MP3

The chant happens as the forest burns.

Children offstage could also join in with this chanting. Super Burger Man watches on.

Farmers:

We slash the trees
 We burn the ground
 The forest dies with ease.
 The animals scatter
 Scared and homeless
 We sow the little seeds.

The animals huddle around Lucy, whimpering and scared.

The farmers walk back across the destroyed forest, in a line and sow seeds across the space.

Sombre music

MUSIC: STILLNESS AND DESTRUCTION.MP3

Lucy: Why grow the soya beans all the way over here in South America? Why can't we grow it at home and leave the rain forest alone?

Eartha: You could. But it's a lot more expensive. (And people don't want to pay).

Monkey: It's much cheaper here to grow it on what once was the rain forest.

Jaguar: And there is not enough space to grow all the feed needed in the UK



- Lucy:** But what about all you animals who live here?
- Eartha:** They will all die
- Lucy:** But we can't let that happen.
- Super Burger Man:** But you'll get your burger! Now I must fly. Another successful mission for Super Burger Man!

Super Burger Man exits with a great fanfare

SFX: FANFARE.WAV

Eartha and the animals are very frail.

- Eartha:** You should go home now Lucy; it isn't safe here.
- Lucy:** But you're going to die. And it's my fault because I want to eat burgers?
- Eartha:** It's not just your fault. It's because everyone all over the world is eating more and more meat. It isn't good for them, or the planet.

*Everything then becomes very dark and still. Nothing is growing.
The children crumple – remain in tight little balls, as still as possible. Eartha is still.*

Music reflects the stillness and destruction of a beautiful place.

MUSIC: STILLNESS AND DESTRUCTION.MP3 REPRISE

Only Lucy is left standing, she sleeps

SFX: ALARM CLOCK ANALOGUE.MP3 OR ALARM CLOCK DIGITAL.MP3.

*Lucy's mum comes in to wake Lucy up.
Lucy mimes getting dressed etc. as she gets ready for school.*

- Mum:** What do you want for tea tonight? Burgers?
- Lucy:** No mum – no thanks mum. No burgers today
- Mum:** No burgers? Are you feeling alright?
- Lucy:** No meat at all actually mum. No sausages, no chicken nuggets, no curry, no pies, no roasts. No fish. Something different. Something veggie.
- Mum:** Veggie? You?!
- Lucy:** It's not good to eat meat all the time Mum. We should have it as a treat. Like once or twice a week.
- Mum:** I would make other things but you won't eat them. Then it's a waste.
- Lucy:** I will. I promise. All this meat I eat, it's not good for me or the planet.



Mum: So what do you want then?
Lucy: Um, how about a veggie burger?
Mum: Okay. Veggie burger it is.
Lucy: Great! Eartha will be happy.
Mum: Who?
Lucy: Never mind.

The rain forest slowly starts to regrow. Trees, waterfalls, animals and birds return....

MUSIC: DAWN OVER THE AMAZON.MP3 INTO RAINFOREST ATMOS.MP3

Eartha is smiling, becomes part of the rain forest.

Happy, vibrant dancey disco music.

MUSIC: I LOVE LEGUMES MP3

ALL cast enter.

Everyone celebrates eating plant based food and feeling happier and healthier with a movement/simple celebration dance

Super Burger Man enters as Super Veggie-Burger Man

Placards, signs or T shirts with the following slogans could be created (but this is an option if there's time) otherwise just go for Dayglo and disco accessories) It should be a fun finale

'I love Legumes!'

'Chickpeas Rock!'

'Veggie Burgers equals Happy Cows'

'Save the Rain Forest Eat Less meat!'

'Meat Free Monday'

'Beans 4ever!'

Super Veggie-Burger Man hands out plates with alternatives to meat on them to the other cast members.

Everyone holds these up to show the audience.

ALL: Here's your plate. Here's your planet. What are you going to eat?

The cast turn the plates of food images over to reveal a happy smiling planet....

MUSIC I LOVE LEGUMES MP3 REPRISE

The End