



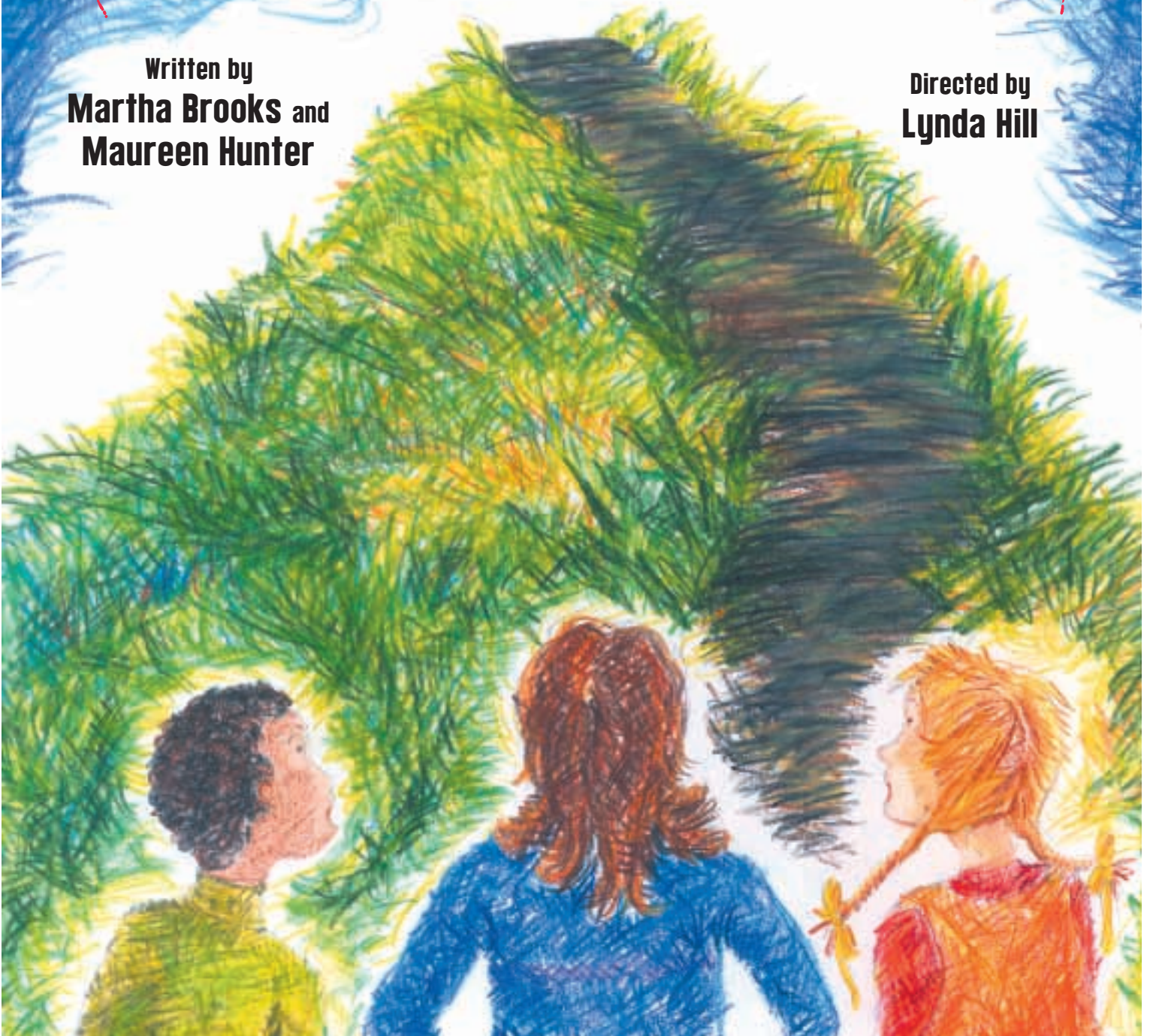
THEATRE DIRECT CANADA

PRESENTS

# I met a Bully @ the Hill

Written by  
**Martha Brooks and  
Maureen Hunter**

Directed by  
**Lynda Hill**



# I met a Bully on the Hill

## The Story

**I Met a Bully on the Hill**, tells the story of 8-year old J.J. (Jonquil Josephine) who has recently moved from the country to the city, leaving behind her beloved grandfather from whom she gets wise advice. She is befriended by David, a quiet boy, with a great sense of humour and a passion for the trumpet, and by tough, good-hearted Karla who doesn't let any one push her around.

Together the three friends attempt to deal with 9-year old Raymond, the school bully, who extorts money from J.J. each time she uses "his hill"- her most direct route to school. Finally, they decide to seek revenge. However, they discover that if they respond to Raymond in this way, they themselves become the bullies. Inspired by J.J.'s compassion, the confrontation is resolved peacefully. The three friends agree to stick together and to get help from adults to solve the problem of the "Bully on the Hill".

With humour and sensitivity, the playwrights explore the issue of bullying and its effect on the bully and on the targeted child. The inappropriate solutions attempted by the children, and the failed efforts of some adults to change the bully, demonstrate what a

complex and serious problem this is.

At the same time, the audience is left with the message that, by sticking together, with determination, empathy, and the right kind of intervention by adults, the bully can be stopped, and hopefully changed

## The Themes

**I Met a Bully on the Hill** explores:

- ◆ Relationships based on friendship and inclusion.

**I Met a Bully on the Hill** is a play about children and the relationships they form, which support and affirm them.

- ◆ Making friends and welcoming newcomers

The play looks at how children can make friends in a new situation and how they can welcome and include newcomers.

- ◆ Relationships between the bully and the target.

The play explores the causes and effects of negative relationships - those based on power imbalances manifested in bullying, which can leave children feeling hurt, alone, and terrorized.



## Reflections for the teacher

### About Bullying

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour that is hurtful and deliberate. Underlying most bullying behaviour is an abuse of personal power and a desire to intimidate and dominate others.

Bullying can be physical, verbal or relational. Often it takes very subtle forms and can be difficult to detect.

In the average elementary classroom, two to three children are being bullied. Some may avoid certain school situations for fear of being hurt, teased and, humiliated. Targeted children do not usually report bullying to adults for fear of retaliation and because they do not really believe help is available.

Both victims and bullies require adult help and support because there are serious and long lasting consequences for all the parties involved. Students may experience a drop in self-esteem, become withdrawn, isolated and depressed. Many experience significant physical symptoms and learning may be affected. Bullies are at risk for continuing difficulties in social relationships and for being convicted of anti-social offences as adults.

Many teachers are unsure about their role in addressing bullying problems and expect children to solve these problems on their own. It is essential for all school staff to increase their knowledge and skills, and to believe that adult intervention is both effective and necessary.

### About Targets (Victims)

Children who are the targets of bullies are usually selected because of personality type. They are often shy, anxious, insecure or lacking in social skills. This may be due to previous experiences of loss or trauma in their lives. In some cases, the failure to pick up social cues is the result of a learning disability. These students often have a difficult time integrating in social situations.

The cycle of bullying and victimization can best be addressed through a whole school approach, by working at the classroom level and by working individually with bullies and targeted children. Schools should access help through specialized school board personnel and published programs. A range of practical strategies are needed for preventing and responding to bullying situations. All students should learn to support and assist targeted children and to report incidences of bullying behaviour.

# Preparing for the Performance

In order to facilitate the expression of responses and feelings about the play, it is important to consider the following:

- ◆ Be sensitive to students who are being bullied or are bullying. This presentation may bring out strong emotion for these students, who may need support. This support may include:
  - Informing the school guidance counselor or social worker about this performance, and the possible need to support affected students
  - Informing parents of the subject matter of the play.
  - Seating vulnerable students close to a trusted adult during the performance.
- ◆ Create a positive classroom environment, where discussions have specific ground rules including:
  - No interruptions
  - Listen attentively
  - No put-downs
  - Students may pass on their turn to participate

## Pre-Performance Discussion and Activities

### Theatre/Dramatic Arts

Discuss the following with the students:

- ◆ For younger students: Think about the title of the play and suggest what they might see when they enter the performance space. (e.g. parts of the set, props, the technical equipment etc.).
- ◆ Ask students to name the jobs of people who worked to get the show ready (e.g. director, stage crew, carpenter, costume maker etc.)

Make a chart of theatre jobs.

- ◆ Ask students to list the differences between watching live theatre and a movie or television show. How does this affect their role as audience members? (stress the relationship between the actors and the audience)
- ◆ Make a poster of "Theatre Etiquette", or "How to be a Good Audience Member". (focus on the "do's" rather than the "don'ts")
- ◆ For older students: The actors in the play are adults, portraying children. What theatre techniques will they use to make us believe they are the age of their respective characters

The characters in the play are:

- ◆ J.J., and eight-year old girl from the country who is new to the school;
- ◆ David, a loner who plays the trumpet;
- ◆ Karla an 8-year old who has the nickname "Killer Karla";
- ◆ Raymond, nine-year old, the school bully, who is not very good at school work.

Describe what you think these characters are like and how they might act in the story.

- ◆ What are some of the elements used to create the "magic" of theatre (lights, sound effects, music etc.) Make a list, including a job description, for the various roles in a theatre company.

### Themes Explored in the Play

#### Discussion Questions

##### Friendship

1. What are the qualities of a good friend?
2. What things can you do to be a good friend?
3. How can you reach out to someone who is lonely or excluded?

##### Bullying

1. What is bullying and what kinds of things do bullies do to others?
2. Can you describe a situation in which you saw someone bullied?
3. How do people feel when they are bullied? What effect does it have on their lives?
4. What is a bystander or an ally? How can an ally support someone who is being bullied?
5. Why are people afraid to stop a bully?
6. What can you do if someone bullies you?
7. What can you do if you see someone being bullied?

#### What to watch for during the performance

To help the students focus during the performance, ask them to watch for the following:

1. This play is about J.J., a girl, who has just moved to a new school. What are some ways that she deals with this situation?
2. What is it about each of the characters in the play that makes them unique?
3. Who in the play gets bullied, and who does the bullying?
4. What are some of the ways that the characters deal with the bullying? Whose method is effective? Whose is not effective?
5. When do the friends in this play help and support each other? When do they not support each other?



Visit our website at  
[www.theatredirect.on.ca](http://www.theatredirect.on.ca)  
for more information  
and activities.

# Post Show Discussion and Activities

## Themes Explored in the Play



### Reflections on Friendship

*J.J.: ... "And that way we'll each have something that will always remind us that we made this promise. (Pause) And that we're friends. And that we'll stick up for each other".*

Children who make friends easily demonstrate flexibility in social situations. They are able to compromise and negotiate with others; recognize their contribution to a disagreement, and apologize when appropriate. These students have a very important role in supporting targeted children by reaching out to include them in all school related activities, and by reporting bullying behaviour to trusted adults.

In the play, **I Met a Bully on the Hill**, J.J., David and Karla explore values of friendship and supportive attitudes towards others in difficulty.

### Discussion Questions and Activities

Engage the children in discussion about the following:

1. Brainstorm a list of ways to make friends. Evaluate how the characters in the play used these friendship skills.
2. What advice would you offer the characters to help them make friends easier?
3. J.J. says that one way to make friends is to tell everyone everything about yourself. Do you agree with her idea? What would you choose to tell about yourself in this situation?
4. How does J.J. go about making friends? (e.g. she brings the caterpillar, approaches people)
5. At one point in the play, the children make a pact to stick together and seal it by exchanging important possessions. Think about a treasured possession you would exchange in this situation.



### Reflections on Bullying

*Karla (speaking about Raymond): What's he up to?*

*J.J.: Nothing.*

*David: Right-nothing. Nothing Number One: he calls you names. Nothing Number Two: he terrorizes you. Nothing Number Three:*

*he makes you sick at your stomach, so you never want to come to school...*

*J.J.: You mean there is a word for what he is doing to me?*

Children need to understand what bullying is and how it differs from other kinds of aggressive behaviour. Make them aware that bullying is learned behaviour. They also need to learn strategies for coping with bullying whether they are a targeted child or an ally.

### Discussion Questions and Activities

1. Recall an incident of bullying from the play. Why would this behaviour be considered bullying? (Bullies are people who like to dominate, be in charge and have power over others)
2. Describe the effect that bullying has on each of the characters (e.g. J.J. is afraid to go to school; Karla has become tough and mean; David has become a loner.)
3. Talk about the reasons for Raymond's bullying behaviour. (his sister bullies him at home, e.g. locks him in the closet). Extend the discussion to suggest where his sister may have learned to bully.
4. For older students: What advice about dealing with bullies have the children in the play received from the adults in their lives? How effective and appropriate are the solutions proposed by the different adults?
  - Karla's dad recommends physical aggression, which is always an inappropriate and dangerous solution.
  - The school principal punishes Raymond with extra homework, which increases his anger and need for revenge.
  - David's mother confronts Raymond's mother without knowing the family dynamics. The bullying escalates.
  - J.J.'s grandfather advises her to have compassion for Raymond, and to seek adult intervention, which are very important strategies to counteract bullying.
5. Under the headings of **physical, verbal and relational (social)**, create a list of all the examples of bullying behaviour, which appear in the play. Using the strategies provided below, have the children apply appropriate solutions for dealing with the bullying behaviours they have listed.

## Bully-Proofing Strategies

### If you are being bullied:

- ◆ Seek help from a trusted adult. Don't be intimidated into silence.
- ◆ Don't be discouraged. Keep telling until you get the help you need.
- ◆ Learn how to avoid bullying situations
- ◆ Seek out allies who can provide peer support.
- ◆ Learn ways to assert yourself in conflict situations.
- ◆ Encourage yourself with positive self-talk.

### If you see someone being bullied:

- ◆ Seek help from a trusted adult. Don't be intimidated into silence.
- ◆ Have empathy for the targeted child and engage in creative problem solving together.
- ◆ Reach out and include any children who are left out of conversations and activities.

**Remember:** Bullying behaviour is hurtful and unacceptable. Everyone should be treated with respect and included in school activities

## Theatre Elements to Explore

Discuss with the students the following aspects of the production:

### ◆ Set Design:

What aspects of the set add to the exploration of the themes of the play? (Theatre-in-the-round gives a feeling of inclusion; the hill is an obstacle while the bridge is a connection for the characters.)

### ◆ Who or what do the playground animals on the set represent?

### ◆ Sound/Music Design:

What kinds of sounds are used in the play?

How does the music and sound used in the production help create the mood of the play?

For older students: How do the sounds affect the characters?

How do these elements affect the audience?

When J.J., David and Karla get back at Raymond, how do the sound and staging help to emphasize how Raymond is feeling?

### ◆ Costume Design:

How do the design and colour of the costumes help portray the characters personalities?

### ◆ Acting/Directing

How do the voice, body language, and expressions of the actors make the audience believe that they are eight year olds?

What body language do the actors use to express the feelings of the characters? (e.g. when J.J. is sad? when Karla is angry?)

For older students: Can you recall any of the blocking during the play (where the actors stand and move in relationship to one another) that emphasized the conflict between the characters? (e.g. where does Raymond stand when he threatens J.J.?; where are the other three children standing when they get back at Raymond by embarrassing him?)

## Curriculum Connections

The presentation of I Met a Bully on the Hill can be an integral part of the classroom program. The students will demonstrate many of the curricular expectations appropriate for their grade as they:

- ◆ Prepare for the show,
- ◆ Watch the production, and
- ◆ Participate in the follow-up activities.



To help assess and evaluate these activities, Specific Expectations from the Ontario Curriculum are listed below each subject area activities.

## Language Arts Activities

*The process of writing, especially writing-in-role and poetic expression, allow the students to reflect on the thoughts and*

*feelings evoked by the play.*

*Because the topic of bullying stirs up powerful and conflicting responses, debating offers older students an opportunity to clarify their thinking through research and reflection.*

### Prose:

Invite the students to engage in the following writing activities:

- ◆ Write a letter telling why you chose that character to receive a "supportive friend" award
- ◆ For younger students: Pretend you are one of the characters in the play. From that characters point of view, write a diary entry, describing one of the incidents of bullying in the play.
- ◆ For older students: Use the technique of writing-in-role. From the perspective of one of the characters, writing in the future, describe the bullying that you experienced when you were younger. Be sure to include the effect the bullying has had on your life.



### Debating:

For older students:

- ◆ Students may participate in debates defending their point of view, using examples from the play, wherever possible.

Be it Resolved That:

- "Who you hang around with is who you are."
- "It is better to protect yourself than to get involved in a bullying situation."
- "Kids who are targets of bullying, bring the situation on themselves."

## Dramatic Arts Activities:

*Drama and role play help students to become more socially aware and to explore the issues of friendship and bullying from a variety of perspectives. Drama enables students to enter into another person's experience and feelings. Through drama they can "walk in the other's shoes"; become aware of non-verbal messages, such as body language and tone of voice. Drama permits people to explore alternative resolutions in a risk-free environment.*

*To be most effective, drama activities should lead to small or large group discussion about the feelings and experiences that emerge.*

### Create a role-on-the-wall:

- ◆ For each of the characters in the play, trace and cut out a life-size shape of a person from craft paper and tape it up on the wall.
  - For younger students: print words that describe the character within the cutout.
  - For older children: Have children print the quality that they most admire in the character somewhere within the outline on the wall.

## Post Show Activities, cont'd

- Use these cutouts as large puppets to act out and rework relevant scenes from the play (e.g. the revenge scene; the first meeting of Raymond and J.J.). To make the puppets, add tabs to the hands and feet of the cutout, so students can attach the “puppets” to their own hands and feet.
- Use the puppets to reenact a bullying scene but, this time, intervene. How did you feel? How effective was your intervention?



### Replay:

- ◆ In small groups: Role-play some of the bullying scenes from the play, but change them so that the characters are using supportive rather than power-over language.

### Hot-seat a Character:

One person sits in a chair at the front of group in “the Hot-seat”.

- For younger students: In role, interview one of the characters about their behaviour in the play. (Students are encouraged to ask questions that may have occurred to them during the performance.)
- For older students: In role, interview one of the characters mentioned, but not seen in the play (e.g. the grandfather, the principal, Raymond’s sister)

**Note:** Children can interview as themselves or in role as appropriate questioners, e.g. the principal, a reporter, etc.)

**Recommendation:** the first time you try this exercise, it would be best if the teacher played the character and have the children conduct the interview

For more student activities visit our website at  
[www.theatredirect.on.ca](http://www.theatredirect.on.ca)

## Monologue

For older students:

- Have the students imagine a situation in which they are deliberately excluded by a group of peers. Ask them to create a monologue that expresses what happened and how they felt at the time.
- Ask the students to replay the scene, saying what they wish they had said or done at the time. (refer students to the chart of Bully-Proofing Strategies listed above.)

**Note:** Accept negative language and behaviours, within reason, but use them as teachable moments.

## Visual Arts

*Creating through visual arts offers many opportunities to explore difficult feelings and subject matter. Imagery is a mental activity that pervades most forms of thought, feeling and conception and deepens the understanding and appreciation of any experience.*

*For more visual art activities visit [www.theatredirect.on.ca](http://www.theatredirect.on.ca)*

- Students may create a silhouette scene that depicts a dramatic moment from the play. The background colour should further evoke the emotion being portrayed.
- For older students: Abstract expression in a variety of media may be used to express emotions ranging from the joy of acceptance and belonging to the pain of being humiliated or excluded
- Each of the characters in the play responds differently to threats. If each were an animal, what would that animal be? What animal would you be?  
Draw a scene from the play, in which all the characters are represented as animals. Add your animal character to the scene.



# Learning Expectations from Ontario Curriculum Guidelines

The following are some of the Overall and Specific Expectations addressed in the Study Guide Discussions and Activities:

## Drama/Dance

### Grades 1-3

- Identify ways in which the voice and body can be used to convey thoughts and feelings when role-playing (e.g., changing tone of voice and volume; changing speed or rhythm of movement).
- Communicate their responses to a variety of stimuli by using elements of drama and dance (e.g., role-playing, creative movement, puppet shows)
- Describe ways in which the experiences of characters in simple performances relate to their own experiences.

### Grades 4-6

- Demonstrate understanding of ways of sustaining the appropriate voice or character (e.g., through language, gestures, body movements) when speaking or writing in role for different purposes.

- Recognize and name characteristics of drama and dance performances that incorporate technology, visual art, music, and popular media to create artistic effects.
- Evaluate drama and dance performances, with reference to their own experiences in daily life.

## Language Arts/Writing

### Grades 1-3

- Communicate ideas and information for specific purposes and to specific audiences. (letters, simple book reports).
- Write materials that show a growing ability to express their points of view and to reflect on their own experiences.

### Grades 4-6

- Communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes (to inform, to persuade, to explain) and to specific audiences (e.g., write the instructions for building an electrical circuit for an audience unfamiliar with the technical terminology).

## Learning Expectations, cont'd

- Communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes (to inform, to persuade, to explain) and to specific audiences (writing-in-role to characters in a play, researching material for a debate).

## Language Arts/Oral and Visual Communication

### Grades 1-3

- Retell stories, demonstrating an understanding of basic story structure and including information about characters, action, and story ending.
- View, read, and listen to media works that convey messages or information and talk about what they have learned.

### Grades 4-6

- Express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately.
- Identify the main types of media works and the most characteristic techniques used in them (talk about the effects of lighting, sound, costumes in plays).

## Health and Physical Education

### Grades 1-3



- Use a problem-solving process to identify ways of obtaining support for personal safety in the home, school, and community.
- Identify examples of real and fictional violence (e.g., schoolyard fights, cartoons, movies).

### Grades 4-6

- Identify the responsibilities associated with caring for themselves and others (e.g., while babysitting).
- Describe and respond appropriately to potentially violent situations relevant to themselves (e.g., threats, harassment, violence in the media).

## Guidance and Career Education (Choices into Action)

### Grades 1-6

- Demonstrate their understanding of socially acceptable responses to a variety of situations in school.
- Identify the variety of characteristics, skills, competencies, qualities, and talents of others.
- Demonstrate their understanding of using skills to build positive relationships at school.
- Demonstrate their understanding of "being a responsible citizen" in the classroom and the school.

For more teacher information and student activities visit our website at [www.theatredirect.on.ca](http://www.theatredirect.on.ca)



## Bullying Prevention Resources

### Web Sites on Bullying Awareness

[www.bullybeware.com](http://www.bullybeware.com)  
[www.bullying.org](http://www.bullying.org)  
[www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca](http://www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca)

### Books for Educators

Garrity, C., Jens, K., Porter, W., Sager, N., & Short-Camilli, C. 1994.

**Bullyproofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools.** Colorado: Sopris West.

Hoover, John H. and Oliver, Ron. 1996. **The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers and Counsellors.** Bloomington, Indiana: National Education Service.

Rigby, Ken. 2001. **Stop The Bullying: A Handbook For Teachers.** Markham, Ont. Pembroke Publishers, (ISBN 1-55138-137-0)

### Fiction for Children

Estes, Eleanor. 1944. **The Hundred Dresses.** New York: Harcourt Brace and Company.  
(ISBN 0-15-642350-2) Grade: 4/5

Moss, Marissa. 1998. **Amelia Takes Command.** Berkeley, California: Tricycle Press.  
(ISBN 1-883672-70-8) Grade: 3/4/5/6/7

Passen, Lisa. 1991. **Fat, Fat Rose Marie.** New York: Henry Holt and Company.  
(ISBN 0-8050-1653-8) Grade: 2/3/4/5

Shreve, Susan. 1997. **Joshua T. Bates in Trouble Again.** Toronto: Random House of Canada Ltd. (ISBN 0-679-89263-X) Grade: 4/5/6/7

### Non-Fiction for Children

Sanders, Pete. 1996. **Bullying (What Do You Know About).** Connecticut: Aladdin Books Ltd.

Discusses bullying, why it occurs, and how it can be dealt with.

Grade: 5/6/7

Use: read aloud and discuss or use as a resource book for students

Solomon, Yvette. 1994. **Bullying (Dealing With series).** Britain: Wayland Publishers.

Discusses bullying, why it occurs, and how it can be dealt with.

Grade: 4/5/6

Webster-Doyle, Terrance. 1991. **Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me? A Guide to Handling Bullies for Young People.** Middlebury, Vermont: Atrium Society. (ISBN 0-942941-22-5) Grade: 6/7

### Videos

**Real Kids: What We Learned About Bullying**

Distributed by Sunburst Communications 1 800 4311934

Year: 2000, Length: 16 min

Appropriate for Grades 2 - 5

**Don't Pick on Me, Part 1 The Bully, Part 2 The Silent Treatment**

Distributed by Sunburst Communications 1800431 1934

Year: 1993, Length: 21 min

Appropriate for Grades 5 - 8

**How I Learned Not To Be Bullied**

Distributed by Sunburst Communications 1 800 431 1934

Year: 1996, Length: 16 min

Appropriate for Grades 2 - 4

# I met a Bully on the Hill

Written by Martha Brooks and Maureen Hunter

Directed by Lynda Hill

Original Set, Props and Costumes by Kelly Wolf

Original Music and Sound Design by Justin Haynes

## Cast in order of appearance:

J.J. .... Nicky Phillips  
David ..... Jefferson Guzman  
Raymond ..... James Duncan  
Karla ..... Miranda Edwards

Stage Manager: ..... Annie McWhinnie  
Associate Director: ..... Marie Beath Badian\*  
Production Manager: ..... Beth Brown  
Set and Props Construction: ..... Paragon Theme and Prop  
Fabrication Ltd.

\* provided through Theatre Ontario's Professional Theatre Training Program

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Elaine Slavens, Consultant of Guidance Social/Personal Skills for TDSB  
Monica Zimmermann, Guidance Counselor and Co-chair of the Anti-bullying  
Committee of TCDSB  
Kelly Wolf, Illustrations

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Education Consultant: Pat McCarthy  
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Manager of Development & Outreach: Steve Hartwell  
Manager of Touring & Education Services: Samara Nicholds  
Associate Artistic Director: Marie Beath Badian  
Playwright in Residence: Marjorie Chan

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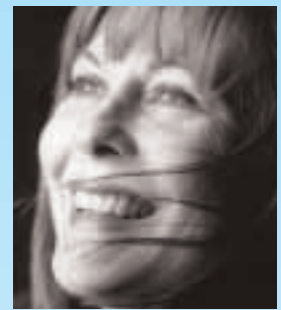
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Actors' Equity Association (CAEA), Associated Designers of Canada (ADC) and  
Playwrights Guild of Canada.*

**Martha Brooks** recently received the Governor General's Award for her young adult novel, "True Confessions of a Heartless Girl." She is, as well, recipient of the Mr. Christie's Book Award, the Vicky Metcalf Award, the Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor Award, and the Canadian Library Association's Young Adult Book Award for her titles, "Being With Henry", "Paradise Cafe and Other Stories," and "Bone Dance." In 2001, Theatre Direct Canada presented a new production of her play "Andrew's Tree," and this year she and her friend, Maureen Hunter, are delighted that their play, "I Met A Bully on the Hill," has returned for another production. Martha is also a jazz singer. She made her Toronto debut at The Top O' The Senator, and performed in 2003 with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and the Reykjavik Jazz Festival in Iceland. Her CD "Change of Heart," won the 2002 Prairie Music Award for Outstanding Jazz Recording.



**Maureen Hunter** is one of Canada's most successful playwrights. Her work has been produced extensively on Canada's major stages, as well as in Britain and the U.S. and on BBC and CBC Radio. It has been nominated for two Governor General's Awards and two Dora Mavor Moore Awards (Outstanding New Play). Her newest play, Vinci, premiered in 2002 at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, in co-production with Manitoba Arts Centre. It has since been produced at the Centaur in Montreal and at CanStage in Toronto. Other plays include Transit of Venus, Atlantis, Footprints on the Moon and Beautiful Lake Winnipeg. Maureen is delighted that Theatre Direct Canada is once again producing I Met a Bully on the Hill, a play which was a joy to co-write with her good friend Martha Brooks.



## I Met a Bully on the Hill was

*Originally Commissioned and Produced by Prairie Theatre Exchange.*

## Theatre Direct Canada Mission Statement

Our aim is to engage young people through compelling, inventive and uncompromising theatre. Our major area of focus is the development, production and presentation of plays which provoke, challenge, question, and empower our audience. The thematic focus extends beyond "social issues" yet it consistently reflects a sincere and sophisticated relationship between the audience and the work.



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