

**EXCERPT**

**RUBY AND MILLIE**  
&  
**THE DYING CUCUMBERS**  
by Tara Meddaugh



a 10-minute play

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## EXCERPT

For the complete play, [visit here:](#)

[www.tameddaugh.com/ruby-and-millie-and-the-dying-cucumbers](http://www.tameddaugh.com/ruby-and-millie-and-the-dying-cucumbers)

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**EXCERPT**

*Ruby and Millie and the Dying Cucumbers* was first performed as part of Tara Meddaugh's [The Victory Garden Plays](#) on February 17, 2019, in New Rochelle, NY with the following cast:

Ruby.....Abigail Grizzle/Ava Pursel  
Millie.....Emma Kathryn

Directed by Billie Tucker

Produced by Tutti Bravi Productions, Inc.

## **EXCERPT**

**Ruby and Millie  
&  
The Dying Cucumbers**

a ten-minute play  
from

[The Victory Garden Plays](#)

by Tara Meddaugh

**EXCERPT**

***Ruby and Millie & The Dying Cucumbers***

Character Breakdown

(2 female)

RUBY                      A girl of around 7-12 years old.

MILLIE                    A girl of around 14-20 years old.

Setting

An apartment building rooftop in White Plains, NY (suburbs of NYC). Night-time. There are crates of dirt with vegetables, small fruits and herbs growing. The set may be minimal, merely an impression of location.

Time

1943, during WW2. Summer.

**\*See playwright and production notes**, on page 11 in excerpt, for more information on the time period, setting, victory gardens, and [\*The Victory Garden Plays\*](#), from which this 10-minute piece comes.

**EXCERPT**

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AT RISE: Summer of 1943, on an apartment building rooftop in White Plains, NY. Night time. There are crates of dirt with vegetables, small fruits and herbs growing. RUBY, a girl of about 9 years old, sings to the plants *The Andrew Sisters* song, “Shoo-Shoo Baby,” and might even dance around a little bit.

RUBY

(sings)

*“Shoo, shoo, shoo baby. Shoo, shoo, shoo baby. Bye, bye, bye baby. Do-dah do-day. Your papa’s off to the...”*

Oh, look at you, my darling. The cutest cucumber leaves in the whole wide world, I’d say!

(sings)

*“Off to the seventh seas! Don’t cry baby. Don’t sigh baby. Bye, bye, bye baby.”*

You have such pretty little spots, doncha? Keep growing. Keep growing for your mama. I’m your mama, aren’t I? I may look like a child, but I’m much more than that. You know that, doncha? I never forget about you and I never will! I’ll sneak you inside tonight if it’s too cold so you’ll be just perfect for Papa. Millie won’t see. Is it too cold for you? Little one? Are you getting a chill? Here. I’ll breathe on you. My “carbon dioxide.”

(breathes a “huff” onto the plant.)

You like that, right? Papa told me that you would. You’re his little cucumbers too. Now, you breathe on me.

(sticks her mouth right next to the plant again and breathes in deeply)

Mm! The best oxygen in all of White Plains! You want another gulp of mine?

(breathes out onto the plant again)

There. I’m gonna do this for you every night from now on, just like Papa says!

(holds onto her tiny pot. Sings)

*“Do-dah do-day. When I come back—”*

(MILLIE, around 17, and Ruby’s older sister, dashes in.)

(RUBY is startled and almost drops the pot.)

MILLIE

There you are!

RUBY

You almost made me drop it, Millie!

MILLIE

I was walking all over Main Street!

RUBY

You shoulda looked up here on the roof first.

MILLIE

I should have?

RUBY

Well, that's where I am.

MILLIE

Don't you talk wise to me. Last I knew, you were outside skipping rope with those younger girls.

RUBY

Don't get yourself in such a tizzy.

MILLIE

Well, of course I'm in a tizzy! I didn't know if you were dead, Ruby!

RUBY

Well, I'm not. Everything's in the groove.  
(walks around to check on the plants)

MILLIE

Oh, look at you—calm and collected.

RUBY

You shouldn't yell around the vegetables.

MILLIE

You shouldn't be up here with the vegetables at this hour!

RUBY

They don't like loud voices.

MILLIE

They're not alive, Ruby.



RUBY

They are alive! Don't you understand Science?

MILLIE

You get my drift. They don't have feelings.

RUBY

Papa wrote me that you have to talk to them every night. Treat them nice. Or they won't grow.

MILLIE

Well, Papa wrote me you should go to bed when it gets dark.

RUBY

He did not!

MILLIE

Look, you've talked to them enough. I have to get up early for work tomorrow and can't have circles under my eyes on your account!

(grabs Ruby's arm)

RUBY

Don't pull me!

MILLIE

Then stop fighting me!

RUBY

If you make me drop my cucumber before Papa sees it, I'll hate you forever!

MILLIE

So dramatic, Ruby. You're the next Bette Davis.

RUBY

Go without me! I can come back on my own! I know how to go down the stairs.

MILLIE

I'm not leaving you on the rooftop! It's late! Mama would—

RUBY

Mama is still awake.

MILLIE

Mama is working. That's different.

(MILLIE pulls her. RUBY still holds the cucumber plant in the pot.)

RUBY

Well, I'm working too! Giving the plants company helps them breathe! Papa said so! Didn't you read his letter today? "I'm sure you have the best Victory Garden in all of the United States of America, my Ruby!" he wrote to me. Didn't you read?

MILLIE

I read it.

RUBY

Papa said my garden is feeding us in the city, so we can save the rest of the food to send to the soldiers!

(MILLIE stops pulling her)

MILLIE

It is a good thing you're doing, with the garden, but—

RUBY

So how are the soldiers gonna have enough food to give them strength if my plants all wilt because I don't talk to them tonight? And how are the soldiers gonna set Papa free if they don't have their strength?

MILLIE

Ruby...

RUBY

This is my job. I'm gonna do this every night now. I gotta help with the war.  
(she shakes Millie's grip off her arm)

Until Papa comes back.

(she takes a step backwards away from Millie and stares her down)

**END OF EXCERPT**

For the complete play, [visit here:](#)

[www.tameddaugh.com/ruby-and-millie-and-the-dying-cucumbers](http://www.tameddaugh.com/ruby-and-millie-and-the-dying-cucumbers)

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Ruby and Millie and the Dying Cucumbers* is a 10-minute play which is also part of a full-length piece entitled, [The Victory Garden Plays](http://www.tameddaugh.com/the-victory-garden-plays). [The Victory Garden Plays](http://www.tameddaugh.com/the-victory-garden-plays) is comprised of 5 10-minute plays and 2 monologue plays. You may find that full-length piece here:

[www.tameddaugh.com/the-victory-garden-plays](http://www.tameddaugh.com/the-victory-garden-plays)

## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

In the early 1940s, "Victory Gardens" sprang up around the US in an effort for Americans at home to lend their support to armed forces and allies fighting overseas in WWII. These gardens of vegetables and fruits, grown anywhere from city rooftops and vacant lots to baseball fields and school yards, contributed an estimated 9-10 million tons of produce to Americans on the homeland, making up around 40% of all fruits and vegetables eaten in the US by 1942. By consuming produce grown within their own communities, not only were Americans able to supplement their rations and eat better, but more commercially grown and canned produce was now freed up to be shipped to the troops overseas. Westchester County in New York State had a very successful Victory Garden program, where in Pelham alone, there were around 1000 Victory Gardens and the community produced 88 tons of produce in 1943. When the war ended, so did the push for community gardens which were often left abandoned as the baby boom era began and neighborhoods returned to more pre-war structures.

When I began researching Victory Gardens as the backdrop for a play, I was drawn in by their momentum of purpose, success, loss and new beginnings. While the gardens went through these phases, so too did the personal lives of their caretakers during the war. From children to newlyweds, from widows to fathers—a Victory Garden could embody empowerment, guilt, connection, death. In this play, I give voice to seven short stories, chronicling a moment in time of men, women and children on the Homefront during WWII.

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Tara's plays have been presented by theater companies such as Fusion Theatre, Mosaic Theater Company of DC, The Directors Company, Le Petit Theatre de Terrebonne, Theatre One, Tutti Bravi Productions, Westchester Collaborative Theater, Possibilities Theater, Tagragg Productions, One Armed Man, Oracle Theatre, Inc, The Acme Theatre Company, The Harlequin Players, Woman Seeking..., and numerous schools, universities and colleges including Gardner-Webb, Prince Williams, and Colgate. Her work has showcased at festivals such as the Artists of Tomorrow Festival in NYC, The Bangkok Community Theatre Fringe Festival, the Pittsburgh New Works Series and the Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Alaska. Tens of thousands of teachers, actors and students world-wide have utilized her monologues for competitions, course material, auditions, performances, and showcases. Tara has taught Playwriting at Carnegie Mellon, the Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and for The Westport Country Playhouse, and she has led Creative Dramatics Workshops for children in underserved areas throughout New York and New Jersey. Additionally, she has script consulted on several animation and VR projects. Tara's work has been published by YouthPLAYS, Smith & Kraus, Oxford Press South Africa, the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), Limelight Editions/Applause Acting Series, The Hunger Journal, Meriweather Publishing, Applause Theatre & Cinema, Performer Stuff and Ace-Your-Audition. She is a recipient of the Shubert Fellowship in Dramatic Writing, the Sloan Screenwriting Fellowship, the New Works for Young Women [Actors] Award, The Write Stuff Award, and is a member of the Dramatist's Guild. Tara holds her MFA in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University.

For more information about Tara Meddaugh or her work,  
visit her website at [www.tameddaugh.com](http://www.tameddaugh.com).

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