

EXTRACT

SPEAK UP!

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[australianplays.org]

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NOTE ON THE SCRIPT

This is an unedited manuscript as provided to us by the playwright. We distribute it in good faith; however it may contain layout inconsistencies or typographic errors.

To

You know who and
You know why
Thank you for always
Being there for me

And

To my wonderful Dad
Thank you for looking in Nan's suitcase
For your inspiring love of freedom and
For always encouraging me
To do what I love!

INTRODUCTION

Speak Up! has been successfully and professionally performed to thousands of children as part of the Queensland Art Council's On Tour in Schools program.

From the rainforests of Queensland's Daintree to the Outback and the shores of the Gold Coast, this play is a hit!

This exciting, engaging and educational play teaches children to stand up to bullying, not to be afraid and to report actions that harm themselves and others. The play is interactive and can be performed with a cast of two actors, or extended to make a cast of six.

Exploring the universal themes of bullying, friendship and courage, the play allows children to explore their own capacity to make a positive difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

With a simple set, the play can be performed by professional companies with a cast of two and minimum staging requirements or performed by school children themselves. When performed professionally, the play utilises Axtell's Hands Free Magic Drawing board purchased from Axtell Expressions in California. Alternatively, you could also use their Magic Drawing Board. See www.axtell.com. For children wanting to perform this play, the board can easily be replaced by having SALLY draw a picture of a bully onto cardboard and another child speaking the EX-BULLY'S lines off-stage.

A quick note about Kevin and Kevin's cubby. His cubby is a large fridge box made of cardboard. It looks like a large mail box and this is how Kevin communicates with the world. He does not talk. Instead, he communicates by sending written messages out of the box. There is one 'mail box' opening at the front of the cubby, facing the audience. Another is at the side of the cubby, facing stage right. And one small window, where he uses his trash grabber to collect things from his mum or to communicate, unseen, with the audience.

He also communicates by jolting the box up and down. One jolt for "no", two jolts for "yes". To move the box from the inside, attach rope handles to each side of the box from within. The actor playing Kevin can sit on a chair inside the box and jolt the box up and down easily from within.

If I can help you with anything to do with the play, please contact me. I would love to hear from you.

CHARACTERS

MUM
KEVIN
LILY
SALLY
EX-BULLY
GAME SHOW HOST 1
GAME SHOW HOST 2
CHILDREN FROM AUDIENCE

To perform the play with two actors, doubling can occur as follows:

MUM/ LILY / SALLY/ GAME SHOW HOST 1

KEVIN/ EX-BULLY/ GAME SHOW HOST 2

For children to perform the play, there are many opportunities for different roles. Rather than performing Speak Up! as an interactive play, with audience participation and volunteers, the following roles can just be learnt and performed. The play lends itself to either approach.

MUM
KEVIN
LILY
SALLY
EX-BULLY
GAME SHOW HOST 1
GAME SHOW HOST 2
BOY/GIRL 1
BOY/GIRL 2
BOY/GIRL 3
CHILD 1
CHILD 2
CHILD 3
CHILD 4
CHILD 5
CHILD 6
GAME SHOW CONTESTANT 1
GAME SHOW CONTESTANT 2
GAME SHOW CONTESTANT 3
GAME SHOW CONTESTANT 4

KEVIN is a young boy who is being bullied at school. He hides in a handmade cubby, made out of a cardboard fridge box.

The play takes place in KEVIN'S backyard. A small backyard with a portable clothes line in the area stage right. A small children's table and four chairs are centre stage. KEVIN'S cubby is in the area stage left. A magic drawing board is set up on the children's table along with a table lamp and an additional camping chair in between the box and the table.

KEVIN is hiding out in his cubby.

MUM: *(Calling off stage)...Kevin...brekkie, Kev... (Enters stage)*
Oh, Kevin. Come on, you can't stay in there all day. Do you want to go to the beach? *(Box jolts once)* Come on, it's a beautiful day! *(Box jolts once)* Do you want some brekkie? I've made some toast. *(Box jolts twice)* Okay, I'll get you some brekkie.

(MUM exits. KEVIN flashes a torch through the front opening of the box and MUM re-enters with two pieces of toast and a small juice container)

MUM: Here we go.

(MUM passes toast through side opening in box and KEVIN takes toast from inside the box)

I can't pass this through *(MUM holds up juice)* so you're going to have to come out and get it okay?

(KEVIN opens the front window in the cubby, extends a trash grabber through it and makes a grabbing action with it. MUM places the juice in the jaws of the grabber and KEVIN pulls the grabber and juice back into the box and closes the window)

MUM: Come on Kevin. Sweetheart, I can't help you if you don't tell me what's wrong. Are you sure you don't want to go to the beach? *(Box jolts once)* Okay then.

(MUM goes to far stage right, takes out her mobile phone from her pocket and phones her friend)

MUM: Hey Helen. No, we can't go. *(Whispers now)* Hey, he still won't come out. Yeah. No, he won't say anything. No, he's not sick. Just sad. I don't know, he won't tell me. No, it's okay. We'll work it out. It's alright. Okay. Have a great weekend, sorry I can't go to the beach with you. Yeah, we'll try.

(MUM exits. KEVIN opens the front window and puts a racoon puppet in the window, puppet waves to the audience, bows, swirls around and around until he hears MUM then KEVIN quickly shuts the window again. MUM re-enters with a washing basket and washing)

MUM: Wanna help me with the washing?

(Box jolts box once. MUM begins to hang washing on the line)

MUM: You know, Kevin, it's okay to talk about what's wrong.

(Box jolts once)

Did something happen at school? You know, Mr. B said you've been going really well.

(KEVIN places a hand written note through the front opening. MUM crosses to stage left, takes the note and reads it)

MUM: *(Reading)* I'm different. Kevin, we're all different. That's how we're supposed to be. That's the great thing about life. Come on.

(MUM returns to washing line. KEVIN sends another note through the front opening. MUM crosses again, takes the note and reads it)

MUM: I look different. Kevin, we're meant to look different. That's how we're *meant* to look - different. Imagine if everybody all looked the same, how would we find each other? How would we know who was who? Huh? Come on Kevin, what's up?

(Box moves once. MUM's mobile phone rings)

MUM: Hello. Oh hello Lily. Yeah, sure sweetheart, I'll just

get him for you. That's okay. *(MUM walks over to box)*
Kevin, it's for you. It's Lily.

(MUM passes the phone through the side opening to KEVIN. He throws the phone back out. It hits the floor)

MUM: Kevin! *(MUM picks up the phone)* I'm sorry Lily. I don't know what's wrong with him... Yep, come on over. That's okay. See you then. *(To KEVIN)* Kevin, you could have wrecked my phone! What's wrong with you? Lily's your friend.

(Box jolts once)

Come on, you guys have been friends for ages. Well, I just told her she could come over.

(Box jolts once. Another note appears from the front opening. MUM takes it and reads it)

MUM: She's not my friend anymore? Well, I'm sorry sweetheart but you're going to have to tell her yourself when she comes over. I'll be inside if you need me.

(MUM exits. LILY enters. KEVIN opens the small front window and a periscope appears looking around at audience members. The periscope disappears when he hears MUM talking to LILY)

MUM: *(Offstage)* Oh, hi Lily. He's just out near the clothesline.

LILY: Thanks Mrs. Moore.

(LILY skips onto the stage and over to the box)

Hey Kevin, what are you doing in there? Want to come and play? Mum just bought me a new game. She said I couldn't bring it over, but if you wanna come over, it'd be fine. Wanna?

(Box jolts once)

Come on Kevin, I really want to show you my new game!

(Box jolts once)

(A note appears out of the front opening. LILY takes note and reads it)

LILY: *(Reading)* I'm not your friend anymore! *(Laughs)* Ha! *(She hits the box playfully)* You're so funny, come on Kevin, let's go play.

(Box jolts once)

(KEVIN delivers another note out of the front opening)

(Reading) Friends report bullies. Oh, Kevin, I couldn't report it, you heard what Ben said. If anyone tells, he's gonna hurt us. Oh come on, just forget about it.

(KEVIN delivers another note out of the front opening. LILY takes it)

LILY : *(Reading)* Friends don't lie. Oh Kevin, I didn't mean to lie. When Mr. B asked me if I saw what happened, I just said no because I didn't want Ben to hurt me. I'm not the only one who is scared of him you know. Everybody is, it's not just me. *(She has an idea)* I know! On Monday I'll go tell Mr. B what happened, okay?

(Box jolts once)

(In frustration) Well, forget about it then, see you later.

(LILY throws the notes on the ground then exits. KEVIN delivers one last note but LILY does not see it)

(KEVIN makes the racoon puppet appear in the front window. It is holding the juice container. As if aiming for a basketball hoop, it makes a one...two...three...movement and throws the juice container out onto the floor)

(MUM enters)

MUM: *(Picking up the juice container and seeing the notes on the floor)*

Kevin, you could have at least put all this in the bin.

(MUM picks up one of the notes and reads it)

I hate bullies? Kevin, did I ever tell you what happened to me once, when I was a kid?

(Box jolts once)

When I was at school, there was this girl called Paula Beams and she was really mean to me. And one time she got all her friends to pick on me and be mean to me and they even used to steal and hide my bag. And I was so scared that I didn't know what to do. And one day I went home and grandpa asked me what was wrong, but I wouldn't tell. And you know what he said? He said "You know, when you tell someone your problem the problem seems so much smaller, but when you don't tell someone your problem, it can seem so big that you think that you can't do anything about it and neither can anyone else. But that's not true!" So grandpa said "I think you should go to school and I think you should tell this girl to stop it and if she doesn't stop it, you should tell your teacher." And you know what? I did go to school and I did tell my teacher and that girl stopped bullying me. Kevin?

(Night music starts. MUM looks up to sky, turns on table lamp)

Hey, come on, it's getting dark now, you can't stay in there all night.

(MUM crosses to clothes line and takes clothes off the line)

Kevin?

(KEVIN passes another note out of the front window)

MUM: *(Reading)* You can't help me. Leave me alone.



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