TRY IT, YOU’LL LIKE IT

A one act play
by Nancy M. Harris

Cast of characters

Narrator  Tomato 1  Carrot 1  Orange
Mrs. Todd  Tomato 2  Carrot 2  Peach
Mitch  Onion  Lettuce  Green
Madaline  Corn 1  Peanut  grapes
Mr. Todd  Corn 2  Almond
Berry God-Mother  Peas  Walnut  Purple
One Potato  Beans  Apple 1  grapes
Two Potato  Spinach  Apple 2  Rice

SCENE I

NARRATOR: This story takes place in the home of the Todd family. Mrs. Todd is in the kitchen preparing the evening meal for her family. In the family room, Mr. Todd is watching television with their children, Mitch and Madaline.

MRS. TODD: Dinner will be ready in five minutes. By the time you wash your hands, the food will be on the table.

MITCH: But Mom, we’re right in the middle of our program.

MRS. TODD: How long before it’s over?

MADALINE: About ten minutes.

MRS. TODD: Fine, but hurry so the vegetables won’t get cold.

MITCH (to Madaline): Maybe if we wait long enough the vegetables will be too cold to eat at all!

MADALINE: You wish...

MR. TODD: All right, you two. Finish this show and wash up. I’ll see if I can help your mother. (Father walks into the kitchen.) It smells good in here. Can I help with anything?
MRS. TODD: Thank you, but I think everything is ready. I'm just waiting for Mitch and Madaline. You can help me try to get Mitch to eat his vegetables. He only wants to eat hot dogs, hamburgers, and French fries. I've made carrots and baked potatoes. See if you can get him to at least try them.

MR. TODD: Don't worry. I remember when I was young. My mother couldn't get me to eat my vegetables, either. Look at me now. I eat everything.

MRS. TODD: Oh, I know you're right, but Mitch is so active and I just want him to eat foods that will help him grow and stay healthy.

MADALINE (from the family room): Mitch, it's over now, so let's go eat.

MITCH: What is Mom going to try to get me to eat tonight?

(Children walk into kitchen)

MRS. TODD: What show were you watching?

MITCH: Oh, we were just watching some cartoons. What's for dinner?

MRS. TODD: Salad, chicken, potatoes, and carrots.

MITCH: French fries...good!

MRS. TODD: No, baked potatoes. I know you like French fries, but baked potatoes really are better for you.

MITCH: Mom, you know I don't like baked potatoes. They're so...so...dry!

(The family sits down around the table and starts passing the food around.)

MRS. TODD: (To Mitch) Try these. They're good for your eyes.

(sarcastically) All the better to help you watch TV.
MR. TODD: Mitch, your mother has made a fine meal. Now stop complaining. Look at your sister. She's eating.

MITCH: I can't eat all of this stuff!

MR. TODD: Stuff, is it? Mitch, it sounds like you've made your decision. Go to your room.

SCENE II

NARRATOR: Mitch was sent to his room. At first, it was fun because he felt he had won. He'd gotten his way. He didn't have to eat and he could play with anything he wanted. Besides...his sister wasn't there to bother him.

MITCH: (In bed, talking to a stuffed animal) I'll bet you don't like baked potato and carrots, either, do you? (He moves the animals head to indicate 'no') You're lucky. No one tells you what to eat. I'm hungry. Oh well, I can't tell Mom and Dad that I'm hungry or they'll tell me I had my chance.

NARRATOR: Mitch read his favorite book for a while and then turned off the light and went to sleep.

(The Berry God-Mother appears in the room, waving her wand.)

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Mitchy Eenie, Mitchy Benie, Mitchy taddle-addle Eenie, Mitchy double O, Silly Billy, Crack, creen, crown, Come a jing dee O.

MITCH: (Waking up to see the Berry God-Mother) Who are you?

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: I am your Berry God-Mother and I am here to tell you that you need to learn more about some of the food your mother is asking you to eat. Have you ever heard the saying, "You are what you eat?" It means if you eat good food, you will have a good chance to have a good
health body. I have asked some of my friends to come and talk to you. First of all, I think you should meet my friends, One Potato and Two Potato.

**ONE POTATO:** (chanting) One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Hello, Mitch. I hear that you don’t like baked potatoes. Oh, you’re not the first person to not like potatoes. When we were first taken to Europe, people thought we were evil. Would you believe that people really believed that if they ate potatoes, they would get warts? Is that what you’re afraid of, Mitch? One ruler, long ago, sent his soldiers out and threatened that anyone who wouldn’t plant and eat potatoes, would have his nose and ears cut off. I’ll bet your mother never threatened you with that, Mitch.

**TWO POTATO:** I hear you do like French fries. Is that right, Mitch?

**MITCH:** Oh, yes. I love French fries. Why won’t my mom let me eat more of them?

**TWO POTATO:** Mitch, French fries aren’t bad once in a while, but they have a lot of fat in them, and too much fat isn’t good for you. And... besides... most of the vitamins and minerals are found in, and just under, the skin. In French fries, the skin is cut off and most of the vitamins and minerals are thrown away. Your mother is thinking of your health. She knows that it is better for you to eat baked potatoes.

**MITCH:** I didn’t know that. Why didn’t my mother tell me that?

**TWO POTATO:** Would you have listened?

**MITCH:** Well, maybe not. I guess I could try baked potatoes, sometime. I wouldn’t look good without my nose and ears (laughing).

**ONE POTATO:** Good for you, Mitch. So long. You need to meet someone else.

**TOMATO 1:** (ta-may-toe) Hi yah there, Mitch. I’m Tomato. I know you like me when I’m ketchup on your hot dog or hamburger. I’ll bet you even like me when I’m the
sauce on your pizza or spaghetti. You need to try me in your salads, now and then.

MITCH: I love ketchup on my French fries, too.

TOMATO 2: (ta-mah-toe) Hi, Mitch. I'm Tomato. Of course you like me as ketchup. I know why, too. As ketchup, I have a lot of sugar added to me. "Sweet, little ole me". But as a plain ole tomato, I am rich in Vitamin A which helps you to grow and have healthy skin and good eyes.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Mitch, are you beginning to see why it is important for you to eat good food?

MITCH: I guess so, but what about spinach? Only Popeye likes spinach.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Let's see what spinach has to say.

SPINACH: Hello there, Mitch. So you know about Popeye, too. I'll have to admit that I am a bit over-rated. The Popeye story does give spinach more credit than it deserves, but I am a good source of Vitamin A. You know how that helps you, right?

MITCH: Yes, I do. Vitamin A helps me to grow. No offense intended, but I plan to get my Vitamin A from tomatoes. That will leave more spinach for Popeye.

ONION (entering, crying): Hello (sob), Mitch (sob). I'll bet you thought that I make your eyes water and make you cry. That's true, but boys and girls make me cry, too, the way they talk about me. I add a lot of flavor to many foods and what thanks do I get? I'm scraped into the garbage before anyone gets a chance to taste me. I do have a fair amount of potassium which helps you to have healthy muscles. When you get older, I think you'll like me better.

MITCH: I think I'll try a little onion on my next hot dog.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Now you're getting the idea, Mitch. Your mother
doesn't expect you to eat all of your vegetables, but she would like you to at least try them. After all, you may like them.

CORN 1: Speaking of like, I know you like me, Mitch. I know you like me as popcorn. You like me best when I'm on a corndog. (acting as if playing a guitar and singing like Elvis) "You ain't nothin' but a corndog, cryin' all the time".

CORN 2: Ahhh, stop being so corny! Get it? Corny? Stop being so corny. Oh, never mind. Have you told Mitch about eating just plain ole corn? Mitch, did you know that when the explorers first came to America, they found corn already growing here? The American Indians made corn the most important human food plant in the West. Not only do people eat corn, but it is a good source of food for animals. too.

PEAS & BEANS: (chanting as they enter) We are legumes and we couldn't be prouder. And if you can't hear us, we'll yell a little louder. We are legumes and we couldn't be prouder. And if you can't hear us, we'll yell a little louder.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Quiet down you two. Mitch, the peas and beans are bragging just a little. But they have a right to brag. Peas and beans are the main source of protein for millions of people throughout the world.

BEANS: We have been an important part of the human diet for over 4,000 years. Do you like me as chili beans, bean burritos, or pork and beans?

PEAS: What about me? I'm so sweet and I can be eaten fresh from the garden as well as cooked. Did you know that I first came here from Italy? (waves an Italian flag)

MITCH: My great-grandmother came here from Italy. I wonder if she liked peas?

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Mitch, you didn't want to eat your carrots tonight. I
think you’d be interested in knowing a little about what you missed.

CARROT 1: (Bragging) Mitch, did you know that the Greeks and Romans used us as medicine? And even today, we are important because we have beta-carotene which is useful in helping to prevent cancer.

CARROT 2: Eat just one carrot and you’ll get more than the amount of Vitamin A your body needs each day. If you eat carrot sticks after a meal, it is just like using one of Nature’s toothbrushes.

MITCH: I hope I can remember all that I’m learning. I’ll tell my friends. They’ll want to know.

RICE: Rice is nice, rice is nice, rice is nice. Oh, hello, Mitch. Did you know that rice was grown for food long before records were kept? The word rice, in Chinese, means agriculture or culture. Rice is grown under water. And, did you know that rice is the main food for over half of the people in the world today? So, rice really is nice.

LETTUCE: LET US not forget me! Get it? LET US, lettuce. Mitch, I’ve got a joke for you. Why didn’t Sally want to open the refrigerator?

MITCH: I don’t know.

LETTUCE: She didn’t want to see the salad dressing. Get it? She didn’t want to see the salad... dressing.... Seriously, Mitch, did you know that lettuce is America’s most popular cold vegetable? Lettuce is very high in fiber which is good for your body.

BERRY GODMOTHER: Mitch, here is someone you and your friends like... Mr. Peanut.

PEANUT: We came all the way from South America, originally. Peanuts are legumes, so we are related to peas and beans. George Washington Carver, a chemist and educator, found over 300 uses for peanuts. We are a
high source of protein. Mostly, kids like us as peanut butter. Which do you like best, Mitch, crunchy or smooth?

MITCH: I like all kinds of peanut butter. I like almonds and walnuts, too.

ALMOND & WALNUT: Did we hear you say Almonds and walnuts?

ALMOND: I’m glad to hear you like me. I do make a good snack, but lots of people use me in cooking, too. Almonds have lots of protein.

WALNUT: Most walnuts are grown in California. People eat me raw or use me in cooking — especially in baking. What is a chocolate chip cookie without walnuts?

BERRY GODMOTHER: Almonds and walnuts grow on trees as you know, Mitch, but so do some other important foods.

APPLE 1: Hi there, Mitch. Did you ever hear of Johnny Appleseed? I’d been around a long time before he spread me around. The Romans in the 4th Century had 37 different varieties of apples.

APPLE 2: Today, there are over 7,000 different kinds of apples in the United States. Ever hear of the saying, “An apple a day, keeps the doctor away”? Well, the best thing about apples is that we contain a lot of fiber and that means pectin. The fiber helps to get fat out of the body.

ORANGE: Mitch, I can really help to keep you healthy. Oranges are our country’s main source of Vitamin C. I grow mainly in California and Florida. Some people eat me as I am and lots of people drink me as orange juice.

PEACH: I grow on trees, too, Mitch. I am a peach. I first came to this country years ago from China. I am grown the world-over. Peaches are very rich in Vitamin A and potassium. Have you ever had peaches sliced over ice cream? It’s a peachy keen dessert. Get it? Peachy keen?
BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Mitch, there are only a few friends left that I want you to meet.

GREEN GRAPES: Grapes are one of the oldest human foods. You can eat grapes right off the vine or you may like us dried as raisins.

PURPLE GRAPES: Mitch, what happens when an elephant steps on a grape?

MITCH: I don’t know. What does happen when an elephant steps on a grape?

PURPLE GRAPES: It lets out a little whine. Get it? The grapes let out a little wine?... Yes, some grapes are used to make grape juice and wine. We have a lot of fiber and grapes make a good, natural, sweet snack.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: It’s time for me to be going, Mitch. I hope you have learned a little more about fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Next time your mother prepares them for you, I hope you’ll give them a try. Try it. You may like it.

MITCH: Oh, thank you, Berry God-Mother. I can’t wait to tell my mom about you.

BERRY GOD-MOTHER: Let’s just keep this a little secret between the two of us.

MITCH: Oh...okay.

SCENE THREE

NARRATOR: It is the next morning in Mitch’s room.

MITCH: (stretching and waking up)
Oh boy, am I ever hungry! I hope Mom has breakfast ready.

(Mitch runs to the kitchen where Mother is preparing breakfast)
MITCH: Mom... I'm really sorry about the way I behaved last night. I hope you saved my carrots and potatoes so I can eat them later. It would be a shame to waste all of that beta carotene and fiber.

MRS. TODD: Mitch, come here (feeling his forehead). Are you sure you're feeling all right? Maybe I should take your temperature.

MITCH: Ah no, Mom. Just give me some orange juice and that Vitamin C will take care of me. You know... we should sit down and plan my sack lunches. I heard someone say once, "You are what you eat". Have you ever heard that before?

THE END

Any questions?

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