

# Just So Stories

***Based on the book by Rudyard Kipling***

*Adaptation and lyrics by R. Rex Stephenson*

*Music and additional lyrics by Emily Rose Tucker*

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This musical was originally produced June 28-July 1, 2005 by the Blue Ridge Dinner Theatre in Ferrum, Virginia. The original cast included:

*Director: R. Rex Stephenson*  
*Music Director: Emily Rose Tucker*  
*Choreographer: R. Carter Cox*  
*Performance Pianist: Fair Robey*  
*Rudyard Kipling: Joe Ray*  
*Caroline Kipling: Jody D. Brown*  
*Josephine Kipling: Chandra Diesel*  
*Elsie Kipling: Emily Rose Tucker*  
*Camel, Elephant, Child, Goldfish: Maria Alegre*  
*Horse, Crocodile, Strange Man, Narrator: Michael Antico*  
*Djinn, Narrator, Mother: Catherine Baggs*  
*Camel, Zebra, Whale, Head Chief, Horse: Giuseppe DiMeo*  
*Dog, Snake, Neolithic Lady: Kara Dunne*  
*Camel, Snake, Whate, T. Bopsulai, Man: Dustin Johnson*  
*Ox, Elephant Mother, T. Tewindrow: Nicole Sanderson*  
*First Assistant to the Vice-Chief's Deputy: Blake Allen*  
*Mouse: Kane Allen*  
*Baboon: Taylor Allen*  
*Man, Giraffe, Vice-Chief: Zach Allen*  
*Chorus: Abigail Ardis, Kelly Bennett*  
*Deputy Vice-Chief: Dakotah Kelly*  
*Neolithic Lady: Amelia Pagans*  
*Chorus: McKenzie Prillaman, Casey Robertson*  
*Snake, Neolithic Lady: Brittany Stone*  
*Chorus: Arthur Stump, Blaire Stump, Cheryl Stump*  
*Emma, Narrator: Ruth Trochim*  
*Giraffe: Drew Turner*  
*Baboon, Neolithic Lady: Kasey Winnemuth*  
*Snake: Kaitlin Wray*

***Production crew included:***

*Rehearsal Pianist, Austin Robey; Lights, Juliet Stephenson;*  
*Costumes, Martha Stephenson, Faye Prillaman, BRDT Company;*  
*Scenic Artist, Kara Dunne; Box Office, Abigail Ardis, Melisa Allen;*  
*Usher Coordinator, Ruth Jones.*

### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Kipling's dramatic and entertaining stories about how the Camel got its hump, how the Elephant got his nose, how the Whale got his spout, and other richly woven tales come to life in this engaging musical. Mr. and Mrs. Kipling and their two bubbly yet unpretentious daughters serve as narrators. The story weaves from animal tales to a human one, how Man—or in this case an enterprising young girl!—wrote the first letter. Especially engaging is the two-person whale which is a great theatrical device. The show opens with the song, "When the World Was Brand New," and features other humorous and rhythmic tunes as "The Whale With a Whale of an Appetite," "An Elongated Nose that Looks Like a Hose," and "Firstest Friends." Easy to produce, this whimsical musical is sure to charm everyone.

### **PRODUCTION NOTES**

The simpler the setting, the better. A large drop with "Just So Stories" painted on it and original student artwork inspired from animals in the play will suffice for scenery. Several platforms scattered about would add variety and also make it easier for a director in staging a large cast.

The water the Great Djinn creates in the desert is simply a long roll of blue material brought in by several actors and stretched across the stage. The Great Djinn's magic carpet could well be flown down from a flyspace, however, four actors can carry the Djinn on a carpet stapled to a piece of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood.

The "deer skin" in "How The First Letter Was Written," requires a bit of preparation by the actress portraying Taffy. Naturally, it has to be pre-painted, however, if the actress carefully unfolds the deer skin one section at a time, and she is drawing with her back to the audience, and the Strange Man is in a similar position, the audience will never see the full picture until it is hung on the trees.

## **SCENES AND CHARACTERS**

### **Act I**

#### **The Kipling Family\***

Rudyard Kipling (storyteller)

Caroline Kipling (wife)

Josephine (eldest daughter)

Elsie (younger daughter)

#### **How The Camel Got His Hump**

Camel

Horse

Dog

Ox

Man

Djinn

#### **How The Elephant Got His Trunk**

Betty (a narrator)

Emma (a narrator)

Elephant Child

Giraffe

Baboon 1

Baboon 2

Mother Elephant

Zebra

Snake

Crocodile

#### **How The Whale Got His Spout**

Whale (2 actors)

Goldfish

**Act II**

**How The First Letter Was Written**

Accompanist (non-speaking)  
Tegumai  
Teshumai  
Taffy  
Trees (1-3 actors)  
Strange Man  
Neolithic Ladies (1, 2, 3 & 4)  
Head Chief  
Vice Chief  
Deputy Vice Chief  
Assistant Deputy Vice Chief  
Warriors and Extras  
Reporter

**How the Cat Became Friendly But Not Family**

Michael (a narrator)  
Wild Man  
Woman  
Horse  
Dog  
Cat (Josephine)  
Cow  
Baby (Elsie)  
Mouse

**Also:**

Extras as desired.  
Sailor (female)

*This musical can be done with as few as 14 people by eliminating one Baboon and the three Assistant Chiefs. With the exception of Kipling, Man and Tegumai, the rest of the cast can be women.*

*\*As narrators, Kipling family members weave in and out of all the scenes.*

## **SYNOPSIS OF SONGS**

### **ACT I**

Overture

“When the World Was Brand New” ... Chorus

“What Shall We Do?” ... Ox, Dog, Horse

“The Camel’s Hump” ... Chorus

“An Elongated Nose That Looks Like a Hose” ...

Elephant Child and Mother, Snake, Zebra, Crocodile

“The Whale With a Whale of an Appetite” ...

Whale 1 and 2, Fish

“The Whale With a Whale of an Appetite” – Reprise ...

Whale 1 & 2, Fish

“Honest Serving Men” ... Chorus

### **ACT II**

“Honest Serving Men” – Reprise ... Chorus

“I Fish With My Dad” ... Taffy, Tegumai Bopsulai

“War Now” ... Men

“Muh-un-wa-kee Exit” ... All

“I Sing a Song of Welcome” Part 1 ... Woman, Chorus

“I Sing a Song of Welcome” Part 2 ... Woman, Chorus

“Cat Lullaby” ... Cat, Chorus, Baby

“Firstest Friends” ... Cat and Family

“The Whale With a Whale of an Appetite” ... Curtain Call

## **PERCUSSION SOUND EFFECTS**

Sound effects used in the original production, and called for by the script include: tambourine, slapstick, wood block, cowbell, kazoos (3), slide whistle, ratchet and vibraslap. The original production also used hand drums, a cabasa, and maracas. Other small percussion instruments may be used to create sound effects as well, and to accompany the chanting of the “War Dance.”

## **COSTUMES**

Costumes would be best as representational, so that the Dog might have ears, a Horse a mane, a Cat a tail. In the original production three people were used to create the Camel and two people to create the Giraffe. The Snake can be made with between two and six actors, depending upon the cast available and the size of the stage.

For the Whale, shape a piece of wood to resemble the front view of a whale, then cut it in half. Cut two large holes for the eyes, and two actors approximately the same height can put their faces through the holes. Handles placed on the back side allow the actors to easily move the whale forward and back. When the Whale swallows Little Fish, it just separates, and when the Woman escapes, the Whale again separates.

The Crocodile actor wears a glove that resembles a crocodile's mouth. For the Elephant's trunk use a dryer hose and cover it with grey sweatshirt material. It is attached to a headband and a string that ties around the actress' head. When the Zebra arrives with loud sound effects and your whole audience is looking stage right, Mrs. Kipling can surreptitiously untie the nose. There are probably many other ways to accomplish this, but this is probably the simplest and least time consuming. Overall, it is not necessary to hide these accoutrements.

As far as costuming the company, Kipling can wear a period suit from the early 1900s. For the rest of the company, costumes can consist of khaki shorts or pants with brightly colored tee-shirts; however, they could just as well wear leotards, sweatsuits, or about any combination of clothing, except blue-jeans or bib-overalls.

### **End of Freeview**

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