
Royalty Notice

A royalty fee must be paid to Contemporary Drama Service, PO Box 7710, Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710 in advance of any performance of this play. The applicable royalty fee for this play is listed in our catalog or may be determined by calling our customer service department at 719-594-4422.

The royalty must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is considered performed each time it is acted before an audience, except for rehearsals when only cast and production crew are present.

When this play is performed, each cast member must have their own script copy purchased from us. It is a violation of copyright law to copy or reproduce any part of this play in any manner. The right of performance is not transferable, and performance without advance permission constitutes copyright infringement punishable by law.

All other rights, including professional or equity performance, TV, radio, film, videotape and recording, are reserved. Fees for these rights will be quoted on request.

On any programs, playbills or advertising for productions of this play the following information must appear: 1. The full name of the play and the playwright. 2. This notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Contemporary Drama Service, Colorado Springs, Colorado."

Copyright © MCMXCVIII Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved

THE ADVENTURES OF RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI

The Adventures of RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI

Adapted from the Jungle Stories of Rudyard Kipling

by Tim Kelly



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

STORY OF THE PLAY

Here's the exotic and thrilling world of Rudyard Kipling, famed author of such works as *The Jungle Book* and *Just So Stories*. Rikki-tikki-tavi is an amusing and brave mongoose who lives in a sunny garden in Old India. When silly monkeys steal a mirror belonging to his young mistress, he vows to follow them to The Lost City and retrieve it. Along the way he has one fantastic adventure after another. Some funny, some scary. He encounters Shere Khan, the man-eating tiger, Queen Cobra who hates him (as all cobras do — especially the incredibly evil Nag and his wife Nagaina); Billy Gumption, a soldier of the empire who can talk mongoose, and a legion of fascinating animals — horse, camel, mule, wolf. Thanks to Puran Bhaget, the storyteller, he even learns how the elephant got its nose. One step ahead of the hunter who wants him for the palace of the Maharajah, Rikki manages to defeat his foes and return the mirror to its rightful owner. The empty stage is the setting. Costumes are simple odds-and-ends. Although almost nothing is required in terms of production, the end result is wondrous and imaginative.

*Special thanks to the Canyon Players,
Hollywood, California*

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Speaking)

(For a Flexible Cast of about 25, plus as many Extras as desired.
Can be smaller with doubling)

PURAN BHAGAT	.....	storyteller
RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI	.....	mongoose
DARZEE	.....	bird of India
IKKI	.....	porcupine
MONKEY POTENTATE	.....	silly simian
MONKEY #1	.....	another
MONKEY #2	.....	another
ENGLISH HUSBAND	.....	proper gentleman
ENGLISH WIFE	.....	afraid of snakes
DAUGHTER	.....	Rikki's friend
NAG	.....	vicious cobra
NAGAINA	.....	his wife
BILLY GUMPTION	.....	soldier
CAMEL	.....	army camp animal
HORSE	.....	another
MULE	.....	another
QUEEN COBRA	.....	clever reptile
MONGOOSE HUNTER	.....	after Rikki-tikki-tavi
ELEPHANT'S CHILD	.....	gets a new nose
KOLOKOLO BIRD	.....	helps Elephant's Child
CROCODILE	.....	sly and strong
SHERE KHAN	.....	arrogant tiger
WOLF #1	.....	jungle citizen
WOLF #2	.....	another
WOLF #3	.....	another

PRODUCTION NOTES

PLAYING TIME: About one hour.

SETTING: India — in the days of the British Empire. Essentially it's the empty stage which, supposedly, represents various locations in the jungle forest. Some modest "touches" can be used to suggest "atmosphere" — cutout trees and shrubbery placed Upstage along with some overhanging vines (painted screens will do). For the first and last scene the action is placed in the garden of an English family with the cottage (bungalow) placed Off-stage Right.

ABOUT THE STAGING: The open stage is all that's needed in way of setting. Only the "humans" need costumes (although in the original production the humans wore nondescript modern clothes with a few "props" to suggest another time — period hat, parasol, wide ribbon sash around the Daughter's waist). The animals wear exercise suits or various odds-and-ends. The cobras have hoods. The point being we want the audience's imagination to work as much as the actor's performance. The animal persona is created by the way the actor crouches, walks, gestures and speaks. If you wish, animals can wear makeup, a half-mask or nose mask to suggest their personality. Some lighting touches are mentioned in the script, but they are optional.

Of course, the play can be presented with a real setting and the actors can wear appropriate costumes; but that, too, is strictly optional.

Although individual scenes are listed as such for rehearsal purposes, the play flows without interruption, one scene blending into the next in the manner of a film.

Imagination is the key word. Don't be afraid to use it.

PERSONAL PROPS: Begging bowl, wooden flute (PURAN BHAGET); fish [made from colored paper], large spoon with cooked rice (hand from Off-Stage), hand mirror (MONKEY); parasol (ENGLISH WIFE); Rifle, hat, military jacket, pocket watch, whistle (BILLY GUMPTION); sack with string (MONGOOSE HUNTER); Doll (DAUGHTER); two lengths of rope to suggest snakes (ENGLISH HUSBAND).

OPTIONAL SOUND EFFECTS: Jungle noises (ACTORS can make animal sounds from Off-stage), flute, menacing chord of music, circus music.

LIGHTING: No special lighting. Although the few effects mentioned in the script would prove effective.

FLEXIBLE CASTING: You can make the cast as large as you wish by adding additional monkeys, wolves, camp animals, elephants. If you do add additional animals, don't be afraid to redistribute some of the lines. With slight exception, the roles can be portrayed as either male or female. For a smaller cast, and keeping in mind the imaginative staging, the CAMP ANIMALS can double as MONKEYS or WOLVES. ENGLISH HUSBAND might play the CROCODILE. ENGLISH WIFE could portray QUEEN COBRA. DAUGHTER could play KOLOKOLO BIRD. BILLY GUMPTION might be SHERE KHAN. The possibilities are many and even tripling works.

ACT I
Scene 1

1
2
3
4 **SETTING:** Garden of the English family, morning.
5

6 **PRIOR TO LIGHTS UP:** Optional sounds of the jungle: bird calls,
7 tigers, monkeys, elephants. The sounds fade to be replaced by
8 the music of a flute — slightly eerie and drawing close.
9

10 **LIGHTS UP:** A few seconds for the stage picture to register. Flute
11 music out.
12

13 *(PURAN BHAGAT, an elderly holy man, ENTERS. A small*
14 *wooden flute is around his neck. He carries a “begging bowl.”*
15 *Surveys the audience.)*

16 **PURAN BHAGAT:** O, Best Beloved, I offer my blessings. For I
17 am the holy man Puran Bhagat. I walk from one end of
18 the jungle to the other, year in and year out, under the
19 warming sun of Mother India. There is not a creature I do
20 not know or who does not know me. Ah, the stories I
21 could tell. Wondrous stories. The rich and the poor, the
22 strong and the weak. The good and the vile. The creatures
23 that live on the earth and the birds that fly in the skies
24 above. Such wondrous, magical, delightful stories —
25 *(Sadly)* But, alas — *(Looks into his begging bowl.)* My begging
26 bowl is empty. See for yourself. *(He displays empty bowl to*
27 *audience.)* Is it not sad? Not even the holy man Puran
28 Bhagat, peace be upon him, can tell a good story when he
29 is hungry. Perhaps you could spare me a morsel of
30 something? A bit of fish, a scrap of meat. *(From Off-stage*
31 *Right a hand is projected. It holds a thin fish. PURAN BHAGAT*
32 *sniffs the air.)* What is that tantalizing aroma? *(Sees the fish.*
33 *Takes it. Hand is withdrawn from view.)* It’s a trout. A rather
34 thin trout, but a trout nevertheless. I particularly like a
35 trout when there’s a little rice to go with it. *(Hand*

1 reappears with a large spoon or ladle containing some cooked
2 rice. PURAN BHAGAT drops the fish into his begging bowl,
3 holds out bowl to catch the rice.) **Was there ever such a**
4 **delicious meal? A million blessings be upon you.** (*Hand*
5 *and large spoon are withdrawn. Hungrily, PURAN BHAGAT*
6 *eats some of the rice, almost purring.*) **It is a feast. A veritable**
7 **feast.** (*Pretends to hear something from audience.*) **What's that**
8 **you say?** (*Listens.*) **Storytime?** (*Annoyed*) **Can't I even finish**
9 **my meal? My fish and rice.** (*Resigned*) **Ah, well. What must**
10 **be must be.** (*Thinks.*) **Hmmm. Tiger stories are so common.**
11 **Everyone's heard an elephant story or two. Crocodile**
12 **tales are not pretty.** (*Brightens.*) **Aha! I have it. You seldom**
13 **hear stories about a mongoose and I have a wonderful**
14 **story about such a creature. His name is Rikki-tikki-tavi.**
15 (*Gestures to "garden".*) **And he lived in a garden very much**
16 **like this one. He could scratch himself anywhere he**
17 **pleased and cobras greatly feared him. That's why a**
18 **mongoose was always welcome in an English garden. The**
19 **motto of all the mongoose family is "Run and find out"**
20 **and Rikki was no exception.** (*Calls left.*) **Rikki.**

21 **RIKKI'S VOICE:** (*From Off-Stage Left*) **Rikki.**

22 **PURAN BHAGAT:** **Rikki-tikki-tikki.**

23 **RIKKI'S VOICE:** (*From Off-Stage Left*) **Rikki-tikki-tikki.**

24 **PURAN BHAGAT:** **Rikki-tikki-tavi.**

25 **RIKKI'S VOICE:** **Rikki-tikki-tavi.** (*RIKKI dances out, full of energy*
26 *and curiosity. As RIKKI speaks, PURAN BHAGAT withdraws*
27 *and we are left with the story he is telling. RIKKI is extremely*
28 *energetic, rarely stands still, darting this way and that, speaks in*
29 *a lively fashion and is quite boastful. Boyishly eager. We like him*
30 *at once. RIKKI steps Downstage, addresses audience.)*

31 **RIKKI:** **Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk! Hello.**

32 **DARZEE'S VOICE:** **That's his voice. He must be up ahead.**

33 **RIKKI:** (*To audience*) **It's Darzee the tailor-bird. Always building**
34 **one nest or another.**

35 **IKKI'S VOICE:** **I hope you're right. I'm tired of looking for him.**

1 **RIKKI:** *(To audience)* And that's Ikki the porcupine. Good
2 friends both. *(Calls left.)* Here I am, good friends. *(DARZEE*
3 *and IKKI enter.)*
4 **DARZEE:** So you are.
5 **IKKI:** Where have you been, Rikki?
6 **RIKKI:** Here. There. Everywhere. Up. Down. In. Out.
7 **DARZEE:** We checked the other side of the road.
8 **IKKI:** The jungle path, too.
9 **DARZEE:** You were nowhere to be seen.
10 **RIKKI:** I'm very good at hiding in the bushes where no one can
11 see me.
12 **IKKI:** Why would you want to do that?
13 **RIKKI:** When no one can see me I can observe what they're up
14 to. I'm very curious, you know. Very curious is Rikki-
15 tikki-tavi.
16 **DARZEE:** The whole jungle knows that.
17 **IKKI:** Even porcupines.
18 **RIKKI:** I'm very busy, you know. Very busy is Rikki-tikki-tavi. I
19 must run and find out things. Why did you want to find me?
20 **DARZEE:** We saw that terrible cobra and his wife. The ones
21 you drove from the garden.
22 **IKKI:** Nag and Nagaina.
23 **DARZEE:** I can't bring myself to say their names. They strike
24 fear in a bird's heart.
25 **IKKI:** Sooner or later a cobra will eat a bird's egg.
26 **DARZEE:** *(Alarmed)* Stop it, Ikki, stop it.
27 **IKKI:** Sometimes a cobra will even eat the bird. *(DARZEE faints*
28 *with a flutter and a downward wail.)*
29 **DARZEE:** Oooooooooooooo. I'm not well. *(RIKKI and IKKI get*
30 *DARZEE to her feet.)*
31 **RIKKI:** Now, now, nothing to worry about.
32 **DARZEE:** Nothing to worry about? Easy enough for you to say.
33 You're a mongoose.
34 **IKKI:** How fortunate I am to have needles on my hide.
35 **RIKKI:** There's nothing to fear. Nag and Nagaina will never

**Thank you for reading this
copyrighted free sample.**

**You may order this play online
or by phone or fax at:**

**Contemporary Drama Service
PO Box 7710
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80933-7710**

**Toll Free: 800-93PLAYS (937-5297)
Toll Free Fax: 888-594-4436**

www.contemporarydrama.com