

Aesop's Fables

Aesop's Fables is a collection of fables credited to Aesop, a slave and storyteller believed to have lived in ancient Greece.

Script by Jennifer Davis

Original Music by Bob Nicoll

Characters:

Aesop 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6-The Aesop characters introduce the play and also serve as stage crew/actors because most of the set changes happen with dialogue on stage and with the curtain open.

Sign Holders-These characters introduce each fable.

The Donkey in the Lion's Skin-

Narrator 1 with puppet

Narrator 2 with puppet

3 Donkeys

Monkey

2 Chickens

Fox

The Clever Dog-

Narrator 3 with puppet

Narrator 4 with puppet

Minister

Farmer

Farmer's wife

2 Wolves

Dog

Clever dog choir, can be made up of 5-15 members

The Fox and the Crow-

Narrator 5

Narrator 6

3 Fox rappers

Crow

Fox and Crow dancers, can be made up of 5-15 members

The Wind and the Sun-

Narrator 7

Narrator 8

The Wind

The Sun

Traveler

Sun's rays, can be made up of 3-5 members

Wind dancers, can be made up of 5-7 dancers

The Old Lion-

Narrator 9 with puppet

Narrator 10 with puppet

Old Lion

3 Bunnies

3 Lambs

Fox

Rose and Butterfly-

Narrator 11

Narrator 12

Butterfly

3 Rose petals

Rose and Butterfly choir, Entire cast dressed as flowers

Overview:

The music in this production of Aesop's Fables was first performed at the Boston Center for the Arts in 1993 by adults for a multi-age audience. Both the music and the script in this version keep the audience chuckling throughout and give them the rare opportunity to see what happens during set changes allowing them a glimpse into what happens behind the scenes of a show. The diversity of roles gives many performers an opportunity to shine in lead speaking roles and singing parts. The varied musical styles of each fable promise to lift the spirits of both the cast and the audience and keep everyone dancing even after the show is over.

Production Notes:

The running time of this show is about 40 minutes and the cast could be ages 6 and up. There are 4 female roles, 1 male role and

50 gender neutral roles however creative gender casting is always encouraged. The minimum cast size is 20 and the maximum cast size is 60. There are 50 parts with speaking and/or singing lines. With a smaller cast, actors can play multiple roles. For example, the same person could play the Fox in the Donkey in the Lion's Skin fable, a Fox rapper in the Fox and the Crow, and a Fox in the Old Lion. Or the same person could play the Monkey in the Donkey in the Lion's Skin, Bunny 3 in the Old Lion, a Fox and Crow dancer in the Fox and the Crow, Aesop 4, *and* be in the clever dog choir. Most of the narrators use puppets of different animals. It is suggested you use microphones for the puppet narrators since their voices can get lost behind the puppet stage. The animal puppets could correspond to each fable being told. For example, for the Old Lion, one puppet could be of a lion and the other could be of a fox. The Rose in the Rose and the Butterfly can be played by 3 people, each person a petal. The Butterfly is played by one person. If microphones are available, either standing or body mics, we recommend using them during the music and songs. Otherwise any background music can be turned to a low volume and the actors/singers will need to project. Everyone back stage can join in on the group songs even if they're not in the scene.

Costumes:

All the characters playing one of the Aesops should dress the same. Their costumes should be simple since they are most likely also playing other roles in the fables and therefore the costume changes need to happen quickly. The Aesops could wear black with black caps unless the director (or anyone) has a different idea. Most costumes are self-evident like the animals, farmer, minister, etc.. There is rapping in the Fox and Crow fable so actors could dress as their animal with a hip hop flare. The Wind in The Wind and the Sun could wear all blue and carry an umbrella that is blown inside out or there could be creativity with this costume. The Wind dancers in The Wind and the Sun could use streamers or flowy scarves. The Sun in The Wind and the Sun is made up of multiple

people-their arms are the rays of the sun and should be yellow. The Traveler in the Wind and the Sun should wear a big cloak. For the Rose Petals in the Rose and the Butterfly, members could wear leaf gloves with hats or crowns on their head to make them look like roses.

Sound effects and songs are labeled by track numbers in the script which match the CD.

The Set and stage props: Because budgets vary, take whatever creative liberties needed to design the set. A backdrop for the whole play is optional. A puppet stage made out of cardboard or wood could be set up either stage right or left downstage in front of the curtain line for the puppet narrators. Some props may include the following.

Introduction;

The set is an empty stage.

The Donkey in the Lion's Skin;

For the Donkey in the Lion's Skin, 3 bushes-possibly made out of cardboard boxes and green tissue paper are on stage with lion skins a few feet in front of each bush. Fur coats (fake or real) could be used as lion skins.

The Clever Dog;

There is a small house stage left that the dog, the farmer and his wife need to be able to climb on top of to make it appear they are on the roof. You could use a few small step ladders or a raised platform with painted cardboard of a house placed in front of it and attached.

The Fox and the Crow;

The Crow needs to sit perched at the top of a tree. Similar to the previous fable, a step ladder with a tree attached to it could be used.

The Old Lion;

The Lion's cave could be made out of a tent with dark sheets draped over it.

The Rose and the Butterfly;

The set is made up of characters dressed as flowers in a garden.

AESOP'S FABLES

Introduction:

(Curtain opens to an empty stage. Silence for 5 seconds. Aesop 1 enters stage left and runs to center stage. He/she/they freezes, slowly turns toward audience, and freezes again looking shocked.)

Aesop 1: Hey guys, we're on!

(The entire cast runs on stage from both stage right and left and scurries around stage nervously chatting until they find their spots. This lasts for a few seconds until Aesop 2 walks downstage. Microphones could be set up at the front of the stage for the Aesops to speak into while background music is playing.)

Aesop 2: Ladies and Gentlemen, we are pleased to welcome you to Aesop's Fables. We're so glad you're here.

Play Track 1 (Show Intro)

Aesop 3: *(Aesop 3 walks downstage.)* I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Aesop. *(Aesop 4 walks downstage.)*

Aesop 4: Excuse me, *(clears throat)* but I'm Aesop.

Aesop 3: This is awkward.

Aesop 5: No, I'm Aesop! *(walks downstage)*

Aesop 6: I thought I was Aesop! *(comes downstage)*

(The entire cast begins to argue.)

Aesop 2: Wait a minute, wait a minute. We are all Aesop. *(Cast looks at each other confused.)*

Aesop 3: What do you mean?

Aesop 4: I think I know what she (or he) is saying. We're all storytellers.

Aesop 5: We are?

Aesop 4: Sure! *(cast nods in agreement)*

Aesop 2: And we're also singers!

Aesop 6: And dancers!

Aesop 1: And actors of course. *(cast nods again in agreement)*

Aesop 6: I'm so glad that's settled.

Aesop 1: Aesop's fables have been told all over the world for thousands of years.

Aesop 5: The fables are credited to Aesop, a slave and storyteller believed to have lived in ancient Greece.

Aesop 2: We are thrilled to be sharing our version. Please enjoy the show! *(Curtain closes.)*

The Donkey in the Lion's Skin

(Place 3 bushes on stage with lion skin down stage.)

Sign Holders: *(Two cast members enter stage left and walk across stage in front of the closed curtain holding a sign with the name of the fable on it. They stop center stage to show the sign to the audience and say in unison.): The Donkey in the Lion's Skin. (They exit stage right.)*

Narrator 1: *(Narrators enter with their puppets and go behind puppet stage.)* A donkey found a lion's skin left in the forest by a hunter.

Narrator 2: He dressed himself in it, and amused himself by hiding in a thicket and rushing out suddenly at the animals who passed that way.

*(Music start and **curtain opens**. The puppet narrators remain behind puppet stage but lower their puppets out of view.)*

Play track 2 (Donkey Intro)

(Three donkeys are standing up stage. Donkeys approach lion skin to different music cautiously and curiously.)

Play Track 3 (Donkeys Approach the Lion Skin)

After a few seconds of checking it out and sniffing it, they each put on their own lion's skin. They wobble a little and walk downstage to sing into microphones.)

Play Track 4 (I'm Big and I'm Strong)

Song: I'm Big and I'm Strong-sung by Donkeys

I'm big and I'm strong
I'm afraid of no one

And I'll scare everyone to death.

Well there is nothing wrong
With pretending I'm strong
And I'll show everyone I'm the best
(Donkeys bray and laugh.)

Donkey 1: We could have some real fun with this.

Donkey 2: I have an idea. Let's go hide behind those bushes and scare anyone who comes our way!

Donkey 3: Do you really think they'll believe we're lions?

Donkey 2: The only way to find out is if we try.

Donkey 1: I can't wait!

(They all laugh deviously as they're tiptoeing to hide behind 3 bushes.)

Play Track 5 (Monkey Dance)

(Music starts and monkey enters carrying a picnic basket while doing a little dance and stops at center stage.)

Monkey: This looks like the perfect place to have a picnic.

(Monkey sits down, opens basket and begins to eat a sandwich. Donkey behind bush center stage stands up and roars. Monkey runs to stage left. Donkey behind bush stage left stands up and roars and monkey runs to stage right. Donkey behind bush stage right stands up and roars and the donkeys bray simultaneously. Monkey exits stage left screaming and making monkey noises. All the donkeys are laughing and braying and giving each other high fives.)

Donkey 3: Did you see the look on her face?

Donkey 1: Yeah, we scared her so much she lost her lunch!

(They all laugh and bray together)

Donkey 2: Let's do it again! I hear someone coming. *(They all hide and duck down behind the bushes again.)*

Play Track 6 (Chicken Dance)

(Music starts and chickens enter stage left doing a dance.)

Chicken 1: Bawk bawk, bawk. Look! Someone left a basket full of food here.

Chicken 2: That's strange. Why would anyone do that?

Chicken 1: Well I'm hungry. Let's eat it.

Chicken 2: But what if they return?

Chicken 1: Oh, don't be such a chicken.

(Chickens sit down to eat. Donkey behind stage left bush stands up and roars. Chickens look at audience scared. Donkey behind bush center stage stands up and roars. Chickens look at each other scared and embrace. Donkey behind bush stage right stands up and roars. Chickens exit stage right screaming and bawking with feathers flying everywhere. Donkeys laugh and bray and give each other high fives again and do a victory dance. Noise back stage.)

Donkey 1: Did you hear that?

Donkey 3: Quick duck!

Donkey 2: It didn't sound like a duck.

Donkey 3: Get down you fool! (*Donkeys hide behind bushes.*)

(Monkey enters cautiously tiptoeing from stage left and chickens do the same from stage right while looking toward bushes. They both grab the basket of food and begin a tug-o-war.)

Monkey: Hey, that was mine first!

Chickens: Finders keepers, losers weepers. (*Everyone on stage freezes.*)

Narrator 1: (*Puppet rises from behind puppet stage.*) A fox approached unbeknownst to everyone. (*Fox enters stage left*)

Narrator 2: (*Puppet rises from behind puppet stage.*) He was very curious about what all the noise had been about. (*Puppet narrators watch the following scene. Fox takes a curious stance. Monkey and chickens unfreeze.*)

Monkey: I said give me that! (*They continue to tug-o-war.*)

Chickens: But we're hungry!

Monkey: Why would you want to eat a chicken sandwich??!!

(Chickens look at each other and then the audience confused. Suddenly all 3 donkeys stand up and roar simultaneously and then bray. Monkey and chickens let go of the basket and run off stage the way they came. Fox looks at the donkeys and begins to laugh. All the donkeys begin to roar again and bray trying to scare the fox. Fox laughs again.)

Fox: You foolish donkeys, lions do not make such silly noise. That is utterly ridiculous. You gave yourselves away with your loud bray. (*Fox laughs again, grabs the picnic basket and exits stage left. Donkeys look at each other and audience with embarrassed expressions.*)

Narrator 1: The moral of the story is a fool may deceive by his dress and appearance...

Narrator 2: ...but his words will soon show what he really is.

Play Track 7 (Donkey Ending)

(*Narrator 1 and 2 stand up holding their puppets and look at each other confused.*)

Narrator 1: Now what do we do?

Narrator 2: I think we have to prepare for the next fable.

Stage Crew Scene/Set Change with Open Curtain

(*Aesop 1 enters stage left running toward down stage, stops center stage and blows a whistle.*)

Aesop 1: Everyone on stage! (*Everyone runs onto stage in a chaotic fashion. Aesop 1 blows the whistle again and everyone freezes. Donkeys run off stage.*) Someone move the bushes off stage! Someone get the house and put it stage left!

Aesop 2, 4, 6: Yes Maam! (*Aesop 2, 4, 6 get house and move it down stage left.*)

(*After the house is stage left*)

Aesop 1: Places everyone! (*Everyone continues to scurry around stage nervously. Some bump into each other. Others argue about where they're supposed to be. After about 10 seconds Aesop 1 blows the whistle again. Everyone freezes.*) I said places!
(*Everyone takes their places for Clever Dog. Some exit the stage*)

The Clever Dog

Sign Holders: (*Two cast members enter stage left and walk across stage in front of the closed curtain holding a sign with the name of the fable on it. They stop center stage to show the sign to the audience and say in unison.*): The Clever Dog.
(*They exit stage right.*)

(*Narrators enter with their puppets and go behind puppet stage. The wolves howl back stage. Wedding music starts.*)

Play Track 8 (Wedding Music)

(*Wedding takes place stage right. Dog asleep stage left in front of a small house.*)

Minister: I now pronounce you husband and...

Farmer: Wait! Wait! Let me get my hat. I can't get married without my hat. Okay, I'm ready.

Minister: I now pronounce you...

Farmer: (*looks off into space*) I hope my dog is okay.

Minister: Excuse me?

Farmer: Oh nothing, nothing.

Minister: Are we ready now? (*Farmer and wife nod yes*) I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.

Farmer: Do I have to?

Farmer's Wife: Well I never! How dare you humiliate me like this! (*Wife smacks farmer on head with her wedding bouquet. Farmer and Wife begin to argue silently. Minister exits stage right.*)

Narrator 3 (*raises puppet in view*): A dog was once left by his master to guard his house and farm while he was away at his wedding.

Narrator 4 (*raises puppet*): When night fell, the dog curled up in the yard and fell fast asleep. While he slept two wolves crept into the yard.

Play Track 9 (Scary Wolves)

(*Dog is snoring and kicking its leg. Wolves enter stage left creeping slowly. They look at audience with finger over mouths and shush them and then lick their lips.*)

Wolf 1: He looks doggone good! (*Wolves giggle and then howl.*)

Dog: What are you doing? It's the middle of the night and you woke me up! You've got a lot of nerve. I really don't like to be woken up when I'm sleeping.

Wolf 2: Quit your yappin'. (*turns to Wolf 1*) These small dogs think they're so tough.

Wolf 1: I much prefer them tender. (*Wolves laugh*)

Wolf 2: And marinated in some olive oil, dijon mustard with a pinch of salt and pepper. (*Wolves laugh again*)

Dog: (*offended*) Well, I never! What do I look like to you?

Wolf 1: Dog food of course! (*Dog swallows out of fear. Farmer's wife walks off stage right angrily in a huff with farmer following her silently yelling at her.*)

Dog: Oh, you don't want to eat me now. Wait 'til tomorrow. My masters at his wedding and he promised to bring me back some great snacks to fatten me up. Come back tomorrow.

Wolf 2: But our tummies are howling! (*Both wolves howl and begin to slowly approach dog. Music starts and dog is slowly backing away from wolves toward microphones and they all stand at mics.*)

Play Track 10 (Oh Mr. Wolf)

Song: Oh Mr. Wolf-sung by Dog and choir

(Dog sings)

Oh, Mr. Wolf please don't eat me
Mr. Wolf, I haven't been feeling too great
(choir) Been on a diet
(choir) Losing weight

(Dog sings)

And you know I'm stringy
(choir) She's stringy

(Dog sings)

And I wouldn't taste good

If you'd only wait 'til the morning
I'm sure that I would

'Cause when my master comes back
from the wedding he's at
he'll bring me lots of tidbits
(*choir*) some of this some of that

(*Dog sings*)
I'm sure then you'd like to eat me
'cause then I'll be big and fat

(*choir*) Oh Mr. Wolf

(*Dog sings*)
Please don't eat me

Wolves: Big and fat? We like the sound of that.

(*Wolves and choir sing*)
Oh you better be right here
'cause I'm coming back for you
And when the morning comes
Oh you know what I'm gonna do.

(*Wolves point at dog with a menacing smile. Wolves and choir exit stage left after song. Dog climbs up on roof and wipes forehead relieved.*)

Narrator 3: Later the wolves returned to the farm but the dog was no longer lying in the yard.

Narrator 4: Instead the wolf saw the dog asleep high up on the roof. (*Wolves enter stage again.*)