

Study Guide prepared by
Catherine Bush
Barter Playwright-in-Residence

Just So Stories

Adapted from Rudyard Kipling's book *Just So Stories for Little Children*
by Will Bigham
*Especially for Grades K-6

**By the Barter Players, Touring January – March 2012
Barter Theatre, April 2012**

(NOTE: standards listed below are for both reading the book and seeing a performance of *Just So Stories* as well as completing the activities in this study guide.)

Virginia SOLs

English – K.1, K.8, 1.1, 1.9, 2.1, 2.8, 3.1, 3.5, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 5.4, 5.5, 5.8, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6
Theatre Arts – M.8, M.9, M.13, M.14

Tennessee TCAPS

English/Language Arts – K.1.02, K1.07, K.1.13, 1.1.01, 1.1.02, 1.1.07, 1.1.13, 2.1.01, 2.1.02, 2.1.07, 2.1.13, 3.1.01, 3.1.02, 3.1.07, 3.1.13, 4.1.01, 4.1.06, 4.1.12, 5.1.01, 5.1.06, 5.1.12, 6.1.06, 6.1.12, 6.1.13
Theatre Arts – Level I, II, III
Theatre 6th-8th Grade – 6.0, 7.0, 8.0

North Carolina SCOS

Theatre Arts – K.7.05, K.8.03, 1.7.05, 1.8.04, 2.7.01, 2.7.05, 2.8.04, 2.8.06, 3.7.05, 3.7.07, 3.8.01, 3.8.04, 3.8.05, 4.7.06, 4.7.07, 4.7.09, 4.8.01, 4.8.04, 5.7.07, 5.7.09, 5.8.04, 6.7.01, 6.7.03, 6.7.07
English Language Arts – K.2.02, 1.2.02, 2.2.02, 2.3.02, 2.3.04, 3.2.03, 3.3.01, 4.2.03, 4.3.01, 4.3.02, 4.3.03, 5.2.03, 5.2.04, 5.3.01, 5.3.02, 6.1.02, 6.5.01

Setting

Various locations including the ocean, the grasslands, the jungle and the desert



Characters

How the Whale Got His Throat

Story Teller – the narrator of the piece

Whale – a whale in the ocean; eats sea creatures of all sizes

Stute Fish – a small fish chased by the whale

Man – a man swallowed by the whale

Raft – the raft upon which the man floats

How the Leopard Got His Spots

Story Teller – the narrator of the piece

The Baviaan – a wise baboon

The Leopard – a big cat who lives in the grasslands

The Ethiopian – a man who hunts in the grasslands

Zebra – a zebra that lives in the grasslands

Giraffe – a giraffe that lives in the grasslands

How the First Letter Was Written

Story Teller – the narrator of the piece

Tegumai – a fisherman

Teshumai – his wife

Taffamai – their young daughter

Stranger-Man – a stranger who does not speak their language

Chief – the chief of the tribe

Tribe – the tribe

How the Camel Got Its Hump

Story Teller – the narrator of the piece

The Man – a man who owns animals

Dog – his animal

Horse – his animal

Ox – his animal

Camel – his animal

Genie – a magical creature capable of granting wishes

Note: Cast Size and Doubling of Actors

In this production of *Just So Stories* we will be using only six actors, with some actors playing more than one role. Doubling of actors requires distinction between characters. In this production, characters will be distinguished by costume, voice and other physical character traits.

Synopsis

In this madcap adventure based on the *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling, six zany actors take on the task of explaining “How the Whale Got His Throat,” “How the Leopard Got His Spots,” “How the First Letter Was Written” and “How the Camel Got His Hump.” Through song and dance and a lot of laughter, these famous “origin stories” come to life, acquainting yet another generation of children with the creative genius that was Rudyard Kipling.



Vocabulary

beloved
spontaneous
combustible
alloyed
equation
finale
kelp
breeches
suspenders
jack-knife
raft
resource
sagacity
exclusively
magnitude
enormous

subtle
indigestion
infinite
dynamite
grating
destination
rehearse
baboon
grasslands
comprehension
popinjay
forest
environment
blotches
interrupt
revere

communicate
Neolithic
primitive
spear
arrogance
magical
genie
extraordinary
fetch
tribe
treacherous
justification
explanation
distraction
alphabet

Biography of the Author

Joseph Rudyard Kipling was an English author, journalist and poet. Born in the British India, Bombay on December 30, 1865, he was sent back to England at the age of six to receive his education. He returned to India as a young man and worked with a much renowned newspaper The Pioneer, Allahabad before taking up writing as a profession. Best known for his works such as *The Jungle Book*, *Kim* and *Just So Stories for Little Children*, Kipling ranks among the greatest English novelists and authors and is regarded as the leader of the art of the short stories. The author has written a number of stories including the famous *The Man Who Would Be King* and several poems and short stories and contributed greatly in the English literature during the 19th and 20th century. The author received the honorary Nobel Peace Prize in Literature in 1907 and became the first English writer and the youngest recipient to have received the award till this day. He died on January 18, 1936.



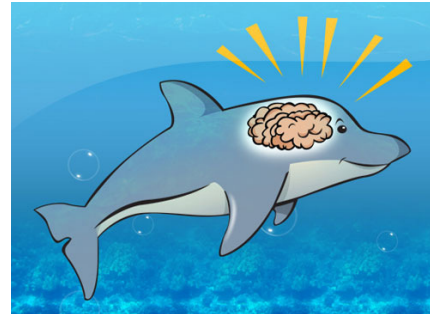
Biography of the Playwright

Will Bigham is a writer/director, currently with a script deal at Paramount Pictures. Prior to the movie business, Will, along with his wife Catherine, worked as an actor at Barter Theatre for five seasons. An MFA grad from Florida State University, Will has been working and living in Los Angeles with his wife and two daughters for the past seven years. In 2007, Will competed in the DreamWorks Television and Mark Burnett Productions reality competition "On the Lot." From the initial 12,000 entrants, Will was selected to be one of 50 directors competing for the top prize, and by the end of the summer, Will was the last man standing. He is now developing several projects through his production company, Shamrock Motion Pictures.



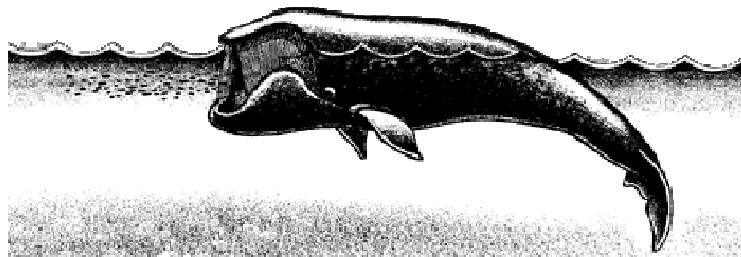
Whale Fun Facts!

Sperm Whales have the largest brain on the planet. It may weigh 20 pounds.



The fin whale is one of the fastest whales. They can swim over 20 miles per hour for short periods.

A humpback whale may eat up to a ton of food every day.

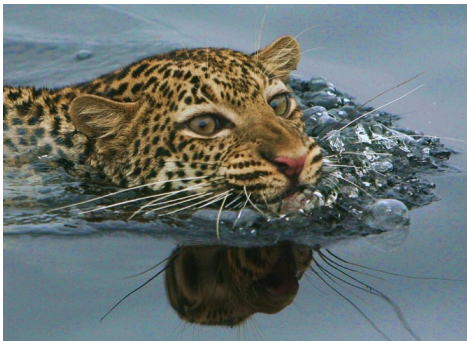


The blue whale is the largest whale. They may grow up to 100 feet and weigh as much as several elephants. A new born baby blue whale may weigh two tons and be 25 feet long.



Leopard Fun Facts!

Leopards are strong tree climbers—they can even climb a tree while carrying a prey their own weight.



Leopards hunt on land and in water—they are great swimmers.

Leopards stalk their prey until they are a few feet away then pounce. They do not chase their prey.



Leopard cubs stay with their mother for 22 months.

Pencil Fun Facts!

A typical pencil can draw a line 35 miles long or write about 45,000 words.



During the 1800s, American pencil makers marketed their use of the superior Chinese graphite by painting their pencils yellow, a color in China which is associated with royalty and respect. Today 75% of pencils are still painted that color!



Have you ever seen a left-handed pencil? It has nothing to do with the way it writes - it's all about the text printed on the pencil. On an ordinary pencil the text runs from the tip to the head so you can read it when you hold it. The printing on a left-handed pencil runs from bottom to tip.



Camel Fun Facts!

Arabian camels have one hump on their body. They live in the desert areas of North Africa. They are also referred to as “dromedaries.”



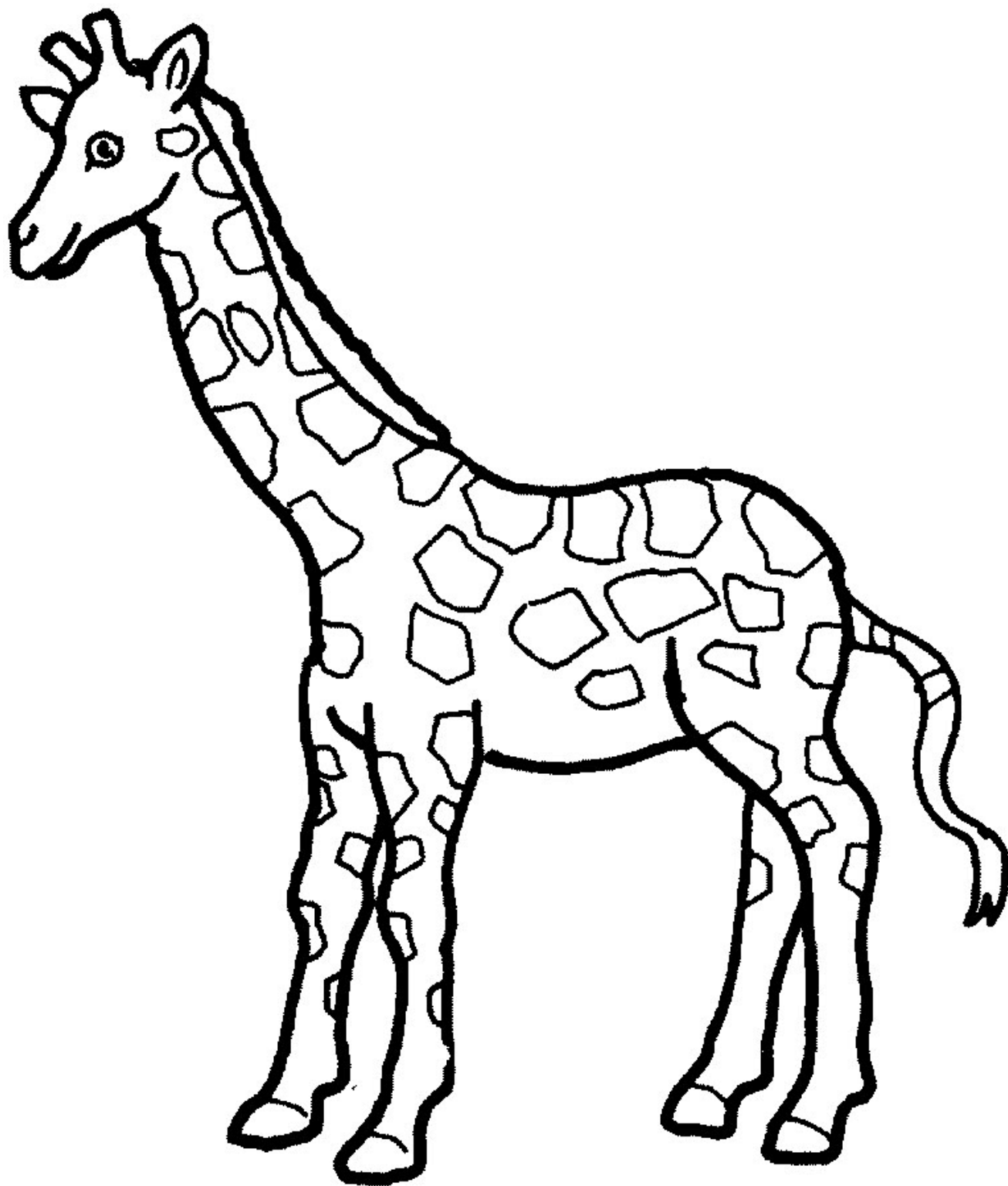
Bactrian camels have two humps. They are found in the desert areas of Asia.

Camels have three eyelids to protect themselves from blowing sand.



An annoyed camel will spit at a person.

Color the Giraffe!



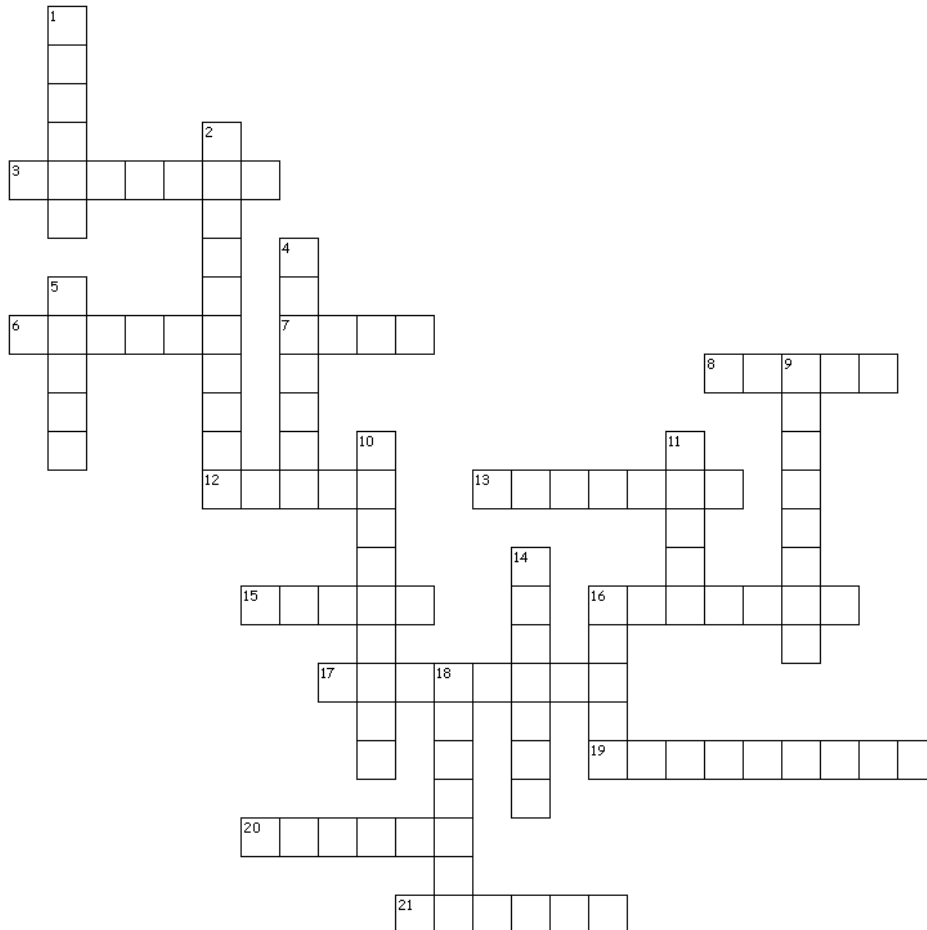
WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below: whale, Stute fish, raft, grating, leopard, spot, Ethiopian, sagacity, giraffe, zebra, suspenders, jack knife, finale, grasslands, Rudyard Kipling, genie, environment, arrogance, jungle, Neolithic, Stranger Man, letter, fishing spear, Tegumai, Beaver Swamp, alphabet, camel, dog, hump

G A N E S E R G T G C T R S E
A N D A L A R E R F N Y A U F
L H I A I A G A T E A E E S I
P B H L T P S A M T C R P P N
H W E I P S O N C N E E S E K
A F N A L I O I A I F L G N K
B G I A V R K G H F T I N D C
E E N N I E O D A T A Y I E A
T D I V A R R R R M E D H R J
S K N N R L I S U A Q O S S U
P E Z A E G E G W Q Y G I Z N
S T R A N G E R M A N D F E G
H S I F E T U T S G M T U B L
N E O L I T H I C T O P S R E
H U M P D R A P O E L E M A C

CRISS-CROSS

Place the following words in the puzzle using the clues below: leopard, zebra, Bavian, Kipling, whale, spear, giraffe, finale, chief, grating, letter, pencil, genie, arrogant, dromedary, Bactrian, grasslands, Bigham, raft, India, Ethiopian, Tegumai



Across

3. pounces his prey
6. writing instrument
7. flotation device
8. water dwelling mammal
12. primitive fishing device
13. author of Just So Stories
15. leader of the tribe
16. found in whale's throat
17. two-humped camel
19. friend of Leopard
20. the playwright
21. the end

Down

1. written communication
2. grassy region
4. long-necked
5. horse in striped pajamas
9. exceedingly proud
10. one-humped camel
11. where Kipling was born
14. wise baboon
16. magical creature
18. Teshumai's husband

True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. ____ Rudyard Kipling wrote *The Jungle Book*.
2. ____ The Baviaan is a wise old owl.
3. ____ The Leopard's spots help him blend in with his environment.
4. ____ The 'Stute Fish convinces the Whale to eat the Man.
5. ____ Tegumai broke his spear trying to stab the 'Stute Fish.
6. ____ In "How the Camel Got Its Hump", the Dog was used to haul rocks.
7. ____ Tafumai wrote a letter using piece of charcoal.
8. ____ Rudyard Kipling was an Englishman born in India.
9. ____ The Ethiopian hunted the Leopard.
10. ____ Dromedaries are camels with two humps.
11. ____ Leopards catch their prey by chasing them down.
12. ____ The Man gave the Whale indigestion.
13. ____ The Genie turned the 'Stute Fish into a Zebra.
14. ____ Stranger-Man did not speak the same language as Teshumai.

Matching

Match the person or place in the first column with the corresponding description in the second.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. 'Stute Fish | a. what Tegumai uses to catch fish |
| 2. grating | b. appears in two stories |
| 3. Zebra | c. used to hold up the Man's breeches |
| 4. Baviaan | d. a wise baboon |
| 5. Camel | e. the audience |
| 6. spear | f. a magical creature |
| 7. Best Beloved | g. striped animal |
| 8. Genie | h. says "Humph" a lot |
| 9. suspenders | i. what the raft becomes in the whales throat |

Questions/Activities - After the Play

This play was adapted from the book *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling. In what ways are the play and the book similar? How are they different? Why are they different?

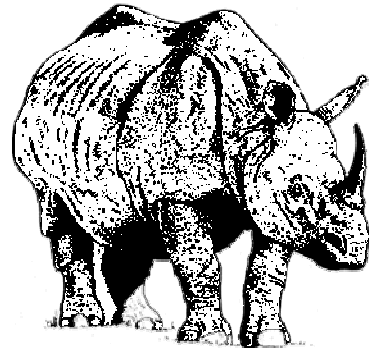
How many characters are in this play? How many actors? What do the actors change, besides their costumes, to become new characters? Were the costumes realistic? Effective?

Locations onstage are called “settings.” What are the various settings of this play? How could you tell when the characters were in a different setting? What changed? How were sound and lights used in establishing the setting? Were they effective? How much scenery was used?

This play incorporated modern music to tell the story. Do you think the songs added anything to the story? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY

As a group, read another story from Kipling’s “Just So Stories” – i.e. “How the Rhinoceros Got Its Skin” or “The Butterfly That Stamped” and pick a song (or songs) that you think would help tell that story. Write a scene that tells the story and incorporates the song. Rehearse the scene with your group and present it to your class.



WRITE IT!

What was your favorite part in the play?
Write a paragraph retelling that part in your own words.

Pick a segment from Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and write your own script for this scene. Keep in mind that, in theatre, the story should be told in dialogue (conversation between two or more characters) and action (what the characters do). Try to avoid the use of a Narrator. Make sure that each one of your characters in the scene has a reason (a *motivation*) for being in the scene.

Working with other students, rehearse the scene you have scripted and perform it for your class. Was the adapting process easier or harder than you thought it would be?

Write a letter to the actors from this production. Tell them what you liked about the play, their performance, etc. Mail your letters to:

The Barter Players
c/o Barter Theatre
P.O. Box 867
Abingdon, VA 24212-0867
ATTN: ALEXANDER

Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* are often referred to as "origin stories" or "pourquoi stories." These are fictional narratives that explain why something is the way it is – for example, why a snake has no legs or why a giraffe has a long neck. Pick your favorite animal and write your own "pourquoi story" explaining how they came to look/act the way they do!



Suggested Further Reading

Other writings by Rudyard Kipling

Novels

Captains Courageous

Kim

Short Story Collections:

The Jungle Book

The Phantom Rickshaw and Other Tales

**includes "The Man Who would Be King"*

Plain Tales from the Hills

Poetry

Barrack-Room Ballads

**includes "Gunga Din"*

