



Performance Notes for Chief Five Heads

THREE WAYS THAT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN UTILIZE THIS PLAY

1. Students can read the play aloud while sitting in the classroom. Ask the readers to skip all bracketed stage directions. You may prefer to rotate your actors to give all students a chance to read the speaking parts.
2. Students can perform the play in the classroom. Clear an area that can be used as the stage. Have the audience sit on the floor in front of the stage. Students in the play can make simple costumes and/or sets as described below. When the scene change, the characters "on stage" simply walk to the back of the room where they wait until their next appearance "on stage."
3. Students can perform the play on stage. Refer to the production notes that follow. Ask the actors to enter from the back of the room and move through the audience as they approach the stage.



COSTUMES

- NARRATOR — Can wear plain nice clothes.
- TAWONGA — Baggy linen pants, solid or patterned tan or brown shirt.
- SHANICE — Brightly colored solid or patterned dress or skirt with bright top, brightly colored headscarf. Should be in the same pattern and color scheme as Nikki.



- **LATOYA** — Brightly colored solid or patterned dress or skirt with bright top, brightly colored headscarf. Should be in the same pattern and color scheme as Arani.
- **TRIBESMEN** — Brown or tan pants and a colorful flowy type of shirt. Patterns and color schemes should match with village tribeswomen.
- **MOUSE/TRIBESWOMAN #1** — Gray pants and t-shirt for a base. For the mouse, add gray mouse ears on a headband. For Tribesman, add colorful flowy type of shirt.
- **FROG/TRIBESWOMAN #2** — Green pants and t-shirt for a base. For the frog, add a green hat with frog eyes. For Tribesman, add colorful flowy type of shirt.
- **BANGA/TRIBESMAN #1** — Brown or tan pants and a white or tan flowy type of shirt. For Tribesman, add colorful flowy type of shirt.
- **TAFARI** — Brightly colored patterned dress, long necklaces, headscarf. Should be slightly more “fancy” than others.
- **CHIEF FIVE HEADS** — Brown or black pants and tan shirt, somewhat baggy or flowy. Over this, he wears an olive green or brown robe or cloak—something to resemble snakeskin. On his face, he wears five snake masks. You can make the snake masks out of a paper plate. You also may be able to find a free printable snake mask online.

To make the masks: Cut the shape of a snakehead (kind of a wide heart shape) and color it green. You can also draw scales in a darker green. Use black construction paper for the mouth, and white for the teeth. You can also cut out a red tongue. Glue or tape all onto the paper plate.

Make yellow eyes with black slits out of construction paper and glue onto the plate. Mark where the actor’s eyes will be and cut holes (either in the eyes or as the nostrils) so they can see.

Punch holes on either side of the mask, and tie string or yarn through the holes and use it to tie the mask on.

Note: Make one mask to fit the actor’s face. This is where the holes for the strings will go. Then make four more, various smaller sizes, and attach to the main mask.

See images on next page for examples:



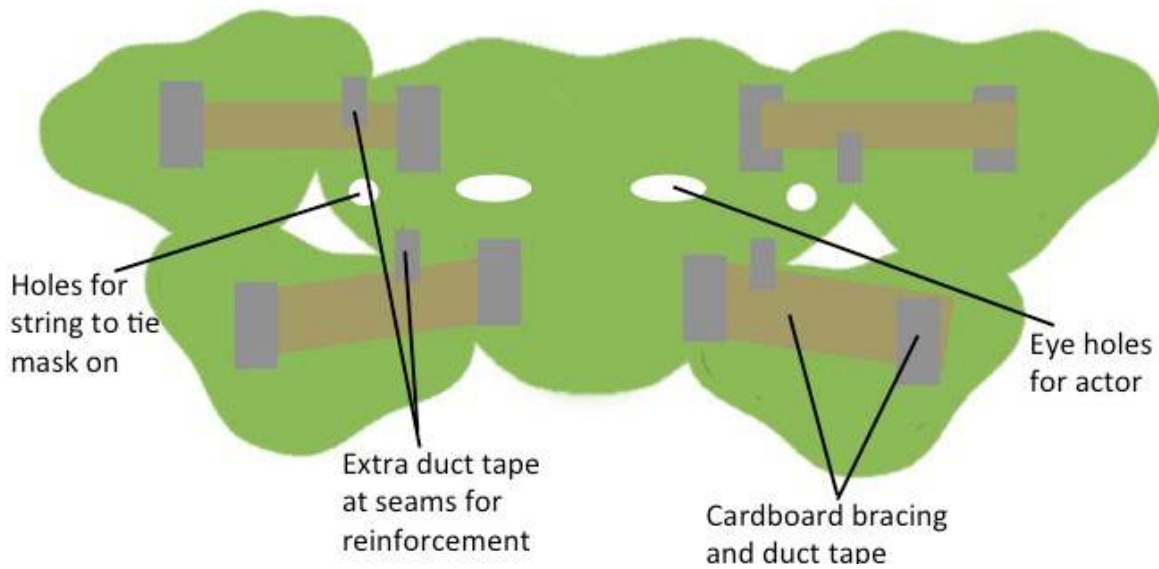
Main Mask



Front of Five-Headed Mask



Back of Five-Headed Mask





- BRIDAL PARTY — Brightly colored solid or patterned dresses or skirt with bright tops, brightly colored headscarves. Patterns and color schemes should match with Nikki.
- TRIBESWOMEN — Brightly colored solid or patterned dresses or skirt with bright tops, brightly colored headscarves. Patterns and color schemes should match with village tribesmen.



PROPS

Scene 1

N/A

Scene 2

- Cloth bag for ELDER SISTER to take on journey.

Scene 3

- Food for ELDER SISTER to take from the cloth bag (fake food, bread)
- Staff for BOY. This can be an actual staff or made from a long piece of cardboard.

Scene 4

- Bag of millet. This can be a cloth bag with the word “MILLET” written in sharpie.
- Something to grind millet with, such as a mortar and pestle. You can use an actual mortar and pestle, or make one, using a cup or bowl for the mortar and cutting a pestle from cardboard.
- Bread for ELDER SISTER to give to CHIEF FIVE HEADS. This can be real or made from cardboard.

Scene 5

- Stuff for bridal party to carry- various cloth bags filled with various items: food (rice balls and bread), brushes and combs, fruit and candy. Food items



can be real and wrapped in cloth napkins, or they can be made from cardboard.

- Cloth bag for YOUNGER SISTER to carry.

Scene 6

- Bit of cheese for YOUNGER SISTER to give to MOUSE. This can be a piece of paper, or the action can pantomime.
- Food for BRIDAL PARTY to give to BOY. This can be some of same food from cloth bags mentioned in Scene 5.

Scene 7

- Bag of millet. This can be a cloth bag with the word “MILLET” written in sharpie.
- Same millet grinding tool as used in Scene 4.



SETS

To make transitions easier, divide the stage into three sections. If you want to make a backdrop, you can paint it to show the three locations, or you can just rely on set pieces. The three locations are:

- 1) Tawonga’s Village, on one side of the stage.
- 2) The road, in the middle of the stage.
- 3) Inside Chief’s village, on the other side of the stage.

Scene 1 — Outside the Chief’s Village. This short scene can take place between the road and the Chief’s village, near the front of the stage, in front of the set pieces. You can place various cardboard bushes around the front of the stage for this scene.

Scene 2 — Tawonga’s Village, on one side of the stage. There is a hut onstage. The hut can be made out of a large piece of cardboard, such as a flattened refrigerator box. Draw the shape of the hut onto the cardboard and cut it out. Paint the bottom half of the hut light brown, and paint the roof a dark gray. You can also add other shades of browns and reds, and you can paint a doorway using



a darker shade of brown.

To prop it up, you can lean it against two milk crates, one on each side. See below for images of Zimbabwean huts:



Scene 3 — The road, in the middle of the stage. Cut a few bushes from cardboard and paint various shades of green. Place them around the stage. If possible, make at least one tree from cardboard. Cut a simple tree shape out of cardboard, paint brown, and glue paper leaves to the branches. This will be the tree that both ARANI and TAFARI sit by. If there is no tree, they can just sit anywhere. The cardboard bushes and trees can be tied to or propped up against milk crates or chairs. You can also make some rocks to scatter around. These can be made from cardboard as well, and propped up the same way, or you can make them from Styrofoam.

Scene 4 — Inside the Chief's Village, on the other side of the stage. Three huts are on stage. Huts can be made the same way TOWANGA'S hut is made, but smaller (small-medium sized pieces of cardboard) so that you can fit more of them.

Scene 5 — Tawonga's Village, same as Scene 2.

Scene 6 — The Road, same as Scene 3.

Scene 7 — Inside the Chief's Village, same as Scene 4.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

The wind sounds in Scene 4 and Scene 7 can be simulated by kids offstage. Kids can make a tunnel with their hands (like a fist with a hole through it) and blow



forcefully into their hands. You can also play a recording of wind or wind sound effects, which can be found online.

