

## Performance Notes for Fur and Feathers

### 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

Ask the children to come up with ideas about how to make their own costumes. The characters should bear some small resemblance to the animals they portray, but they are more fanciful than realistic. An option is to have them make animal masks out of paper plates. Below are some more suggestions for getting started.

- MAMA LION – Yellow clothing, can be furry material, and a mane of fuzzy material. Over-sized, bright spectacles.
- MAMA OSTRICH – White or light yellow furry fabric, draped. Pink knee socks and a bright kerchief over her head.
- MAMA ANTELOPE – A pink marabou boa or red tennis shoes.
- MONGOOSE – Camouflage paints over his or her face with cloth ears pinned to his or her hair.



- **GORILLA** – Brown or black t-shirt and pants with a circle of brown or black furry fabric glued or sewed to the middle of the T-shirt.
- **GIRAFFE** – Yellow T-shirt with black spots. Pants to match, or brown pants. You can make giraffe horns out of paper or cardboard, and attach to a plastic headband.
- **OSTRICH CHICKS** – Similar to MAMA OSTRICH, with white or light yellow furry fabric, draped. You can add brown and black spots to their backs, to make them slightly different, since they are chicks. Pink knee socks.
- **MAMA ZEBRA** – Black and white stripes. Optional long tail made of black and white striped fabric or painted cardboard, pinned or otherwise attached to waist band of pants.



## PROPS

### Scene 1

- A simple basket containing mangoes, real or plastic, for MAMA OSTRICH to carry.



## SETS

“Fur & Feathers” takes place at dusk in the African jungle. The scenery for both scenes is similar. If you are able to paint a backdrop, it could show a setting sun, large purple and black mountains, silvery streams, trees, and animals. This backdrop does not change.

**Scene 1:** The homes of MAMA OSTRICH and MAMA LION. You can make the two homes out of large, refrigerator-sized boxes, painting them so they look made of jungle materials- browns and greens to represent wood, mud, and leaves. You can also make vines and leaves from paper and fabric, and drape them over the huts.

NOTE: After Scene 1, the homes of MAMA LION and MAMA OSTRICH can be taken offstage or moved out of the way, and replaced with an anthill. You can use stage hands to help with the transition or use the actors in costumes to move it, making it a “part” of the show.

Another option is to create two sets and have the actors move from one side of the stage to the other.

**Scene 2:** An anthill. The anthill can be built using boxes stacked atop each other and painted reddish brown. When MONGOOSE goes through the anthill, they can just crawl behind it, pretending as if they or going into it.

You might paint big black ants all over your anthill or glue plastic or construction paper bugs on it.

The “dirt” referred to in the beginning of the second scene can be made of brown fabric draped on the ground, or toilet paper rolls painted brown and placed around the anthill. Either way, it should be placed so that MAMA OSTRICH can easily push it away. Be sure it does not obstruct the pathways of your actors.