

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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African Tales: Kalulu and Rumpelstiltskin

by
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African Tales was first presented by The Children's Theatre Company for the 1972-73 season.

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Preshow

Drumming. COMPANY performs a physical warm-up as NARRATOR addresses the audience.

NARRATOR My friends and I are here to tell you a story. Two stories, really. We're going to tell our stories with drums and dancing and big masks and big costumes. And these people here we your story-tellers. But in order to dance and drum and wear big masks they must "warm themselves up" beforehand. They have to get their muscles and bones and bodies and minds all working together. These young people have been practicing a long time in order to tell these two stories in a special way.

You know, everyone has his own way of telling stories. You have your way; I have mine. Maybe your parents have their own way of telling you stories. And somebody's father who lives in China has his way of telling a story. Or somebody who lives in France, in Norway. . . People tell stories, you know. all over the world. Everybody likes a good story. Everyone has his own way of telling it.

Today we're going to tell you our stories in something like the way they might be told if you and I lived in Africa. When you hear the storytellers speak on stage - the actors and actresses speak on stage - you probably won't be able to understand what they're saying. That is, unless you speak Swahili, which is one of the languages of Africa. And Swahili is the language that these people are going to use in the stories that you are going to hear today. But don't worry about that. Because I'll be here and I'll tell you what they're saying. so you'll understand in English what they're saying in Swahili.

Between the two stories that we're telling today. we'll take a little break and I'll teach you some Swahili words and a Swahili song.

Warm-up ends.

NARRATOR Now the actors and actresses are going backstage. They will put on their make-up and put on their big masks and big costumes. In a moment or two the stories will begin.

Prologue

NARRATOR

I'm going to tell you something about Africa. In some parts of Africa, all the children know exactly what their favorite time of day is. It comes toward evening when they gather with their fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers around a big open fire. The fire crackles and sends sparks up into the night sky, and the shadows move among the trees.

And all the children wait - wait very quietly - because pretty soon one man will stand up from the circle around the fire and will begin to tell them stories: wonderful, magical stories.

The first story that we're going to tell you today is called "Kalulu" and it's about a bragging rabbit who promises to grow an impossible crop.

The second of the two stories is one that you may already know. It is called "Rumpelstiltskin." It's really a German tale, but today we're going to tell it as if you and I lived in Africa.

In Africa, and it is evening, and we are all gathered around a big open fire, waiting very quietly for the story to begin...

Kalulu

A WOMAN sings a lullaby, continuing under narrative.

NARRATOR

There was once a time – a dreaming, magical time -- when everything was like every other thing. Men looked like trees, and trees were not so very different from men. Animals spoke to each other and to the men and women and children who were their friends. Even heaven was closer to the earth - as close as the roof of your house. And everybody lived a dream with everybody else.

JU JU MAN enters.

NARRATOR There was a magic man who brought the sky down on his shoulders and wore it like a ribbon. A magic man who danced and sang and told his people magic stories and listened to the grass. A magic man who loved the jungle beasts and danced with them at dusk. At dusk, when the shadows of the trees are long, Ju Ju - the magic man - danced with the animals and told his magic stories.

ANIMALS enter and dance.

NARRATOR Ju Ju and the animals of the jungle danced the night back into its own dark home so that the morning sun came and lived with them again. This is a very special morning for them all because the King has arrived.

KING sings chant; Others respond. After chant, KING addresses the ANIMALS in Swahili.

NARRATOR I'll tell you what he's saying. The King is saying, "Hello, my friends; it is spring. The earth was thirsty and the rains gave it something to drink. Now the earth is hungry. You must feed it. I will give you seeds and you must plant them. And when it is harvest time you must bring the crops that you have grown back to me." So the King called each animal to him, one by one. "Giraffe, your neck is long; you bring coconuts from the tops of the trees." "Monkey," said the King, "you grow beans." "Lion, some corn, if you please." "Zebra, you grow bananas which we like nice and yellow." "Warthog, bring me peanuts." Then the King said, "Kalulu!" But no one in the jungle answered him. "Kalulu!" he said again. "Where is that rabbit? It's a very bad thing to make an important person wait for a rabbit!" And the King began to shake all over, he was so angry. Just then, a rabbit appeared in the clearing. He didn't seem to be in a big hurry even though he was late. His name was Kalulu. And Kalulu never hurried for anyone. "Kalulu," said the King, "you're late! Grow me some yams and bring them back at harvest time." "Yams?" said Kalulu. "I don't even like yams." "What?!" said the King. (*KING in Swahili: "What?!"*) "What?!" said the animals of the jungle. (*ANIMALS in Swahili: "What?!" one after another.*) "Money -- that's 'what,'" said Kalulu. "I'll grow you some money in my special money garden. Just give me some gold and I will plant it for you."

NARRATOR

"Impossible!" said the King. But Kalulu said, "It is not impossible; not if you know the secret. And I know the secret. . . "

Now, the King was very tall, but he was not very smart. He was beginning to be interested in a crop that would grow money. ". . . Just give me lots of gold; that's all I need." Well, the King believed the bragging rabbit and gave him a bag of gold. And wasn't Kalulu pleased with himself! "But remember," said the King, "bring your crop at harvest time with the others." And Kalulu hurried home to tell his wife the good news.

Mrs. Kalulu wondered why her husband was so late coming home. (*KALULU shouts "Sungura!"*) Kalulu knew that his wife would be very happy. She always said Kalulu didn't make enough money. (*KALULU: "Sungura!"*) He didn't make any money. (*MRS. KALULU: "Moombaza."*) "Where did you get all that money?" "I'll tell you," said Kalulu. And Kalulu told her. "It happened like this: the King gave me a bag of gold. He thinks I'm going to plant it and grow a money farm. Can you believe that? Of course, I have to give it back in a year, but now we can buy all the things we ever wanted. . . (*MRS. KALULU cuts him off with a gesture.*) ". . . What's wrong?" said Kalulu. "What are you going to do when you have to pay back the King?" "We'll think about that later Let's go to the market!"

NARRATOR

The market was a wonderful place, if you had the money. But nobody in the jungle had any money. Business was always slow in the market. But then came Kalulu and his wife. And even though they knew better, there they were with all the King's money and there were all the things they ever wanted. And they began to buy. They bought and they bought. And then they bought some more. They bought pineapples from the Warthog and bells from the Giraffe. They bought jewels from the Monkey and rings and beads and bracelets and bangles. They bought bananas from the Lion and new clothes from the Zebra. They bought things a rabbit would never need. They bought so much, they could hardly hop.

The year passed quickly. Spring grew into summer and all the seeds of the earth grew ripe. And the earth was very happy. Finally, it was harvest time. All the beasts of the jungle brought

their crops to the King. And they were happy too. The Warthog was happy because it was a good year for peanuts. The Lion was happy because the corn was tall. The Zebra's bananas were nice and yellow. The Monkey was happy because her beans were just right. The Giraffe brought coconuts, and she was happy too. But Kalulu wasn't too happy. He didn't know what to do. "Kalulu." said the King, "where is my crop of money?" "Well," said Kalulu, "you've got to understand, money is a very slow-growing crop." "Maybe," said the King, "but next year my money had better be ready." So the King waited for a whole year. . . . But the next year, it was the same story. "It was a bad year for money," said Kalulu. "These things take time." "Time?!" said the King. "I'll give you some time in my rabbit stew! One more year, Kalulu."

NARRATOR

But of course it was no different the next year. "Not yet," said Kalulu. "You have to wait a little longer." "Wait?!" said the King. "I've waited long enough! Warthog -- you go with Kalulu to his money farm. See that he brings his crop back to me." Now Kalulu was really worried. What was he going to do? He didn't have any money tree in any money garden. But suddenly, he got an idea. "Warthog," he said. "I forgot my spear in the hall of the King. I better go back and get it. There might be hunters in the jungle. You wait here. . . ."

Now. Warthog was a hungry sort of fellow, and this looked like a good time for a meal. He looked around for something to eat. And just as he was about to pick some berries, Kalulu yelled out: "Hunters! Hunters! There's a fat warthog! Let's shoot him and spear him and have him for supper! Quick! This way! There he went! Catch him!" The Warthog didn't want to be anybody's supper so he ran away as fast as he could. And Kalulu laughed and laughed and laughed. The King said. "Kalulu! Where is the Warthog? And where is my money?"

"There were hunters in the jungle." said Kalulu. "I fought them off, but Warthog ran away." "Oh. Well. . . Lion -- you're a brave one! You go with Kalulu to his money farm."

Kalulu was so scared he didn't know what to do. But he told the Lion that it was a long way to his money farm and finally the Lion

grew very tired. "Oh. Lion. why don't you take a rest? Anyway, I forgot my shovel at the King's hall. We'll need it to dig up all the gold." Now, this Lion was a tired old lion anyway, so he just curled up and went to sleep as fast as you please.

NARRATOR

Kalulu was so frightened, he didn't watch where he was going. He tripped over a big something in the grass. But he was in luck. It was an antelope horn. Kalulu ran back to the sleeping Lion, put the horn to his ear, and blew as hard as he could. "Run!" said Kalulu. "It's right behind you! This way! Hurry! Look out! It's catching up! Closer and closer! Just don't look back! Oh, oh -- there it goes again! And again! And again!" And the Lion ran all the way back to the King's hall.

"What's going on?" said the King. "Oh," said Kalulu, "it was nothing. I don't know what frightened the Lion so much, but he sure was scared!" "Shame on you. Lion!" said the King. Now the King thought to himself: Warthog, who was an honest fellow, ran away. Lion, who was known for his courage, turned out to be a coward. "I know! Turtle! Come here!" And the oldest turtle in the world walked in the door. "Turtle! You're a sensible fellow. Make Kalulu lead you to his money farm. See that he harvests his crop and bring it to me. Now, hurry!... I said, Hurry!"

"Say, Turtle, old friend. . . I seem to have forgotten my spear. I'll just run back and get it." "Oh. no," said the Turtle, "Don't worry about that. You can use mine if you want." "Thanks." said Kalulu. "Oh, no!" said Kalulu. "I really am a fool! I forgot my shovel to dig up all the money, I'm afraid I'll have to go back and get it." "Well," said the Turtle. "we are in luck! I have my shovel right here." "What was that?!" said Kalulu . "There are evil spirits in this jungle! I'm going back for my magic charms." "Oh, no," said the Turtle, "I've got lots of nice charms right here around my neck." "Yours don't work! You do what you want! I'm going!" And the Turtle wondered what he would tell the King about Kalulu's money farm.

So Kalulu ran all the way home, jumped in his house, and shouted to his wife, "Help me! Hide me! They know I cheated!" "About the money farm?" "Yes! Yes! Hide me somewhere!" "Where? How? Here? There's nowhere!" (MRS. KALULU has an idea.) "I know!

Pretend that you're my baby I'll pull out all your fur, so that you look just like a baby rabbit." "Ouch! Ouch!" "Now, you hush up! You brought this on yourself!"

NARRATOR

And she pulled out all his fur, and took him and laid him on a blanket. Just then, there was a knock on the door. "Hello?" "The King wants Kalulu!" said the Lion. "Where is he?" "He's not here. Maybe he's harvesting the crop on his money farm. Only Baby and I are home. Aren't we, Baby?" "Baby comes with us! We'll hold him hostage until Kalulu returns with his money crop." "Oh, no! You can't take my baby! He's. . . (MRS. KALULU suddenly has an idea.) sick! And he might die! Won't you, Baby?" (LION gestures.) "Baby comes with us!" But when they arrived at the King's hall and brought the baby before the King - sure enough! - Baby was dead.

At least, that's how it looked. Its eyes were closed, its body was stretched out, and its little paws hung down limp. (MRS. KALULU wails.) "My baby! My baby!" cried Mrs. Kalulu. "You've killed my baby and now he's dead!" The Giraffe said, "There, there. . ." and did what she could. (More wailing.) The Warthog tried everything he could think of and so did the Zebra . . . (More wailing.) . . . but nothing would help. Even the Lion said, "I'm sorry." The King said, "I'm so sorry. Take this bag of gold. I know it's not much when your baby is dead, but please take it. I insist."

So Mrs. Kalulu took the bag of gold, and Warthog and Lion took up Kalulu, and together they all went home. Kalulu was groaning and shivering in his nakedness. "I'm cured of boasting and bragging and cheating. I promise never to do it again!" And when Kalulu had grown a new fur coat - longer, thicker, and glossier than ever - he took the bag of money and laid it before the King. The good King was happy, but no happier than Kalulu, who had learned that lies bring only troubles and worries and a sore hide!

Reprise of KING'S chant and ANIMAL response.