

Performance Notes for The Blacksmith's Dilemma

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 – Simple modern day clothes, such as black or brown pants and a white button-up shirt, or traditional Ugandan clothes. Traditional clothes can be represented by a long white or off-white gown and a black blazer for a male or brightly colored dress with a sash for a female.
- WAKALUGA – Simple clothes, such as brown or tan linen pants and a white or tan t-shirt. A black apron overtop, leather if possible, but if not any fabric will do.
- TIAN, HANIF and RAFIKI – Traditional tribal clothing, with bright colors and animal pelts.
- GUARDS #1 and #2 – Traditional tribal clothing, with bright colors and animal pelts. They hold spears and tall shields (See Props Notes for how to make these.)
- SERVANTS #1 and #2 – Long white or off-white garments.

- KING – A red robe and a tall crown.
- WAZIMU – Simple rags.



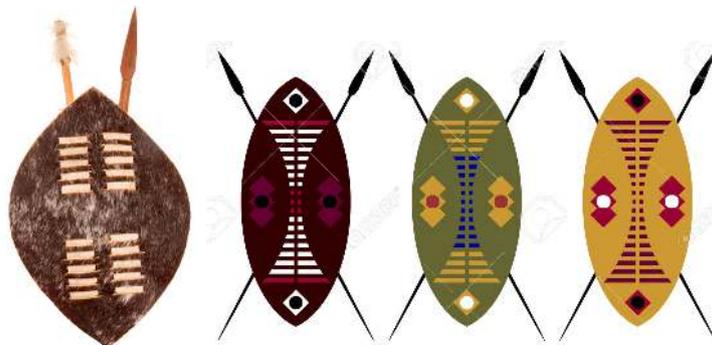
PROPS

Scene 1

- Long piece of metal. You can cut a long strip of cardboard and cover in tin foil, or paint with a metallic paint.
- Hammer (real or cardboard.)
- Spears and shields for GUARDS. You can cut spears out of cardboard, or cut a spearhead and tape it to a long stick.

For the shield, you can cut a football-shaped piece of cardboard and paint a tribal design on the front. You can cut a strip of cardboard to tape on the back to be used as a handle. Paint the front to resemble traditional African Swords- can be brown or black with white strips, or a colorful design.

See below for some ideas for options:



Scene 2

- A big palm leaf that SERVANT uses to fan KING. This can be cut from paper.
- Pieces of iron to be carried by SERVANTS. These can be made from various pieces of cardboard wrapped in foil or painted silver-gray.

Scene 3

- Various tools for RAFIKI, TIAN, and HANIF to use. You can make these out of cardboard and paint them black. See below for some images of blacksmith tools.



Scene 4

- Cloth bag, filled with berries and bits of root. Actors can pretend to eat the berries and root or you can use pieces of cardboard, painted.

Scene 5

- Two big palm leaves that SERVANTS use to fan KING. Leaves can be cut from paper.
- Two large buckets.



SETS

To make scene changes easy, the stage can be divided into three sections. You can make a backdrop to show the three locations, or just rely on the sets. The locations are:

- 1) Wakaluga's Forge, on one side of the stage.
- 2) The palace, in the middle of the stage.
- 3) The bushland, on the other side of the stage.

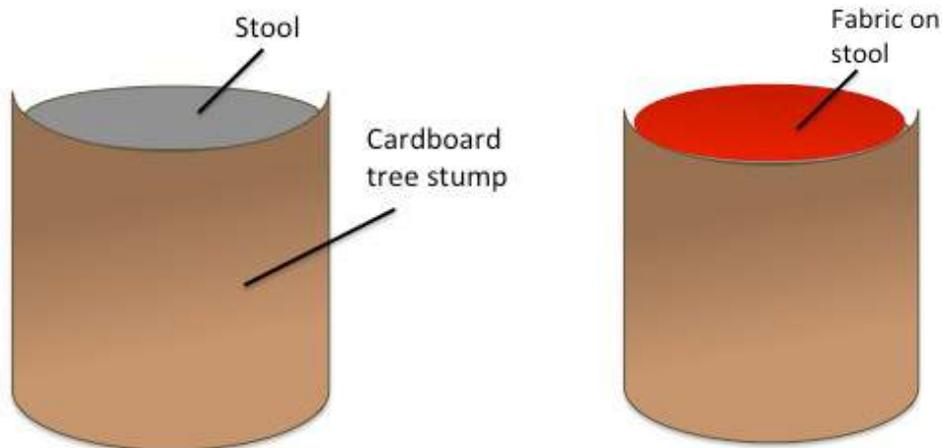
- **Scene 1** – Wakaluga's Forge has an anvil as the centre of focus. You can cut out a large anvil shape from cardboard and paint gray. You can add different shades of gray to create a 3D effect, like the picture below. Use another piece of cardboard to create a stand or rest the piece against a chair or milk crate. Optional: If you want to cut out the shape twice, and use other pieces of cardboard to attach the two pieces together at the top and the sides, you can create a free-standing anvil.



- **Scene 2** – The Palace has a throne made from a tree trunk, which sits on one side of the stage.

For the throne, start with a tall stool. Cut a piece of cardboard that is the height and width of the stool. You can cut the top to curve down a little to give the look of a 3D tree stump. Paint to look like a tree stump. Tape to chair, ensuring that it still allows for KING to sit.

Optional: You can cover the top with a red fabric to make it look more “royal”.



- **Scene 3** – Same as Scene 1.
- **Scene 4** – The Bushland can be decorated with leaves and twigs made from paper and cardboard. Also, at least one bush for WAZIMU to sit behind. This can be made from a large refrigerator box sized piece of cardboard painted green and cut to resemble a bush. You can use the whole box, so that it stands on its own, or if it is flat, you can use another piece of cardboard to help prop it up.
- **Scene 5** – Same as Scene 2.