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*Dramatic Publishing*



**A Play**

**By**

**Edward Mast**

**and**

**Lenore Bensinger**

# **DINOSAURUS**

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***Drama. By Edward Mast and Lenore Bensinger. Cast: 6+ (3 either gender and 3+ dancers, either gender). “There’s a place down below where the dinosaurs live.”*** Looking for oil underneath Wisconsin, two geologists stumble on a lost world of dinosaurs. Are the humans the heroes? No: this story is told from the viewpoint of the dinosaurs, who must struggle to deal with the intrusion of these pushy, noisy, troublemaking little humans. The dinosaurs try everything to get rid of the intruders, until finally history repeats itself with a solution that at first seems tragic—but just wait. *Dinosaurus* is a shadow play with life-sized dinosaurs projected on a full-size screen. The effects create wonderful surprise. *Production notes in the script are available containing details on all technical aspects of staging, and setting. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: DB5.*

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DINOSAURUS



*Dramatic Publishing*

311 Washington St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098-330  
Phone: (800) 448-7469

[www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com)

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A Play by

EDWARD MAST & LENORE BENSINGER



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

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## SETTING

All in silhouette behind a white screen which will fill with shadows and colors. The figures are rear-projected by a single light-source about 20 feet behind an opaque screen. Thus six-foot-tall performers can project dinosaur figures twenty, thirty, fifty feet tall.

The Narrator is the only creature in front of the screen. The two humans in the story speak for themselves. The dinosaurs speak in a range of sounds: wails, twitters, roars, growls, hoots, screeches, moans, calls, songs, chatters. The Narrator simultaneously interprets the dinosaur language into human talk for us.

Much of the dinosaur dialogue is included as a guide to behavior. Wherever music and movement are articulate enough, the Narrator's translation may be cut.

### A NOTE ON STAGING

Our original production used a 20' high by 30' wide screen of Visqueen (inexpensive opaque white plastic) stretched across the front of the proscenium. A leiko light source on the ground about 25 feet behind the screen was the single light source. We removed the lens and reflector from the light, which enabled us to cast sharper shadows. We also set two other light sources with colored gels next to the main source, so we could alter the color of the screen and shadows. Caverns, backgrounds, etc. were projected with cardboard cutouts in front of the lamp.

Actors playing humans stood right behind the screen, those playing dinosaurs stood farther back, about halfway between the light source and the screen, so humans and dinosaurs were always in true proportionate scale to each other. The script calls for very specific dinosaur types; we found that we were able to create these shapes and costumes using all sorts of inexpensive materials.

## CHARACTERS

short noneck	(PEEK)
tall noneck	(BUNK)
Narrator	
Dinosaurs	(HARK POINT TURTLE TALL KINGKING SPIKE BIG ZOOZOO MEATMOUTH BABY and others)

Names are mainly for identification in the script: only Kingking, Big, Meatmouth, and Spike are said aloud. These names may be taken as dinosaur-talk for species: i.e., Kingking is a kingking, Spike is a spikeface, etc.)

### Note on doubling:

In the original production, all the dinosaurs were played by 3 dancers. This made the total cast 6 people, plus 1 musician who created all the dinosaur sounds. Larger casts are of course possible, but the show worked fine with this small cast.



*(Music: the sounds of the dinosaur world. A huge shapeless mass at center, hardly moving. Trembling slightly, as with a vast slow heartbeat. In front of the screen, enter the Narrator, a codgy old sort in flannel and jeans. He peers at us for a moment; looks at the shape onscreen; turns back to us.)*

**NARRATOR:** There's a place  
down below  
where the dinosaurs live.

*(The huge shape has begun to move; now lifts up a long graceful head; lifts up its huge weight to become a massive dinosaur, higher than the screen, rising and moving off slowly. On the ground at center, it leaves a large round egg, almost opaque, though we can perhaps discern some movement inside, as through gauze. From the side, a long brontosaurus or diplodocus neck bends down gently to nuzzle and cuddle the egg, giving it warmth. The neck bends back up and disappears; from the other side, another long neck bends down to cuddle the egg. One by one, several different types of dinosaur step up to fondle, inspect, and embrace the egg.)*

**NARRATOR:** A hundred million years  
they've lived by themselves  
in a warm dark world down beneath a volcano  
laying their precious eggs in the mud  
and raising their young.  
A million centuries all to themselves.  
Until. . .

*(A crash off stage. Music ceases. Dinosaurs stop moving; they take postures of defense. Silence. Music picks up again as they begin to move. Crash. Silence. Music stops, dinosaurs freeze to listen. They start to move. Another crash. Music out. A pteradactyl! - - Point - - gives a long piercing screech.)*

**NARRATOR:** Which means  
Whattdahekizzat!?

HARK: *(A longneck hadrosaur)* Earthquake?

TURTLE: *(An ankylosaurus)* Noooooope.

HARK: Thunder?

TURTLE: Noooooopee.

HARK: Avalanche?

TURTLE: Noooooopee.

POINT: Something strange!

HARK: Relax. Let's have a look.

*(POINT and HARK exit, leaving TURTLE to follow more slowly.)*

TURTLE: Hey! Wait up! *(Turtle exits.)*

*(A shaft of sunlight spills from offstage. From that direction, enter two humans: PEEK and BUNK. PEEK scurries; BUNK looks around nervously. Both are using flashlights.)*

PEEK: Fantastic. Curious and fantastic.

BUNK: Yeah but where are we?

PEEK: Your dynamite broke through the surface.

BUNK: Underground? Criminy. We better scam.

PEEK: But this is a great cave! Don't you love caves?

BUNK: Not this one. I'm leaving. *(Turns to go, stumbles, falls.)*  
Hey!

PEEK: You alright?

BUNK: Yeh, yeh. Can't see a thing in here. Stepped in one of these pizza-size potholes.

PEEK: *(Inspecting it.)* That's not a pothole.

BUNK: Whaddisit?

PEEK: A footprint.

BUNK: Gimme a break. Nothing's gotta foot that big.

PEEK: I don't think I believe it.

BUNK: Believe what?

PEEK: This has every characteristic of a sauropod footprint.

BUNK: Whassa sauropod? Some kinda plant/

PEEK: Some kinda dinosaur.

BUNK: Mean like a fossil?

PEEK: Fossil nothing. This print is recent.

BUNK: Take a break. It's elephant or sumprm.

PEEK: With claws and three toes? This is clearly the imprint of some gigantic saurian reptile.

BUNK: Oh don't start with the professor talk. Too hot for that.

PEEK: It was hot during the Mesozoic too!

BUNK: Messa what?

PEEK: The Mesozoic Age, 97 million years ago!

BUNK: So?

PEEK: So we have stumbled onto a place which resembles the surface of the earth as it was 100 million years ago. Aren't you the least bit excited?

BUNK: *(Takes a beat.)* How many million.

PEEK: And what's more, this footprint is evidence of living prehistoric life!

BUNK: Ymean dinosaurs/

PEEK: Yes! Dinosaurs! Yes! *(Calms himself quickly.)* Impossible of course. Dinosaurs are extinct.

BUNK: Sure are.

PEEK: Extinct for at least sixty-five million years. But something made this footprint.

BUNK: Lissen we better get our shale samples and get outta here.

PEEK: Get out of here?

BUNK: Yeh.

PEEK: We have discovered - - with the help of your dynamite - - a geologically impossible environment. Any scientist would give his life to spend just one single moment here. And you want to leave?

BUNK: You got it.

PEEK: Where's your spirit of inquiry?

BUNK: I got plenty of inquiry. Wanna find out if there's oil here. That's my job.

PEEK: Don't be such a hardhat. We've got plenty of time to get our ground samples. Right now, I want to find out what made this unbelievably incredible footprint.

BUNK: Whatever made that footprint, I don wanna meet it.

PEEK: Here's another one! This way!

BUNK: C'mon. . .



*(Near the Waterhole. Enter PEEK and BUNK.)*

PEEK: Another. All the weight on two feet, like some big meateater. Another.

BUNK: I'm tellin ya, elephant tracks.

PEEK: Leading to a waterhole.

BUNK: A waterhole! Great. This whole place's muggy as an armpit.

PEEK: Look! Look! Look here!

BUNK: *(Jumps, raises fists, glancing around ready to fight.)*  
What! Where! What is it?

PEEK: Look at all these tracks!

*(BUNK sighs and relaxes while PEEK goes on.)*

Different sizes. Bipedal, quadripedal, meateater, planteater; this is too good to be true! What a find, what a find, what a find!

BUNK: *(Staring at him.)* Aren't you hot or anything? *(BUNK peels off jacket, splashes water on face. Starts fiddling with equipment.)*

PEEK: Is this really time for a bath?

BUNK: The equipment got dirty in that last blast.

PEEK: *(Already distracted.)* I've got to record these tracks. *(Whips out a camera, flashes a picture.)*

BUNK: Hey! Don't do that! What if something sees us?

PEEK: Relax. Just one more picture. *(Points camera at huge mushroom; stops.)* Do you know, these aren't rocks?

BUNK: What are they?

PEEK: Giant mushrooms. This must be what the creatures eat.

BUNK: *(Looks around, fearful.)* What creatures?

PEEK: Whatever lives down here. Mushrooms don't need sunlight; they can grow underground, and the conditions here have apparently mutated this species into gargantuan fungi.

BUNK: Giant mushrooms. Yuk. Hope they don't have giant slugs to match.

*(A little round thing bounces across and off.)*

What wassaat!

PEEK: It had fur.

BUNK: Like a mouse?

PEEK: Or like the tiny proto-mammals that were alive during the Mesozoic! Incredible! Everything points to prehistoric conditions! Let's follow these tracks.

BUNK: Lissen we better get outta here.

PEEK: Oh come on! What have you got to lose! This could be our chance to make a name for ourselves!

*(PEEK is going off. BUNK follows, speaking as he goes.)*

BUNK: Terrific. I can see the headlines. "Two employees of Mobil Oil given up for lost. Search parties find nothing but squashed tools and a few human bone splinters. . ."

*(They are off. Enter HARK opposite, moving to the water. Enter POINT behind him.)*

POINT: Look out! Look out! Nonecks were here!

HARK: Shut up, wouldja? I just outran Kingking. I'm thirsty.

*(HARK drinks from water. Spits it out.)*

HARK: Ptah!

POINT: Whatsamatter! Whatsamatter!

HARK: Water tastes funny.

POINT: Noneck taste! Noneck taste! They're taking all the water for themselves!

HARK: They can't do that. Can they?

POINT: Followem! Followem!

HARK: Relax. I'm coming, I'm coming.

*(The two of them exit to follow the humans. Enter KINGKING, exhausted.)*

KINGKING: PFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFOooooo.  
I must be getting old. Can't even catch a duckhead.  
I gotta eat somethin. Even a pteradactyl.  
Even a lousy pteradactyl sounds good.  
Hey. *(Snuffs. Listens.)* Hey!

*(Enter MEATMOUTH, a gorgosaurus. KINGKING roars at him. The two meateaters do a ferocious dance of territory, trying to scare each other away.)*

KINGKING: Hey! MEATMOUTH! This is my turf! Get back on your own turf!

MEATMOUTH: But there's nobody left to eat on my turf!

KINGKING: I don't care! This is mine! GIT!

*(KINGKING grabs MEATMOUTH by the neck, hurls him away and off.)*

KINGKING: Hard enough without competition. What's that?



*(KINGKING snuffs. Hides. Enter SPIKE, a triceratops, chomping around and humming. KINGKING roars and leaps on and grabs SPIKE.)*

KINGKING: Gotcha!

SPIKE: Ah, leggo.

KINGKING: AHHHH PPPffooo, a spikeface. Ptui! Make my mouth bleed.

SPIKE: Shuttup Kingking. Yer loud as a noneck.

KINGKING: I am not! *(Pause.)* What's a noneck?

SPIKE: Some dinky little animal. What's it ta you?

KINGKING: I'm hungry, that's what!

SPIKEFACE: Watch my horns, loudmouth.

KINGKING: Too bad, spikeface. Looks like you're lunch.

*(They growl, circle, lash at each other. KINGKING tries to clamp with jaws; SPIKE fends off with horns. KINGKING fights fierce; SPIKE suddenly drops over on his back, playing dead. KINGKING pauses, staring down at him. Snuffs.)*

KINGKING: Whaddy, think I'm stupid?

SPIKE: Win a few, lose a few.

*(KINGKING bends down to eat. Behind him, enter PEEK and BUNK. BUNK sees KINGKING; PEEK, looking close at the ground, keeps walking toward the battle.)*

BUNK: JEEEEEEEEEEZ! !

*(KINGKING turns, distracted. Spike hops up, escapes.)*

KINGKING: Huh? *(Turns back.)* Awwwww brrrrr! Gottaway!  
Whassa racket?

*(BUNK cowers back, but PEEK stands in plain sight, staring at KINGKING.)*

PEEK: Impossible.

KINGKING: *(Bends down to look at PEEK.)* What daheck is that?

PEEK: It can't be. Tyrannosaurus Rex.

KINGKING: Sure makes funny noises.

PEEK: *(Pulls out a measuring tape.)* Fully . . . eighteen feet high. Each foot, two yards across.

*(PEEK wanders around KINGKING closely, staring, measuring with a tape, making notes in a book. KINGKING looks down at him, puzzled.)*

KINGKING: *(Snuffs.)* Yuk. Smells awful.  
Too scrawny to eat anyway.

PEEK: Totally incredible.

BUNK: Pssssst!

PEEK: Alive. Alive!

BUNK: Let's go!

PEEK: Unbelievable. Reflexes?

*(Walks right up, feels KINGKING's leg. KINGKING jumps.)*

KINGKING: Watch it!

PEEK: Can I be dreaming?

*(Pokes at KINGKING with tape.)*