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*Dramatic Publishing*



# The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi



Comedy  
by Y York  
Adapted from the story  
by Rudyard Kipling



The Dramatic Publishing Company

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# The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi

*Comedy. By Y York.*

*Adapted from the story by Rudyard Kipling.*

*Cast: 5 actors (4 with doubling).* A free-flowing, comic brawl of a loose adaptation of the Kipling classic in which nobody dies! Darzee, the diva, is incensed when Rikki Tikki Tavi washes up in Darzee's pristine garden. Darzee and her friend, Chuchu, pull out the stops attempting to run off the pesky mongoose, until they see Nag, cobra and despot, run in fear when Nag discovers that a mongoose is loose. This comedy about sharing and cooperation was a sell-out hit in its Honolulu Theatre for Youth premiere. *Unit set.*

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Honolulu Theatre for Youth premiere.

(l-r) Lisa Ann M. Omoto, Cynthia See and Sheilah Sealey.

*Photo: Jean-Jacques Dicker*

*Cover design: David G. Sergel*



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# **THE GARDEN OF RIKKI TIKKI TAVI**

**A Play  
by  
Y YORK**

**Adapted from the Story  
by  
RUDYARD KIPLING**



**Dramatic Publishing**  
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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*THE GARDEN OF RIKKI TIKKI TAVI* was first presented by Honolulu Theatre for Youth, October 10, 1998, at Richardson Theatre, Ft. Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii. The production was directed by Mark Lutwak and included the following artists:

#### CAST

Darzee . . . . . CYNTHIA SEE  
Rikki Tikki Tavi . . . . . SHEILAH SEALEY  
Teddy/Nag . . . . . HERMEN TESORO, JR.  
Chuchu . . . . . LISA ANN M. OMOTO

#### PRODUCTION STAFF

Scenic Design . . . . . JESSICA DODGE  
Costume Design . . . . . FRANCES KENNY  
Lighting Design . . . . . RICHARD SCHAEFER  
Prop Master . . . . . BULLDOG  
Music Composer . . . . . MARK LUTWAK  
Music Director . . . . . LINA DOO  
Stage Manager/Choreography . . . . . LAURIE A. BARKER

# THE GARDEN OF RIKKI TIKKI TAVI

## CHARACTERS

DARZEE . . . . . a tailor bird, cranky, formal, stingy, a diva

RIKKI . . . . . a young mongoose, has the confidence of the  
innocent

TEDDY . . . . . a human child, wears a human mask

CHUCHU . . . . . a muskrat, needy, literal

NAG . . . . . a cobra, sly, smart

PLACE: A bushy garden outside of a house.

Note: The human actor beneath each animal should be apparent, particularly the human faces. When there is “mistaken identity” it’s for the characters on stage, not the audience.

Note: Characters can be played by female or male actors. Change the existent gender-specific pronouns as needed.



# ACT ONE

**AT RISE:** *A bushy garden. RIKKI sleeps, unseen. DARZEE enters, inhales deeply.)*

**DARZEE** *(sings; song found at end of playbook).*

**All in order,  
Everything fine,  
Everywhere I look  
I see what is:**

**MINE, mine mine mine  
MINE, mine mine mine  
MINE, mine mine mine  
MINE, mine mine mine.**

**Nothing to share  
Nothing to give  
Nothing to lose  
As long as I live.**

**It's my garden,  
My garden.  
My one and only  
Garden.**

**It all belongs to me— *(Cadenza.)*  
Darzee!**

DARZEE (*looks around. Speaks*). Everything in order, my ground, my bushes, my nest, my mine. (*The sound of a snore.*) Snoring? How can that be? Could I be snoring and speaking at the same time? (*A snore. Proud:*) I am snoring and speaking at the same time. I'm sleeping while I'm waking. I am amazing. (*A snore. DARZEE is getting closer to the sound.*) Never, never in all the world has there been such an amazing bird such as myself. To sleep, to wake—

(*DARZEE trips over the sleeping RIKKI.*)

DARZEE. And to trip! All in the same moment. (*Sees RIKKI.*) Wait a minute. (*RIKKI is snoring; a snore.*) This is sleeping. This is snoring. Could this be me? (*Touches RIKKI.*) This is not feathers. If this is not feathers, this is not a bird. If this is not a bird, this isn't me, and if this isn't me, this cannot sleep in my garden. (*Squawks loudly.*)

RIKKI (*awakens with a start*). Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki!

DARZEE. Out out out!

RIKKI. Rikki Rikki Rikki Tikki—

DARZEE. Stop that.

RIKKI. Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki—

DARZEE. Stop making that noise at once!

(*RIKKI instantly silent.*)

DARZEE. Why were you making that horrible sound?

RIKKI. You scared me!

DARZEE. Well, calm down.

RIKKI. I don't know how to calm down.

DARZEE. Take a big breath. (*Demonstrates.*)

(*RIKKI takes a big breath.*)

DARZEE. Do it again.

(*RIKKI takes a big breath.*)

DARZEE. How's that?

RIKKI. Great! (*RIKKI does big breath around the garden.*)

DARZEE. What—? What are you doing?

RIKKI. I love big breath. (*Taking big breaths.*)

DARZEE (*over*). Big breath is for calmness!

RIKKI. Oh. Yes, I am. Big breath made me calm.

DARZEE. Good. Now you can leave.

RIKKI. But I'm not scared anymore.

DARZEE. I beg your pardon?

RIKKI. So why should I leave?

DARZEE. No strangers allowed.

RIKKI. I'm no stranger. I'm Rikki Tikki Tavi.

DARZEE (*aghast*). Your *name*?! You're telling me your name?

RIKKI. Rikki for short, until I'm tall, then I'll be Rikki Tikki Tavi. My full height, my whole name.

DARZEE. I have no interest in your full height, your whole name or you.

RIKKI. I never met anybody who wasn't interested in my full height, my whole name or me.

DARZEE. You must have a very limited acquaintanceship.

RIKKI. What's that mean?

DARZEE. You must not know very many creatures!

RIKKI. I know Ma, I know my brother, I know my sister,  
and I know *you*!

DARZEE. You don't know me.

RIKKI. Ma, one, brother, two, sister, three, and you, four. I  
know *four*. Four! You're my fourth mongoose.

DARZEE (*insulted*). What did you call me?!

RIKKI. Four!

DARZEE. I am not a four! (*Sputters.*) I mean I am not a  
mongoose.

RIKKI. You're not?

DARZEE. I'm not. What are these? What are they?

RIKKI. I don't know.

DARZEE. Wings! These are wings. Do *you* have wings?

RIKKI. Not yet, but I'm a baby.

DARZEE. Never, you will never have wings.

RIKKI. You are a very strange sort of mongoose.

DARZEE. I am definitely, most assuredly, most infinitely  
NOT, I say, NOT a mongoose. I am Darzee. Darzee the  
tailor bird!

RIKKI. What's a tailor bird?

DARZEE (*speechless, then*). A tailor bird is a bird that  
sews. I am two things, a bird and a tailor. I am Darzee  
the tailor and bird.

RIKKI. How do you do, Darzee the tailor and bird. Glad to  
meetcha, Darzee the tailor and bird. I'm Rikki Tikki  
Tavi, the mongoose and mongoose.

DARZEE. Whoever you are, you cannot stay here.

RIKKI. Why not?

DARZEE. This is my home, mine.

RIKKI (*looks around, can't believe it*). This isn't a home.

DARZEE. This is a perfect home.

RIKKI. A home is a hole in the ground. A snug, safe, everybody-touching-the-sides-of-the-tunnel place.

DARZEE. What kind of home is that?

RIKKI. A burrow.

DARZEE (*gets an idea*). A burrow? Your home is a burrow?

RIKKI. That's what I'm saying. A burrow.

DARZEE (*idea, new tactic*). Ah, a burrow, your home is a burrow. A nice little burrow, all safe and snug touching the sides of the— No, this is nothing like that.

RIKKI. This is very different.

DARZEE. This is all open, all exposed. (*Waves arms.*) Nobody touching the sides of anything. Nothing like your sweet little burrow home.

RIKKI. No.

DARZEE. Where your ma, and your brother, and your sister are.

RIKKI (*sighing*). Oh.

DARZEE. Waiting impatiently for you to come home.

RIKKI (*misery*). Oh.

DARZEE. You miss it terribly.

RIKKI. I miss it terribly.

DARZEE. Do not wait. Do not tarry. Get back to that burrow.

RIKKI. Yes, I need to get back there.

DARZEE. The sooner the better.

RIKKI. I must go. I must get there. (*RIKKI looks this way and that.*)

DARZEE. Hurry hurry.

RIKKI. Which way?

DARZEE. Pardon?

RIKKI. I don't know which way.

DARZEE. You must know which way.

RIKKI. I don't know which way.

DARZEE. Think, think. (*Paces.*) Come on, let's think.

RIKKI (*thinking*). It was dark.

DARZEE. Yes yes, dark.

RIKKI. It was wet.

DARZEE. It's all coming back to you.

RIKKI. All of a sudden, whoosh!

DARZEE. Whoosh?

RIKKI. Uh huh. Dark, wet, whoosh, can't see, floating and floating, land here, sleep, wake up. Meet you. My best friend. (*Tries to hug DARZEE.*)

DARZEE (*escaping*). Fuss fuss fuss.

RIKKI. I'll never find my way back. I have to stay in this burrow.

DARZEE. This is not a burrow! This is a *garden*.

RIKKI (*amazed, happy*). This is a garden?

DARZEE. The Garden of Darzee.

RIKKI. I'm in a garden?

DARZEE. You certainly are.

RIKKI. It's a wonderful garden!

DARZEE. Yes, it is.

RIKKI. A perfect garden!

DARZEE. Yes, it is perfect.

RIKKI. Now that *I'm* here!

DARZEE. No—

RIKKI. "A garden isn't perfect until a garden's got its mongoose."

DARZEE. Says who?

RIKKI. My ma. She told me "One day you'll grow up and find a garden to make perfect."

DARZEE. No no no.

RIKKI. And I've found mine.

DARZEE (*holds face in hands*). No no no no no.

RIKKI. Oh, don't cry for me. It was almost time to leave home anyway. Ma was going to teach me how to hunt and then toss me out. (*Pats DARZEE.*) Thanks for sharing your garden with me.

DARZEE (*choking*). Share?!

RIKKI. Yeah, it's a great garden.

DARZEE. Share my garden with a mongoose?!

RIKKI. It's very friendly of you.

*(DARZEE does big breath around the garden to calm down.)*

RIKKI. Oh, goody.

*(RIKKI follows behind doing big breath. DARZEE turns and faces RIKKI. Another tactic.)*

DARZEE. Actually, if I may be perfectly frank...Rikki? This is a terrible garden, a horrible garden, a big big bother of an uncomfortable garden.

RIKKI (*investigating*). This is a comfortable bush.

DARZEE. Prickly stickily thistily.

RIKKI. This is a comfortable ground.

DARZEE. Hard, rocky, dirty, flat!

RIKKI. This is...this is a wonderful comfortable spot.

DARZEE. That is— That's my nest!

RIKKI. Very comfortable.

DARZEE. Nobody sits in my nest!

RIKKI. That's a terrible waste. Somebody should sit in it.

DARZEE. I sit in it, me.

---

RIKKI. That's good. Because this is a wonderful nest and you should definitely sit in it.

DARZEE (*trying to get in*). There's no room!

RIKKI. Really? There's plenty of room for me. Maybe this should be *my* nest.

DARZEE. Nests are for birds!

RIKKI. But I can see the whole garden from here.

DARZEE. You hate the nest.

RIKKI. I love it. I love everything in the garden.

DARZEE (*scuffling*). You won't love it...you won't love the garden...when the cobra comes to call. (*Makes a terrible hissing sound.*)

RIKKI. I love cobra.

DARZEE. You don't.

RIKKI. Do. Cobra casserole. Every Thursday.

DARZEE. Have you ever met a cobra *not* in a casserole?

RIKKI. No.

DARZEE. One that slithers and pounces?

RIKKI. No.

DARZEE. One that is alive and hungry?!

RIKKI. No.

DARZEE. One that eats a mongoose!

RIKKI. A mongoose?!

(*The sound of someone whistling.*)

DARZEE (*to the approaching whistler*). Oh, not now!

RIKKI. Is that the cobra?! (*RIKKI is terrified. Gets out of the nest.*)

DARZEE. Finally! (*DARZEE climbs into nest.*)

TEDDY (*off*). Here birdie birdie birdie. It's me, Teddy.



RIKKI (*terrified*). Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki!

(*Enter TEDDY, the human child, whistling. The human and the animals do not understand each other.*)

TEDDY. Oh, look! A baby mongoose.

RIKKI (*shaking*). It's going to eat me!

DARZEE. No such luck.

RIKKI. Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki Rikki Tikki!

TEDDY. Come here, little critter.

RIKKI. I promise I'll never eat cobra casserole again!

TEDDY. Goosey goosey goosey! (*TEDDY approaches RIKKI.*)

RIKKI. Noooooo!

(*RIKKI frozen in fear, hides face in hands. TEDDY pets RIKKI's head.*)

RIKKI. The cobra's eating me!

DARZEE. It isn't eating you.

(*RIKKI looks.*)

DARZEE. It isn't a cobra. It's my pet.

RIKKI. It's a pet?

DARZEE. Mine. You leave it alone.

TEDDY. You can live here in the garden with birdie.

RIKKI. What's it saying?

DARZEE. It's saying "get out, I hate you."

RIKKI (*likes it*). Then how come it's rubbing my head?

DARZEE. To...trick you. As soon as you trust it, it'll snarl and bite you.

TEDDY. Do you like bread crumbs, too?

*(TEDDY tosses bread crumbs. DARZEE comes for them.)*

RIKKI. What's it doing?

DARZEE *(picks up bread)*. I trained it to feed me.

TEDDY. You cute little mongoosey goosey goosey. *(Gives bread crumbs to RIKKI.)*

DARZEE. Hey. Hey, what's going on? Mine mine mine.

RIKKI. The pet gave it to me.

DARZEE. You'll get very sick if you eat that.

RIKKI. I don't want to get sick. *(RIKKI gives crumbs to DARZEE.)*

DARZEE *(eating)*. Yes, it would be terrible to get sick.

TEDDY. Doncha like it, Goosey?

RIKKI. How come you get to eat it?

TEDDY *(hands in pocket)*. Maybe I got something else.

DARZEE *(lying)*. It's bird food. I'm a bird. Birds don't get sick from bird food.

TEDDY *(finds things in pocket)*. Emergency string.

RIKKI. Hey! Are you trying to fool me?

TEDDY. ABC gum.

DARZEE. No, of course not.

RIKKI. I wouldn't like it if you were trying to fool me.

TEDDY. *There's my cockroach. (Puts back in pocket.)*  
Bye, Roachy.

DARZEE *(eating crumbs)*. I'm helping you. Saving you from getting sick.

TEDDY *(approaches RIKKI)*. Here! Here we go. You'll love this. Candy!

RIKKI. What's it saying?

DARZEE. "I want to turn your fur into a carpet."