

Brain Drain

by

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Brain Drain

DESCRIPTION

In this tale of gentle trickery, Crocodile is ready to eat El Mono (The Monkey) when El Mono fools him with a diversion. Though Crocodile is faster and stronger than El Mono, El Mono uses his brains to outwit brawn, showing (at least sometimes) that the mind is faster than muscle.

CHARACTERS

- **El Mono**, should be played by a young child, male or female -- the salient feature, aside from good acting ability, is that the child be light in weight, since CROCODILE will have to carry him or her for most of the play. "He" is used for convenience.
- **Crocodile**, should be played an adult or a strong adolescent, who will carry MONO on his or her shoulders -- "he" is used for convenience.
- **Narrator**, can be male or female -- "he" is used for convenience. It would be good, in terms of costumes, to have NARRATOR wear something like painter's pants, with pockets.

SETTING

- By the banks of a river

TIME

- Fluid

PROPS

- Two kazoos
- A fake brain
- A bunch of bananas (*one real, the rest fake*), held at the end of a pole
- A small paper boat, folded origami-style
- Small bowl or bucket of water
- Similar small bowl or bucket of confetti
- A piece of light blue cloth on a stick, like a flag.
- A small, battery-operated handfan
- A flashlight
- A wood block with mallet
- A tail for CROCODILE

MISCELLANEOUS

- Three step ladders: two used upstage, one by NARRATOR
- One heavy board between the two upstage ladders on which MONO will stand

NOTES

- Sound effects by the actors; pre-show music, such as lively dance tunes, would be nice.

- Lighting is kept general. If there are facilities in the space for lighting, then the director is free to put in any lighting effect he or she wants.
- No make-up is required, but the director is free to use any sort of make-up and/or masks.
- NARRATOR is pretty free to ad lib with the audience, as long as it keeps the flow going.

Brain Drain

Pre-show music out. MONO and CROCODILE come out, one on each side of the stage, and do a kazoo fanfare. NARRATOR comes onstage with a bound, like a game show host -- encourages the audience to applaud. The kazoo fanfare ends with a button. MONO climbs up on the board between the two upstage ladders; CROCODILE sits underneath after he puts on his tail. NARRATOR is holding a fake brain.

NARRATOR

Do you know what this is?

(gets audience responses)

You're right -- it's a brain. I got one, you got one, all God's chillun got one.

He tries to balance it on top of his head, but it falls off.

NARRATOR

I really like my brain. Do you like yours? I especially like it when I use it -- I feel like my head is just sizzling!

(holds his brain with his knees)

Everyone do this: put your hands on top of your head, and get your fingers going like you're scratching your head. And now go, "Zzzzzzzz!" like it's electricity. That's what the brain feels like when it's smokin'! Feels gooooood! Okay, this is a story about what happens when you really use your brain and don't just use it for a hatrack.

He goes to someone in the first row, can ad lib as needed.

NARRATOR

Would you hold on to my brain for me while I tell this story? I'll pick it up later. Don't let it slip out of your hands! I need it, so be careful, okay? All right, I have to get back to work up here, so I'll be by later my brain. Take good care of it.

(to the audience, making "muscle moves")

A story of brain versus brawn, mind versus muscle. One day, El Mono, the monkey --

MONO signals from where he is.

NARRATOR

-- saw some delicious bananas on the other side of the river.

NARRATOR lifts up the bananas, holding them as if they were just out of MONO's reach.

NARRATOR

You'd like these, wouldn't you?

MONO
Every single delicious one of them.

NARRATOR
But you have a problem.
(to the audience)
He has a problem.

MONO
I can't reach them!

NARRATOR
Mono, bananas; bananas, Mono; river in-between.

MONO
(despairingly)
How am I going to get them?

NARRATOR puts the bananas down and brings both buckets to MONO.

NARRATOR
He thought maybe he'd swim across.

MONO tentatively sticks a toe in the water but takes it out quickly -- this will establish that there is water in one of the buckets.

MONO
I hate getting wet!

MONO reaches down to flick some water at NARRATOR.

NARRATOR
Hey, stop it. Aw, come on, try it again.

MONO tries it again with the other toe, in the other bucket, with the same response.

MONO
Getting wet is for the birds!

NARRATOR
But not for the monkey.

NARRATOR puts the buckets down.

NARRATOR
Because he didn't know how to swim.

MONO takes out the paper boat.

NARRATOR
Mono tried making a little boat.

MONO
(crumpling up the boat and throwing it away)
But it sank -- with me in it!

NARRATOR
And he really hated getting wet!

MONO
(shaking himself dry)
I really hate getting wet!

NARRATOR
He had to figure out a way to get those bananas.

MONO takes up the Thinker's pose.

NARRATOR
He thought really hard -- you could see the steam
rise from his ears, you could smell the rubber
burning, you could --

MONO
All right, already, they get the picture!

NARRATOR
But not one idea came to him.

MONO
And, boy, is my stomach growling.

All the actors make a growling noise.

MONO
Really growling.

They make an even bigger growl.

MONO
That's more like it -- oh, poor me!

NARRATOR
Just then, Crocodile --

CROCODILE
That's me.

NARRATOR
-- cruised on by like silk.

CROCODILE, as he swims, comes close to the audience with his tail.

CROCODILE
Don't you just love my tail? Huh? Huh?

NARRATOR
Looks like he wants some applause -- so let's
give him some applause.

NARRATOR starts clapping in a rhythmical way and gets the audiences clapping as well. CROCODILE responds to the rhythm with rhyme.

CROCODILE

I'm a Crocodile
See me smile
Got a long flashy tail
That goes for a mile

My teeth are keen
My skin is green
I'm the sleekest piece of Nature
You've ever seen.

Boom, chakalakala
Boom, chakalakala

When the sun was new
I was right here, too,
I am as old as the earth
And a lot older than you

So clap for me
Clap for my beau-tee
I'm the ruler of the river
And a mystery

Boom, chakalakala
Boom, chakalakala
Boom, chakalakala -- BOOM!

NARRATOR

(finishing up the clapping)
Thank you Crocodile.

CROCODILE

(in an Elvis voice)
Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you.

MONO

Can we get back to my problem, now?

CROCODILE

Hey!

He makes a gesture of something orbiting something else.

NARRATOR

Oh, that's right. Everything in the world
revolves around El Mono.

CROCODILE

I don't know if I like you.

MONO

Who cares? Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's
the fairest of them all? Me, of course!

NARRATOR

So, the Crocodile was swimming in the river.
(to CROCODILE)

Go on, swim.

CROCODILE reluctantly starts swimming back and forth in the river.

NARRATOR

And Mono called out to him.

MONO

Hey, Crocodile!

CROCODILE does not answer.

MONO

Hey, Crocodile!

CROCODILE

Did I hear my name?

MONO

Hey!

CROCODILE

No, I think it's just the buzzing of some really
annoying flies.

(to the audience)

Do you hear anything important?

(gets responses)

No, I didn't think so. I think I'll just swim
here in the river.

MONO

(really loud)

Hey, Crocodile, come here!

CROCODILE

Oh, are you speaking to me?

MONO

No, I just thought I'd stand here and yell until
my lungs fell out for the heck of it.

CROCODILE

How may I help you?

NARRATOR holds up the bananas.

MONO

Can you carry me on your back to get those
bananas?

NARRATOR puts the bananas down, picks up the bucket, and sprinkles water on MONO.

CROCODILE
Why don't you swim over there?

MONO
Because I don't like water.
(to NARRATOR)
Hey, enough!

CROCODILE
I could do it, I suppose --

MONO
But will you?

CROCODILE
(to the audience)
Should I?

MONO
I'm really hungry. I'm soooo hungry. I'm
really, really hungry.

NARRATOR
He's pretty hungry.

CROCODILE
I'll give you a ride.

MONO
You will?

CROCODILE
(to the audience)
I'll give you a -- very interesting ride.

CROCODILE take MONO on his back and begins the trip across the river.

NARRATOR, while continuing the story, also adds the "special effects," standing on the third ladder to do them. The effects are wind (the handheld battery fan), waves (the blue cloth on a stick, with the CROCODILE bobbing up and down), lightning (the NARRATOR making thunder and lightning sounds with the flashlight), and rain (which will be the bucket of confetti poured on MONO). NARRATOR will have to move the ladder as CROCODILE swims the river.

NARRATOR
Okay, here comes our big special effects budget.
The ride across the river was not easy. There
was lots of wind.

Blows them with the hand-held fan and makes a big "Whoosh!" sound.

NARRATOR

There were waves that made them bounce like a bumpy bus ride.

CROCODILE bobs MONO up and down while NARRATOR waves the blue cloth over him; MONO looks nauseous.

MONO

I think I'm going to lose it.

NARRATOR

There was lightning.

NARRATOR blinks the flashlight on and off, making the appropriate lightning sounds.

NARRATOR

And there was rain.

NARRATOR can play with the audience a bit as he holds the bucket -- then he dumps the confetti onto MONO.

MONO

Hey, Crocodile, how much longer?

NARRATOR brings the ladder downstage and stands on it while holding out the bunch of bananas.

CROCODILE

It won't be long now.

Finally, they get there, and MONO takes the real banana out of the bunch and eats it in a funny manner. He takes the rest of the bananas and holds them.

NARRATOR

Mono had gotten what he wanted, and he was very happy.

MONO

Hey, Crocodile, I'm done. Hey! Let's get back.

NARRATOR

But what did Crocodile get out of the deal?

CROCODILE

Oh, you'll see.

NARRATOR

I think Crocodile knows something that Mono doesn't know. What do you think?

NARRATOR gets audience responses.

MONO

Hey, let's go.

CROCODILE

Yes, little master, we have a long way to go.

NARRATOR

So they turned around to come back. I don't have the energy to do all the special effects again. There was wind.

(pulls out the fan, turns in on and off quickly)
There were waves.

(waves the blue cloth)

There was lightning.

(flashes the flashlight)

There was rain. Enough. As they got closer to the shore, Mono began thinking about all the bananas he was going to eat.

MONO

First, I'll eat one -- a little one. I'll eat it slowly -- little, little bites. It'll taste yummy to my tummy. Then, maybe, another one --

NARRATOR

But Mono suddenly realized that Crocodile wasn't taking him back to where they had started out.

If possible, this sequence should be taken out into the audience.

MONO

Hey, where are we going?

CROCODILE

We're going to my special place now.

MONO

I think I like my place better.

CROCODILE

Oh, trust me -- this place is much better.

(out to the audience)

Better for me, that is. We're going to look for my special food.

NARRATOR

Mono didn't like the sound of that.

MONO

I don't like the sound of that.

NARRATOR

Mono was in a tight place.

MONO

I can't outfight him.

CROCODILE

You certainly can't outswim me.

NARRATOR runs to the audience member who is holding the brain.
NARRATOR holds it up and shines the flashlight on it.

NARRATOR

But --

MONO

(looking at NARRATOR)

But -- But what? What are you doing?

NARRATOR

(indicating the brain with the flashlight)

Look! Look at what you have!

(to audience)

What does he have?

Gets audience responses.

MONO

Ohhh --

(realizing what NARRATOR is getting at)

Ohhh! Right! Ahem. Mr. Crocodylus, for that is your Latin name, you know --

CROCODILE

Just call me Crocky, for short --

(exaggerated laugh: "Bwa-ha-ha")

-- because you only have a short time left!

MONO

Well, Mr. Crocky, just where are you taking me?

CROCODILE

My poor mother is ill --

MONO

I am sorry to hear that -- bring me to my home so that I can write her a get-well card.

CROCODILE

Wouldn't help. No, the only thing that will cure her is --

(begins a false crying -- crocodile tears)

I hate to tell you this -- it really pains me -- but the only thing that will make her better is a bowl of soup made out of -- monkey brains!

(again, the exaggerated laugh: "Bwa-ha-ha")

Ah, here is my house now.

NARRATOR

Mono only had a moment to come up with a brilliant idea.

MONO

Oh, silly crocodile! I wish you had told me before we left.

CROCODILE

Why?

MONO

Because -- I'm such a ninny! -- I left my brain at my house on the other side of the river.

Big wink to the audience.

CROCODILE

You what?

MONO

I don't want to wear it out, so sometimes I take it out just to give it a rest. My brain is on the other side of the river.

CROCODILE

Where is it?

NARRATOR

Let's give Mono some help.

Gets audience to repeat the phrase.

NARRATOR

"On the other side of the river."

MONO

On the other side of the river. You'll have to take me to the other side of the river so that I can plug it back in, and then I'd be glad to come help your poor, poor mother.

CROCODILE

Hmmm --

MONO

Really.

Knocks his head with his knuckles; as he does, NARRATOR raps the wood block.

MONO

Can't you hear it echo? Empty --
(knocks head, knocks block)
-- empty --
(knocks head, knocks block)
-- empty --
(knocks head, knocks block)

CROCODILE

Sounds empty. All right.

CROCODILE reverses direction and swims towards MONO's home.

NARRATOR

You already know the special effects, so I won't go through them again:

(makes abbreviated gestures and sounds)

-- wind, waves, lightning, and rain.

CROCODILE gets to MONO's house.

MONO

Okay, let me off.

CROCODILE

Can't you reach your brain from here?

MONO

Oh, no, no -- I keep it up in the tree there, away from all the ants and birds and creepy-crawly things.

NARRATOR

(to audience)

Can you see the brain up there?

MONO

It's right up there. See, right there.

NARRATOR takes the brain and stands upstage with it over his head.

NARRATOR

Now can you see it? Good.

MONO

See, there's my brain. Now move closer.

CROCODILE moves closer but not close enough.

MONO

You've got to get closer so I can get up into the tree.

CROCODILE

I don't know.

MONO

I don't have a brain in my head -- how could I trick you?

CROCODILE

All right.

MONO gets off CROCODILE and does an exaggerated laugh: "Bwa-ha-ha."

CROCODILE

Go get your brain!

MONO

(pointing to his head)

I've got it right here! I never let it go, you loopy lizard!

CROCODILE tries to catch MONO, who stays out of his reach.

MONO

It's not up there -- it's in here --

(pointing to his head)

-- at the top of the tree, right where it belongs. I never let it go! And if your mother has to eat your brains, she'll die from starvation! Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah.

CROCODILE

You pip-squeak primate!

MONO makes faces at CROCODILE.

CROCODILE

You moronic monkey! You oleaginous orangutan! You blathering baboon!

MONO

But I'm the one up at the top of the tree / You can insult all you want, but you can't get me.

MONO gets on the shoulders of NARRATOR and takes the brain.

MONO

What a beautiful thing!

All three come downstage.

NARRATOR

And that's how El Mono tricked Crocodile.
Crocodile was bigger --

CROCODILE

See my nice tail!

NARRATOR

And Crocodile was quicker --

CROCODILE

I could have you for dinner in three snaps and a shiver.

MONO

But El Mono used his brain.

NARRATOR
And this time, El Mono got away with it.

CROCODILE
This time.

MONO
But next time --

ALL
Who knows?

NARRATOR
In the meantime --

CROCODILE
Use your brains --

MONO
And eat lots of bananas!

Music. Blackout.