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THE JUNGLE
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**"IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE
YOU BETTER BEWARE..."**

THE JUNGLE



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CHILDREN'S MUSICAL. Annie, a young green-winged macaw, is eagerly awaiting her first flight. But before the big event, Annie's parents go to the river to gather some nuts for breakfast. While they are gone, loggers cut down all of the trees, including the macaw's home. Annie escapes to another part of the rainforest but gets lost and cannot find her way home. As Annie searches for her parents, she meets a tree sloth, a pair of singing tree frogs, leaf-cutter ants, and a beautiful Morpho butterfly. With the help of the jungle creatures, Annie is able to summon her courage and continue her journey home. But on her way, Annie must escape the talons of Ego the eagle and the jaws of Con the boa constrictor. This charming musical features irresistible characters, richly entertaining songs, and a fun way for children to learn about rainforest ecology and conservation.

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

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SONGS

- Song 1:** "It's a Jungle Out There" (Choir)
- Song 2:** "Look Out Macaw" (Father, Choir)
- Song 3:** "Chainsaw Outlaws" (Outlaws 1, 2, Choir)
- Song 4:** "Wake Me Up When It's Over" (Siesta, Choir)
- Song 5:** "Sing" (Creak, Croak, Annie)
- Song 6:** "She's No Ordinary Bird" (Mother, Choir)
- Song 7:** "Love Her to Death" (Con, Choir)
- Song 8:** "Work" (Chief, Leaf-Cutter Ants, Choir)
- Song 9:** "Nothing to do but Cry" (Annie, Choir)
- Song 10:** "Spirit" (Annie, Choir)
- Song 11:** "It's a Jungle Out There (Reprise)" (All)

CHARACTERS

(3 m, 3 f, 6 flexible, choir, extras)

ANNIE: Fledgling green-winged macaw who is eagerly awaiting her first flight.

MOTHER: Annie's mother.

FATHER: Annie's father.

EGO: Harpy eagle; large gray bird with a double crest; looks menacing; flexible.

CHAINSAW OUTLAW 1, 2: Wear cowboy hats and bandanas; need to be tall since they will be performing on the ground floor and need to be seen from the audience; flexible.

SIESTA: Tree sloth; slow-moving, bored, and sleepy; flexible.

CREAK: Red-eyed tree frog; singer; male.

CROAK: Red-eyed tree frog; singer; male.

CON: Boa constrictor; costume must be long so that he can wrap around Annie and feet should be hidden so that he appears to slither across the stage; flexible.

CHIEF: Chief of the leaf-cutter ants; flexible.

MARANTHA: Morpho butterfly; beautiful; female.

ANTS: Leaf-cutter ants; non-speaking; flexible.

FROG ENTOURAGE: Fans of Creak and Croak; female.

CHOIR

EXTRAS (OPTIONAL): As additional Choir members, frog groupies, leaf-cutter ants, and other rainforest creatures, if desired.

CHOIR

The choir will be placed off to the side of the auditorium. Though the choir shouldn't block the view of the stage, it should be clearly visible to the audience.

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SETTING

An Amazon rainforest.

SET

The set requires two backdrops.

I.) RAINFOREST: The first backdrop will depict a lush Amazon rainforest full of trees and flowering plants and insects. Stage center will contain one predominant tree. To accommodate the four layers of the rainforest—forest floor, understudy layer, canopy layer, and emergent layer—there will be four levels of the stage.

- 1.) **Forest Floor:** The floor of the gymnasium or auditorium will be the forest floor. Just as in nature, it will not be that lush since little sun penetrates that low, but it will contain the trunks of trees including one in the middle. This middle trunk will also have a series of steps leading up to the stage.
- 2.) **Understudy Layer:** The stage itself will be the understudy layer. This is the only level that Creak and Croak the tree frogs as well as Con the Boa Constrictor operate on.
- 3.) **Canopy Layer:** Can be demonstrated by a simple bench (standard bench used for school gym activities) placed in front of the backdrop. The backdrop itself should be positioned approximately midway between the front of the stage and the backdrop. This is so that Siesta the tree sloth can hang upside down under the bench/branch (as tree sloths do) and still have the bench appear to be part of the tree. Green leaves and branches should be attached to this bench to make it blend in with the rest of the

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rainforest. Also, there must be about 20 or so leaves that can be taken off the tree fairly easily and put back on after the play. (This will be for the work of the leaf-cutter ants.) The only characters that will use this level are the macaw family, Siesta, and a few of the leaf-cutter ants. On the predominant tree somewhere close to the trunk will be the nest of the green-winged macaw family.

4.) **Emergent Layer:** The highest level will be used by Marantha the Blue Morpho butterfly and Ego the Eagle. One very stable table will be used for this. Safety must be a priority. The only movement done by characters on this level is with their hands. (**Note:** If this cannot be done safely, then a bench will suffice.) This layer should appear above the canopy layer. The table will be positioned upstage left so that one half is showing toward the audience and the other half is hidden by the curtain. This will give the effect of characters entering and leaving at this level.

II.) **DEVASTATED RAINFOREST:** The second backdrop will depict the rainforest after it has been devastated by the Chainsaw Outlaws. This must be the complete opposite of the first backdrop. Where there was once live luscious green, now there is only dead black and brown. The backdrop will be dotted with tree stumps and burnt trees. The Chainsaw Outlaws not only cut down trees but burn some as well. The only sign of plant life will be a thin line of green along the distant horizon. Also, the forest floor that was bare before is now cluttered with fallen dead branches. It is now the only place where any hunted animal could hide. There is nothing left of the predominant tree in the middle except one branch sticking up and running horizontal. This will be represented by the bench. Only this time it appears bare and brown instead of being covered with leaves.

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PROPS

2 Cardboard chainsaws
Hardhats, for Leaf-Cutter Ants
Detachable leaves

SOUND EFFECTS

Chainsaws
Tree falling

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SCENE 1

(AT RISE: Backdrop 1—Lush jungle scene depicting understudy layer. Choir begins song by making all sorts of jungle noises. Song: "It's a Jungle out There.")

CHOIR: *(Sings.)*

(Verse 1)

Dawn breaks over the canopy layer
Spider monkey watches with great care
Jaguar emerging from inside her lair
Monkey run or you ain't got a prayer, 'cause

(Chorus)

It's a jungle out there
You better beware
Life just isn't fair 'cause
It's a jungle out there

(Verse 2)

Boa constrictor sitting on a tree
Bird comes by unsuspectingly
Boa tries to get cuddly
Little bird, you better flee, 'cause

(Chorus)

It's a jungle out there
You better beware
Life just isn't fair 'cause
It's a jungle out there

(Verse 3)

Baby macaw goes for her first flight
Eagle flyin' is within sight
Mother warns baby with all her might

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Then comforts her child to calm her fright.

(Repeat chorus twice.)

(The macaw family has just risen and emerges from its nest, Father first, then Mother and Annie. Mother scans the horizon as if looking cautiously for something. It is a big day for Annie, the fledgling macaw. Today is the day of her first flight. Annie is excited and so are her parents.)

FATHER: What a beautiful day! Perfect weather for flying.

MOTHER: And I don't see our friend Ego the Eagle anywhere.

ANNIE: *(Excited.)* You mean today is the day?!

(Father and Mother look at each other, then break into a smile as they turn to Annie.)

FATHER: It looks that way. Are you ready?

ANNIE: You bet. I can't wait to take off. Flying will be so much fun.

(Father approaches Annie.)

FATHER: Do you remember everything we've told you?

MOTHER: Of course she does. *(Proud, she puts her arm around Annie.)* She's our daughter, remember?

FATHER: *(Smiles.)* Of course.

ANNIE: Can I try it right now?

MOTHER: Not quite yet. Your father and I first have to go down to the river to get us breakfast.

ANNIE: Why do you always have to go so far to get food?

FATHER: Because the river is the only place where the nut trees are still sheltered by the bigger trees. The harpy eagle can never spot us feeding there.

ANNIE: Is that the bird that hunts us?

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FATHER: Yes.

ANNIE: That's horrible.

MOTHER: (*Loss for words.*) Well, yes...

FATHER: Yes, and he's horrible.

ANNIE: What does he look like?

FATHER: He's huge with a large double crest on his head that makes him look quite frightening. The very sight of him will make your feathers turn white.

(*Song: "Look Out Macaw"*)

FATHER/CHOIR: (*Sing.*)

(*Verse 1*)

Faster than lightening
Terribly frightening
Talons tightening
The harpy eagle.
Crown's double-crested
Looks quite impressive
You'll be digested
If you get in his way.

(*Chorus*)

He stands about a meter tall
With talons longer than a bear's claw
And a beak sharper than a saw
Look out macaw!

(*Verse 2*)

His keen sense of hearing
You should be fearing
He'll come down shearing
With his sharpened claws.
Once you're in his vision
He's made a decision
With one incision

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He'll cut you in two.
(Chorus)
He stands about a meter tall
With talons longer than a bear's claw
And a beak sharper than a saw
Look out macaw!

(Verse 3)
Wings full of power
Flies fifty miles an hour
He will devour
So look out macaw, so look out macaw, so look out mac...

(The song ends abruptly. Father puts his hand to throat feigning being strangled to death. Annie gasps. Mother gives Father a daggered look and goes over to comfort Annie.)

MOTHER: *(To Father.)* Enough of that. You'll be scaring the poor thing to death before she even takes her first flight. *(To Annie.)* Now, don't you worry about any eagles. For awhile we'll be with you for every flight until you gain some confidence. Then we'll teach you how to scout for harpy eagles. *(Gives Father a sharp look as she moves closer to him. Turns to Annie.)* Now, you stay close to the nest until we get back. No wondering down the branch. We shouldn't be long. *(To Father with a tone.)* Ready?

FATHER: *(Sheepishly.)* You lead, dear.

(Mother pats Annie on the head.)

MOTHER: Now take care.

(Mother takes off with Father following behind. Annie waves as mother and father fly away. They wave to Annie.)

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ANNIE: Bye! *(Aside.)* Oh, I can't wait till they get back.
(Spreads her wings a bit.) Just think, I'll be flying today.
(Looks down.) It seems so far down. The first step will be the
hardest. My mother says my instincts will tell me the rest.
(Looks worried.) Oh, I must go over all the things they taught
me. *(Sound of chainsaws.)* Keep your head straight. Flap you
wings evenly. Tuck your claws in. Keep...

(As Annie continues to practice, Chainsaw Outlaw 1, 2, wearing bandanas over their mouths, emerge from SL at the forest floor level. They are each carrying a cardboard chainsaw. Sound of chainsaws gets louder as they begin to "cut" the trees SL. Annie stops and listens nervously. As the music for "Chainsaw Outlaws" comes in over the sound of the chainsaws, Chainsaw Outlaw 1, 2 move front stage center and pull down their bandana masks and begin to sing. During the song, any time there is the sound of a chainsaw, they begin cutting or revving their chainsaws but they do not touch Annie's tree until the song is over. They finish their song at the base of the trunk of the Annie's tree. The outlaws use a heavy western accent. A lot of sneaky underhanded types of movements would be good in this song. After all, they are outlaws. Song: Chainsaw Outlaws.)

OUTLAW 1, 2/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 1)

We're outlaws, we come ridin' into town
With our chainsaws, *(Show chainsaws.)* cuttin' everything
down
We don't care about the rainforest
We cut down the big trees and burn the rest

(Verse 2)

'Cause we're outlaws, we love to hear the sound *(Outlaw 1
revs chainsaw.)*
Of our chainsaws, *(Outlaw 2 revs chainsaw.)* that go round
and round

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Forget about ecology

All we care about is the money. 'Cause we're...

(Verse 3)

Outlaws *(Laugh as they "cut" down a tree.)*

Outlaws *(Laugh and cut some more.)*

(Outlaw 1, 2 come together, put their arms around each other's shoulders, and face audience.)

(Chorus)

At night we cut the lawn and work the barbecue

But when morning comes we turn into... *(Evil grin.)*

(Verse 4)

Outlaws, we never wear a frown

'Cause our chainsaws, level everything to the ground

We just love to cut and slash

It makes us feel good and it gives us cash, 'cause we're..

Outlaws, Outlaws

(Outlaw 1 turns to macaws' tree.)

OUTLAW 1: Hey! *(Indicates tree.)* Lookie here!

(Annie starts pacing nervously on the branch. Outlaw 2 turns to tree.)

OUTLAW 2: Yeah, she's a beauty. Brazilian redwood.

OUTLAW 1: Some deserving family who needs new
hardwood floors will pay top dollar for this tree.

(Outlaw 2 holds up chainsaw.)

OUTLAW 2: Well, Let's get at it. They don't call us the
Chainsaw Outlaws for nothing.

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(Outlaw 1, 2 begin to cut the tree and laugh heinously. Annie's pacing becomes more frantic as the chainsaws get louder and laughing more insidious.)

OUTLAW 1: *(Yells.)* Timber!

(Sound of tree falling. Blackout. Curtain.)

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SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Backdrop II – devastated rainforest. Father and Mother are perched on the one remaining branch of their tree. Father is in shock. Mother is pacing frantically, scouring the horizon.)

FATHER: I can't believe it! Not one tree left standing!

MOTHER: *(Frantic.)* We should never have left her! We should have started back the moment we heard that strange noise. Oh, she'll be so scared!

FATHER: *(Not hearing a word spoken by Mother.)* What could possibly have done this?

MOTHER: We can't waste any time. If she's anywhere, it will be amongst the fallen branches that are still left. You take the river north and follow it until it turns toward the setting sun. Then circle back. Look under every fallen tree and bush. I'll follow the ridge until it meets the mountain. We must hurry. Now go! *(This seems to bring Father out of his state of shock. He exits SL.)* I should have never left you alone, Annie! *(Exits SR.)*

(On the emergent layer table, Ego the eagle steps out from behind the curtain. His wings are spread out as if he is gliding.)

EGO: *(Aside. Ominous.)* Yes, go and find your little bird. I haven't tasted a good macaw in a long time. And dining on three will be much better than dining on two, especially if it is a young tender one. *(He spreads his wings wider. They are huge. He makes a circling motion with his wings as the curtain closes.)*

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SCENE 3

(AT RISE: Backdrop I—luscious rainforest. There are removable leaves on the main branch of the tree CS. Annie enters SL and lands on the bench. Just below Annie with arms wrapped around the bench and eyes closed is Siesta the tree sloth. Siesta is upside down under the bench and is unaware of Annie.)

ANNIE: *(Exhausted.)* I'm so tired. That was farther than I thought.

(Annie steps on Siesta's paw. Siesta yawns loudly, opening eyes, and speaks slowly with as little energy as possible.)

SIESTA: Ouch! Do you mind? You're standing on my paw.

(Startled, Annie jumps away.)

ANNIE: Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't see you there.

SIESTA: *(Too tired to be offended.)* Well, please try to be more careful. I depend on those paws, you know. Now, if you'll just move along to another branch, I'll get back to sleep. *(Closes eyes as if the problem has been dealt with.)*

ANNIE: Back to sleep? But, it's the middle of the day.

SIESTA: *(Opening one eye, and managing just enough energy to look irritated, but no more.)* You're still here. I thought I asked you to move on. *(Closes eyes again.)*

ANNIE: *(Excited that she has someone to talk to, she speaks very rapidly.)* But, I have nowhere to go. I'm lost. I was supposed to take my first flight today, but then some ugly-looking creatures with pointed heads came by and cut down our tree. As a matter of fact, they cut down all the trees. Every time I landed on one tree, they'd cut it down making this loud awful sound. I must have landed on a hundred

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different trees today. Then after they cut down the last one, I kept flying until I, well... (*Shrugs wings.*) ...landed here.

SIESTA: (*Opens eyes again but looks really bored.*) That's very interesting. Now, could you *please* move along, so I can get back to sleep? (*Adjusts to a new position on the "branch" and closes eyes again.*)

ANNIE: Move along? (*Flutters to other side of Siesta.*) Well, where will I go? I don't have a home anymore.

SIESTA: (*Opening eyes, irritated.*) I don't know. Try some other branch, or tree, or better still, another jungle.

ANNIE: (*Exhausted.*) But, I've flown for miles already and I'm so tired! And this is my first flight.

SIESTA: (*Bored.*) That's a very sad problem, which I'm sure you'll figure out, hopefully somewhere else.

ANNIE: (*Still speaking rapidly.*) But, I have to stay here where there is shelter. I mean, my mother told me that the trees are the only thing that shelters us from the harpy eagle. Of course, I don't...

(*Siesta suddenly sits up on the bench.*)

SIESTA: Did you say *eagle*?

ANNIE: (*Surprised, but proud to get Siesta's attention.*) Oh, yes the harpy eagle. But you don't have to worry because I haven't seen any.

SIESTA: Well, let's be thankful for that. You almost gave me a heart attack.

ANNIE: My name is Annie by the way.

SIESTA: (*Bored.*) And my name is Siesta.

(*Annie extends her wing to shake Siesta's paw.*)

ANNIE: Glad to meet you, Siesta.

(*Siesta extends a paw as if it is a huge effort and sounds quite put out.*)

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SIESTA: Glad to meet you, Annie. Say, what time is it?

ANNIE: (*Puzzled.*) Time?

SIESTA: I never get up before noon.

ANNIE: (*Curious.*) Oh, really? Why do you sleep so much?

SIESTA: (*Irritated.*) Because I'm a tree sloth! That's what we do. We sleep. It's our best defense. Our enemies mistake us for just another part of the branch.

ANNIE: (*Interested.*) A tree sloth?

SIESTA: (*Uninterested.*) Yes. (*Changing the subject quickly so he doesn't have to answer any more questions.*) Where did you say you were from again?

ANNIE: (*Excited again.*) Well, like I was saying. I was supposed to go for my first flight—

(*Siesta puts paw up to interrupt story.*)

SIESTA: (*Bored.*) Right, right, the fallen tree story.

ANNIE: Do you think you can help me? (*Sadly.*) I'm so lonely.

SIESTA: Well, I don't know if I can help you. But, every time I encounter a problem I find one thing that really helps.

ANNIE: (*Interested.*) What's that?

SIESTA: Sleep. (*Siesta slowly takes place CS. During the song, Siesta is barely awake and puts as little movement and animation into the song as possible except to yawn. Song: "Wake Me Up When It's Over." Siesta yawns. Sings.*)

(*Verse 1*)

Into our lives, problems do creep
Some take action, others retreat
As for me, I'd rather just sleep, So
Wake me up when it's over

(*Siesta yawns, then looks quite irritated when the Choir interrupts yawn.*)

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CHOIR: (*Abruptly.*) Wake me up when it's over

SIESTA: (*Sings.*)

(*Verse 2*)

The lion wakes the jungle with his mighty roar (*Yawns.*)

The eagle attacks then loftily soars

But, my best defense is a really good snore, so

Wake me up when it's over

CHOIR: (*Sings, loudly.*) Wake me up... (*Siesta puts fingers in ears.*) ...when it's over

SIESTA: (*Sings.*)

(*Verse 3*)

Working too hard will just drive you crazy

Making all things seem a little hazy

I get more done by just being lazy, so

Wake me up when it's over.

(*Siesta falls asleep standing up but abruptly wakes up when the Choir sings next line.*)

CHOIR: Wake me up when it's over.

SIESTA/CHOIR: (*Siesta becomes slightly more animated in this section, then goes back to his sleepy self for the last verse. Sing.*)

(*Chorus*)

The early bird catches the worm

That's how the saying goes

But between worm pie and some extra shuteye

I'll go for the longer dose

SIESTA: This is taking too much energy. (*Heads back sleepily toward his branch.*)

SIESTA/CHOIR: (*Sing.*)

(*Verse 4*)

We must solve our problems and not cry the blues

Think out our choices, then carefully choose

But, I always think better after a snooze, so

Wake me up when it's,

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SIESTA: *(Loud, with a stern look.)* But, not before ten. *(Falls asleep.)*

CHOIR: Wake me up when it's over

(Siesta is sleeping under the branch exactly where he was when Annie landed on him.)

ANNIE: Oh, Siesta, please don't go to sleep. *(Siesta responds with a soft snore.)* I need your help. *(Looks around exasperated.)* Sleeping isn't going to solve my problems. I'll be just as alone again when I wake up. *(To Siesta.)* Siesta! Wake up!

(As Siesta goes into a deep sleep, the snore disappears as do Annie's hopes of waking him. Suddenly Creak and Croak enter SR, arguing and pushing each other.)

CREAK: I told you to keep quiet. Now we won't have any peace for the rest of the day.

CROAK: Me? What are you talking about? You're the one who started it.

CREAK: *(Defensively.)* I was just clearing my throat.

CROAK: Yeah! Right! Clearing your throat in a perfect scale.

CREAK: You're just envious because I can do a perfect scale, unlike your voice that sounds like you have a human in your throat.

CROAK: *(Offended, last straw.)* Oh, that does it! *(Feigns rolling up his sleeve.)* Put'em up!

(They start to push and pull each other. Annie jumps down from the branch, separating them before they start a real fight.)

ANNIE: Whoa, fellows! Easy! There's no need for this.

(Croak notices Annie for the first time and a little irritated at her intervention.)

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CROAK: Who are you?

ANNIE: *(Sheepish.)* I'm Annie...ah, the macaw.

CREAK: Well, Annie the macaw, we'd appreciate it if you'd stay out of our little disagreement.

ANNIE: But you looked like you were going to kill him.

CROAK: Kill me? Hah, you're perceiving this all wrong. I was about to kill *him*. The thought of this piece of green swamp slime killing anything is just too—

CREAK: Why you bug-eyed—

(They begin to fight again. Annie breaks them up again.)

ANNIE: Boys, please. I know there's a better way to solve this.

CROAK: *(Suddenly.)* Hey! You're not from around here!

ANNIE: Well, no...to tell you the truth, I'm lost.

CROAK: Lost? How could a macaw get lost? I mean you have wings. You can fly and circle about.

ANNIE: Well, this is my first day flying. I haven't learned that maneuver yet.

CREAK: But don't you have any parents? Macaws stay with their folks a long time after they learn to fly, don't they?

ANNIE: *(Sadly.)* Yes...

(Annie becomes tearful and turns away. Creak and Croak suddenly forget about whatever they were fighting about and try to comfort Annie.)

CROAK: Ah, ya poor thing.

(Croak puts his frog arm around Annie. Creak comes up on the other side of her.)

CREAK: Always had a weak spot for a young chick in distress.

CROAK: Tell us about it.

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(Annie turns to face them and the audience.)

ANNIE: Well, it was my first day to fly. My parents went to get breakfast, and before they came back, these two ugly creatures with no feathers or fur and only two legs came by making the loudest sound and killed our tree.

(Creak and Croak give each other a knowing look.)

CREAK: *(Disgusted.)* Uuh! Humans!

CROAK: Bunch of bottom-feeders if there were any.

CREAK: Once they move in... *(Motions with thumb.)* ...there goes the neighborhood.

CROAK: *(To Annie.)* So, how did you get here?

ANNIE: Well, when the last tree went down, I kept flying and didn't stop until I landed here.

CREAK: Your parents are probably out looking for you.

CROAK: Did you try calling for them? I mean they might hear you if you would just sing out with that strong macaw voice.

ANNIE: I haven't tried that yet. Besides, I'm not very loud. You see, I'm still just a young fledgling.

CREAK: Age has nothing to do with it. It's all in the way you let the sound out.

ANNIE: *(Interested.)* What do you mean?

CREAK: We'll show you. *(Creak and Croak move CS as song starts. Song is sung with a slight Jamaican accent and the rhythm of this song lends itself to some type of choreography. Song: "Sing." Sings.)*

(Verse 1)

If you want to be heard
Down the Amazon and through the trees
Just begin to sing a sweet song
And let your voice be carried on the breeze

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CREAK/CROAK: (*Sing.*)

(*Chorus*)

Breathe the air in through your nostrils
Let it fill you like a balloon
Then open wide your throat like a big cave
And begin to croon

CROAK: (*Sings.*)

(*Verse 2*)

Nothing carries better for miles
Like a soft soothing melody
Every creature's head will turn
When your cry is tied to a harmony

CREAK/CROAK: (*Sing and demonstrate.*)

(*Chorus*)

Breathe the air in through your nostrils
Let it fill you like a balloon

ANNIE: (*Speaks.*) Like this? (*Breathes in slowly, filling diaphragm.*)

CREAK: (*Speaks.*) That's it.

(*Sings.*) Then open wide your throat like a big cave
And begin to croon

(*Creak and Croak gather around Annie nodding approvingly as she tries to sing.*)

ANNIE: (*Sings.*)

(*Verse 3*)

La la la, la la la la
La la la la la la la la laa

CREAK: (*Speaks.*) You're getting it.

(*Sings.*) La la la, la la la la

La la la la la la la la laa

CROAK: (*Speaks.*) "American Idol," look out!

CREAK/ CROAK/ CHOIR/ ANNIE: (*Sing.*)

(*Chorus*)

Breathe the air in through your nostrils

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Let it fill you like a balloon
Then open wide your throat like a big cave
And begin to croon

(Verse 4)

If you want to be heard
Down the Amazon and through the trees
Just begin to sing a sweet song
And let your voice be carried on the breeze
(Arm-in-arm, Creak and Croak sing with Choir.) Ribbet, ribbet,
croak.

(As the song ends, an entourage of Female Frogs enter SL, running and screaming like crazed fans and begin to mob Creak and Croak.)

CREAK: *(To Croak.)* You've done it again!

(Creak and Croak flee the pursuing mob and head SR.)

CROAK: *(To Creak.)* Me?! You're the one who started singing!

(Creak and Croak exit SR. Curtain.)

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SCENE 4

(AT RISE: Backdrop II, scene of forest devastation. Father is sitting on bench, looking very tired.)

FATHER: I followed the river all the way to the bend and past to where the tree line... *(Points to distant horizon.)* ...starts again. I have looked under every fallen tree...what few are left. She is nowhere to—

MOTHER: You mean there still is some forest up there?

FATHER: *(Skeptical.)* Yes, there's forest. But, it took me the entire morning to get there and the whole afternoon to get back.

MOTHER: *(Hopeful.)* Did you go inside the tree line?

FATHER: There is no possible way she could have flown that far.

MOTHER: *(Snaps.)* You don't know that!

(Father points to the small green line on horizon.)

FATHER: *(With emphasis.)* That is almost as far as the horizon!
No ordinary bird that age could fly that—

MOTHER: *(With emphasis.)* She is no ordinary bird.

(Pause. Mother approaches Father. Song: "She's No Ordinary Bird.")

MOTHER: *(Sings to Father, with tenacity and spirit.)*

(Verse 1)

I raised her from the time she was a tiny chick
Was there when she made her first peep
Taught her to be strong, learning right and fleeing wrong
Calmed her when she couldn't sleep

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(Chorus)

If she wanted to fly
To where the tree line meets the sky *(Gestures to green horizon.)*
She would do it completely undeterred
I don't care what you say
Somehow, she'd find a way
She's no ordinary bird

(Verse 2)

Remember how I cried the night the others died
She stayed alive on so little seed
If she could survive then, I know she could again
Her good instincts will tell her what she needs

(Chorus)

If she wanted to fly
To where the tree line meets the sky *(Gestures to green horizon.)*
She would do it completely undeterred
I don't care what you say
Somehow, she'd find a way
She's no ordinary bird

(Verse 3)

If she were any cockatoo, then what I'm saying isn't true
Who could travel that far in the wild?
But deep down inside I know she's still alive
The truth is: *(Looks to Father.)* I know my child
MOTHER/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Chorus)

If she wanted to fly
To where the tree line meets the sky
She would do it completely undeterred
I don't care what you say
Somehow, she'd find a way

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She's no ordinary bird

MOTHER: *(Sings.)* She's no ordinary bird.

MOTHER: *(Hopeful, to Father. Speaks.)* I know she's still alive.
I just feel it.

(Father comes closer to Mother, puts one wing around her, and speaks slowly with assurance.)

FATHER: Then, we don't stop looking.

MOTHER: This time I'll come with you.

FATHER: *(Looks at sky.)* We'll have to follow the east fork of
the river if we're going to make it by nightfall. *(Looks at
Mother.)* There's not much cover out there.

MOTHER: *(Confidently.)* Then let's go now.

(As they both leave, Ego the Eagle appears from behind the curtain on the emergent layer with wings spread and making slow circling motions.)

EGO: *(Irritated.)* All this sentimental hogwash is getting on
my nerves *and* my stomach. If they don't find the brat soon,
I'll just have to settle for a two-course dinner instead of a
three. *(Ego makes another huge circling motion with his wings as
the curtain closes.)*

SCENE 5

(AT RISE: Backdrop I—luscious rainforest. Annie is fluttering about as she tries to sing melodically. Con the boa constrictor is on the forest floor.)

ANNIE: (Singing.) Oh, Mom! Dad! I'm here. Please come and get me. Mom, Dad! (To herself.) I've been singing all afternoon and still Mom and Dad still haven't found me. Maybe they're looking in the wrong place. (Pause. Thinks.) Maybe, they're lost, too. (Pause. Scared.) Maybe they're trapped somewhere. Maybe... (Suddenly downcast.) ...maybe they've given up looking for me. (As Annie flitters about, she comes dangerously close to Con the Boa Constrictor. Surprised.) Oh! I didn't see you there.

CON: (Plotting.) Don't worry about it. I ssssshould have given you some noticcce that I wasssss here. (Aside.) A young macaw. Thissss ought to be... (With emphasis.) ...deliccccioussss. I haven't had macaw pie in agessssss. (Con comes a little closer; Annie backs up a little.) What'ssss your name?

ANNIE: (Politely.) Annie. What's yours?

CON: Con.

ANNIE: Aren't you a—?

CON: Boa conssssstrictor? Yesssss.

(Con slithers closer, and Annie takes another step back.)

ANNIE: And don't you—? (Pauses to think of the right word.)

CON: Eat animalsssss? Only thingssss that crawl on all foursssss, like ratssss, but definitely not birdsssss.

(Con slithers closer, and Annie takes a step back.)

ANNIE: (Unconvinced.) Oh, I see.

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CON: (*Amiably.*) You're new to the neighborhood. What bringssssss you here?

ANNIE: Well... (*Suddenly remembering her plight.*) ...I lost my home and parents, and this was the nearest safe place to land.

CON: Ah, that'ssssss very tragic. But, you cccccertainly did land in a ssssafe place. Tell me, how did it happen?

(Con slithers closer, and Annie takes a step back. Annie begins to feel nervous but doesn't know why.)

ANNIE: Well, some humans, at least that's what I think they were, cut down our home and all the other trees for miles. My parents were out at the time and since there was no shelter near, I kept flying till I got here.

CON: (*Aside.*) Thissss issss perfect. (*To Annie with sympathy.*) Ahhhhhhh! You're abandoned. You jussst need a little comfort.

(Con slithers closer, and Annie takes a step back. Annie nervously looks for a way to deal with the situation.)

ANNIE: I don't really know...

CON: Don't be sssssshy. I'm jussst here to help you.

(This song is a sort of cat and mouse dance. As Con sings, he slowly slithers closer to Annie, who slowly backs away. At the end of every phrase, Annie slowly turns to discreetly walk away only to find Con suddenly on the other side and in her path. He sings the next phrase as he backs her in the opposite direction. At the end of that phrase, she slowly turns to flee again only to find him again on the other side standing in her path. With each chorus Con attempts to coil around Annie, each time constricting a little more. On the last line of the chorus, Con goes in for the fatal bite. But right on the word "death" as he is about to sink his fangs into her, Annie breaks away while Con makes some kind of gesture of frustration to the audience. Then

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he continues his entrapment game in the next verse. Song: "Love Her to Death.")

CON: (Sings.)

(Verse 1)

Excuse my approach, I don't mean to encroach, I guess I'm
just an extrovert.

But, I can see from your frown, you look kind of down, and
more than a little bit hurt.

So, don't walk away, I just want to say, I think you need
some comfort.

CHOIR: (Sings.)

(Chorus)

When you try to hug her,

You're going for the jugular,

(Emphasizing last line.) 'Cause you just love her to death.

CON: (Sings, sounding sincere.)

(Verse 2)

Life can be rough, and so very tough, like a ship on the
ocean we're tossed.

Parents will leave us, it's all very grievous, and soon we up
being lost.

So, come a little near, there's no reason to fear,

(To audience.) Notice my fingers are crossed. (Shows fingers.)

CHOIR: (Sings.)

(Chorus)

When you try to hug her,

You're going for the jugular,

(Emphasizing last line.) 'Cause you just love her to death.

CON: (Sings.)

(Verse 3)

Please don't be shy, I'm just the kind of guy that people
want for a friend

You're hesitant, but my medicine will cause your problems
to end

After a cuddle... (Hugs himself.) ...and a little snuggle,

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you'll never worry again...

(Attempts to take another bite as Annie jumps away.)

CHOIR:

(Chorus)

When you try to hug her,
You're going for the jugular,
'Cause you just love her to...
When you try to hug her,
You're going for the jugular,
'Cause you just love her to *death*.

(On "death" Con makes his last final attempt to bite Annie and comes dangerously close. Annie suddenly loses her shyness and becomes very assertive.)

ANNIE: *(Angrily.)* I don't need your help. Leave now!

(Con pretends to be offended, but realizes the jig is up.)

CON: Well! Talk about gratitude! *(Slithers off SR, muttering.)*
Ratsss! Ratsss! Ratsss! And that'ssss exxxactly what I'm
going to be eating tonight!

(As Annie composes herself, auditorium doors open (back or side) and Leaf-Cutter Ants enter wearing hardhats. They march in a single line. The Chief leaf-cutter ant walks beside them like a sergeant marching his troops. The ants repeat their "work" mantra without stopping as the Chief talks loudly over them.)

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.
Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.

CHIEF: *(As the Ants are repeating "work.")* You there! Number three! Pick up the pace. It isn't time for a coffee break yet!

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ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.
Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.
CHIEF: Number seven, you're out of step! It's left, right, left!
Who taught you to march?

(The line of Leaf-Cutter Ants comes up CS, goes up the stairs/tree trunk and onto the stage.)

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.
CHIEF: Move it number two! This isn't recess!
ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.
CHIEF: *(Loudly.)* Company, halt! *(The Ants come to attention right in front of the bench CS and stop their work mantra.)*
Number one... *(Stretching out "begin.")* ...begin cutting operation. *(At this command, the first ant in line takes his proboscis and "cuts" a leaf off the tree. He then hands it to the second ant, who hands it to the third ant, etc. and an assembly line is started. A second leaf is cut, and passed along, then a third, and so on. Note: Ants may be placed in a crouching position so they don't block the view of the Chief and Annie.)* Number three, let's be careful. That's prime leaf you're handling there!

(Curious, Annie takes a step closer.)

ANNIE: Hello.

(Chief is suddenly aware of Annie's presence.)

CHIEF: *(To Ants, loudly.)* Company, halt cutting operation!
(All of the ants stop and freeze. The Chief turns to Annie.) What are you doing here? This is a work area. No children allowed. And where is your hardhat?
ANNIE: *(Flustered.)* I ah...don't have one?
CHIEF: *(Angry.)* Don't have one! Do you know you're violating the health and safety act?
ANNIE: I...didn't know that.

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CHIEF: I ought to report you. This area is not safe for anyone underage!

ANNIE: *(Nervously.)* It's the safest place I could find.

CHIEF: I think I'll tell your parents.

ANNIE: *(Sadly.)* I don't know where my parents are. I'm lost.

CHIEF: Well, I'm sorry to hear that. But, you still shouldn't be here. *(Turns to Ants.)* Company, resume leaf-cutting process!

(Ants resume. Annie tries to change the subject.)

ANNIE: *(To Chief.)* What are you by the way?

CHIEF: *(Insulted.)* What am I? I'm a leaf-cutter ant. What does it look like?

ANNIE: Leaf-cutter ant? *(Anxious.)* So you cut leaves, but not trees, right?

CHIEF: Wood is of no use to us. We harvest fungus on these leaves and feed it to our young. *(To one of the Ants as he fumbles with a leaf.)* Number sixteen, *[or another number if you have fewer ants in the cast]* pay attention! That's the second one you almost dropped!

ANNIE: *(Relieved.)* Look, is there any way you could help me?

CHIEF: *(Distracted.)* Huh? Help you? No, sorry, helping lost macaws isn't my department. Try public relations. *(Yells.)* Number eight, you're getting ahead of the rest! Do you have humans in your pants or something? *(Pauses, then turns to Annie.)* Look, whenever I have a problem, there's one solution that always works.

ANNIE: *(Hopeful.)* What's that?

CHIEF: *(Emphatic.)* One word. Spelt W-O-R-K. *(With reverence and emphasis.)* Work!

(With this song, the verses are sung by the Chief and Choir and the choruses are either spoken or "rapped" by the Ants and the Choir)
NOTE: Chief does none of the rapping parts. As the verse is sung,

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the movements by the Ants as they cut and move the leaves along will be very robot-like. Then when it gets to the chorus their movements become a lot more lucid with a lot of rap gestures with baby fingers, pointer fingers and thumbs extended, or one hand over one ear while the other feigns scratching a record on a turntable, etc. The Choir and Chief sing the verse with an air of authority and command. Song: "W-O-R-K")

ANTS/CHOIR: *(Ants continue working as they chant or rap line.)*

Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.

CHIEF/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 1)

When life pushes you into the dirt
And you are feeling down and so hurt
That's just the time that you need not to shirk
Your responsibilities and your work.

ANTS/CHOIR: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work,
work. *(Ants suddenly go into rap mode as they rap Chorus 1.)*

(Chorus 1)

If you're full of dark emotion
Put yourself in forward motion
Do your job to the letter
Soon you will be feeling better

CHIEF: *(Shouts loudly as Ants sing line below.)* You're slacking
off fourteen!

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.

CHIEF/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 2)

Things happen to us that we can't police
Parents abandon, troubles increase
If you want to get fast relief
Just roll up your sleeves and apply elbow grease.

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.

ANTS/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Chorus 2)

Life isn't always heaven

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Sometimes all we get are lemons
Don't just sit around and worry
Go get busy in a hurry.

(Annie joins Ants and helps pass leaves down the row.)

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work.

CHIEF/CHOIR: *(Sing.)*

(Verse 3)

Keep your mind maintained to the task
Do every step from the first to the last
Time will fly so incredibly fast
That present problems will soon be the past.

CHOIR/ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work,
work.

(Chorus 3)

Working hard with endurance
Will give you great assurance
Constant effort without fear
Will make your problems disappear

Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work. WORK!

CHIEF: *(Stretches out "company." "Halt" is said at same time as last "work" is said by the Ants.)* Company halt! *(Chief is totally focused on the column of Ants and doesn't give Annie a second thought.)* About face! *(Column of Ants turns around.)*
Forward march!

ANTS: Work, work, work, work. Work, work, work, work...
(Repeat until they exit auditorium.)

CHIEF: *(Loudly.)* Let's move it. We still have two more trees to do! What do you think this is? An elementary school?

(Annie watches Ants as they exit.)

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ANNIE: (*Forlorn. Calls out.*) Wait! Don't leave! I can help you carry some more leaves. I can even cut some for you. (*To herself, downcast.*) They're gone. (*Looks at the sky.*) And it's going to be dark soon.

[End of Freeview]