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Dandelion

Book and lyrics by
JOAN ROSS SORKIN

Music by
MARY LIZ MCNAMARA

Based on the book by
DON FREEMAN

Dramatic Publishing Company
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Book and lyrics by JOAN ROSS SORKIN

Music by MARY LIZ MCNAMARA

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(DANDELION)

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“*Dandelion* was premiered at Playhouse on Park, West Hartford, Conn., in 2023.”

Dandelion had its world premiere at Playhouse on Park (West Hartford, Conn.) on April 25, 2023.

CAST:

DANDELION.....Sage Jepson
JENNIFER GIRAFFELiz Davis
ROSCOE Ryan Phelps
TOBY/MAXIE MOUSE..... Jong Sang Rheu
PIPPA PARROT/ROSIE RABBIT Sydney Weiser
ZIPPY ZEBRA/LOU KANGAROO Dan Zimberg
SWINGS Alia Irshaid Gilbert, Niko Touros

PRODUCTION:

Director Jill Zarcone
Music Director Kevin Barlowski
Choreographer..... Darlene Zoller
Orchestration & Musical Tracks Andy Roninson
Scenic Designer Lindsay G. Fuori
Costume Designer..... Vilinda McGregor
Lighting Designer Reed Simiele
Sound Designer..... Rachel Landy
Props Master Judi Manfre
Stage ManagerHanna Zammarieh
Photos..... Meredith Longo
Co-Founder/Executive Director..... Tracy Flater
Co-Founder/Artistic Director.....Sean Harris
Co-Founder/Artistic Director..... Darlene Zoller

Dandelion

CHARACTERS

DANDELION: A shy, lovable lion. Age 12.

JENNIFER GIRAFFE: A kind-hearted, gregarious giraffe.
Age 12.

TOBY: Jennifer's annoying brother. Age 8.

ROSCOE: A mean, macho lion. Age 12.

ZIPPY ZEBRA: A zebra science nerd. Age 12.

PIPPA PARROT: A friendly parrot. Age 12.

MAXIE MOUSE: A rhyming haberdasher.

LOU KANGAROO: A barber with a flair for hair.

ROSIE RABBIT: A florist with a bent for the romantic.

SCARY ANIMALS: Five "jungle demons" straight out of
Dandelion's imagination.

TIME: The present.

PLACE: Suburbia in Zooland.

CASTING NOTES

For a smaller cast of 6, the following roles can be doubled:

Toby can also play Maxie and a scary animal.

Zippy can also play Lou and a scary animal.

Pippa can also play Rosie and a scary animal.

Jennifer and Roscoe can also play scary animals.

The cast may also be expanded as needed with additional ensemble members as scary animals and guests at the party.

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Dandelion

Scene 1

(The playground at the middle school before school. DANDELION enters apprehensively, wearing his backpack and holding his schedule.)

DANDELION. First day of middle school. *(Looking up at the building.)* This place is gi-normus, even for a lion!

(PIPPA PARROT enters with JENNIFER GIRAFFE and ZIPPY ZEBRA.)

DANDELION *(cont'd)*. Hey, Pippa. Hey, Zippy.

(#1: “All I Wanna Do Is Fit In”)

PIPPA. Hey, Dandelion. Have you met Jennifer? She just moved here from Savannah-land.

(All turn to the audience and freeze. Separate lights come up on each character as they sing.)

DANDELION.

SHOULD I SPEAK TO HER?
YIKES! DO I DARE?

JENNIFER.

HE LOOKS NICE
I MUSTN'T STARE.

PIPPA.

WILL WE BE FRIENDS
THOUGH I'M REALLY SMALL?

ZIPPY.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW
WHAT TO DO AT ALL.

ALL.

I'M A MIDDLE-SCHOOL KID
WITH THE REST OF THE TWEENS
WONDER IF THE OTHERS
ALSO WISH THEY WERE TEENS!
I TRY TO BE INVISIBLE IN MY OWN SKIN
'CAUSE ALL I WANNA DO IS FIT IN
ALL I WANNA DO IS FIT IN!

(ROSCOE rides in on his skateboard, holding his phone.)

ROSCOE. Hey, guys. *(Snapping a picture with everyone.)*
Selfie! *(Zooms back offstage.)*

PIPPA *(yelling after ROSCOE)*. Show off!

JENNIFER. Who was that?

DANDELION. My cousin Roscoe. But don't think all lions
are like him. *(To himself.)*

IT'S TIMES LIKE THIS
I WANNA RUN FOR COVER

ZIPPY.

HARDLY MACHO
(Pointing to his muscle.)
NOTHING TO DISCOVER

PIPPA.

I'M RUFFLED FEATHERS
NO MORE, NO LESS.

JENNIFER.

I'M NEW SO WHO SHOULD I TRY TO IMPRESS?

ALL.

I'M A FISH OUT OF WATER
THAT'S NO SURPRISE
NO CHANCE THAT I'LL WIN
A POPULARITY PRIZE
I'M HARDLY COMFORT'BLE IN MY OWN SKIN
'CAUSE ALL I WANNA DO IS FIT IN
ALL I WANNA DO IS FIT IN!

(TOBY runs in.)

TOBY. I'm just Jen's kid brother. No way I'm *ever* gonna fit in.

(TOBY runs off. The PA system is heard on the playground.)

PRINCIPAL *(V.O.)*. Good morning animals of all stripes, colors and creeds, and welcome to Treetops Middle School. I am Principal Reginald Rhinoceros, and I am wishing you a wonderful year in your new school. When the bell rings, please report to your homeroom, and remember—at Treetops, we strive for inclusion, but celebrate our differences.

ALL. Differences?

DANDELION.

WHO WANTS TO BE DIFFERENT

ZIPPY.

AND STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD?

PIPPA.

HOW COME GROWN UPS LOVE
TO SAY WE MAKE 'EM SO PROUD?

JENNIFER.

THEY SHOULD GET A GRIP ON HOW WE FEEL
WITHIN

ALL.

'CAUSE ALL I WANNA DO

JENNIFER.

IS BREAK IN

ZIPPY & PIPPA.

BLEND IN

DANDELION.

FIT IN!

ALL.

ALL I WANNA DO IS FIT IN!

(Bell rings. DANDELION screws up his courage to speak to JENNIFER.)

DANDELION. I'm in homeroom thirty-two. What about you?

(Musical button. Blackout as DANDELION and JENNIFER face each other.)

Scene 2

(JENNIFER's house, three weeks later. JENNIFER is slumped on the sofa, reading a textbook. TOBY is playing a hand-held video game.)

TOBY. Prince Xanadu just crushed the silver dragon. Yes!

JENNIFER *(holding her ears)*. I'm not listening.

TOBY. You've just never gotten to level five.

(JENNIFER lets go of her ears.)

JENNIFER. Can't you do something educational, like read a book?

TOBY. You don't know how to have fun. When I'm in middle school, you won't catch me doing homework on a Saturday morning.

(JENNIFER slams her book shut.)

JENNIFER. For once, the kid is right. *(Playing distractedly with a fidget toy.)* Hmm. I could watch a movie, listen to music or ... I could have a party!

TOBY. A party? Here? You're in trouble now.

JENNIFER. Mom and Dad won't mind.

TOBY. But we've only been here three weeks. Are you sure anyone will come?

JENNIFER. Well, we'll see. Won't we?

TOBY. Then can I come too?

JENNIFER. Maybe ... if you help.

(TOBY smiles, then high-fives and low-fives JENNIFER.)

JENNIFER *(cont'd)*. I'll text the invitations. *(Handing TOBY some money.)* You go to the Jungle-Mart and buy some chips, popcorn and ... cocoa-avocado-oatmeal cookies.

TOBY. Cocoa-avocado-oatmeal cookies? Hey, you're not having a party just to invite some weirdo you like?

JENNIFER. Toby G. Giraffe, don't stick your "neck" into places it doesn't belong. Anyway, I'm inviting my whole homeroom.

TOBY. That bunch of animals?

(TOBY runs off. JENNIFER starts texting invitations on her phone.)

(#2: “Come As You Are”)

JENNIFER.

DEAR HOMEROOM THIRTY-TWO:
I’M WONDERING IF YOU
ARE SITTING AT HOME
BORED LIKE ME
WITH NOTHIN’ TO DO
DROP OVER FOR A PARTY

(To herself.)

WHO DOESN’T LIKE A PARTY?

(Returning to texting.)

RIGHT ABOUT TWO

(Smiling and talking to herself.)

I’LL BE WAITING HERE FOR YOU ...

(She resumes texting.)

COME AS YOU ARE
BY BUS OR BY CAR
OR THOSE WHO CAN FLY
JUST JUMP THE WIND AND FLY BY
AND COME AS YOU ARE.

It’s nothing fancy.

SO COME AS YOU ARE
’CAUSE I DON’T LIVE FAR
A PARTY TODAY
AT FORTY-FIVE ZOOLY WAY
SO COME AS YOU ARE.

TURN OFF THE TV
CUT THOSE MORNING CARTOONS
GET READY TO PARTY
WITH BEARS AND BABOONS.

DON’T CRAM FOR YOUR MATH TEST
YOU’LL ACE IT, NO DOUBT

DON'T GO TO THE MALL
NO, COME HERE AND HANG OUT!

YEAH!

WE'LL ROLL UP THE CARPET
PLAY SOME FUNKY TUNES
SO QUIT YOUR HIBERNATIN'
BUST OUT OF YOUR COCOONS.

(Pushing the send button.) Send!

*(ZIPPY, PIPPA and DANDELION appear with their phones.
Ping sounds are heard.)*

ZIPPY.

HEY, I'VE GOT A MESSAGE!

(Ping sounds.)

PIPPA.

HEY, I'VE GOT A MESSAGE!

(Ping sounds.)

JENNIFER.

HOPE THEY GOT MY MESSAGE.

ZIPPY & PIPPA.

TEXT MESSAGE FOR ME!

DANDELION *(flabbergasted)*.

HEY, I'VE GOT A MESSAGE
FROM JENNY G!

JENNIFER.

COME PLAY MY GUITAR
LEAVE YOUR HOMEWORK BEHIND

JENNIFER (*cont'd*).

JUST RELAX
EAT SOME SNACKS

DANDELION, ZIPPY & PIPPA.

EAT SOME SNACKS

JENNIFER.

AND UNWIND

DANDELION, ZIPPY & PIPPA.

YEAH!

JENNIFER.

SKIP THE RSVP

DANDELION, ZIPPY & PIPPA.

TWO P.M. AND NOT THREE

JENNIFER.

YEAH, JUST COME AS YOU ARE

DANDELION, ZIPPY & PIPPA.

YEAH, WE'LL COME AS WE ARE.

ALL.

JUST COME AS YOU ARE
YEAH, COME AS YOU ARE.
YEAH!

(Lights fade on and scene shifts to DANDELION at home. He wears an old yellow sweater and puts down his phone.)

DANDELION. Wait a minute! Jennifer Giraffe wants *me* to come to *her* party? Just as I am? (*Looking down at himself.*) Ratty yellow sweater, mangy mane. Definitely no-can-do!

(#3: “At Jen’s Party”)

DANDELION (*cont’d*).

I’M A GEEK, NO, I’M A FREAK
 WITH A ZIT UPON MY CHEEK
 AND SHE THINKS THAT I SHOULD COME AS I AM?
 I’M A NERD, NO, I’M A TURD
 A GUY WHO’S NOT PREFERRED
 LOOK AT ME, I’D BE BETTER OFF AS A CLAM.

At least clams have an excuse for looking ordinary ...

AT JEN’S PARTY
 AT JEN’S PARTY
 HOW CAN I SHOW THEM MY FACE?
 HERE AM I LIKE A LUMP
 LIKE A SCHLUMP
 LACKING GRACE.

AT JEN’S PARTY
 AT JEN’S PARTY
 YOU CAN BET THEY’LL ALL AGREE
 AT JEN’S PARTY
 AT JEN’S PARTY
 THERE’S NO CHANCE
 SHE’LL LIKE ME.

She probably only invited me ’cause she had to.

I’M JUST A SIMPLE LION
 SHY AND AWKWARD AND STRANGE
 WHY WOULD SHE WANT TO RELY ON
 DANDELION?
 A GUY WHO’LL NEVER CHANGE.

Change? That’s it! I’ll change! I’ll go out and buy some hip new clothes, I’m talkin’ “really hip,” and maybe even get my mane cut short or trimmed or tamed. Yeah, I’ll be ... a *party* animal!

AT JEN’S PARTY
 AT JEN’S PARTY
 THEY’LL SEE ME AS A REGULAR GUY

DANDELION (*cont'd*).

THEY'LL HAVE TO ADMIT
I'M A HIT!
A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY!

AT JEN'S PARTY
AT JEN'S PARTY
JUST YOU WAIT AND SEE
AT JEN'S PARTY
I WILL BE
A BRAND NEW ME!
A BRAND NEW ME!
A BRAND NEW ME!

(*DANDELION rushes off.*)

Scene 3

(*The playground at the middle school, later that morning. ROSCOE, wearing headphones, sails in on a skateboard. He makes a fancy stop and then bops to the music. TOBY walks by with a grocery bag.*)

ROSCOE. Hey kiddy giraffe, whatcha got there? (*TOBY ignores him.*) Hey, kid, I said “whatcha got there?” No one ignores “The King.”

TOBY (*excited*). Are you playing knights and castles or something? Can I be Prince Xanadu?

ROSCOE. Well, Princey, since you're trespassing on my kingdom, I'm sending you straight to the dungeon.

TOBY (*getting scared*). Hey, I quit. I don't wanna play that game.

ROSCOE (*in TOBY's face*). Even with quitters, I'm still the king.

(#4: “King of the Middle School”)

TOBY. Hey, leave me alone. I'm just cutting through the playground.

ROSCOE (*mimicking*). “I’m just cutting through the playground.” (*In his normal voice.*) Didn’t anyone tell you this is my turf. So ...

*MAKE WAY FOR THE KING
YEAH, I’M DOIN’ MY THING
BETTER CHECK OUT MY NEW MOVE*

(*Flipping the skateboard.*)

*I’M GROOVIN’ IN THE GROOVE
’CAUSE I’M THE KING!
I’M COOL
I’M THE KING!
KING OF THE SCHOOL.*

TOBY. It’s Saturday. School’s closed.

ROSCOE. So what! I’m still in charge.

*NO ONE MESSES WITH ME
IT DON’T END HAPPILY
ON THE SWING OR THE WALL
I GO FIRST
OR NO ONE GOES AT ALL!
’CAUSE I’M THE KING!*

(*In TOBY’s face.*)

NOBODY’S FOOL

(*Poking TOBY’s chest.*)

*I’M THE KING!
KING OF THE SCHOOL.*

(*TOBY starts to walk away. ROSCOE pulls him back by the shirt.*)

ROSCOE (*cont’d*).

*HEY, WATCH ME SNEAKIN’ IN THE HALLWAY
GOT A FAKE PASS
GRAFFITI IN THE BOYS’ ROOM
SKIPPIN’ SCIENCE CLASS*

ROSCOE (*cont'd*).

*WHO WANTS TO HAVE A FOOD FIGHT
IN THE LUNCH ROOM?
I'LL SHOW YOU A FOOD FIGHT
SHABOOM, KABOOM!*

(ROSCOE pretends to throw food, landing a good one. Then he's in TOBY's face again.)

ROSCOE (*cont'd*).

*DON'T TANGLE WITH THE KING
YOU'LL LAND UP IN A SLING
A WEDGIE IN THE GYM
HEY
A BAD DAY.*

TOBY (*near tears*). I don't even go to this school!

(ROSCOE continues to intimidate TOBY.)

ROSCOE.

*NO ONE BETTER CROSS THE KING
IF YOU DO YOU'LL FEEL THE STING
IT'S ME WHO'LL BURST YOUR BUBBLE
JUST CALL ME "DOUBLE-TROUBLE"
'CAUSE I RULE
I'M THE KING!
YEAH, THE KING!
I'M THE KING
OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL!
GRRRRRRR!*

TOBY (*nervously*). Listen "king," I really gotta go.

ROSCOE. Glad you recognize who's boss around here, but you ain't goin' nowhere. Not till you tell me what's in the bag.

TOBY. Nothing—nothing's in the bag.