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Publishing**

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Dear Albert Einstein

Book by

RUSS KAPLAN and SARA WORDSWORTH

Music by

RUSS KAPLAN

Lyrics by

SARA WORDSWORTH

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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Music by RUSS KAPLAN

Lyrics by SARA WORDSWORTH

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(DEAR ALBERT EINSTEIN)

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“*Dear Albert Einstein* was originally commissioned and premiered by Making Books Sing, New York City, Spring 2014.”

Dear Albert Einstein received its world premiere from May 3 to May 18, 2014, at New York City Children’s Theatre (formerly Making Books Sing).

CAST:

SusanSarah Lasko
Steven.....Michael Lorz
Einstein Evan Teich
Miss D..... Angela Travino
Judy Lindsay Bayer

PRODUCTION STAFF:

Founding Artistic Director Barbara Zinn Krieger
Co-Artistic Director Emma Halpern
Executive Director Andrew Frank
DirectorJosh Penzell
Music Director Tim Rosser
Set Design Erica Hemminger
Costume Design Leslie Bernstein
Lighting DesignAriel Benjamin
Stage Manager Nikki Castle
CastingMichael Cassara Casting

Dear Albert Einstein

CHARACTERS

With doubling

Susan Fisher (soprano)

Steven, Einstein's Father, Einstein's Peer, Einstein's Teacher,
Twelve-Year-Old Einstein (tenor)

Albert Einstein, Gym Teacher (tenor)

Judy, Three-Year-Old Einstein, Eight-Year-Old Einstein,
Einstein's Peer (soprano)

Miss D, Einstein's Mother, Einstein's Peer, Ten-Year-Old
Einstein (mezzo)

NOTE: German characters may speak with an accent.

TIME: September 1954 to April 1955 (with a flashback to the
1880s).

PLACE: Greenwich Village, New York City (and other fantasy
locations).

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Dear Albert Einstein

SCENE 1

(#1: “New Me”)

(Classical music plays. Lights rise on 12-year-old SUSAN FISHER in her bedroom, circa 1954. She is wearing a bathrobe. She sits at her desk, writing a letter.)

SUSAN. September 7, 1954. Dear Albert Einstein, It's me again, Susan Fisher. I believe by now, you have become accustomed to my monthly letters. You've never responded to any of them, but don't worry, I understand ... as the greatest scientist who ever lived, you must be SUPER busy calculating complex formulas and coming up with more groundbreaking theories. Anyway, while it's been fun writing to you, I regret to inform you that after today, I will be unable to continue any future correspondence. You see, professor, today I started junior high ...

(Flashback! Music changes to lively, boppin' rock-n-roll as SUSAN sheds her bathrobe to reveal her school clothes, and we transition to West Village Junior High. The hallways are bustling with the energy of the first day of a new year.)

P/A ANNOUNCEMENT. Good morning, students and faculty! Welcome to another year at West Village Junior High, and a special West Village welcome to our new seventh-graders. Homeroom begins promptly in five minutes. Goooo Otters!

SUSAN.

WELL THERE'S A SPRING IN MY STEP
AND THERE'S A BUSTLIN' IN THE HALL

JUDY (*crossing the stage, waving, and off again*). Barbara!
How was your Summer?!

SUSAN.

I FEEL A CHANGE IN THE AIR,
THE KIND THAT ONLY COMES IN FALL

GYM TEACHER (*blows whistle and crosses*). Eddie! Look
alive!

SUSAN.

I DON'T WANNA BE SQUARE ANYMORE
GONNA ROCK, GONNA ROLL, IT'S NINETEEN
FIFTY-FOUR

MISS D (*crossing, with papers in her hand*). I'm looking for
room twenty-three ... ?

SUSAN.

NO TIME FOR KID'S STUFF, I'M WHERE I'M
MEANT TO BE
NEW DAY, NEW YEAR, NEW SCHOOL ... NEW ME!

(*STEVEN enters, looking lost.*)

STEVEN. Susan! There you are. This place is huge—I can't
find my locker.

SUSAN. Here, genius. It's right next to mine. Where'd ya
think it would be?

STEVEN. Yeah, same last name. That makes sense.

(JUDY crosses again. She is giggling and waving to more friends offstage. She looks totally put-together and wears her hair in a stylish ponytail. SUSAN immediately puts her hair in a similar ponytail.)

STEVEN. What are you doing?

SUSAN. Performing a magic transformation. Say hello to “Cool Susan.”

I GOT A PLAN OF ATTACK
I’M GONNA TAKE THIS PLACE BY STORM

STEVEN *(rolling his eyes)*. Oh right, “The Plan.”

SUSAN.

PULL OFF A COUPLE OF MOVES
’N WATCH MY SOCIAL LIFE TRANSFORM

STEVEN. It won’t work.

SUSAN. Will too.

STEVEN.

IT’S A LITTLE BIT WEIRD
HOW YOU’RE TRY’N’ TO BE “COOL”
GONNA FAIL—

SUSAN.

GONNA NAIL MY FIRST DAY AT THIS SCHOOL

STEVEN. And I have to play along with this?

SUSAN.

NO TIME FOR WASTIN’, MY FIRST MOVES HERE
ARE KEY
NEW LOOK, NEW TOWN, NEW FRIENDS ... NEW
ME!

STEVEN. So tell me, “Cool Susan,” you really think getting Mom to sew a poodle on your skirt is gonna make you popular?

SUSAN. Sure! There are some very simple things I can do to assure that NOBODY finds out what I used to be like. I refuse to spend one more day as a social outcast. “Nerdball” Susan is gone. “Cool Susan” is here to stay!

STEVEN (*sarcastically*). Nifty. Anyway, see you in class. Don’t be late ...

(STEVEN rolls his eyes and leaves, SUSAN takes a checklist from her pocket and reads.)

SUSAN.

REMEMBER TO BE FUNNY, SUNNY, STYLISH
INTO ALL THE LATEST TRENDS
DON’T MENTION CONSTELLATIONS, MATH
EQUATIONS
THAT STUFF LOSES FRIENDS
DON’T BE TOO BRAINY, COMPLAIN-Y, TOO NERDY,
TOO WORDY
TOO PRUDISH, EXCLUDE-ISH, TOO TOO ON THE
NOSE
STRAIGHTEN MY CLOTHES
STRIKE A CUTE POSE
STAY ON MY TOES

(JUDY is now at her locker.)

SUSAN (*cont’d*).

THERE’S THE GIRL THAT I CHOSE ...
HERE GOES!

(SUSAN pulls a record album out of her own locker and tucks it under her arm. She approaches JUDY, who is wearing a store-bought, perfect poodle skirt. SUSAN “accidentally” bumps into JUDY.)

SUSAN. Oh, I'm so sorry! (*Changing the subject.*) Oh my gosh, I LOVE your skirt. The color's so pretty!

JUDY. Thanks! My mom took me to Gimbel's last week for school shopping. I like yours too, where'd you buy it?

SUSAN (*lying*). Oh ... I got mine at Gimbel's too.

JUDY. I thought so. I can always tell Gimbel's. (*Noticing the record, excitedly.*) Ooh! Is this the new Pat Boone record?

SUSAN. What, this? Oh, yeah! Isn't he the greatest?

JUDY. My parents think rock 'n' roll is just a bunch of noise, but I don't care ... Pat Boone is a musical GENIUS. And he's so dreamy!

SUSAN. I know, he's just ... the END!

(*They both giggle.*)

JUDY. I'm Judy.

SUSAN. I'm Susan. Susan Fisher.

JUDY. Are you new here?

SUSAN. Yeah, we just moved from Connecticut. My dad's a physics professor and he got a job at New York Uni—

JUDY (*cutting her off*). Hey, wanna meet some of my girlfriends? They're coming over after school, and I bet they'd DIE to hear that record!

SUSAN. Sure!

JUDY. Great! Meet me here right after class. I wanna make sure I introduce you to all the right people.

SUSAN. Thanks, Judy! Can't wait!

(*JUDY leaves.*)

SUSAN (*cont'd*).

NOW I'M HITTIN' THE GROUND,
I'VE GOT A SURE AND STEADY START

SUSAN (*cont'd*).

I'M CHARGING OUT OF THE GATE,
I LOOK AND ACT AND PLAY THE PART
AND NOW I'M READY TO SPRINT ON THE INNER
TRACK
GONNA CRUISE, CAN'T LOSE, NO WAY I'M
TURNING BACK

P/A ANNOUNCEMENT. Class starts in ONE MINUTE!

SUSAN.

GOODBYE "OLD SUSAN," THIS PLACE HAS SET ME
FREE
NEW GIRL, NEW LIFE, NEW EVERYTHING ...

(SUSAN is back in her bedroom, in the present. She is finishing her letter.)

SUSAN (*cont'd*). So you see, professor, now that I'm a young lady, I need to start making some big changes. Starting with: stop writing letters to an old scientist. Sincerely, your FORMER biggest fan, Susan. *(She seals the letter.)*
NEW ME!

(There's a knock on her door. SUSAN opens it. It's STEVEN, holding a large book.)

STEVEN. Hey, Snoozan. Mom was making me unpack and I found your Einstein biography.

SUSAN. Ooh! I was wondering where— *(Catching herself.)*
Actually, you keep it. I'm done with it.

STEVEN. What? It's your favorite book. You've read it ten times! Are you feeling OK?

SUSAN. Yeah, I feel great! Don't you? West Village is such a boss school!

STEVEN. Yeah, it's the ... bossiest. So are you nervous about tomorrow?

SUSAN. What's tomorrow?

STEVEN. What's tomorrow? Tryouts for the math league!

SUSAN. Oh sheesh, I'm not doing that.

STEVEN. Not doing ... are you serious? Susan, our old school didn't even HAVE a math league, we've been waiting for YEARS for something like this!

SUSAN. I thought you were all excited to try basketball this year.

STEVEN. Yeah, well ... Dad thinks sports are a waste of time. Besides, the West Village math league is number two in the city, he'll FLIP OUT if we can make it!

SUSAN. Steven, cool girls don't join the math league. NO girls join the math league!

STEVEN. Oh that's right, I forgot, I'm in "Cool Susan's" room now.

SUSAN. Yeah, and my plan will NEVER work if I'm sitting around discussing the Pythagorean theorem and catching all your math cooties.

STEVEN. I get it, I get it! I guess it's up to me to carry on the Fisher family legacy.

SUSAN. Yeah, I guess it is. Anything else?

STEVEN. No. Good night, I guess.

(STEVEN turns to go.)

SUSAN. Oh, Steven? Sorry ... would you put this in the mailbox for me?

STEVEN. You do it.

SUSAN. I'm already in my nightgown!

STEVEN. Fine, fine! Sheesh.

(He takes the letter and Einstein book and exits. SUSAN checks the mirror to make sure her makeup is off, gets into bed and turns out her light. Beat.)

(#2: “I Read Your Letter”)

(Suddenly, she hears classical violin. She flicks on her light—the music stops. Nothing.)

SUSAN. Huh.

(She shrugs and turns off her light again. Beat. The music resumes. She turns on her light again, and this time is startled by a vision of ALBERT EINSTEIN, playing a violin!)

EINSTEIN.

I READ YOUR LETTER

SUSAN *(rubbing her eyes)*. Huh?

EINSTEIN.

YOUR LATEST LETTER

SUSAN. Albert Einstein?!

EINSTEIN.

IN THE FLESH

WELL NOT REALLY IN THE FLESH, BUT
METAPHYSICALLY HERE

BUT I DIGRESS, THAT’S NOT THE POINT
BACK TO THE POINT!

I READ YOUR LETTER

SUSAN. WAIT! Uh ... what are ... you’re ... Albert Ein ...
ah ...

EINSTEIN. You know, I thought you'd be a bit more articulate.

SUSAN. But I JUST mailed ... uh ...

EINSTEIN.

I READ YOUR LETTER

SUSAN. Am I dreaming?

EINSTEIN.

CONFUSING LETTER

SUSAN. Yep, dreaming.

EINSTEIN.

SINCE FOR YEARS

I'M YOUR HERO, YOU LOVE MATH,

AND SCIENCE TOO, YOU LOVE THEM BOTH

WHAT'S GOING ON? *YOU'RE DONE WITH ME?*

(Referring to the Pat Boone record.)

AND WHO'S THIS GUY?

SUSAN. Oh! Pat Boone ... the dreamiest! Except I guess

YOU'RE the dreamiest, since this is a dream ... ha ha ha.

Wait, that's weird.

EINSTEIN. He doesn't look like a physicist.

SUSAN. Oh no, but he is a MUSICAL genius. My friend

Judy is president of his fan club, and—

EINSTEIN *(taking the record out of the sleeve and inspecting*

it). Isn't it fascinating how the records make the music? The

needle travels around and around in the tiny little grooves,

creating vibrations that travel through the air to your ears

and POOF! The sounds of Mozart or the Pat Boone fill your

brain with joy!

SUSAN. Yyyyes ... that is pretty interesting. And that's why

I'm going to join his fan club—

EINSTEIN.

SWELL!

BUT YOU'LL STILL HAVE THE MATH LEAGUE

SUSAN. Not exactly—

EINSTEIN.

THE STAR OF THE MATH LEAGUE

YOU'LL BE BRIGHTER THAN STARS IN THE SKY

SUSAN. Well actually, I've decided—

EINSTEIN.

AND I

WILL BE IN YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS

SUSAN. Huh?!

EINSTEIN.

CHEERING YOU ON, PROUD AS CAN BE

SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH WRITING TO ME?

BACK TO YOUR LETTER

SUSAN. This is crazy.

EINSTEIN.

PERPLEXING LETTER

SUSAN. It's late.

EINSTEIN.

NOT TOO LATE

THERE'S STILL TIME TO TAKE IT BACK, JUST

WRITE ANOTHER

LIKE YOUR OLD ONES WHERE YOU ASK

INSIGHTFUL QUESTIONS—

SUSAN (*cutting him and the music off*). Look. I'm not joining the math league. I'm doing the stuff that Judy and her friends do.

EINSTEIN. Can't you do them both?

SUSAN. No, don't be ridiculous. I don't want to be a square. I need to be exactly like those other girls.

EINSTEIN. Why would you want that? You must always be yourself! To quote the great William Shakespeare, "To thine own self be true."

SUSAN. Well mine own self was miserable, my COOL self will be much happier. Anyway, why do you even care? You never answer my letters anyway. You've probably never even read them.

(SUSAN rolls over and pulls the covers over her head, frustrated.)

EINSTEIN.

WELL I READ THIS ONE
THIS SILLY LETTER
MAKES NO SENSE
AND YOU'RE CLEARLY IN A PHASE, AND BY
TOMORROW YOU'LL COME 'ROUND
BACK TO THE GIRL YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN
BACK TO YOURSELF—

SUSAN. Well this is the new me. Nice meeting you, professor. Good night.

(SUSAN turns out the light. A beat. EINSTEIN shines a flashlight on his face.)

EINSTEIN.

I READ YOUR LETTER