

Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



Judith Viorst's

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Book and Lyrics by Judith Viorst
Music by Shelly Markham



The Dramatic Publishing Company

© The Dramatic Publishing Company, Woodstock, Illinois

Judith Viorst's

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Musical. Book and Lyrics by Judith Viorst.

Music by Shelly Markham.

Cast: 4m., 3w. playing several roles. Alexander is having a bad day. A terrible day, A terrible, horrible day. To be quite honest, it's a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day. But then, everybody has bad days, sometimes. In this delightful adaptation of her popular children's book, Judith Viorst sets Alexander's rather trying life to music and brings to the stage one of America's feistiest characters. Not only does Alexander wake up with gum in his hair, but his mother forgets to pack him dessert, and his best friend decides he's not his best friend anymore. And if that's not bad enough, Alexander's brothers don't have any cavities but — he does. And just when it can't get any worse, there are lima beans for supper and — yuck! — kissing on TV. It is enough to make anyone want to go to Australia. Alexander's struggles with life's daily dramas will not only entertain but educate young audiences as they identify with Alexander and the obstacles he encounters, encouraging them to share their feelings and to realize that bad days happen — even in Australia. Commissioned and premiered by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. *Area staging.*

ISBN: 0-87129-979-8

Code: A83



Printed on Recycled Paper

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

~ A Musical ~

**Based on the book by
JUDITH VIORST**

**Book and Lyrics by
JUDITH VIORST**

**Music by
SHELLY MARKHAM**

**Stage directions by
NICK OLCOTT**

**Based on the original production at the
John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty fees are given in our current catalog and are subject to change without notice. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and stock rights should be addressed to:

DRAMATIC PUBLISHING
P. O. Box 129, Woodstock, Illinois 60098

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT *THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES*. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved.

©MCMXCIX
Book and Lyrics by JUDITH VIORST
Music by SHELLY MARKHAM

Based on the book by
JUDITH VIORST

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,
NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact:
Selma Luttinger, Robert A. Freedman Dramatic Agency, Inc.,
1501 Broadway, Suite 2310, New York NY 10036
Phone: (212) 840-5760

ISBN 0-87129-979-8

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the Musical *must* give credit to the Author and Composer of the Musical in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Musical and in all instances in which the title of the Musical appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Musical and/or a production. The name of the Author and Composer must also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and must appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Specific credit must read as follows:

“Judith Viorst’s
*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible,
No Good, Very Bad Day*
Book and Lyrics by Judith Viorst
Music by Shelly Markham”

All producers of the Musical must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Musical and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“The Musical was commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and was first produced in 1998 at the Kennedy Center.”

On all programs this notice must appear:

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY was commissioned by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1998 and was first produced at the Kennedy Center's Theater Lab on November 27, 1998. The production was directed by Nick Olcott and included the following artists:

CAST

KATE KILEY, RANDY KRAVIS, CARLYNCIA S. PECK,
CLEO REGINALD PIZANA, LYNNE STREETER,
JOSH THELIN, ANDREW ROSS WYNN

PRODUCTION STAFF and CREW

Music Director GEORGE FULGINITI-SHAKAR
Choreographer SANDRA L. HOLLOWAY
Set Designer JOSEPH B. MUSUMECI JR.
Costume Designer ROSEMARY PARDEE
Lighting Designer LYNN JOSLIN
Casting BHK ARTS CONSULTANTS
Assistant Director BONNIE GERMANN
Properties Artisan DREAMA J. GREAVES
Orchestrator BOB CHRISTIANSON
Production Stage Mgr . JOHN "SCOOTER" KRATTENMAKER

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

**A Musical in One Act
For 4 Men and 3 Women playing several roles**

CHARACTERS*

ALEXANDER 6 years old (can go up to 7, with his
brothers growing younger or older accordingly)

ENSEMBLE #1 Also plays Nick (Alexander's 9-year-old
brother) and Albert Moyo (same age as Alexander)

ENSEMBLE #2 Also plays Anthony (Alexander's
11-year-old brother) and Becky (same age as Alexander)

ENSEMBLE #3 Also plays Audrey and Philip Parker
(both same age as Alexander)

ENSEMBLE #4 . . . Also plays Paul (same age as Alexander)

MOTHER Also plays Mrs. Dickens

FATHER Also plays Dr. Fields and the Shoe Salesman

***All characters can be played by adult actors: the children
by actors in their 20s, the adults by actors in their 40s.**

SET

The set consists of whatever arrangement allows for a fluid transition in and out of several different locations. Six rolling chairs, one rolling table, and a rolling bed can easily fulfill most of the play's needs. A large rolling copy machine, basically a box big enough to accommodate two actors, is necessary for the office scene. The rest of the physical world is played by the four Ensemble actors.

The play takes place over the course of one day in the life of a middle-class American first- or second-grader with a mother, father, two older brothers, and a finely honed sense of injustice. He NEVER laughs but we hope that everyone else will.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING about *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day...*

"Delightfully funny! The show sold out almost as soon as we advertised it."

Carey Cahoon,
Palace Professional Children's Theatre,
Manchester, N.H.

"*Alexander...* is an entertaining musical—tremendously popular with young ones—most of whom know the original by heart. Very faithful and very funny—a huge success for our children's theatre."

Chuck Minsker,
First Stage Theater Company,
Huntington, W.V.

"*Alexander...* is a sure-fire audience-pleaser. With its delightful tunes and fun characters, it is a show that reaches all age groups from pre-K to grownups. Our audiences loved it!"

Julie Condy,
Stage to Stage Inc.,
New Orleans, La.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

If you're using the additional songs "Since Hanna Moved Away" and "First Day of School," and you're adding two extra characters, I suggest you do so as follows:

Page 29, after Audrey sings and is applauded:

MRS. DICKENS. Beautifully sung, Audrey. All right, Elliott, it's your turn. What's the name of your song?
ELLIOTT. "First Day of School."

[ELLIOTT sings "First Day of School."]

MRS. DICKENS. I think you worry too much, Elliott. Now, Becky and Alexander, you were going to sing something together?

[Continue as is till page 32. Add this to MRS. DICKENS' dialogue after "...tuneful."]

MRS. DICKENS. ...tuneful. Christine, I believe you're next.

CHRISTINE. I am, and my song is "Since Hanna Moved Away."

[CHRISTINE sings "Since Hanna Moved Away."]

MRS. DICKENS. Thank you, Christine, that—

[PAUL charges to the front AND THE REST CONTINUES AS IS.]

MUSIC AND UNDERSCORING

- 1A. “Overture”
- 1B. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were in Charge of the World” snippet
- 1C. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were” snippet
- 1D. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were” snippet
- 1E. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were” snippet
- 1F. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were” snippet
- 1G. “PROLOGUE UNDERSCORE”—“If I Were” snippet
- 1H. “If I Were in Charge of the World” Opener
- 2A. “Sleepy” Music
- 2B. “Wake-up” Music-1
- 2C. “Wake-up” Music-2
- 2D. “Morning” Music
- 3. “Lady, Lady” Song
 - 4A. “Baby Sister” Song—False Start-1 (through first line of song)
 - 4B. “Baby Sister” Song—False Start-2 (halfway through second line of song)
 - 4C. “Baby Sister” Song—False Start-3 (through end of second line and bear growl)
 - 4D. “Baby Sister” Song—the whole thing
- 5. “Lizzie Pitofsky” Song
- 6A. “Mother Doesn’t Want a Dog” Song—False Start (through end of second line)
- 6B. “Mother Doesn’t Want a Dog” Song—the whole thing
- 7. “Disappointment” Music
- 8. “Soccer Game” Music
- 9. “Tag” Music

- 10A. “Hand-walking” Music—Philip
- 10B. “Hand-walking” Music—Albert
- 10C. “Hand-walking” Music—Paul
- 11. “Mother’s Dessert” Music
- 12A. “Australia” Song
- 12B. “Australia” Play-off Music (Dark)
- 12C. “Australia” Play-off Music
- 13A. “Shoes” Music
- 13B. “Shoes”
- 13C. “Presentation” Music
- 13D. “Shoes” Play-off Music
- 14. “Copier” Music
- 15. “Bored-dance” Music
- 16. “Cell Phone” Music
- 17. “Australia”—Final Play-off Music
- 18. “Sweetest of Nights and the Finest of Days”
Intro and Song
- 19. “Australia”—Finale Music
- 20. “Bows”—“If I Were” Song—last verse only

OPTIONAL SONGS

- 1. “First Day of School”
- 2. “Since Hanna Moved Away”

If you wish to use these two optional songs, sung by two additional characters, see page 77 of this book for the additional dialogue leading into and out of the songs and information on where the songs should be placed.

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

PROLOGUE

House to half. "OVERTURE" (1A)

(One by one, the ENSEMBLE ACTORS run on stage. They are setting a trap for ALEXANDER, who they know will come by this way. When they spot him, they hide. ALEXANDER storms on to center. He is clearly in a vile mood. The four ENSEMBLE ACTORS surround him. The music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #1. Dear Alexander: A dog thought I was a tree. So he went to the bathroom on me. It was a terrible day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE IN CHARGE OF THE WORLD" snippet (1B). ALEXANDER tries to escape, but kids head him off at the pass. The music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #2. Dear Alexander: When I went to get my allergy shot I stubbed my toe by accident. On my way back from the allergy doctor two quarters fell out of the hole I have in my jacket. The barber gave me the ugliest

10 ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,

haircut you ever saw in your life. This has been a terrible, horrible day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" snippet (1C). Again ALEXANDER tries to escape. Again they surround him. Music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #3. Dear Alexander: I had a hamster named Fluffy. She died last January. I had a hamster named Stinko. He died last May. I got a whole new hamster, but he died this afternoon and I'm having a terrible, horrible, no good day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" snippet (1D). Once again the attempted escape. Once again he is stopped. Music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #4. Dear Alexander: I had fifty-two chances to get the ball in the basket. My basketball missed the basket fifty-two times. They said I could have some more chances but I don't want any more chances. It's been a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" snippet (1E). Another attempt. Another defeat. Music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #1. Dear Alexander: They said if I didn't finish my oatmeal this morning I wasn't getting any dessert tonight. I didn't think they'd remember. They did. I didn't think I'd care THAT MUCH. I did. So everybody else had strawberry shortcake, and I had a terrible, I had a horrible, I had a no good, I had a very bad day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" snippet (1F). Same business. Music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #4. Dear Alexander: Somebody called me fatso and when anyone calls me fatso it's a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" snippet (1G). This time ALEXANDER attempts to escape into the audience, but realizes for the first time that they are there. He pulls back from them and is now well and truly surrounded by the ENSEMBLE ACTORS. Music stops.)

ENSEMBLE #3. Dear Alexander: My little sister isn't allowed to go in my bedroom. Ever! She went anyway. My sister also isn't allowed to open my gerbil cage. Ever! She opened it anyway. And here's what I wish: I wish I could lose my sister and find my gerbil. And here's what I am having: I'm having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

(MUSIC—"IF I WERE" Opener—Intro and Song (1H). The intro starts under "I'M HAVING," plays under the next speech, and leads into ALEXANDER's beginning of the song "IF I WERE IN CHARGE OF THE WORLD.")

ENSEMBLE #1. Dear Alexander: If I were in charge of the world, I would fix it so people would never have a terrible...

ADD ENSEMBLE #2. ...horrible...

ADD ENSEMBLE #3. ...no good...

12 ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,

ADD ENSEMBLE #4. ...very bad day!

(ALEXANDER now turns to the audience and begins song "IF I WERE IN CHARGE OF THE WORLD." Choreographed movement should accompany this number.)

ALEXANDER *(sings)*.

**If I were in charge of the world
I'd cancel oatmeal...**

ENSEMBLE #3 *(sings)*.

Monday mornings...

ENSEMBLE #2 *(sings)*.

Allergy shots...

ENSEMBLE #4 *(sings)*.

And also Sara Steinberg.

ENSEMBLE #1 *(sings)*.

If I were in charge of the world...

ENSEMBLE #2 *(sings)*.

There'd be brighter night-lights...

ENSEMBLE #3 *(sings)*.

Healthier hamsters...

ENSEMBLE #4 *(sings)*.

And basketball baskets forty-eight inches lower.

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

If I were in charge of the world...

ENSEMBLE #1 (*sings*).

You wouldn't have lonely.

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

You wouldn't have bedtimes.

ENSEMBLE #2 (*sings*).

Or "Don't punch your sister."

ENSEMBLE #3 (*sings*).

You wouldn't even have sisters.

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

If I were in charge of the world
A chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts
would be a vegetable.
And every kind of movie would be G.
And a person who sometimes forgot to brush,
And sometimes forgot to flush,
Would still be allowed to be
In charge of the world.

ENSEMBLE #3 (*sings*).

If I were in charge of the world
I'd put in more rainbows and leave out all the
thorns and snakes.

ENSEMBLE #1 (*sings*).

I'd put in mermaids and unicorns...

14 ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

And leave out splinters, cavities, and stomach
aches.

ENSEMBLE #2 (*sings*).

I'd put in magic carpets.
And I'd put in wishing wells.

ADD ENSEMBLE #1 (*sings*).

And I'd put in genies.

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

And I'd leave out wars and tornadoes.
And leave out dress-up clothes.

ENSEMBLE #4 (*sings*).

And good guys getting picked on by the meanies.

ALL TOGETHER (*sings*).

If I were in charge of the world...

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

There'd be no more raining on soccer games.
Or (*yecch*) liver for dinner.

ENSEMBLE #3 (*sings*).

And no more playing board games
Where you always get to lose

ENSEMBLE #2 (*sings*).

And your brother always gets to be the winner.

ALL TOGETHER (*sing*).

If I were in charge of the world...

ALEXANDER (*sings*).

There'd be no more staying home at night
With some bossy old sitter.

ENSEMBLE #4 (*sings*).

And no more being scolded
when your cousin...

ENSEMBLE #1. the big pest...

ENSEMBLE #4 (*sings*).

...was being so REALLY pesty that you bit her.

ALL TOGETHER (*sing*).

If I were in charge of the world
A chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts
would be a vegetable.
And every kind of movie would be G.
And a person who sometimes forgot to brush,
And sometimes forgot to flush,
Would still be allowed to be
Would still be allowed to be
Would still be allowed to be
In charge of the world.

(*End of number. After the applause:*)

16 ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE,

ALL FOUR ENSEMBLE ACTORS PLUS ALEXANDER
(*singing-speaking in unison*). If we were in charge of the world we'd fix it so people would never have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

(*MOTHER and FATHER enter and look at the KIDS. FATHER points at his watch or a clock. Suddenly, the KIDS make the sound of alarm clocks of all types going off all over the place. They exit, making the clock sounds. Maybe one of them is the voice of a radio announcer saying something like: "This is radio WTHNGVB (or KTHNGVB) saying, It's time for school, kids. Wakey, wakey, up and at 'em."* MOTHER calls up-stairs to the boys as the ENSEMBLE exits.)

MOTHER. Up time. Come on, everybody, out of bed. Anthony, Nick, ALEXANDER!!

(*Silence. She turns to FATHER, who also calls up the stairs.*)

FATHER. Hey, guys. I want to hear some action up there.

(*A couple of beats and then a burst of noise as NICK and ANTHONY enter, yawning and scratching.*)

MOTHER. Good morning, Nick. (*She gives him a kiss.*)
Good morning, Anthony. (*She tries to kiss him too.*) So, where's Alexander?

NICK. We traded him for two pairs of roller blades.

ANTHONY. Wrong, Nick. They said that he was only worth ONE pair of roller blades.

NICK. Actually, he moved to the zoo with all the other animals.

ANTHONY. No, he went downtown to a store to buy a new face.

FATHER. Hey, you comedians, can we please get a straight answer? Is your brother awake?

NICK. Well, I'll tell you—Peter Pan flew in his window, and took him to Never Never Land last night. And now *(he pretends to sob)* we're never never gonna see him again.

ANTHONY *(also pretending to sob loudly)*. Never never.

NICK *(sobbing even louder)*. Never never nev—

MOTHER. Okay, enough. I better go wake him up.

(MOTHER exits as ANTHONY and NICK break up at their joke. FATHER herds them off in the opposite direction and exits. "SLEEPY" MUSIC (2A) begins as ENSEMBLE ACTORS roll on ALEXANDER's bed and scatter his toys on the floor: a train, a drum, and a skateboard. ALEXANDER is in the bed, blankets pulled over his head, only a tuft of unruly hair showing. MOTHER enters as the ENSEMBLE ACTORS exit. "SLEEPY" music fades when bed is in place and before MOTHER delivers line.)

MOTHER *(sweetly)*. Alexander, time to get up.

(No sound or movement from ALEXANDER.)

MOTHER *(firmly)*. Wake up, Alexander.

(No sound or movement. MOTHER starts shaking him. ALEXANDER moans but doesn't budge.)

MOTHER *(yanking off the blankets)*. Alexander, you have exactly— *(She looks at her watch.)* —four minutes to get washed, tooth-brushed, dressed, and down in the kitchen. *(She shakes him again.)* Speak, so I know you heard me.

ALEXANDER *(groaningly)*. I heard you.

(He pulls the covers back over himself. MOTHER pulls the covers back off and gives him a gentle-but-firm whack on the bottom. She exits. "WAKE-UP" MUSIC-1 (2B) begins on MOTHER's exit. ALEXANDER sits up in bed, rubs his eyes, stretches, pauses for a moment as an idea strikes him, then starts poking inside his mouth looking for something. "WAKE-UP" MUSIC-1 fades before he delivers next line.)

ALEXANDER. My gum! I had all this gum! Where's my gum?

(He searches through the bedclothes, searches some more, shrugs, gives up the search. He scratches his head with both hands and suddenly feels the gum in his hair. He slowly pulls his fingers away from his hair and we see him staring at large gobs of gum now stuck to his fingers. The ACTOR should pantomime the gum.)

ALEXANDER. Oh, yuck!

(He first tries to get the gum off one hand with the other hand. It sags between the two. He succeeds in getting it all on one hand, but then tries to get it off. It sticks both his hands together. Finally he wipes his gummy hands on his pajamas. He gets out of bed. He stumbles over his toy train. He picks it up, glares at it accusingly, and tosses it onto the bed. He starts away from his bed and steps on his skateboard, which flies up to his chest. He catches it and falls to the floor. He rises slowly from the floor, glares at the skateboard, and marches toward the bed. On the way he steps into his drum, putting his foot through the drum head. He turns to the audience and speaks to them with heart-felt emotion.)

ALEXANDER. I hate mornings.

("WAKE-UP" MUSIC—2 (2C) plays to cover this next transition. The ENSEMBLE ACTORS enter with his clothes. ALEXANDER starts to unbutton his pajamas, then—taking note of the audience—modestly moves to behind the bed quilt, which two of the ENSEMBLE ACTORS hold up for him. As he dresses, another ENSEMBLE ACTOR becomes a bathroom sink. Wearing a faucet mounted on a baseball cap, he demonstrates the cold tap by pantomiming turning it on and off and testing it with his hand. It's fine. Then he demonstrates the hot tap, but the hot water burns his hand and he blows on his fingers. He then clasps his arms in front of him in a circular shape to form the sink and kneels as ALEXANDER, now dressed, emerges from behind the quilt. One ENSEMBLE ACTOR hands ALEXANDER a sweater, which he carries toward the bathroom. Another ENSEM-

BLE ACTOR becomes the door to the bathroom. ALEXANDER opens the door and enters the bathroom. The door slams on ALEXANDER's back and chortles to itself. ALEXANDER glares at it, then drapes his sweater over the head of the actor playing the sink and turns on the faucet. The actor playing the sink reacts with displeasure to the sweater, then makes the sound of running water. "WAKE-UP" music fades as ALEXANDER starts to sing-chant.)

ALEXANDER (sings or chants as he pantomimes the washcloth and soap).

It just takes a second to wash my face, wash my face,
wash my face.

It just takes a second to wash my face,
Early in the morning.

(He dries his hands on his shirt, then pantomimes picking up a toothbrush and putting toothpaste on it. He sings or chants as he pantomimes brushing his teeth.)

It just takes a second to brush my teeth, brush my
teeth, brush my teeth.

It just takes a second to brush my teeth,
Early in the morning.

(He pantomimes spitting toothpaste into the "sink." The actor playing the sink reacts with distaste and decides to get even. ALEXANDER wipes his mouth on his shirt sleeve and dries his hands on his shirt as he sings or chants the following, then reaches for the sweater.)