

ACT 1

SCENE 1

OVERTURE

As the Overture ends, the curtain opens on--

THE GATHERING PLACE

Under a twinkling night sky, MANDEROOTH, a lone buffalo, sleeps. Upstage, from deep in the darkness, three pairs of eyes, glowing red, blink on. A low, rumbling horn sounds-out. Manderooth wakes and scrambles to his feet. Out of breath, a second buffalo, JIEN-HEE, rushes in.

JIEN-HEE

Was that it?

MANDEROOTH

Sh! *Listen.*

A second horn-blast sounds out.

MANDEROOTH (CONT'D)

That's it! That's it!

One after another, horns bellow. Jien-Hee squeals.

JIEN-HEE

This is so exciting!

Manderooth and Jien-Hee scurry about, calling in the herd. One after another, the red eyes blink off. Sunrise begins.

MANDEROOTH

Up, up, up! Everybody up!

JIEN-HEE

C'mon, c'mon! Get up!

From all directions, buffalo enter bearing bundles of goodies. As they come, they sing.

SONG: DAY OF ALL DAYS

MANDEROOTH

TO THE MEADOWS BY THE WATERS
TAKE YOUR SONS AND BRING YOUR DAUGHTERS

COME ALONG DON'T SHY AWAY
NOT TODAY NOT TODAY

JIEN-HEE

WE'LL FILL THE AIR WITH CLANK AND CLATTER
PARENTS RUSH WHILE CHILDREN SCATTER
PUSH YOUR TROUBLES FAR AWAY
NONE TODAY NOT TODAY

The herd sets the stage for a
grand celebration.

ENSEMBLE (ROUNDS)

TO THE MEADOWS BY THE WATERS
TAKE YOUR SONS AND BRING YOUR DAUGHTERS
COME ALONG DON'T SHY AWAY
NOT TODAY NOT TODAY

WE'LL FILL THE AIR WITH CLANK AND CLATTER
PARENTS RUSH WHILE CHILDREN SCATTER
PUSH YOUR TROUBLES FAR AWAY
NONE TODAY NOT TODAY

TODAY WE WILL SEE A NEW DAY OF ALL DAYS
WE HAVE WAITED ALL YEAR FOR THIS MOMENT
AND NOW IT IS ONLY A BEAT AWAY
WE HAVE WAITED ALL YEAR
WAITED ALL YEAR FOR THIS DAY

POUND YOUR HOOVES ON THE GROUND LIKE THUNDER
PUT A LITTLE RHYTHM IN IT PUT A LITTLE RHYTHM IN IT
DUST FLIES UP AS SUN BEATS DOWN
LOOK ABOVE AT THE SKY WE'RE UNDER
GOT A LITTLE MAGIC IN IT GOT A LITTLE MAGIC IN IT
WE'VE BEEN WAITING ALL YEAR FOR THIS DAY TO COME AROUND

POUND THE GROUND POUND THE GROUND
WE'VE CELEBRATED THIS DAY SINCE LONG AGO
POUND THE GROUND POUND THE GROUND
IT'S A BRAND NEW START IN THE HEART OF THE BUFFALO

POUND THE GROUND POUND THE GROUND
WE'VE CELEBRATED THIS DAY SINCE LONG AGO
POUND THE GROUND POUND THE GROUND
FIRST DAY ON THE WAY TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

TODAY WE WILL SEE A NEW DAY OF ALL DAYS
WE HAVE WAITED ALL YEAR FOR THIS MOMENT
AND NOW IT IS ONLY A BEAT AWAY
WE'VE BEEN WAITING ALL YEAR
WAITING ALL YEAR FOR THIS DAY

THORN, a royal bull, thunders in.

THORN

QUIET!!

From behind, out of Thorn's sight, a handsome bull, THE CHIEF, enters. With hoof-to-lips, the Chief signals, 'Sh". The herd takes a knee.

THORN

Well, now. That's better. I am Thorn! Royal!
Cousin to the Queen!

A royal fanfare blasts. Thorn jumps out of his skin.

THORN (CONT'D)

YAAA!!

He spins to face the Chief.

THE CHIEF

And *I*, am the Chief. *Husband* to the Queen.

THORN

Oh! S-s-s--

JIEN-HEE

Sire?

With an uncomfortably nervous giggle, Thorn melts into an exaggerated bow. The Chief brushes past him.

THE CHIEF

Good morning, everyone! Have you ever seen such a sunrise? We'll have the greatest festival of all!

ENSEMBLE

Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip!
Hooray!

THE CHIEF

Quickly now. The day will be on us in a blink.
Hooves in, my friends. Time to hustle!

The Chief grabs Thorn's loot, carries it all back for the festival. Joyful, the herd resumes setting up. Defeated, Thorn picks up one apple, slouches it over to the pile. The Chief calls Manderooth aside.

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)

Manderooth.

MANDEROOTH

Yes, Sire?

THE CHIEF

Have you seen the Queen? I was sure I'd find her here.

MANDEROOTH

No, Sire. I haven't. Auntie's missing too.

THE CHIEF

Oh, now there's trouble. Wonder what they're up to.

AUNTIE (OFFSTAGE)

Where? Where's—? Where *IS* he!

JIEN-HEE

Sounds like Auntie.

Out of breath, AUNTIE, beloved eldest elder, stumbles in.

AUNTIE

There you are!

Jien-Hee hurries to help her, guides her to the chief.

THE CHIEF

Auntie, what is it? Are you all right?

AUNTIE

Fine, Sire. I'm fine. It's not me. It's the Queen.

The crowd gasps.

THE CHIEF

Is she all right? Auntie, what's wrong?

AUNTIE

Nothing's wrong, Sire. She's gone to the woods.

THE CHIEF

The woods? Is it time?

AUNTIE

It *IS*.

JIEN-HEE

You're going to be a Daddy!

MANDEROOTH

Three cheers for Queen Willa-Mah!

ENSEMBLE

Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip! Hooray! Hip-hip!
Hooray!

AUNTIE

Her time's very close. You'll have to hurry.

THE CHIEF

Don't worry, Willa-Mah! I'm coming!

The Chief rushes offstage.

AUNTIE

Run, Sire! Run like the wind!

MANDEROOTH

This calf changes *everything*.

JIEN-HEE

Half royal. And half one of us!

AUNTIE

Quickly, everyone. Gather up. We don't want to miss a thing.

Horns blast. The herd lines up.

AUNTIE (CONT'D)

Isn't this exciting, Thorn? A baby. A brand-new, shiny baby!

MANDEROOTH

Everyone, move out!

Auntie kicks off their song.

AUNTIE

POUND YOUR HOOVES ON THE GROUND LIKE THUNDER

The herd joins in.

ENSEMBLE

PUT A LITTLE RHYTHM IN IT PUT A LITTLE RHYTHM IN IT

Auntie leads the herd off.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

DUST FLIES UP AS SUN BEATS DOWN
LOOK ABOVE AT THE SKY WE'RE UNDER
GOT A LITTLE MAGIC IN IT GOT A LITTLE MAGIC IN IT
WE'VE BEEN WAITING ALL YEAR FOR THIS DAY TO COME AROUND...

All, but Thorn, exit. The singing fades out.

THORN

Baby indeed. Some foul little half-n-half calf.
You've ruined everything, Willa-Mah. You and
your common-born Chief. You're a traitor to
your kind. You're a traitor to your class! That
crown was meant for a royal head. You should
have passed it to me!

THORN (CONT'D)

SONG- THE LIFE DELUXE

I WAS BORN TO A FAMILY ROYALED
I WAS RAISED FULLY PAMPERED AND SPOILED

As Thorn sings, a toad-chorus
assembles.

TAUGHT TO LIVE THE LIFE LUSH
IN A STYLE SOFT AND PLUSHY
WHILE EACH OF MY HOOVES WAS WELL-OILED
I WAS BORN TO A FAMILY ROYALED

TOAD CHORUS

OON DIKKA-DIKKA, OON DIKKA-DIKKA, OON DIKKA-DIKKA
OON DIK

THORN

I WAS MADE FOR THE LIFE DELUXE
I'M ONE OF THOSE HAPPY-GO LUCKY-DUCKS
A PRINCE BATHED IN GLORY, A FABULOUS STORY
UNLIKE ALL THE OTHER HARD-LUCKS

TOAD CHORUS

AW SHUCKS

THORN

I WAS MADE FOR THE LIFE DELUXE

TOAD CHORUS

OON DIKKA-DIKKA, OON DIKKA-DIKKA, OON DIKKA-DIKKA
OON DIK-HE'S A PRINCE MADE FOR GLORY UNLIKE THE HARD-LUCKS
HE WAS RAISED FOR THE LIFE DELUXE

CHORUS TOAD #1 (UNDER HER BREATH)

HE'D SELL HIS OWN MUM FOR A COUPLE-A BUCKS

CHORUS TOAD #2 (UNDER HIS BREATH)

MUCKY-MUCKS AND THEIR LIFE DELUXE

THORN

Wha--?

TOAD CHORUS

TIPPY-TIPPY-TOO, TIPPY-TIPPY-TEE
TIPPY-TIPPY-TOO, TIPPY-TIPPY-TEE, TIPPY-TIPPY-TOO
BORN TO LIVE THE LIFE DELUXE!

THORN

NOW THERE'S A SPARK IN THEIR HEARTS I MUST SMOTHER
THEN LIGHT 'EM BACK UP WITH ANOTHER
I'LL GET RID OF THIS CHIEF, HE'S A FRAUD, HE'S A THIEF
TAKE THE CROWN IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER
THEN WITH ORDER RESTORED LIVE A LIFETIME ADORED
NO MORE COMPETING ONCE I'M DONE UNSEATING
THIS CHIEF--

THORN (CONT'D)

And that new little '*Muth-ah*'. Hey! Wait for
me!

Thorn rushes off after the herd.

SET CHANGE TO THE WOODS

ACT 1

SCENE 2

THE WOODS

Ancient trees encircle a clearing. Beams of sunlight pierce the darkness. Center stage, WILLA-MAH, about to deliver her firstborn, stands alone. A distance away, the Chief calls out.

THE CHIEF (OFFSTAGE)
Wiii-lla-Mah?

WILLA-MAH
I'm he--Ooh...

Willa-Mah doubles over.

WILLA-MAH (CONT'D)
It's time, little one. Let's get to work.

Willa-Mah slips in, behind a tree. The Chief enters.

THE CHIEF
Willa-Mah? Are you here?

A newborn cries out.

THE CHIEF (CONT'D)
I'm here, Willa-Mah! I'm coming!

WILLA-MAH (OFFSTAGE)
No, wait! Stay there! Wait.

Willa-Mah, steps out. In her arms, she cradles a tiny calf. A son, covered nose-tip to tail with white, orange and black spots.

THE CHIEF
Oh. Oh, Willa-Mah, she's beautiful.

The Chief slips the calf into his arms.

WILLA-MAH
He. It's a boy.

THE CHIEF
A boy? Well, hello beautiful boy. Look at you.

The newborn giggles.

WILLA-MAH

I never believed it. I thought it was a myth.
What are we going to do?

THE CHIEF

Do? Willa-Mah, what? What's happened? What's
wrong?

WILLA-MAH

You know what's wrong. You know very well.

THE CHIEF

I don't. Please. Tell me.

WILLA-MAH

"The calico ones stuck out from the herd. These
calves could not blend, couldn't hide. Their
speckles of color called out to the wolves. And
the wolves, by the hundreds, replied."

THE CHIEF

Oh, come on now. Willa-Mah. You can't believe--

WILLA-MAH

"The pack swept in and over the herd,
surrounding each bull, cow and calf. By
nightfall the losses were piled to the hip. Our
nation diminished by half."

THE CHIEF

Stop! It's just an old bull's tale. Told by
fools to scare little calves.

WILLA-MAH

No it isn't! Look! He's here. Can't you see?

THE CHIEF

This is nonsense. I won't—

WILLA-MAH

It's true! All of it. It has to be. The Council
convened, a decision was reached. Calico calves
were a threat, a menace. Forbidden by law. The
herd will never accept this calf. They will
never take him in.

Offstage, a twig snaps. The Chief
turns toward the woods.

WILLA-MAH (CONT'D)

Sh. What's that?

A wolf howls, "Ya-rooo".

THE CHIEF

What are they doing in here?