



THE STORY

ACT 1: It is sunrise over Pride Rock, overlooking the savannah. Rafiki, the wise old baboon, calls the animals to witness as Mufasa, 'The Lion King', and his queen, Sarabi, present their newborn son, Simba. All the animals are delighted, except Mufasa's brother, Scar, who resents the new prince and the cub's place as next in line to the King.

Simba grows into an adventurous young cub, as Mufasa tries to instill in him the responsibilities of leadership, and his belief that everything lives together in a delicate balance called the Circle of Life.

Scar plays on Simba's curiosity by telling him about the Elephant Graveyard beyond the borders of the Pridelands, where Simba is forbidden to go. Simba cannot resist exploring, taking with him his best friend, the young lioness Nala, and evading their chaperone, the hornbill Zazu, Mufasa's major domo. The young pair are attacked by three hungry hyenas, and only Mufasa's arrival saves them.

Mufasa is disappointed in Simba and tries to explain to him the real meaning of bravery and maturity.

Scar continues to plot the downfall of Mufasa. He lures Simba into a gorge and has the hyenas start a stampede of wildebeests which threatens to kill Simba. Mufasa arrives in time to save him but is wounded and clings desperately to the cliff by his claws. Scar shows no mercy to his brother, throwing Mufasa back down under the hoofs of the wildebeests. He makes Simba believe that Mufasa's death was his fault and persuades him to leave the Pridelands, never to return.

The rest of the pride, believing Simba to be dead, must accept Scar as their new king. A lazy and inefficient king, he invites the hyenas into the Pridelands, and the devastation of the countryside begins.

Simba runs a long way from the Pridelands before collapsing exhausted, almost becoming a meal for the buzzards. He is rescued by Timon, a wisecracking meerkat, and Pumbaa, a big-hearted warthog. They befriend Simba and teach him their philosophy of life, Hakuna Matata – which means no worries. Simba grows from a cub into a young lion.



Zazu



Scar



ACT 2: Scar, haunted by the memory of Mufasa, wishes to secure his immortality by having children. He tries to force his attentions on Nala, Simba's childhood friend, now grown into a beautiful young lioness. She rejects him and runs away from the Pridelands.

Simba has grown restless, and rather reckless.

He leaps over a river, daring Timon to follow. When the meerkat tries, he falls into the river, almost plunging over the waterfall into the jaws of crocodiles who wait below. Simba rescues him but is ashamed at his own folly. As they lie looking up at the stars, Simba remembers his father and his promise always to be there for him. As Simba sings 'Endless Night', back in the Pridelands old Rafiki hears the song on the wind and conjures Simba's image on a tree trunk, with the mane of an adult lion.

Pumbaa is chased by a lioness. When Simba intervenes to protect him, he recognises his old friend Nala, who is shocked to find him alive. The two young lions realise the depth of their affection for each other, but still Simba is too ashamed to do what Nala asks, to go back to the Pridelands and reclaim the throne.

Simba stalks away into the jungle, but meets old Rafiki who tells him his father is alive – in him.

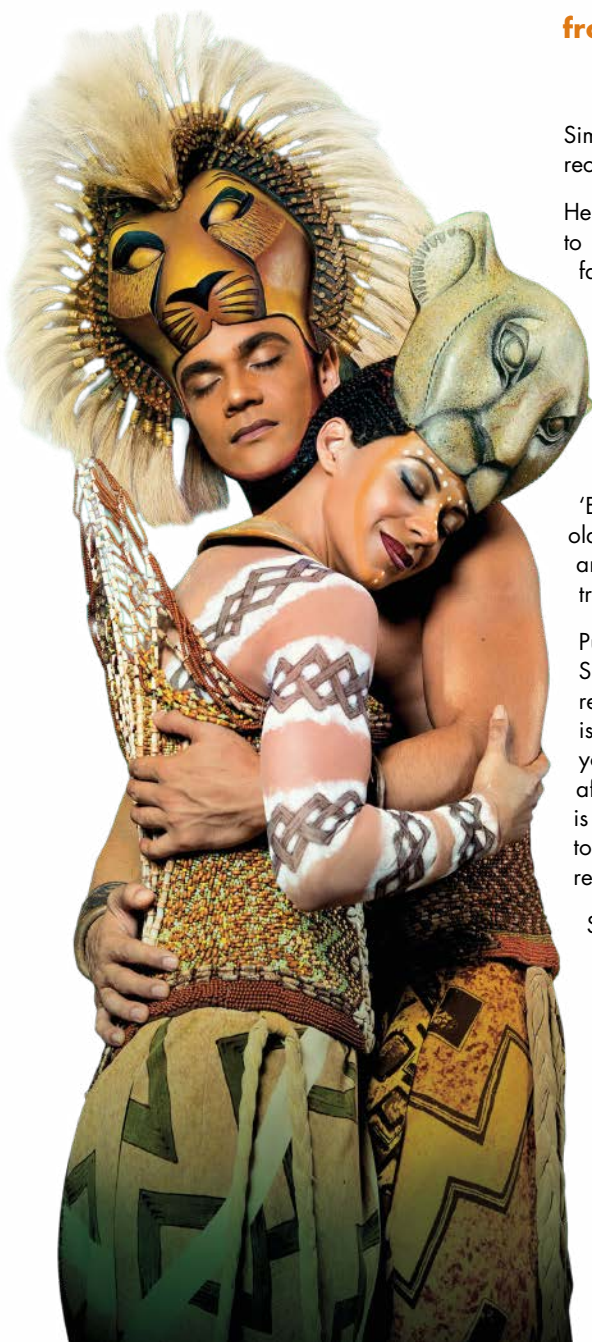
The stars seem to come together to form Mufasa's face. Mufasa tells his son that he must take his place in the great Circle of Life. Simba is resolved, and sets off back to the Pridelands, with Nala, Timon and Pumbaa.

They arrive to find the land dry and bare, and Scar assaulting Sarabi, Simba's mother, because she advises that they leave Pride Rock. Simba confronts Scar but is forced by Scar to admit that he believes that he caused his father's death.

As Scar backs Simba to the edge of a cliff, in a moment of foolish arrogance, he whispers the truth, that he killed Mufasa.

This gives Simba the strength to retaliate and conquer Scar, who is made to repeat the truth to everyone, though he tries to blame everything on the hyenas. Simba spares his life, but banishes him. Scar attacks Simba again, but Simba manages to flip his uncle over the cliff, down to the hungry hyenas waiting below.

Simba is proclaimed the new king, and all the animals celebrate. The Circle of Life continues as Rafiki raises aloft the son of the new Lion King for all to see.



Simba and Nala