

YOUTH
SERIES
08-09

 KRANNERT CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS



COLLEGE OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



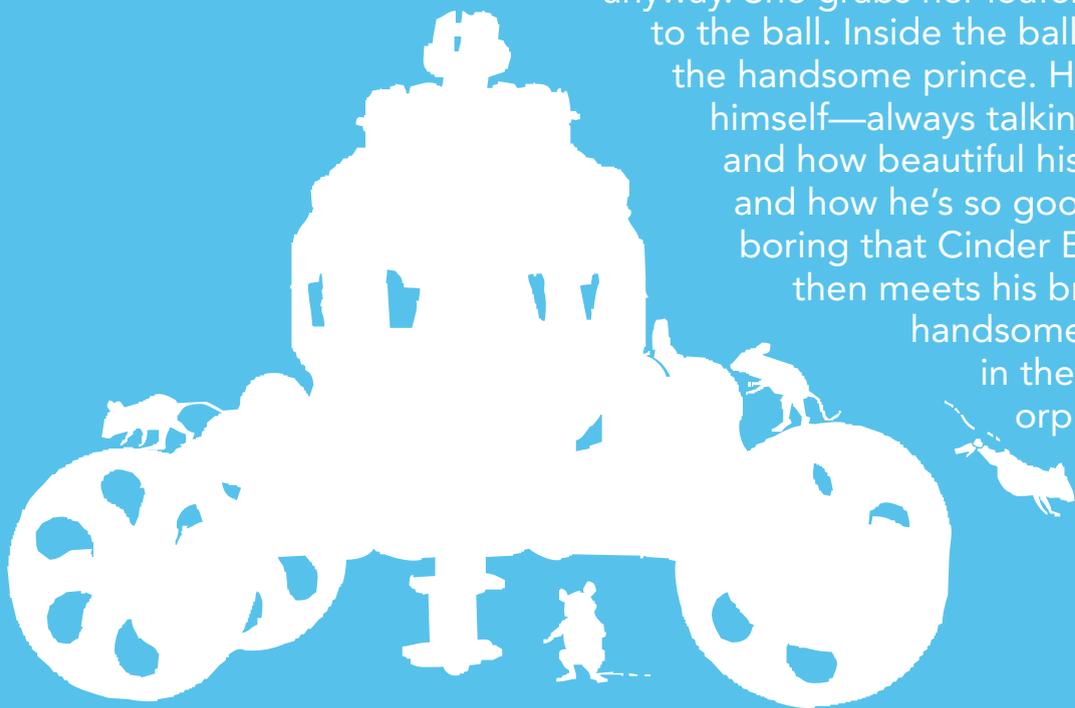
HEAR THE POUNDING DRUMS, see the bright costumes, and watch the swaying trees and flowers on this exciting trip to Zimbabwe. In a small village live Mufaro and his daughters Manyara and Nyasha, who are both beautiful but not at all alike. When the king requests that the most worthy and attractive daughters in the land come to the city, where one will become his queen, each daughter makes a different choice and takes a strange journey. Come along to see who gets to be queen . . .



DO YOU KNOW THIS STORY?

Cinder Edna is poor but happy, and she makes the most of what she has. Instead of crying because she can't afford to eat in an expensive restaurant, she learns how to make tuna casserole 17 different ways. Instead of moaning because she can't go to fancy parties, she teaches herself to tell jokes. Instead of feeling sorry for herself because she can't buy fashionable clothes, she mows the lawn or rakes leaves for her neighbors to save up for a pretty dress. Sure, she'd never been to a fancy party . . . but you never know what your future holds. And then one day two princes announce that they're having a huge ball, and all of the women in the area are invited.

Cinder Edna takes out her new dress, but she doesn't have any high heels to wear with it. She decides that the shoes don't really matter, since her toes would hurt in those things anyway. She grabs her loafers and takes the bus to the ball. Inside the ballroom, she first sees the handsome prince. He seems really full of himself—always talking about his huge palace and how beautiful his future wife must be and how he's so good looking. He seems so boring that Cinder Edna walks away. She then meets his brother, Rupert, who isn't handsome at all but is interested in the environment, rescues orphaned kittens, and likes

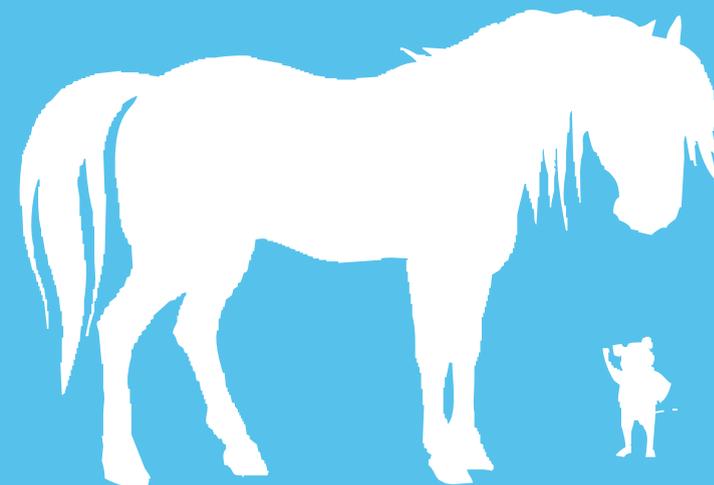


to tell jokes. She tells him a few herself, and they dance together all night.

Just as midnight chimes, Cinder Edna realizes that she has to leave so that she can catch the last bus home. She runs out without telling Rupert her name, and when she gets outside, she realizes that she's somehow lost her shoe . . .

Does this story sound familiar? What does it remind you of?

What do you think happens to Cinder Edna at the end of the story?







WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE WE?

If someone from another country came to your town, what would they learn about you just by looking around? Do you wear bulky jackets and gloves? Then the weather must get cold during the winter. Do you have kneepads in your backpack—or how about a flute case? Then you're probably on a soccer team or in a band. Do you have a recycling bin at your house? Then you must be interested in saving resources and protecting the environment.

We can tell a lot about the history of Zimbabwe just by looking carefully at the scenery and costumes (or the illustrations in the book) for *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*.

- How are your clothes different from the ones that Mufaro, Nyasha, and Manyara wear?
- What food do you think you would eat if you lived in Mufaro's village?
- How are the animals you see every day different from the ones in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*?
- Think about where Mufaro lives with his daughters. How is your house or apartment the same?

Write a few sentences about what a day in Mufaro's village would be like.



Many people in Zimbabwe love to play on the mbira—often called a thumb piano because guess what you play the keys with?—and most of these instruments are homemade from gourds, pieces of scrap wood, and leftover bits of metal. You can make your own!

You'll need:

- 1 small square piece of wood
- 4 large popsicle sticks
- 2 large bobby pins (you can use more if you want more keys on your piano)
- 2 large rubber bands
- Glue
- Tape
- Push pins or nails

1. Glue two popsicle sticks next to each other on top of the wood.

2. Wrap one rubber band around the ends of the popsicle sticks and then around the

wood, so that the sticks will stay in place.

3. While the glue dries, paint the wood, add stickers, or wrap colored masking tape around the wood for decorations. Make it look like other mbiras or make it look like something you've never seen before.

4. Have an adult break the bobby pins so that they are slightly different lengths. Each bobby pin should be broken into two pieces.

5. Tape one end of each bobby pin onto the popsicle sticks so that it hangs over the piece of wood. These bobby pin pieces will be the keys of your mbira.

Organize them however you want but make sure they're not too close together so that you can pluck them to make sounds.



6. Glue the other two popsicle sticks on top of the bobby pins. They should fit right over the first two popsicle sticks.

7. Wrap the other rubber band around the sticks to hold them in place.

8. With the help of an adult, take the push pins and stick them through the popsicle sticks and down into the wood. If the bobby pins are held down tightly, you'll get a clear sound.

9. After the glue has dried, carefully bend the bobby pins up so that you can push down on the keys to make sounds.



Experiment with holding the thumb piano in your lap, setting it on a table, or putting it down on a hard floor to see what makes the best sound—or maybe your desk will work great. Try attaching the metal tabs from soda cans with other push pins so that you can spin them. Many mbira makers add bottle caps or other small pieces of metal that will rattle or buzz. You can try playing songs you already know or make up your own. If your class gets together, you can jam during your own Zimbabwean music concert.

If you have access to the Internet, you can play a mbira online, listen to some songs, or even record your own music. Just type the following link into your browser and get ready to become a mbira master:

<http://pbskids.org/africa/piano>.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The characters in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* have special names that come from the Shona language, which is spoken in Zimbabwe. Can you guess which definition goes with which name?

Mufaro
Nyasha
Manyara
Nyoka

Snake
Ashamed
Happy Man
Mercy

Many names have particular meanings that come from ordinary words (like the names Charity or Victor in English). Akira means "intelligent," Raja stands for "hope," and Latifah refers to someone who is gentle or kind. John means "gracious," but did you know that Juan, Sean, Gianni, Jens, and Ivan are all the name "John" in different cultures?

Does your name have a story to tell too? Some people are named after relatives—maybe you have the same name as a favorite aunt or your father. Some people have place names, like Madison or Brooklyn, or share names with flowers, like Jasmine or Lily. And

how about names like Apple or Calico? Those first names are words for objects. Maybe you—or someone you know—got your name because of a funny story (do you have an embarrassing nickname or did your pet get its name because of its weird behavior?).

Last names have stories too. People named Smith were originally called that because they worked as blacksmiths making horseshoes, swords, and other metal objects. Centuries ago, people who were shepherds were often named Schafer (because "Schafer" is the German word for "shepherd"). People named Zhu originally lived in an area by that name in China.

Pick an interesting name—yours, your cousin's, your favorite comic book hero's, the name of someone you're studying in science class, anyone's!—and find out its story. Amaze your classmates with what they never knew—but now do—about names.



Breaking News

URBANA-CHAMPAIGN, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, APRIL 30-MAY 1, 2009

THE KING INVITES YOU!

MOST WORTHY AND BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS TO ATTEND HIS COURT

Imagine that you're living in Mufaro's village and the king has just invited all of the most worthy and beautiful daughters to his court. This is a big story that will be reported on the local news. Think about who would be interviewed—the king, Mufaro, Manyara, and Nyasha for sure, but who else might be in the story? Who would you interview if you were the reporter?

Now volunteer to be the reporter. Who would you want to interview? What would you want to know?

Next, volunteer to be one of the main characters. What would you want the people watching your interview to know?

Imagine that you are someone else involved in the story. What would you want to say?

Remember to think like the character you're playing—it's your chance to be an actor!



TOP: Manyara and Nyasha dream of what life may be like with the king. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Mufaro is proud of his beautiful daughters. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Everyone is excited and joyous.