

Lion King Character Descriptions

Young Simba

The protagonist of the story, is an adventurous and endearing cub who can't wait to be king of the Pridelands. Simba is playful, energetic, and naive, but after his father Mufasa's death, Simba struggles with shame and his destiny. Cast a strong singer and dynamic performer in this role.

Gender: male

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Rafiki

A wise mandrill who acts as healer of the Pridelands and guides Simba on his journey home. She is an omniscient character, evincing an air of mystery. Rafiki has significant solos in "Circle of Life" and "He Lives in You," and leads the African chants throughout the show, so cast a confident performer with a strong singing voice.

Gender: female

Vocal range top: C5

Vocal range bottom: A3

Young Nala

A courageous lion and Young Simba's best friend. She is not afraid to speak her mind. While Young Nala does sing a little, look for a strong female performer who can portray this confident cub.

Gender: female

Vocal range top: C5

Vocal range bottom: A3

Mufasa

The strong, honorable, and wise lion who leads the Pridelands. Mufasa should command respect onstage and also show tenderness with his son, Simba. Cast a mature actor who can convincingly portray the king.

Gender: male

Vocal range top: C5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Scar

The antagonist of the show, overcome with jealousy of his brother, Mufasa, and nephew, Simba. Coldhearted and wickedly intelligent, he will stop at nothing to become king of the Pridelands. Cast a mature performer who can bring out this villain's dark side while handling Scar's sarcastic sense of humor. As his solos can be spoken, opt for an actor over a singer.

Gender: male

Vocal range top: A4

Vocal range bottom: A3

Zazu

The anxious yet loyal assistant to Mufasa who is always busy trying to do his duty. Zazu's lyrics are spoken rather than sung, and the role can be played by a boy or girl.

Gender: any

Shenzi

One of Scar's hyenas who plot to take over the Pridelands. She is the sassy one of the trio and is always looking out for herself. With Banzai and Ed, she should be able to laugh loudly and long, as well as be menacing to Young Simba and Young Nala.

Gender: female

Banzai

A slick yet childish hyena who works for Scar. He would be the leader of the group if hyenas weren't so lazy. Look for an outgoing and confident actor who can portray nastiness and gruffness. As Banzai is always featured with Shenzi and Ed, consider audit

Gender: male

Ed

The third member of Scar's trio of lackeys. He has a loud, cackling laugh that is his only form of communication. Ed should be played by an actor who can laugh unabashedly and communicate through physicality and facial expressions rather than words. This role can be played by a boy or girl.

Gender: any

Sarabi

A featured lioness, Mufasa's mate, and Simba's mother. Sarabi has a few key speaking lines for an actor who can deliver the care and command of a queen.

Gender: female

Sarafina

A featured lioness and Nala's mother. She has one short, spoken line, so consider giving this part to an actor who is putting in a lot of effort and hard work in rehearsal as a lioness.

Gender: female

Simba

Grows from a cub to lion in "Hakuna Matata." Older Simba has more complex moments as he reunites with Nala, mourns his father, and returns to confront Scar, so cast a more mature actor. Be sure that the change in actors is clear: Try having Young Simba hand-off a costume piece, such as a medallion, to older Simba. Also be sure that Simba and Young Simba share a movement vocabulary.

Gender: male

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: B3

Nala

Grows from a cub to a lioness before she confronts Scar, so cast a more mature actress to play the character beginning in Scene 10. As with older Simba and Young Simba, ensure that this switch in actors performing a single role is clear. Direct the actors to share a mask or costume piece that distinctly represents Nala, as well as a movement vocabulary.

Gender: female

Vocal range top: E5

Vocal range bottom: G3

Timon

An outcast meerkat who lives in the jungle with Pumbaa. He is afraid of his own shadow, but pretends to be the confident, relaxed leader of the duo. Timon is one of the funniest characters in the show and should be played by a charismatic actor who understands comic timing. This part can be played by a boy or a girl.

Gender: any

Vocal range top: B4

Vocal range bottom: B3

Pumbaa

A kindhearted, sensitive warthog who enjoys his simple life of grubs and relaxation. Cast a boy or girl who can portray this loveable and loyal friend to Timon and Simba with deadpan humor.

Gender: any

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: D4

Lionesses

The fierce hunters of the Pridelands and featured in "The Lioness Hunt," "The Mourning," and "Shadowland." These actors should be strong singers, as the material can be challenging. Depending on the complexity of your choreography, particularly for "The Lioness Hunt," strong dancers may be desirable as well.

Gender: female

Hyenas

Scar's army, helping carry out his evil plot to take over the Pridelands. Hyenas are mangy, mindless creatures who sing in "Be Prepared." Cast actors who are able to sing the background parts of that song while playing the loud and raucous characters. Your hyenas can double as animals of the Pridelands or lionesses.

Gender: any

Ensemble

The ensemble plays various inhabitants of the Pridelands, such as giraffes, elephants, antelopes, wildebeest, and other creatures you choose to include. This group can have as few or as many performers as your production permits. Be sure to cast many strong singers. There are also several moments to showcase individual dancers in "The Lioness Hunt" and "I Just Can't Wait to Be King."