

= Simba =

Simba (from the Swahili word for lion) is a fictional character who appears in The Lion King franchise . Introduced in Walt Disney Animation 's 32nd animated feature film The Lion King (1994) , the character subsequently appears in its sequels The Lion King II : Simba 's Pride (1998) and The Lion King 1 ½ (2004) .

Simba was created by screenwriters Irene Mecchi , Jonathan Roberts and Linda Woolverton . While Mark Henn served as Simba 's supervising animator as a cub , Ruben A. Aquino animated the character as he appears as an adult .

Although considered an original character , Simba was inspired by the character Bambi from Disney 's Bambi (1942) , as well as the stories of Moses and Joseph from the Bible . Additionally , several similarities have been drawn between Simba and Prince Hamlet from William Shakespeare 's tragedy of the same name . In 1997 , The Lion King was adapted into Broadway musical , with actors Scott Irby @-@ Ranniar and Jason Raize originating the roles of the cub and adult Simbas , respectively .

= = Development = =

= = = Conception = = =

The idea for The Lion King originated from Disney chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg in 1989 and was originally conceived under the title King of the Jungle . The story , which has been compared to Bambi (1942) , was jokingly referred to as " Bambi in Africa " because of the similarities between the two films and their respective main characters . Co @-@ director Rob Minkoff said that both films are " more true @-@ life adventure than mythical epic . " Though considered an original coming @-@ of @-@ age story that follows the life of Simba as he grows up and " tak [es] on the responsibility of adulthood , " co @-@ directors Roger Allers and Minkoff drew inspiration from other sources . In particular , the biblical figures Moses and Joseph served as creative inspiration for the character . Producer Don Hahn said that , like them , Simba is " born into royalty , is then exiled , and has to return to claim [his] kingdom . "

Several film and entertainment critics have noted similarities and parallels between the stories of The Lion King and William Shakespeare 's tragedy Hamlet , and their protagonists . Allers said that these similarities were not initially intentional and came as a surprise to the filmmakers themselves ; they noticed the similarities only after the story was established and they eventually decided to pursue it . According to Hahn , " When we first pitched the revised outline of the movie ... someone in the room announced that its themes and relationships were similar to Hamlet . Everyone responded favorably to the idea that we were doing something Shakespearean , so we continued to look for ways to model our film on that all @-@ time classic . "

Screenwriter Jonathan Roberts said that , in a musical , songs are used to convey a character 's emotions and " I wants . " Composer Elton John and lyricist Tim Rice wrote the song " I Just Can 't Wait to Be King " in order to give Simba a medium through which he can express his desire to become King of the Pride Lands . Roberts said , " It 's a way for storytellers to move the story and deliver the direction of the character . "

= = = Voice = = =

Matthew Broderick provided the speaking voice of Adult Simba . The first actor to be assigned to The Lion King , Broderick learned of the role while he was on vacation in Ireland , where he received a telephone call from his agent informing him that the directors were interested in casting him as Simba . At the time , Broderick was well known for portraying the title character in Ferris Bueller 's Day Off (1986) . The directors decided to cast him as Simba because they felt that he was " perfect " for the role ; according to producer Don Hahn , Broderick 's voice resembled " the kind of character

who could be irresponsible and likeable , but you also felt that he could come back in a very heroic way . " Jonathan Taylor Thomas , who was starring as Randy Taylor on the television sitcom Home Improvement at the time , was cast as the speaking voice of Young Simba . His appearance and personality would later serve as creative inspiration for supervising animator Mark Henn .

Though Broderick is a trained Broadway singer , he was not up to the task , and neither was non @-@ singer Thomas , so Toto lead singer Joseph Williams and actor Jason Weaver were hired to dub their respective singing voices . Williams ' voice is heard on the song " Can You Feel the Love Tonight " . Impressed by Weaver 's performance as a young Michael Jackson in the miniseries The Jacksons : An American Dream , songwriters Elton John and Tim Rice recruited him to record " I Just Can 't Wait to Be King " and " Hakuna Matata " while the film was still in its early stages of production . As directors , Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff worked closely with the actors in order to ensure credible performances . As is frequently done in animated films , the filmmakers videotaped the actors while they recorded their dialogue , allowing the animators to incorporate their specific mannerisms into the designs of their characters .

= = = Characterization and animation = = =

When The Lion King was green @-@ lit , its concept and story were not well received by studio employees . To guarantee the release of at least one successful film , Disney CEO Jeffrey Katzenberg divided the studio into two separate projects : The Lion King and Pocahontas (1995) , with Pocahontas expected to be the more successful of the two . Because of this assumption , the majority of the studio 's more seasoned animators gravitated towards Pocahontas because The Lion King was deemed a " risk " , while less experienced animators were assigned to work on The Lion King . Co @-@ director Rob Minkoff received this positively , saying that this decision " gave a lot of newer animators a chance to step up to leadership roles . "

The role of animating Simba was divided between Mark Henn and Ruben A. Aquino . While Henn served as the supervising animator of Simba as a cub , credited as Young Simba , Aquino was placed in charge of animating the character as he appears as an adult . The Lion King was Disney 's first animated feature film to feature a cast of quadrupeds since Oliver & Company (1988) . According to Aquino , animating four @-@ legged creatures is difficult because the artists are faced with the task of drawing " twice as many legs ... as you do with human characters " and must also attribute to them both human and animal @-@ like qualities . For assistance , Aquino drew influence from previous animated films that feature four @-@ legged creatures as their main characters , citing Bambi , Lady and the Tramp (1955) and The Jungle Book (1967) as his main sources of inspiration .

Before The Lion King , Henn 's experience as a supervising animator was limited to predominantly female characters ; he had just recently completed work on Ariel from The Little Mermaid (1989) , Belle from Beauty and the Beast (1991) and Jasmine from Aladdin (1992) . When he became involved with The Lion King , Henn initially expressed interest in animating the film 's villain , Scar , because he wanted to do " something different . " However , producer Don Hahn felt that he was better suited for animating Simba . Henn approaches animating new characters by " put [ting himself] into the character 's situation . " Simba proved to be a challenge because Henn was faced with the task of creating an animated character who would both appear and behave like a real lion cub . To achieve this , Henn visited zoos , sketched and studied live lion cubs that were brought into the studio for research , and frequently consulted with wildlife experts .

When it came time to animate Simba during the " I Just Can 't Wait to Be King " musical sequence , Henn felt it essential that the character remain on all fours at all times , despite the fact that he is meant to be dancing . In terms of personality , Henn aimed to depict Simba as a " cocky , confident character " at the beginning of the film , who must eventually mature and learn to take responsibility . The animators would often observe and document the voice actors while they recorded their dialogue , using their movements and mannerisms as a visual aid . Actor Jonathan Taylor Thomas , who provided the voice of Young Simba , served as inspiration for the design and personality of Simba . Henn said , " I loved watching Jonathan Taylor Thomas when he was a boy on Home

Improvement , and getting to meet him and observe him . " Although Aquino was responsible for animating the majority of Simba 's adult sequences , Henn animated the character 's first appearance as an adult that occurs near the end of the " Hakuna Matata " musical number .

= = Appearances = =

= = = The Lion King = = =

Released in theaters in 1994 , The Lion King marks Simba 's first appearance . All the animals in the Pride Lands gather at the foot of Pride Rock to commemorate the birth of Simba , who will eventually succeed to the throne and take his father Mufasa 's place as king . Furious by the fact that he is no longer next in line , Simba 's jealous uncle Scar refuses to attend the ceremony . While Simba grows into a rambunctious lion cub who frequently boasts about the fact that he will someday rule over the Pride Lands , Scar secretly plots against him .

Scar plots regicide and familicide against Simba and Mufasa by luring Simba into a vast gorge , where he triggers a wildebeest stampede . Notified by Scar that Simba is in danger , Mufasa rushes to his aid and manages to place him safely on a ledge . Weakened and unable to pull himself up the steep slope to safety , Mufasa asks his brother for assistance . However , Scar 's true nature is revealed and he betrays Mufasa , throwing him into the gorge where he is killed by the fall .

Convinced by Scar that he is responsible for his father 's death , Simba runs away to a distant jungle where he is befriended by Timon and Pumbaa , who teach him to ignore his past and avoid his responsibilities . There , he grows into a handsome young lion , while Scar wreaks havoc on the Pride Lands . When Simba is discovered by his childhood friend Nala several years later , she confronts him , warning him of Scar 's tyranny and begging him to return home . Afraid of facing his past , Simba refuses until a wise mandrill named Rafiki leads him to Mufasa 's ghost , who convinces him to return home and reclaim his kingdom from Scar .

Simba returns to the Pride Lands and finds them barren because their natural resources have been squandered and abused by Scar . After witnessing Scar strike his mother Sarabi , Simba orders Scar to resign . At first thrown by the fact that he is alive , Scar soon regains composure and forces Simba to reveal that he is responsible for Mufasa 's death , while cornering him at the edge of Pride Rock , hoping to subject him to a similar fate as his father . Having grown overconfident , Scar finally reveals to Simba that he killed Mufasa . Furious , Simba tackles Scar and forces him into announcing this to the pride , initiating a battle between Simba 's pride of lionesses , Timon , & Pumbaa and Scar 's army of hyenas . Simba eventually defeats Scar and throws him into a pit , where he is cornered and killed by the hyenas , who have had enough of Scar treating them like slaves . Simba then takes his rightful place as king . When the kingdom returns to its former glory , the animals welcome the birth of King Simba and Queen Nala 's first born .

= = = The Lion King II : Simba 's Pride = = =

A direct @-@ to @-@ video sequel released in 1998 , Simba 's Pride takes place shortly after the events of the first film , depicting Simba and Nala as king and queen of the Pride Lands . In a ceremony at Pride Rock , the Pride Lands commemorate the birth of Simba and Nala 's daughter Kiara , whom Simba is overprotective of . He discovers that Kiara has disobeyed him by visiting the forbidden Outlands , home to an enemy pride of Scar 's followers known as the Outsiders , and befriending a young member of the pride named Kovu . After a close confrontation with Kovu 's mother Zira , the leader of the Outsiders and Scar 's most loyal follower , Simba separates the two and reminds Kiara of her responsibilities as the future queen . Meanwhile , Zira plots to manipulate Kovu to exact revenge on Simba for Scar 's death .

Several years later , Simba grants a young adult Kiara 's request to embark on her first hunt , but has Timon and Pumbaa follow her in secret . Realizing this , Kiara rebels and pursue her hunt outside of the Pride Lands , where she nearly falls victim to a wildfire . Kiara is rescued by Kovu ,

who returns her to the Pride Lands , which is actually part of Zira 's plan to overthrow Simba . Saying that he has left the Outsiders , Kovu asks Simba to let him join his pride . Simba reluctantly accepts , but distrusts Kovu because of his similarities to Scar , and continues to treat him ruthlessly . That night , Simba has a nightmare about attempting to save his father Mufasa from falling into the stampede but is stopped by Scar who turns into Kovu and throws Simba off the cliff into the stampede .

While Kiara and Kovu 's friendship continues to grow , Simba , encouraged by Nala , attempts to show Kovu kindness by spending a day with him . Realizing that Kovu is beginning to side with Simba because of his love for Kiara , Zira ambushes and attacks Simba . Convinced by Zira that Kovu is responsible for the ambush , Simba exiles him and forbids Kiara to see him , but she makes her father realize that he is acting irrationally and finds Kovu . When a battle ensues between the Pride Landers and the Outsiders , Kiara and Kovu arrive and stops them . When a furious Zira attacks Simba , she is intercepted by Kiara , causing the two to fall over the edge of a cliff . Having landed safely on a ledge , Kiara offers to help Zira , who is struggling to hang on . However , Zira , consumed by her resentment towards Simba , declines her assistance and falls into the raging water below . Simba finally approves of Kiara 's love for Kovu and reconciles with his daughter , and accepts the two lions as future king and queen .

== The Lion King 1 ½ ==

In The Lion King 1 ½ , a direct @-@ to @-@ video followup released in 2004 , Simba appears as a less prominent character because the film 's primary focus is on Timon and Pumbaa 's behind @-@ the @-@ scenes role and involvement in The Lion King , in which they appear as supporting characters . Although the two films technically share the same story and timeline , the plot of The Lion King 1 ½ focuses more on Timon and Pumbaa . The meerkat and warthog unknowingly coexist alongside Simba , and the story fills in the two characters ' backstories and events that lead up to their long @-@ lasting friendship , coinciding with and often initiating the events that affect Simba 's life during the first film . These events include the commemorative bow that occurs during the opening " Circle of Life " musical number and the collapsing of the animal tower that takes place during " I Just Can 't Wait to Be King . " The film also explores , in further detail , the relationship among the three characters as Timon and Pumbaa struggle to raise Simba as adoptive " parents " and disapprove of his relationship with Nala , portraying Simba as he grows from an energetic young lion cub , into an incorrigible teenager and , finally , an independent young lion .

== Timon & Pumbaa and television ==

The success of The Lion King and popularity of its characters led to the production of Timon & Pumbaa , an animated television series starring Timon and Pumbaa . Simba makes several appearances , including one episode in which Timon drags him out to try to revive Pumbaa 's lost memory .

In the episode " Congo On Like This , " Timon and Pumbaa (especially Timon) suspect that Simba has reverted to his carnivorous nature . The episode " Shake Your Djibouti " again features Simba , when Timon and Pumbaa are forced to train him to protect them from a laboratory monster . Another episode , entitled " Rome Alone , " shows Simba being captured by Romans and forced into gladiatorial battle with another lion named Claudius . Simba makes brief appearances in " Once Upon a Timon " , " Zazu 's Off @-@ By @-@ One Day " , and " Beethoven 's Whiff " . He also appears in a music video of " The Lion Sleeps Tonight " .

Simba was featured as a guest in the animated series House of Mouse , in which he alternates between cub and adult .

== The Lion Guard ==

In November 2015 , a new series called The Lion Guard was released . Set in the middle of the

timeline of The Lion King II : Simba 's Pride , it features Kion who is the son and youngest child of Simba and Nala .

= = = Broadway musical = = =

The success of The Lion King led to the production of a Broadway musical based on the film . Directed by Julie Taymor , with a book by Irene Mecchi and Roger Allers , The Lion King premiered at the New Amsterdam Theatre on November 13 , 1997 , where it ran for nine years until being moved to the Minskoff Theatre on June 13 , 2006 . The role of Simba was originated by Scott Irby @-@ Ranniar and Jason Raize , with Irby @-@ Ranniar portraying Young Simba and Raize portraying Adult Simba .

Raize auditioned for the role of Adult Simba after hearing that Taymor was looking to cast an actor who was of " unidentifiable ethnicity . " Raize revealed in an interview that there was a lot of competition for the role because the musical required " triple @-@ threat work -- singing , dancing and acting -- that you don 't get to such an extent in other shows . It was more the sense of who can take the challenge and not be daunted by the task . " Raize , who instantly felt that he " had a connection with Simba , " eventually won the role with the approval of Taymor and choreographer Garth Fagan , with Fagan admiring the fact that Raize was " willing to try , to fail , and then to try again . " Once cast , Raize found it difficult to maintain Taymor 's " sense of duality " because Simba is " both man and beast . " He said , " The tendency is to sacrifice one for the other , but you can 't . " Although hundreds of children auditioned for the role of Young Simba , the casting process was far less grueling for Irby @-@ Ranniar who , according to Taymor , simply " walked in and he had the part . "

= = = Miscellaneous = = =

= = = = Books = = = =

In 1994 , a six @-@ volume book set titled The Lion King : Six New Adventures were released . Set after the events of the first film , they featured a cub named Kopa , who was the son of Simba and Nala .

= = = = Merchandising and video games = = = =

As part of the franchise 's merchandising , Simba has appeared in various The Lion King @-@ related products . The character 's likeness has been used in and adapted into a variety of items , including plush toys and figurines , clothing , bedding , household decor and appliances . The success of the Broadway musical has also lead to its own line of merchandising , including the Simba beanbag doll , based on the character 's appearance and costume in the Broadway show .

Since the film 's 1994 debut , Simba has appeared as a playable character in a variety of video game releases , both directly and indirectly associated with the franchise . The character 's first appearance as a video game character was in The Lion King , which was released by Virgin Interactive on November 1 , 1994 , for the video game platforms Super Nintendo Entertainment System , Sega Game Gear , Nintendo Entertainment System and PC . The game follows the plot of the original film and features Simba as both a cub and an adult .

On December 28 , 2000 , Activision released The Lion King : Simba 's Mighty Adventure for Game Boy Color and PlayStation . The game encompasses 10 levels and incorporates the plot of both The Lion King and The Lion King II : Simba 's Pride as " Simba ... matures from a precocious cub to an adult lion . " Simba also appears as a playable character in Disney Interactive Studios ' Disney 's Extreme Skate Adventure , released on September 3 , 2003 , for Game Boy Advance , PlayStation 2 , GameCube and Xbox , and Disney Friends , released for Nintendo DS on February 26 , 2008 . Additionally , Simba appears in the Square Enix Kingdom Hearts video game franchise as a friend

and ally of the series ' main character , Sora .

== = Walt Disney Parks and Resorts = = =

Live versions of Simba appear in the Lion King musical and in the parades and shows at the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts .

Simba was also the main character in " Legend of the Lion King , " a former Fantasyland attraction in Walt Disney World 's Magic Kingdom , which retold the story of the film using fully articulated puppets . Other Disney attractions that have featured Simba include the Mickey 's PhilharMagic 3D show and the Hong Kong Disneyland version of It 's a Small World .

He appears as one of the main characters at Epcot 's Land Pavilion 12 @-@ minute edutainment film Circle of Life : An Environmental Fable .

= = Reception and legacy = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Although The Lion King itself has garnered Universal acclaim from film critics , reception towards Simba has been generally mixed . The Christian Science Monitor 's David Sterritt hailed Simba as " a superbly realized character , " specifically praising the scene in which the character " faces discipline by his dad after his adventure with the hyenas . " Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly wrote that Simba " has been given a marvelously expressive face " to the point of which " He seems more human than the Ken and Barbie types featured in Aladdin and The Little Mermaid . " Peter Travers of Rolling Stone described " the father @-@ son relationship " shared by Simba and Mufasa as " movingly rendered , " while About.com 's David Nusair wrote , " it ? s the touching father / son stuff that lies at the heart of the movie that cements The Lion King 's place as an utterly timeless piece of work . " James Berardinelli of ReelViews enjoyed the fact that the film focuses more on the story of Simba himself as opposed to the romantic relationship developing between the character and Nala . However , Berardinelli criticized Matthew Broderick 's vocal performance , describing it as " nondescript . " Rob Humanick of Slant Magazine hailed the fact that " it 's never laid on [Simba] that his time as king will directly correspond with the eventual passing of his father " as one of the film 's " most important facets . " However , he criticized The Lion King 's characters , describing them as well @-@ designed but " lazy and troublesome . " The Austin Chronicle 's Robert Faires felt that Simba and the other Lion King characters , though " true " , were simply unoriginal retreads of preceding animated characters who were " swiped from other Disney cartoons . "

Hal Hinson of The Washington Post gave the character a negative review . Labeling Timon and Pumbaa the only interesting characters in The Lion King , Hinson questioned Simba 's role as the film 's hero . Kenneth Turan of the Los Angeles Times agreed , " A movie 's heroes may have their names above the title , but often as not it 's the sidekicks who get the real work done . " Turan went on to pan Simba , describing him as " irritatingly callow . " Chris Hick of the Deseret News complained about the fact that Simba and the other " characters in The Lion King are not as warm and fuzzy as other Disney animated features , " crediting this with making " the film a bit tougher to warm [up] to . " ComingSoon.net strongly panned Simba as a lead character , writing , " typically for Disney animated fare , it 's the hero who is the weak link being both blandly designed and blandly performed . " Acknowledging the character 's Shakespearean origins , The Baltimore Sun 's Stephen Hunter gave Simba a negative review , writing , " Alas ... Simba stands in for Hamlet , but he 's a lot less complicated ; in fact , he 's less complicated than Morris the Cat or Sylvester . " Hunter continued , " Simba the Exile is even less interesting than Simba the Prince . " Christopher Null of Contactmusic.com was critical of Weaver 's performance as the singing voice of Young Simba , writing , " If there 's anything annoying about the film , it 's the singing . Young Simba sounds like a young Michael Jackson ... You almost don 't want him to succeed . " However , Null

reacted more positively towards Broderick 's performance .

Despite the character 's mixed reception , several critics have awarded specific praise to Broderick for his portrayal of Simba , including the San Francisco Chronicle 's Peter Stack and The Washington Post 's Desson Howe . Annette Basile of Filmink described Broderick 's performance as " excellent , " while Peter Bradshaw of The Guardian called it " sumptuous . " Digital Spy 's Mayer Nissim described Broderick 's portrayal of Simba as " wonderful . "

= = = Impact and popularity = = =

During the film 's opening number , " Circle of Life " , Rafiki introduces a newborn Simba to the crowd of animals gathered at the foot of Pride Rock by holding him high above their heads while parents Mufasa and Sarabi look on . Since the film 's 1994 release , this scene has grown to iconic status . In November 2002 , singer Michael Jackson sparked controversy by holding his son over the protective railing of a hotel balcony in Berlin . The event was witnessed by a large crowd of spectators who were watching from below . Some sources have claimed that Jackson was harmlessly attempting to emulate the scene from The Lion King .

When Kate Middleton , Duchess of Cambridge went into labor with hers and Prince William 's baby in July 2013 , the idea that the couple should reenact the famous scene from The Lion King became quite popular among Twitter users . Radio journalist Darren Simpson reportedly tweeted , " when your baby arrives please re @-@ enact the scene from the Lion King " . Shortly after Middleton gave birth to a boy , England native Tommy Peto initiated a petition asking the couple to welcome their baby by having the Archbishop of Canterbury emulate the scene by holding him over the balcony of Buckingham Palace . Ultimately , the idea was deemed " outside the responsibility of the government " and was declined .

The scene has found itself the subject of both reference and parody in various forms of media , such as in the film George of the Jungle (1997) . In what is almost an exact replica of the scene , George , portrayed by actor Brendan Fraser , takes the place of both Rafiki and Mufasa by standing at the tip of Pride Rock and presenting his young son to a crowd of onlooking animals , accompanied by wife Ursula , portrayed by Leslie Mann .

During the season 3 finale of Once upon a Time the main character Emma Swan asked her parents Snow White and Prince charming) that they aren 't going to hold up her yet unnamed baby brother like in the Lion King Since the release of The Lion King in 1994 , the name " Simba " has increased in use and popularity among dog and cat owners . According to Comcast in 2010 , the use of Simba as a dog name reemerged in popularity in 2009 after experiencing a noticeable decline in 2001 , ranking the name ninth out of 10 on its list of " Top 10 Trendiest Dog Names of the Year . " In May 2013 , Yahoo ! Lifestyle included the name on its list of " Trendiest Dog Names . " According to YouPet , Simba is the 17th most popular cat name out of 100 candidates . Care2 included Simba in its article " All @-@ around Cool Cat Names , " while DutchNews.nl reported that Simba ranks among the country 's most popular cat names as of July 2013 . In its list of " Top Popular Pet Names , " BabyNames.com placed Simba at number 64 on its list of most popular dog names out of the 100 that were considered .