

# JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE ORANGE

A Comedy Musical

Written by

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## **Synopsis**

This musical is all about remembering and celebrating your school through a historical imaginary journey and about our protagonists Zuko and Marylou – finding who they are and where they belong. Feel free to use your own symbols, sayings and history to make it authentic to your school. Thus it would work equally well for high school or primary school level.

The play has strong themes about family, unity and identity and features famous South African and Western music spanning 50 years. There are only six principal speaking parts but room for a small or large cast to play the various (non-speaking) characters, dancers and singers. So it is truly a play where everyone can get involved and shine.

The show is about 35 minutes per Act – so in total about one hour and ten minutes. Where songs are considered too complicated or long, simply using the chorus will usually give the same effect.

## **CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

Marylou: The sister, mischievous and strong-willed. Although Marylou may seem opinionated at first, she has a soft heart. She also often has to live in her brother Zuko's shadow, especially at school.

Zuko: The brother, a classic 'goody-two-shoes' who irritates Marylou. He is talented and he knows it but he is also proud and condescending. They share a friendly sibling rivalry that he usually wins.

Mom (Rosa): The kids' mom is kind, conscientious, nurturing and gentle with Marylou and Zuko.

Dad (Lawrence): He is a lawyer with high expectations of his children and strong traditional African roots.

Gogo: This is Lawrence's Mom. She is straightforward and fiery and a traditional African lady from the rural Transkei and she insists on her traditional culture being respected. She was a dancer.

Doc: This is Rosa's Dad, who is a brilliant 'mad scientist' from England. He is scatterbrained and distractible. Doc and Gogo are always insulting each other, especially because of cultural differences.

A teacher

The Principal

Various other school students and extras such as the protesting hippies / the animals / the singers/ dancers / warriors

## SCENE 1: CLASSROOM

*(Teacher walking up and down classroom. Two students seated at desks. Zuko and Marylou. Zuko is calmly reading through magazine; Marylou is scribbling at a frenetic pace.)*

Teacher: 10 minutes until the start of your History exam!

Marylou: *(Jumps up in panic)* 10 minutes until my doom! 10 minutes until despair and destruction!

Zuko: *(snottishly, also rising)* Oh, quit being so melodramatic! It's really quite simple you know, once you remember who fought which war and who won and what their ideology was.

Marylou: You can't even spell ideology.

Zuko: I – d – e – ...i... who needs to spell when you've got charm?

Marylou: *(starts writing crib notes on her arm)* Quick - give me all the important dates! I still have place up to my elbow.

Zuko: Oh, don't think that cheating will save you now. You'll get caught and then I will die of shame knowing that my sister was nothing more than a common criminal. Although I am the top student in every class, it would somewhat...tarnish my reputation.

Teacher: Pack away your books please. *(They start packing their bags away and moving them to the front of the class)*

Marylou: Now it's too late! Quick – what's the difference between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World War?

Zuko: Oh Maylou! Everyone knows that the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War came **after** the First!

Marylou: *(sarcastically)* Thanks, that helps a lot.

Zuko: *(They go sit down at their desks)* The most important thing Mary, is to concentrate. And don't get distracted by the first thing you read, like you always do!

Marylou: *(sounding unsure)*...I'll try. ..

*(They both take the papers from teacher and start writing).*

Marylou: Oh I remember this part... *(reading)* Shaka Zulu was one of the greatest warrior leaders in Africa. He defeated many other nations with his courageous Impi.

Zuko: *(softly)* Don't get distracted...

Marylou: *(dreamily)* I can almost picture the British soldiers, bright red uniforms against the African savanna. I wonder if they were scared... I they sensed attack. I can just imagine the cute Zulu warriors, muscles gleaming in the sunlight...

Zuko: *(softly in the background as the drums start to beat)*: Shh... Marylou, whatever you do, don't get distracted....

**(Dancers/singers as Zulu Warriors and British on stage to Johnny Clegg's IMPI song, they are wearing traditional clothes, carrying spears or fake 'guns' and they march, stamp and sing to the song.)**

Marylou: *(while the music continues in the background)* The heroes of the past were so brave, dashing, inspirational! We've come from Shaka Zulu to...Zuma! Oh for a great heart to save me from my history test!

**The song blends from IMPI into GREAT HEART. The girls chorus/singers join the guys in their traditional clothes. Marylou gets caught up in this scene, taking place in her imagination. One can also have politicians trying to win Marylou's trust but she rejects them in favour of the heroic 'Great Heart' character. The dancers and singers leave the stage when the teacher says 'Time's up'.**

Teacher: Time's up. Please hand in your papers.

Mary: Where did the cute Zulu warriors go?  
*(Teacher takes answer sheet forcefully and starts leaving)*

*(upset and tries to cling onto answer paper)* But I hardly wrote a thing! I know I failed.  
Zuko this is terrible!

Zuko: Luckily there is one of us to keep the family name high. Let's go. *(They start walking off stage)*

Teacher: Don't forget about the school's big anniversary concert. You can write down your names if you are interested in auditioning.

Marylou: You know, I think I will give it a shot – anything to distract my parents from my poor marks.

Zuko: *(very dry)* And poor they are...

**BLACKOUT**

**END OF SCENE 1**