

**NEW VICTORY Sensory-Friendly Performance**  
**CHARACTER AND STORY GUIDE**





Theater can sometimes be a little scary!  
**If you're feeling scared, you can always:**



Cover or close your eyes.



Talk to my grown-up.



Cover your ears with your hands or put on headphones.



Use a fidget tool.



Take a break from the show in the Jack and Lew Rudin Lobby.

## CHARACTERS



### APHRA

An adolescent trilobite



### AUNT TONKA

Calliope's aunt



### CALLIOPE

An opabinia



### ELDER GALLA

Aphra's grandmother



### ELVIN

Judomiah's father



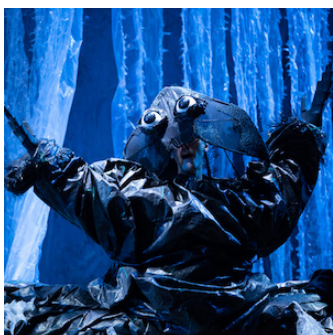
### HAI

A haikouichthys fish



### JUDOMIAH

Aphra's best friend



### ISOTELUS REX

The oldest trilobite



### VANYA

A spiny worm, or hallucigenia

### ANOMALOCARIS

The trilobite's most dangerous natural predator.  
These are unseen in this musical.



## THE STORY

500 million years ago there was only one sea called Panthalassa filled with creatures called trilobites, haikouichthys, opabinias, hallucigenias and anomalocaris. *Riddle of the Trilobites* begins with everyone singing the song "Panthalassa."

It is Molting Day—the day that trilobites shed their exoskeletons. An exoskeleton is a skeleton that grows on the outside of a creature's body. To grow, the exoskeleton cracks and falls away and a new, larger one is revealed underneath. The Elders, or older members of the trilobite tribe, sing "We Knew That It Was Coming."

Aphra is hiding when her Grandma Galla comes to find her for the Molting Day Festival. Aphra has never molted before and she is scared. Aphra's parents died long ago while exploring the Southern Reef and she wishes that they were there with her. Aphra's friend Judomiah arrives, they all sing "The Molting Song" and leave for the festival.



Aphra sings "Time to Change." At the festival, the first-timers begin to molt and everyone sings "The Proetida Call to Molt." When Aphra molts her exoskeleton, her new exoskeleton is covered in unique markings. Grandma Galla is surprised about Aphra's new markings. Just then, a shadow passes over the festival and the trilobites run away. Grandma Galla sends Aphra home to keep her new markings secret and consults her fellow elders about them. They sing a song called, "The Prophecy."

Meanwhile, Aphra shows Judomiah her markings. Neither of them understand what Aphra's markings mean. Aphra wants to follow the creature that caused the shadow, but Judomiah is scared. Aphra ignores him and they follow the creature.

Aphra and Judomiah search through a sponge grove and find the creature that caused the shadow. It is a haikouichthys, one of the first fish in the sea! They scream but realize the fish is afraid of them, too. The fish is named Hai. Suddenly a large anomalocaris swims above them. Aphra, Judomiah and Hai are scared and hide in the sand together.

Judomiah's dad, Elvin, finds Hai, Judomiah and Aphra. Elvin sees Hai and panics, but Aphra and Judomiah tell Elvin that Hai isn't dangerous. Elvin agrees to let Hai return to their home to meet the Elders, but once there, the Elders lock Hai in prison. The Elders tell Aphra that her markings mean that she must solve the Riddle of the Trilobites. The riddle is, "The trilobites cannot live but will not die."

The Elders show her drawings that were made by the trilobites' ancestors. The drawings show Aphra journeying to the Southern Reef. When Aphra was a little baby trilobite, Aphra's parents and Judomiah's dad died in the Southern Reef.

Aphra and Judomiah free Hai. Once freed, Hai leaves.



To figure things out, Judomiah and Aphra visit their friend, Calliope the opabinia. Calliope has heard rumors of the ocean changing. Calliope sings "Calliope's Big Number." She takes Judomiah and Aphra to her Aunt Tonka, a scientist, and her assistant Vanya, a spiny worm, or hallucigenia.



Aunt Tonka and Vanya explain the science of the changing ocean with the song "Alive Like You and Me." Aunt Tonka sends them to Isotelus Rex, the oldest and wisest trilobite, for answers.

Aphra shows Isotelus Rex her markings and asks him about the Southern Reef. Isotelus Rex sings, "Beware," telling them that the Southern Reef is cursed and filled with the dreaded Anomalocaris. Because the Southern Reef is impossible to reach before nightfall, Isotelus Rex suggests Aphra, Judomiah and Calliope camp through the night in a nearby sponge grove.

Aphra, Judomiah and Calliope find hundreds of trilobites living in the sponge grove. The changing seas have destroyed their homes, making everyone scared that the ocean is changing too much and all trilobites will become extinct. Extinction is when an entire species dies. As the anomalocaris swims above, Aphra, Judomiah and Calliope take turns keeping watch while they rest. They sing, "What Do the Elders Know?"



When Aphra, Judomiah and Calliope wake up, Hai is there with his siblings! Hai and his siblings offer to swim Aphra, Calliope and Judomiah to the Southern Reef. Judomiah sings, “Let Them Laugh.”

Judomiah, Aphra, Calliope, Hai and his siblings reach the Southern Reef. Aphra and Judomiah find a hall with lots of drawings. Next to the drawings, there is a letter from Aphra’s parents and they sing “The Letter.” It says if they free a large stone, the trilobites will escape extinction. They will find a new home underground.



Aphra, Judomiah and Calliope see the stone at the far edge of the reef. The anomalocaris is swimming above, so to be safe, Hai offers to swim Aphra to the stone while his brother, Josh, distracts the anomalocaris. Hai and Aphra reach the stone, but it is too heavy to move and they must swim away to safety.

Aphra, Judomiah, Calliope and Hai find Grandma Galla and the other trilobites. A volcano destroyed their home, too. Aphra tells Grandma Galla about the letter from her parents and the stone that was too heavy to move. Grandma Galla tells her that another drawing showed Aphra asking the fearsome anomalocaris for help.

Aphra explains to the anomalocaris that the stone must be moved for the trilobites to survive, but the anomalocaris says that he cannot help. Moving the stone would destroy his own home. Aphra suggests that the anomalocaris and his species join the trilobites under the seafloor, where they can be friends. He agrees to Aphra's plan and tells her to work quickly while he distracts his fellow anomalocaris.

Grandma Galla tells Aphra that the Elders will stay behind when the ocean floor opens and become part of the rock. Aphra is upset at first, but then Aphra realizes the answer to the riddle! If the Elders become part of the rock that future creatures study, they will learn about how the trilobites ruled the ocean floor. This is how trilobites cannot live but will not die! Grandma Galla and Aphra say goodbye. Aphra rushes to the stone.

The trilobites push the stone and the anomalocaris distracts his fellow anomalocaris. The stone falls and the trilobites march underground. Everyone sings, "The Riddle." No one is sure what lies in store for the trilobites, but everyone is hopeful.

Hai and his siblings are left behind. Fish are not in danger of extinction. They are sad to have lost their new friends, but are happy to have helped them.

*Riddle of the Trilobites* is based on real events from a long, long time ago! During the Late Devonian extinction, which started about 375 million years ago, only one species of trilobites survived—the Proetida. The Proetida ruled the ocean floor for 123 million years, until they also went extinct.