

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Cinderella

CINDERELLA
STEPMOTHER
MATILDA
GRISELDA
FRUMP } *Step-sisters*
FAIRY GODMOTHER
PRIME MINISTER
PRINCE
DUKE
LADY ONE
LADY TWO
LADY THREE
LORDS AND LADIES OF THE COURT

SCENE: *In front of drapes of a neutral color stand two three-folds, simply painted to represent the interior of the Stepmother's house. One is Right and one is Left. There is a separation between them so that a section of drape, containing a slit, is exposed.*

AT RISE: CINDERELLA, dressed in rags, a streak of soot across one cheek, barefooted and tumbled, is sweeping the floor. Offstage, in the four corners of the wings are STEPMOTHER and the three SISTERS—MATILDA, GRISELDA and FRUMP.

STEPMOTHER. (*Off.*) Cinderella! Cinderella! You stupid girl! Come help me get into my gown! (CINDERELLA starts *u. r.* towards Stepmother's room.)

MATILDA. Cinderella! You lazy thing—come help me fix my hair. (CINDERELLA starts *d. r.* toward Matilda's room.)

GRISELDA. Cinderella! Come help me lace up this corset! How can I go to the ball if I can't fit into my gown! Hurry up! (CINDERELLA starts *u. l.* toward Griselda's room.)

FRUMP. Cinderella! I need you! I can't find my other shoe! (CINDERELLA starts *d. l.* toward Frump's room.)

(*Now the voices come almost simultaneously.*)

STEPMOTHER. Cinderella! Come in here.

MATILDA. Cinderella! Hurry!

GRISELDA. Cinderella! What are you doing?

FRUMP. Cinderella! Where are you?

(Cinderella is pulled toward each of them as they call.)

CINDERELLA

STEPMOTHER. (*Entering.*) When I call you, miss queen of the cinder pile, I mean for you to come—immediately! What on earth were you doing? Here, fix this. (*CINDERELLA helps fasten her gown.*)

MATILDA. (*Entering.*) Look at this hair! How can I go to the ball looking like a hurricane? Are you trying to spoil everything for me? (*CINDERELLA tries to fix MATILDA'S hair, but it is hopeless.*)

GRISELDA. (*Entering.*) Fasten this, Cinderella. (*CINDERELLA fastens her necklace, almost dropping it.*) Look out, clumsy fingers! I got into my corset all by myself—with no help from you. What were you doing that you couldn't help me?

FRUMP. (*Entering, hopping with one shoe on.*) If you had any pride in the way you look, you'd help me get off to the ball with both my shoes on. Where is my other shoe?

STEPMOTHER. Fasten this!

MATILDA. Pin this!

GRISELDA. Button this!

FRUMP. (*Sinks into chair.*) Find my shoe!

(*CINDERELLA tries to fulfill all their requests.*)

STEPMOTHER. My handkerchief!

MATILDA. My gloves!

GRISELDA. My purse!

FRUMP. My shoe! My other shoe!

(*CINDERELLA finds each of these.*)

STEPMOTHER. Isn't she dreadful?

MATILDA. Miserable.

GRISELDA. Lazy.

FRUMP. Ugly, too.

ALL. Hurry, Cinderella. Run! Hurry! You'll make us late for the ball!

CINDERELLA

(*By now they are all ready.*)

STEPMOTHER. Now, are we all ready? No thanks to you, Miss. Let me look at my lovely daughters, Matilda—stand up straight. Griseida—pull in your tummy! Frump—put your feet together. Now, let me see how you look. Yes—you are really quite handsome. Mark my words, one of you will catch the eye of the Prince tonight. I feel it in my bones. Matilda, stop scratching! Frump, put your feet together! Griseida, stop looking at the end of your nose!

ALL THREE. We must go, Mother. We're going to be late for the ball! Where is the carriage, Mother?

STEPMOTHER. The carriage! The carriage! You miserable girl—where is the carriage? I told you to order it early. Can't you ever do as you are told?

CINDERELLA. The carriage is waiting. Mother dear—just outside the door.

STEPMOTHER. Well, why didn't you say so, stupid!

Come along, girls. Frump, walk straight.

FRUMP. My feet hurt.

MATILDA. You'll never be a Princess!

FRUMP. Neither will you!

GRISELDA. The Prince will choose me—won't he, Mother?

STEPMOTHER. All right, girls, all right. Out—out—out to the carriage.

(*They exit, still jabbering. STEPMOTHER stands and looks at them.*)

STEPMOTHER. Don't they look lovely?

CINDERELLA. May I help you into the carriage, Mother dear?

STEPMOTHER. Indeed you may not! Don't even stick your head out the door. I don't want anyone to see you. You look like a scullery maid. Go scrub your face—and don't forget to scrub this floor.

CINDERELLA. Yes, Mother dear. Goodbye—goodbye! I hope it's a lovely ball! (CINDERELLA, left alone, sighs, looks at her ragged clothes, then goes back to her sweeping. A lovely WALTZ begins softly. Eventually CINDERELLA hears it, then she turns the broom upside down, courtises deeply.) I am honored, Your Highness. I would love to waltz with you. (She dances with the broom.) Yes, Your Highness, this is a lovely ball, and I am having a beautiful evening. If I may say so, Your Highness is a superb dancer. Why, thank you, Your Highness, but I am not half so beautiful as my stepsisters. Just look at them. They are the most beautiful young ladies at the ball—and I am only a scullery maid. (She stops dancing.) No, they are not beautiful—and I am not at the palace—and you are not the Prince. (CINDERELLA turns the broom right side down. The music stops, and she sits on a chair, very sad. FAIRY GODMOTHER enters. She is elderly and forgetful and not at all certain that her magic is going to work. It's almost as if she might be out of practice.)

GODMOTHER. Cinderella? Why are you so sad? (CINDERELLA, startled, springs up.) Good gracious, don't look so startled!

CINDERELLA. I must be dreaming.

GODMOTHER. Dreaming? Fiddlesticks! That's what you were doing a few minutes ago when you were dancing with that broom.

CINDERELLA. Oh, did you see me? How awful. I'm so embarrassed.

GODMOTHER. Embarrassed? Don't be ridiculous. Dreams are very important. How else would you know what to wish for? Besides, that's a very nice broom, and it dances very well. (GODMOTHER takes the broom from CINDERELLA, courtises and begins to dance with it. Suddenly the broom takes over and begins to whirl and twirl her about the room. She shrieks and squeaks and finally is able to turn the broom right side down and make it stop. She catches her breath and tries to re-establish her dignity.)

CINDERELLA. Who are you, Madam?
GODMOTHER. Who am I? (She walks down to audience.) She doesn't even know who I am! Do you know? Who am I? That's right. I am your fairy godmother, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA. My fairy godmother?

GODMOTHER. Why, yes, Cinderella—your fairy godmother. I heard you dreaming and wishing, and I have come to help you.

CINDERELLA. Are you really my fairy godmother?

GODMOTHER. Well, you needn't look so surprised. If you can believe in dreams, you certainly can believe in me.

CINDERELLA. Oh, but my dreams will never come true. Godmother. Fiddlesticks! Then why dream them? Let me show you how dreams can work. Pick up that broom.

Now pay close attention. (GODMOTHER waves her wand, and CINDERELLA begins to march like a soldier with the broom held like a rifle.) Halt! Now, what was the broom that time?

CINDERELLA. A gun!

GODMOTHER. Right. Now— (She waves her wand again and CINDERELLA begins to ride the broom as if it were a spirited horse. To audience.) What is the broom now? (Audience responds. She waves her wand again and CINDERELLA begins to use the broom as if it were a shovel. To audience.) And now, what is the broom? (Audience responds. She waves her wand again, and CINDERELLA begins to "strum" the broom as if it were a guitar. To audience.) What is the broom this time? (Audience responds. Godmother waves the wand once more, and CINDERELLA begins to dance with the broom. To audience.) And now, what is the broom? (Audience responds.) That's how a dream is made, Cinderella. Now all we have to do is make a dream come true. (GODMOTHER gets a book out of her pocket, hums for her spectacles, puts them on, and finds the right page.) Now then, Cinderella

—let me see—oh, yes, here it is: Run get me the mousetrap.

CINDERELLA. The mousetrap?

GODMOTHER. The mousetrap. Hurry—run and get it. There are six mice in it, all of them dreaming about becoming prancing, black horses. (CINDERELLA goes to fetch the mousetrap, returns almost immediately.) And now—let me see what else we need. Oh, yes, one extra large pumpkin.

CINDERELLA. A pumpkin. (She starts but turns back to ask.) What is the pumpkin wishing to become?

GODMOTHER. Never you mind. Just run and fetch it. (CINDERELLA goes to get the pumpkin, returns. Consulting book.) Six mice—one pumpkin—now, what else do we need? One teaspoon salt—a dash of cinnamon—two ounces of sweet chocolate—Oh, dear, no! That's my recipe for Magic Cake. (Turns pages.) Here we are! Ah ha—we need one last ingredient: Lots of good, strong, fresh wishes. (She goes to audience.) Do you know what to wish for? That's right. A coach—six prancing horses—what else? Oh, my goodness, yes—a lovely gown for Cinderella to wear to the palace. Now—how hard can you wish? Oh, you'll have to wish harder than that. I can barely feel it. Harder! That's better. I'll tell you what we have to do now—we have to count up to twenty. Can you do that? All right—ready? Here we go! One, two, three—Oh, wait a minute—I forgot to tell you—we've got to close our eyes and count. That makes the wishes stronger. Everybody got his eyes closed? All right—here we go again. One, two, three—Oh, oh—someone's got his eyes open. (She finds several in the audience who are peeking.) All eyes closed. Concentrate. Wish harder than you've ever wished for anything in your life. And count—one, two, three (etc.). (During the above and the counting, CINDERELLA slips behind the Right three-fold, where helpers dress her in her beautiful, floor-length gown. Her exit is covered by GODMOTHER, who spreads her voluminous cape and remains there, counting, until CINDERELLA

is dressed and ready to return. When she enters, CINDERELLA eases out of her slippers and stands beside them. The coach is pushed through the Upstage blacks, the coachman's back visible to the audience.) TWENTY! Presto! Magic wand—work the magic spell. Open your eyes, children. You, too, Cinderella. (CINDERELLA opens her eyes and gasps with delight at her beautiful gown.) Look at our Cinderella. Doesn't she look beautiful?

CINDERELLA. Oh, Fairy Godmother, I've never seen such a beautiful dress.

GODMOTHER. (Relieved.) Now the dream begins to be real. Thank you, children, for helping me. Now, Cinderella, it's time for you to be off to the ball—so into your carriage—and off you go. (CINDERELLA takes one step toward the carriage, exposing a bare foot.) Just a moment, Cinderella. Let me see your feet! (CINDERELLA shows one bare foot.) And the other. (CINDERELLA shows the other bare foot.) Now, how did that happen? (To audience.) Did someone forget to wish for shoes? Who was it? Did you wish for shoes? Did you? How can we send Cinderella off to the ball without her magic glass slippers? Let's count again—but we can do this one in a hurry—just by counting up to three. Ready? One, two, three! (GODMOTHER waves her wand, there is a flash of LIGHT, followed by SMOKE. [Flashes paper and smoke powder.]) Good gracious! (CINDERELLA lifts her skirt, and we see that she has on a pair of sparkling, jewelled slippers.) It worked! Look, it worked! I knew it would. CINDERELLA. Oh, my darling Fairy Godmother, I've never had a pair of shoes in my life. Nor a beautiful dress. Nor an invitation to the palace. Nor a—

GODMOTHER. Invitation! We forgot the invitation! Here, maybe I can pull one out of my sleeve. (GODMOTHER reaches inside her cape and with a flourish pulls out—instead of an invitation—a large bouquet of flowers.) Fiddlesticks! Wrong sleeve. (She now produces the invitation, which she loops by its ribbon on CINDERELLA'S

wrist.) Now! Surely that's everything. So, into your coach and off you go.

CINDERELLA. Before I go, may I tell you how happy I am? I love you, my dear Fairy Godmother. (CINDERELLA *kisses her.*)

GODMOTHER. (*Shyly.*) Fiddlesticks. Get along with you. (CINDERELLA *gets into her coach. It begins to move off.*) Oh, dear! There's something else I'm forgetting! Just a moment, coachman—hold your horses. What could it be that I am forgetting? Children—help me! What have I forgotten this time? It's something terribly important. Please help me think of it—or the ball will be over before Cinderella can get to the palace! That's it! The time! Midnight! Cinderella, my dear, you must leave the palace before the clocks have finished striking midnight. If you don't your beautiful gown will turn to rags—your coach will turn back into a pumpkin—and your prancing horses will become six, squeaking mice again. Do you understand?

CINDERELLA. Yes, Fairy Godmother. Goodbye—and thank you for making my dreams come true!

GODMOTHER. (*As the coach pulls off.*) No, my lovely child—you will make your own dreams come true. (CURTAIN *comes in, and Godmother, wiping her eyes a little, stays in front of it. To audience.*) And I think she will, don't you, children? Didn't she look pretty? Do you think she'll meet the Prince at the palace? What do you think will happen? Would you like to see? All right—just look back there. All the grand Lords and Ladies of the court are coming to the palace. Watch. (GODMOTHER *exits through the curtains.*)

(*Down the aisle come the Lords and Ladies of the court, led by a highly decorated and somewhat pompous PRINCE MINISTER.*)

MINISTER. (*Coming Onstage.*) And now, Ladies and Lords of the court—the Prince invites you, one and all,

to repair to the great hall—where there will be music and dancing. (*He raps on the floor with his staff.*) Let the music begin! (*He turns and faces the curtain and raps once more. The CURTAIN opens.*)

(*We are now in the great hall of the palace. The three-folds have been reversed and are painted in geometric, abstract style to indicate the palace. LORDS and LADIES group themselves Onstage, and FOUR COUPLES dance the Gavotte. They are applauded at the conclusion of the dance. Now from the rear of the theatre, SERPOTNER, MATILDA, GRISELDA and FRUMP appear.*)

SERPOTNER. Stand up straight, Matilda. Griseida, stop chewing your nails! Frump—you do not have your feet all the way in your shoes.

FRUMP. But, Mother, they hurt my feet! Terribly!

MATILDA. That's because there's so much of them.

FRUMP. You horrible girl—I wish warts on your nose.

SERPOTNER. Smile, girls—and stop your bickering.

What would the Prince say if he heard you?

GRISEIDA. Where is the Prince? I don't see him in the great hall.

FRUMP. That's because you can't see any farther than the tip of your nose!

SERPOTNER. I must say my daughters look a thousand times better than any of those wretched creatures.

Oh, yes—the Prince is bound to notice you.

MATILDA. I don't see him, Mother. What if he doesn't come to his own party?

SERPOTNER. Don't be ridiculous. He'll be here—and he'll ask my daughters to dance.

GRISEIDA. All of us?

SERPOTNER. Griseida, stop being silly. Frump! Put your feet back in those shoes. Now all of you watch the ladies (all the way, Frump!)—and learn what not to do when the Prince asks you to dance.

CINDERELLA

(PRINCE MINISTER *found*s the floor with the staff.)

MINISTER. His Royal Highness, the Prince—is now approaching the great hall. He will choose his partners for the evening—and then lead the court in the grand waltz.

(PRINCE and DUKE, *his friend*, enter *Onstage from the rear of the house*.)

STEPMOTHER. Hurry, girls! Over here! I want him to see you first. (STEPMOTHER *pushes her way through the LORDS and LADIES to Left, dragging her DAUGHTERS with her*.)

MATILDA. Frump! You clumsy big-foot—you stepped on my toes.

FRUMP. Well, you pushed me.

MATILDA. I did not. You did it *on purpose*.

FRUMP. No, I did not. But stay out of my way.

STEPMOTHER. Why don't you both behave properly? Like your dear sister Griselda.

MATILDA. Look at her—posing like a queen.

FRUMP. Griselda—come stand over here with the rest of us.

STEPMOTHER. Quiet, girls—here he comes! (PRINCE and DUKE *are now Onstage*. All the LORDS and LADIES *bow*, and STEPMOTHER *sets upon him immediately*.) Your Highness—may I present my three beautiful daughters? You'll find them all exceedingly brilliant of mind—sweet of temper—gifted and charming. This is my youngest—Matilda, Matilda, bow!

MATILDA. Enchanice, Your Highness.

(GRISELDA and FRUMP *shriek with laughter*. The DUKE *deserts the PRINCE and walks Upstage to a group of LORDS, all of whom watch the PRINCE in his predicament*.)

STEPMOTHER. My second—an accomplished singer—a

CINDERELLA

lovely disposition—and she barely eats enough to keep a bird alive. This is Griselda.

GRISELDA. So gracious of you to ask me—to ask us—to you—to you—to you what, Mama?

STEPMOTHER. To your ball. She's shy, Your Highness. Not much for speaking, but then who wants a talkative wife? Perhaps later in the evening Your Highness would like to call upon her to sing. (The PRINCE *warts, silently pleading for help from the DUKE*.) Oh, you don't like singers? Then, may I present my eldest—Frump. I mean to say, Francelda! And now, if it please your Gracious, Royal Highness—may we save the gavotte—the minuet—the schottische—as well as the grand promenade—for you?

PRINCE. Madame, these are your daughters?

STEPMOTHER. Yes, Your Highness—my treasures—my jewels—my—

PRINCE. My deepest sympathy, Madame. You are a very brave mother. And now, if you'll pardon me—

STEPMOTHER. Oh, how very nice, sire. "A very brave mother"—how extraordinarily sweet of you to say so.

MINISTER. Pray stand aside, Madame, and let the Prince pass through. (PRINCE MINISTER *bars all four of them from following the PRINCE*. His staff of office *stops STEPMOTHER for a moment, but she brushes it aside and begins a circuit of the court letting everyone know what the PRINCE has said*.)

FRUMP. What did the Prince mean, Mother—"my sympathy, Madame"?

GRISELDA. He meant you're a ninny.

STEPMOTHER. The Prince has paid me a very deep compliment, and I shall cherish it all the rest of my life. "You are a very brave mother," he said. I tell you, it takes the experience and *savoir-faire* of an older woman to know how to address a man like that.

(The LORDS and LADIES *are giggling behind their fans*.)

MATILDA. Mother, why didn't he ask us to dance?
STEPMOTHER. Never you mind—I'll find other partners
for you.

MINISTER. Let the music begin!

(A waltz is played. The PRINCE comes near STEPMOTHER, who almost swoons into his arms, but when she opens her eyes, he has moved past her to another partner. No one asks the SISTERS to dance. They stand like walled walls, flowers when all the LORDS and LADIES have paired off for the waltz. The waltz is staged so that partners are exchanged. The PRINCE on three successive occasions brings a Lady Downstage.)

PRINCE. My lady, have you noticed the moon this evening? It's such an unusual shade of purple.

LADY ONE. Indeed I have, Your Highness. I love these evenings when the moon is—what color did Your Highness say?

(The PRINCE bows and sends her on to her next partner. He is joined by Lady Two, and in a moment brings her down.)

PRINCE. Have you noticed, my lady, how brightly the sun is shining in the sky this evening?

LADY TWO. The sun?

PRINCE. The sun!

LADY TWO. Oh, indeed I have, sire. I'm sure Your Highness arranged it especially for this lovely festival—no doubt.

PRINCE. No doubt. *(He bows and sends her on to her next partner, Lady Three joins him. After a few moments of dancing, he begins to trip and stumble.)* Your ladyship must forgive me. I am a most awkward dancer.

LADY THREE. Oh, no, sire! You are not dancing awkwardly.

PRINCE. Oh?

LADY THREE. You are inventing a new dance that will soon become the rage of the court.

(He looks about, and sure enough, all the LORDS and LADIES are mimicking his awkward steps.)

PRINCE. Please pardon me, my lady. *(The PRINCE leaves the court and walks Down Left. LIGHTS dim down on the DANCERS, who hold their positions during the following. CINDERELLA comes down the aisle and reaches the stage just as the PRINCE reaches the Down Left corner.)* Good evening, my lady.

CINDERELLA. Good evening, sir.

PRINCE. Do you have an invitation to the ball?

CINDERELLA. Yes, I do, sir. Am I to give it to you?

PRINCE. Yes. I am the footman in charge of collecting all invitations. *(CINDERELLA gives him the invitation. He looks at it and returns it to her.)* Will you enter, my lady?

CINDERELLA. *(She bows to him, starts in, then jalters and turns back to him.)* Would you escort me in, sir?

PRINCE. Escort you?

CINDERELLA. Yes, sir. You see, I've never been to a ball at the palace, and I feel frightened.

PRINCE. Frightened! Of what?

CINDERELLA. Oh, many things, sir. Have you never been frightened?

PRINCE. *(Thoughtfully.)* Yes. Yes, my lady—many times.

CINDERELLA. Good. Then you can understand how I feel.

PRINCE. No, I can't say that I can. What could possibly frighten you about attending your first ball at the palace.

CINDERELLA. So many things. What if I don't do all the right things—say all the right things—what if I don't behave properly, like all the Lords and Ladies?

PRINCE. Heaven forbid you should ever learn!

CINDERELLA. I beg your pardon, sir?

PRINCE. I said, how lovely the heavens are tonight. Have you noticed how purple the moon is this evening?

CINDERELLA. Purple? Oh, I see—you're teasing me.

PRINCE. No, I am not. I say the moon is purple, and it is purple.

CINDERELLA. Then there must be something wrong with your eyes, sir. The moon is as brilliant and golden as a newly polished copper pot—more beautiful than I have ever seen it. Or perhaps I think so because I am so happy.

PRINCE. And why are you so happy?

CINDERELLA. Just to be here, sir. It's my first ball—and I'll tell you a secret, Footman, sir—if you promise not to tell anyone.

PRINCE. I promise.

CINDERELLA. This is my first ball gown—and my first pair of shoes!

PRINCE. (*Amused.*) Tell me another secret, Princess.

CINDERELLA. I am no Princess, sir. What secret?

PRINCE. What is your name?

CINDERELLA. Tonight I have no name.

PRINCE. Not even for a footman?

CINDERELLA. Not even for you.

PRINCE. Are you content to stand out here talking to a footman?

CINDERELLA. I like talking to you. And I'll tell you another secret: I am just a scullery maid.

PRINCE. I see. Now I believe you are teasing me!

CINDERELLA. No, I am not teasing. You are my friend—the first one I've met at the palace.

PRINCE. Perhaps you are the first friend I have met at the palace. Tell me, have you noticed how brightly the sun is shining this evening?

CINDERELLA. The sun?

PRINCE. The sun!

CINDERELLA. What a very funny boy you are! The

sun is not due in the sky until 5:14 tomorrow morning—and I have the whole evening to enjoy the moon.

PRINCE. (*Certain now he will catch her.*) Have you come to the ball in order to meet the Prince?

CINDERELLA. Yes, sir. I should like to see him. I have heard that he is kind and gentle and very, very handsome.

PRINCE. (*A little taken aback by her frankness.*) Have you heard that he is sometimes lonely and sad—and even sometimes afraid?

CINDERELLA. I suppose everyone is sad and lonely and afraid sometimes. But I think my Prince would be wise enough to know how to change things about so he need not be.

PRINCE. (*Thinks this over for a moment, then bows low to her.*) My Lady Princess Scullery Maid—may I escort you into the palace.

CINDERELLA. (*Courtesies.*) Yes, please, sir. But don't leave me. I shall be terribly nervous.

PRINCE. Are you not as wise as the Prince?

CINDERELLA. Oh, no, sir. Please—promise you'll stay with me.

PRINCE. But, My Lady, I am only a footman.

CINDERELLA. You are my friend. (*As they move Up-stage toward the palace, the MOONLIGHT effect fades and LIGHTS come up full on the palace scene. The PRINCE escorts CINDERELLA to the Duke, who bows and accepts her hand. To PRINCE.*) Oh, please, sir—don't leave me.

PRINCE. You'll be all right, My Lady. The Duke is a very charming fellow.

(*The PRINCE exits. MUSIC begins, and the Duke dances a very stately court dance with CINDERELLA.*)

DUKE. How long have you known the Prince, My Lady?

CINDERELLA. I've never met him, sir.

CINDERELLA

DUKE. (*Amused.*) Never met him? Oh, I see. What charming games you ladies play.

CINDERELLA. Games?

DUKE. Games. All of you have set your caps and traps for the poor Prince. YOU might get him, you know. You're a very pretty girl.

CINDERELLA. Why, thank you, sir, Is the Prince here this evening?

DUKE. My dear child—now I know you're playing a game with me.

(*The Prince, now masked, takes CINDERELLA from the Duke.*)

PRINCE. My pardon, sir, May I, My Lady?

DUKE. Indeed, your Royal—

PRINCE. (*Interrupting.*) Hurry along, my good friend, you'll find three charming ladies and their gallant mother waiting for you—just over there.

DUKE. (*He looks over at STEPMOTHER and STEPSISTERS.*) Yes, Sir—but I think I'll look elsewhere, unless that's a royal command.

PRINCE. I give no commands. I am merely the footman.

DUKE. Footman? Oh, Interesting. Everybody's playing games. (*He leaves them.*)

CINDERELLA. Thank you for coming back.

PRINCE. I thought perhaps with a mask on no one would recognize me—and even a footman would like to dance with a Princess—especially a pretty one.

CINDERELLA. Thank you, sir, but I am not a princess. (*The Prince begins to dance awkwardly.*) What is it? What's the matter?

PRINCE. Why nothing, My Lady. What do you mean? CINDERELLA. (*Laughing.*) You're doing it on purpose.

PRINCE. Doing what?

CINDERELLA. Dancing so awkwardly.

PRINCE. Why do you say that?

CINDERELLA

CINDERELLA. Because you were dancing so beautifully; then suddenly you changed. Are you doing it to tease me?

PRINCE. Indeed I am not. (*He dances correctly.*)

CINDERELLA. There, you see?

PRINCE. My Lady, will you play a game with me?

CINDERELLA. Of course. What kind of game?

PRINCE. I am only a footman, and you say that you are but a scullery maid. Will you pretend to be a Princess—and I shall pretend that I am the Prince.

CINDERELLA. Oh, what fun! But suppose someone should notice?

PRINCE. Let them. (*He bows deeply.*) My fairest Princess, I thank you for the privilege of dancing with you.

(*The MUSIC stops. The PRINCE begins to lead CINDERELLA proudly about the great hall. As they pass, the Lords and Ladies bow to him. CINDERELLA does not see them.*)

CINDERELLA. I am deeply honored, Your Highness.

PRINCE. Are you enjoying the ball?

CINDERELLA. Yes, Your Highness. It is a lovely ball.

If I may say so, Your Highness dances superbly—unless he wants to stumble and be awkward.

PRINCE. That was just to tease you. I am the happiest Prince in the world, My Lady.

CINDERELLA. You are? Why?

PRINCE. (*Removes mask.*) Because the Prince has at last found his Princess—more beautiful, more lovely than any he might have dreamed of finding. I should like to ask you to become my Queen.

(*Lords and Ladies gasp.*)

CINDERELLA. Oh, Footman, sir—you have carried the game too far. Everyone heard you.

PRINCE. (*More loudly.*) I intend they should. My

CINDERELLA

Lords and Ladies of the court: I should like to present to you the future queen of the realm—if she will only say "yes,"

(There is great consternation among the Lords and Ladies of the court, and STEPMOTHER shrieks and faints, caught by her three DAUGHTERS. The CHIMES begin to strike midnight.)

CINDERELLA. Foolman! Please stop. You will get into trouble. *(She hears the chimes.)* Oh, no!

PRINCE. What is it, Princess?

CINDERELLA. What do the chimes say? What hour is striking?

PRINCE. It is now midnight, My Lady. Exactly the right hour to proclaim our coming marriage.

CINDERELLA. Midnight! I must go! *(PRINCE claps her hands.)* Please, let me go. I must be out of the palace before the chimes stop ringing. Goodbye, sir—and thank you for a lovely evening. *(She runs down the ramp and out through the house. Lords and Ladies crowd to the ramp to watch her, barring the PRINCE'S way. He finally breaks through and stands shouting at her.)*

PRINCE. Come back! Come back, Princess. I was not playing a game. I am the Prince! Come back! I don't even know your name! *(He runs after her.)*

STPMOTHER. *(Raving.)* Ooooh! That wretched creature. Has she gone?

STPMOTHER. Yes, Mother.

STPMOTHER. Such ridiculous behavior! Have you ever seen anything like it?

MARTIDA. Imagine deserting the Prince on the dance floor!

GRISelda. Imagine not obeying a royal command!

FRUMP. Imagine sitting down and putting your feet up!

STPMOTHER. Frump, put your shoes on.

(Add-itto, reactions from Lords and Ladies.)

CINDERELLA

What was she?

Have you ever seen her before?

No, never.

LORDS AND LADIES. She must be a Princess from another land.

I thought she was quite beautiful. Do you suppose the Prince is serious about marrying her?

DUKE. *(He steps Center.)* Whoever she is, she must have answered the three questions.

STPMOTHER. What three questions? Listen closely, girls—he might ask you some day.

DUKE. He always asks the same three questions. And once he told me if he ever found a Princess who would answer them truthfully, he would make her his Queen.

STPMOTHER. What are the questions?

DUKE. Is the moon purple?

LADY ONE. Oh, no!

DUKE. Does the sun shine at night?

LADY TWO. Oh, no! I thought he wanted me to agree with him!

DUKE. And three—is he an awkward dancer?

LADY THREE. Well, he was dancing awkwardly.

STPMOTHER. Then why didn't you say so?

LADY THREE. Because he is the Prince.

STPMOTHER. Now we know the questions, girls. Keep them in mind—sun, moon—and what was the third one?

FRUMP. Stars!

GRISelda. Oh, Frump, don't be so stupid.

STPMOTHER. Well, what was it, Griselda?

GRISelda. Pardon?

STPMOTHER. What was the third question?

GRISelda. He wanted to know—Martida, you tell her.

MARTIDA. Never.

STPMOTHER. Why, Martida!

GRISelda. She's just being selfish, Mother.

CINDERELLA

FRUMP. Don't you remember, Mother?

STEPMOTHER. Of course I do. The sun—purple. The moon—shining. And number three—

MINISTER. His Royal Highness, the Prince, is now ap-
preaching the great hall. Make way for the Prince.

STEPMOTHER. Matilda—hurry—what was the third question?

(*The Prince comes Onstage, carrying the slipper.*)

MATILDA. I won't tell.

FRUMP. She doesn't remember, either.

PRINCE. Lords and Ladies of the court . . . Tonight I have found the Princess who will become my future wife and your future Queen. I found her—and I lost her—and I do not even know her name. She is beautiful—she is wise—and she is honest. And this is all I have (*Shows slipper.*) to prove that she was not a dream. Tomorrow my courtiers will search throughout the realm until they find the Princess who lost this slipper—and she shall be returned to my side. And now, if you will pardon—I shall take my leave. Good night—one and all.

LORDS AND LADIES. (*They bow as he exits.*) Good night, Your Highness.

(*The CURTAIN comes in.*)

(*The Duke and the Prime Minister come in front of the curtain after a brief pause. The Prime Minister is carrying the slipper on a cushion.*)

DUKE. I think this Princess must live in another country, Lord Prime Minister. We have searched for miles and miles—and yet no lady's foot has fit into this slipper.

MINISTER. We shall continue to search until we find her. That is the wish of the Prince.

DUKE. Ah, here are some ladies. (*To audience.*) Would you like to try on the slipper?

CINDERELLA

(*They come down into the audience and try the slipper on several little girls in the audience, making certain it fits no one.*)

(*While this goes on, the stage is being re-set to Stepmother's house. As Rise, Stepmother and Sisters are Onstage. Stepmother is being helped by Cinderella, who is removing tight bandages from her feet, used to make them smaller. Frump is soaking her feet in a basin of cold water. Matilda and Griselda are also trying to make their feet smaller.*)

STEPMOTHER. Don't be so slow, Cinderella. Oh, never mind. Here, I can do it better myself.

MATILDA. Frump—take your feet out of that ice bath. You've been sitting there for hours—and you know perfectly well your feet will never fit that shoe.

FRUMP. No, but it feels so good.

GRISELDA. Here, let me soak mine for a minute. Hurry, Frump.

MATILDA. No, Griselda—it's my turn.

(*Griselda and Matilda each crowd a foot into the basin, along with Frump's two big feet.*)

STEPMOTHER. Don't stand there like a helpless lout, Cinderella. I think I hear the courtiers coming. Get that towel busy—dry their feet. There's no more time.

CINDERELLA. Yes, Mother dear. (*She dries Frump's feet, who giggles.*)

STEPMOTHER. Here they come! (*The Duke and Prime Minister come down the aisle and enter Onstage.*) Cinderella! I don't want them to see you. Here, quickly! Get behind that curtain, you ugly child. (*Cinderella goes behind curtain Upstage Center.*) Welcome, gentlemen, welcome to our humble cottage. Pray what is your business at this happy home? (*Sisters laugh at her.*)

DUKE. Good day to you, Madame—and to your charming—*(He looks at them.)* to your daughters.

MINISTER. Good day, Madame. We have come from the palace.

DUKE. Are your daughters barefooted for any particular reason, Madame?

STEPMOTHER. Why—we're just getting up, sir.

DUKE. Just getting up? The sun is about to go down.

STEPMOTHER. Yes, I know—but we danced the whole night long—and this afternoon we all took a nap. Pray pardon our dishevelment.

MINISTER. If you were at the ball last night, then you should know why we have come.

STEPMOTHER. Yes—oh, yes! Yes, indeed. I think you'll find all the ladies in this family have exceedingly petite feet. And we were all at the ball last night. Matilda—Griselda—Rump—well, never mind about her.

MINISTER. Would My Ladies care to try on the slipper? *(Griselda and Matilda fight over who is to be first.)*
Griselda gets seated in the chair first. My Lady Matilda—*(Matilda, gleefully, makes Griselda get up so she can sit down. PRIME MINISTER tries to put the slipper on her, and despite the fact she has her toes curled under, it will not go on.)* My Lady Griselda—

(Matilda rises and Griselda sits.)

Griselda. Let me try it by myself. No, no—I don't want you to help me. I can do it. *(She struggles, but it will not go on.)*

(PRIME MINISTER and DUKE look at RUMP, but it is quite obvious she cannot wear the shoe. They shrug.)

DUKE. Thank you, Madame and Ladies. We do not find what we are seeking here, and so farewell.

STEPMOTHER. Just one moment!

MINISTER. Yes, Madame?

STEPMOTHER. Well, how really! Need I remind you that I, too, was at the palace ball last night?

DUKE. *(Almost laughing.)* You, Madame?

STEPMOTHER. Indeed, and why not?

MINISTER. The Duke means to say, Madame, that the Princess we seek is about the age of one of your daughters. Not that Madame is old, but that the Princess is young.

STEPMOTHER. Young or old, I insist I have the right to try.

MINISTER. Very well, Madame.

STEPMOTHER. Give me that slipper! *(PRIME MINISTER hands it to her. She struggles and struggles, seated on a chair—and finally the shoe goes on her foot.)* There now! You see? The shoe fits, and I shall wear it.

MINISTER. Oh, dear—what shall we do?

DUKE. Madame—will you do me the great honor of dancing with me?

STEPMOTHER. How charming! How delightful! I am pleased to accept. *(She rises and almost falls. It is impossible for her to walk with the slipper on. DUKE and PRIME MINISTER almost drag her back and seat her in the chair.)*

MINISTER. I think you will understand, Madame.

(DUKE, who has watched Uprage to cover his laughter, sees CINDERELLA'S toes sticking out from behind the curtain.)

DUKE. Just a moment, Madame. Are there any other daughters in your house?

STEPMOTHER. What?

DUKE. Have we seen all of your daughters?

STEPMOTHER. Of course. One, two, three. There they are—plain as day.

MINISTER. And ugly as home-made sin.

STEPMOTHER. What did you say?

MINISTER. I said, it's time for my medicine, Madame. I am not well.

DUKE. Madame, are there any other females living in this house?

STEPMOTHER. No, sir.

DUKE. Then whose toes are these?

STEPMOTHER. Toes? Toes? What toes?

DUKE. These toes, Madame.

STEPMOTHER. Don't be ridiculous. Those belong to our scullery maid—a stupid, ugly, slovenly, lazy girl who's never been to the palace in her life.

MINISTER. Nonetheless, may I have the slipper, Madame?

STEPMOTHER. It fits me, and I am wearing it.

(The Duke walks directly Downstage and with one movement removes the slipper from her foot. He then turns and gives her a most courtly bow.)

DUKE. Orders from the palace, Madame.

(The Duke takes the slipper Upstage and slips it on CINDERELLA'S foot with great ease. He and PRINCE MINISTER pull back the curtains to reveal CINDERELLA in her beautiful ball gown, looking radiant. They lead her forward, just as the PRINCE enters from the aisle. His entrance makes it impossible for STEPMOTHER and SISTERS to protest, although they try. PRINCE kisses CINDERELLA'S hand, bowing.)

PRINCE. My lovely Princess. I have come to take you to the palace to be my wife. Will you come with me?

CINDERELLA. I shall go happily with you, Footman, sir.

MINISTER. This is no Footman. This is the Prince!

STEPMOTHER. Cinderella! You see how stupid she is—Footman, indeed!

CINDERELLA. The Prince!

PRINCE. Yes, Cinderella. Will you come with me, anyway?

CINDERELLA. Yes, sir—gladly—if I may have just one wish before I leave my stepmother's house.

PRINCE. Certainly.

CINDERELLA. Fairy godmother! Fairy godmother!

(FAIRY GODMOTHER enters, still dressing and almost yawning.)

GODMOTHER. Yes, Cinderella. Good gracious, these emergency calls are so confusing.

CINDERELLA. Dear Fairy Godmother, do you know what I am wishing?

GODMOTHER. Wait just a minute. Oh, there, now I can hear you. *(She looks at STEPMOTHER and DAUGHTERS.)*

Oh, dear. Yes, Cinderella, I know what you are wishing.

CINDERELLA. Can you make this last wish come true?

GODMOTHER. Well—it will take a great deal of magic—but let's see what we can do.

(GODMOTHER moves toward STEPMOTHER and THREE SISTERS. She waves her wand and sprinkles them liberally with golden sparkles.)

STEPMOTHER. What do you think you're doing, you wicked thing?

MARILDA. Don't let her come near me, Mother. She frightens me.

FRANK. I'm not afraid of her.

GRISERDA. Anyone could do what Cinderella has done—if I had a fairy godmother.

GODMOTHER. Riddlesticks—it's not working, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA. Oh, dear—and I did want them to be happy.

GODMOTHER. There's one more possibility. Let's see what happens. *(She goes to audience.)* Children—can you

CINDERELLA

help me work this last magic? Cinderella wants her step-mother and Matilda and Griselda and Frump to be happy. Would you like to try to make them happy? (*These may be some disagreements.*) Oh, yes—I think we must try. I'll tell you—let's all count to twelve—and wish very, very hard—and watch them turn into good people. Ready? One, two, three. (etc.). THIRTEEN! Presto!

STEPMOTHER. Cinderella—how beautiful you look. I am so happy for you.

MATILDA. Dear sister—and I hope you will be happy forever and ever.

GRISELDA. Will you come back and visit us some times?

FRUMP. Yes, Cinderella—I shall miss you.

CINDERELLA. Of course, I shall come visit you—and you will come visit me at the palace.

(*They each kiss CINDERELLA goodbye, each of them whispering away a tear or hug. The PRINCE then leads her down the ramp into the house. He turns back and calls.*)

PRINCE. Come along, Prime Minister. Come along, Duke—we have work to do at the palace. Weddings are not arranged every day, you know.

MINISTER. (*To STEPMOTHER.*) Madame—may I escort you?

STEPMOTHER. I am deeply honored, sir.

DUKE. And will you charming ladies consent to join me?

MATILDA, GRISELDA AND FRUMP. Why, thank you, sir. We'd be delighted. With pleasure.

(*They all file off the stage and to the back of the house. CURTAIN comes in, leaving FAIRY GODMOTHER in front of it.*)

GODMOTHER. And now, children—our story is over.

off
↑
Curtain
Call
(Celebrate)

CINDERELLA

Would you like to meet the Prince and Cinderella? Would you like to meet Stepmother and Matilda and Griselda and Francelda—and me? Then come along—let's all go back and meet them. (*She comes down off the stage and leads the children back to meet the actors, who are supplied with peppermint magic wands to give them.*)

THE END

PROPERTY PLOT

Broom
Necklace (for GUSMANA)
Handkerchief
Gloves
Magic wand
Spectacles
Notebook
Mousetrap
Pumpkin
Coach
Flash paper and smoke powder
Invitation (on ribbon)
Feather flowers
Staff (for PRIME MINISTER)
Mask (for PRINCE)
Cushion
Slipper (one of CINDERELLA'S)
Foot basin
Towels
Bandaging
3 Chairs
Gold sparkle
Peppermint sticks (for audience)

STORY OF THE PLAY

This new version of the ever-loved story of Cinderella places emphasis on audience participation. The Fairy Godmother resorts to help from the audience in working all her magic—mainly because she is out of practice and not at all certain anything is going to work properly. Cinderella's slipper is tried on youngsters in the audience, and they are consulted as to whether the wicked Stepmother and Stepsisters (Matilda, Griselda and Frump) should be turned into happy people. At the end of the play, the audience meets all of the characters at the back of the theatre, and each child receives a peppermint magic wand. There is ample opportunity for ballet in Cinderella's dream sequence, as well as in several court dances, although these are not of prime necessity to the development of the plot. Cinderella is not the sticky-sweet variety in this version, but a very natural joyous girl with a bubbling sense of humor and great honesty. And of course she and the Prince live happily ever after.