

CINDERELLA

By Marty Duhatshek

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CHARACTERS

YOUNG SARIELLA: A young girl, 8 to 12, that plays Cinderella in her early years.

FATHER: A loving father to Sariella who misses his dead wife as much as his daughter.

CINDERELLA / SARIELLA: Once loved by her father, she is now at the mercy of her stepmother and stepsisters, who have given her the task of keeping up the house and the nickname Cinderella.

STEP MOTHER, ESMERELDA: A bully when she can be and a brown-noser when she has to be. She will do what it takes to get what she wants.

STEP SISTER, MURKATRINA: Murk could never be loved by anyone as much as she is loved by herself. She will have what she wants or ears will be shattered.

STEP SISTER, OOFA: (pronounced: "oof- a" as in *roof-a*) Rather a slob who takes after her mother in the bully category. She eats with bravado but has little use for napkins.

FAIRY GODMOTHER, GWYLLION: More of a "spirit mother," Cinderella's real mother that has been reincarnated as a spirit guide and protector.

FOXGLOVE and FAYE: Fairy/Sprite helpers to the Spirit Mother, played by small girls.

PRINCE RUPERT: A dashing young man who wears his heart on his sleeve.

PHILLIPE: (pronounced "Phil-leap") Serving man and sidekick to Prince Rupert.

KING OGDEN: The ruler of the kingdom. He is boisterous if not a bit oblivious.

QUEEN CORRENA: Doting mother of Rupert, she does her best to care for his happiness while trying to contain her fiery husband.

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ACT I

SCENE I

(Young SARIELLA and her father sit on the front of the stage as if they were fishing. SARIELLA bounces her pole and hums to herself.)

FATHER: If you keep bobbing your pole up and down like that, the fish will have no chance to get your bait.

SARI: Maybe they won't... but maybe they will fight to see who can catch the dancing worm and the biggest fish will win!

FATHER: It's a dancing worm is it?

SARI: Yes, he is.

FATHER: And how can you tell it's a he?

SARI: Cause he blew his nose on me when I picked him up. *(rubs her hand off on her skirt, remembering how it felt)* A girl worm wouldn't do that.

FATHER: *(lies down, still holding onto pole)* I see.

SARI: Papa?

FATHER: Yes, Sariella.

SARI: I like fishing with you.

FATHER: I like fishing with you, too.

SARI: Ever think we'll catch a fish?

FATHER: Not if we're lucky.

SARI: *(tugs at his pole like a fish)* Papa, you have a bite!

FATHER: *(grabs SARI)* I caught it! *(stands up holding her in his arms)* But this fish is too little. I think I'll throw it back in. *(acts like HE is going to throw her off the stage)*

SARI: No!!!!

FATHER: *(puts her down)* Does this mean you're ready to go home, little fish?

SARI: *(sits back down)* Not just yet. We haven't talked yet.

FATHER: What do you mean?

SARI: When we go fishing, we always talk about the most wonderful things: the adventures you have out at sea; the jungles you've explored... sometimes you talk about mother...

FATHER: I know it's hard for you. Every little girl needs a mother. It makes me sad, too.

SARI: I wish I could remember her. (**puts her head in his lap**) When you talk about her, I can almost see her and hear her... I wish I had a memory of my own and didn't have to borrow yours all the time.

FATHER: Well, let's see if we can dig one up that maybe you didn't know you had. Close your eyes and let your mind go, let it run like this brook and find its own course. Nice big breaths now... that's it. Your mother... she always smelled like flowers to me, not a heavy smell like the flower cart at the market, but light... like when the wind blows in from the front porch... can you smell her?

SARI: It smells like... jasmine.

FATHER: That's right. When you were a baby she carried you everywhere and held you all the time. She was forever looking at you and she would always...

SARI: And she would sing to me...

FATHER: She sang little songs to you all the time... "The Dancing Princess"... "Flying on a Dragon"...

SARI: And "My Little Peanut!" (**sits up, excited**) She would bounce me in her lap and touch my nose with her nose... I was her little peanut.

FATHER: That's right! She called you her little peanut. There you are; now you have your own memory.

SARI: Yes, I suppose so.

FATHER: What's wrong?

SARI: I still can't see her.

FATHER: I'm sorry, honey, she was very beautiful. Come on, sweetheart, let's go home now. It's getting late. (**takes her hand and they start to exit**)

SARI: I love you, Papa.

FATHER: I love you too, Sariella.

(Blackout)

SCENE II

(SARI is outside pitching stones, like pitching pennies, with FOXGLOVE and FAYE)

FOXGLOVE: I'm too hot. Let's go down to the brook and cool off.

FAYE: You're always too hot or too cold. It's a perfect day.

FOXGLOVE: It's not perfect, it's hot.

SARI: We could go down to the meadow and weave flower rings. It's cooler in the meadow.

FAYE: We better not - the groundhog is rather cross today.

FOXGLOVE: (*imitating the groundhog*) “Some stupid cows came along and tromped down my best escape hole. I shall be digging all morning.”

FAYE: We could go into the wood and play tree-hop with the squirrels.

FOXGLOVE: Sari would fall. She has no wings, Faye, remember?

FAYE: I forgot, I'm sorry, Sari. It must be horrible not to be able to fly.

SARI: It does look like fun.

FATHER: (*calling from off stage*) Sariella!

FOXGLOVE: We better go. (*running off*)

FAYE: Goodbye, Sariella. (*grabs her stone and runs off*)

FOXGLOVE: Goodbye!

SARI: Goodbye, Foxglove! Goodbye, Faye!

FATHER: (*enters with STEPMOTHER*) Sariella, there you are. Who were you talking to?

SARI: The fairies.

FATHER: (*to STEPMOM*) Sariella is on speaking terms with the fairies, aren't you, Sariella?

SARI: Foxglove and Faye are my best friends.

STEPMOM: She talks to fairies? (*laughing*) What foolishness can spring out of a little girl's imagination?

SARI: They're real - they're not made up.

FATHER: Sariella, I'd like you to meet Esmerelda.

SARI: (*curtsies*) Pleased to meet you, Esmerelda.

STEPMOM: I'm pleased to meet you too, Sariella.

SARI: Is she to be the new housekeeper?

STEPMOM: I should say not. (*softens up*) No dear, I'm not a housekeeper.

FATHER: Sari, do you remember when we talked about... that maybe some day you might have a new mother? When I was making my arrangements for the spice ship, during my stay at the seaport I met Esmerelda, and, well... she is your new mother.

SARI: My new mother?

FATHER: I know how much you've missed your real mother. You're getting bigger now. There are things a young lady needs a mother for that a father just doesn't know how to do.

SARI: You're going to be my mother now? Can she sing? Do you smell like flowers? (*buries her nose in ESMERELDA's dress*)

STEPMOM: (*pushing her away a bit*) What a sweet child. You have sisters now too, Sariella.

SARI: Sisters!

FATHER: Esmerelda has two daughters who will be coming to stay with us. They're about the same age as you. Won't it be nice to have sisters to play with?

STEPMOM: That's right. You won't have to make up fairies for company any more. You will have two sisters and I know they will have lots to keep you busy.

SARI: Foxglove and Faye are real!

FATHER: (**takes SARIELLA off to one side**) What do you think? It's a lot to happen all at once. It will take some getting used to.

SARI: She doesn't smell like flowers, Papa, and her voice doesn't sound at all like it was meant for singing.

FATHER: Sari...

SARI: And she doesn't believe in fairies... you said mother talked with them all the time.

FATHER: She told me she did. She would put sweetened milk out for them on summer nights. But she's gone now, Sari. Esmerelda is here and she wants to be a good mother for you.

SARI: If she's your wife now, does that mean you don't love mother anymore?

FATHER: I'll always love your mother, sweetheart. And I'll always love you, too. Nothing will change between us, you'll see. Now there will be someone to watch over you when I go off with my ship. Give her a chance, please?

SARI: If you want me to, Papa, I will.

FATHER: That's my girl. (**picks her up**) Now, let's all go back to the house. I think Cook has something special ready for lunch. (**They exit.**)

(GWYLLION enters watching them exit. FOXGLOVE and FAYE walk in acting shy and hiding behind her poking their heads out. A special will come up as the other lights fade off.)

GWYL: Sariella lost her father a few months later when his spice ship went down in a terrible storm. She was left alone with her stepmother and stepsisters.

FOXGLOVE: (**tugs on GWYLLION's dress**) Gwyllion!

GWYL: Yes, Foxglove.

FOXGLOVE: (**points to audience**) Who are they?

GWYL: These lovely people have come to watch our story.

FAYE: They're so quiet.

GWYL: Yes, they are. Now why don't you follow their example?

FAYE: Sorrrry.

(FOXGLOVE and FAYE become fascinated with the audience and will go down looking them over, touching them, waving, etc.)

GWYL: The servants who watched over Sari since she was born were dismissed. "To save the money that sank with your father," her stepmother would tell her. Sariella was made to care for the whole household all by herself. Her stepmother took away her bedroom that looked over the valley and gave that to her stepsisters. Sari, was moved into a small room off of the kitchen and her soft bed was replaced with straw.

(SARI enters carrying a pail, her face is now smudged up. SHE walks slowly with her head down. SHE stops center stage and digs a stone out of her shoe.)

GWYL: Her stepmother took away the pretty dresses that her father had given her.

STEMMOM: ***(from back stage)*** Sariella would you hurry along with that water! Why does it take her so long?

GWYL: Her pretty dollies were given to her sisters to teach her a lesson in sharing.

MURK: ***(from back stage)*** I think it's because she's afraid of water, Mother. That's why she's always so dirty.

OOF: ***(from back stage)*** Yes. She looks more like a Cinderella than a Sariella.

(SARI finishes with her shoe and exits.)

MURK and OOF: ***(overlapping, from back stage)*** Cinderella! Cinderella, hurry up now! It's time for lunch, Cinderella! Time to sweep, Cinderella! Cinderella, Cinderella!!

GWYL: They even took away her name. The years went by and Sari... Cinderella grew up into a beautiful young lady.

(Adult CINDERELLA enters from where young SARI just exited carrying the pail with a similar dress and smudges. SHE crosses and goes into the house.)

GWYL: ***(starts to exit and notices the SPRITES are not with her)***
Oh, girls!

FOXGLOVE: ***(running off and waving)*** Goodbye.

FAYE: ***(running off)*** Wait for me!

(Blackout)

SCENE III

(Inside house. CINDY is sweeping the floor. OOFA is slouched in a chair trimming her toenails with a large pair of scissors and eating cookies that fall apart dropping crumbs all over her and the floor. SHE will throw the nails SHE cuts off where CINDY has already swept.)

MURK: ***(after the above goes on for half a minute SHE enters from upstairs)*** Cinderella! Cinderella, there are ants all over our bedroom!

Filthy little creatures crawling all over the floor.

CINDY: They're just hungry and looking for food.

MURK: Food that wouldn't be there if you had cleaned properly.

CINDY: I just swept your room yesterday.

OOFA: ***(spitting out bits of cookie as SHE speaks)*** Well, you must have missed some spots. You must do a better job, Cinderella.

CINDY: ***(noticing the crumbs on her dress)*** Perhaps I should shake out your dresses before I sweep next time.

OOFA: Mother!

STEPMOM: ***(enters)*** Yes, my little pumpkin?

OOFA: Cinderella is calling me fat again!

MURK: She didn't call you fat, Oofa. She said you ate like a pig. You do, you know.

OOFA: Mother!

STEPMOM: Murkatrina, don't make fun of your sister, ***(to OOFA)*** although you could try to get more of what you're eating into your mouth darling. ***(MURK makes pig snorting noise.)*** Enough! Cinderella, look what you have done! Making my poor babies fight with each other. You should be ashamed of yourself.

CINDY: All I said was...

STEPMOM: I don't want to hear it. If you can't keep yourself out of trouble I will just have to find some more work to keep you busy.

CINDY: Yes, Stepmother.

STEPMOM: You must remember that it is my goodwill that keeps you clothed and fed. Isn't that right, Cinderella?

CINDY: Yes, Stepmother.

MURK: And ants swarming all over Oofa's and my bedroom is not a way to keep in Mother's good graces.

STEPMOM: Ants in your room!

MURK: Yes, Mother. ***(acting upset)*** The horrid little things, getting into God knows what.

STEPMOM: My poor angel. **(to CINDY)** Get up there and clean that room this instant! If that room isn't spotless, there will be no supper for you tonight. Go!

CINDY: But I swept it up spotless yesterday.

STEPMOM: Obviously not! Are you going to blame someone else, again, for your slip-shod work? **(waits for answer)** I thought not - now go.

CINDY: **(exiting)** Yes, Stepmother.

STEPMOM: I swear. I don't know what to do with that girl.

MURK: Try beating her...

OOFA: **(still slouched and eating)** She's just lazy, Mother. Some people are like that, you know.

STEPMOM: Yes, I know. Please, dear, chew your food and then swallow.

MURK: Yes, watch you don't inhale a finger while you're at it!

STEPMOM: Remember, you're a lady, Oofa.

OOFA: I know. **(continues to eat with her little finger in the air)**

MURK: Mother, I'm tired of all my dresses. I want something new that twirls when I dance.

OOFA: If Murkatrina gets a new dress, I get one too!

STEPMOM: Well then, how about a trip to the market?

OOFA: Oh yes, Mother! Can we stop by the bakery while we're there?

MURK: There is more to life than eating, you great cow! I want to go to the dressmakers and the shoemakers. Could we have someone else, besides Cinderella, make our dresses this time?

OOFA: Yeah. The dresses she makes me only fit a few weeks and then they get too small. I think that little ingrate shrinks them on purpose to make me feel ugly.

MURK: If you spent less time grazing in that chair we wouldn't need to use a shoehorn to squeeze you into your dresses.

OOFA: Mother!

STEPMOM: Now, now, you are both beautiful young ladies. With the dowry that idiot would have wasted on his daughter, you will both have wonderful, handsome husbands.

OOFA: I want mine to be tall and muscular. He'll come calling at my door with a bouquet of flowers in one hand and...

MURK: And a side of beef in the other.

OOFA: Well, who would want to marry a stick like you, Murkatrina? I'm... full figured, isn't that right mother?

MURK: I'm not a stick... I'm like a willow reed that dances in the wind.

OOFA: Your voice is like a reed - like a broken reed on an instrument that keeps squealing!

MURK: You're just jealous because I don't look like a tree stump!

STEPMOM: Girls! Now, let's get ready for the market. Cinderella!

CINDY: (**comes down still carrying the broom**) I swept the room again. (**to MURK**) The two ants I found I shooshed out the window.

STEPMOM: We're going to the market; help get your sisters ready.

CINDY: (**Helps OOFA out of the chair. As if they have done this before, OOFA raises her arms over her head and turns slowly as CINDY sweeps the food off her dress.**) Oh, please may I come with you this time? I have all my work done. Please, Stepmother? I won't ask for anything.

STEPMOM: If your work is done, of course you can come. But, I see that this floor is just a mess.

CINDY: It was clean before I swept off Oofa!

STEPMOM: I'm sorry, dear. What kind of mother would I be if I let you go off with your work half-finished? Come on girls, let's go. (**exits**)

OOFA: (**taunting her**) Goodbye, Cinderella. (**exits**)

MURK: Cinderella, you must learn your place. Look at yourself, you would embarrass us. (**exits**)

CINDY: (**begins sweeping floor very agitated**) Yes, Stepmother...whatever you say, Murkatrina...here Oofa, let me sweep off the table cloth you use as a dress! (**throws down the broom**) It's not fair! (**after a moment SHE picks up the broom, sweeps the crumbs out the door and walks outside**) Oh, but it is a beautiful day outside. If they're at the market, at least I won't have to listen to them screech. (**walks down stage enjoying the day**)

PRINCE: (**enters from the back of the house and walks to the stage**) Pardon me, m'lady, but could I trouble you for a small drink of water?

CINDY: (**going to get the bucket**) Of course. (**brings him the bucket and hands him a ladle**) Here, take as much as you like. (**noting his head is bloody**) You're hurt!

PRINCE: Am I? I hadn't noticed. (**gingerly touches his head**) I guess you're right.

CINDY: (**dips a rag in the bucket, rings it out, and starts dabbing his head**) We need to clean this up. How did you get hurt?

PRINCE: It must have happened when I was thrown from my horse. The stag I was chasing down suddenly bolted back toward me and the horse reared up.

CINDY: Well, it serves you right. I've cleaned it off now. The bleeding has stopped. Chasing some poor deer through the forest.

PRINCE: So, are you the savior of the deer then...the great goddess of the woodlands...or are you just not partial to venison?

CINDY: I'm partial to all animals, thank you very much. I take my meals out of the garden or the berry patch.

PRINCE: I see.

CINDY: And when I fish, I'm careful not to catch anything.

PRINCE: How charming...

CINDY: Are you making fun of me?

PHIL: Sire! Sire, there you are.

CINDY: Sire?

PRINCE: Merely a humble knight in the king's service.

PHIL: You're a humble knight...

PRINCE: Yes! This is my squire, Philippe.

PHIL: I'm...your squire.

PRINCE: Yes, and if you keep repeating everything I say, **(gives him a little "biff" in the back of the head)** you'll be my "ex" squire. How many times have I told you Philippe. Call me Rupert. He worships me; it's annoying, but what can I do?

CINDY: Nice to make your acquaintance, Squire Phillippe and, of course, yours too, Sir Rupert.

PHIL: I'm sorry Sire. Forgive me, Rupert, but when Daisy came running past me without you, I was worried something had happened.

CINDY: **(amused)** Daisy?

PHIL: His horse.

CINDY: A knight who rides a horse named Daisy?

PHIL: He named him when he was a pony. You see the pony was partial to eating daisies, and Rupert here thought he would like to be called... **(another biff)**. A noble name really...a fine name for a stallion. Daisy...well, um, why don't I just go round him up then... **(starts to go)**

CINDY: No, Philippe, you've run a long way. Here, have some water.

PHIL: Thank you, kind lady. **(takes a drink)** Well, Rupert this is quite a girl we have here. **(catches a glare from PRINCE)** Yes, thank you for the drink, I'll be off then. **(takes CINDY's hand and kisses it)** A pleasure m'lady. **(another biff)** I'm on my way! **(runs back through the audience)** Oh, Daisy! Daisy, here boy! Here horsey, horsey, here horsey, horsey.

CINDY: Your squire seems an interesting sort.

PRINCE: Yes, he's quite the character. But now you have me at a disadvantage. You know my name and I have no idea who you are.

CINDY: Forgive me. **(curtsies)** I am called Cinderella.

PRINCE: You're "called" Cinderella. What do you call yourself?

CINDY: When I was young my father called me...no, I had best leave that in the past.

PRINCE: You look so sad. It's a beautiful day and here I've snatched the sunshine right out of you.

CINDY: I'm fine, truly. I do appreciate your concern for me; you're a nice man, Rupert.

PRINCE: Believe me, if everything were as easy as being kind to you, I wouldn't have a care in the world.

CINDY: Well, you have lightened my world today. (*curtsies*) Much obliged, Sir Rupert.

PRINCE: (*bowing back to her*) Ever at your service, m'lady.

CINDY: You are a dear. But perhaps you should go now. I think Phillippe may need your help in rounding up Daisy.

PRINCE: You're a mystery, m'lady...and a very pretty one at that. But I suppose you're right. I should go help Phillippe. Thank you for the water, Cinderella. (*starts to exit through the house*)

CINDY: Be kind to my deer now!

PRINCE: Of course, my lady-of-the-wood. (*bows to her and exits*) Until we meet again?

CINDY: Until we meet again. (*curtsies back to him and watches him leave*)

(Blackout)

SCENE IV

(KING and QUEEN sit on two thrones. They are not lit until PHIL and PRINCE enter their space. PHIL and PRINCE enter from the back of the house. They will have their conversation as they walk down the aisle and in front of the stage.)

PHIL: I told you. Daisy's tracks are leading us right back to the palace. You still look a bit dazed, Sire. Could it be you've fallen twice today?

PRINCE: Twice?

PHIL: Once off a horse and once over a pretty girl.

PRINCE: She was pretty, wasn't she?

PHIL: Enchanting... but...

PRINCE: But what?

PHIL: Well... it was rather obvious, I thought... she wants me.

PRINCE: She wants you?

PHIL: Yes. I'm sorry, Your Highness. You might think it would be pleasant being devilishly good looking, but... it's a curse, truly...the cross I must bear.

PRINCE: Are you sure it wasn't you who hit his head?

PHIL: Ahh, she was a keeper, that one.

PRINCE: A refreshing change from the self-loving ladies that inhabit the court.

PHIL: Why pretend to be a knight? Telling her you are Prince Rupert. Now that would have made an impression.

PRINCE: I rather enjoyed being treated like a real person, instead of having people falling all over themselves trying to please me. Cinderella...

PHIL: Now don't go all dreamy on me. You know your father and mother would never let you marry a serving girl.

PRINCE: If and when I choose to marry, it will be my choice.

PHIL: Of course, Sire. It's getting dark; we best go to the king and queen.

PRINCE: I suppose we should. Come on then.

(PHIL and PRINCE walk up onto the stage and the lights come up on the KING and QUEEN)

QUEEN: There you are, Rupert.

PRINCE: Hello, Mother. ***(kisses her cheek)***

KING: Was it a successful hunt?

PHIL: One arrow found its mark. ***(holds his heart swooning for RUPERT's benefit)***

PRINCE: ***(biffs PHIL once again)*** No luck today, Father. I came home with nothing but a bump on the head to show for it.

PHIL: ***(rubbing where RUPERT biffed him)*** If you got the bump, why am I getting the headache?

KING: There seems to be something going on here.

PHIL: I would offer a hint but my brain pan has collected enough dents today.

QUEEN: Is this about a girl?

PRINCE: Yes, Mother.

QUEEN: Wonderful! We were just speaking of that.

KING: No, no, I was recalling the time I was cornered by a great black bear out in the wood; he came towards me with his... ***(receives a kick in the leg from the QUEEN)*** Ouch!

PHIL: My mouth makes my head hurt and yours makes you limp. We have a lot in common, Your Highness.

KING: ***(rubbing knee)*** So it appears... a girl, is it?

QUEEN: Oh, I do hope it's Lady Agatha; she is such a sweet girl.

PHIL: ***(to PRINCE)*** Her handmaiden calls her Lady Nagatha.

KING: Her mother is a shrew and her daughter will be the same...

PHIL: ***(elbows PRINCE)*** See.

QUEEN: Was it Lady Gwendolyn then? Lady Cecile?

KING: How about Lady Roxanne? Now, she's a hearty lass. (**receives another kick from the QUEEN**) Ouch! Would you stop doing that!

PRINCE: It was none of those, anyway.

QUEEN: Well, who then? Rupert, it is well past the time you married.

PRINCE: She called herself Cinderella. She was...

QUEEN: Cinderella? I don't think I know this person.

PRINCE: She is beautiful, and funny, and she put me in my place, rather like you do with Father, and...

QUEEN: And?

PRINCE: She... was a serving girl. (**rushing on**) I think, anyway. Her face was rather smudged as if from soot, but she carried herself with such...

QUEEN: A serving girl? I don't care how she carried herself, Rupert. She is no match for a prince.

PRINCE: Phillippe said you would say that.

QUEEN: Well, he was right! I want you to be happy, darling, but your bride must be suitable for the court and the station she will carry as a queen some day. (**to KING**) Don't just sit there - tell him!

KING: Your mother is right, son, (**rubbing his leg**) and I'm not just saying that to avoid both knees swelling up. A serving girl is just not acceptable. I'm sorry.

PRINCE: But I can't make my heart feel something it doesn't. All the women at court are so... shallow...

QUEEN: The time has come to put a stop to this once and for all. We shall simply choose for you and that is that. I think Lady Agatha is a fine...

PRINCE: Mother, you can't!

QUEEN: Well we need to do something before you drag the cook in here as your bride-to-be.

PHIL: (**to PRINCE**) She's taken; sorry, friend.

QUEEN: Or the chamber pot girl. Now she'd make a fine queen!

PHIL: (**to PRINCE**) She's mine, too. She cleans up rather nicely actually.

PRINCE: But, Mother...

QUEEN: Don't "but Mother" me, Rupert. I will have you matched properly!

KING: Perhaps there is a compromise that we can reach. (**thinks a moment**) We shall have a ball... a grand ball, a week from tonight. All the ladies from throughout the kingdom will be invited from the finest houses. You will choose one lady from all those that attend. Is that agreeable to you my dear?

QUEEN: Yes, I suppose so... but, we must approve of her, and, if you do not choose one of the ladies attending the ball, then we shall. What do you say, Rupert?

PRINCE: What can I say, you leave me no choice. You cannot tell your heart what to do, Mother; it chooses for itself.

QUEEN: Oh, pish-posh. I told your father he would love me and that was the end of it. *(turns to KING and gives him a look)*

KING: *(quickly pulls his legs out of the way)* A match made in heaven my dear!

(Blackout)

SCENE V

(Inside CINDERELLA's house. MURK follows behind CINDERELLA as SHE dusts, checking her work. OOFA is in her chair eating crackers.)

CINDY: What are you doing, Murkatrina?

MURK: Mother says that a wife running a great household, as I'm sure I will be one day, must stay on top of the help or they will take advantage of her. I'm practicing on you.

(FOXGLOVE and FAYE creep into the scene and watch from a distance.)

CINDY: *(disgusted)* And how am I doing so far?

MURK: The work seems to be fine, although your pace is a bit slow.

CINDY: I have been working since well before you dragged yourself out of bed. I'm tired. If you ever did any work, you would realize that.

MURK: If I worked, what would we need you for?

FOXGLOVE: Why are they so mean to her?

FAYE: Poor Sariella.

OOFA: You are a loafer, Cinderella. I sit here and watch you all day, I would know. For the last few days you have spent more time mooning out the window than you have scrubbing the floors.

MURK: Mooning is she?

OOFA: She looks out that window, *(points in the direction PRINCE came from)* and every time she walks by she stops and sighs so loudly, once it woke me from my nap.

MURK: Could it be our Cinderella is in love?

CINDY: No I...

OOPA: Cinderella? In love? Who would love her? Her face looks like it's been up a chimney.

MURK: And her hair looks like a bird's nest that's been carried away in a strong wind.

OOPA: Who do you think it is, sister? Probably the boy who comes to milk the pigs!

MURK: They don't milk pigs, you great nincompoop.

OOPA: Are you sure?

MURK: Of course I'm sure. No, I think she is in love with the man who drives the peddler wagon... the one with very few teeth.

CINDY: Please, stop it.

OOPA: I think you hit the nail on the head, sister. It's the toothless peddler!

CINDY: It is not!

MURK: Who is it then, Cinderella? Certainly no honorable gentleman would give you a second look.

FOXGLOVE: Can I hit her with something?

FAYE: Me first.

CINDY: If you must know...

STEPMOM: (**enters holding an invitation**) Such news, girls, such news.

OOPA: What is it, Mother?

STEPMOM: We have an invitation to a grand ball at the palace. From what I hear, every available young lady in the kingdom, of good parentage of course, is being invited. It seems Prince Rupert is to choose his bride from among those attending!

MURK: Oh, Mother!

CINDY: Prince... Rupert?

MURK: Yes, you ninny! Have you never heard of him? But, of course, we wouldn't be discussing such things with you, anyway, so how could you know?

CINDY: Is Prince Rupert's man called Phillipe by any chance?

STEPMOM: Why, yes, he is. How would you know that? Well, never mind, I'm glad to see that you are setting your sights high. Although Phillipe might be a stretch for you... but, who's to say? Once one of your sisters marries the prince, I can see what I can do on your behalf.

MURK: Oh, what shall I wear, Mother? I have nothing fitting for a ball in any of my closets.

OOPA: (**getting out of the chair**) Yes, Mother, we must have proper gowns.

STEPMOM: I've already thought of that my dears. Cinderella, bring in the material I have in the wagon. You have a lot of sewing to do.

CINDY: No.

STEPMOM: What?!

OOFA: She said, "No," Mother.

STEPMOM: I heard her, Oofa; I am old, not deaf. What do you mean no?

CINDY: I mean no. I will not work my fingers to the bone sewing day and night to watch you all go riding off to the ball while I sit at home.

FOYGLOVE: You go girl!

FAYE: Shhhh!

MURK: You have gone too far this time, Cinderella. Out! Kick her out on her ungrateful ear, Mother.

CINDY: That material won't sew itself, you know, and I doubt you'll find a dressmaker who isn't already terribly overworked trying to get other ladies dressed for the ball. Perhaps one of you wants to try and sew the dresses?

MURK: We'll just see...

STEPMOM: (*pulls her daughters aside*) She's right, we need her. Now be nice to her and let me work this out. (*to CINDY*) Cinderella, sweetheart, if you wish to come to the ball with us that's wonderful. Your sisters will look much more regal with a sweet little handmaiden at their side. Murkatrina has some old dresses that would suit you.

MURK: She can't have one of my...

OOFA: (*stomps on MURK's foot*) You're welcome to have one of my old dresses, dear sister. A few of them are too small for me anyway.

CINDY: I will make my own dress and I will go to the ball along with the other ladies of the kingdom. My father was a man of position. I am his daughter, and I will go.

MURK: But what about my dress!?

FAYE: I don't like her very much.

FOYGLOVE: Who does?

CINDY: I will make Murkatrina's and Oofa's dresses first. Then I will make myself a dress with what material is left over.

MURK: I certainly will not show up to the ball in a gown that is made from the same material as your dress is. People will think we are associated somehow.

CINDY: The way I cut and dye it, the dresses will not look the same.

MURK: I don't care. I won't have it!

CINDY: You're right... you won't.

STEPMOM: Well, I must say, I don't much care for this new attitude you have adopted. In fact, I will be hard pressed to forgive this breach of trust between us. I have done all I could in raising you to be a proper and well spoken young lady. I suppose there is only so much you can do when bad blood is involved. Very well, here is my

offer. You will make dresses for Murkatrina, Oofa, and myself. There will be no skimping on the fabric for our gowns to save material for your own. When these are ready, to my satisfaction, you may make your own dress and go to the ball.

CINDY: Thank you, Stepmother.

STEPMOM: In addition, all your other chores must be kept up with and these also must be done to my contentment. Do you agree to these terms?

FOXGLOVE: No, don't trust her. Sari. She's a cheat. I just know it!

CINDY: Yes, I agree.

STEPMOM: Good. Now bring in that material and get to work.

BLACKOUT AND INTERMISSION

ACT II

SCENE I

(In half light CINDY is in the house sewing. Specials will come up on stage; GWYLLION will walk into it followed by FOXGLOVE and FAYE.)

GWYL: For five days, Cinderella worked day and night: cleaning the house, cooking the meals and caring for the farm animals during the day and sewing by firelight deep into the night... ***(CINDY will slump over asleep at this point.)*** Until her poor little body would finally give out from exhaustion.

FOXGLOVE: Can't we help her, Gwyllion?

FAYE: Oh, please! She looks so tired, and the ball is tonight.

GWYL: Soon enough, my dears, we will play our part.

FOXGLOVE: I hope my part has to do with kicking the snot out of those stepsisters.

GWYL: Now, Foxglove...

FAYE: Let's charm the stepmother to sleep and have her wake up in the middle of a swamp!

FOXGLOVE: Yeah! And coat her with bacon grease so the mosquitoes will feast on her.

GWYL: Girls, please! Show some restraint.

FOXGOLVE: Well it makes me mad.

GWYL: People get mad, Foxglove... fairies get even. ***(starts to exit)***
Come, come.

(GWYLLION and the SPRITES exit. Lights fade up on CINDY who is now asleep.)

OOFA: **(enters)** Cinderella, Cinderella! Where's my breakfast?

(Notices that CINDY is asleep. SHE picks up the broom and pokes her with it.)

CINDY: **(wakes up)** What... I must have fallen asleep.

OOFA: Breakfast? Come on, chop chop. I want three slices of ham and four eggs and lots of toasted bread with butter.

CINDY: **(yawns)** All right, I'm going. I'll have it ready in a little while.
(picks up her sewing and walks into the kitchen)

MURK: **(enters)** Cinderella! Cinderella, where are you?

CINDY: **(enters)** Yes, Murkatrina?

MURK: Off lazing about in the kitchen again.

CINDY: I was making Oofa's breakfast.

MURK: Well, she can wait.

OOFA: No I can't!

MURK: I want you to help me try on my dress again.

CINDY: We tried it yesterday and it fits perfectly.

MURK: Last night I dreamt I was locked in a bakery and I ate three entire chocolate cream pies all by myself! I feel so fat. I'm sure my dress doesn't fit me any more.

CINDY: It was only a dream, Murkatrina. You haven't gained an ounce.

MURK: That may be, but I feel positively Oofa-ish.

OOFA: Watch it, Sister, or you'll feel Oofa-ish tearing your hair out by the roots. I haven't eaten yet and I'm in no mood to put up with insults from the stick woman. Back in the kitchen, Cinderella.

MURK: You come upstairs with me. **(starting to exit)**

CINDY: Oh dear... let me throw the toast in the wood stove and I will come up in a moment. **(runs into the kitchen)**

MURK: A moment and not a moment longer! **(exits)**

OOFA: Don't let that toast burn now!

CINDY: **(running out and up the stairs)** I won't, Oofa.

STEPMOM: **(almost getting run over)** Watch where you're going, Cinderella.

CINDY: Yes, Stepmother.

STEPMOM: I want those stalls in the barn cleaned out this morning. They're filthy.

CINDY: I will.

STEPMOM: There's no time like the present!

CINDY: I was just helping Murkatrina with her dress and Oofa's breakfast is cooking.

MURK: **(from off stage, in a screeching voice)** Cinderellllllla!!!

STEPMOM: I want those stalls done this morning.

CINDY: Yes, Stepmother. **(runs up to MURK)**

OOFA: Don't forget my eggs now! **(to STEPMOM)** So far so good.

STEPMOM: Good. My plan is working just fine. That girl has barely slept in four days and we shall run her ragged for the rest of this one. She'll be in no shape to go to the ball tonight.

OOFA: I smell something burning, Cinderella!

CINDY: **(coming the down stairs and into the kitchen)** I've got it, I've got it.

STEPMOM: By the time we leave she'll be begging for her bed. Come on then, let's have our breakfast. **(STEPMOM and OOFA walk into the kitchen.)**

(Lights fade out.)

SCENE II

(PHIL and RUPERT enter from the house and walk down in front of the stage. STEPMOM and the sisters will use this scene to change into their ball gowns.)

PHIL: We have been walking all day, Your Highness.

PRINCE: I'm sorry, but I could not stay at the palace and watch them make ready for the ball tonight. It's rather like watching your own funeral being organized. My stomach is tied in knots.

PHIL: **(fanning his feet)** I still think a ride on the horses would have accomplished the same thing... with a lot less leather lost for it.

PRINCE: No. If I climbed on Daisy today and started riding, I'm afraid I would not have stopped.

PHIL: I, for one, am glad you did not. We need you, Sire. You're a good man; you'll be a good king. I know your parents fill your ears with duty enough, but as one of your subjects, I am glad to know it will be you on the throne.

PRINCE: It isn't easy being the prince sometimes. Oh, it has its perks, but at times like this... I'm to choose a bride tonight, and all I can think of is Cinderella. I will not be happily matched; there is no hope for it.

PHIL: Choose a girl who believes in long engagements. Maybe something will come up.

PRINCE: No, I'm lost.

PHIL: Perhaps we could ugly you up a bit, Sire?

PRINCE: And how would you do that?

PHIL: Well, I could knock a few teeth from your head... take a dull knife to your hair, maybe roll you in the dung heap behind the stables for a while?

PRINCE: I'm afraid even that wouldn't keep the pack of wolves from me tonight.

PHIL: Sire, if you feel that strongly about it... I would understand. Riding off on Daisy, I mean.

PRINCE: No, Phillipe, you were right the first time. I could not ride away from my home and the obligations I've been raised to fulfill. But, thank you, Phillipe. You have been a good friend.

PHIL: Then we should turn back now, Sire, if we are to be on time tonight.

PRINCE: You're right, it will be dark soon. Come, Phillipe, let's return.
(They start to exit.)

PHIL: Sire?

PRINCE: Yes, Phillipe.

PHIL: When you are choosing tonight, since as you say there is no hope for you, there is a handmaiden I've had my eye on... She is employed by Lady Sodbottom. Do you remember her? ***(gets biffed from RUPERT)*** Ah! I see you do recall her. ***(They exit.)***

(Blackout)

SCENE III

(Lights up on stage. STEPMOM is fussing with OOFA's make-up. CINDY looks very tired and is still running around trying to help them. It is fine if they are still dressing. There is now a dressing dummy on stage with CINDERELLA's dress hanging on it.)

MURK: It just isn't hanging as it should.

CINDY: It looks fine, Murkatrina.

MURK: No, it hangs off this side more than that side. It needs another pleat over here. Come and stitch that up.

CINDY: It hangs off you beautifully, Murkatrina, but if you insist. ***(gets needle and thread and starts to sew)***

MURK: Well, I do insist. I'll be the judge of what hangs properly and what doesn't.

OOFA: Must you put on so much make-up, Mother?

STEMMOM: Yes, dear. You tend to perspire a little bit and this should help make your face look... drier.

(GWYLLION enters with SPRITES off to one side.)

FOXGLOVE: Now Gwyllion, now?

FAYE: Oh pleeeeeeeze.

GWYL: Yes, my little ones, it is time for us to play our part. Let me make you invisible first.

FAYE: Invisible?!

GWYL: We can't have you getting caught now can we. **(Recites the following as an incantation, sort of weaving her arms. The SPRITES will do as they are instructed.)** First, spin once...and then spin twice, spit on the floor... and stomp it thrice! There you are. Now, do your worst.

FOXGLOVE: **(to FAYE)** This is going to be fun.

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