



A CALL FOR SCRIPTS:

Undressing Cinderella, a new play festival at Middlebury College, VT.

The wife of a rich man fell sick, and as she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said: "Dear child, be good and pious and I will look down on you from heaven and be near you." Thereupon she closed her eyes and departed. When winter came the snow spread a white sheet over her grave, and by the time the spring sun had drawn it off again, the man had taken another wife.

The woman had brought with her into the house two daughters, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. The sisters did her every imaginable injury - they mocked her and made her do all the housework. In the evening when she had worked till she was weary she had no bed, but had to sleep by the hearth in the cinders. She always looked dusty and dirty, so they called her Cinderella.

One day the king gave orders for a festival which was to last three days, and to which all the beautiful young girls in the country were invited, in order that his son might choose himself a bride. Cinderella and her two stepsisters were invited.

Immediately, the stepmother began purchasing fancy gowns for her daughters, hoping the prince would fall in love with one of them.

"Oh, Cinderella," teased the older stepsister, "wouldn't you like to come to the ball?"

Both stepsisters looked at each other and laughed merrily at the thought of their dirty servant stepsister standing in rags at the ball. Cinderella turned away so her stepsisters wouldn't see the tears in her eyes.

"You cannot go with us," said her stepmother, "for you have no clothes and can not dance. We would be ashamed of you." On this she turned her back on Cinderella, and hurried away with her two proud daughters.

Cinderella waved and watched the carriage roll down the street until it was completely out of sight. Then the poor girl burst into tears.

"Why are you crying, child?" said a voice.

Cinderella looked down and saw a tiny, sparkling woman no larger than a teacup standing on the table. "Who are you?" the teary-eyed girl asked.

"I am your Fairy Godmother," said the little woman. "Why are you so sad?"

But Cinderella was too sad to respond.

"You wish you could go to the ball?" The Fairy Godmother finally asked.

"Yes," wept Cinderella. "But I am too poor and ugly, everyone would laugh."

"Nonsense," laughed the fairy. "You are beautiful and kind and have all you need. I'll just give you a little help."

"Okay," Cinderella said.

"First, we'll need a pumpkin," said the little fairy.

Cinderella brought a pumpkin in from the garden, and the Fairy Godmother gently touched it with her wand. Instantly the pumpkin was transformed into a jeweled coach.

Next, her wand transformed mice into prancing horses to draw the carriage. Some frogs became footmen, and two rats became the coachman and the coach driver.

"Now," said the Fairy Godmother, "you have your carriage. We must see to your gown." She touched Cinderella with her wand. Instantly the ragged dress became a stunning white gown of silk, with beads and pearls and diamonds glittering everywhere. On her feet were a pair of glass slippers, the most beautiful shoes Cinderella had ever seen.

"Now, go to the ball," said the Fairy Godmother. "Leave before midnight. At the last stroke of midnight, the coach will be a pumpkin again, the horses will become mice, the coachmen rats, and the footmen will be frogs. And," she added, "your gown will turn back into rags."

When Cinderella arrived to the ball, the prince hurried to greet her. He gave her his hand and led her into the great hall.

When the two made their entrance, the crowd fell silent. So beautiful a pair was the prince and the strange girl that no one could say a word. Then, Cinderella and the prince began to waltz.

"What a fine dancer she is," said the stepmother, not recognizing the young girl.

"Her dress is better than mine," sulked the older stepsister.

"Her shoes are nicer than mine," hissed the younger one.

"Quiet, you two," snarled the stepmother.

The hours passed like minutes. Cinderella danced and talked with the prince. As the clock neared the hour of twelve. Terrified that she might be discovered, she quickly separated herself

from the prince, out the door, where sprang into the pigeon-house. The king's son followed her, and waited for her to come out, and when she didn't, he called for an axe and a pickaxe that he might hew the pigeon-house to pieces, but no one was inside it.

And when her step-sisters got home Cinderella lay in her dirty clothes among the ashes, for she had jumped quickly down from the back of the pigeon-house and had run home, arriving just before midnight. Her Fairy Godmother was very pleased.

The next day when the festival began afresh, and her parents and the step-sisters had gone once more, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother gave her a different dress, but just as beautiful. And when Cinderella appeared at the wedding in this dress, every one was astonished at her beauty. The king's son had waited until she came, and instantly took her by the hand and danced with no one but her. When others tried to dance with him, he said, "This is my partner." The hours flew by as they danced.

Cinderella was quite surprised with the clock began striking midnight. She quickly sprang away from the Prince, and into the garden behind the house. There stood a beautiful tall tree on which hung the most magnificent pears. She jumped in the tree just as the clock stopped ringing, and her dress immediately changed back to rags. She clambered nimbly between the branches like a squirrel that the king's son did not know where she was gone. The Prince called for an axe cut the tree down, but no one was on it.

On the third night at the festival, with another beautiful dress from her fairy godmother, no one knew how to speak for astonishment. The king's son again danced with her only. While they danced, the Prince's men smeared the staircase with pitch, and when midnight came, Cinderella again sprang away from the Prince and down the hall. She ran down the staircase, becoming bogged down by the pitch. She barely made it away from the prince and away from the staircase when her dress disappeared and she was dirty and in rags.

Cinderella ran away so quickly that she didn't even realize one of her slippers had fallen off. It was picked up by the prince who had turned to follow the girl whose name he hadn't even learned.

The next morning, a proclamation was issued that the prince himself would be visiting every house in the town to find the owner of the missing glass slipper. The prince tried the slipper on all the other princesses and duchesses in the court, but none of their feet could fit into it. He then began going to the houses of everyone in the kingdom.

The two stepsisters knew that he would arrive soon. They fluttered and twittered about until the stepmother shouted for them to calm down.

The doorbell rang. "Open the door for the Prince."

"Welcome, Your Highness," giggled the first stepsister.

The prince frowned, but he asked the two girls to remove their shoes. The eldest went with the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on, and her mother stood by.

But she could not get her big toe into it, and the shoe was too small for her. Then her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut the toe off! When you are queen you will have no more need to go on foot." So the maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the king's son. He took her on his horse as his bride and rode away with her. As they rode, the Prince looked at her foot and saw how the blood was trickling from it. He turned his horse round and took the false bride home again, and said demanded she leave his horse.

Her sister was waiting there, and tried the slipper next. She went into her chamber and got her toes safely into the shoe, but her heel was too large. So her mother gave her a knife and said, "Cut a bit off your heel, when you are queen you will have no more need to go on foot." And so she did.

The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the king's son. He took her on his horse as his bride, and rode away with her, but soon he looked down at her foot and saw how the blood was running out of her shoe, and how it had stained her white stocking quite red. Then he turned his horse and took the false bride home again. The Prince was very upset.

At last, Cinderella peeked around the corner. "May I try?" she asked meekly.

"You?" scoffed the stepmother.

"That's just the cleaning girl," said the older stepsister.

"Let her try," said the prince.

Cinderella sat down in the chair, and the prince lifted the slipper to her foot. It fit beautifully.

"She can't be!" cried the stepmother.

"Impossible!" shouted the two stepsisters.

And when she rose up and the king's son looked at her face he recognized the beautiful maiden who had danced with him and cried: "This is my true bride." The step-mother and the two sisters were horrified and became pale with rage. The Prince took Cinderella on his horse and rode away with her.

When the wedding between Cinderella and the Prince was to be celebrated, the two selfish stepsisters came and wanted to get into favor with Cinderella. But when they went to church, the pigeons pecked out one eye from each of them. Afterwards as they came back, the pigeons pecked out the other eye from each. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness all their days.

The prince took Cinderella's hand and led her off to the palace, where they lived happily ever after.

The stepsisters and stepmother still live together in a rather unkempt home.