



Cinderella

Readers Theater Play Script

AUTHORS: Elaine Lindy COUNTRY: Germany, GENRE: Fairytales



CHARACTERS

CINDERELLA
STEPSISTER #1
STEPSISTER #2
STEPMOTHER
KING
QUEEN
PRINCE
FAIRY GODMOTHER
DRIVER
WHITE HORSES (2)
CARRIAGE (2)
GUESTS
CLOCK

Scene 1 – Cinderella’s Cottage

[Stage set: A cottage in France. On a painted backdrop, show two windows with trees outside and a large painted hearth in the middle. On the side is a table with four chairs, two in front of the table and two behind the table.]

[CINDERELLA is onstage scrubbing the floor with a rag. A bucket is beside her. STEPSISTER #1 is seated behind the table and STEPSISTER #2 is seated in front of the table, each one with her feet up on a chair. They are talking and laughing in low voices.]

CINDERELLA:

(looks up at the audience, still kneeling) I know what you’re thinking. Why am I scrubbing the floor and doing all the hard work around here when my two sisters just sit around like that all day? *(points to STEPSISTERS)*

[CINDERELLA stands up.]

Well, here’s what happened. When I was a baby, my mother died. A few years ago, my father re-married. His new wife, my Stepmother, moved in with her own two daughters. Soon after that, my father passed away too. So you can see I’m pretty much stuck here the way things are.

STEPSISTER #1:

(from off-stage) Cinderella! You’d better still be scrubbing! I don’t want to see any missed spots.

CINDERELLA:

(kneels and starts scrubbing again; then speaks again to audience) This is my life.

STEPSISTER #1:

(goes over to the window closest to the table and calls through it as if to someone outside) Wait a minute, what did you say? Hold on! I’ll be right there.

STEPSISTER #2:

What is it?

STEPSISTER #1:

I don’t know. She seems excited.

[STEPSISTER #1 exits.]

CINDERELLA:

(stops scrubbing and looks up to audience) Can't imagine what that's all about. People don't come around here much.

STEPMOTHER:

(from off-stage) Cinderella! What ARE you doing?

CINDERELLA:

(starts scrubbing again) I know, I know, Stepmother!

[STEPSISTER #1 enters excitedly.]

STEPSISTER #1:

(clapping her hands) Oh my goodness!

STEPSISTER #2:

What? Tell me!

STEPSISTER #1:

Mother has to hear. *(calls offstage)* MOTHER!

STEPSISTER #2:

I can't believe this – you're making me wait!

[STEPMOTHER enters, brushing her hair.]

STEPMOTHER:

What could be so urgent? *(flips her hair, then notices Cinderella)* Cinderella! Who asked you to stare at us like a stuck pig? You'd think you didn't have enough work to do!

[CINDERELLA looks to the audience for a moment, throwing up her arms in exasperation, then returns to scrubbing while keeping an eye on STEPMOTHER and STEPSISTERS.]

STEPSISTER #1:

So get this! The Prince is having a ball!

STEPSISTER #2:

The Prince?

STPMOTHER:

A ball?

STEPSISTER #1:

Every eligible young lady in the kingdom is invited. And he'll choose a bride!

STEPSISTER #2:

A bride?

CINDERELLA:

(whispers to audience) Every eligible young woman?

STPMOTHER:

My girls, come closer!

[STEPSISTERS waddle up to STEPMOTHER, who holds out her arms to them. CINDERELLA starts to go to STEPMOTHER, too.]

STPMOTHER:

(to Cinderella) I said "MY girls"! – not YOU! *(encircles her arm around STEPSISTERS and speaks to them in a sweet voice)* Make no mistake, dears, this is your big chance!

[STEPSISTERS squeal.]

[STPMOTHER claps her hands to call for Cinderella.]

CINDERELLA:

(to audience) NOW she wants me.

STEPMOTHER:

(with nose in the air) We will need three fabulous gowns. You will sew these in time for the ball and they better be in the latest fashion. *(hisses)* There is no change to your regular chores.

CINDERELLA:

(to audience) Could things get any worse?

Scene 2 – A palace

[Stage set: The throne room of a palace. A painted backdrop can show long columns and wallpaper having large floral prints. Two large chairs side by side are wrapped in tin foil and gold foil and represent the thrones.]

[KING stands by one throne and QUEEN stands by the other. PRINCE is pacing.]

QUEEN:

I can't believe how you're carrying on, son.

KING:

(to Queen) Doesn't he realize how many princes would give their right arm to be able to pick a bride from a ballroom full of beautiful young ladies?

PRINCE:

Mother, Father, I know that's why we're having the ball. But how can I tell a woman is right for me by just looking at her? It's impossible!

QUEEN:

I don't know about that. *(reaches out to King and places her hand on his arm)* WE knew right away, didn't we, dear?

KING:

(patting her hand lovingly) We did indeed.

PRINCE:

Maybe the two of you got lucky. What if I'm not so lucky? Whoever I choose, I'll be married to my whole life!

QUEEN:

That's the idea, isn't it? *(shrugs)* Worst case, no worries. If it doesn't work out, the palace is a big place.

KING:

You'll hardly see her.

PRINCE:

What kind of life is THAT?

QUEEN:

***(to King)* You just can't please these kids.**

Scene 3 – Outside Cinderella’s cottage

[Stage set: If you can paint a backdrop, paint a front door to the cottage on the far left side, and trees for the rest of it. Make a bush by taping a large cutout of a painted bush in front of a table, large enough to cover the table. On the table (low enough to be unseen by the audience) place the gown Cinderella will change into later in Scene 3, and a tiara. Locate the bush at stage left.]

[STEPMOTHER and STEPSISTERS are primping in their gowns. CINDERELLA stands by the front door. She looks sad.]

STEPMOTHER:

You two look very nice, if I do say so myself.

STEPSISTER #1:

(primps hair) Don’t we, though?

STEPSISTER #2:

(looks offstage) The carriage is almost here!

STEPSISTER #1:

We’re going to the BALL! *(Stepsisters jump up and down in glee)*

[STEPMOTHER notices CINDERELLA.]

STEPMOTHER:

Why are YOU here?

CINDERELLA:

I just thought –

STEPMOTHER:

Thought WHAT?

CINDERELLA:

Well, that I might go to the ball, too.

STEPMOTHER:

What, YOU?

STEPSISTER #1:

HER?

STEPSISTER #2:

Just look at her! What a mess!

STEPMOTHER:

(in a sharp voice) You are NOT going to this ball, or ANY ball, EVER. Where did you get such a crazy idea? Go inside! *(Cinderella backs up; Stepmother turns to Stepsisters and speaks in a soft voice)* My dears, are we ready?

STEPSISTER #1:

Yes, Mama.

STEPMOTHER:

Excellent! Because our carriage is here.

[STEPSISTERS squeal in delight. The three of them exit, their noses high in the air. No one says goodbye to CINDERELLA.]

CINDERELLA:

(runs her hands through her hair and pats her clothes) When they look at me, maybe they see a mess. But I am not a mess, not really. *(looks up to where Stepmother and Stepsisters existed and sighs)* And if I could, I WOULD go to the ball. It's not fair!

[Offstage, a member of the cast throws several handfuls of sparkly confetti. If you can find magical-sounding music, play it for a few seconds as FAIRY GODMOTHER enters through the confetti. FAIRY GODMOTHER is wearing a gown with two wings fastened behind her back. She holds a wand with a large star wrapped with tin foil and glitter at the end.]

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Lots of things in life aren't fair! The question is, what can be done about it?

CINDERELLA:

What do you mean? What I want is impossible.

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

(tosses head) Oh, fiddle faddle! Am I your Fairy Godmother, or am I not?

CINDERELLA:

You ... are?

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Excuse me! Did I not just show up out of thin air?

CINDERELLA:

I suppose you did.

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Then let me be the one to say what is possible or not!

CINDERELLA:

(to audience) Fair point. *(to Fairy Godmother)* But how could I go to the ball? Look at me – I'm a mess!

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

I wouldn't say that, child. There, go stand by that bush.

[CINDERELLA moves to the bush.]

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Now turn around.

[FAIRY GODMOTHER raises her wand and gives it a shake. As she does this, members of the castoff-stage throw more sparkly confetti in front of CINDERELLA. Play the magical-sounding music. As the confetti continues to be thrown and the music plays, CINDERELLA quickly reaches down to the dress on the table behind the bush and puts it on, as well as the tiara.]

CINDERELLA:

(amazed) This is wonderful!

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Who said I was done?

[FAIRY GODMOTHER turns to face stage right. She raises her wand and as she does, cast members offstage throw more handfuls of sparkly confetti. Magical music plays. TWO WHITE HORSES, a DRIVER, a FOOTMAN and a CARRIAGE enter through the confetti. One WHITE HORSE is before the CARRIAGE is the other is behind it. CARRIAGE consists of a large painted cardboard cut-out of a carriage that's big enough to cover two cast members who carry it from behind. DRIVER steps up to CINDERELLA and bows.]

CINDERELLA:

I don't believe this!

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Believe it. But there is one thing you must know.

CINDERELLA:

What's that?

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

All of this lasts only to midnight. Tonight, at the stroke of midnight, everything will go back to the way it was before.

CINDERELLA:

Then I must leave the ball before midnight!

FAIRY GODMOTHER:

Good idea. *(steps back toward the stage right entrance.)* My work here is done.

[As FAIRY GODMOTHER approaches the stage right entrance, cast members offstage throw more handfuls of sparkly confetti in the air. Magical music plays. FAIRY GODMOTHER exits through the confetti.]

CINDERELLA:

Did that even happen? (*touches the gown and tiara in her hair*)

DRIVER:

Coming, Miss?

CINDERELLA:

(*to audience*) I suppose it did.

Scene 4 – Ball room

[Stage set: An elaborately painted ball room. High windows with decorative trim, a large fireplace, columns throughout. On one edge of the stage, a high staircase. All actors onstage are dressed in elaborate costumes. Most are dancing and the two Stepsisters are in a corner, talking. Soft ballroom music playing.]

[PRINCE is pacing toward the front of the stage.]

PRINCE:

(to audience) I know what you're thinking. What am I complaining about? I'm a prince, right? Still, imagine if you were me. You'd be surprised how stuck a prince can feel. I'm supposed to dance with all these young women tonight and choose one of them to be my bride. For the rest of my life! So far, it's not going so well. Here, I'll show you.

[STEPSISTER #1 and STEPSISTER #2 are standing together at far stage left. PRINCE signals to STEPSISTER #1. She makes an elaborate "What? Me?" motion, claps excitedly, then rushes over to PRINCE.]

STEPSISTER #1:

(curtsies) Prince.

PRINCE:

(short bow) Young lady.

[Ballroom music starts up. PRINCE and STEPSISTER #1 start to dance to the center of the stage. After a few moments, they stop. Music should be lowered so it's still audible but you can hear the actors.]

STEPSISTER #1:

Oh Prince, just marry me. I'm obviously the only choice.

PRINCE:

Oh?

STEPSISTER #1:

There's no one even close to me. Look at this. *(tosses head)* Beauty, pizzazz, charm.

PRINCE:

You don't say?

[Ballroom music stops.]

PRINCE:

Well, thank you for the dance.

STEPSISTER #1:

Oh! Well, sure.

[PRINCE motions to STEPSISTER #2. STEPSISTER #1 backs up to edge of stage. STEPSISTER #2 squeals with delight, comes up to the Prince and curtsies.]

PRINCE:

Young lady.

STEPSISTER #2:

Prince.

[Music starts up. They dance around the stage a couple of moments, then return to center stage. Music fades.]

STEPSISTER #2:

You don't want to choose HER (*motions to STEPSISTER #1*).

PRINCE:

Why not?

STEPSISTER #2:

Or any of these losers. You wouldn't want to be caught dead with any of them.

PRINCE:

I wouldn't?

STEPSISTER #2:

Obviously! I'm the best choice here.

[Ballroom music stops. Prince bows. STEPSISTER #2 backs up to edge of stage near STEPSISTER #1.]

PRINCE:

(to audience) You see what I mean? Is it too much to find someone you can talk to?

[CINDERELLA enters by the painted staircase. She looks around, unsure what to do next. PRINCE notices her.]

PRINCE:

Wait a minute. *(approaches CINDERELLA)* Young lady?

CINDERELLA:

(curtsies) Prince.

PRINCE:

Have we met before?

CINDERELLA:

I'm pleased to meet you now.

PRINCE:

Yet I feel as if I already know you. But that's impossible.

CINDERELLA:

Many things are possible, Your Highness, if you wish them to be true.

PRINCE:

Do you really believe that?

CINDERELLA:

I know it.

[Ballroom music starts up. PRINCE and CINDERELLA dance for a few moments and end up at center stage. Music fades.]

CINDERELLA:

Tell me about yourself, Prince.

PRINCE:

What's there to know? I'm a prince.

CINDERELLA:

No, I mean about YOU. Yourself.

PRINCE:

Well! No one's asked me that before. And I'd like to learn more about you, too.

[Ballroom music goes up to regular volume. PRINCE and CINDERELLA dance around the stage a few moments. The music stops and they stop dancing. They pantomime talking and laughing. The music starts up and they start to dance again.]

STEPSISTER #1:

Will you look at that?

STEPSISTER #2:

He's just dancing with HER. Dance after dance. How rude!

STEPSISTER #1:

This prince has no manners at all!

STEPSISTER #2:

I wouldn't marry him if he begged me.

STEPSISTER #1:

Nor I!

[Music stops. CLOCK enters, a large cardboard cutout of a clock set to midnight and held from behind by CLOCK-HOLDER.]

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

[CINDERELLA and PRINCE are still dancing.]

CINDERELLA:

Did you hear something?

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong! Dong!

PRINCE:

What? All I hear is you.

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

CINDERELLA:

***(notices Clock)* It's almost midnight!**

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

PRINCE:

Why does it matter if it's midnight?

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

CINDERELLA:

I must go!

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

PRINCE:

Why? You just got here!

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

CINDERELLA:

I must go – NOW! *(turns and runs toward stairs)*

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

CINDERELLA:

(to audience) There isn't much time!

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

PRINCE:

Time for what? Wait! I don't even know your name!

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

CINDERELLA:

Goodbye!

[CINDERELLA runs to the front of the painted staircase. She trips (whoever plays this part pretends to trip in a safe way). As she does so, a cast member off-stage throws a cardboard cutout of a glass slipper onstage. CINDERELLA exits in great haste.]

CLOCK-HOLDER:

Dong!

[PRINCE runs to the front of the painted staircase.]

PRINCE:

Come back! *(goes up to the stage entrance and leans forward, looks around)* I don't see her anywhere!

[PRINCE looks all around. He doesn't see the glass slipper. Cast member from offstage reaches out with a broom and pushes the glass slipper in front of PRINCE. He finally notices it.]

PRINCE:

What's this? She left behind this glass slipper? *(to audience)* I will find her! *(holds one arm and index finger high in the air)* With this glass slipper, no matter how long it takes, I will find her!

Scene 5 – The Woods

[Stage set: The scene is between two characters, the PRINCE and his DRIVER, and it can be on edge of the stage. A couple of cardboard-cutout trees at the edge of the stage is enough to give a flavor for this scene.]

[PRINCE and DRIVER enter.]

PRINCE:

Another day. I don't know how many cottages we visited today.

DRIVER:

Twenty-three.

PRINCE:

That's what I thought. And I can't say how many days we've been searching.

DRIVER:

Forty-one.

PRINCE:

Just what I thought. Do you get the feeling we'll never find her, this young lady who I met at the ball, whose foot fits this glass slipper? *(holds up the glass slipper)*

DRIVER:

Your Highness, I–

PRINCE:

Say no more! We WILL carry on! Village by village, cottage by cottage, as long as it takes. We will find her!

DRIVER:

Just what I thought.

[PRINCE and DRIVER exit.]

Scene 6 – Cinderella's cottage

[Stage set: As in Scene 1. STEPSISTERS look outside the windows, one before each window. CINDERELLA looks on from edge of stage.]

STEPMOTHER:

Any sign of his carriage?

STEPSISTER #1:

Not yet, Mother.

STEPSISTER #2:

I hope he doesn't skip us! He's supposed to be nearby.

STEPMOTHER:

Are you both ready? Come over here.

[STEPSISTERS line up for inspection. STEPMOTHER looks at each one in turn, her hair, dress, and so forth, all the while saying "Hmph!" "Good enough, I suppose," and "Very well, then."]

[Bugle sounds from off-stage.]

STEPSISTER #1:

He's coming to the door!

STEPSISTER #2:

Do I look all right?

STEPMOTHER:

(to Cinderella) Why are you standing there?

CINDERELLA:

I thought I'd get a glimpse of the prince.

STEPMOTHER:

Think again! To the attic, Cinderella. I don't want to see or hear from you until I call for you to come out. *(growls)* Do you hear me?

CINDERELLA:

Heard, Stepmother.

[CINDERELLA goes to the far right edge of the stage, sits, and crosses her legs.]

[PRINCE enters.]

PRINCE:

Excuse me, Madam. I understand there are some young ladies in this house?

[STEPMOTHER gently pushes STEPSISTERS to in front of PRINCE.]

STEPMOTHER:

One of these two priceless young ladies is the bride you seek. You don't have to bother with that glass slipper. Just pick one of them.

PRINCE:

Well, if you don't mind – *(takes out the cardboard cutout of the glass slipper).*

(to Stepsister #1) Would you like to have a seat?

STEPSISTER #1:

Would I! *(sits at the table and stretches out her foot)*

[STEPSISTER #1 groans and heaves as she tries to put her foot into the glass slipper. Finally, she gives up.]

STEPSISTER #1:

Ugh!!

STEPMOTHER:

Step aside! Surely it will fit your sister. *(to Stepsister #2, gripping both shoulders with her hands)* You MUST fit into that glass slipper, no matter what it takes – do you hear me? *(Stepsister #2 nods)*

[STEPSISTER #1 gets up from the table and STEPSISTER #2 sits down. STEPSISTER #2 groans and heaves as she tries to get her foot inside the glass slipper. Finally she gives up too.]

PRINCE:

(sighs) Are there no other young ladies in this house?

STEPMOTHER:

(crosses arms in front of her) None.

PRINCE:

Then I must go. *(turns to leave)*

CINDERELLA:

(to audience) I told my Stepmother I HEARD her. I didn't say I'd DO it.

[CINDERELLA steps into the room.]

CINDERELLA:

Maybe there is one more.

PRINCE:

(to Stepmother) I thought you said there were no other young women here.

STEPMOTHER:

(hisses) None who matter.

PRINCE:

(to Cinderella) Come here.

[PRINCE motions for Stepsister #2 to get up from the chair and for CINDERELLA to sit down. PRINCE gets down on one knee and with the cardboard cut-out of the glass slipper, tries it on her foot. It fits perfectly!]

PRINCE:

I knew it when you walked in! You're the one from the ball!

STEPSISTER #1:

WHAT?

STEPSISTER #2:

Not HER!

STEPMOTHER:

This cannot BE!

PRINCE:

(takes Cinderella's hands in his) I have found you!

CINDERELLA:

And I have found you!

PRINCE:

(on one knee) This may seem quick, but I know what I know. Will you marry me?

CINDERELLA:

Gosh, is it okay to say "I think so"?

PRINCE:

But...!

CINDERELLA:

Hear me out, please. How about if we took a bit more time to get to know each other better?

PRINCE:

(stands & wipes his trousers) Of course! That's a much better idea. Say, there are lots of extra rooms at the palace. How about if you move in?

CINDERELLA:

That would be marvelous! Would there be work for me to do? *(glances at Stepmother)* Paid?

PRINCE:

Plenty of work. Paid. We'll work it out. *(takes her hand)*

CINDERELLA:

I know we will.

STEPMOTHER:

Wait a minute, wait a minute. YOU were the mysterious young lady at the ball. And now you're moving into the royal palace?

CINDERELLA:

That's right. On both counts.

STEPMOTHER:

I'm not even going to ask where that gown at the ball came from. *(in a silky sweet voice)* But dear, you do know we're the ones who took care of you after your poor father passed on.

CINDERELLA:

Oh, I see! You're worried what I might do now because of how badly you've treated me. *(motions to Stepsisters)* And they have, too.

STEPMOTHER:

(nervously laughs) Why no! That's not the least bit on my mind! Why would you even say such a thing?

CINDERELLA:

You need not worry. There will be no dungeon for you, or my stepsisters. Nothing bad will happen. I hold you no grudge. I'm going to start my new life with the Prince with a fresh, clean heart. Oh, but there is one thing. *(picks up bucket and scrub brush and hands it to Stepmother, leaning toward her and whispering)* Be sure there are no missed spots. *(takes Prince's hand)* So long, everyone. Stay well.

[CINDERELLA and PRINCE exit, hand in hand.]

STEPSISTER #1, STEPSISTER #2 and STEPMOTHER, together:

(throwing their arms in the air) Aughh!!!