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Never After Happily

By

CINDY MARCUS

Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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CINDY MARCUS

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(NEVER AFTER HAPPILY)

ISBN. 978-1-61959-325-1

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Never After Happily made it's world premiere at the North Coast Repertory Theatre (Eureka, Calif.) on Feb. 16, 2023.

CAST:

CLARABELLA/BEANSTALK JACK/
ARIEL/SPOON Noël August
GODFATHER/HANK..... Morgan P. Cox
BRITTANY/LITTLE RED/RAPUNZEL/
AURORA/PRUNELLA.....Kimberly Haile
PRINCE CHARMING.....David Hamilton
PLATE/PHILIP/ JUDGE/
YOUNG CHARMING AJ Hempstead
ELLA..... Cindy Marcus
DOC..... Scott “Q” Marcus
SNOW WHITE/COP/BAILIFF/KNIFE 1 Solveig Lyssand
HERALD Johne Nathanson
MARINA/YOUNG CINDY/
CHICKEN LITTLE/GOLDILOCKS Alexandra Nilsen
CARD GIRL Katie Rossi
CINDY Denise L. Ryles
JACK HORNER/PRIEST/
PROSECUTOR/EMPEROR Steven A. Santos
WOLF/DEFENSE ATTORNEY Montel VanderHorck III
PROPRIETOR/STEPMOM/WITCH Willi Welton
LAWYER/ORDERLY/KNIFE 2..... Bill Welton

PRODUCTION:

Director Scott “Q” Marcus
Assistant Directors Cindy Marcus and Flip Kobler
Costume DesignOlivia Gambino
Set Designer.....Brian Butler
Light and Sound Operator.....Daniel Scott Marcus
Properties Kelly Hughes
Artistic Director Calder Johnson
House ManagementOlivia Gambino
Stage TechMaggie Vlahovic
Music Consultant Donna Landry
Original Music Dennis Poore

Never After Happily

CHARACTERS

ELLA	PROSECUTOR
CINDY	DEFENSE ATTORNEY
DOC	CHICKEN LITTLE
CARD GIRL	JACK HORNER
PRINCE CHARMING	BRITTANY
YOUNG CHARMING	RAPUNZEL
YOUNG CINDY	PROPRIETOR
LITTLE RED	SPOON
WOLF	GODFATHER
HANK	GOONS
GOLDILOCKS	PLATE
HERALD	ICE PICK
PRIEST	MARINA
PRUNELLA	ARIEL
CLARABELLA	AURORA
STEPMOM	PHILIP
LAWYER	WITCH
JUDGE	SNOW WHITE
BEANSTALK JACK	EMPEROR
COP	ORDERLY

SETTING: Minimal sets required—just some black boxes, benches or chairs. Bring in costumes and a few special set pieces to give the scenes the right “feel.” Nothing special—this is all imagination.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This show is *all about* audience interaction. Extensive notes with ideas, tips, suggested improv scenarios (with template script) and all manners of helpful information can be found in the back of the book.

Additionally, Director's Notes from Scott "Q" Marcus on the original production and four accompaniment tracks are available as free downloads on Dramatic Publishing's website.

Never After Happily

(When the lights come up the entire cast is spread across stage, posed like character statues. The more fairy taleness packed into the costumes and poses, the better. It's like a living royal portrait. Cinderella [CINDY] is C, looking older than we remember but just as much like an ingénue. She talks to the audience like her own fairy godmother.)

CINDY. Hello and welcome to our world. We are ever so glad you could join us here in our fairy-tale kingdom.

(The cast ad-libs their hellos to the audience. CINDY claps twice to continue on.)

CINDY *(cont'd)*. Here, everything is just like you remember. Our princes are charming.

YOUNG CHARMING *(spotlight)*. Hey, how *YOU* doin'?

CINDY. Our ingénues are gullible.

LITTLE RED *(spotlight)*. What? He looked like my granny. Glasses and bonnet and everything.

CINDY. Our wolves are big and bad.

WOLF *(spotlight)*. Actually, it's all a misunderstanding. I'm a nice guy—

EVERYONE ELSE. Big and bad!

WOLF. Fine, yeah, I'll huff and puff, whatever.

CINDY. These are the stories you know and love. And we are here tonight to retell them in a new and exciting way—

ELLA *(entering from the audience with a purpose)*. Yeah, we're not doing that.

(You can practically hear the record scratch. The cast is a little stunned. CINDY tries to hold onto her composure as ELLA splits her attention between the cast and the audience.)

CINDY. I'm sorry?

ELLA. Yeah, we're not doing that, we all know the stories. Seen 'em a billion times. We all know how they end.

HANK. Hey, you don't know how my story ends. You don't even know who I am or what—

ELLA. Rumplestiltskin.

HANK *(freaking out)*. What? Who said? OK, first of all, shut up. Second of all, my name is Hank.

EVERYONE ELSE. Hi, Hank.

HANK. Thirdly, shut up again. Fourthly, who are you?

ELLA. I'm Ella.

EVERYONE ELSE. Hi, Ella.

ELLA. I'm the writer.

EVERYONE ELSE. *OoooOOOOOoooooh.*

ELLA. Everybody knows these stories and how they end. I mean, how does every story end?

EVERYONE ELSE. We all lived happily ever after.

ELLA. Yeah, what a crock.

(The cast wigs out at that word. AURORA actually faints. The WOLF puts his hands over LITTLE RED's ears. Everyone is beyond shocked.)

YOUNG CHARMING. Hey! Language. This is a family show.

HANK *(to the audience)*. Sorry, man.

CINDY. So as the writer, you're not here to retell our stories?

ELLA. No. Geez, I think we know these stories. I don't care what happened before the ending. *(The cast seems offended by this.)* I want to know what happens after the ending.

GOLDDILOCKS. Why, we all lived happily ever after.

ELLA. But did ya, though?

CINDY. Yes.

ELLA. Didja?

EVERYONE ELSE. Yes!

CINDY. I know I did.

ELLA. I don't think so. I think this is what happened.

ALL *(to the tune of "Bridal Chorus")*.

DUM DUM DA-DUM

DUM DUM DA-DUM

DUM-DA-DA-DUM DA DE DUM DE DA DUM.

The One With the Glass Shoe

(CARD GIRL walks across the stage with a big sign that says, "THE ONE WITH THE GLASS SHOE." We are in a royal hall decorated for a wedding. The unnecessary cast sits down and will be the guests. A HERALD steps forward.)

HERALD. Hear ye, hear ye! All give your attention to the wedding of Prince Charming and Cinderella.

(Someone throws rose petals or blows bubbles. Others connect hands across the aisle, making an arch-like tunnel for YOUNG CINDY to walk through. The cast hums/sings to the tune of "Bridal Chorus" as YOUNG CINDY walks to meet YOUNG CHARMING, who is waiting with the PRIEST. From the sidelines, CINDY and ELLA look on.)

CINDY. This is my wedding. Look at how beautiful I was.

Oh, goodness, this was a perfect day.

ELLA. Was it though?

(YOUNG CINDY finally stands beside YOUNG CHARMING. STEPMOM and the stepsisters, PRUNELLA and CLARABELLA, are bridesmaids. The PRIEST is one impressive clergyman.)

PRIEST. Mawige. Mawige is what bwings us togevver today. Cindy? Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband?

YOUNG CINDY. I do. I do. I most certainly do, my perfect love.

PRUNELLA *(scoffing)*. Pfffft.

(Eyes turn to PRUNELLA, who covers. The ceremony continues.)

PRIEST. And do you, Prince Philip, take this woman—

PRUNELLA. Ugh.

(And once again, all eyes on PRUNELLA.)

PRUNELLA *(cont'd, whispering)*. Sorry. Something in my throat.

CLARABELLA *(whispering)*. Suck a lozenge.

PRUNELLA. Bite me.

PRIEST *(beat)*. Then as long as anyone has no just cause why these two—

PRUNELLA. Excuse me. But when you say “just cause,” what exactly do you mean? ’Cause I see a really big gray area there.

(STPMOM steps in, hoping to stop this runaway train from crashing.)

STEPMOM. Could you excuse us for just one moment?

(STEPMOM pulls PRUNELLA aside, and CLARABELLA follows.)

STEPMOM *(cont'd)*. Prunella, sweetheart, moon of my life—*are you out of your mind?!*

PRUNELLA. I'm sorry. Really. But what if Cindy is making a terrible mistake?

STEPMOM. Right. Because marrying *the most eligible bachelor in the entire kingdom* is a real error in judgment?

PRUNELLA. See, this is what I'm talking about. Why is he such an eligible bachelor?

STEPMOM. I dunno. I'm thinking it could be because he's *heir to the entire kingdom?!*

PRUNELLA. But she just met him! They had one date! One perfect date. Do they really think that every day is gonna be perfect?

CLARABELLA. Oh ho ho, jealous much?

PRUNELLA. Look. Yes. I admit. There was a brief moment where I really wanted to marry him. But now, I'm actually kind of relieved, you know, that he didn't pick me.

STEPMOM. So then there's no problem?

PRUNELLA *(beat, realizing)*. No. I guess not.

STEPMOM. Then can we get on with this?

PRUNELLA. If she wants to.

(They head back to the altar. STEPMOM nods at the PRIEST, who continues.)

PRIEST. By the power—

CLARABELLA. Hang on.

PRIEST. Excuse me?

CLARABELLA. Oh I'm sorry. Not you. You. *(She looks at PRUNELLA.)* What did you mean you were relieved not to marry him?

(CINDY snaps at ELLA. The entire wedding scene freezes behind them.)

CINDY. This is not how it went.

ELLA. Are you the writer?

CINDY. No, I'm the bride. And you can't just change the story.

ELLA. Not changing the story. I'm not even changing the ending. I'm changing what happens AFTER the ending.

CINDY. You can't do that.

ELLA. Really?

(ELLA snaps her fingers, and a young LAWYER in a business suit enters with a briefcase, all official and snobbish.)

LAWYER. I'm an attorney with Mares/Oats & Lamb/Ivy. This is a cease and desist. She's the duly hired writer and for the next ninety minutes, she calls the shots.

CINDY. But—

LAWYER. Cease.

CINDY. I just—

LAWYER. Desist.

(LAWYER exits through the audience, and the scene resumes.)

YOUNG CHARMING. Who wouldn't want to marry me?
I'm a prince.

STEPMOM. That's what I said.

PRUNELLA. You're also the future leader of the kingdom and you decided to marry her because she fit a size seven shoe.

YOUNG CHARMING (*proudly*). Yup. Know what you're thinking. Pretty romantic, right?

YOUNG CINDY. Yes, my one and only. But if it was so romantic, why did you have to try it on EVERY woman in the kingdom?

YOUNG CHARMING. I didn't know what you looked like.

YOUNG CINDY. I was at the ball!

CLARABEL. The ball!!

PRUNELLA. Um-hmmmmmm.

YOUNG CHARMING. Yeah, but people look different in street clothes.

YOUNG CINDY. That's why you didn't recognize me when you came to the farm, dearest one?

YOUNG CHARMING. You had a smudge on your cheek.

YOUNG CINDY. And that's why you didn't recognize me, sweetheart?

YOUNG CHARMING. Smudge! It's just, you know, you looked really different.

YOUNG CINDY. And what about when I'm middle-aged, sweet bear? You know, someday I may actually look like my mother.

YOUNG CHARMING (*looks at STEPMOM and shivers*). Yeeshaggh! (*Way overreacting, but he pulls it back*). But I'll always love you.

YOUNG CINDY. Maybe we rushed into this. Got caught up in the moment.

PRUNELLA. Yeah! I mean he doesn't even know the real you, and he was on his best behavior. I mean, seriously?

YOUNG CHARMING. No, not seriously. We don't do serious. It's just a funny little fairy tale.

PRIEST. Chop chop, people. I have a bris in two hours.

(The PRIEST removes his biretta and puts on a yarmulke.)

YOUNG CHARMING. See?

PRIEST. So? What's it gonna be? I do or I don't?

YOUNG CINDY. I do, I guess.

CINDY. You guess?

PRIEST. Great. Awesome. Mazel tov. I now pronounce you husband and wife. Shalom.

(YOUNG CINDY and YOUNG CHARMING walk out, ad-libbing their uncertainty. The bridesmaids follow. The cast sings/hums a recessional song. When everyone is gone, CINDY and ELLA are alone onstage.)

CINDY. What did you do?

ELLA. What? I fixed it. I made it real.

CINDY. People don't want real.

ELLA. I want real.

CINDY. Well, reality sucks.

ELLA. Yes! Thank you. That's my point. Fairy tales are not real, and they set up unrealistic expectations in young people.

CINDY. You're crazy. You need help.

(CINDY grabs ELLA's arm and drags her across the stage as the HERALD enters.)

HERALD. Hear ye, hear ye! Ella is crazy!

(During the following conversation, ELLA and CINDY cross the stage to DOC's office. Maybe just a chair, or settee. DOC enters as CARD GIRL hangs a sign that says "PSYCHIATRIC CARE.")

CINDY. Doc! Doc! You gotta help. Doc?

(DOC enters. You know him. The little red vest, brown cap and glasses. Right outta Snow White.)

DOC. Cindy. Hi-ho. How can I help?

CINDY. This woman is crazy.

DOC. We don't use that word here, Cindy. You know that.

CINDY. Well, sane people don't turn my kingdom upside down.

ELLA. Your kingdom's not even real. None of this is real.

CINDY. See what I'm dealing with?

ELLA. You're all just inside my head.

DOC. Wait. You don't think I'm real?

ELLA. It's all just a construct of collective imagination.

DOC. Thought I was real. *(He slaps himself across the face.)*
That *felt* real.

CINDY. She's changing the stories, Doc.

ELLA. I'm a writer, that's what writer's do.

(DOC takes a pen and stabs himself in the leg.)

DOC. OOOOOOwwwwwWW! That felt totally corporeal!

CINDY. You can't just change everything.

ELLA. I'm not changing your stories. I'm not even changing the ending. I'm just writing what happens after the ending.

CINDY. There is no after the ending.

ELLA. Every day you wake up is after the ending.

CINDY. But your ending endings changes our themes and morals. Actions have consequences, Ella.

ELLA. Yes! Yes, exactly! But they don't in your world! Everybody just gets happily ever after. But that's not how it is in the real world. I mean, take that Jack guy.

DOC. Which Jack? Jack Be Nimble? Jack Frost? Jack Sprat? Jack and Jill?

ELLA. The beanstalk guy. This is what shoulda happened.

(Lights fade on this part of the stage and come up on another part of the stage, or there is a transition that resets the stage.)

MUSIC CUE: Track #1- TV Theme. This sets the tone coming into this scene.)

The One With the Boy and the Beanstalk

(The CARD GIRL crosses with a sign, "THE ONE WITH THE BOY AND THE BEANSTALK." This is a courtroom scene with the JUDGE, the PROSECUTOR, the DEFENSE ATTORNEY and BEANSTALK JACK.)

JUDGE *(banging a gavel)*. Order. Order in the court.

BEANSTALK JACK. I'll have a ham on rye.

(CARD GIRL now holds up the "BOO" sign for the audience. BEANSTALK JACK walks up to the audience.)

BEANSTALK JACK *(cont'd)*. So that's how it's gonna be huh? I tell a classic one-liner, and you boo me?!

(CARD GIRL holds up the "BOO" sign to the audience again. BEANSTALK JACK turns and glares at the audience, then stares daggers at CARD GIRL.)

JUDGE. Can we get back to the trial please?

(BEANSTALK JACK takes seat in the witness box.)

PROSECUTOR. So you say you didn't kill the giant, Jack?

BEANSTALK JACK. The giant was named Jack?

PROSECUTOR. No.

BEANSTALK JACK. But you just said, "You didn't kill the giant Jack."

PROSECUTOR. You're Jack. I was referring to you.

BEANSTALK JACK. Is there anyone else named Jack?

DOC. Sprat. Nimble. Frost. O'Lantern. Jill's brother—

PROSECUTOR. Let's try this again. You, Jack, are accused of killing the giant.

DEFENSE *(like Foghorn Leghorn)*. Objection. Mah client is allegedly—I say, allegedly—accused of killing the giant. But he did not. Did you, Jack?

BEANSTALK JACK. I'm innocent.

DEFENSE. You see? I think we can all go home.

JUDGE. I'll decide when we can all go home. Proceed, council.

PROSECUTOR. I asked if you killed the giant, Jack. Not the giant named Jack because you are Jack.

BEANSTALK JACK. Right. 'Cause what are the odds that the giant and I would both be named Jack?

JUDGE. In this play? I'd take ten to one odds.

DOC. Yeah, 'cause we got Sprat. Nimble. Frost. O'Lantern. Jill's brother—

PROSECUTOR. So did you?

BEANSTALK JACK. Did I what?

PROSECUTOR. Kill the giant.