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Dramatic Publishing

A Participation Play for Children

cinderella, cinderella...

BY
STEVE AND KATHY HOTCHNER



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CINDERELLA, CINDERELLA . . .
A Participation Play for Children
For Three Men and Five Women

C H A R A C T E R S

CINDERELLA

CECILY

DENISE

STEPMOTHER

FAIRY GODMOTHER

KING

DUKE FERDINAND

PRINCE

TIME: Long ago.

PLACE: Far away.

CINDERELLA, CINDERELLA . . .

AT RISE OF CURTAIN, a single rocking chair and two chairs which will double in function as thrones and as chairs. Enter CINDERELLA L with a bucket filled with sponges, dustpan, broom and rags.)

CINDERELLA (to audience). Hello. Who are you? You look so nice. You remind me of the friends I used to have before my stepmother drove them all away. Now I don't get to play much. I work all the time. And I get so tired. Look at this house. The floors need scrubbing, the windows need polishing and the fireplace needs sweeping. I'll never get it all done. Oh, if only . . . But no, no, it's no use. I wanted so to go to that ball. I would dance and dance and . . . What's the use of dreaming. If only . . . do you think . . . you could help me. (Moves into audience, to one child.) Would you help me scrub the floor? (Repeats this to another child and brings them both on stage.) Here are some sponges. You can start right away. And now the windows. (Again she chooses two children with:) Would you like to polish a window? And you? (Leads them up on stage.) Right there. And there are your rags. And . . . I can't believe it, the place looks cleaner already. Oh, I forgot the fireplace. (Selects two more children.) Here, I'll give you a broom and you a dustpan. And I'll help all of you scrub. The rest of you warn us if you hear my stepsisters coming. They have high, shrill voices. (After a short pause, Cecily's voice is heard. She must give children some time to clean first.)

CECILY (from offstage R). Bet you wish you could look as pretty as me.

CINDERELLA. Are they coming? Oh, they are. Quick, everyone, back to your seats. They mustn't find you here.

DENISE (also offstage R). Don't you wish you had my looks. The prince won't even look at you when we get to the

ball, bandy-legs.

CINDERELLA. Hurry, hurry. I'll take the rags and the sponges and the broom and the dustpan. Then I'll run upstairs and finish my dress and----(Starts to exit L, then turns.) Thank you. (Runs out L with cleaning paraphernalia, leaving the broom behind.)

(CECILY enters R dressed in evening gown, followed by DENISE similarly dressed.)

CECILY. Fatty.

DENISE. I am not fat. Mama, Mama. Cecily called me fatty.

(STEPMOTHER enters dressed for the ball in gown, gloves and cloak.)

STEPMOTHER. I'm going to say this just once. Tonight you must be beautiful. The Prince is going to choose one of you for his wife at the ball. If you argue, your cheeks will turn puffy and then you'll be as ugly as Cinderella.

CECILY. As ugly as Cinderella. Mama, how can you say that?

DENISE. You're right, Mama, as always. You mustn't argue with me, Cecily.

CECILY. Me argue with you? You started it, you little louse.

DENISE. Why, you . . . you . . .

STEPMOTHER. Now, girls. Remember. Dignity, grace, poise.

CECILY (curtsying clumsily). We're sorry, Mama.

DENISE (curtsying clumsily). Beg your pardon, I'm sure.

STEPMOTHER. That's my little darlings. Cecily, we have to go. Where are your gloves?

CECILY. Cinderella was supposed to bring them. (Sharp change of voice, a fishwife.) Cinderella!

DENISE. Cin-de-rella!

(CINDERELLA runs in, out of breath. She is dressed in rags still. She stops dead when she sees the sisters glaring at her. She holds out the gloves. CECILY snatches them from her.)

CINDERELLA. I . . . I . . . didn't mean to be late. I was making a dress.

DENISE. A dress? You, in a dress? You couldn't wear a dress. It would be covered with soot in two seconds.

CECILY. One second.

CINDERELLA. But, Mama . . .

STEPMOTHER. Don't call me your mother. Your real mother died long ago. I am "ma'am" to you.

CINDERELLA. But . . . Ma'am, you said that when I finished my work I could go to the ball if I could find a dress and I've found one and . . .

CECILY. Mama, she's not going to the ball, is she? She's a servant. The Prince will take one look at her and hold his nose.

DENISE. She smells like a servant.

STEPMOTHER. We mustn't be unfair. I did say if Cinderella finished all her work she could go to the ball.

DENISE. Over my dead body.

CINDERELLA. Oh, thank you, Ma---- I mean, Ma'am. I'll run up and finish my dress. (Starts to leave.

STEPMOTHER throws cherry pits into fireplace.)

STEPMOTHER. Oh, Cinderella. (CINDERELLA stops, slowly turns.) Look at the fireplace, will you? Inside the fireplace.

CINDERELLA (walking slowly UR, stares inside fireplace). Where did all those cherry pits come from? Tons of them. Buried deep in the ashes. It was clean. It was clean.

STEPMOTHER. What a shame, girls. It looks like Cinderella forgot to clean out the fireplace.

CINDERELLA. I didn't. I swear I didn't.

CECILY. Are you calling Mama a liar?

CINDERELLA. But . . .

STEPMOTHER. I'm sorry. It looks like you won't be able to go to the ball. Cecily, take my hand. Denise. I hear the coach. And we mustn't keep the coachman waiting. Good-bye, Cinderella.

CECILY and DENISE. Good-bye, Cinderella. (They break into malicious laughter.)

DENISE. Have fun. (They exit.)

CINDERELLA (waving). You, too. (Turns and walks to the rocking chair. She crooks the broom between her elbows.) Have lots of fun at the ball. You meanies. I'm

not going to cry. I'm not going to . . . I won't clean up the fireplace. I won't. I'll sleep and dream. Dream of the ball and my prince and a dress and -- (Yawns.) -- a nicer place to be than -- (Yawns.) -- here. (Closes her eyes.)

(The FAIRY GODMOTHER enters from the audience dressed as a cleaning lady, with long overalls and sleeves rolled up. She carries a huge handbag which is so bulky it resembles an overnight bag and a large package wrapped like a birthday present. The moment she gets on stage she turns to the children, putting her finger to her lips.)

GODMOTHER. She's asleep. I think introductions are in order. I'm Cinderella's fairy godmother which is just the same thing as your favorite aunt or uncle, and I'm mad. Did you see the nasty trick that stepmother played on my little girl? Cherry pits in the fireplace. Just when you'd all cleaned up so beautifully, too. They play tricks like that on her all the time. If only her real father and mother were alive . . . but those days are gone. I'll start the magic. And in just a second---- (Starts to fumble in her bag for the wand.) Now that wand was around here somewhere, somewhere. (Turns bag upside down and dumps it out on floor. All sorts of objects tumble out: yarn, thread, crowns for kings and queens.) Oh, dear. I can't have left my wand at home. I couldn't have done that. Children, would you look for my wand? I could have left it under one of your seats. Yes, I could have done that. I was very nervous before you came. Never talked to so many children before. Don't know if you're going to like me, that sort of thing. Please look. Does anybody see it? Anybody? (Child replies or waves wand in air.) Oh, thank goodness. You stay right there. I'll come down and get it. (GODMOTHER goes down into audience and retrieves wand from child. She begins to put back contents of bag.) I'm in a terrible hurry. Do you see this package? This is Cinderella's dress for the ball. I must get her to that ball before the Prince chooses a wife. (Goes into audience.) Would you help me put on her dress? And you? (GODMOTHER leads children on stage.) Come on. Let's wake up Cinderella. Oh, we must hurry, we

must hurry. (GODMOTHER whispers into Cinderella's ear.) Cinderella.

CINDERELLA (waking). My goodness, who are you?

GODMOTHER. Your fairy godmother, Cinderella, and I arrived late because I couldn't find the right address. You are going to the ball. Oh, please hurry. These children will help you get dressed. Go off stage with them and come back as soon as you can.

CINDERELLA (to the two children and the audience). Well, should I believe her? Can I really go to the ball? (Children respond.) I can. Then let's hurry. Come. This way. (CINDERELLA takes the package and goes offstage with the children.)

GODMOTHER. No time to lose. By midnight it'll all be over. (Goes into audience and selects more helpers.) There's so much more to do. Would you and you put on the slippers? Would you brush Cinderella's hair when she comes out in that beautiful dress. And, and would you put on her necklace. Thank you. (Leads four children on stage.) A fairy godmother who can't arrive on time to do her job. Now. Here is your brush -- (Gives brush to child.) -- and here is your necklace and here are the slippers. (Hands items to children.) Are you ready, Cinderella? (If she is not, GODMOTHER can have children come on stage and clean out cherry pits.) Ready.

(CINDERELLA steps out in a beautiful floor-length gown, ruffles on the sleeves, studded with diamonds. She whirls about in the gown.)

CINDERELLA. This is wonderful. I feel so pretty.

GODMOTHER. Now, sit down, Cinderella. (CINDERELLA sits in the rocking chair.) This child is going to brush your hair. And this child will put on your diamond necklace. And these two can help put on your slippers. Oh, do hurry. (Comes to edge of stage.) How to get her to the ball. When I wave my wand I want all of you to close your eyes. The lights will go out. There'll be music. Perhaps even thunder and lightning -- that always helps. And I want you to wish Cinderella to the ball in a golden coach with four black horses and a coachman with a green hat and a yellow feather. Have

you finished combing and brushing her hair? We must hurry. Are the slippers on? And the necklace? The sisters have probably already arrived. Come, children, magic helpers, go back to your seats and help us all wish Cinderella to the ball. (GODMOTHER takes children back to their seats.) Now I'll stay with you. Wishing is very hard and I want to help you create the scene. Lights! (Lights go out.) Wishing is better in the dark. (CINDERELLA exits.) Thunder and lightning. (Thunder and lightning.) Music. (Traveling music begins.) Clippity clop, that's the sound of the horses' hooves traveling over the road to the castle. Make the sound with me. Clippity clop, clippity clop, clippity clop. (She slaps her knees, leading the children to create the ride.)

CHILDREN. Clippity clop, clippity clop, clippity clop.

GODMOTHER. Keep it up. Keep on racing, horses.

Coachman, raise your whip. They must run faster than the wind. Don't bounce too hard, coach. We don't want to tumble Cinderella into a ditch. Ride, horses, ride -- wish, children, wish. Wish for a ball and a King and a Prince and a Duke and the one true love that the Prince has been waiting for. Cinderella! Lights!

(Lights on. A forlorn-looking KING sits on one of the thrones. The other throne, the Queen's, is empty. There are no guests.)

GODMOTHER. Where is the Queen? Where are the guests, the lovely ladies? Their escorts? Oh, no. I forgot to wish for them.

KING. Ferdinand? Duke Ferdinand? You booby. You nincoompoop.

(Enter the DUKE FERDINAND pursued by STEPMOTHER and her two daughters.)

DUKE. Yes, your booby -- I mean, your majesty. Oh, good heavens, the Queen, the guests, the ladies, the ball . . .

STPMOTHER. Here are all the ladies you will need, your majesty.

CECILY (curtsying terribly). Pleased, I'm sure.