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Cinderella

Adapted from the Brothers Grimm

A musical by

MOSES GOLDBERG

Optional songs and music by **EWEL CORNETT**

Lyrics by **MOSES GOLDBERG**



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(CINDERELLA)

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(NOTE: This play has been produced both with and without the music. Producers desiring to do the version without music should omit text in brackets ([]), and include text in **(Bold.)** For the musical version, omit the **(Bold)** and include the [bracketed] text.

CAST

CINDERELLA

THE MOTHER, later THE WHITE BIRD

THE FATHER

THE STEPMOTHER

KURZLE, her daughter

HOCHEL, her older daughter (should be played by a man)

TWO PIGEONS, friends of WHITE BIRD

BARON VON SCHWARTZ, Court Herald

PRINCE FREDERICK

(Additional Pigeons, Lords and Ladies at the Ball may be added as desired.)

The play was originally presented by STAGE ONE: The Louisville Children's Theatre on December 1, 1985, directed by the author. Bill Corcoran was the Music Director, Ingrid Gunderson the Choreographer, and the Designers were Randal R. Cochran (Scenery), Doug Watts (Costumes), John Michael Roberts (Props), and Chuck Schmidt (Lights). The acting company included Julia Mueller (Cinderella), Debra Lynne Wicks (Mother/White Bird), Nina Furst (Stepmother), Jill Susan Meyers (Kurzle), Terry Weber (Hoichel), Geoffrey Hobin (Prince), Rick Munger (Father), Louis DiVincenti (Baron), and Jeni Lamm and Scott Richard (Pigeons and Ball Guests.) The Stage Manager was Barb Feige.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

(The FATHER'S country home. We see the hearth and kitchen, where most of the action takes place. The hearth is the warmest place in the house. A door or passage stage left leads to the back yard; another door stage right leads to the rest of the house. There is a table and benches, and potted plants are visible in profusion. As the lights come up, the MOTHER sits in a rocking chair by the fire, covered in blankets. She is pale and near death. The FATHER is praying. [An ominous chord is heard.] (A clock tolls heavily in the distance.) NOTE: The [bracketed] text belongs to the musical version only; the bold text to the non-musical version only.)

- FATHER: *(Nearly inaudible)* Oh, Heavenly power, help her! I need her so!
- MOTHER: *(tries to speak, and ends up coughing)*
- FATHER: Dearest, can I get you something?
- MOTHER: *(weakly)* I'm so sorry, my darling, for all the worry I've caused you.
- FATHER: Don't think of that! You just need to get well again. I love you so. And the child needs you, too.
- MOTHER: For her sake I wish I could get well! . . . but I am so tired, my darling. I think I must go soon.
- FATHER: Don't say things like that! I'm so afraid without you. I seem to be always afraid.
- MOTHER: You must try to be brave.

FATHER: I could never be brave. You are the one who gave me courage. Only you.

MOTHER: We gave each other courage. That's a big part of loving. You must marry again, and soon. You cannot raise a child alone without courage.

FATHER: How can you think of such a thing? You must . . . You shall be well in a few days.

MOTHER: You must promise me for her sake . . . find a good woman who will love you both, and help you both to be brave.

FATHER: Dearest angel, I love you so much.

MOTHER: I know. *(pause)* Where is she? I want to see her.

FATHER: You mustn't get over tired. She's so lively . . .

MOTHER: Ah, yes! *(pause)* Send her to me, please. I haven't much more time.

FATHER: *(starts to say something, then bites his lip and exits.)*
[The MOTHER hums the tune from LITTLE STAR softly.] *(After a moment, CINDERELLA enters, carrying a potted plant. The FATHER enters and watches silently from the doorway.)*

CINDERELLA: Mother! Are you feeling . . . ? *(pause)* Look, I brought you a new friend. It's from the hazel bush, but I think it likes its new pot very well.

MOTHER: Hello, hazel twig! I see it's never too late to make a new friend. And hello, Daughter, my well known, lifetime friend.

CINDERELLA: Father said . . . He said . . .

MOTHER: He told you I am very sick. Very sick, didn't he?

CINDERELLA: Yes, but . . .

MOTHER: And soon I will be . . . leaving. Did he tell you that?

CINDERELLA: No! You can't! It's not fair!

MOTHER: It's not my choice. You mustn't think I choose to go.

CINDERELLA: Stay! Please!

MOTHER: I haven't the power. But I will stay in your heart, and you will stay in mine - forever!

(CINDERELLA cries)

We will miss each other - I know. Of course, you'll miss me terribly at times! And I'll miss you. But you can still talk with me. And I'll hear you.

CINDERELLA: I can! How?

MOTHER: You can talk to my new friend the hazel twig. And you can pray to the little star I showed you.

CINDERELLA: Yes.

MOTHER: Wherever you are, you can talk to me. And I promise - wherever I am - I swear it - I'll hear you! I'll hear you; I know it!

CINDERELLA: Mother, I'll be so scared.

MOTHER: Your Father will be here.

FATHER: Yes, of course I will.

MOTHER: Now, courage, both of you. You'll keep each other

brave. [Now sing with me - I know you remember - -

SONG - LITTLE STAR

MOTHER: Little Star
Little Star
Watch over me.
Pure light of Heaven
Help me to see.
Be an angel, a mother, *(the Father joins in)*
Be a father and friend.
Little Star
Little Star

ALL THREE: Little Star
Little Star
I can be me
For I know you're above
And I know that, my Little Star,
You love me.]

(FATHER: Yes. We'll try.)

MOTHER: *(suddenly very weak)* Dear one, I want . . .

FATHER: What is it?

MOTHER: I want . . .

FATHER: Yes, anything!

MOTHER: The hill . . . let me lie on the hill so I can watch over . . .
watch over . . . watch . . . *(dies)*

CINDERELLA: Mother! *(she runs from the room, crying. The FATHER falls to his knees with his head in his wife's lap. BLACKOUT)*

SCENE 2

(A windswept hill behind the house. One highly feasible way of staging this play is to use a full painted drop, or Show Curtain, for the hill, and play all the scenes there "in one." This will cover all the important scene and prop changes. Another alternative would be to have the hill set simultaneous with the hearth, above or to one side. At present, the hill is bare. Later, a tree will grow there over the MOTHER's grave. CINDERELLA enters and kneels at the grave and weeps. FATHER comes in slowly, places a lily on the grave, tries to speak to his daughter, but can not, and exits.)

[CINDERELLA: SONG - TEARS (WINTER)

The seasons come, the seasons go:
The Winter wind is colder than snow.
My tears freeze as I sit here weeping,
For my mother lives now in the cold ground below.

(CHORUS is sung by offstage voices as Cinderella dances out her sorrow)

Tears falling on a mother's grave - -
The daughter feels the knife.
The tree grows from the teardrops falling.
Water of sorrow to water of life.

At the end of the dance, CINDERELLA exits.]

(CINDERELLA slowly rises and waves good-bye as she exits.)

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 3

(The lights come back up in the hearth area. It is three months later. The room seems cheerful and spring like, and all the plants are thriving. There is a bustle offstage left, and the FATHER enters, escorting the STEPMOTHER, KURZLE, and HOCHEL, all of whom struggle with huge boxes, luggage, coats, etc.)

FATHER: Well, here it is, my dearest! I hope you don't mind coming in the back way. It was closer!

STEMMOTHER: Is there someone to help with our luggage?

FATHER: No servants, I'm afraid. Just my poor arm. But we'll manage. I think you'll like it here. My first wife . . .

STEMMOTHER: Now, now! No comparisons! I'm sure you won't be telling me, "my first wife this" and "my first wife that". That's no way to make me feel at home.

FATHER: Of course not! Sorry! Well, I thought the girls would like to see their room. They'll be sharing, just up this hall and on the right. My daughter's in the first room and they will have the other one. You and I will be in the big room on the left.

KURZLE: Share a room? Mummy!

HOCHEL: Mummy, you promised!

STEMMOTHER: Hush, dears. Why don't we just relax for a few minutes before all that. I'm sure we're all tired after that long coach ride. And we haven't even met your little daughter.

FATHER: I'll find her. She will be awfully sorry she missed the wedding; but it all happened so fast, and I, well, I guess I was just swept away with love.

STEPMOTHER: Of course you were. *(gives him a little kiss)* Sit down, dears. *(they sit)*

FATHER: I'll find her. Ah . . . this is going to seem a bit sudden to her, I guess. You'll have to give her some time, some understanding.

STEPMOTHER: Oh, I know all about raising little girls; don't I, dears.

KURZLE: Of course you do, Mummy!

HOCHER: I'll say you do, Mummy.

FATHER: Well, make yourself at home. Of course, this is your home. Well, I mean . . . I'll be right back. *(exits)*

KURZLE: Oh, Mummy! I'm furious!

HOCHER: He isn't at all rich!

KURZLE: The back door! I'm humiliated! He brought us in through the kitchen!

HOCHER: And where are the servants? I'm not going to carry all this stuff another inch!

KURZLE: And I refuse to share a room with her! The big giraffe!

HOCHER: You little spider! Mummy, keep her out of my room!

STEPMOTHER: Hush, dears!

(They continue to argue. Actually, they do that rather a lot, and, since it should have an improvisational feel, only the gist of their arguments will be given in the text)

Will you hush!

(finally, they do)

STEPMOTHER: It was the best I could do on short notice. Be thankful you have a roof over your heads.

KURZLE: But he's so ugly!

HOCHEL: And not at all rich!

STEPMOTHER: That's enough! You don't think I married him for my own pleasure, do you? Don't I always have your best interests at heart? He may be plain, and he's certainly not wealthy; but he's very well thought of. He's even been received at the Palace!

KURZLE & HOCHEL: Oooh! The Palace! *(etc.)*

STEPMOTHER: Now, hush! And let me see if I can find another room. It won't do to have you two in the same one, I suppose. You'll only keep me awake all night with your eternal bickering.

HOCHEL: Well, I'm not the one who starts it! She . . .

KURZLE: What a liar! You're always . . .

(they are stopped by the entrance of FATHER and CINDERELLA)

FATHER: Here she is. Meet your . . . That is, meet my . . . This is my daughter. The . . . ah . . . new lady of the house. Oh, and that's Kurzle and that's Hochel. *(Gets it backwards.) (HOCHEL's name is pronounced with the voiced "k" sound common to German: "hoe' khel")*

KURZLE: I'm Kurzle!

HOCHEL: I'm so glad I'm not!

STEPMOTHER: Very nice to meet you. I know we are going to get along just fine.

CINDERELLA: I'm awfully glad to meet all of you. Father seems so happy; I know I'll like you, too.

STEPMOTHER: Very polite. I can see you've been well brought up.

CINDERELLA: Thank you. My mother . . .

(STEPMOTHER clears her throat and stares at FATHER)

FATHER: Let's not make comparisons. This is your mother, now.

CINDERELLA: Yes. I hope I don't disappoint you.

STEPMOTHER: I'm sure you won't! Well, maybe we should see to the sleeping arrangements.

CINDERELLA: I'll be happy to share. Kurzle, or Hochel - either one. There are only three bedrooms, so two of us will have to . . .

KURZLE: Not me!

HOCHEL: Or me, either!

STEPMOTHER: You must excuse them. They've always had their own rooms.

FATHER: Well, we only have three bedrooms, and you and I must surely have one of them, so . . .

CINDERELLA: It doesn't matter to me. I can sleep anywhere.

STEPMOTHER: This is a lovely room. I bet it's the warmest place in the house.

CINDERELLA: In Winter it is. I can just sleep in here by the fire.

STEPMOTHER: It's only for a little while. Once they get used to the house and everything, I'm sure you can all take turns, or something . . .

CINDERELLA: I don't mind, really.

STEPMOTHER: Say, "Thank you," to your stepsister, dears. She's really very generous.

KURZLE & HOCHER: Thank you, stepsister!

CINDERELLA: Well, can I help you move your things? *(picks up some of the luggage)*

FATHER: Here, let me help. *(He does)*

HOCHER: That's mine! And that, and that!

KURZLE: Be careful with that one, it's very delicate.

(The sisters, of course, carry nothing; but they lead the way for CINDERELLA and FATHER out of the room. Alone, STEPMOTHER studies the room, and then starts collecting all the potted plants. CINDERELLA returns.)

STEPMOTHER: What a nuisance, all these plants. I'm afraid I'm allergic.

CINDERELLA: Oh, I didn't know. I'm sorry.

STEPMOTHER: Be a dear and get rid of them all, won't you? No rush; after you finish with the luggage will be fine.

CINDERELLA: Yes, Moth . . . , yes, ma'am.

STEPMOTHER: You may call me "Stepmother".

CINDERELLA: Yes, Stepmother.

(CINDERELLA picks up another load. STEPMOTHER takes off her gloves and continues to survey the room. BLACKOUT).

SCENE 4

(The lights come up on the hill. CINDERELLA runs in almost in tears. She falls to her knees and prays silently for a moment.)

CINDERELLA: Father seems happy. Oh, he tries so hard. I'm sure he loves her. I'll try to love her, too; if only for his sake. Oh, Mother, I miss you so.

[SONG - TEARS (SPRING)]

The seasons come. the seasons go:
In Spring the hills with colors glow.
From strangers on my hearth I'm running,
For my mother, my only friend lies below.

(CHORUS of offstage voices; Cinderella dances.)

Tears falling on a mother's grave - -
The daughter feels the knife.
The tree grows from the teardrops falling.
Water of sorrow to water of life.]

(BLACKOUT)