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Dramatic Publishing

CINDERELLA

**Dramatized
by
William Glennon**



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CINDERELLA

**A Play in Three Acts
For Six Women, Two to Four Men**

CHARACTERS

**STEPMOTHER
OLDER SISTER
YOUNGER SISTER
THE JESTER
THE PRINCE
THE FAIRY GODMOTHER
CINDERELLA
A DOUBLE FOR CINDERELLA
TWO FOOTMEN (Optional)**

TIME: Long ago.

PLACE: A small kingdom.

ACT ONE: Exterior to suggest laundry drying yard.

ACT TWO: The same with a fireplace on rollers
and a cut-out pumpkin coach added at curtain.

ACT THREE: Interior to suggest the palace with
easy shift possible back to exterior for final scene.

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *Pleasant music is heard as the curtain rises on an exterior scene. Several lines of stylized laundry hanging across the stage form a background. Downstage, a large laundry basket, a washtub and a stool. CINDERELLA is behind the front line of wash, hanging up another item. Her feet can be seen. The JESTER, young and appealing, dashes in, stops and looks around. He sees her feet moving back and forth and for a moment imitates what she is doing. Then he chuckles softly and drifts downstage.*

JESTER. There's more to her than meets the eye. I mean, there's more than feet! She goes right on up to a very pretty face. And even so, they call her a rather unpretty name. I know. I've been here before. Sometimes it's a fine place to rest. *(He climbs in the laundry basket, kneeling.)* Well, if you had my job, you'd need some rest, too. You wouldn't believe the time I spend hiking and swimming and running and wrestling—it's enough to make anyone tire. Like her, sort of. I mean she spends all her time cooking and scrubbing and cleaning and mending; and the only rest she ever gets is when they let her sleep among the soot and ashes. Poor thing. At the palace they call me the Jester, when they can find me. And here, they call her...

MOTHER and STEPSISTERS *(off, very loud).* Cin-der-el-la!

JESTER. Excuse me! *(He gets down in the basket and covers himself.)*

STEPMOTHER *(yelling, off)*. Cin-der-el-la!

(CINDERELLA appears in front of the wash. She is dressed in rags, and her face is dirty. There is a crash of thunder.)

CINDERELLA. Was it Stepmother or thunder? Please!

Please don't let it rain on my wash!

STEPMOTHER *(off)*. Cin-der-el-la!

CINDERELLA. Oh, yes, dear Stepmother?

STEPMOTHER. Where are you, Cinderella?

CINDERELLA. Out here, Stepmother, out here in the yard, washing.

STEPMOTHER. Cin-der-el-la!

(STEPMOTHER enters carrying a load of laundry. She is handsomely overdressed.)

STEPMOTHER. Here, you wicked child, you forgot these.

(She tosses the armful of clothing at CINDERELLA.)

CINDERELLA *(picking up the laundry)*. I'm sorry, Stepmother.

STEPMOTHER. You're also dirty. Look at your face! It wants a good scrubbing too! The idea! Out here in the yard with a dirty face for all the world to see.

CINDERELLA. I cleaned the chimney this morning and I haven't had time...

STEPMOTHER. Have you prepared our luncheon yet? We're going to be very hungry. I've spent the entire morning schooling my two sweet girls in the social

graces and I know they'll be famished. Is luncheon ready?

CINDERELLA. Not quite yet, Stepmother.

STEPMOTHER. And why "not quite yet" if I may ask?

CINDERELLA. I've been trying to get the laundry washed and dried before it rains. I heard thunder a moment ago.

STEPMOTHER. Another excuse to avoid your duties! (*More thunder.*) You see! It's going to rain! Why did you decide to wash today?

CINDERELLA. Dear Stepmother, you told me to.

STEPMOTHER. That's it, blame me for your foolishness. Thank heavens my own dear daughters do not take after your wicked ways. If I must put up with a dirty cinder wench at least I have two gentle doves to coo and comfort me. (*Immediately there is a scream heard offstage and a laugh, another cry, a loud crash and more laughter.*)

OLDER STEPSISTER (*off*). Cinderella!

YOUNGER STEPSISTER (*off*). Cin-der-el-aaaaaaa!

STEPSISTERS (*off*). Cinderella!

STEPMOTHER. Out here, my pretties! (*To CINDERELLA.*) They sound upset.

(*The SISTERS enter, fighting. They, too, are overdressed.*)

OLDER SISTER. Aha! There she is!

YOUNGER SISTER. Aha! There she is!

OLDER SISTER. I just said that.

YOUNGER SISTER. I just said that, too! (*She laughs.*)

OLDER SISTER. Cinderella, where's lunch?

YOUNGER SISTER. Yes, Cinderella, where's lunch?

OLDER SISTER. We looked and looked. There's nothing in the dining room and nothing in the kitchen.

YOUNGER SISTER. And I'm hungry!

STEPMOTHER. There, there, pets.

OLDER SISTER. We've been studying all morning, learning charm.

YOUNGER SISTER. Charm.

STEPMOTHER. Show the cinder wench what Mommy's taught her doves.

SISTERS. But we're hungry!

STEPMOTHER. It will make you forget!

CINDERELLA. Do show me, while I finish the wash. Then I'll prepare a lovely lunch.

OLDER SISTER. I don't care if it's lovely, as long as it's big!

CINDERELLA. There's an enormous meat pie cooking in the oven.

OLDER SISTER. In the oven? I never thought to look there. Well, all right, we'll show you.

STEPMOTHER. Now, then, let's see what you've learned this morning...the social graces.

OLDER SISTER. Charm...

YOUNGER SISTER. Charm...

STEPMOTHER. That's right, charm! (*She picks up a mop and hands it upside down to YOUNGER SISTER.*) Here. Show us how charming you can be to this nice young man.

YOUNGER SISTER. This isn't a nice young man. (*Takes the mop.*)

STEPMOTHER. Well, can't you pretend?

YOUNGER SISTER (*turning to OLDER SISTER*). Looks a little like you.

STEPMOTHER. Be charming to the nice young man!

YOUNGER SISTER (*to the mop*). You need a haircut.

STEPMOTHER. No, no, no, no, no!

OLDER SISTER (*grabbing the mop*). Here! I'll show you how.

YOUNGER SISTER. You know, it does look like you, only prettier.

OLDER SISTER (*starting to swing the mop*). I'll really show you how!

STEPMOTHER. Now, now, now! That's no way for Mommie's cream puffs to carry on! Be charming, the way I taught you.

OLDER SISTER (*gaining her composure*). Well, now. Let's see. (*She holds the mop to one side and begins to cast flirtatious glances at it, simpering and giggling, then she speaks in a broad baby talk.*) How do you do, you nice young man! (*An awkward curtsy.*) Pray, kind sir, what do you think of little me?

YOUNGER SISTER (*her head near the mop*). I think you're a big fat toad. (*Again OLDER SISTER starts to swing the mop and YOUNGER SISTER ducks out of the way, laughing loudly.*)

STEPMOTHER. Stop it, you silly geese! No more foolishness! Here! (*She grabs the mop.*) Sing a pretty song for the nice young man. Show him how charming you both can be. (*They take the mop between them, each holding it with one hand. The JESTER, unseen, sticks his head up to watch.*)

SISTERS (*after much clearing of throats, they begin to sing quite tunelessly*).

Tell me, tell me, tell me, sir,

Do you like my pretty grin?

Do you like my bright and shining eyes?

Do you like the dress I'm in?

(The JESTER shakes his head "No!")

Tell me, tell me, tell me, sir,

Would you like to dance with me?

Would you like to hold me in your arms?

Would you kiss me tenderly?

(CINDERELLA sees the JESTER shaking his head and tosses a bit of laundry over him.)

STEPMOTHER. Lovely! Aren't my cupcakes just too sweet for words, Cinderella?

CINDERELLA. They do seem to be trying.

STEPMOTHER. But it was too fast, lamb chops, much too fast. Try it again, slower. *(As they "sing" the song this time, they gradually face each other and start grabbing the mop handle, hand over hand, like a baseball bat, up to the top. YOUNGER SISTER "wins" and immediately takes over the mop, chasing OLDER SISTER, screaming, off stage. STEPMOTHER rushes after them.)* Rosebuds! Stop it! Charm! remember—charm! *(She pauses at the exit and turns rather grandly to CINDERELLA, nearly catching the JESTER peeping out again.)* We'll be ready for lunch shortly. Cinderella. *(A scream from the SISTERS quickly draws her off stage.)*

(CINDERELLA turns to the basket and lifts the cover from the JESTER who now sits up and looks at her.)

JESTER. Hello.

CINDERELLA. What in the world are you doing in there?

JESTER. Nothing now. I was resting.

CINDERELLA. Resting?

JESTER. Yes, want to try it?

CINDERELLA. I haven't time. I've got to get this washing in before it rains.

JESTER. Let me help.

CINDERELLA. Well, I can't decide if I should hang up what's down or take down what's up.

JESTER. It's a problem.

CINDERELLA. Do you really think it's going to rain?

JESTER. I've always been suspicious of thunder and stepmothers.

CINDERELLA. It might not rain for several hours. We'll hang up first.

JESTER. Good idea. (*He helps her.*) Do you always have this large a wash?

CINDERELLA. My stepmother likes everything spotless.

JESTER. Everything?

CINDERELLA. Yes. (*JESTER takes a bit of cloth, goes to the wash bucket, dips it in, then crosses to her and begins to dab her face.*) What are you doing?

JESTER. Pleasing Stepmother.

CINDERELLA. Stop it. I haven't time.

JESTER. She's jealous of you, you know.

CINDERELLA. Who?

JESTER. Your stepmother.

CINDERELLA. Jealous of me? Why?

JESTER. Because you're so pretty.

CINDERELLA. Tell me, who are you?

JESTER. A young fool.

CINDERELLA. I don't believe it.

JESTER. Oh, it's true! A young fool. But not for long.

CINDERELLA. I should hope not.

JESTER. No indeed. In a few years, I'll be an *old* fool.

CINDERELLA (*laughing*). What a sad fate!

JESTER. Isn't it? (*Thunder.*)

CINDERELLA. Please don't let it rain on my wash!
Please!

JESTER. It's not up to *me*. Better ask your fairy godmother.

CINDERELLA. My fairy godmother? You're teasing me!

JESTER. No. I'm tempting you.

CINDERELLA. Well, I won't be tempted. I've got work to do.

JESTER. You *want* to ask her. I can tell. You can't fool a fool.

CINDERELLA (*laughing*). *I'm not trying to fool anyone.*

(*Pause.*) All right, I will! Please, Fairy Godmother, don't let it rain on my wash! (*Thunder.*)

JESTER. She's mad.

CINDERELLA. She thinks we've been making fun of her.

Oh, this is silly. I don't even know if I *have* a fairy godmother. (*More thunder.*)

JESTER. I'm beginning to wonder myself.

(*Pretty, delicate music is heard and through some of the laundry we see the lovely FAIRY GODMOTHER. She smiles, waves her wand and then vanishes.*)

CINDERELLA. I thought I heard something.

JESTER (*looking off R*). Look! It's raining! It's raining-there! (*He runs to the other side and looks off L.*) And there! It's raining there. But it isn't raining here!

CINDERELLA (*checking right and left*). It isn't raining on my wash!

JESTER. I was right! Here's a girl with a fairy godmother, I said. And I was right!

CINDERELLA (*joyously*). Maybe I *do* have a fairy godmother. (*They laugh.*)

STEPMOTHER (*off*). Cin-der-el-la!!!!

JESTER. *And* a stepmother! Excuse me.

(JESTER runs and hides behind the wash as the STEPMOTHER comes on, holding an umbrella over her head. CINDERELLA begins to scrub.)

STEPMOTHER. Haven't you finished yet? Daydreaming, I expect!

CINDERELLA. I was just about to come in and prepare your lunch.

STEPMOTHER. That won't be necessary.

CINDERELLA. But the meat pie should be cooked by now.

STEPMOTHER. It's gone. We ate it.

CINDERELLA. All of it?

STEPMOTHER. Every last scrap. My two little gumdrops even licked the juices in the bottom of the pan. Such a sweet sight. Of course, you'll have to wash their dresses again. Well, what do you know, it's stopped raining.

CINDERELLA. No, it's still raining there. And there.

STEPMOTHER. So it is.

CINDERELLA. It's just that it isn't raining on my wash.

STEPMOTHER. That's good. You're a very lucky girl for a cinder maid. Now listen, I'm going to take my little pussycats to town. They've been such absolute dears I've decided to buy them some presents. I just want you to keep busy. Such an ugly, dirty face! Promise me you'll let no one look at you while we're gone. Absolutely no one. Promise!

CINDERELLA. I promise.

STEPMOTHER. Not that anyone would want to. Who'd want to look at a dirty cinder girl? But someone might glance your way by accident and if that happened, my two angels and I would simply die of shame.

CINDERELLA. I promise no one will see my face.

STEPMOTHER. What a relief! Well, we're off! (*She starts out.*) Perhaps I'll bring you a present, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA. Oh, Stepmother, how very kind.

STEPMOTHER. Kindness is my middle name. What would you like, Cinderella?

CINDERELLA. Something pretty?

STEPMOTHER. Something pretty? Whatever for? No, I'll bring you something sensible.

CINDERELLA. What?

STEPMOTHER. A new scrub brush! (*She laughs and goes out.*)

CINDERELLA (*fighting back the tears*). A scrub brush...

(The JESTER comes out from behind the wash and immediately CINDERELLA picks up a towel or something and hides her face.)

JESTER. Afraid I'll see your tears?

CINDERELLA. There are no tears to see.

JESTER (*trying to peek*). Sure?

CINDERELLA. Please! You mustn't look at me.

JESTER. But I like to.

CINDERELLA. You heard me promise. No one must see my face.

JESTER. And I'll wager you always *keep* your promises.

CINDERELLA. That's what promises are for, keeping.

JESTER. Well, I still can listen. That's pleasant, too.

CINDERELLA. How can I work if I have to hide my face?

JESTER. Don't hide your face, I'll hide mine. No one will miss it. (*He takes the towel and holds it up.*) There!

CINDERELLA (*smiling*). I know who you are.

JESTER. Who?