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Family Plays

Cinderella



Fairytale adapted by
SALLY NETZEL

Cinderella

"I like *Cinderella* so much I thought I'd go with your company again." (Vickie Cerati, St. James School, Davis, Calif.)

"I would like to do *Cinderella* next year ... in front of children and nursing home audiences ... as a touring play ... I have done several plays ordered from your company and have been well pleased with them." (Walter Sylvest, Carver High School, Montgomery, Ala.)

"This play and the televised version have been a tremendous success story for our school and our community. I appreciate your help in making it possible." (Principal Bernard G. Romain, Atherton Middle School, Burton, Mich.)

Fairy tale. By Sally Netzel. Cast: 5m., 9w., extras. (Flexible cast. Many roles may be played by men or women.) Sally Netzel designed her two-act play so that each scene flows smoothly into the next without a break in the action. Designed for set changes choreographed to music, the prince's ball and other scenes will benefit from music. All the ingredients that have made the story a perennial favorite are here: dirty, ragged, pitiful, but optimistic and loving Cinderella; her cruel stepmother and selfish stepsisters; the ball and the handsome prince looking for a bride, the fairy godmother; the glass slipper and the search for the foot that fits it, and the happily-ever-after ending. Netzel's sense of humor and her ability to develop captivating characters and invent charming scenes make this dramatization outstanding. Cinderella is a real person, with the hopes and petulance and frustration and love that modern young people experience when their fantasies seem to be impossible dreams. Premiered by Dallas Theater Center. *Easy set. Costumes: fairyland. Approximate running time: 60 minutes. Code: CL8.*

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311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308
Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170
Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

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ISBN-13 978-0-88680-028-4
ISBN-10 0-88680-028-5



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Cinderella

CINDERELLA

Fairy tale
by
SALLY NETZEL

Dramatized from the
fairy tale by
CHARLES PERRAULT

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(CINDERELLA)

ISBN: 978-0-88680-028-4

CINDERELLA

Cast

CINDERELLA, a sweet young thing
CLOAKMAKER, (also **FALL***), orderly, bossy
DRESSMAKER (also **SUMMER***), nearsighted, deaf
SHOEMAKER (also **WINTER***), crabby, but with a warm heart
HATMAKER (also **SPRING***), gentle, a little silly, excitable
STEPMOTHER, wicked and greedy
FAIRY GODMOTHER, also appears as the **BEGGAR**
PIERRE, servant of the Royal Court, overworked
QUEEN, vague but kindly
TRUMPETER, loud but unmusical
PRINCE, easy-going yet determined
BLANCHE, a very loud and coarse stepsister
AGNES, a very silly and inane stepsister

Also **TOWNSPEOPLE** and **GUESTS AT THE BALL**

*For a larger cast, these may be separate roles

Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1: Dawn, a market square in a village in France, long before now

Scene 2: A room in the Stepmother's house, later that same day

ACT II

Scene 1: Stepmother's house, that evening

Scene 2: The palace ballroom, that night

Scene 3: Around the world (various areas in the house and among the audience)

Scene 4: The market square, dawn, several months later

(The scenes are designed so that there is no break in the action. See Production Notes, pp. 31-32.)



This dramatization of CINDERELLA was first presented by the Dallas Theater Center, Dallas, Texas.

PRODUCTION NOTES*Properties***ACT I****Scene 1**

- Bundle of sticks—Cinderella
- Cloth, shoes & boots, feathers, hats, dresses, foodstuff, flowers, and other merchandise—Merchants
- Baskets—Villagers
- Mirror—Hatmaker
- Trumpet—Trumpeter
- Feather, with string attached—Hatmaker

Scene 2:

- Broom—Cinderella
- Dresses, hats, very large shoes, cloaks—Merchants
- Purse with money—Stepmother
- Scroll—Pierre
- Census book, quill pen—Pierre
- Cuckoo clock—on mantel or wall
- Piece of bread—Cinderella

ACT II**Scene 1:**

- Candle—Stepmother
- Large key—Stepmother
- Magic wand—Fairy godmother
- Cinderella's ball costume, including glass slippers—Four Seasons
(Optional: large pumpkin and cage of white mice—Servants)

Scene 2:

- Lace handkerchief—Queen

Scene 4:

- Butcher knife—Stepmother

Costumes

The traditional medieval costumes may be used; or fanciful, timeless garments may be designed. CINDERELLA wears a ragged peasant skirt and blouse. Her ball costume should be shimmering and beautiful, built for fast change. The STEPMOTHER might wear a "good" everyday dress denoting some wealth. Her ball gown should be ostentatious and in poor taste. The STEPSISTERS appear for the first time in nightgowns and nightcaps. Their ball gowns are even gaudier and tackier than their mother's. The PRINCE appears first in a hunting costume. His ball costume may be a military type. If the MERCHANTS also play the FOUR SEASONS, each merchant costume may be in the same color as the corresponding season costume. The "season" costumes should be flowing and stylized for fantasy and dance. The BEGGAR wears rags, large and shapeless to cover underdressing. The fairy godmother costume, worn under the rags for fast change, may be silvery, glittery, and lovely.

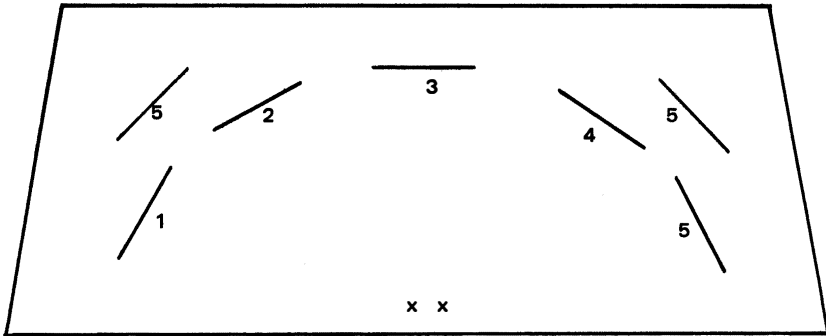
The Set

The play is designed so that each scene may flow smoothly into the next scene without a break in the action. The merchant stalls for Scene 1 may be designed with the upstage side representing parts of the Stepmother's house—the fireplace, the steps, the front door, the walls—so that the scene may be changed merely by

CINDERELLA

reversing the set pieces. The scene change may be incorporated into the choreography ending Act I, Scene 1. The palace ballroom may simply be the empty stage with its drapes. Banners may be placed around the ballroom to give a castle-like effect.

ACT I, Scene 1; ACT II, Scene 4

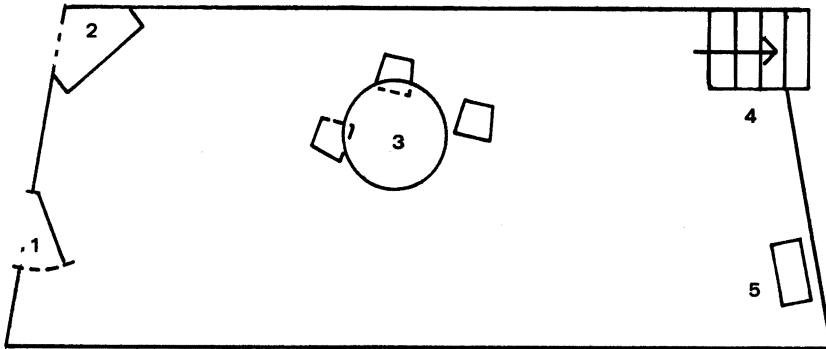


Scale: 1/8" = 1'

- 1—Shoemaker's stall (Front door to Stepmother's house on upstage side)
- 2—Hatmaker's stall (Fireplace on upstage side)
- 3—Dressmaker's stall (Step unit on upstage side)
- 4—Cloakmaker's stall (Wall panelling on upstage side)
- 5—Additional stalls as desired, with wall panels on upstage side

x—For Act II, Scene 4 an ornate chair and footstool will be placed Down Center

ACT I, Scene 2; ACT II, Scene 1



- 1—Front door
- 2—Fireplace (with opening on side for entrance of Fairy Godmother)
- 3—Table and chairs
- 4—Stairs
- 5—Bench

Author's Note

This is a free-wheeling version of the classic story. The comedy and romance are equally balanced and one should not be sacrificed for the other. The director must not be misled by the comedic elements which tend greatly toward "camp" or the story will be lost for the children. The balance may be kept by allowing the Stepmother, Blanche, Agnes, and the Queen full comedy range while keeping the other characters, especially Cinderella and the Prince, straight. The casting of the principals is fairly obvious, but be careful to give thought to the range required of the four Shopkeepers and their counterpart, the Four Seasons.

—Sally Netzel

CINDERELLA

By Sally Netzel

ACT I

Scene 1

[SCENE: Dawn in a deserted market square in a village in France, long before now. Empty stalls belie the color and activity soon to be seen. Four of the stalls should be more prominent than the others. These belong to the SHOEMAKER, HATMAKER, DRESSMAKER, and CLOAKMAKER, who later become the four seasons – WINTER, SPRING, SUMMER, and FALL. The shape and color of the stalls might suggest this. The other stalls (if any) might be for flowers and food, or carts with these items might be brought on.

AT RISE: The trill of a bird is heard (a flute or human whistle). A melody develops out of the trill (“Plaisir D’amour” or any other suitable tune). A young girl, ragged and dirty, enters carrying a large bundle of sticks on her back. CINDERELLA sighs under the weight of her burden and sets it down to rest a moment. The bird sings on. CINDERELLA sees the bird moving about although no one else seems to]

CINDERELLA. What a sad song you sing, little bird. Why should your songs be sad? You have no wood to carry, no floors to sweep. Do you sing your sad song to me? I should be pleased with a happier tune. Oh, bird, I would not mind the work, if only it weren’t the very same every day, if only something would happen, something wonderful. Oh, bird, I am so bored, so very bored!

[CINDERELLA hums the bird’s tune as she rises and picks up her bundle. A few sticks fall out and as she tries to replace them, others fall. She keeps humming, but the sounds and tempo and volume now denote anger rather than melancholy. This CINDERELLA has a temper. The bird trills in alarm. CINDERELLA finally throws the whole mess down and begins to weep. The noise of laughing VILLAGERS is heard off stage and she dries her eyes. The market PEOPLE enter from all directions, toting their goods, laughing, talking, taunting each other. Several have carts loaded with fish or fowl, flowers or vegetables. The sight and smell and feel of the market

with the energy of a crowd and the excitement of trade should be communicated. The flower people hold their noses from the fish people; a fish merchant swipes a flower and dances with it between his teeth; several women with baskets enter and begin to haggle. Live animals will help the feeling of confusion. The HATMAKER floats into her stall, flighty and joyous, and decks it with her wares. The DRESSMAKER moves slowly, languorously, as she lays out several dresses on display plus silks of many colors, some of which will later be seen in the dresses of the stepsisters. The CLOAKMAKER, a bit of a cynic, is more businesslike and efficient. SHOEMAKER moves fast, a kindly grouch prone to icy blasts of anger when someone touches too much with dirty fingers. CINDERELLA dances from one stall to another, greeting each merchant, smelling each bouquet, gazing at the color. She goes to the stall of the CLOAKMAKER, who greets her amiably]

CLOAKMAKER. Good morning, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA. Good morning, Cloakmaker. Shall you have good business today?

CLOAKMAKER. Time will tell. Time will tell. How are your stepmother and stepsisters?

CINDERELLA. They're very well, thank you.

CLOAKMAKER. *[Under her breath]* Sorry to hear it.

CINDERELLA. I beg your pardon?

CLOAKMAKER. Nothing. Run along, my dear, I've work to do. *[CINDERELLA runs to the stall of the Dressmaker. An old BEGGAR woman shuffles on, begs at a few stalls during the following, then seats herself on the ground and watches all that occurs]*

CINDERELLA. Good morning, Dressmaker. What beautiful silk you have!

DRESSMAKER. *[Nearsightedly peering]* What? Oh, yes, beautiful, you are quite beautiful.

CINDERELLA. Not me! The silk, not me.

DRESSMAKER. *[Vaguely, smoothing some cloth]* Whatever you say, my dear. *[CINDERELLA fingers the rags of her skirt and almost touches some silk on the stall. She runs toward the Shoemaker and nearly runs over the Beggar]*

CINDERELLA. Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't see you.

BEGGAR. *[Cheerfully]* That's all right. Most people don't. *[CINDERELLA is puzzled but continues to the stall of the SHOEMAKER, a brusque but easily softening merchant]*

SHOEMAKER. Don't touch anything!

CINDERELLA. I . . . I wasn't going to.

SHOEMAKER. Grubby little girls always smearing up the shine!

CINDERELLA. I only wanted to smell the leather. I think the smell of leather is almost as nice as lilacs.

SHOEMAKER. Hmmph! I prefer leather to lilacs, myself. Everyone to their own taste!

HATMAKER. *[Calling to Cinderella]* Cinderella, come here, my dear! *[CINDERELLA runs to her]*

HATMAKER. Look, Cinderella, I have this feather left over from the hat of a fine lady. It would be very pretty in your hair. *[CINDERELLA takes the proffered feather]*

CINDERELLA. Oh, thank you, Hatmaker. *[Putting it in her hair]* How does it look?

[HATMAKER holds up a mirror and both are so busy admiring the effect that they do not hear the screeching call of the nasty old STEPMOTHER from the rear of the audience]

STPMOTHER. Cinderella! Where are you, you lazy good-for-nothing! Wait until I get my hands on you. I'll beat you black and blue! Where is that brat! *[STPMOTHER searches for Cinderella in the audience, asking kids the whereabouts of her stepdaughter. If any point out the fact that she is on stage, STEPMOTHER goes directly to the stage. If not, this bit may go on for a minute or two. When she finally sees Cinderella, she leaps up to the stage with a screech of triumph. There is silence as CINDERELLA slowly turns to her]* So, this is how you repay my kindness to you, you dirty little brat! *[She crosses to Cinderella and tears the feather from her hair and throws it to the ground]* What is this nonsense in your hair? I suppose you expect me to pay for it! And where is the wood you were supposed to bring? The house is freezing, no breakfast cooked, and you waste the morning laughing with peasants! Gather that wood together and take it to the house. You'll get your beating there. Hurry! *[CINDERELLA hurries in terror to gather the wood. She exits running]* As long as I'm here, I'll look around, not that I expect to find anything worthy of me or my beautiful daughters. *[STPMOTHER goes to one of the stalls. The feather rises from the ground (by means of a thread), and disappears into the flies. HATMAKER goes to pick it up and can't find it. BEGGAR comes forward watching the feather disappear]*

HATMAKER. Now where did that thing go?

BEGGAR. A bird came and took it away. It will be a beautiful feather for its nest. [*Looking off where Cinderella exited*] Beautiful things should not be wasted.

[A moronic looking TRUMPETER enters with his trumpet, followed by PIERRE, chief adviser and servant of the Royal Court. The Trumpeter is only one of Pierre's problems; Pierre is overworked and suffers a lot. BEGGAR scurries back to a corner. TRUMPETER blows a loud, not necessarily tuneful blast, and PIERRE jumps]

PIERRE. Must you blow that thing in my ear! [*TRUMPETER grins idiotically. PIERRE recovers himself as the market people stare at him*] Attention! Her Royal Majesty, Queen Charlotte, honors you with her presence! [*QUEEN enters smiling vaguely, a very vague woman who frequently forgets where she is and what she is doing. All bow. PIERRE speaks aside to Queen*] Really, Your Majesty, forgive me, but I must speak. It is unseemly for Your Royal Highness to come to this vulgar place unattended . . .

QUEEN. Be quiet, Pierre.

PIERRE. But, Your Highness, it is not seemly . . .

QUEEN. What means this "seemly?" I know not "seemly." I came here to . . . to . . . [*She goes blank, a frequent occurrence*]

PIERRE. To find the Prince.

QUEEN. Oh, yes, to find the Prince. Why, is he lost?

PIERRE. He's been out all night again, Your Highness.

QUEEN. That's right! All night . . . most unseemly for a Prince to be out . . . [*The dawn*] That's what "unseemly" means! For goodness sake!

PIERRE. Your Majesty . . .

[The two close to the audience and continue an animated discussion. PRINCE PAUL enters in another area, an easy-going and likable chap. He looks around, curious at the silence of the market. He wanders about and finally comes close to Pierre, Queen, and Trumpeter without seeing them. Only the TRUMPETER sees him and immediately renders an ear-deafening blast. All recoil, especially PIERRE. PRINCE sees them and tries to sneak off, but it is too late]

PIERRE. Must you blow that thing in my ear! [*Seeing the Prince, bowing*] Your Highness! I didn't see . . . [*Announcing*] His Royal Highness, Prince Paul! [*All bow, PIERRE continues without a break to the Prince*] Where have you been?

PRINCE. None of your business, my friend.

QUEEN. [*Stepping to him*] But it is *my* business, young man. I was saying to your father only last week . . . or month . . . or whenever, our dear son — what's his name, is staying out too late at night.

PRINCE. Paul, Mama.

QUEEN. Paul who?

PRINCE. [*Patiently*] Paul, that's my name. I'm your son.

QUEEN. Of course you are, and I love you like a son. Where were you? [*STEPMOTHER begins to creep nearer*]

PIERRE. Your Majesties, I really don't think we should discuss it here . . .

QUEEN. Be quiet, Pierre.

PRINCE. I've been at the Inn playing cards.

QUEEN. Playing cards, that's all you do.

PRINCE. No, I also go riding and hunting.

QUEEN. Riding and hunting and playing cards. That's all you do.

PRINCE. I *like* riding and hunting and playing cards.

QUEEN. Son, the time has come for you to settle down.

PRINCE. You're always saying that.

QUEEN. You must get married. We must find a princess somewhere . . .

PRINCE. I don't want to get married and I don't like any of the princesses and I do like riding and hunting and playing cards.

QUEEN. Oh, I wish your father were here. But he's always off riding and hunting and playing cards . . .

PIERRE. If I may make a suggestion, I am sure the Prince is a true Frenchman, and when a true Frenchman sees a beautiful girl, he will act the way a true Frenchman does.

QUEEN. How's that?

PIERRE. [*Continuing*] I therefore suggest a ball — invite all the eligible ladies in the Kingdom, let the Prince look them over, as it were, and perhaps with the gowns and the lights and the music and the dancing, there may be a girl who charms the Prince . . .

PRINCE. It won't work. I don't like music or dancing or girls.

QUEEN. A ball! What a lovely idea! [*Loudly to the crowd*] Attention, everyone! You are all invited to a ball at the Palace. Ladies, bring your daughters! The Prince will choose a Princess . . .

PRINCE. Mother . . .

QUEEN. Or else! Tonight at eight o'clock. [*QUEEN starts out, TRUMPETER and PIERRE following*]

PIERRE. Tonight!? But Your Highness, I cannot possibly arrange everything for a ball by tonight! There are the musicians and the servants and the hors d'oeuvres . . . Wait, Your Majesty! [*Exit QUEEN, PIERRE, and TRUMPETER. PRINCE watches helplessly, isolated for the moment. STEPMOTHER leaps downstage*]

STEMOTHER. A ball! The Queen's going to give a ball! Now's the chance for one of my beautiful daughters, Blanche and Agnes, to catch a handsome Prince – and we'll all live in the Palace forever! [*She leaps from stall to stall, pointing and pulling as she goes*] Make me two cloaks, one of this and one of that, and shoes fit for a Princess for the feet of my darlings, and hats of fine jewels and some of this and some of that, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera . . . and all of you, make sure they're magnificent! [*She exits, leaving the stalls in shambles, cloth strewn thither and yon*]

SHOEMAKER. [*Shaking a boot threateningly*] That woman will get hers someday!

DRESSMAKER. Excitement is fine, but rudeness is unforgivable.

CLOAKMAKER. Such a mess, I don't believe it.

HATMAKER. We're forgetting the Prince! [*Stepping to him and bowing*] Your Highness, you look so sad.

PRINCE. [*Turning to her*] A ball . . . and I can't even dance!

HATMAKER. Forgive me, Your Highness, for daring to speak, but everyone can dance.

PRINCE. Not me. I can ride and hunt and . . .

HATMAKER. [*Dancing a few light SPRING steps*] But it's spring! And the world dances when it's spring. Fast!

[Each of the MERCHANTS dances a seasonal-flavored step around the Prince as each says her/his line. As they dance, other VILLAGERS rearrange the stage for the next scene. (SUGGESTION: the reverse side of each stall may be a part of the house—fireplace, wall, etc.—so that simply turning the stalls changes the set.)]

DRESSMAKER. And the world dances when it's summer. Slow.

CLOAKMAKER. And the world dances when it's fall – leaping through leaves.

SHOEMAKER. And the world even dances in the winter – swift and smooth on ice.

HATMAKER. The world dances all the time!

DRESSMAKER. And you must dance with it.

SHOEMAKER. Or you'll freeze to death standing still, whatever the season.

CLOAKMAKER. So let's dance! *[They take his hands and lead him into a simple folk dance. He is awkward at first, then catches on and soon leads the dance himself. The MARKET PEOPLE all join in, laughing and shouting to a build and then, BLACKOUT. Immediately the lights come up on:]*