

CINDERELLA II

(Happily Ever After?)

A musical by Daniel Curzon and Dan Turner

(Book and Lyrics by Daniel Curzon)

(Music by Dan Turner)

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[Winner of three San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, 1984]

CHARACTERS: (at least 15)

CINDERELLA

PRINCE CHARMING, her husband

PRINCE MOE, Charming's less-than-charming brother

GARGOLA, Cinderella's stepsister

ODIA, Cinderella's stepsister

TICKLE, the evil jester

FAIRY GODMOTHER

STEPMOTHER

FATHER

N'ATOR

Assorted animals, citizens, gargoyles, and trees, etc. that sing and dance

STYLE: The fairy tale should not be played archly, too knowingly, but it should be played brightly and broadly. Good singers are a plus.

SET: There are three sets here: The Palace, Cinderella's Family Home, and the Forest. The main stage should be labeled CINDERELLA II — the story of what happens to Cinderella after she lives happily every after, a new fairy tale, set in the past, with colorful, vibrant costumes. Suggestive costumes will also work.

If possible, on a scrim are projections to accompany the Narrator's original Brothers Grimm sections. The Narrator's resonant voice should come over a loudspeaker from above and behind the audience.

ACT I. SCENE 1. The Palace.

Overture.

N'ATOR Once upon a time, there was a young girl named Cinderella, whose Mother died. When Cinderella's father remarried, the new wife brought with her her own two daughters. They began to treat Cinderella like a servant, forcing her to scrub and to carry out ashes and —

VOICE
FROM

HOUSE Oh, we know that story already! What happened to Prince Charming and Cinderella *after* they got married?!

N'ATOR Excuse me, sir, but you've given away my ending!

VOICE Big surprise! Why not some new information. It's always the same old gossip!

N'ATOR Sorry, but I don't have that information. Perhaps you should seek elsewhere!

BEE (entering) *We* can tell you the story of *Cinderella II* — what happened after they lived happily ever after!

N'ATOR But people like the old stories, not this modern claptrap. So if you will please leave the stage — (Birds and Bees begin to sing "Buzz, Buzz, Buzz," cutting him off.)
But — My —

BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ (SONG)

Buzz, buzz, buzz!
Somebody's in love.
They've been gone
The whole night long —
'cuz, 'cuz, 'cuz!

Tweet, tweet, tweet!
Someone's not asleep.
In their nest

They've had no rest —
Peep, peep, peep!
They've been busy
Making honey for their honeycomb —
Flying, falling, sighing, calling
In their aerodrome.
Day in, day out,
Never once letting up.
Night out, night in,
Always refilling the cup.

Sigh, sigh, sigh!
Life is passing by.
Making whoopee
'Stead of hay.
My, my, my!

CHARMING (in bed offstage) AH!

BIRDS
AND BEES OOO!

CHARMING AH!

BIRDS
AND BEES OOO!

CHARMING AH-HA-HA-HA-HA! OH!

BIRDS
AND BEES WEE!

CHARMING OH!

BIRDS
AND BEES WEE!

CHARMING OH!

BIRDS
AND BEES HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE!

(SONG cont'd.)

Kiss, kiss, kiss!
(Let's look and see.)
What is under this?
(Biology!)
There's a pair in underwear.
Tsk! Tsk! Tsk!

(During the song, the Birds and Bees roll in a huge bed, with Charming and Cinderella under the covers, humping away. The audience sees only moving sheets and hears appropriate but exaggerated sounds.)

CHARMING A-AH-AHHHHHHHHH! (He climaxes.) Cinderella!

(Just before Charming reaches his climax, Cinderella gets out of bed and starts cleaning the fireplace, polishing everything in sight.)

(Prince Charming sits up in bed, watching her.)

CHARMING Cinderella, stop that!

CINDERELLA (guiltily) What?

CHARMING You know!

CINDERELLA Just one more thing. Just one.

CHARMING You keep saying that, but you don't stop. Come back to bed.

CINDERELLA I like things clean, that's all!

CHARMING (shaking his head) That's what servants are for. Do you want to put the staff out of work?

CINDERELLA No. (She sneaks in another bit of cleaning.)

CHARMING Cinderella, you're a princess now, not some drudge. We can't have it!

CINDERELLA I know, but it's hard to break old habits.

CHARMING I hate to say it, darling, but maybe it's true. Once a peasant, always a peasant?

CINDERELLA (sitting on the bed) I can't explain it. I just have these sudden impulses, these cravings to tidy up, to dust, to make beds. (She starts to make the bed while he's still in it. The Birds and Bees help her.)

CHARMING (jostled) There's no need for it! We're living happily ever after, aren't we?

CINDERELLA (stops making the bed, then thoughtfully) Are we?

CHARMING Am I doing something wrong? Tell me, and I'll try to improve.

CINDERELLA Oh, it's not you, darling. You're kind and generous, handsome, rich, thoughtful and your pryncedom is very well endowed.

CHARMING What is it then?

CINDERELLA It's my fault. You're perfect. (Sighs unhappily) Quite, quite perfect.

CHARMING If you like, I can try very hard to be less perfect!

CINDERELLA Oh, that's so like you, dearest. But I don't think that's going to help.

CHARMING Why not?

CINDERELLA Why don't they tell people happiness isn't what it's cracked up to be? Maybe we wouldn't want it so much.

CHARMING *I know, darling!* How about a royal baby?

CINDERELLA (not wanting to get pregnant) Not just now, thank you.

CHARMING I don't know what more to say. I suspect you don't even want me to say anything. You want to be alone with your thoughts, don't you?

CINDERELLA Oh, Charming, you've hit it squarely on the head. As usual!

CHARMING I'm sorry, darling. I always seem to say the right thing, don't I? (Kisses her Cheek.) Well, I guess I'll leave you alone for now. Call me if you want anything. (Grimaces because he's said the right thing again.) Oops! I did it again, didn't I? Sorry, darling! (Exits.)

CINDERELLA Oh, dearest, I'm so sorry, but our marriage isn't working out. All we do is make love, eat the best food in the whole principality, go to balls, have fun night and day. But perfection isn't enough, Charming; it's simply not enough! And I don't know how to tell you. Wait! I do know! (Exits for a quill and paper.)

(Enter Moe from side opposite where Charming exited.)

MOE (calling) Brother! Charming! No one here? (Looks at the rumpled bed.) Oh, you're so lucky, brother! You have everything, but most of all you have Cinderella. (Sighs) (He touches the bed, then is startled by Cinderella returning. He hides and watches her where the audience can see that he's in love with her.)

(Cinderella returns with quill and paper. She writes Charming a note as she sings, crossing out some words here and there, agonizing over what to say and whether to go or to stay. The Birds and Bees help her get dressed.)

CINDERELLA (spoken) Dearest Charming,

HOMESICK (SONG)

Your balls are fun — somewhat overdone.
I'm filled with your finest file.
However much that I like your touch,
I'm thinking of going away.
It didn't seem that great back then,
Yet I confess a certain yen
For the folks I left behind!
I'd like to look them up once more.
I almost see the cottage door
Of the folks I left behind!
I'm homesick! Oh please understand that I'm homesick.
Let go of my hand!
Oh, we had more thin than thick.
Still my heart beats double-quick.
I'm homesick! It's no illusion!
I'm homesick! Excuse this effusion!
Though not what they should have been,
They nevertheless are kin.

I bet it's true that they miss me too
Are wishing their loved one nearby
I'll only stay for at most a day —
Or, dear, is this really good-bye?
I'd like to hear my father snore
And bake the bread and sweep the floor
For the folks I left behind!
I'm homesick! It's only a visit!
I'm homesick! It will be exquisite!
My mother, my sisters, though step they be,
Are waiting there on the step for me!
So now I must cross the moat
And leave you this little *note!*

(She leaves the note for Charming as she hits a high note.)

(Exit Cinderella and Birds and Bees separately.)

SCENE II. The Palace.

(Enter Charming.)

(He does not see the note she left for him.)

CHARMING (calling) Cinderella! Cinderella! Cind — I must have just missed her! I'll wager she's off somewhere doing something sneaky, like scouring the skillets. O, Cinderella, what's going to become of us! I confess I want to tell you the truth, but can I? Something is amiss with our marriage. I yearn for something I've never done, something . . . exotic! If only I knew *what* it was! Wait a moment! I'll summon advice and comfort! Moe! Prince Moe, are you anywhere around?

(Enter Prince Moe.)

MOE I'm here, brother! What's troubling you?

CHARMING Oh, Moe, for the first time in my life everything is not idyllic. I can't go on this way! May I lean my head on your shoulder? (He does at once, without waiting.)

MOE (after the fact, looking at the head) Do!

CHARMING It's not really her fault, of course. God knows she's tried! But one can't upgrade the lower orders just like that, dragging them in off the street, expecting them to fit in.

MOE I think Cinderella is the best wife any man could ever hope to have. (He sighs. We see that he loves her, but Charming does not.)

CHARMING I suppose you're right. Oh, Moe, I don't know what I'd do without you.

MOE Thank you, Charming.

CHARMING Someone who's always ready to lend a helping shoulder. Someone who's plain and charmless, and thus has no social life of his own. Someone who's ordinary and just hangs about the palace waiting to help those whose lives are more exciting and interesting. Someone who —

MOE Your compliment goes on far too long, brother. Shall I help you get dressed? (Gets Charming's clothes.)

CHARMING I suppose I couldn't even dress myself without you, could I, Moe? (getting into a wrong article of clothing)

MOE (deliberately not answering, looking at audience) I think somebody ought to take a look at the flying buttress on the south wall. It needs repairs.

CHARMING You're so good.

MOE Someone's got to do it.

CHARMING I wish I could give you something. Here, take this! (Starts to remove the charm around his neck.)

MOE Your charm? No, I couldn't.

CHARMING Take it!

MOE I can't.

(Moe helps Charming with his wig.)

CHARMING When you were born, you didn't get any charm, did you?

MOE I guess they ran out when they made yours.

CHARMING Such a pity! Well, some get, some don't! (Fits wig on.)

MOE Be careful you don't lose yours, brother!

CHARMING I suppose I could, couldn't I? But, you know what? Sometimes I want to rip it right off my neck. Just rip it off like that! It gets so tiring being charming.

MOE It must! (He pushes the wig down over Charming's eyes. Well, good day, brother! I must look at that flying buttress!

CHARMING Moe, wait! If I can't give you my charm, is there something I can give you? How would you like to borrow Cinderella's Fairy Godmother?

MOE Some have charms. Some have Fairy Godmothers. I wouldn't presume to take

what isn't mine.

CHARMING Oh, Moe, you're a treasure! I don't know how you keep from resenting me.

MOE (tongue in cheek) I don't know either. Well, is there anything else?

CHARMING Actually I have been wondering about my face.

MOE Your face?

CHARMING I was thinking of having a wrinkle put in. It's too — too —

MOE Perfect?

CHARMING Don't you think so? A wrinkle might give it more character. I might even splurge and have *two* wrinkles! What do you say?

MOE Let me sleep on, all right?

CHARMING Oh, you want to sleep on a *wrinkle*! That's good! That's very good, Moe!

(They sing "PRETTY FACE" on opposite sides of the fireplace, lamenting their separate fates. Live gargoyle faces in the fireplace join in.)

PRETTY FACE (SONG)

CHARMING (sings:)

I don't want a pretty face!
Had enough of charm and grace.
Could I change this pretty face
Into something commonplace?
Oh, this chin
and this grin —
I'm sure without them my life would be bliss!
Oh, there's got to be more; oh, there has to be more than just this!

MOE (sings:)

May I beg a pretty face?
Just a little charm and grace.
If I had a pretty face,
I'd be more than commonplace?
Oh, this jaw
and this flaw —
I'm sure without them my life would be bliss!
Oh, there's got to be more; oh, there has to be more than just this!

MOE (sings:)

Just a pretty face!
I'd like to put one on!
CHARMING (sings:)
If I could erase
And lead a different life!

MOE (sings:)
Maybe just a trace —
To win a winsome wife!

GARGOYLES (sings:)

Am I just a pretty face?
Am I just a fireplace?
I would like to really live
And be more than decorative.

Oh, this goo
in my flue —
I'm sure without it my life would be bliss!
Oh, there's got to be more; oh, there has to be more than just this!

ALL (sing:)

Oh, this face must go! I want to scream and shout!
Oh, this status quo I can live without!

CHARMING (sings:)

Just a pretty face!
I wish it would be gone!

MOE (sings:)

Just a pretty face! I'd like to put one on!

CHARMING (sings:)

If I could erase
And lead a different life!

MOE (sings:)

Maybe just a trace —
To win a winsome wife!

GARGOYLES (sing:)

Just a pretty face!
I think there could be more!
Just a pretty face
That's all we do implore!

ALL (sing:)
Oh, this face must go! I want to scream and shout!
Oh, this status quo I can live without!

CHARMING (sings:)

I don't want one!

GARGOYLES (sings:)

Pretty face! Pretty face!

MOE (sings:)

Gee, I need one!

GARGOYLES (sings:)

Pretty face! Pretty face!

OTHER GARGOYLES (sing:)

Oh, please help me!

CHARMING/ MOE (sing:)

Pretty face! Pretty face!

ALL (sing:)

Pretty face! Pretty face! Pretty face! Pretty face!
Pretty face! A pretty — face!

BLACKOUT

N'ATOR The girl was obliged to do hard work from morning till night, to get up at daybreak, carry water, light the fire, cook, and wash. Not content with that, the sisters inflicted on her every vexation they could think of. They made fun of her, and tossed the peas and lentils among the ashes, so that she had to sit down and pick them out again. In the evening, when she was worn out with work, she had no bed to go to, but had to lie on the hearth among the cinders. And, because she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Cinderella.

SCENE 3. The Palace.

(Enter Fairy Godmother. She is trying to hold on to her magic wand, which is acting up, pulling her around, flying out of her hand, etc. She retrieves it twice, only to have it escape again.)

GODMOTHER Damn! (to her wand) Why don't you work! Okay, chair, over there! (Waves the wand. The chair doesn't move) I said *move*! (It doesn't.) My wand's probably wearing out because I have to use it all the time! Give me this! Give me that! Okay, how about some nice, fresh flowers — one of the perks of my profession! (Waves the wand. A bunch of dead, ugly flowers appears, or some such trick. She shakes it in disgust.)

(Enter Cinderella.)

CINDERELLA Fairy Godmother, there you are! I've been looking everywhere for you!

GODMOTHER Let me guess! You want a favor!

CINDERELLA Oh, I do! I do!

GODMOTHER So what else is new? What is it this time, my child?

CINDERELLA Could you transform me?

GODMOTHER My wand has been acting up.

CINDERELLA Couldn't you try?

GODMOTHER Well, tell me what you want.

CINDERELLA I want to go back home.

GODMOTHER You mean to your old stepmother and awful stepsisters? Whatever for? I rescued you from them!

CINDERELLA This time it will be different. Besides, everybody deserves a second chance, even them.

GODMOTHER Are you telling me the whole truth?

CINDERELLA (obviously lying) Yes.

GODMOTHER What's the real reason you're leaving? It's because of Charming's brother, Prince Moe, isn't it?

CINDERELLA (obviously hitting a nerve) No, it isn't!

GODMOTHER You're in love with him!

CINDERELLA No, I'm not! . . . I can't be.

GODMOTHER Because you're a married woman, isn't that it?

CINDERELLA Yes . . . No! I don't know! Life is so confusing. I thought I wanted Prince Charming, but maybe I just wanted to get away from home.

GODMOTHER And took the first prince who came along! And now you want to go back *there*? I don't approve at all, and I'm not going to help!

CINDERELLA (angrily) You're my Fairy Godmother! I don't think you have any choice!

GODMOTHER Why don't you get a divorce instead? Marry Moe.

CINDERELLA He doesn't even know I'm alive. He never looks at me. Besides, I wouldn't want to hurt Charming's feelings. Oh, I don't know what to do! (Cries on Godmother's shoulder) Oh, if only my true mother were alive! She'd tell me!

GODMOTHER (reacting to the slight) I guess some of us have to settle for a mere Fairy Godmother!

CINDERELLA If I could just go back home for a while, to sort things out. Can't you help me?

GODMOTHER Oh, all right, but I'm not promising anything! Here goes! (Godmother tries to transform Cinderella, but the wand doesn't work.) Damn!

CINDERELLA What's wrong?

GODMOTHER This is for the birds!

(Dancing birds enter.)

WHY SWEAT? (SONG)

(a soft shoe song and dance, using the wand like a baton, but dropping it, twirling it, etc.)

What good is having perks,
When every other pumpkin's full of quirks!
Why remain a bumpkin! Get out now!
What's the use when nothin' works!

What good's a magic wand!
You might as well go toss it in some pond!
Just cut your losses and shake a leg
And travel here and there and yon!

Why sweat to be a fairy!
Just overturn that leaf.
Instead be ordinary,
And save yourself the grief!

What good are magic tricks?
You oughta drop 'em when you get no kicks!
You could swap 'em, honey, if you wish.
Muddlin' through is fiddlesticks!

What good is casting spells,
For silly, ragamuffin ne'er-do-wells!?

Oh, why keep on a-puffin' night and day!
What's the use when nothin' jells!

Why sweat to be a fairy!
Just overturn that leaf.
Instead be ordinary,
And save yourself the grief!

(Cinderella joins. Both sing:)

(I/You) I gotta blot these blues,
Count (my/your) my blessings now, by ones and twos,
And stop kvetching now all the time.
Be sublime! You know a fairy should amuse!
You know a fairy should amuse!
You know a fairy should amuse!

CINDERELLA Let *me* try the wand!

GODMOTHER Stand back! Let's give it one more super-duper try!

(Cinderella stands back. This time the wand works — a ragged dress appears from above.
Cinderella grabs it and runs off.)

(She loses one of her slippers.)

GODMOTHER Good luck, Cinderella! You're going to need it!

(Exit Fairy Godmother.)

N'ATOR (with slides) Now, if we could get back to the Brothers Grimm, the *real* story:
“And when the sun of spring had unveiled Cinderella's mother's grave again,
the husband took another wife. The new wife brought home with her two
daughters who were fair and beautiful to look upon, but base and black at
heart.”

(Re-enter Fairy Godmother, questioning , in front of the scrim.)

GODMOTHER (to Narrator) I thought they were *ugly* stepsisters!

N'ATOR That's not what it says here.

GODMOTHER What does it say about me?

N'ATOR I'm checking.

GODMOTHER And?

N'ATOR Uh, it doesn't mention you.

GODMOTHER The Brothers Grimm don't mention the Fairy Godmother?!

N'ATOR Afraid not.

GODMOTHER What do I do it for? Why? Can't count on my wand anymore! Don't even get mentioned! Cinderella doesn't listen to me! What's it all for? Why! Why!

(She exits, kvetching.)

SCENE 4. Family House.

(Discover Stepmother and Cinderella's Father with the Cat (a person in a costume) near his chair.)

STEPMOTHER Have you seen the girls?

FATHER I think they're out in the garden teasing the new pet you got them.

STEPMOTHER Not again! Well, at least they obeyed me and didn't go to the dog fights!

FATHER They did place a bet, though.

STEPMOTHER At heart they're good girls! High-strung, that's all.

FATHER (starts reading the newspaper, to avoid the situation)

(Offstage sound of a bear squealing.)

STEPMOTHER Girls! Girls, stop teasing that bear!

FATHER At least I can comfort myself that I didn't bring those two into the world! My own daughter knew when to leave — although we haven't heard a word from her since, have we? (Hears the two stepsisters offstage, buries his head in the newspaper) Oh, God!

STEPMOTHER Sometimes I wonder if my babies are ever going to leave home. Gargola! Odia! Come inside, dears! It's time for your nap!

(Enter Gargola and Odia, one of them carrying a muzzle on a leash.)

GARGOLA (To Odia) You did too!

ODIA I did not!

GARGOLA (pinches her) Did too!

STEPMOTHER Odia, stop right there! What have you got in your hand?

ODIA (slipping it to Gargola) Nothing.

STEPMOTHER I saw that! What have you two done?

GARGOLA Nothin'.

STEPMOTHER Have you un-muzzled that bear again? Don't you know that thing can't be loose in the neighborhood!

ODIA All it did was maul a beggar — once. It just wants to play!

GARGOLA How would you feel if you were chained up all day? (She holds up the muzzle. Then she and Odia look at each other, with the same idea — what if their *mother* were muzzled) (falsely mild) Mother, did you notice the spider in the corner?

STEPMOTHER (terrified) Spider! Where? Where is it? Where? (looks around for it, Gargola and Odia grab her and put the muzzle on her; the Father continues to read the newspaper) (Stepmother now finds it hard to talk because of the muzzle. Now, girls, this isn't a trifle bit funny!

ODIA Does it hurt?

GARGOLA (wanting it to) Yeah, does it?

STEPMOTHER Come now, you've had your little prank! Let Mother out!

ODIA (to Gargola) Think we should tie her to the stake in the back yard?

GARGOLA How about the cellar? We could pretend it's a dungeon.

ODIA That's a good idea! Usually you're quite stupid, Gargola, but sometimes you surprise me.

GARGOLA Why, thank you, Odia!

STEPMOTHER It's nice to see you girls getting along for a change, but Mother's tired now. Take off the muzzle!

ODIA Phooey, you're no fun!

GARGOLA (to Father) How about you, Stepfather? Want to play to?

FATHER (doesn't answer, rattles his newspaper)

GARGOLA God, I miss Cinderella! When she lived here, she'd always let us do things to *her*!

ODIA If only she'd come back! But, no! She's too good for us now, up there in the palace!

GARGOLA That's just like her, forsaking us after all we did for her! (Gargola knocks over a chair angrily.)

STEPMOTHER Go, lie down now, girls! I think you're over-stimulated.

(She gooses them to get them to go.)

ODIA Maybe we will, and maybe we won't! But thank you for the goose, Mother! Come, Gargola! I've got an *idea*! (They run off together.)

FATHER We've got to do something about those two.

STEPMOTHER I don't see you helping!

FATHER As I recall, they're your children, not mine. What do you expect me to do?

STEPMOTHER Don't put all of the responsibility on me!

FATHER I support them! I put up with them! What more do you want?

STEPMOTHER I can't control them, that's all! I don't know what to do! You think maybe I got the wrong ones at the hospital?

FATHER You let them walk all over you! God, if we could just get rid of them! Maybe we'd have a moment together! But I suppose I'm asking the impossible!

(He reads his paper again.)

(Enter Cinderella.)

CINDERELLA Hello? (knocking tentatively) Hello! It's me, Cinderella!

ODIA (peeking in, thrilled) It's *her*! Oh, my god, it's her!

(Cinderella enters the cottage.)

GARGOLA Oh, little stepsister, we've missed you *so* much!

STEPMOTHER Stepdaughter!

CINDERELLA Stepmother! (They embrace and kiss.) (referring to the muzzle she's wearing) I don't mean to be rude, but I believe there's something on your face.

STEPMOTHER Oh, this old thing?

CINDERELLA May I help you? (Removes the muzzle.)

STEPMOTHER Thank you, dear.

GARGOLA Did you come back to stay?

CINDERELLA Well, I don't really know yet. I —

ODIA We want you to stay!

GARGOLA Oh, do we *ever*!

CINDERELLA (noticing her father being standoffish) Is that you, Father?

FATHER Hello, Cinderella.

CINDERELLA (shyly) How about you, Father? Do you want me to stay?

FATHER I don't interfere.

ODIA (to Father) Tell her you want her to stay!

GARGOLA Yes, tell her! Tell her!

FATHER You can't live other people's lives for them. (He starts to return to his newspaper.)

CINDERELLA You haven't changed, Father, have you? . . . Oh, the memories! . . . Ah, here's the little corner I used to have to sit in! (to Stepsisters) And here's the little poker you used to poke me with! Do you remember, Father?

FATHER (Doesn't answer.)

ODIA (to Cinderella) Did you bring us any presents?

CINDERELLA No, I didn't.

GARGOLA No presents?

(The Stepsisters leave, the girls incensed. The Stepmother tries to calm them as they all go.)

CINDERELLA Father! Talk to me! All the time I lived here after you re-married you just ignored me, ignored the things that were happening to me! Why?

FATHER You can't live other people's lives for them, and that's all there is to it! And you're a fool if you try! (Father reads his paper.)

CINDERELLA Oh, Father!

HOW FAR CAN LOVE REACH? (SONG)

CINDERELLA (sings:)

Can a daughter say to a father
What she's never said before?
Should she hold her tongue or bother to complain?
Is there something she can gain?
Should she just forget the pain,
And ask for nothing more?

May a daughter ask for an answer
That she's never sought till now?
Can she hope that he will grant her an embrace?
Does she dare to touch his face?
Should she seek a hiding place
Until he speaks somehow?

How far can love reach?
How much should she try?
Or simply let love die?

FATHER (sings:)

Can a father say to a daughter
What he's never said before?
Should he take a seat and bother to explain?
Would it only be in vain?
Can he finally make it plain
Just what a father's for?

May a father give for an answer
What he couldn't give till now?
Should he stay the same or chance a changing heart?
Does he dare to make a start?
Must they always stay apart
Until he speaks somehow?

How far can love reach?
How much should he try?
Or simply let love die?

BOTH (sing:)

How far can love reach?
How much should (he/she) try?
Or simply let love die?

(They want to embrace, but they do not. The Stepmother interrupts, so the two are still estranged, but the audience sees that they want to be reconciled.)

STEPMOTHER The girls are having their nap. So, Cinderella, you're back to stay!

CINDERELLA Well, I —

ODIA (re-entering gleefully) It'll be like old times again!

GARGOLA (also entering) And I'd almost given up hope!

CINDERELLA (interrupting) Uh, actually I wouldn't want *everything* to be the way it used to be.

STEPMOTHER Oh, do stay! You could entertain the girls for me!

CINDERELLA I'm not the same person I was. I've learned quite a number of things in the palace. I'm trying to speak up more and —

GARGOLA Why? You got something to say?

ODIA I've got a great idea! Why don't we all move into the palace with you!

CINDERELLA Well, I don't know —

GARGOLA An excellent suggestion! Odia, sometimes you are profound!

CINDERELLA I don't know about this. You did have certain habits that would have to be changed. And you —

ODIA Oh, we'll change completely!

GARGOLA Absolutely. You won't even recognize us!

(Odia and Gargola bow, etc., pretending to be at the palace.)

ODIA Oh, Lady Cinderella, how convenient to see you this evening!

GARGOLA Madame, you're looking positively radiant!

CINDERELLA Well, I —

(They twirl Cinderella around, almost upending her.)

ODIA Oh, Mother, wouldn't it be grand!

STEPMOTHER We haven't really been invited yet.

CINDERELLA Would you want to come, Father?

FATHER Is there room for me?

GARGOLA Oh, there's plenty of room for everybody!

CINDERELLA Well, let me think it over.

N'ATOR Some of you people don't belong in a palace!

ODIA Who asked you, dulcet tones!

N'ATOR I'm telling the story! Not you! And you're not going to the palace!

(Some of them begin to whimper.)

CINDERELLA (summoning courage) Oh yeah!

PLAY THE PALACE
(a big SONG and DANCE number involving all five.)

(Divide the lyrics up.)

Go, and gather all your things!
We are gonna spread our wings!

Go grab your hat!
Put out the cat!
The sooner the better to live like kings!

Everything will happen soon!
It can only be divoon!
Toss out your rags
For moneybags!
We've paid the piper, so play our tune!

When will that day be?
When will it be here?
It is no maybe!
It's a-comin'. Have no fear!
It's a-comin'. Have no fear!

We'll be big! We'll be grand!
We'll be much in demand,
When we — we play the palace!

We'll be tops! We'll be great!
We do not overstate!
When we — we play the palace!

We'll be more famous than Joan the Maid,
And more admired than the last Crusade.
We'll be more stunning than Babylon,
And have more laurels than Genghis Khan.

We'll be a whole lot smarter
Than ancient Sparta.
We'll be greater than the Magna Carta!

A name more telling than William Tell's.
And better selling than the Book of Kells.
With more charisma than Charlemagne.
We'll make a big mark. Move over, Cain!

But, loved ones, what of our little cottage,
Nestled here in the roses,
Where our love is enshrined?

And, loved ones, what about our dear neighbors?

They have all been so precious.
Can we leave them behind?

ALL (after looking at each other) YES!

We'll be more potent than dragon's breath,
And have more color than the Black Death!
We'll get more kisses than Helen's lips,
And be more noticed than Godiva's hips.

They'll even toast our fossils
At future wassails.
We'll be hotter than the twelve Apostles!

We'll eat some hot goulashes
With Persian pashas.
We'll be posher than Hieronymus Bosch is!

Get ready to climb!
Don't — forfeit, misuse, squander — the time!
We'll do it somehow,
That's a vow,
And what is more we're starting right now!

Just look at that sky!
We'll get up that high!
You watch —
And you'll learn how to fly,
Seeing us soar above the small fry!

Hurry up! We're too slow!
Hurry up! Time to go!
No — it's over there!
Do we dare? Say a prayer! Yes!
Light the lights! Let's play the palace now!

(Stepsisters return down the stairs, for encore.)

ENCORE
(if needed)

We'll be more talked of than Egypt's queen.
We'll have more confessions than Augustine.
We'll be more perfect than Pericles.
We'll have more winners than Sophocles.

There'll be an end to shyness.
Come, kiss our highness.
We'll be finer than Thomas Aquinas!

(They exit.)

N'ATOR "For his two stepdaughters he brought home from the fair clothes and jewels. And on his way home, as he was riding through a green copse, a hazel twig grazed against his hat and knocked it off. Then he broke off the branch and took it with him. When he got home, he gave his step-daughters what they had asked for, and to Cinderella he gave the twig from the hazel tree. Cinderella thanked him and went to her mother's grave and planted the twig upon it. She wept so much her tears fell and watered it, and it took root and became a fine tree."

(Re-enter Cinderella and the others. Cinderella is carrying their luggage.)

CINDERELLA (to Narrator) A tree grew out of my mother's grave?

N'ATOR Yes.

GARGOLA (enjoying the idea) Did it grow right out of her *corpse*?

ODIA Yeah, did her tears make the body get all squishy and then turn into fertilizer?

CINDERELLA (trying to get them to change the subject) Come along, everybody! We've got to get to the palace! Wait — I know how we can get there! (calling) Fairy Godmother! Fairy Godmother!

OTHERS You hoo! Fairy Godmother! Etc.

(Exit all, calling.)

SCENE 6. The Palace.

(Enter Charming, still looking for Cinderella.)

CHARMING Cinderella! Where are you! We must talk! (He finds her shoe.) How like you! (He shows affection for her by kissing or fondling the shoe.) Always leaving things around! (He finds her note.) (reading it aloud) "Dearest Charming . . ." (after reading more silently) Oh, no! Doesn't she know how dangerous it is out there! I must follow her! I'm desperately worried. But, before I go, some comfort! Tickle! Tickle, are you there?

TICKLE (offstage, irritably) I'm here! What do you want?

CHARMING Come in here! Quick, tell me a joke!

(Enter Tickle, the Jester.)

TICKLE About what?

CHARMING Anything! Cinderella's run away. Make me feel better.

TICKLE No.

CHARMING What?

TICKLE I don't feel good.

CHARMING What's wrong with you? You've never refused before!

TICKLE Laughs, laughs, laughs — that's all you people want! Well, I'm fed up with it!

CHARMING But my wife! My marriage! It's got to be saved!

TICKLE Why? Who cares?

CHARMING Because it's a model for others. Because it's — because it's —

(He shows Tickle the slipper.)

TICKLE Maybe you've ruled too long!

CHARMING You criticize my marriage, and now you challenge my authority?

DANCE COMPETITION

(Tickle and Charming dance THE SLIPPER DANCE, a contest of their respective points of view.)

(Tickle grabs the slipper.)

TICKLE A slipper is no reason for a man to fall in love! Because her foot fit a shoe?

(Charming grabs it back.)

CHARMING I loved her from the first. She and I were meant to be!

TICKLE (grabs the slipper back and dances with it, mockingly, cynically, taunting Charming)

CHARMING (grabs the slipper again and dances with it)

(The dancers then should have a tap competition, with Tickle sitting on the throne, tapping. Charming removes him. They compete, tapping more furiously as the dance proceeds. At the end, when they both seem to have come out even, Tickle faints and falls. Charming helps him up.)

(The following lines should be spread throughout the dance.)

TICKLE You "fall in love" by seeing someone's face! You romantic twit!

CHARMING Tickle!

TICKLE People deserve their problems. They make 'em themselves!

(at end of dance)

CHARMING Please come with me! Outside are ferocious animals that might hurt her. To say nothing of what her family might do.

TICKLE Why should I?

CHARMING We'll continue this later! But I do want you to know I'm shocked at your behavior, Tickle! Shocked! And I hope when we meet again, you're back to your normal self! Good day!

(Exit Charming, bowing ironically.)

TICKLE Who do you think you are! Just because you happened to be born with a silver spoon up your butt! I'm as good as you are any day. Maybe I'll take him up on his offer, and follow him into the Forest. Who knows what might happen to him there — with a little *help* from me! How do you like that for a laugh, Mr. Goody Two Shoes! And then Cinderella will find out what it's like to have a real man in her bed!

(Exit Tickle, following Charming his dagger drawn.)

(Scene in front of scrim.)

N'ATOR Wait! I don't care for that prince, but you're not going to harm him! (calling) Prince Charming! Prince Charming!

TICKLE (to Narrator) Shut up, you! Stick to your own business!

N'ATOR Wait a minute now! Just wait a minute! (He is interrupted by the next scene.)

SCENE 7. The Forest.

BALLET DANCE OF DANGER

(Re-enter Charming, lost in the Forest, where he encounters wild animals — boars, stags with antlers, griffins, etc. — and dances with them, trying to escape, in an acrobatic, stylized “Dance of Danger.” At one point they pull off his charm. At the end of the dance, the animals chew on his shoe and bloody it, play with it, grab it from each other, etc.)

(Finally the Fairy Godmother appears and rescues Charming, sends the animals running off by using her wand.)

(Prince Moe and Tickle enter separately, both looking for Charming.)

TICKLE (with dagger) O, Prince Charming, where *are* you?

MOE Brother! Brother!

TICKLE (hearing Moe) What's that! (He hides.)

MOE Ouch! There's a stone in my shoe. (Removes the shoe, looks for stone.)
(resting) Aye me, I can't find him anywhere! I hope he's all right! He shouldn't travel alone! I do like my brother! I do! That's why I'm seeking him — or is it that I don't really have anything else to do?

TICKLE It's that ugly brother! He's nice. But I never really liked him either! Maybe I should dispatch him as well. If both brothers are gone, I'll have a much better chance at the throne — and Cinderella's magnificent body!

(Tickle starts to stalk Moe, who notices Charming's lost charm and picks it up, as Tickle just misses him with the dagger.)

MOE Isn't this Charming's charm? How did it get here?

(Tickle swings the dagger again, misses.)

MOE Oh, I hope nothing has happened to him! Brother! (No answer.) I'd better return this to him at once! At last I've got something important to live for!

(Tickle swings the dagger again, just misses. Moe runs off in one shoe, hobbling.)

TICKLE Oh, that family can't stay still a minute! (Finds Charming's bloody shoe.)
What's this? That's just like them, leaving their shoes around for others to pick up! (Starts to throw it down in disgust.) Wait a royal minute! (thinking) This is Charming's shoe. And the shoe is a bloody! And, pray tell, how did the shoe get bloody? Why, of course! From trampling on the faces of the poor! (loudly) Wait till the masses hear about this!

(Exit Tickle, running, holding the shoe aloft.)

N'ATOR How did the masses suddenly become major characters? They are not high-born! They're here to provide background for the real story, about important people! You're just catering to the lowest common denominator, who want to hear about themselves!

TICKLE (popping back in) Are you still talking? No one's listening! (Exits.)

SCENE 8. The Palace.

(Enter Cinderella, Stepmother, Stepsisters, and Father, tired.)

STEPMOTHER Thank god, we finally made it!

(They set baggage down, relax.)

CINDERELLA I'm sorry my Fairy Godmother never showed up. She's been acting very strange of late. But at least we're here now, and we're all together, and we can

begin to live happily ever after.

ODIA Well, if you ask me, I think the whole travel arrangements sucked!

STEPMOTHER Now, Odia!

ODIA Well, they did! What's the use of being a princess, if you gotta walk!

FATHER You're not a princess yet, Odia.

ODIA If she's a princess because she's related to the prince, and I'm related to her, then why can't *I* be a princess too?

GARGOLA Is this the same palace where we attended the ball? It looked better at night!

STEPMOTHER Gargola!

GARGOLA What am I supposed to say — it's pretty when it ain't?

FATHER You can always go back home.

CINDERELLA I'm sure it'll grow on you. It did on me. How about some nourishment, everybody?

GARGOLA Whatcha got?

ODIA You got any ambrosia?

CINDERELLA Maybe. I'll see.

GARGOLA Oh, I don't want no ambrosia. You got any nectar? Whatcha got to eat in this place anyway?

ODIA Come to think of it, cancel the ambrosia and give me a couple of eggs over easy. You got any Dodo eggs? Make 'em scrambled. No — over easy! And not too cooked — I like mine sort of runny.

GARGOLA Yeah, that sounds good. Make mine two — no, four — eggs, sunny side up, with boar strips, and a side of spuds — in a little separate dish — with lots of catsup, and a flagon of — of mead!

ODIA Make that two flagons!

CINDERELLA (taking their orders on a pad) Anybody else?

FATHER Cinderella, stop that!

CINDERELLA (catching herself) You're right! What am I doing?

ODIA (loudly) And don't forget some extra garlic!

CINDERELLA There seems to be some misapprehension here about my role!

STEPMOTHER Girls, you promised if we came here, you'd change!

ODIA We've changed!

GARGOLA We're being *nice*! We haven't said a single word about scrubbing a floor!

ODIA (meant for Cinderella) Although I did notice some awful muck in the corner that *somebody* should look to!

GARGOLA While you're doing those few other things, you ought to see to our welcoming ceremony.

ODIA That's right! Nobody's even said hello to us!

GARGOLA What a way to run a principdom!

CINDERELLA Fairy Godmother! Fairy Godmother, help me! Where are you!

ODIA And when and if that meddling witch does come, I'm going to have her fined for practicing magic without a license!

GARGOLA Who does she think she is not showing up when she's called! You give a fairy an inch, they'll take a kilometer!

CINDERELLA Fairy Godmother, help! I made a terrible mistake!

(The Fairy Godmother appears, galumphing in a large duck's foot.)

GODMOTHER What is it, dear? I seem to have developed this —

CINDERELLA Send them back! Send them back! (She hides.)

GARGOLA Oh no, you don't! We're here to stay!

ODIA Get her, Gargola!

(The Stepsisters try to get the Fairy Godmother.)

GODMOTHER Whoa! Get thee gone and get thee hence!
And may this change soon commence!

(She waves her wand and there is a flash. Cinderella emerges transformed into a pumpkin, her head sticking out. She whirls. The Stepsisters set her spinning even more.)

CINDERELLA Help me! Something's making me move! (She is pulled offstage.)

FATHER Wait! What's wrong? (Runs after her.)

GODMOTHER Cinderella, I'm sorry! Wait, I'll fix it! Wait!

(She galumphs after Cinderella.)

ODIA Good riddance to that trash!

GARGOLA If I was in charge around here, I'd run a very tight palace.

ODIA And if two people were in charge, it would be even tighter!

(The two Stepsisters look knowingly at each other.)

BOTH Why not?

GARGOLA We could even be crowned!

STEPMOTHER Now, girls, you're not entitled to —

BOTH Shut up!

ODIA Oh, Gargola, this could really be the start of something fabulous!

GARGOLA We'll share the power!

ODIA (picking up a crown that's in a glass case) I'll crown you if you'll crown me!

GARGOLA Do we dare?

ODIA Who deserves it more?

STEPMOTHER Girls, you can't just come in here and —

ODIA Who says?

STEPMOTHER I won't permit it. Give me that crown! (She tries to take it.)

ODIA Gargola! Here! (Throws her the crown. They play keep-away from their mother, ad lib, until she gives up.)

STEPMOTHER Oh, I just can't go on like this!

ODIA Who asked you to?

GARGOLA I guess we showed her!

ODIA There's no question we've earned it now. Kneel, Gargola! (She does.) By the power digested in me by having the courage to take what we want, I hereby crown you Co-Queen! (Places crown.) Okay, now me! (She kneels.)

GARGOLA By the power ingested in me . . . Hey, I'm the queen now, aren't I?

ODIA Co-Queen!

GARGOLA Not until I crown somebody else! And just maybe I won't!

ODIA Listen, mold-head! You only got where you are because of me!

GARGOLA Well, I don't want to share!

ODIA Give me that crown! I'll crown myself! (Grabs crown.)

GARGOLA Oh, never mind! I'll do it!

ODIA You promise?

GARGOLA By the power infested in me by Almighty God — (Odia prompts her to include her with a wallop to the stomach.) And my sister, I hereby crown you Co-Queen! (Places crown on Odia's head.)

ODIA (rising) Well, well, well, it appears that cream will rise to the top!

(Enter Father.)

FATHER I can't find Cinderella!

ODIA/
GARGOLA Big deal! . . . Long live the co-queens! (Raise their crowns.)

(Exit Father, searching.)

Blackout

N'ATOR (and slides, if possible)
And after everyone had left the house, Cinderella went out to her mother's grave under the hazel tree and cried. 'Shiver and shake, dear little tree,/ Gold and silver shower on me!' Then the magic bird threw down to her a gold and silver robe and a pair of slippers embroidered with silk and silver."

(Enter Cinderella, as pumpkin.)

CINDERELLA (to Narrator) *What* little tree? Where's the pumpkin that turns into a coach? I need to get back.

N'ATOR There isn't one.

CINDERELLA You sure you've got the right book up there?

N'ATOR Positive!

CINDERELLA Where's Prince Moe? Why can't he help?

N'ATOR There is no Prince Moe, or shouldn't be! What a ridiculous name! And you're not going to marry him at the end either! How do you like *them* pumpkins!

CINDERELLA Fairy Godmother! Where are you! Get me out of this pumpkin!

(She waddles off.)

SCENE 9. The Forest.

(Enter Prince Moe.)

MOE (calling) Charming! Charming! I fear he may be dead. (Looks at the charm.) Oh, poor brother, you offered me your charm once before, and I refused. Perhaps I should wear it now, before I lose it, the way you did. (He dons the charm.) *My*, somehow I feel so different! (He begins to act like the early overly gracious Charming.)

(Enter Prince Charming, disheveled.)

CHARMING Moe! It's you! Oh, I'm so glad to see you.

MOE Have we been introduced?

CHARMING It's me!

MOE Oh, I don't think so!

CHARMING It's me! It's me!

MOE Please, young man, don't disgrace yourself with unseemly behavior! Here's a penny. See if you can't lift yourself up by your bootstraps. Good day!

CHARMING But — I —

MOE Don't thank me. I understand your gratitude. Well, I really must be going. So nice meeting you. (Gives Charming a polite little phony handshake.)

(Enter Tickle leading the Masses — two people in a cutout with more human figures pasted on.)

TICKLE (in disguise) Stop! Which one of you is Prince Charming?

MOE I am. Why?

CHARMING No, I am.

MOE Can't you tell that I'm Charming by the way I act? (Dances gracefully for them.)

CHARMING I tell you *I* am! (Dances clumsily for them.)

TICKLE One of you is an imposter!

MOE Well, it's not me! Can't you see the quality? (Does a pompous turn.)

TICKLE In that case we arrest you in the name of the people!

(The Masses seize Moe.)

MOE Just a minute now! We haven't been properly introduced!

MASSES (as one) Hello! We're the masses!

MOE That's better! How do you do! *Now* you may proceed to arrest me.

CHARMING I tell you *I'm* Prince Charming! If anyone is to be arrested it's me!

(They all laugh at him.)

TICKLE You're just a pretentious peasant! Get away!

MOE Don't be nasty to him. That boy's got a lot of promise.

TICKLE Come along, you! I call for a fair trial of the evil, rich prince, followed by his immediate death!

MOE Death? Don't be impertinent!

TICKLE Take him away to the palace! (The Masses lead Moe off.) Look out, world, here comes *Prince* Tickle! (Removes his disguise grandly, exits.)

CHARMING (seeing who it is) Tickle? What's come over him!?

(Charming pursues them.)

(Enter Moe with the Masses from different entrance.)

MOE Now what seems to be troubling you people? I'm sure we can work it out. Do I seem like the kind of man you can't trust? (They shrug.) Come along, come along, we'll hear everybody out!

(Exit Moe and the Masses.)

(Enter Charming separately, calling.)

CHARMING Moe, where have they taken you? Cinderella! Are you anywhere around?

(Re-enter Moe, the Masses, and Tickle.)

MOE And here's a crumb for you! (Feeds a crumb to one of the Masses.) And here's a crumb for you! (Feeds another one. They are overjoyed to bask in his presence. He now, because of his charm, literally has them eating out of his hands.)

TICKLE (to Masses) Stop that! Stop it! How can you be taken in like that!

MASSES (together) But he's got so much charisma!

ONE of
the MASSES And he gave us a crumb!

MOE And another great big crumb for all of you! (Throws a big crumb.)

TICKLE Stop it! Stop it! Rise, o citizens, and topple the regime! Wake up! Don't you see what he's doing to you? Revolution! Revolution right this minute!

(The cry of "Revolution" is picked up by the Masses as they exit.)

(Characters start calling and running on and offstage, haphazardly.)

CHARMING (calling) Moe! Where are you? Cinderella!

CINDERELLA Fairy Godmother! O, Charming, where are you! Moe! Moe!

(Re-enter Tickle and the Masses.)

TICKLE Down with the Prince! Down, I say! . . . Oh, look, it's Cinderella! *Alone* here in the forest!

CINDERELLA Tickle! It's you! Oh, I'm so glad to see you!

TICKLE Are you? The feeling's mutual, sweetie.

CINDERELLA Can you help me?

TICKLE What, bored? Want me to tell you a funny story? Juggle?

CINDERELLA Tickle, what's the matter with you? Can't you help me?

TICKLE (threateningly, sexily oily) Well, let me try! Do *you* want to take off your pumpkin or should *I*? Come on, I promise to tickle your fancy!

CINDERELLA Tickle, what are you talking about?

TICKLE I just want a piece of . . . pie! (Advances.) Here, let me serve myself!

CINDERELLA Stay away from me! Stay away! (Retreats.) Help! Somebody help!

(Characters continue to rush past, ignoring the would-be seduction.)

TICKLE You *want* me and you know it! So let's get down to basics!

CINDERELLA Tickle! Help, somebody! Help!

(Enter Fairy Godmother amidst the confusion, above, possibly flying in as a would-be deus ex machina.)

GODMOTHER Okay, kids, I'm here to save the day!
 And with my wand make all your troubles go away!

(She waves her wand, but it misfires. The characters run back and forth, in an out, shouting, calling. Moe now becomes the pumpkin. Cinderella is now in Charming's ragged clothes. Charming is dressed in Cinderella's ragged dress. Tickle and the Masses run offstage.)

GODMOTHER Well, at least I *tried*!

(Cinderella, Charming, and Moe, look at themselves and sing:)

WHO AM I? (SONG)
(a big tap number)

CINDERELLA (sings:)

Am I lady or a gent?
Now won't you please give me a hint!

CHARMING (sings:)

Am I a princess or a fraud?
Am I a beefcake or a broad?

CINDERELLA/
CHARMING (sing:)

I have a curious suspicion
That I am different than I seem.
What is your deepest intuition?
Is this a nightmare or a dream?

MOE (sings:)

Should I smile or should I wince?
Am I a pumpkin or a prince?
Am I laddie or a lass?
Is this my elbow or my — finger!

So do you have an explanation?
What does the future hold in store?
I have a ripening sensation.
I may be rotten to the core!

CHORUS (sings:)

So tell me what perchance does it mean!
And is it nice or is it obscene?
And from this all just what can we glean?

So what perchance does it —

(Tap Dance)

CINDERELLA (sings to Charming:)

Are you a maiden or a bloke?

CHARMING (sings to Cinderella:)

Are you in earnest or a joke?

MOE (sings to Cinderella/Charming:)

Are you a lady or a lord?

CINDERELLA/CHARMING (sing to Moe:)

Are you a melon or a gourd?

ALL THREE (sing:)

Now is it over-stimulation,
Or could it be some other cause?
An unseemly aberration,
Or is it merely menopause?

CHORUS (sing:)

So tell me what perchance does it mean!
And is it nice or is it obscene!
And from all this just what can we glean!
So what perchance does it —

(Tap Dance)

(Enter a chorus of dancing question marks. They all dance the first verse of the song.)

CHORUS (sing:)

So tell me what perchance does it mean!
And is it nice or is it obscene?
And from all this just what can we glean?
Please tell me what perchance — does it mean!?

(Tickle and the Masses re-enter.)

TICKLE Hey you two! (He grabs Charming and Cinderella by their wrists.) (to Cinderella)
All right, Prince Charming, you're under arrest! (to Charming) And as for you,
Cinderella — (breaks into a threatening laugh)

(Then he does a double-take on the Prince, Cinderella, and then looks questioningly at the audience, scratching his head.)

Hey, what the *fuck's* going on here?!

Blackout

END OF ACT I

ACT II, SCENE 1. The Same.

N'ATOR (plus slides on scrim of the real Brothers Grimm – but not essential)
“At his festival, the Prince wanted to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged. But she slipped out of his way and sprang into the pigeon house.”

CHARACTERS

ON STAGE (in the same threatened positions as at the end of Act I) *Pigeon house?!*

(They break the pose and laugh, talk.)

CINDERELLA Pigeon house?

N'ATOR Yes, pigeon house!

CINDERELLA (to Narrator) This is “Cinderella”?

N'ATOR *I'm* telling the real story! You're the ones who have it screwed up!
There was a pigeon house, and no Fairy Godmother, and no pumpkin that turned into a coach, and it was a festival, not a ball, and it lasted for three days, not one night, and his name wasn't Prince Charming either. Just the Prince! Got it?

CINDERELLA Just asking!

N'ATOR (angrily) Goddamn troublemakers! Get back where you were!

(They hurriedly resume the poses they had at the end of Act I.)

(The three changed characters (Cinderella, Charming, and Moe) all have inklings throughout the scene of who they are despite the way they look now.)

GODMOTHER Okay, let me try to fix this, everybody! (She tries with great fanfare. But nothing changes.) Curses! Drat! Or words to that effect!

N'ATOR Well, if you followed my script, you wouldn't be in all this trouble!

TICKLE (to Narrator) Shut up, you! (to Charming) What's your name?

CHARMING (dressed like Cinderella, coyly) Cinderella.

TICKLE Are you trying to pull something?

CHARMING Little old me?

TICKLE Something's wrong here! (to Cinderella) And who are you?

CINDERELLA (as Charming) What's it to you, Mack? Want to make something of it?

TICKLE Hey, what's going on?

CINDERELLA (Pushes him.) Maybe you need somebody to push you around, huh? (Pushes him again.) How does it feel, kiddo? Can't take it, huh? (Boxes at him.)

TICKLE (trying to re-assert himself) All right, *nobody move!* (They freeze.) I'll figure this out. And when I do, you're all going to be sorry, each in your own way!

(Dances among them, checking them out, but is not near each group as it is speaking.)

MOE (as pumpkin with "charm") (to cross-dressed Charming) Don't I know you from somewhere?

CHARMING (as Cinderella) Maybe.

MOE You're very lovely.

CHARMING (as Cinderella, coquettish) Thank you. You're not so bad yourself.

MOE I feel good! (Pats his charm.) As a matter of fact, I feel downright Charming, even though I seem to have put on some weight. (Feels the pumpkin he's become.) By the way, what's your name?

TICKLE (Comes up to them right at that moment, listening hard.)

CHARMING (touching dress, to protect himself from Tickle) Just call me Cindy.

TICKLE (to Moe dressed as the pumpkin) And what about you?

MOE I'm Prince Charming! (to Charming) I guess that means you and I are married!

TICKLE You don't look like Prince Charming to me! I'll find the real one yet!

(Tickle goes off looking.)

MOE (to Charming as Cinderella) Have you met my brother, Moe? (Points to Cinderella dressed as Charming.)

CHARMING I don't believe I have.

MOE He's in love with you, you know.

CHARMING With me? He's never said a word.

MOE That's because you're married to his brother, and he wouldn't do anything to harm our marriage.

(Charming and Moe wrinkle up their faces at the complexity of the switched characters.)

CHARMING It's too bad Moe doesn't say something. I hear that Prince Charming isn't all that happy in his marriage.

MOE Really?

TICKLE (near Cinderella dressed as Moe) Are you Prince Charming?

CINDERELLA No, I'm Prince Moe.

TICKLE Are you sure? You look like Prince Charming.

CINDERELLA Don't you think I'd know who I am, pal?

MOE (calling to Cinderella) Moe! Oh, Moe!

CINDERELLA Do you mean me? (She poses like a macho boy.)

MOE Come over here! There's someone I'd like you to meet! (She leaves Tickle, comes over.) Prince Moe, this is Cinderella!

CHARMING /
CINDERELLA (playing the opposite sex, shyly) How do you do?

MOE There, now *that's* all straightened out! Excuse me, I've got o speak to Tickle and the Masses. They're becoming quite unruly. But a word from me, and they'll see the error of their ways!

CHARMING Watch yourself, or they'll make you into a pie!

MOE Oh, not me! (Goes to Tickle, talks quietly to him and Masses.)

CHARMING (still dressed as Cinderella) So how you doing?

CINDERELLA (dressed as Charming) Not too grand, actually.

CHARMING What's wrong?

CINDERELLA We've all been through a lot lately.

CHARMING You can say that again.

CINDERELLA We've all been through a lot lately.

CHARMING You're sweet! But you seem sort of depressed.

CINDERELLA Oh, I guess it's —

CHARMING (pointing to pumpkin Moe) That pumpkin over there?

CINDERELLA Yes.

CHARMING You're in love with him, aren't you? I've noticed.

CINDERELLA Well, I thought I was, when I knew him as Moe, but now he seems to think he's

Charming. To tell the truth, I liked him more when he wasn't "on" so much.

CHARMING I know what you mean.

CINDERELLA It's not because he's a pumpkin or anything.

CHARMING Of course.

CINDERELLA Some of my best friends are pumpkins. It's just that I was hoping to get free to marry Moe, but now nothing's the way it's supposed to be. I *look* like Moe, but I *feel* like Cinderella, and yet some people seem to think I'm *Prince Charming*. So I guess I'll have to marry myself! And I don't think that's allowed.

CHARMING Life's complicated, isn't it?

LOVE TRIO (SONG)

SHOULD YOU JUST FORGET LOVE? (Cinderella's Theme)

Should you just forget love
When it goes away?
Should you start to hate love
When it fades to gray?

Never after
May you hope again?
Can there be what's been?

Or can love strike two times in a lifetime,
If only someone will stop and see?
I'm looking hard for that second someone,
But will he notice me?

DON'T BLAME LOVE (Charming's Theme, relating to Cinderella))

Don't blame love,
'cause our little love went wrong.
We're just not the ones meant for each other!

Don't blame love,
'cause our little love's not strong.
It fell out of bed and bumped its head!

Sometimes people *aren't* compatible.
Doesn't mean that love's no good at all!

Don't blame love.

Instead blame the gods above.
Or put all the blame on me.
But don't blame love!

OH, WHERE CAN I FIND LOVE?
(Moe's Theme, relating to Cinderella)

Although I don't know why,
I've always been too shy.
How do so many seem to find it?

Oh, where can I find love?
Could it be somewhere close?
Am I too slow, too scared, or blinded?

I think this love I feel's profound!
I think this love may be around!
Somehow this far love must be found!
When will I know it's near?

Although I don't know how,
I'd better act right now.
Should I pursue it or forsake it?

Oh, where can I find love?
Could it be somewhere close?
Do I perceive it or mistake it?

I think this love I feel's profound!
I think this love may be around!
I think this far love must be found!
I think I know it's here.

(Then all three themes blend as they sing together.) (TRIO is on tape.)

GODMOTHER All right, everybody! I'm going to try once more. Let's get this wand back in gear!

(Everybody on stage ducks or hides.)

Hey! That's not nice! Come on now, everybody help!

(They reluctantly return, agree, etc.)

Wish very hard to be who you really are!

TICKLE And when the real Prince Charming appears, I want to see him real bad!

GODMOTHER Ready? Aim! Fire! (Waves wand. Nothing happens.) Damn it! I don't think you kids are trying!

CINDERELLA (acting macho) Well, actually there's a lot to be said for being a boy!

CHARMING (acting feminine) You know, when you come right down to it, this isn't *so* bad!

MOE (as a pumpkin, necking with a tree in the set) I think I'm in love!

TICKLE You're all a bunch of weirdoes!

GODMOTHER No, they're not! They're just a little confused.

TICKLE Can't you do anything right?

GODMOTHER Listen, clown, this wand isn't completely dead yet! (Threatens him.)

TICKLE Maybe somebody ought to take it away from you! (He advances.)

(The Godmother holds him at bay with the wand.)

WEIRD SPOT (SONG)

TICKLE (to Moe, Charming, Cinderella, recitative) You are *weird*!

GODMOTHER (recitative) They're not weird!

TICKLE (to Godmother, recitative) You're weird too!

MOE /
CHARMING /
CINDERELLA Who asked you!

GODMOTHER (spoken) Don't let grouches make you frown,
'Cause their minds are hand-me-down . . . ones.

GODMOTHER (sings:)

Oh, everybody's got some oddity.
That shouldn't make you blue.
Some little folks may sneer and call you names,
But I'll be loyal to you.

TICKLE (sings:)

You're a pack of raving animals!
Wouldn't want to get too close.
I thank God that I'm so norimal.
(Others spoken: "*Norimal*"?)
The rest of you are really gross!

GODMOTHER (sings:)

Go find your weird spot!
Try to unbend!
Go find your weird spot, my friend!
Go find your weird spot.
Find it today.
It's really quite okay!

TICKLE (spoken) Weird spot?

OTHERS (sing:)

Everybody's got a weird spot!
Or at least a trace.
Everybody's got a weird spot,
If you can find the place!

(Godmother ushers in Beast #1.)

BEAST #1 (sings:)

Am I weird?

TICKLE (sings:)

What a stench!

BEAST #1 (sings:)

Should I change?

OTHERS (sing:)

Not an inch!

TICKLE (sings:)

What's that creature over there? (Points.)
It looks very strange and scary!

GODMOTHER (sings:)

This is a striped, spotted poopersnip.
It is a gentle beast.
If you are kind and pet it on the head,
I bet it licks you — at least!

But if you are mean and pull its fur,
It gets hungry when it's mad.
It will likely cease to hum and purr,
And will eat you, though forbade.

TICKLE (sings:)

You're such a weird bunch!
I don't know why!
You're such a weird bunch of guys!
Ain't got no weird spot!
No spots on me,
As you can plainly see!

OTHERS (sing:)

Everybody's got a weird spot.
That's what makes 'em nice.
Everybody's got a weird spot,
And that's what gives 'em spice!

(Godmother ushers in Beast #2.)

BEAST #2 (sings:)

Am I weird?

TICKLE (sings:)

Does it sting?

BEAST #2 (sings:)

What is wrong?

OTHERS (sing:)

Not a thing!

TICKLE (sings:)

Put that monster in a cage!
It looks very queer and hairy!

CINDERELLA (sings:)

This is a fuzzy, winged willywak!
It is a herbivore.
And if you smile and feed it vegetables,
It does a flip on the floor.

CHARMING (sings:)

But if you are rude and make it wail,
It will drag you to its lair.
In the dark it roars and lifts its tail —

And lays pink eggs in your hair!

TICKLE (sings:)

You're such a weird bunch!
I don't know why!
You're such a weird bunch of guys!
Ain't got no weird spot!
No spots on me,
As you can plainly see!

OTHERS (sing:)

Everybody's got a weird spot,
Or at least a trace.
Everybody's got a weird spot,
If you can find the place!

(They start looking for weird spots.)

We've got a weird spot!
It's over here!
We've got a weird spot to find!

I found my weird spot!
I'm glad it's here!
It really blows my mind!

Everybody's got a weird spot!
Or at least a trace.
Everybody's got a weird spot,
If you can find the place!

(Enter Beast #3 — a button-down very conventional businessman with a briefcase.)

BEAST #3 (spoken) Am I weird?

(Everyone else screams in horror and fright.) (Exit businessman, affronted.)

TICKLE Everybody stop! Stop! I've got it!

ALL Got what? What's he got? Etc.

TICKLE There's only one way to find out who the real Prince Charming is!

CHARMING What's that?

TICKLE (pulling out the bloody shoe) By having you all try on this shoe! If the shoe fits — (He pauses, warning the others.) Don't say it! If the shoe fits, I'll have my Prince!

MOE But, my good fellow, what if we refuse to try it on?
TICKLE (summoning his Masses) Then every single one of you will die!
ALL Oh, no! He can't do this! Etc.
TICKLE (loudly) All right then, who's going to be first?

(The Masses push a reluctant Cinderella forward to try on the shoe.)

(Scene in front of scrim.)

N'ATOR Must you mock everything?
MASSES What?
N'ATOR What has happened to elegance?
MASSES You think you're elegant? These cheap pictures? This is elegance?
N'ATOR It's more beautiful than your silly little play!
MASSES And who needs your glamorous lies?
N'ATOR People need glamour, not drab drones like you!
MASSES Some of us are quite nice! (Exit.)
N'ATOR Oh, what have I gotten myself into here! What have I gotten into!

Blackout

SCENE 2. The Palace.

STEPMOTHER Girls? Where are you?
BOTH (offstage) We're here!
(Sound of a man and a woman being tortured offstage.)
STEPMOTHER What are you doing? Stop that!
ODIA (enters) We're just torturing the prisoners!
STEPMOTHER You go right back there and release them!
ODIA Oh, Mother!

GARGOLA (entering) They're so stupid! They don't even know any secrets!

ODIA Damn! Damn! Damn!

STEPMOTHER Odia!

ODIA Well, I'm bored! I gotta do something!

GARGOLA I'm bored too.

ODIA I'm more bored than you are!

GARGOLA No, you're not!

STEPMOTHER How can you be bored? You've got the whole world at your command.

ODIA All we do all day is rule, rule, rule!

GARGOLA Yeah, we never have any fun anymore!

STEPMOTHER Well, why don't you do some good? Go visit the lepers in the hospital.

ODIA (getting off on the pain) Oo, that does sound like a good time! Are they still open — the *sores* I mean! (Laughs.)

GARGOLA I've got it! Let's throw a ball!

STEPMOTHER Now I don't want you girls straining yourselves throwing a ball around.

GARGOLA I don't mean that kind of ball!

ODIA Right! She means a big party — with dancing and music and food and stuff.

GARGOLA And we'll invite just everybody! The Prime Minister!

ODIA Knights in shining armor! And the princes of the Church!

GARGOLA Just everybody who's anybody!

ODIA Oh, it sounds fabulous. Let's get to work right away on it! We've got to send invitations!

GARGOLA I don't want to waste a second! Mother, help us!

INVITATION (SONG)
(sung by Stepmother and Stepsisters like the Andrew Sisters)

ALL THREE (sing:)

Goodness gracious! Send those invitations,

Only to the — only to the — only to the very best.
No one facile! Folks with razzle-dazzle.
La-di-da-di! No one shoddy!
Nothing but the very best!

STEPMOTHER (sings)

Let's invite the Archduke Basil.
He has lots of clout.

STEPSISTERS (sing:)
But his missing leg's a hassle,
And he has the gout!

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

Shall we ask our Uncle Boris?
He has lots of class.

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

But what has the man done for us?
And *there* is his gas!

ALL THREE (sing:)

Goodness gracious! Send those invitations,
Only to the — only to the — only to the very best.
No one facile. Folks with razzle-dazzle.
La-di-da-di! No one shoddy!
Nothing but the very best!

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

How about the Doge of Venice?
He's a lovely chap.

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

But he tends to be a menace
Since he got the clap!

STEPMOTHER (sing:)

What about our cousin Hedvig?
She is musical.

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

But she dances like a dead pig,
And swigs alcohol!

ALL THREE (sing:)

Goodness gracious! Send those invitations,
Only to the — only to the — only to the very best.
No one facile. Folks with razzle-dazzle.
La-di-da-di! No one shoddy!
Nothing but the best!

ALL THREE (sing:)

But what if no one's really chic or good enough?
There are standards, so we must be tough.
We can't let just anyone in.
Admitting riff-raff is a sin.
Let's go slow
Until we know
Just
Who is good enough! Yes, who is good enough!
Yes, who is good enough to come!

ODIA (sings:)

Let's invite somebody sexy,
Like a grand vizier.

GARGOLA (sings:)

What if he gets apoplexy
Stroking your brassiere?

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

What about your dear old granny
With her walking stick?

ODIA (sings:)

There's a pimple on her fanny!

GARGOLA (sings:)

And she makes me sick!

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

What about the Queen of France?

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

She's a klepto! Not a chance!

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

How about a Romanoff?

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

They are bleeders! Cross them off!

STEPMOTHER (sings:)

What about His Holiness?

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

He's a weirdo! Wears a dress!

ALL THREE (sing:)

Goodness gracious! Send those invitations,
Only to the — only to the — only to the very best.
No one facile. Folks with razzle-dazzle.
La-di-da-di! No one shoddy!
Nothing but the very best!
But what if no one's really chic or good enough?
There are standards, so we must be tough.
We can't let just anyone in.
Admitting riff-raff is a sin.

STEPSISTERS (sing:)

Don't be dumb.
The best will come!
Now who is good enough? Yes, who is good enough?
Yes, who is good enough — (spoken loudly) BUT US!

ALL THREE (sing:)

Good gracious! Send those invitations,
Only to the — only to the — only to the very best.
No one facile. Folks with razzle-dazzle.
No one but the — fancy-schmantzy, hotsy-totsy, cutsey-
wutsey, hoity-toity, haughty-gaudy, artsy-fartsy—no onebut the very best!
The best!

(They wet their fingers and touch them to their rumps and make a sizzling sound.)

STEPMOTHER It's just as well. Perhaps no one would have come to your party anyway.

ODIA (incensed) What?

GARGOLA What do you mean?

STEPMOTHER Nothing.

ODIA Are you inferring that nobody likes us?

STEPMOTHER Well, I wouldn't say that. I like you. In fact, I love you!

GARGOLA Oh, but that doesn't count. You're our mother. You *have* to!

ODIA I don't think you're right. Everybody loves us. Why, if we went for a ride in our carriage, all the people would rush out to throw rose petals at us.

GARGOLA Absolutely! What do you say, Odia? You want to go?

STEPMOTHER Now, girls, I've read there are assassins out there!

 (They start to get ready anyway.)

ODIA Are you ready, Gargola?

GARGOLA Just a minute! Don't rush me! (Calls coarsely.) Hey, out there! Send up a coach! And make it snappy!

ODIA Gargola, what are you doing? I don't want to go coach! I want to go first class!

GARGOLA Don't be so dim! Around here coach *is* first class!

STEPMOTHER Girls, you aren't going?

ODIA We'll show you! And we're not girls anymore!

FATHER (entering) What are you then?

GARGOLA We're significant queens! And we're going for a drive to see our queendom! So there!

FATHER You haven't been officially crowned. And you wouldn't be queens if you were. You'd be princesses! And *these* are the people who are trying to run the country!

ODIA Don't get surly with us. You're not our father!

GARGOLA That's right! And even if you were, we never liked you!

STEPMOTHER Girls — I mean, whatever you are —

GARGOLA And don't you stand up for him, or we'll put you both in two separate dungeons and behead you twice!

ODIA Without any conjugal visits. So there! Is the coach ready, sister?

(The coach begins to pull up, honks, crudely.)

GARGOLA It's pulling up even as we speak. We'll be out for an hour or two. Don't try to pull anything funny while we're gone.

ODIA Like a *coup d'etat* (mispronounced) or something!

FATHER Wouldn't dream of it.

STEPMOTHER Do you really think you should risk driving among the common folk?

ODIA God knows, I'm not looking forward to it. But those vulgarians out there just love to see their betters! You just wait and see! Come, sister!
The rabble awaits! (Grand Exit Odia and Gargola.)

SCENE 3. The Forest.

N'ATOR "The next morning Prince Charming went with the slipper he had found to Cinderella's father and said, 'No other shall become my wife but she whose foot this golden slipper fits.' The eldest daughter went into another room intending to try on the slipper, and her mother stood beside her. But her great toe prevented her getting it on. Her mother handed her a knife and said, 'Cut off the toe. When you are royal, you won't have to walk anymore.' And so she cut it off!"

(Characters on stage are trying on the bloody shoe, but Prince Charming is holding back. They stop and look at the Narrator.)

CHARMING You're kidding!

N'ATOR No, I'm not! She cut it off and it bled, and that's how the Prince knew she wasn't to be his bride.

CHARMING That's gross!

N'ATOR Look at you, in a dress! That's sick!

CHARMING Somehow I think my dress isn't as bad as your bloody toe!

N'ATOR Shall we continue or not?

TICKLE I say continue! There's only one person here who hasn't tried on the shoe!

(He holds out the shoe to Charming.)

CHARMING I don't want to. Do you have something in a nice little pump?

TICKLE No!

CHARMING A wooden shoe?

TICKLE Stop stalling. Do you want all these others to die?

CHARMING Well . . . I guess I'd better try it on. Wish me luck, everybody!

(They do, ad lib. Charming starts to try on the shoe, Tickle assisting.)

TICKLE *Aha!* It fits! You are the real Prince Charming!

(Enter Odia and Gargola in a coach, interrupting.)

ODIA Out of our way, peasants!

GARGOLA Move off there! Make way for royalty!

TICKLE Who are you?

GARGOLA Haven't you heard? We're in charge now. This is our land! So get out of the way! You may, however, kiss the seat cushion upon which I've been sitting!
(Holds out a cushion.)

TICKLE Just a minute now! Why have I been plotting so hard? So you two nobodies could just come in and take over?

GARGOLA What do you mean nobodies! We've been crowned! Who are you?

ODIA Yeah?

TICKLE Damn it! You turn your back for a minute and somebody else tries to move in! Arrest them!

ODIA Arrest him!

TICKLE I said it first!

GARGOLA Well, we're gonna say it last! Arrest him!

(The Masses run back and forth, not knowing who to arrest.)

CHARMING (pulling them aside, as Cinderella) Aren't you my stepsisters? Can't you help us now that we're in trouble?

CINDERELLA Wait just a minute! You can't rely on them! (to Stepsisters) Because no matter what we say you're going to be rude and stupid, aren't you?

ODIA Dear Princess Cinderella —

CINDERELLA Oh, shut up, you! I'm not finished yet! How are we supposed to deal with you? By being as vicious and ruthless as you are? Is that the answer?

MOE Ignore them, and they'll probably go away!

CINDERELLA No, that isn't the answer either!

ODIA If you think you —

CINDERELLA No, you *won't* talk! I won't let you! The quiet, rational people always get drowned out by your kind! But it's time somebody stood up to you!

BREAK THROUGH plays underneath the following (SONG)

CINDERELLA (to Moe) Come here, please!

MOE What is it?

CINDERELLA Please give me that! (meaning the charm)

ODIA What's going on here, sister?

CINDERELLA (to Moe) Hurry!

MOE Certainly! (He starts to remove the charm. Cinderella helps remove it.) Oh, what's happened?

(Moe becomes his old self.)

(Cinderella now dons the charm.)

CINDERELLA (feeling the difference) WOW! Oh, my!

ODIA (creeped out) I don't know what you're doing, but *stop* it!

CINDERELLA (coming over to Odia, but now "Charming") My good woman, you have exhausted my patience! (to Gargola) And you as well! Come here! (Gargola approaches hesitantly.) Now, grovel! (They are uncertain.) I said *grovel*!

(They prostrate themselves, intimidated.)

ODIA But we've been crowned!

CINDERELLA Yes, by your own hand! By your own hand! Not only are you a threat to the realm, you are . . . ill-bred! And that, above all, is unforgivable! (Laying hands on their heads.) Therefore, I hereby declare you both un-crowned, un-dubbed, and undone!

GARGOLA Oh, my God, we're *un-queens*!

CINDERELLA I further decree that from this day forward you both are banished from our sight until the day you die! Rise now and be gone!

(They rise, chastened.)

ODIA Well, I guess we have to go. (They start to leave, defeated. Then Odia recovers some of her old self.) (conspiratorially to Gargola) Wait, wait, wait! Maybe we could use a little of that charm ourselves and then we won't have to be banished after all!

(She signals to Gargola, who creates a diversion by beginning to loudly. The others come over to her. Meanwhile, Odia sneaks up on Cinderella, who watches but who remains above it all.) (Odia sneaks the charm off — over Cinderella's head.)

ODIA Look what *I've* got!

CHARMING Fairy Godmother, can't you do something? Hurry! Hurry!

MOE Fairy Godmother!

GODMOTHER (entering, frustrated) I'm trying! I'm trying! (waving the wand) It just doesn't seem to have it anymore.

THE
GOOD

CHARACTERS Fairy Godmother, do something!

(Then the bad characters say it mockingly.)

GODMOTHER (giving up in disgust) I can't do it! I can't take it anymore! Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! That's all I hear! Well, I won't take it, not one more minute! I *quit*!
(She throws down the wand and exits.)

(When she is gone, the others realize that the wand may still be usable, and there is a mad scramble for it. It's unclear who is going to get it. Then —)

ODIA (holding up the wand) Guess who got it!

OTHERS Oh, no!

GARGOLA Oh, yes!

TICKLE Wait! Don't use it. It might misfire again!

ODIA We're willing to risk it!

TICKLE Wait! Take me in with you!

GARGOLA Why? What's in it for us?

TICKLE Can't you tell we're the same sort of folks?

GARGOLA What do you think, Odia?

ODIA I don't trust that guy.

TICKLE It's not easy staying in power. You can always use some help!

ODIA That's true, but I don't think we need anything but this. (meaning the wand)
Not even this! (She throws the charm offstage.) (The others react to its loss.)
Ha! Ha! Now *nobody* can have any charm!

GARGOLA Just think of what we can do now!

TICKLE Together we could inflict pain on all those who've laughed at us!

CINDERELLA No, you could use it to bring good to the whole world!

CHARMING You could bring some joy into life, not more pain!

ODIA (toying with them) Whatever shall we do?

GARGOLA This is my big chance, and I'm not going to waste it! (Grabs the wand away
from Odia.) At last! At last! Now I can have the body I've always wanted!
All right, wand, make me beautiful! Here and here and here!

(She touches herself with the wand. Various parts of her body begin to swell.) What's happening to me?

(She drops the wand. Tickle gets it.)

TICKLE Well, well, well! Guess who's in charge after all!

OTHERS Give us that wand! Etc.

TICKLE Never!

(They all advance on him.)

TICKLE Aha, what I've always dreamed of! (He waves the wand — a BIG explosion!)

NIGHTMARE BALLET (SONG)

A time-warp nightmare in which Tickle is the focus. We see three people as clocks. Tickle says: "My time has come!" The Stepsisters are dragged in and offer him their crowns. Clocks change to a later hour. Tickle: "My time has come!" Cinderella enters as his bride, sits on throne. Clocks change to a later hour. Tickle: "My time has come!" Charming is dragged in. Tickle beheads him. Clocks reach midnight. Clocks: "Your time has come!" The clocks begin to say: "Tick! Tick! Tick! Tick! Tick! *Tickle!*" They advance and tickle him, get him down, building to a frightening climax.)

(Tickle screams, wakes up, looks at what has been happening in his mind and runs off.)

TICKLE (at the top of his voice) Who needs it!

Blackout.

SCENE 7. The Palace.

(Father and Stepmother are watching out the window, toward the audience.)

FATHER Where can Cinderella be? Where is she!?

STEPMOTHER She'll probably be here any minute.

FATHER Oh, God, why didn't I do something sooner! I never said anything to her. What was wrong with me! If she'd only come back, I'd try to. . . I *would*! I promise!

STEPMOTHER Odia and Gargola are late too.

FATHER Shall we have a search party sent out?

STEPMOTHER (not too sure) Well, I suppose we have to, don't we? But it has been so nice with just the two of us! (She hugs him.)

FATHER (patting her hand) If your daughters are dead, we'll have to be (smiles) . . . strong.

(They start to kiss just as others begin to troop in one by one, all disheveled.)

(Enter Odia and Gargola, crying.)

BOTH Mama! Are you there?

STEPMOTHER What happened to you two?

ODIA Oh, it's a long story. But it wasn't our fault!

FATHER Are you all right?

GARGOLA I don't know yet. Are all my limbs sound?

ODIA Are mine?

(Stepmother and Father check them for injuries.)

FATHER Come now. What were you ladies up to?

(Enter Cinderella, also bedraggled.)

Exactly what's going on here?

CINDERELLA May I sit down for a minute?

FATHER Of course.

STEPMOTHER What happened?

CINDERELLA It's a long story.

ODIA/
GARGOLA And it's her fault!

(Enter Moe, the same.)

MOE (Doesn't say anything, rests flat on his back.)

STEPMOTHER /
FATHER (looking around) What is this?

(Enter Charming, the same.)

CHARMING Oh, my god, these shoes are killing me! (Collapses.)

STEPMOTHER Will somebody please tell us what happened!

CHARMING Well, we were all in the forest and there was this big explosion and —

(Enter Tickle, the same, carrying the wand.)

TICKLE I made it! (Collapses.)

ODIA /
GARGOLA Get him out of here!

TICKLE It's all right! It's all right! (Holds up his hand to placate them.) (to Father)
Why don't *you* take this? (Offers him the wand.)

FATHER Me? (Takes the wand.)

STEPMOTHER And me! (She holds onto the wand with him.)

FATHER Maybe we should give it back to the Fairy Godmother . . .

GODMOTHER (as a face in the fireplace) I don't want it! I don't want it!

FATHER Are you positive?

GODMOTHER You can't keep counting on me, kids! I've retired!

FATHER Does anybody have a final wish? (He waves it.)

(All the characters shake their heads no and cringe — not after all they've been through.)

FATHER Well, I guess a cynical remark is called for. . . But I really don't have one. As you know, I don't like to interfere. But maybe this time it's different! (Holds up the wand up as if to break it.) All right then, let's see how we do without this! . . . Mother?

STEPMOTHER (comes over to help him) Yes, let's do it together!

(Father and the Stepmother break the wand together and throw the pieces into the fireplace.)

CINDERELLA (looking at the wand) Good-bye, little wand. I guess if I'm going to make any more wishes, I'll have to make them come true myself!

ODIA Just a darn minute now! Is that it?

GARGOLA Right! What about us? Don't we get anything?!

TICKLE And me? What about me?

CINDERELLA Oh, yes, you three! (to Tickle) The pumpkin-eater (to the Stepsisters) and the prima donnas! I have something for all of you!

ODIA You do?

TICKLE What is it?

CINDERELLA (producing them quickly) A mop for you! A pail for you! (to Tickle) And a bar of soap for you! (Sticks it in his mouth.)

ALL THREE For us?

CINDERELLA If you want to keep playing the palace, you'd better start *earning* your keep!

(The others present all agree, intimidating the three villains.)

(Tickle and the Stepsisters sing as they scrub and clean.)

WOE (SONG)

You can smile all the time,
Be the essence of elegance,
And lay on the charm,
Even reek of intelligence,
Or be kind to pets,
And put up with your relatives.
Yet all people do is make fun!

Oh, let me ask you what does it get you?
What comes from being a regular joe?
Yeah, in the end they forget that they met you.
Oh, oh, oh — woe!

(This next verse and chorus can be deleted to save time.)

You try to help out.
You try to be kind.

For giving your all
You're only maligned!

Oh, let me ask you what does it get you?
What comes from being a regular Joe?
Yeah, in the end they forget that they met you.
Oh, oh, oh — woe!

All the world is so glad
When some gal gets her fella
that
They cheer night and day
And they sing acapella,
But what of the losers,
Those folks who never make a fuss.
Yeah, nobody cares — nobody cares — nobody cares about *us*!

(They mope.)

MOE Maybe it's time we all cleaned up. Shall I be the first? (The others encourage him. They all begin to clean up. Cinderella has already gone offstage to get into a gorgeous gown.) I don't really want to be a pumpkin. (Removes the pumpkin costume.) And I didn't want to be Prince Charming either. I guess I just want to be who I am.

CHARMING Good Old Moe!

MOE We could still go look for your lost charm in the forest, brother.

CHARMING No thank you. I'm going to try it without stimulants. Just be myself.
(Removes the dress.) Well, Cinderella?

(Re-enter Cinderella in her best gown.)

CINDERELLA Well, Charming?

(He nods. She pulls him downstage with his agreement.)

BOTH (sweetly) Good-bye. (They kiss.)

CINDERELLA You know what I think?

CHARMING What?

CINDERELLA It's going to be a happy divorce!

CHARMING I think you're right.

CINDERELLA (about her gown) What do you think, Moe?

MOE I think you look wonderful!

CINDERELLA (charmed) Oh, Moe!

MOE Cinderella!

(They embrace and kiss enthusiastically.)

MOE But, brother, *you* don't have anybody?

CHARMING That's all right. I want you and Cinderella to rule in my place. I've always had this secret yearning to run off and be something exotic — like a, like a, like an *accountant!* And guess what else! I've gotten my very own first wrinkle!
(Shows it.)

(Applause from the others.)

CINDERELLA Well, I guess that about does it —

TICKLE Is there nothing for us at *all*?

GODMOTHER (entering) Okay, okay! One last little miracle! You guys need it! And then I swear I start working for myself! (to Tickle) Come here, you! I have an idea what *your* problem is! (Grabs him, puts him across her knee, pulls down his pants, blocking the audience's view with her body, and finally removes a *huge* sharp object.) Look what I found! Have you been in a thorn bush?

TICKLE I did cut one down to make my new jester's bauble not long ago!

GODMOTHER Just as I suspected! You've had this thorn up your butt the whole time!

TICKLE (sighing, rubbing his backside) Oh, you can't believe how much better I feel!

GODMOTHER All in a day's work! And as for you two?

ODIA/
GARGOLA (eagerly) Yes?

GODMOTHER I know what you really want to be!

ODIA You do?

GODMOTHER Just step over there and try those on.

(Points offstage.)

(Odia and Gargola hurriedly exit to don new clothes.)

MOE Oh, Fairy Godmother, you're terrific!

GODMOTHER Am I?

CINDERELLA Of course you are! Don't you know that?

GODMOTHER Well, Cinderella, it was always take and take and take! It wouldn't have hurt you to tell me that before, just once. You never did, you know. Nobody ever did. Even a Fairy Godmother doesn't want to be taken for granted.

CINDERELLA Oh, Fairy Godmother, I'm sorry! From now on, I'm going to treat you like my own mother, not a substitute! (They embrace.)

FATHER And from now on, I'm going to treat my daughter like . . . like my daughter!

HOW FAR CAN LOVE REACH? (SONG)
(REPRISE)

BOTH (sing in harmony:)

How far can love reach?
How much will you allow?
Oh, let me show you now!

(They embrace.)

MOE And listen all, I have further good news. I hereby decree, as your new Prince, that from this moment on the Masses shall have the right to vote!

(Enter the Masses, cheering.)

TICKLE (slyly) And I hereby declare that I am a candidate for prime minister!

MASSES (cheering) Tickle for prime minister! Tickle for prime minister!

MOE (aside) I hope they won't abuse this!

CHARMING Now can we live happily ever after?

GODMOTHER Just one more thing! (She looks toward the Stepsisters, who enter dressed as nuns in traditional wimples and habits.)

ODIA (showing off her habit) Oh, yes, *this* is it!

GARGOLA (the same) At last we've found ourselves!

ODIA Guess what! We're going to be teachers with our own school!

GARGOLA (holding up a paddle) Yes, there are so many little bad bottoms out there that need to be spanked!

(They both show their paddles and bang them happily.)

GODMOTHER Now, kids, do you think you know what you've got, even if it wasn't what you thought it was going to be?

CINDERELLA (to the Narrator) Would you mind saying the ending for us? “And they lived . . .

N’ATOR “When the wedding was going to take place, the two false sisters came and wanted to curry favor with Cinderella and take part in her good fortune. But as the bridal party was going to the church, doves flew down and picked out the eyes of each of them.”

CHARACTERS

ON STAGE (as one) PICKED OUT THEIR EYES?!

GODMOTHER (to others) What do you say, kids? Have we had enough?

ALL YES!

GODMOTHER (to others) Shall we?

(They all agree and lift the scrim and send it skyward, and then all wave good-bye to the Narrator.)

MAGIC’S HERE (SONG)

CINDERELLA (sings:)
(taking their hands)

So, my good friends, look at us!
Right where we want to be.
Now that we’re standing on a frontier,
Where do we venture from here?

(Add singers:)

Charming / Moe

Happily ever after was bound to fail.

Godmother / Tickle

Happily ever after was just a tale.

Stepsisters / Stepmother / Father

But if we put our hearts in it, we’ll prevail,
If we try to live — magically!

ALL

There’s magic for everyone.
It’s here to possess.
We’ve only just begun.
Why settle for less?

The world wants the magic touch —
To come in a wink.
Some people expect too much.

It's not what they think.
Go forward and grab your star!
No, never think small.
But if you go leap that far,
You can expect a little fall.
The magic's here! The magic's *here!*
(pointing to the ground, to each other)
And if it doesn't seem a lot,
The magic's here, the magic's *here* —
And it's all that we've got!

People may tell you stories,
Make promises they can't keep.

Now what we offer won't fill your coffer,
But boy, oh, boy is it cheap!
So dance and sing and give 'em hell!
Go take a chance and weave a spell!

(Dance sequence)

We're the magic! We're the magic!
We're all the magic is!
And *that* is good enough!
Truly good enough!
So live, live, live!

(Curtain Call.)

REPRISE OF MAGIC'S HERE
(encore, addressed to the audience)

You're the magic! *You're* the magic!
You're all that magic is!
And *that* is good enough!
Truly good enough!
So live, live, live!

THE END