CINDERELLA

Adapted by

Mickey Coburn

from the fairytale by
Charles Perrault



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About the Play: From the classical fairytale by Charles Perrault, Mickey Coburn spins a funny, lively play for children of all ages. This Cinderella is feisty and fiery, the dialog is full of humor; the addition of two sprites – Junot and Julie – give additional casting possibilities for younger actors. A charming version of the well-loved story.

About the Playwright: **Mickey Coburn** is playwright, poet and stage director. A BFA graduate of Carnegie Institute of Technology theatre program, Mickey studied in the graduate programs at the New School in New York City, the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford, England and the University of Pittsburgh. Her plays have been produced by the Acting Place, Inc. in Massachusetts, the Boston Children's Theatre, the New Ehrlich Theatre in Boston and have been given numerous readings in New York and elsewhere. Mickey conducts workshops at schools and universities and works as a stage director and acting coach. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

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CHARACTERS

CINDERELLA	Young, sweet beautiful but not sappy; "Puckish" and high spirited
AUBERT	Stepsister; eats all the time; slightly round
ARMENTINE	Stepsister; the skinny one; everything is hers; bosses Aubert; throws tantrums
GASPARDE CRISPIN	Stepmother: silly and vain; has-been Opera singer; equipped with strays, gargles and continual scales; sings part of all her sentences
HYPATIA IGNATIA HESPARA MINETTE (MINNIE)	Fairy Godmother; a bit of a bag lady; absent minded; talks in riddles; adorable
JUNOT **JULIE**	Well-Wishers/Sprites; elves; tricksters; Invisible to all except Cinderella and Minnie
CLAUDE	The Prince; charming, regular; bored with the royal life
DARCY	Prince's sidekick; devoted to Claude; overly interested in the ladies
KING FONTAINE	Jolly: more Chevalier than Boyer; something of a voyeur
MARC **RENE**	Guests at the ball; charming courtiers
METISSE **REINETTE**	Guests at the ball; charming courtiers
SIBELLE	King's Girlfriend; the floozy of her time; Speaks with Brooklyn accent
FOOTMAN/PAGE	
DANCER CINDERELLA	Cinderella's dancer double to permit magic; wears duplicate ball gown; same hair-do, etc.

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Act I
Scene 1

(The French countryside, early 19th century; the kitchen and garden of a small, country house. Inside, there is a cooking hearth, table, chairs, etc.; outside, there is a wishing well, garden bench. It is morning of the day of the great ball.

As the curtain opens, we hear GASPARDE CRISPIN, a widow in her early 40's, practicing her scales. She gets stuck on a high note, repeats it several times and then trills downward as she enters. She wears a flowing negligee over her corset and bloomers; and though not having completed her toilette, is nonetheless "done up." She attempts her scales again; gets stuck again – this time going to the counter near the hearth, pours water from the pitcher, gargles – tries scales again -- succeeds at the high note.)

GASPARDE: Manifique! Manifique! Ma-ni-fique!! (kisses her hands, arms, fingertips) Tonight I'll be la belle du balle – My gown – my hair – my eyes – but most of all – (hits high note). (Improvising; giggling) Oh, your majesty – you flatter me. But I've already sung eight songs – (flirtatiously) Well, maybe jut two or three more. Of course, if you dance with me, I'll sing all night. (she dances around the kitchen) This is a magnificent ball! I was so pleased to be invited. You old meany, you didn't invite me last year. *(she continues dancing singing; suddenly she stops – lets out a vibrato screech --)* The ball!! Aubert! Armentine !! Armentine!! Aubert!! Up – up – up!! Tonight's the King's ball! Aubert!!

(She sings the last word and is off vocalizing again. AUBERT and ARMENTINE enter; AUBERT is eating an apple; ARMENTINE carries a mirror and hairbrush)

AUBERT: What's all the screeching about? It isn't even noon yet. We've got ten hours until the ball.

GASPARDE: Only ten? I'll never have you looking beautiful by then. Would you please stop eating? You'll pop your seams tonight!

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(She takes the apple away from her; AUBERT gets another from a bowl, and eats it.)

ARMENTINE: (has been looking in the mirror; let's out a scream) Aaaaaagh!! Aaaaagh!! Aaaaagh!!!!
GASPARDE: What? What? What?
ARMENTINE: A gray hair! I found a gray hair!
AUBERT: *(laughing and singing)* Mademoiselle called Armentine how old are you? Mademoiselle called Armentine how old are you? *(ARMENTINE chases her, grabs her and pulls hairs out of AUBERT'S head)*
ARMENTINE: Not as old as my old maid sister!! There's a gray hair (yank) There's another! (continues)
AUBERT: Ouch! Mama!! Help!! Mama! Ouch! I'll be bald!
GASPARDE: Enough! Armentine – sit down! Sit! Now stop crying Aubert; your eyes will be all red and puffy.
AUBERT: So what? It's a masked ball.
GASPARDE: At the stroke of midnight, we remove our masks. The Prince will not fall in love with a girl who has red and puffy eyes. There now – eat something – you'll feel better –
ARMENTINE: The Prince won't fall in love with a girl who eats all the time either-
GASPARDE: Tina –
ARMENTINE: Or who has gray hair!! (She pulls one more out of her sister's head; AUBERT screams)
GASPARDE: Enough!! Stop that! Sit!! (sitting at table) First we'll have our coffee; then we'll have a soothing herb bath with scented oil….(all are at table)
…maybe that will calm you both down.
AUBERT: Where is the coffee?
ARMENTINE: Where is Cinderella?
GASPARDE: (calling) Ella! Cinderella!! Oh, that girl – off dreaming at the river again – (she goes outside) Cinderella!

(CINDERELLA runs in carrying a basket of flowers)

CINDERELLA: Here I am – Good morning, Mama.

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GASPARDE: Where have you been? There's no coffee – there's no breakfast – what are those for? We cannot eat flowers for breakfast.
CINDERELLA*: (entering kitchen)* The coffee's ready, Mama.
GASPARDE: (*following*) Lazy, good-for-nothing girl. What am I to do with you?
ARMENTINE: Oh, what gorgeous flowers – perfect – perfect – I'm going to wear them in my hair! Perfect – I'm going to wear them in my hair!
AUBERT: To cover the gray? Uh- uh – you can't have them – Cinderella picked them for me --didn't you, Cinderella?
ARMENTINE: To eat in an omelet?

(They've been pulling at the flowers, and spill them on the floor. CINDERELLA retrieves them)

GASPARDE: *(singing)* Silence!! Sit down – it is very déclassé to wear flowers. It's probably not a good idea to eat them either.

(The two girls are squared off at each other)

GASPARDE*: (singing)* Sit!! Coffee!! Now!! Up! Up! Cinderella – we're waiting – (As CINDERELLA serves three bowls of coffee)
CINDERELLA: Tonight's the ball, Mama –
ARMENTINE: What's it to you?
AUBERT: (overlapping) What's it to her?
CINDERELLA: Did you ever see the Prince, Mama?
GASPARDE: Yes, once.
ARMENTINE: You never told me that –
AUBERT: (overlapping) What did he look like? –
CINDERELLA: He's very handsome, isn't he?
GASPARDE: He was very small at the time. The King brought him to the opera. I was singing Béatrice – You should have heard me – I was truly magnificent. In Act 2, I…..
ARMENTINE: The Prince – Mama!
GASPARDE: He was only six. He fell asleep during Act I. He missed my best Aria. He's been abroad at school ever since – hopefully he's learned to stay awake at the opera.
CINDERELLA: *(serving little buns)* I can't wait to see him. I know he's very handsome –

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AUBERT*: (stuffing her mouth with rolls)* See him? How will you see him?
ARMENTINE: She's not coming to the ball – Mama! How embarrassing – she can't come to the ball!!
CINDERELLA: Everyone is invited –
ARMENTINE: Did you get an invitation? You didn't get an invitation!
CINDERELLA: Everyone got an invitation.
ARMENTINE: Mama! You said you tore it up!
AUBERT: Servants are not invited!
CINDERELLA: I'm not a servant. You've treated me like one since my father died. But I'm not a servant. And you had no right to tear up my invitation –
ARMENTINE: You're a dirty little thing who sleeps near the cinders – Mama – she can't come to the ball – You can't let her – Mama –(she throws a tantrum) You mustn't let her come … (etc.)
GASPARDE: Go—go—go—Tina—Aubert—get ready for your bath! Now! Now!!

(They exit; AUBERT takes her coffee and rolls with her)

GASPARDE: Perhaps next year, Cinderella –
CINDERELLA: But this is the ball to welcome home the Prince an to find him a bride. Please – I've always dreamed of going to a ball –
GASPARDE: Well, if you're very good, when one of your lovely sisters marries him, I'll let you come to the wedding. Now go fetch water for your sisters' bath – go—go—go—

(GASPARDE exits)

Scene 2

(CINDERELLA takes the flowers and a pitcher and goes out to the well)

CINDERELLA: "You're a dirty little thing who sleeps near the cinders –" If my papa was alive I wouldn't sleep near the cinders – and I'd go to the ball – *(She lowers the well bucket for water)* He wouldn't marry one of them anyway. Mean, ugly things. And they're not my sisters – "She

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can't come to the ball – you can't let her –" *(She pours the water into the pitcher and arranges flowers in the pitcher)*

CINDERELLA: Mean – ugly – nasty – I wish…. I wish Aubert would eat too much and explode – and I wish…. I wish…Armentine's hair would turn gray all at once… and I wish…
JUNOT: *(a voice from the well)* Better be careful –
CINDERELLA*: (looking around)* Who's that?
JULIE*: (a voice from the well)* Better be careful --
JUNOT: Your wishes might come true…
CINDERELLA: Where are you?
JUNOT: In here –
CINDERELLA: *(looking in the well)* I can't see you –

(JULIE laughs)

JUNOT: *(popping up)* Now you can –
CINDERELLA: What are you doing in the well?
JUNOT: We live in the well –
CINDERELLA: We? Are there more of you?
JULIE: *(coming from behind well; behind Cinderella)* There's me and he –
CINDERELLA: How funny you are. What are you? Why do you live in the well?
JUNOT: Because we're well-wishers.
CINDERELLA: There's no such thing.
JULIE: But there has to be – here we are…
CINDERELLA: Why didn't I see you before?
JULIE: Why didn't she see us before?
JUNOT: Because we didn't let her.
JULIE: We didn't let you*. (to Junot)* Why not?
JUNOT: This just seemed the right time. Those were terrible wishes you were making.
JULIE: The ones you made yesterday were much nicer about going to the ball and meeting the Prince and living in the palace…
CINDERELLA: Oh, you awful little creatures – you've been spying on me –
JUNOT: That's what we're supposed to do – we're supposed to hear your wishes and make them come true.
JULIE: Can we do that?

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JUNOT: Well, we've never done it before; but we can certainly try –
JULIE: Oh, let's do try – how do we start?
JULIE: We start by introducing ourselves. I'm Junot and this is Julie. (they bow)
JULIE: Can we make Aubert explode first? Please?
JUNOT: First, we should help Cinderella get to the ball.
CINDERELLA: I couldn't go anyway. It's a costume ball; I haven't a gown or a mask or an invitation.
JULIE: If Aubert and Armentine explode, Cinderella can wear their costumes and use their invitations.
ARMENTINE*: (off)* Cinderella – where's the bath water? Hurry up your lazy thing –
CINDERELLA: "Hurry up you lazy thing!" She calls me lazy. All she does all day is stare into a mirror and fuss with her face and her hair – and it doesn't do a bit of good.
AUBERT: (off) Cinderella – bring the water for our baths – and some lunch – you mean girl – you're starving me to death –
CINDERELLA: And she eats. All the time. Screams and eats.
JULIE: Why don't you just – run away?
CINDERELLA: I think about it all the time. I've no where to go. It's my house, you see. My father didn't know how terrible they were when he married Gasparde. And then he died. I was very little. I thought it was supposed to be this way.
JUNOT: And now you don't know how to stop it.
CINDERELLA*: (filling bucket at the well)* I'd better bring the water.
AUBERT/ARMENTINE: Cinderella!! Cinderella!!
CINDERELLA: Oh, dear, they're coming out – you'd better hide –
JUNOT: They can't see us –
JULIE: We're invisible –
JUNOT: Except to you –

(ARMENTINE and AUBERT enter from the house)

CINDERELLA: Oh dear, I'm in for it now…
ARMENTINE: What ever are you doing? You should be spanked, you lazy thing—*(JUNOT smacks ARMENTINE'S bottom)* Aaaggggh!! How dare you– I'll pull your hair out –

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(JULIE pulls AUBERT'S hair)

AUBERT: Aggghhh! Why you – *(JUNOT pinches her)* Owwwww!

(ARMENTINE reaches out to hit CINDERELLA; JULIE grabs her hand and twirls her around. AUBERT starts toward CINDERELLA; JUNOT trips her; she falls face down)

ARMENTINE: Get up, you silly fool – get up!

(JULIE pushes her down on her seat AUBERT and ARMENTINE try to get up; JUNOT and JULIE respectively push them down each time)

AUBERT/ARMENTINE: *(overlapping)* This is – preposterous – what's going on – stop it – Let me out of here – MAMA!

(CINDERELLA is laughing; GASPARDE enters from the house)

GASPARDE: What's the matter wit you girls? I've seen anything so ridiculous!! Why are you bobbing up and down like that?

(JULIE and JUNOT retreat to the well)

GASPARDE: Get up! Up! Up! Up! Now march – to your rooms immediately –
AUBERT: *(pointing at Cinderella)* She did it – she did it Mama –
ARMENTINE: *(crying)* She did, Mama, she really did –
GASPARDE: Nonsense - she couldn't have done anything this time; she was Nowhere near you; she's not a magician! Go –go—go—to your rooms! Cinderella, bring the water immediately!! *(exits pushing the bawling sisters in front of her)* Ridiculous behavior! What's wrong with the two of you?
CINDERELLA*: (to J and J, laughing*) Oh – you're naughty creatures. Wonderful! But very naughty – I'll be right back. Don't go away – (hurries into the house with the water)
JULIE: Oh, that was fun! Let's sneak upstairs and liven up bath time. *(starts toward the house)*

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JUNOT: Julie – no. We'll just get Cinderella in trouble and we'll never get her to the ball.
JULIE: But can you imagine those silly sisters? Splash – whoosh – glug – glug – glug – (*pretends to drown)*
JUNOT: Julie –
JULIE: All right. What do we do now? How do we make wishes come true?
JUNOT: I don't know.
JULIE: You don't?
JUNOT: No. I think we're supposed to, but we were never taught—
JULIE: Well, if we can't make wishes come true, who can?
JUNOT: What?
JULIE: What's what?
JUNOT: No. What did you say?
JULIE: I said – if we can't make wishes come true – who can?
JUNOT: Of course! Come on!!
JULIE: Where are we going?
JUNOT; To find who can!
JULIE: Who can what?
JUNOT: Make wishes come true.
JULIE: Who can do that?
JUNOT: You'll see – hurry!!

(They exit.)

SCENE 3

(We hear voices offstage).

DARCY: (*offstage*) You don't know what you're doing – Claude – Come back here – *(CLAUDE enters)* You've chosen the worst possible time to take off –

(DARCY enters)

DARCY: At least you could consider me – it's hardly fair –
CLAUDE: Ah – here's a well. You'd better fill your flask, too – it's a long trek. *(Draws water through the next few speeches)*

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DARCY: You've only been here a few days. If you've got to take off so soon, why can't it wait until tomorrow? Tonight's the ball.
CLAUDE: That's exactly why I'm leaving this afternoon.
DARCY: But every girl from here to Paris has been invited.
CLAUDE: Precisely. Darcy – can you imagine having to dance with every girl from here to Paris? Tall ones, short ones, thin ones, fat ones --
DARCY*: (starting out)* I sure can – we'd better hurry back --
CLAUDE: *(stopping him)* And every one of them wants to marry me.
DARCY: You only have to marry one of them; but you can dance with all of them.
CLAUDE: You can dance with all of them.
DARCY: Precisely! Let's go back --

(CLAUDE walks to bench and sits)

DARCY: It's easy for you. You're the Prince; all you have to do is throw a ball, or raise your scepter or life an eyebrow – and you can meet any girl you choose. But what about me? Do you want to deny your best friend the opportunity of meeting all those lovely ladies? You've got the whole kingdom at our feet. All I have is me!
CLAUDE: Lucky you! Darcy, if a girl is interested in you, it's because you're you. If she's interested in me, it's because I'm the Prince.
DARCY: Lucky you! I'd switch places any day.
CLAUDE: Or night?
DARCY: Really? Prince for a night? Me? Tonight?
CLAUDE: It's an interesting idea. If I really do leave my father will disown me. Sure, you could pretend to be me. It's a masked ball. Besides, no one knows what either of us looks like.
DARCY: Except His Majesty.
CLAUDE: It could still work. My father's as interested in the ladies as you are. He may be too busy to notice. I wish he'd find a wife for himself instead of for me-
DARCY: What if he does notice? Where will you be?
CLAUDE: I'll be there. It'll be fun to watch. Besides, I'm still supposed to choose a bride. Heaven help me.
DARCY: So I do the dancing and you do the marrying.
CLAUDE: If my father catches on, I'll step in and rescue you.
DARCY: Promise?

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CLAUDE: Word of honor.
DARCY: With my luck, you'll step in just when I'm dancing with the prettiest girl of all.
CLAUDE: No doubt. But you have to promise to behave in a princely manner.
DARCY: Sure. Let's go back –
CLAUDE: Not 'sure.' Promise. You know how rowdy you can get.
DARCY: Moi? Little old me? Claude – don't you trust me?
CLAUDE: No. You're too fond of practical jokes.
DARCY: All right. I'll behave.
CLAUDE: Promise. A royal gentleman.
DARCY*: (taking his hand)* A royal gentleman. We'd better go back.
CLAUDE: You go on ahead. It takes a Prince longer to dress. I have plenty of time.
DARCY: You won't take off without me—
CLAUDE: I'll be there. Word of honor.

(DARCY dances off. CLAUDE stretches out on the bench. CINDERELLA enters from house with bucket; goes to well to refill it)

CINDERELLA: "Do this – do that—do this—do that—" Pick-pick-pick-pick-pick! It isn't fair – it simply isn't fair! (looking in well) Junot! Julie! Are you there? Junot?
CLAUDE: Did you lose someone in the well.
CINDERELLA: (*startled*) What? Who are you? What are you doing here?
CLAUDE: I didn't mean to frighten you…
CINDERELLA: I'm not frightened. What do you want?
CLAUDE: I just stopped for some water.
CINDERELLA: Yes? Well, take your water and go –
CLAUDE: You're not very hospitable –
CINDERELLA: This is not an inn, monsieur, and I have work to do. So take your water –
CLAUDE: *(holding up flask)* I already did. Who's in the well?
CINDERELLA: What do you mean?
CLAUDE: You called to someone in the well.
CINDERELLA: No, I didn't.
CLAUDE: You certainly did. I heard you.

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CINDERELLA: You shouldn't eavesdrop. This is a private garden. Good-day, monsieur. (starts to exit with her pail of water)
CLAUDE: *(calls into well)* Hello down there!
CINDERELLA: What are you doing? No one can live in a well. You're crazy—
CLAUDE: Was it a game, then?
CINDERELLA: Well, if you must know, yes, it was a game and none of your business.
CLAUDE: Why are you so angry?
CINDERELLA: (*angrily*) I'm not angry.
CLAUDE: You're very angry.
CINDERELLA*: (very angry)* No – I'm not…(catches herself) angry…Goodbye monsieur.
CLAUDE: Do you live here or just work here?
CINDERELLA: I'm not a servant. I live here…this is my house and my garden. Will you please go away?
CLAUDE: All right. Good day, mademoiselle.

(He turns to leave and turns back)

CINDERELLA/CLAUDE: Monsieur…../ Mademoiselle….
CINDERELLA/CLAUDE: I'm sorry I was so…. /I'm sorry I was so….. *(They laugh)*
CLAUDE: Rude. I was very rude.
CINDERELLA: No. I was very rude. I apologize. I spend so much time in the kitchen, I forget how to behave with…..
CLAUDE: Strangers in your garden? I shouldn't have been here; I'm sorry.
CINDERELLA: Well, I must bring this upstairs. My sisters are going to the ball.
CLAUDE: And you? Aren't you going?
CINDERELLA: Me? No. I don't care about a silly old ball. I don't want to go.
CLAUDE: It'll be very boring anyway.
CINDERELLA: Yes. A terrible bore.
CLAUDE: All that dancing.
CINDERELLA: A terrible bore…
CLAUDE: You hate dancing then?
CINDERELLA: I've never…I don't…yes, I detest dancing!
CLAUDE: You've never danced then?

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CINDERELLA*: (flustered)* Well – I – it's not important – I –
CLAUDE: Here. (takes her hand) I'll show you. It's very simple.
CINDERELLA: (pu*lling away)* I can't – I have to work – I –\
CLAUDE: (*waltzing with her)* Come – 1-2-3 – 1-2-3 –
CINDERELLA: Really, you shouldn't be here at all, you know….
CLAUDE: It's the waltz. Come on – I'll teach you.
CINDERELLA: I have work to do – I don't want to –
CLAUDE: 1-2-3—1-2-3 – That's it – 1-2-3 – 1-2-3 – See? You dance very well. I told you it's easy.
CINDERELLA: My father danced with me when I was little. I'd forgotten – *(He twirls her faster; they laugh; she breaks away)*
CINDERELLA: I have to go –
CLAUDE: Come to the ball –
CINDERELLA: Will you be there?
CLAUDE: Probably….yes. I'll be there.
CINDERELLA: I can't. I don't have an invitation.
CLAUDE: Everyone's invited*. (takes out invitation)* Here – go on – take it.
CINDERELLA: Where did you get this?
CLAUDE: It popped out of the well. It's real. Now you have no excuse. Tonight you can dance at the ball – *(He twirls her again; she begins to cry)* What's the matter? Did I say something?
CINDERELLA*: (running into the house)* Goodbye, monsieur.
CLAUDE: Wait! I don't know your name –

(He waits a moment and exits)

Scene 4

(JUNOT and JULIE appear)

JULIE: Wasn't that nice? Now Cinderella has an invitation to the ball and her wish will come true.
JUNOT: No, it won't.
JULIE: It won't? Why won't it?
JUNOT: Because her stepmother won't let her and she hasn't a gown and she hasn't a way to get there.
JULIE: Junot – I thought we were going to help her!
JUNOT: We have helped her.

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JULIE: Oh, that's so good. I'm glad! (*pause*) How did we do that?
JUNOT: We sent for someone with special talents.
JULIE: We did? Oh, yes – we did.
JUNOT: Now, we wait.

(JUNOT climbs into the well; JULIE goes behind it; after a moment as the lights change to twilight.)

JULIE: Junot….
JUNOT: Yes?
JULIE: How long do we have to wait?
JUNOT: Not very. Shhhh –

(A beat. Laughter. GASPARDE vocalizing; she enters garden from house decked out for the ball)

GASPARDE: (*singing*) Oh – what a night – a magical night – the moon is full – the stars are bright –

(She repeats last word trying to hit appropriate note)

ARMENTINE: (*off*) Give me that – you awful girl –
CINDERELLA: (*off*) It's mine – give it back to me, Armentine –
ARMENTINE: (*off*) It used to be mine and I'm taking it back – there!
(ripping sound)
GASPARDE: Armentine – what are you doing?

(CINDERELLA comes running out crying and goes to the bench; ARMENTINE follows carrying remnants of a dress)

ARMENTINE: I found her stitching up this old rag of a gown I gave her. She actually meant to wear it to the ball. (*throws it at CINDERELLA)*
GASPARDE: Cinderella, I told you that you couldn't go this year. Now, behave yourself or I'll lock you in the cellar.
CINDERELLA: It was my gown. She had no right…
GASPARDE: The cellar…
AUBERT: *(entering)* How am I going to eat in this gown? I can't even breathe!

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GASPARDE: Oh, look at the both of you! How will the Prince ever choose?
AUBERT: Really, Mama – I can't even breathe. I'll turn blue before I get there.
GASPARDE: The gown fit you last week when it came from Paris.
ARMENTINE: But all she's done this week is eat and eat…
AUBERT: I was nervous about the ball. I always eat when I'm nervous. I can't help it!
ARMENTINE: Too bad. Now you can roll to the palace like a great pumpkin.
GASPARDE: Armentine!
ARMENTINE: And when you curtsy to the Prince, you'll split your seams !! (*laughs*)
AUBERT: Mama!!
GASPARDE: Oh, dear – Cinderella – stop your sniveling and hurry – get your sewing basket – hurry!!

(CINDERELLA gets her basket from the kitchen)

GASPARDE: Now, stop your weeping, Aubert; you'll ruin your makeup and your mask.

(CINDERELLA works on the gown; letting out seams etc. AUBERT makes much fuss: "ouch! careful" etc.)

ARMENTINE: What a fuss! Mine is the prettier gown anyway, Aubert. He won't even notice yours.
AUBERT: You're lucky it's a masked ball, Tina – you'd scare him away – Ouch!
GASPARDE: That's enough—that's enough – where is that carriage? We'll miss the first promenade –
AUBERT: It's out front. It's been out front for ages.
GASPARDE: Aubert – why didn't you tell me? Come along girls. Goodnight, Cinderella. Don't wait up.
AUBERT: And don't wake us tomorrow. We'll dance till dawn and sleep all day.
ARMENTINE: We'll tell you all about it – goodnight –

(They exit)

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Scene 5

(CINDERELLA is crying softly; lights change again; a magical glow; we hear humming)

MINNIE: (*entering*)
The breeze is a tease
The moon a balloon
A mouse in the house
Sings the happiest tune. Mooooon ----toooooon --- balloooooooon ----

(CINDERELLA looks up amazed)

MINNIE: May I sit down*? (does so)* I walked ten miles today. Maybe less. I must take these shoes off. *(does so)* You don't mind, do you? Ahhh -- that's better. What a pretty garden. What's your name?
CINDERELL: Cinderella.
MINNIE: Cinderella. Cin—der—ella. Cin – der – ella. Cinder-ella – oh, that's wonderful. You can do so much with it. Well, don't you want to know my name? You're very pretty but not very curious.
CINDERELLA: I'm sorry –
MINNIE: No. You're Cinderella. And I'm Hypatia Ignatia Hespara Minette.
CINDERELLA: Hypatia –

(JUNOT and JULIE sneak out to watch)

MINNIE: Hypatia Ignatia Hespara Minette.
CINDERELLA: Hypatia Ignatia Hes…Hes…
MINNIE: Oh, just call me Minnie. Everyone does.
CINDERELLA: Minnie.
MINNIE: Did you have a good cry? Nothing better than a good cry, except a good laugh. But a good laugh is harder to come by. I myself have a good laugh at least once a day. I save my good cries though – for special occasions.
CINDERELLA: I don't like to cry –
MINNIE: No? Well, don't do it then. That's simple. What's this? *(picks up dress remnant)*
CINDERELLA: A gown. I was going to wear it to the Prince's ball.

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MINNIE: Oh, you couldn't do that. Poor thing – it's had a terrible accident. What will you wear instead?
CINDERELLA: I'm not going to the ball now –
MINNIE: Weren't you invited?

(CINDERELLA hands her the invitation)

MINNIE: Well, that's official. Don't you want to go?
CINDERELLA: Oh, yes – very much.
MINNIE: Well, we'd better get to work. *(She picks up her big bag; opens it; glitter flies out)*
CINDERELLA: Who are you?
MINNIE: Didn't we do that part? I'm Hypatia Ignatia…
CINDERELLA: No, no – I mean who are you? Why are you helping me?
MINNIE: That's two questions. It's very greedy to ask two at once. You may have only one.
CINDERELLA: (laughing) Which shall I ask?
MINNIE: That's three. We'll be here all night answering all of those and you'll never get to the ball. Now, let's see, what do we need*? (She puts bag on the ground and peeks inside; JUNOTand JULIE creep over and peek in)* Something round, I think—

(She claps her hands; JUNOT and JULIE run around looking for something; CINDERELLA watches intently JULIE brings pitcher of flowers)

MINNIE: No, no, no – round; very round –

(JUNOT brings bowl from kitchen)

MINNIE: No, no, no – too small –
JULIE: *(running in with a small pumpkin)* Look, Minnie – will this do?
MINNIE: Very nicely, indeed. Put it there – *(points to the ground)* Oh, dear, if it gets too big we'll never get it through the gate. Over there I think – *(She points to opening between trees and house)* Now—snap – snap! (*nothing*) Hmmmm – it always used to work. Maybe it needs a little dance to cheer it up.

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(JUNOT and JULIE run around pumpkin; glitter sprinkles down over the pumpkin; it snaps into a billowing coach or a similar effect)

MINNIE: Snap! Snap! Snappity Snap!
CINDERELLA: Oh, how beautiful! I can't believe it – are you a magician?
MINNIE: A magician? Or a witch – or your fairy godmother.
CINDERELLA: Fairy Godmother?
MINNIE: That's silly isn't it? I haven't even got a wand. (*giggles*)
JULIE: It didn't come with a horse. How will it get to the palace?
MINNIE: Oh, dear – that will never do. *(looks in bag)* My, my, my – I didn't bring one. Would you mind being a horse, Julie? Just for tonight?
JULIE: Is it all right, Junot?
JUNOT: Sure – it'll be fun –
MINNIE: Go – go –

(JULIE goes to left of coach hidden by house)

MINNIE: Now make a really good horsy sound and jump up and down…. *(Glitter falls)* Snap, snap, snappity snap! *(MINNIE claps her hands; we see the tail end of the horse with the tail waving around or a similar effect)*
JUNOT: Oh, you're lovely Julie – a dapple gray!

(JULIE neighs)

CINDERELLA: This can't really be happening. It must all be a dream….
MINNIE: *(looks in her bag)* I don't think so; I ran out of dreams weeks ago – only wishes left.
JUNOT: May I go, too, Minnie?
MINNIE: If I remember that one. Let me think. Snap, snap, snappity snap! Spin! Spin! Spin!

(JUNOT spins near coach out of sight for a second and FOOTMAN spins in)

CINDERELLA: Oh, Junot, how handsome you are!
MINNIE: There you are, Cinderella, now off to the ball with you –
CINDERELLA: Oh, Minnie, thank you – but….

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MINNIE: But, but, but – there is a but I think – oh, yes, But you must leave the ball by midnight – before the clock strikes twelve. My magic doesn't last as long as it used to. Hurry now –
CINDERELLA: But Minnie….
MINNIE: I don't have any more buts about it –

(CINDERELLA goes to the coach reluctantly)

MINNIE: Wait! You can't go looking like that. My goodness, that'll never do.
CINDERELLA; It's all I have.
MINNIE: Couldn't we borrow one of your sisters' gowns? No, that's not a good idea.
CINDERELLA: It was a lovely dream after all.
MINNIE: (looks in bag) Wait, wait, wait – if you help me, I've one wish left.
CINDERELLA: What should I do?
MINNIE: Imagine yourself in the loveliest gown waltzing at the ball. Go on – dance, dance, dance ….

(Glitter falls; CINDERELLA spins; becomes DANCERELLA in mask)

MINNIE: There! I'm really wonderful at this. Now hurry, hurry! *(CINDERELLA goes to her and kisses her)* Oh my – oh dear – hurry now. Remember – you must leave before the clock strikes twelve.

(Footman bows; horse neighs; CINDERELLA steps into coach And goes off with MINNIE waving)

CINDERELLA: *(calling – off)* Goodbye Minnie – thank you!!
MINNIE; Goodbye Cinderella……..

End Act I

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ACT II

Scene 1

(Curtain rises on the ball; music; banners fly in as THREE COUPLES waltz; CLAUDE wanders about watching, waiting. The stepsisters stand near the sweet table; AUBERT is munching away; the KING enters with GASPARDE; the PAGE heralds his entrance; the couples bow)

KING: Don't stop – please. Dance, feast, enjoy yourselves. All the ballrooms and terraces welcome you. My son – Prince Claude – is home again and before this night is over, he'll choose his bride. Musicians – please –

(Music in; dancing. KING and GASPARDE stroll downstage. The SISTERS follow)

GASPARDE: What a charming ball, Your Majesty. It reminds me of the marvelous parties in Paris. Of course, when I retired to the country, I gave up a brilliant career. But as you've noticed I'm sure, I'm still in perfect voice. I could easily be persuaded to sing another song – perhaps the aria from….

KING: Merci, Madame Crispin – perhaps a bit later. The young people want to dance.

GASPARDE: Oh, your majesty – do call me Gasparde. You always used to ; don't you remember?

KING: Gasparde – of course.

(Stepsisters pull GASPARDE away)

AUBERT/ARMENTINE: Mama – Mama –

(KING goes to a couple quickly; talks; dances with the girl)

GASPARDE: What do you want? I'm talking with the King – the King! Oh – now see what you've done –

ARMENTINE: We haven't danced all night, Mama –

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AUBERT: I thought the Prince was supposed to dance with everyone; he hasn't even noticed me –

GASPARDE: If you keep stuffing your mouth with sweets and following me around, how will he notice you? Now circulate – circulate –

ARMENTINE: But Mama – *(They follow her upstage scolding)*

DARCY*: (dancing with SIBELLE)* Mademoiselle Sibelle – Sibelle….a lovely name – before the end of the evening, I'm bound to propose to you.

SIBELLE: *(in Brooklyn accent)* Oh, your highness, that's so sweet. I'm really flattered, really. But you see, I'm already spoken for. I mean, well, I'm practically engaged – practically –

DARCY: But Sibelle – I'm the Prince –

SIBELLE: Oh, I know. Excuse me your highness. Oh, King – King –

(The KING has finished his dance with REINETTE. SIBELLE goes to him; he turns to go the other way and sees GASPARDE coming toward him; chooses SIBELLE as the lesser of two evils)

SIBELLE: You haven't danced with poor little me all night, your Majesty. You've been yacking with that canary.

KING: Sibelle, my dear – Madame Crispin is an old acquaintance.

SIBELLE: Old is right. One dance – you promised – you wouldn't want me to cry and make a scene?

KING: Perhaps later, my dear –

(GASPARDE approaches; KING dances SIBELLE away DARCY has been avoiding ARMENTINE and AUBERT; hurries to METISSE and MARC; waltzes METISSE downstage; SISTERS hurry back to GASPARDE)

DARCY: Ah, Mademoiselle, I've been watching you all night. Mademoiselle….?

METISSE: Metisse, your highness.

DARCY: Metisse. A lovely name. Before the end of the evening, I am bound to propose to you.

(MARC is keeping close by)

METISSE*: (stops dancing)* Oh, your highness, I'm really flattered, buy you see,… you see….

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MARC: Forgive me, your highness; Mademoiselle Metisse is my fiancée. I'm sure your highness understands –

DARCY: Of course. Of course. Monsieur – Mademoiselle. (going to CLAUDE)

METISSE: Did you have to do that, Marc? How embarrassing! He was going to propose to me – the Prince!

MARC: Don't be angry – *(she walks away; he follows)* Metisse – I apologize –

CLAUDE: Your highness – are you enjoying myself?

DARCY: All the eligible girls must be on the terrace. So far, I've been refused by two ladies –

CLAUDE: Darcy – are you proposing to everyone? You promised to behave like a gentleman –

DARCY: Not to worry, my friend, your reputation is in tact.

CLAUDE: I think you should let me choose my own bride, Darcy; you do the dancing – I'll do the proposing.

DARCY: How will you know whom to propose to if you stand in a corner all night?

CLAUDE: I'll know. Go on – the ladies are waiting. *(DARCY steps back onto the dance floor)*

GASPARDE: There he is – now go – introduce yourselves. Be charming!

(ARMENTINE and AUBERT surround DARCY, curtsying and fawning)

ARMENTINE: Your highness – Armentine Crispin. We were introduced earlier this evening. (*He turns and…)*

AUBERT: Aubert Crispin, your highness. Could I bring you a bit of supper*? (He turns and…)*

ARMENTINE: Oh, your highness – I want so much to hear about your stay abroad. And we haven't had our dance yet – *(He turns and…)*

AUBERT: It's our dance your highness – I do love to waltz –

ARMENTINE: No It's my dance –

AUBERT: It is not – let go of him –

ARMENTINE: Go away Aubert – go eat something –

AUBERT: Get out of here Armentine – I'll tell Mama –

(DARCY gets away)

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ARMENTINE: I won't let you ruin my evening, Aubert –
AUBERT: *(overlapping)* Don't try to spoil my evening Armentine—
ARMENTINE: Where is he?
AUBERT: Now see what you've done*! (They go after him together)*
ARMENTINE/AUBERT: Your highness – oh, your highness –

(GASPARDE has been circling the KING)

KING *(with SIBELLE):* Once my son is happily settle, we can discuss our own future, my dear.
SIBELLE: I think you're trifling with me, your majesty. I know you think I'm too young for you.
KING: But you're not too young for my son, my dear Sibelle, and one day he will be king –
SIBELLE: Gee, I never thought of that –
KING: Come – I'll introduce you –

(They turn to look for the Prince; DARCY enters walking very fast FOLLOWED BY ARMENTINE and AUBERT calling after him. SIBELLE and KING stop to look after them and GASPARDE intervenes)

GASPARDE: Your majesty – *(takes his arm)* do let me tell you about my two lovely daughters— (She ushers him away)
SIBELLE: Well, I never…..

(RENE and REINETTE stroll in)

REINETTE: But he hasn't even noticed me, Rene. And it's getting so late. The ball will be over –
RENE: The ball will not be over until the Prince dances with every girl here.
REINETTE: But there are hundred of girls in all the ballrooms….
RENE: Haven't I always taken care of my little sister? I promise you will dance with the Prince.

(DARCY enters again. RENE intercepts him)

RENE: Your highness, may I have the pleasure of introducing you to my…..
(DARCY grabs REINETTE and dances off)

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DARCY: Merci, Monsieur – many thanks –

(ARMENTINE and AUBERT enter; they grab RENE, see he's not the Prince and stalk away to bother GASPARDE).

Scene 2

(The PAGE trumpets. CINDERELLA appears. Everything stops. DARCY takes a step forward and sees CLAUDE coming to the stairway. CINDERELLA descends; CLAUDE takes her hand, bows; they dance. Everyone begins to whisper. He dances her to the KING; she curtsies, etc. They dance away.)

GASPARDE: My goodness – who could she possibly be?
KING: Obviously a princess. The way she holds her head; what grace! Charming! Charming! I wouldn't be surprised if my son has made his choice.
GASPARDE*: (indicating DARCY)* But isn't that – I mean – that's certainly the Prince – he's danced with all the…
KING: A youthful joke, I think, Madame. That's Darcy, my son's friend. Claude seemed to be waiting all night. I understand why.
GASPARDE: That's not fair, your majesty; by your own edict the prince is to dance with all the young ladies. If you'll excuse me, I'll just remind him of that –
KING: *(stopping her)* Madame! Gasparde – won't you come to the music room and sing that remarkable aria from The Petulant Princess and the Poisoned Pomegranate?
GASPARDE: But the Prince…my daughters… I… sing, your majesty? Oh, I'm terribly flattered-

(They exit. CLAUDE and CINDERELLA STROLL downstage; everything softens behind them)

CLAUDE: I've been waiting for you all evening –
CINDERELLA: For me, Monsieur? How could you know I was coming? We've never met.
CLAUDE: But – I could have sworn – in the garden – I know that we have met, Mademoiselle.

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CINDERELLA: On a night like this, with music and magic and masks, anything is possible. I could be a fantastical princess, and you might even be the Prince.

CLAUDE: I am the Prince, Mademoiselle.

CINDERELLA: Ohhh---- *(she curtsies)*

CLAUDE: (taking her hand and lifting her up) And who are you, really? Where do you come from?

CINDERELLA: It isn't important. You wouldn't believe me.

CLAUDE: Of course I would –

CINDERELLA: I don't think so.

CLAUDE: Please?

CINDERELLA: I'm a country girl, and my fairy godmother turned a pumpkin into the coach that brought me here, and an elf into the horse and spun this gown from the stars –

(CLAUDE laughs)

CINDERELLA: I said you won't believe me—

CLAUDE: It's too fantastic –

CINDERELLA: All right. (in an accent) I am a princess from Rumania. I was on holiday in the country and heard about the ball.

CLAUDE: Now that I can believe – only –

CINDERELLA: Only what?

CLAUDE: I'm sure we've met before. I know we have. Take off your mask.

CINDERELLA*: (seeing her sisters)* Oh, no – your highness – I mustn't –

CLAUDE: Well there's time. At midnight everyone must take off their masks –

(The sisters are getting closer)

CINDERELLA: Could we go outside? It's so warm in here –

CLAUDE: Of course – come….

(They exit)

ARMENTINE: Who is that? I know her from somewhere….

AUBERT: Obviously a countess or a princess. And you don't know any countesses or princesses –

ARMENTINE: Something about her is very familiar –

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AUBERT: I think it was very unfair for that other young man to pretend to be the prince and make fools of us –
ARMENTINE: A fool of you, you mean. I knew all the time he wasn't the prince –
AUBERT: You did not!
ARMENTINE: I did too!
AUBERT: Then why were you chasing after him if you knew he wasn't the prince?
ARMENTINE: I wasn't chasing after him—
AUBERT: You were too –
ARMENTINE: Was not –
AUBERT: Were too –
ARMENTINE: Was not –
AUBERT: Were too –
ARMENTINE: Oh, go stuff your face!
AUBERT: Oh, all right!

(Marches off to the sweet table; ARMENTINE follows)

METISSE: There goes my chance to be a princess. I wonder who she is.
MARC: Metisse – I thought you wanted to marry me –
METISSE: Oh, I do – truly. But I also wanted to be a princess…. *(she looks off after CINDERELLA and the PRINCE)* She's so lovely…

(MARC takes her hand and they walk away whispering)

Scene 3

(Lights change. DANCERELLA and CLAUDE enter. The MIDNIGHT BALLET. At end of dance, the clock strikes 12. DANCERELLA is alarmed; begins to leave. CLAUDE pulls her back.)

CLAUDE: Wait – *(he removes his mask; DANCERELLA has a moment recognizing him)* It's almost midnight – take off your mask – (she runs away) Don't leave – come back – I don't know your name ….

(He starts after her; picks up her glass slipper. Blackout. (Immediate spot downstage on CINDERELLA, JUNOT, JULIE, with pumpkin Blackout.)

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Scene 4

(Lights up on ballroom. CLAUDE sits on step holding the slipper; DARCY is eating at table; KING is pacing)

KING: But I don't understand, Claude. Why did she run away.
CLAUDE: I don't know.
KING: What's her name?
CLAUDE: I don't know.
KING: Who is she?
CLAUDE/KING: I don't know.

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