

Plays for Young Audiences

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Cinderella

By
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Cinderella was originally produced by Unicorn Theatre, UK, in 2009..

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Cinderella

Phil Porter

Cast:

Cinderella

Prince Amjad

Dad / Miss Ptolomina Flugelhorn

The Queen of England / Mrs Mifflock / Mum

Mr Marakovic

Mrs Sheila Yarg / Mrs Peafendorf

Miss Monopoly Yarg / Miss Calpurnia Burke

Miss Tixylix Yarg / Miss Antonia Tiplady

The Royal Frogman, Partygoers and Wedding Peoples to be cast from the company at the discretion of its esteemed director. Gavin The (world's biggest) Seagull to take the form of some kind of puppet or other.

1 : 1

Aboard The Floating Cassandra – a large, leaky boat, anchored two hundred yards out to sea, converted some years ago into a residential home for retired magicians and/or their retired assistants. A battered old sign hangs above the place: ‘~~The Deck Of Cards~~ The Floating Cassandra: Where The Magic Lives On!’

The Kitchen on The Floating Cassandra. Situated at the front of the boat, and only half-covered from the elements, this was once the area from which the Captain would steer the boat. The old steering wheel remains. But now, though permanently two inches deep in sea water, this is where the old people’s meals are cooked. It is also where Cinderella and her father, who own and run the place, spend any spare time. Not that Cinderella has much of that. As ever, she is expertly doing many things at once – cooking porridge, cleaning the table, hanging up washing and, as ever, bailing out seawater with a little bucket. She wears plastic bags over her shoes to protect her feet from the seawater...

Meanwhile, three very old people approach the audience by various means – with walking sticks, walking frames, wheelchairs etc. Their attire betrays a history of performing magic. They lead the singing, with support from Cinderella’s Dad, Prince Amjad, Miss Calpurnia Burke and Miss Antonia Tiplady...

All but Cinderella: Once
Upon a time, upon a boat,
Upon a boat, upon a time
Did live a girl, upon a boat
Called Cinderella. Cinderella.

And on this boat, upon a time,
She spent her time upon this boat
Working hard from crack of day
'Til dead of night upon this boat.

No normal boat, no fishing boat,
No sailing boat, nor whaling boat,
This was a boat that was devoted
To the care of older folk.

And not just any older folk
This boat was set upon a mission
Giving rest and good nutrition
Unto yesteryear’s magicians
Her mother’s dream until she died.

Now Cinderella toils alone
To keep us old folk clean and fed
Poor Cinderella, poor Cinderella.

The old folk ring little bells. Cinderella speaks into the Speaking Tube - a brass, funnel-like mouthpiece attached to a rubber tube that feeds into the wall. Her words echo around the boat.

Cinderella: I'm coming!

Cinderella takes the pan of porridge and a ladel to the Mingle Room on The Floating Cassandra, where the Oldsters spend most of their time. They wait with bowls and spoons ready. Exhaustedly, Cinderella ladels the porridge into the bowls.

Cinderella: Morning, everybody.

All: Good morning, Cinderella.

Cinderella: Everyone for porridge?

Mrs Mifflock: As long as it's good and chewy.

Cinderella: Extra chewy, just for you, Mrs Mifflock.

Mrs Peafendorf: Did I ever tell the story of how Mrs Peafendorf met Mr Peafendorf?

Cinderella: Only yesterday, Mrs Peafendorf.

Mrs Peafendorf: She was on tour with that most forgetful magician, Tony Fingeroni.

Mr Marakovic: *(With cups and balls on a tray.)* Three ordinary cups and one ball!

Mrs Mifflock: Here's one. Think of a number between one and ten.

Mr Marakovic: I place the ball beneath the cup on the left and off we go! *(He starts shuffling cups.)*

Mrs Peafendorf: One day, Mr Fingeroni locked Mrs Peafendorf in a box and forgot all about her!

Mrs Mifflock: Double it.

Mr Marakovic: Follow the ball.

Mrs Mifflock: Add three, double again.

Mr Marakovic: Don't watch me, watch the ball!

Mrs Peafendorf: All night she was there, wearing nothing but her sparkles.

Mrs Mifflock: Add the number you first thought of.

Mr Marakovic: *(Loses track.)* No, wait a minute... *(Continues.)* Ah, yes!

Mrs Mifflock: Add four, divide by five.

Mrs Peafendorf: Without Mr Peafendorf she'd still be there now!

Mrs Mifflock: Add one and take away the number you first thought of.

Mrs Peafendorf: Such a gentleman!

Mrs Mifflock: You're left with three!

Cinderella: Yes, Mrs Mifflock.

Mr Marakovic: Which cup, Cinderella?

Cinderella points at the middle cup. Mr Marakovic turns the cup to reveal the ball.

Mr Marakovic: You have a gift!

Cinderella: I'll be back for your plates in a minute.

Mrs Peafendorf: Wouldn't her mother be proud?

Mr Marakovic: Oh, yes, uh-hum!

He beckons Cinderella. He produces a coin from behind her ear. The ladies applaud. This happens every day but never fails to please. Cinderella takes the coin. Mrs Peafendorf coughs as Cinderella leaves the old people and heads for the kitchen. Dad is now sitting at the kitchen table yawning vaguely and reading The Daily Honk (Headline: Do We Need A Royal Family?) He wears pyjamas, dressing gown and bags over his slippers. Cinderella puts the porridge pot in the sink...

Dad: Morning, love! You shouldn't have done the old breakfast again.

Cinderella: You were asleep.

Dad: Was I?

Cinderella: I prodded you with the cricket bat, you just groaned.

Dad: Silly old Dad, eh?

Dad yawns and starts looking at his fingers. Cinderella puts her coin in a piggybank and starts cleaning the pan...

Dad: Look at that. The middle finger on my right hand's exactly the same length as the one next to it. But on my other hand the middle finger's the longest. Why's that, do you reckon?

Cinderella: I don't know, Dad. *(Finishes washing pan.)* Okay, I'm going to collect the plates and then I'll give Mr Marakovic his shave /

Dad: Yeah, just a minute, love /

Cinderella: (*Into speaking tube.*) I'll be through in five minutes, Mr Marakovic /

Dad: Love, please, come and sit with your Dad for a minute. Something I need to say. Something slightly massive. (*She sits with him.*) As you may have noticed, since your mum died, your old Dad's been a bit short of the old... get up and go. Loneliness, I guess. Which is daft really, you being here /

Cinderella: It's fine, Dad.

Dad: No, it's not fine, which is why I've not been here on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings these last four months.

Cinderella: Haven't you?

Dad: No. I've been going to things. Activities... put on to help... well... women without...

Cinderella: Husbands?

Dad: Husbands, yes, and men without...

Cinderella: Wives?

Dad: That's right, such as I, to find...

Cinderella: Husbands and wives?

Dad: Precisely! And, the fact is, Wednesday's badminton. And I, of late, have been forming a doubles partnership with... a lady... with a very fine drop shot... and her name is Mrs Yarg.

Cinderella: Yarg?

Dad: There is, I believe, a kind of cheese with which she shares that name. Anyhoo, Mrs Yarg and I – or Sheila's her name, I believe – we like each other very much, so I've said she can live on the boat with us. With her two daughters. (*Pause.*) Love?

Cinderella: That's great, Dad.

Dad: Really?

Cinderella: Really. Because you're right, you haven't had much get-up-and-go since Mum died. I mean, you didn't have much before, but these days... Maybe this is what you need.

Dad: This is exactly what I'm hoping.

Cinderella: And I could do with a hand around the place. Maybe we'll even be friends, the daughters and me.

Dad: Of course you will! Your mum is so proud of you, love. Wherever she is, looking down...

Cinderella: You think?

Dad: So proud! With everything you do here. For me, for the old people, keeping her dream alive. You make her so proud.

Cinderella: Just promise me one thing, Dad. That she won't be forgotten in all this?

Dad: No-one will ever replace your Mum. I promise.

A bell rings, calling Cinderella away.

1 : 2

The palace. The Prince is writing music. He has a pen, composition paper and a violin. He plays a few notes, stops, scribbles something down. He starts to play the notes again when he is interrupted by the Queen, who is angrily waving The Daily Honk about...

Queen: Well, really!

Prince: Morning, Mum.

Queen: Of all the horrid nonsense! 'Do we really need a royal family?' What kind of question is that?

Prince: A fair enough one?

Queen: Oh, and using a picture of me flaring my nostrils while eating a giant prawn, that's fair enough too, is it?! 'Here at The Daily Honk we find Queen Felicity dreary and dim. And our readers feel the same, with only twelve per cent saying they like the stuck-up old prune.' Of course, there's one thing we could do to give the old ratings a boost. *(No response.)* Oh darling, is it so much to ask? Getting married's a nice thing!

Prince: Then you do it!

Queen: But people want young love! They'd fall in love with us royals all over again! And we'd find the right girl. We'll line up a hundred, you can pick your favourite.

Prince: No /

Queen: You could ask them all questions. 'If you were a biscuit, what kind of biscuit would you be?'

Prince: Mum /

Queen: This would make a fabulous television programme. I'll make some calls /

Prince: Mum, I don't want to get married! There's other things I want to do first.

Queen: What other things?

Prince: Go home?

Queen: This is your home.

Prince: No, home is where I was born. The place you dragged me from to bring me here. *(The Queen starts to cry.)* Please don't cry.

Queen: *(Wails.)* You're being mean!

Prince: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you. I just miss it sometimes. I'm sorry. *(He gives her a tissue.)* You need to blow your nose, Mum. *(She blows her nose.)* What's for lunch?

Queen: A pigeon stuffed inside a duck, why?

Prince: I was hoping for chips. *(She blows her nose again.)* I guess it wouldn't hurt to meet a few girls.

Queen: Really?!

Prince: But not in a line.

Queen: Of course not. I shall get only the best and no lines. Thank you, darling, you're doing the right thing!

The dashes off to arrange some girls. The Prince returns to his music...

1 : 3

Cinderella is in her bedroom...

Cinderella:

Has it come to this, Mum?
Soggy socks and dirty sheets.
Food scrap, porridge pan.
Heavy eyelids long for sleep.
But I'll carry on, Mum.
Stay and make you proud.
What would I give to escape this life

Just for one magical night,
Just for one fabulous time?
Just for one night, one night of grace and beauty?
Skin so clean, feet so light,
Just one night.

Cinderella moves into the kitchen and finishes setting the table for tea: a teapot, five places and a cake....

Has it come to this, Mum?
Teacup, saucer, cake and spoon.
They can live here, Mum.
But they'll never take your place.
Has it come to this, Mum?
Has it come to this?
Has it come to this, Mum?
Has it come to this?

Dad enters wearing a suit over his pyjamas. He is followed by Mrs Yarg and her daughters, Monopoly and Tixylix. Everyone wears plastic bags over their shoes...

Dad: Here she is, love, your new mum!

Mrs Yarg: Oh, Stanley, she's beautiful! You didn't tell me she was beautiful! So nice to meet you, Cinderella.

Monopoly: Hi there, I'm Monopoly.

Tixylix: And I'm Tixylix.

Cinderella: It's great to meet you all at last.

Mrs Yarg: The pleasure's all ours. Girls...

Monopoly: Oh yeah, this is from us. *(Gives Cinderella a present.)*

Cinderella: Thank you. I feel bad, I didn't get you anything.

Mrs Yarg: Don't be silly, you made us this lovely-looking tea!

Dad: Please, everyone, take the weight off.

Everyone sits. Dad tucks in. Cinderella unwraps her gift – an antique necklace.

Cinderella: Oh, but it's beautiful...! Look Dad, a necklace. But it looks kind of expensive.

Mrs Yarg: Family heirloom, didn't cost a thing.

Tixylix: We just thought, what with us all being kind of family now...

Cinderella: That's really kind, thank you.

Dad: Milk.

Cinderella: In front of you, Dad.

Mrs Yarg: Well, what a charming kitchen, Stanley! I've never seen anything like it!

Cinderella: Yeah, sorry about all the water.

Mrs Yarg: Don't be silly.

Monopoly: It's fun.

Mrs Yarg: And with us Yargs doing our bit, maybe there'll be more time to sort these things out.

Dad: Ooh, speaking of the wet, where do we keep the spare bags, love? Your dad's sprung a leak!

Cinderella: Big cupboard behind the button jar.

Dad: Big cupboard behind the button jar! Shan't be long.

Dad goes. As soon as the door closes behind him, the atmosphere changes. Mrs Yarg becomes icy. Monopoly takes out a mirror and applies make-up. Tixylix starts filling her face ravenously.

Cinderella: So yeah, it's not so bad, living on a boat. And the old people are great, even if they do play tricks all the time /

Mrs Yarg: Strange taste, this cake has. Kind of grey tasting. I wonder what she put in it.

Cinderella: It's a family recipe. Mum used to make it on special occasions /

Mrs Yarg: Rather like chewing on a woodlouse...

Monopoly: *(Takes the necklace and puts it on herself.)* I wonder why they call it The Floating Cassandra. *(To Cinderella.)* I asked you a question.

Cinderella: Sorry?

Monopoly: Isn't that what you call it, The Floating Cassandra?

Cinderella: That's right. Because Cassandra was my Mum's name. It was her dream, you see. A floating rest home for old magicians. Because she was an assistant. To Mr Marakovic. Well, it was called The Deck Of Cards, but when she died we changed it. To The Floating /

Mrs Yarg: Weird name, Cassandra.

Monopoly: Cassandra.

Tixylix: Cassandra.

Mrs Yarg: Cassandra. Still, can't say it doesn't suit the place.

Dad returns. The Yargs return to being nice...

Dad: Sorry I was gone so long. Forgot which cupboard was the big cupboard.

Mrs Yarg: That's all right, Stanley. We've been enjoying hearing all about Cinderella's love of worms.

Dad: Worms, eh?

Mrs Yarg: She spends so much time staring at pictures of worms, she worries she'll start to look like one, she says. But I don't think she looks like a worm. Do you think she looks like a worm, Stanley?

Dad: I don't know...

Mrs Yarg: Do you, girls?

Tixylix: No.

Mrs Yarg: Monopoly?

Monopoly: Not a worm exactly, no.

Mrs Yarg: Don't worry, dear. You look almost nothing like a worm.

They all enjoy their tea and cake, except Cinderella, who has lost her appetite. A bell rings. No-one looks up from their tea so Cinderella goes.

1 : 4

The Palace. The Queen and Prince enter, having just fought their way through a throng of screaming girls. The Prince has already had enough. The Queen leads him to a special chair...

Queen: Don't sulk.

Prince: Mum, there's hundreds.

Queen: We'll just keep going 'til you find one you like. *(She gives the Prince two sticks. One has a big green tick on the end, the other a big red cross.)*

Prince: What are they?

Queen: Just a little system borrowed from the television. If you like a girl you, give her a tick. *(Holds up a tick)*. If you don't... *(Holds up a cross and makes a noise)*. Two ticks, they're on the shortlist. Anything else and it's down the rubbish chute! *(Reveals rubbish chute)*.

Prince: Can't they just go through the door?

Queen: It's just a bit of fun! *(She sits with him and honks a horn)*. And off we go. *(The first girl enters. She is the demure Miss Calpurnia Burke. The Queen consults a clipboard)*. Miss Burke. Your mother and I play Bridge on occasion, do we not?

Miss Calpurnia Burke: Yes, Ma'am.

Queen: Excellent, when you're ready, dear.

The Queen nudges the Prince enthusiastically. Calpurnia sings and dances daintily...

Miss Calpurnia Burke: My father is the owner of a fabulous estate
My mother is the daughter of an earl.
I have a clean driving license, a Masters in Forensics,
My embroidery won silver at the Needlework Olympics.

The Queen raises her green tick and nudges the Prince to do the same.

I speak Finnish, French and Mandarin,
I'm handy on the mandolin,
Tamil, Thai, Mongolian and Greek, I speak.
Swahili, Dutch, Somali, Zulu,
Share my house in Honolulu,
Tajik, Uzbek and Czech and Sign.

On Mondays I devote my time to nursing sickly bats and birdies
Tuesdays I spend baking for the poor /

The Prince raises his red cross. Calpurnia lets out a wail of anguish and throws herself down the chute.

Queen: Really, darling!

Prince: She's a show-off.

Queen: She was merely showing pride in her achievements. I should have thought it lovely when one's wife speaks Mongolian. Plenty more. *(Consults list)*. This should be... Ptolomina Flügelhorn.

The Queen honks her little horn and Miss Flügelhorn thunders gracelessly in...

Ptolomina Flügelhorn: Oh my God, oh my God,
You're the Prince, you're the Queen,
It's a palace and I'm in it,
Oh my God, (*breaks wind*), oops!

The Prince finds this funny. The Queen holds up her red cross...

Ptolomina Flügelhorn: I can cook, I can (*breaks wind*),
I can (*breaks wind*), I can clean,
I would bear you many children
Who would (*breaks wind twice*) just like me /

Queen: Get out, get out! Really! How dare you come to my palace and chuff so relentlessly?

Ptolomina flings herself down the rubbish chute. The Queen fans the air.

Queen: I was warned of her windiness but I gravely underestimated the extent of the problem. She'd burn the nose clean off your face with a bottom like that.

She honks the horn. Miss Antonia Tiplady enters.

Queen: And you are?

Miss Antonia Tiplady: Antonia Tiplady.

Queen: Miss Tiplady.

Prince: Take your time.

A moment between the Prince and Antonia. There is a chemistry here to which the Queen is alert.

Miss Antonia Tiplady: It may sound strange
For I'm not that well to do
But I've always known I'd marry a prince some day
And how I'd love to play a part in softening this
Troubled heart.

Queen: Such a nice girl.
Don't you think, dear?

Miss Antonia Tiplady (and Queen): I can play the drums (Tatty-pom-pish-pom)
Make jam from plums (Yippee-yippee-yum-yum)
But, all in all, I guess I'm fairly ordinary (No!)
I'm hoping you can see it too, a happy life for me and you.

The Queen waves her tick joyously to the music...

Miss Antonia Tiplady (and Prince): It may sound strange (it may sound strange)

For I never ever dreamed (I never dreamed)
I'd meet someone I felt so quickly at ease with.
I picture now the life I'd have
The taps and hubcaps made of gold
Beds the size of tennis courts
Servants doing what they're told!
The islands and the wineries
The diamonds and the fineries
An idle life of luxury for me!

The Prince raises his cross. Miss Tiplady, realising she has blown it, follows the others down the chute.

Queen: Tremendous! You're doing it to spite me!

Prince: She wanted me for my money.

Queen: But darling, you're a prince! *(He walks off through the screaming throng.)*
Darling, come back! What if I bought you a speedboat? Darling!

1 : 5

The Kitchen on The Floating Cassandra. Dad is doing a jigsaw. Cinderella comes in with the porridge pan and a coin from Mr Marakovic. She is tired. She dumps the pan in the sink...

Dad: Morning, love! You shouldn't have done the breakfast again, it was my turn.

Cinderella: No, it was the Yargs' turn. But yet again they've gone missing when there's work to be done. *(Picks up piggybank.)* Why is my piggybank empty?

Dad: Oh, that was your money! I said they could spend it. Is that okay?

Cinderella: Fine.

Dad: I'm sure they'll pay you back.

Cinderella: I'm sure they will.

Dad: Hadn't been saving long had you?

Cinderella: Just a few months.

Dad: What for?

Cinderella: Oh, nothing much. Haircut maybe. Some clothes. Something to make me feel slightly less disgusting.

Dad: Oi, now listen here. You are beautiful /

Cinderella: I don't feel beautiful!

Dad: Well, you are. Inside and out. Your mum would be so proud of you!

Cinderella: I hope so. *(Pause.)* Dad, can we talk about the Yargs for a minute /

Dad: Love, I know what you think and I completely agree.

Cinderella: You do?

Dad: Completely! Aren't they just wonderful? Do you know, I'm actually happy for the first time in years?! I know the old get-up-and-go's not there yet. But knowing you've got two big sisters looking out for you. And with all the love and affection Mrs Yarg's been showing me in private *(she winces)*... Look at me, I can't stop smiling!

Cinderella: That's great, Dad.

A bell rings. Cinderella goes to see what the Oldsters want...

1 : 6

The Mingle Room is in a state of chaos. Mrs Peafendorf has glued her face and both hands to the floor. Mrs Mifflock and Mr Marakovic cling to other parts of her. Mrs Peafendorf screams as they pull but she remains firmly stuck. Cinderella enters...

Cinderella: What on earth...?!

Mrs Mifflock: Oh, Cinderella! Mrs Peafendorf has glued herself to the floor.

Mr Marakovic: Hands and face!

Cinderella: Right, nobody panic.

Mrs Peafendorf: She was fixing her spectacles and a screw fell on the floor.

Mr Marakovic: She got down to look and her face became stuck!

Mrs Mifflock: She must have got glue on it somehow.

Mr Marakovic: And now it seems my hand is stuck to her ankle! *(Mrs Peafendorf shrieks.)*

Cinderella: Right, where's the tube of glue?

Mrs Mifflock: *(Glue in hand.)* Why, it's here in my... *(It is stuck to her hand.)* Oh bother, it seems the glue is now stuck to my hand.

Mr Marakovic: And my buttocks are now stuck to Mrs Mifflock's buttocks!

Mrs Peafendorf: And my hand is stuck to my walking frame!

Mrs Peafendorf: And his foot is stuck to Mrs Peafendorf's buttocks!

Mr Marakovic: And my hand is stuck to this rubber chicken! (*Produces Rubber chicken.*)

The Oldsters: Help, help...!

Cinderella: Nail varnish remover! That's good for unsticking things. I'll borrow some off Monopoly. Nobody move!

Cinderella goes. The Oldsters wait in silence for a second, then get up, chuckling to themselves. They were never really glued to one another. They swap places so Mrs Mifflock now has her face on the floor, Mrs Peafendorf's hand is stuck to her buttock, Mr Marakovic has the tube, etc. They recommence their wailing and Cinderella returns with nail varnish remover. At first, she doesn't notice the switch...

Cinderella: Okay, let's work quickly. I'll work in the order that things got stuck. (*She begins to apply remover to Mrs Mifflock's face.*) Stay still, Mrs Mifflock. I'll have you free in... (*Stops.*) Hang on, why is Mrs Mifflock's face now stuck to the floor? And why is Mrs Peafendorf stuck to the rubber chicken?

The Oldsters burst into a helpless laugh, guffawing, squeaking, clapping their hands, high-fiving and holding their sides.

Mr Marakovic: It was a joke, Cinderella!

Mrs Peafendorf: Mrs Peafendorf's idea!

Mrs Mifflock: A practical joke!

Cinderella: Very funny.

Mr Marakovic: It's not even glue, it's toothpaste!

Cinderella: I was worried. Stop laughing.

But they won't stop laughing so Cinderella leaves. The Oldsters fall silent.

Mr Marakovic: Oh dear, I'm afraid we've upset her. That wasn't the idea at all.

1 : 7

The Palace. The Prince is on the staircase with a hammer, fixing a bannister, making lots of noise, still in a bad mood after the speed dating. The Queen enters with a copy of The Daily Honk...

Queen: Darling? Darling, we have people for that kind of thing!

Prince: I want to do it, I'm bored! (*More hammering. Pause.*)

Queen: Darling, please, I have a headache. (*Takes hammer.*) What a perfect nose you have! (*He sighs.*) Not too big, just enough to be commanding. How splendid that the future king should /

Prince: What have you done?

Queen: What do you mean?

Prince: Whenever you've done something stupid you talk about my nose. And how it's 'just big enough to be commanding'.

Queen: I know why His Highness is down in the dumps. He wants to marry Miss Tiplady, after all.

Prince: I don't want to marry Miss Tiplady.

Queen: (*Delighted.*) Then you've changed your mind about Miss Burke?! You're doing the right thing.

Prince: No!

Queen: Surely not that trombone-bottomed Flügelhorn gas machine!

Prince: I don't want to get married!

Queen: Oh dear... The thing is, darling, silly Mummy made a sort of announcement. Saying you'd get married on Christmas Day. (*Holds up newspaper. Headline: Prince To Marry On Xmas Day.*) Darling, please don't be cross. I had to do something. They were saying our home should become a skateboarding park. Things like weddings remind our people why they need us.

Prince: Remind me why they need us.

Queen: Well, for things like weddings! To give meaning and beauty to their lives, they like us when we do that! (*Reads newspaper.*) 'Support for the royals doubled while calls for them to live like normal people have disappeared.'

Prince: But I want to live like a normal person. We are normal people!

Queen: I'm nothing more than a normal person, I know that. But this life, this palace, it's all I know. Take it away, I wouldn't survive /

Prince: I've survived. You took me from my home. I'd never even seen a dangly light or a stuffed duck before I came here.

Queen: I thought I was rescuing you! Most people don't want to live like that, in a hut made of mud. Your mother begged me to take you! (*Prince goes to a computer and starts hammering something out on the keyboard.*) What are you writing?

Prince: An invitation. (*Types.*) 'To every flipping girl in the country...' I'm going to have a big old party, choose one, get the whole stupid thing over and done with.

Queen: Oh darling, I'm so pleased you've had a change of heart.

Prince: Who said anything about a change of heart? I've told you a million times I don't want to get married. But what I want means nothing.

1 : 8

The kitchen. Monopoly is curling her lashes. Tixylix is spreading a jar of jam onto a single piece of bread. She is about to take a bite when Mrs Yarg enters...

Mrs Yarg: Ready, girls? (*They put down their hobbies.*) Nice and loud now.

Mrs Yarg exits. Monopoly and Tixylix wait, then start bawling at incredible volume. Dad rushes in wearing his pyjamas. The girls are barely comprehensible...

Dad: Eh, what's all this?

Monopoly: Cinderella!

Dad: Cinderella?

Tixylix: Cinderella!

Dad: What about her?

Tixylix: Stole our remover!

Dad: What?

Mrs Yarg enters with a picture of an otter and a standing order form.

Mrs Yarg: Really, girls, what is the matter? I was donating money to this otter sanctuary and now the whole thing's been spoilt! (*She tears the form and picture in half.*)

Tixylix: Cinderella stole our nail varnish remover.

Mrs Yarg: She did what?! Stanley, this is serious. Mr Yarg gave them that from his death bed.

Dad: Nail varnish remover?

Monopoly & Tixylix: It's all we have left of him! *(Stanley backs off.)*

Mrs Yarg: Cinderella knew this to be true and she stole it out of spite.

Tixylix: Evil worm-lover!

Mrs Yarg: *(Down speaking tube.)* Cinderella, kitchen, now!

Dad: I'm sure there's a simple explanation.

Mrs Yarg: She's a sticky-fingered sneakthief, there's your explanation! A plunderous pick-purse with nothing but a clump of rotting seaweed where her heart should be!

Cinderella comes in wearing rubber gloves and carrying a bucket. Monopoly and Tixylix point and scream.

Dad: Morning, love! You've not seen a... thingy of... nail varnish remover on your travels?

Cinderella: *(With nail varnish remover.)* You mean this?

More pointing and screaming.

Mrs Yarg: *(Takes bottle.)* Why, you grabby little bandit!

Dad: Can't take people's things without asking, love.

Cinderella: But I did.

Mrs Yarg: I reside with a hoodlum!

Cinderella: You stole my savings!

Mrs Yarg: Oh, so it's revenge?! *(Waves money.)* Well, as a matter of fact, I have your money here, you sickening, sickening tightwad. But I don't think she deserves it now, do you, Stanley?

Dad: Well /

Mrs Yarg: Precisely. *(Keeps money.)*

Cinderella: I didn't steal the nail varnish remover. I borrowed it because Mrs Peafendorf glued her face to the floor, only when I went back they'd swapped round.

Dad: Love, that doesn't even make sense. I'm afraid you'll have to say sorry, come on.

Cinderella: *(Reluctantly.)* I'm sorry.

The door swings open and The Roal Frogman enters, dripping wet, in full diving gear, holding out a letter.

Mrs Yarg: It's The Royal Frogman... *(She takes the envelope and reads.)* It's from the Prince! *(Begins to read...)* 'To every flipping girl in the country. I have to marry someone so I'm having a Butterfly Ball at the palace tonight...' You're both invited!

Mrs Yarg flings the invitation into the air and celebrates wildly with her daughters. The Royal Frogman turns and leaves. Cinderella picks up the invitation and reads it to herself...

Cinderella: *(Reads.)* 'To every flipping...' I'm invited too. I'm invited too!

1 : 9

Cinderella in her room...

Cinderella: With a bedsheet and a ribbon,
Some sequins and some lace,
I'll make myself a pretty dress
And a mask to hide my face

Tixylix: Buff me, Ma,

Monopoly: With a powder puff, me, Ma.
Buff me, Ma.

Tixylix: Funny fanny fah-fum-ti-ta...

Cinderella: Brush away the tangles,
Wash away the grime.
And a squirt of perfume
Hide the smell of brine.

Cinderella: Just for one night I might feel like a princess.

Mrs Yarg: Play your cards right, girls, you'll make the prince yours.

Cinderella: Antiques and chandeliers, music and dancing.

All Yargs Together: Sing from the rooftops, the Yargs are advancing!

Cinderella: Just for one magickful night /

All Yargs Together: Rich for the rest of our lives /

Cinderella: Just for one magickful night.

Cinderella: Backstitch here.

And another catchstitch here.

Backstitch here.

Funny fanny fah-fum-ti-ta.

Monopoly & Tixylix: With a smudge of lip gloss

And one or two of these *(beauty spots)*

Soon enough we'll have him so

Giddy at the knees

Like taking the sweets from a baby
As easy as peasy as pie
His heart will be putty in these pretty hands!

Cinderella: Just for one night I might feel like a princess

Mrs Yarg: Play your cards, girls, you'll make the prince yours

Cinderella: Antiques and chandeliers, music and dancing.

All Yargs Together: Sing from the rooftops, the Yargs are advancing!

Cinderella: Just for one magickful night /

All Yargs Together: Rich for the rest of our lives /

Cinderella: Just for one magickful night.

Cinderella: Backstitch here.

And another catchstitch here.

Backstitch here /

Cinderella sees Tixylix standing in her doorway...

Cinderella: What do you want?

Tixylix: Can I come in? There's something I need to say. *(She enters without invitation.)* You must hate me so much.

Cinderella: I don't... hate you /

Tixylix: Well, you should, I've been horrible to you. I only do it because I'm scared of them. It's true! If I don't pick on you, they pick on me! 'Honestly, Tixylix, you're such a pig, such a guzzle-bucket, you make us feel sick! Who needs a dustbin when you're around?'

Cinderella: You do eat quite a lot.

Tixylix: Only because I'm unhappy. It's like I've got this... emptiness, Cinderella. From a whole life being picked on. And doing things I know are wrong. And I'm trying to fill it with food but the emptiness just gets bigger. Well, I can't make up for what I've done, but I can say 'that's it'. From now on, I'm sticking up for you. When they make up plans to make you look bad, I'm telling you straight away. And I don't expect you to forgive me because I don't deserve it. But at least I'll know, for once in my life, I'm doing the right thing. *(Gets up to leave.)* Well, that's all I came to say /

Cinderella: I think you're wrong.

Tixylix: How do you mean?

Cinderella: I think you do deserve to be forgiven. It's not easy, admitting you've done wrong. That's what my mum taught me. So, if you really mean what you're saying...

Tixylix: But I do, Cinderella. *(They hug.)* You won't regret this, I promise. Is that your costume?!

Cinderella: Do you think it's okay?

Tixylix: The Prince will be besotted!

Cinderella: I don't care about the Prince. It's not like I could ever leave this place. I just want a night to myself. *(She yawns.)* I'll probably fall asleep as soon as I'm there.

Tixylix: Then you should get some sleep now. There's loads of time before it starts.

Cinderella: Yeah, and I've got toilets to clean, Mrs Mifflock's chair to fix /

Tixylix: I'll do all that, give me the list. *(She helps Cinderella into bed.)* I'll wake you at seven. Night night, friend.

Tixylix leaves Cinderella to sleep.

1 : 10

Cinderella sits up in bed and sees her mother, dressed in the sparkling outfit of a magician's assistant, smiling back at her.

Cinderella: Mum?

Magic show music begins. Mr Marakovic has a cabinet which he shows off to a large and enthusiastic audience. They 'ooh' and 'aah'. Cinderella is enjoying the show too, kneeling up on the end of her bed, childlike. Mr Marakovic invites Cinderella's mother to step into the cabinet. She does so. The cabinet is locked. Drum roll. Mr Marakovic waves his magic wand and opens the door to reveal the cabinet empty. Applause. The music becomes slightly nightmarish. Cinderella runs onto the stage, worried she might never see her mum again. The crowd 'aah' with sympathy. Mr Marakovic closes the door of the cabinet. Drum roll. He waves his magic wand and opens the door to reveal... Mrs Yarg. The crowd applaud wildly and Mrs Yarg laps up the applause...

Cinderella: No...!

Cinderella searches for her mother. The audience laugh. Mr Marakovic searches too. Cinderella backs away from the horrible scene, eventually finding herself back in bed. She wakes with a start.

Cinderella: Horrible dream. *(She looks at her watch.)* No!

1 : 11

Kitchen. Dad is trimming his nostril hair. The Yargs are about to leave for the Butterfly Ball. Tixylix wears Cinderella's dress, Monopoly wears her mask. Cinderella bursts in...

Cinderella: It's nearly eight o'clock!

Monopoly: That's the smell. The worm has risen.

Cinderella: I said, 'It's nearly eight o'clock!'

Mrs Yarg: The rest of us learnt to read the time some years ago, Cinderella.

Dad: Not me!

Cinderella: Just now, in my bedroom, you said you'd wake me at seven.

Tixylix: What are you talking about? I've never been in your bedroom.

Cinderella: That's my dress! That's my mask!

Mrs Yarg: Really, Cinderella, you can't blame other people if you were too lazy to make an outfit. Come along, girls, or we'll be late. I shan't be long, Stanley.

The Yargs leave.

Cinderella: That was my outfit, Dad. They stole it.

Dad: (*Mind primarily on nostril hair.*) I'm sure they didn't mean to, love.

Cinderella: One night, that's all I wanted. One night without cleaning and cooking and bailing out water.

Dad: You can still go.

Cinderella: I've got nothing to wear! Everything else is full of holes and covered in porridge!

Dad: I know what you need. A Chinese takeaway. A good old Chinese takeaway with your old Dad.

Cinderella: No thanks.

Dad: We'll go mad, order two things each. Prawn balls, foo yung, crispy seaweed...

Cinderella: I don't want a Chinese takeaway!

Dad: Okay. Tell you what then, Christmas is coming, you can have your present early.

Cinderella: You haven't bought me a Christmas present, you never do.

Dad: Oh really, then what's this?! (*Produces wooden box.*)

Cinderella: I don't know.

Dad: It's only a wormery, love! Big old box of mud and worms! Sheila's idea! Now you can sleep knowing worms there are just inches from your face! I'll fetch the booklet.

Dad goes off to find the booklet. Finally alone, Cinderella loses it, letting out a primal yell and hurling a chair overboard. A bell rings. She wants to ignore it. It rings again. She stumbles off to see what the Oldsters want.

1 : 12

The Mingle Room.

Cinderella: Yes?

Mr Marakovic: We'd like to apologise for our babyish toothpaste prank.

Mrs Peafendorf: Mrs Peafendorf's been feeling awful!

Cinderella: It doesn't matter.

Mrs Mifflock: Oh, but it does! You're so kind to us and this is how we repay you.

Mr Marakovic: We want to make amends, Cinderella. By giving you something to wear to the Butterfly Ball, Cinderella.

Mrs Peafendorf: After that wicked girl stole the one you made for yourself.

Cinderella: How do you know about my dress being stolen?

Mrs Mifflock: Oh, that's just something we do. Use our magic powers to listen in when there's nothing on the television.

Mr Marakovic: And since the television exploded there's been nothing on at all!

Mrs Peafendorf: Using our magic powers, we'll make you a whole new outfit, even more special than the last /

Cinderella: Just stop, okay?! You don't have magic powers.

Mrs Mifflock: Silly girl, of course we do. Or how do you explain this? *(She performs a trick.)*

Mr Marakovic: Or this. *(He performs a trick.)*

Mrs Peafendorf: Or this. *(He performs a trick.)*

Cinderella: Tricks.

Mrs Mifflock: Tricks indeed! We gave up on tricks long ago.

Cinderella: There's no such thing as real magic.

Mrs Peafendorf: Now, you of all people know that's not true.

Mrs Mifflock: There's real magic in all of us, Cinderella. It just takes a lifetime to find.

The Oldsters set about dressing Cinderella in an outfit even more wondrous than the last. They magic the necessary items from unlikely places – the aluminium tubing of a walking frame, the armrest of a wheelchair, from thin air...

Mr Marakovic: O, surely you've been told of the magic of the old
The hocus and the pocus of the powers that we hold.

Mrs Peafendorf: A girl of seventeen may possess a healthy glow

Mrs Mifflock: But she'll never match the magic in her granny's little toe.

Mr Marakovic: What makes the old girl's hair turn purple?

What makes the old boy look like a turtle?

What makes the onion pickle in its big old jar?

All Oldsters Together: It's the magic of the old.

Mrs Peafendorf: We hide our magic dust in the most unlikely places

Mrs Mifflock: The crinkles in our stockings and the wrinkles on our faces

Mrs Peafendorf: Our bones may lose their density to osteoporosis

Mrs Mifflock: But you'll never take our fragilisticexpialidocious

Mr Marakovic: What makes the slipper on your foot so comfy?

What makes the custard in your bowl stay lumpy?

What makes the beetroot pickle in its big old jar?

It's the magic of the old.

All Oldsters Together: It's the magic of the old.

It's the magic of the old.

Mr Marakovic: It's the magic of the old.

Cinderella is nearly ready now.

Mrs Mifflock: Have a fine time at the ball, Cinderella.

Mrs Peafendorf: Dazzle and shine for us all, Cinderella.

Mr Marakovic: Shine like the perfect princess we all know you are!

The Oldsters summon Gavin, the world's biggest seagull, from the skies...

Mr Marakovic: This is the world's biggest seagull, Cinderella. His name is Gavin.

Mrs Peafendorf: He'll take you to the ball and wait in the car park to bring you home.

Mrs Marakovic: But be sure to find him by midnight!

Mrs Peafendorf: For this is when the magic wears off, and the clothes disappear.

Mrs Mifflock: Leaving you pretty much in the nude, Cinderella, your little bottom seen by all.

Mr Marakovic: Away, Gavin! Away, and take her there!

Gavin beats his giant wings, carrying Cinderella away, frightening and exciting her in equal measure...

All Oldsters Together: Once
Upon a time, upon a boat,
Upon a boat, upon a time,
Did live a girl upon a boat
Called Cinderella. Cinderella.

Then one day (long overdue)
The fates smiled on her beauty
And they rewarded all her thankless toil
And slavery to duty.

And now,
To the palace, Cinderella,
To the ball, your time has come,
From your chrysalis you must climb.
O, Cinderella, Cinderella
Your time has come,
O, Cinderella, Cinderella.

Interval.

2 : 1

Cinderella is high above the ground in the trusty clutches of Gavin. As she descends, costumed revellers (all masked) sing up to her like worshippers...

All: In perfect style, so very fine,
Her heart a-flutter,
A picture perfect Cinderella,
Cinderella glides into the splendid hall.
The many party-goers stop
And gaze in wonder
As the clock strikes eight
And so begins the famous Butterfly Ball.

Gavin The Seagull flies away and The Butterfly Ball commences. The palace ballroom has been decorated to fit the theme. The music is tasteful and restrained - perhaps