

Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404
612-872-5108
FAX 612-874-8119

Cinderella

By
Charles Way

Cinderella was originally commissioned and produced by the The Library Theatre,
Manchester, December 1999. All Rights Reserved.

**DO NOT REPRODUCE.
NOT LICENSED FOR PRODUCTION.**

Character List:

- Cinderella
- Prince Sebastian
- Aloysia
- Constanze
- Maria
- Sigmund
- Wolfgang
- Fairy Godmother/Bird
- King Leopold

Additional dancers/soldiers/princesses (real or plastic). Actors may double roles.

Setting:

The play is set in a fictional representation of Mannheim, Germany, where Mozart vainly tried to become Court composer in 1777. Mozart's music should accompany the play.

Act One: Scene 1

Music. A dance with masks. Lights fade. A heavy tick-tock of a pendulum clock can be heard. A light rises on a figure dressed in 'ghostly' white – this is Cinderella's Fairy Godmother. She carries a cage inside which is a white dove.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/COMPANY

Tick tock, tick tock
Time slips by,
Sometimes it jumps.
Sometimes it flies,
Sometimes it waits,
As if for ever,
Sometimes it stops,
Altogether.
(The ticking stops)
Ah – this is one of those times.
(A bell tolls distantly)
A sad time
An in between time,
A time of tears.

Enter Cinderella, she rushes from one side of the stage to another as if trying to get out of a cage. Eventually she rushes into the arms of her father.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/COMPANY

Oh yes, once upon such a time
There was a Clockmaker.
(Cinderella pulls away from her father)
And the Clockmaker had a daughter.
They lived in a beautiful town
On the banks of a flowing river
In the shadow of a fine castle.

The bell tolls.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

But all is not well.
The town lay in the grip of a terrible sickness
For which there seemed to be no cure.
The sickness was so bad that many people died.
One of these was the young girl's mother.

Cinderella kneels. Exit Father. The lights rise slowly. It becomes morning and the air is full of birdsong but the grief-stricken Cinderella barely notices.

The child was struck down by grief,
She felt as if her tears would never end
And would flood the world.

The Fairy Godmother takes the white Bird from the cage. The Bird is obviously not real. It's a beautiful artifact and the Fairy Godmother is its voice. At this stage, the Fairy Godmother is invisible to Cinderella. She takes the Bird to the girl and flies around her head, until it annoys her.

CINDERELLA

It's you again. The same bird every day, spying on me, flying around my head, like a – like a wasp. Have you no respect? Go away wasp – go away.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

There's no need to be rude.

Cinderella looks around, startled.

CINDERELLA

Who's there? Is there anyone there?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Yes – me.

CINDERELLA

Where are you? Why do you hide?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I'm not hiding. I'm in full view. It's me – that's right.

CINDERELLA

You?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

A wasp am I?

Cinderella backs away.

Don't be frightened. I won't sting you. I'm a bird.

CINDERELLA

A talking bird.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Stranger things have happened, and will again, I assure you.

The Bird flies onto her arm.

Close you mouth, and stop staring. It's rude and makes you look like a fish.

CINDERELLA

Why haven't you talked before?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I was waiting, for the right time. I've been waiting for the past year. I have something to ask you. May I?

CINDERELLA

Yes.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I need your help.

CINDERELLA

How can I help you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

This garden used to be so beautiful. Your Mother was happy here.

CINDERELLA

My mother?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

She and I were good friends. She used to look after the garden – not like you. Look how bare it is. It's not a Garden anymore – it's a graveyard.

CINDERELLA

(Chases the bird) How dare you talk about my mother. Go away you wicked creature. Go away.

(She cannot catch the Bird and she collapses in tears)

What would you have me do? Bury her in one of those big pits along with everyone else who died of the sickness? No. This was her garden – she belongs here, with me.

Silence.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I understand.

CINDERELLA

You're a bird what do you know, about anything?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I k now one thing. This garden needs a tree.

CINDERELLA

A tree? What for?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

It's a bird thing. Somewhere for me to sit of course.

CINDERELLA

Why should I help you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

For your mother. It's what she wanted. Plant it in her memory – plant it here. It will give us all shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. Please.

The Bird fetches a hazel twig.

CINDERELLA

What kind of tree will it be?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Hazel.

Next to her mother's grave, Cinderella plants a twig of hazel.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Close your eyes.

Cinderella closes her eyes. Music. The Fairy Godmother removes the twig and magically a tree replaces it.

You can open your eyes now.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Ah! It's – it's so beautiful.

CINDERELLA

(proudly) Isn't it just?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

But how – who – what – did it?

CINDERELLA

Oh don't ask me, I'm a bird. What do I know about anything?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

The bird perches on the tree.

What are you – exactly?

CINDERELLA

A friend. I think your mother would have liked it.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Yes, yes she would. Will it flower?

CINDERELLA

Perhaps, one day, if –

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

If-?

CINDERELLA

If time moves on. It generally does.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

A boy in rags [Prince Sebastian in disguise] has entered.

We have a visitor.

Who are you? What are you doing? Get out. Get out.

CINDERELLA

Are you talking to me or the bird?

PRINCE/BOY

Go away, go away.

CINDERELLA

She chases the boy, he laughs and runs away.

So you want to play?

PRINCE/BOY

No. Get out – please.

CINDERELLA

I didn't mean to upset you. **PRINCE/BOY**

Well, you have. Now go – this is a private place – private. **CINDERELLA**

And you were talking to that bird, in private of course. **PRINCE/BOY**

No I wasn't. **CINDERELLA**

It looked like it from a distance. **PRINCE/BOY**

You've been spying? **CINDERELLA**

You've been lying. Is this your tree? **PRINCE/BOY**

Yes, now get out. **CINDERELLA**

This tree wasn't here yesterday. **PRINCE/BOY**

You were here yesterday? **CINDERELLA**

And the day before, and the day before that. Every day I hear crying from the other side of the wall, so today I climbed the wall and came in. Why do you cry like that? **PRINCE/BOY**

Leave the tree alone. **CINDERELLA**

Did you plant it? **PRINCE/BOY**

Yes. **CINDERELLA**

No, this tree is older than you. **PRINCE/BOY**

Please stop – **CINDERELLA**

You couldn't have planted this tree. **PRINCE/BOY**

I did plant it. **CINDERELLA**

When? **PRINCE/BOY**

Just now. **CINDERELLA**

And, it just grew...just now? **PRINCE/BOY**

Yes. **CINDERELLA**

I like tall trees – and tall stories too. **PRINCE/BOY**

I don't care what you like, or dislike I just want you to – **CINDERELLA**
The Bird flies to him and settles on his arm.

It's beautiful. **PRINCE/BOY**

Don't harm it. **CINDERELLA**

Why would I harm it? **PRINCE/BOY**

How should I know? There isn't always a reason, is there? **CINDERELLA**

Can it really talk? **PRINCE/BOY**

Why are you so persistent? Have you no one else in the world to talk to? **CINDERELLA**
Silence

No, not really. My father is confined to his bed... **PRINCE/BOY**

Your mother? **CINDERELLA**

She died, four years ago. She liked trees too. She liked gardening...she like dancing...she liked all kinds of – **PRINCE/BOY**

Please, leave me alone. **CINDERELLA**

Shall I come back tomorrow? **PRINCE/BOY**

No. **CINDERELLA**

Perhaps the bird will talk to me tomorrow. **PRINCE/BOY**

Don't be silly, birds don't talk. **CINDERELLA**

You really don't want to be friends? **PRINCE/BOY**

No. **CINDERELLA**

I'll go then – but only if you tell me your name. **PRINCE/BOY**

You promise? **CINDERELLA**

Cross my heart. **PRINCE/BOY**

My name – (*music*) – is Cinderella. **CINDERELLA**

He exits.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

(Aside) The very next day the boy returned, and again Cinderella chased him and turned him away. But the boy would not give up. Why, he did not know. He came every day for a month.

Go away, go away. **CINDERELLA**

One of these days Cinderella...I will make you laugh – I promise you. **PRINCE/BOY**

You must go – really. **CINDERELLA**

What's the reason today? **PRINCE/BOY**

And one day she could not think of a reason. **FAIRY GODMOTHER**

I'll stay then. **PRINCE/BOY**

If you want. **CINDERELLA**

Do you want me to? **PRINCE/BOY**

Cinderella nods, she is still not smiling. An awkward silence follows.

Do you have any other friends? **PRINCE/BOY**

Do you? **CINDERELLA**

One – Wolfy. **PRINCE/BOY**

Wolfy? **CINDERELLA**

He’s a laugh. Likes music. Your question – if you want? **PRINCE/BOY**

Where do you live? **CINDERELLA**

In the castle, I work there. **PRINCE/BOY**

Really? What kind of work? **CINDERELLA**

Kitchen – work. **PRINCE/BOY**

What’s your name? **CINDERELLA**

PRINCE/BOY
They just call me Boy. Boy come here and clean the pot. Boy, stir the soup...Boy, sweep the floor...has anyone seen that good for nothing Boy?

CINDERELLA
Have you ever seen one of the parties they hold, where they dance all night in the great hall?

PRINCE/BOY
Loads of times – from a distance.

CINDERELLA
Tell me, everything.

PRINCE/BOY
Well...there are big lights.

CINDERELLA
Chandeliers.

PRINCE/BOY
And –

And an orchestra?
CINDERELLA

Yes, and the men and women bow and curtsy – and dance.
PRINCE/BOY

How do they dance?
CINDERELLA

I don't really know. I'm a kitchen boy.
PRINCE/BOY

Well, try and remember, please.
CINDERELLA

Well, they put one hand here and the other here and they put their heads to one side like –
PRINCE/BOY

Like - ?
CINDERELLA

Yes, and they smile like their teeth are glued together. Yes, just so. And they start to dance as if they really did not care to dance at all.
PRINCE/BOY

They begin to dance. A magical moment – their eyes meet.

Now you really must go.
CINDERELLA

But there's something I have to tell you –
PRINCE/BOY

My Father! Go – Go!
CINDERELLA

The boy exits, as Sigmund enters.

Cinderella.
SIGMUND

What is it? What's happened? Why are you smiling?
CINDERELLA

News. Good news. It's about time we had some good news isn't it? What's this?
SIGMUND

It's a tree. What news?
CINDERELLA

It wasn't here before.
SIGMUND

It's been here for ages, Father. Perhaps if you visited more often, you'd have noticed. What news?
CINDERELLA

SIGMUND

It's time Cinderella.

CINDERELLA

Time?

SIGMUND

Time to move on. You are fast becoming a young woman. You'll need help...guidance. You need a mother. I need a wife.

CINDERELLA

What are you saying?

SIGMUND

I have met someone – who has agreed to be my wife.

Cinderella attacks him. He restrains her gently.

SIGMUND

Please, please try to understand. *(She pulls away)*

CINDERELLA

How could you? How could you?

SIGMUND

Cinderella, its time for us – for you, to stop crying.

CINDERELLA

Never.

SIGMUND

Life is too short –

CINDERELLA

How could you even think of marrying someone else? And so soon...

SIGMUND

It's been a year.

CINDERELLA

A year?

SIGMUND

Time has stopped for us, now we must progress, you need a mother.

CINDERELLA

I have a mother. A mother who loves me, go away, go away!

He is about to turn away, when the Bird flies to him. It lands on his arm, turns him back.

SIGMUND

You are very young Cinderella. You have time on your side. I am getting older and time seems to be slipping through my fingers faster than ever. I need company – friendship, love.

CINDERELLA

But father, I am your friend, your company –

SIGMUND

Of course you are. But you won't want to stay with me forever. You'll leave – make a life of your own.

CINDERELLA

Leave? No, I'll never leave. Please Father, don't marry again. I'll never leave you.

SIGMUND

Cinderella, I knew this would be your reaction...so...

CINDERELLA

So?

SIGMUND

So, I have already married – this woman. Her name is Maria and she's coming, to be with us.

CINDERELLA

How could you do this?

SIGMUND

I know this has come as a shock to you but perhaps a shock is what you need. You can't grieve forever.

CINDERELLA

I can grieve for as long as I want!

SIGMUND

Calm yourself. Listen to me, you spend so much time alone...Maria has daughters. They can be your friends, your new sisters.

CINDERELLA

Sisters? I don't want any ugly sisters!

SIGMUND

These girls are very nice. They come from Heidelberg. They are charming, friendly, Aloysia has a wonderful singing voice and Constanze dances. They will – occupy you.

CINDERELLA

I will never forgive you for this – never.

SIGMUND

Time will tell...but now you must come with me and meet them.

CINDERELLA

I will not.

SIGMUND

I am your Father.

CINDERELLA

In name only.

SIGMUND

(Losing his temper) Then in name only, follow me!

CINDERELLA

I won't betray you Mother. Not like him. I will never let you go.

The Bird flies around in an agitated way.

SIGMUND

Come.

FAIRYGODMOTHER/BIRD

Cinderella. Trust me – and do as your father asks.

Fairy Godmother makes a spell, which changes the scene.

ACT1: SCENE 2

Cinderella's house. Music which brings with it Maria, Constanze and Aloysia. Maria steps forward, leaving the girls, in a frozen pose, holding heavy bags.

SIGMUND

Maria! Welcome. Where are the girls?

MARIA

Bringing the bags.

SIGMUND

I'll help them.

MARIA

No, it's fine. The exercise will do them good. It's a beautiful *little* house.

SIGMUND

I know it's not what you've been used to...

MARIA

I'm sure we'll manage. Such a lovely clock? Why has it stopped? What - ?

SIGMUND

It stopped the moment my first wife passed away.

MARIA

Why don't you fix it? Mr. Clock-fixer.

SIGMUND

Somehow I –

MARIA

Haven't found the time? It's very beautiful, as I'm sure was your first wife. Where is Cinderella?

SIGMUND

She's washing her face. I'll call her.

He steps to one side. A light rises on Cinderella who kneels in front of the kitchen fire.

SIGMUND

Cinderella – please. Your Stepmother is here. I urge you to come out.

CINDERELLA

I can't.

SIGMUND

Why not?

CINDERELLA

I have dirt on my face. *(She deliberately covers her face with soot)* I'm not presentable.

Sigmund turns to Maria.

SIGMUND

She won't be long. I'll show you around the house.

MARIA

I'm sure that won't take long either.

Sigmund and Maria smile at each other nervously

MARIA

A joke.

Exit Sigmund and Maria. Constanze and Aloysia move into the scene, collapsing under the weight of the bags. They are twins.

ALOYSIA

This is it, sister, our new home. Quaint.

CONSTANZE

It's not quaint – it's tiny. It's a doll's house.

ALOYSIA

We'll get used to it.

CONSTANZE

I don't want to get used to it. I want to go home to our big house in the country, with the big roaring fire in the big hall.

ALOYSIA

Look at me, Constanze. Our old life is over.

CONSTANZE

No.

ALOYSIA

We're not the first to fall on hard times. Mother has done the best she could for us.

CONSTANZE

Don't tell me – we're lucky not to be out begging on the streets.

ALOYSIA

Indeed we are. We can be happy here, if we make the best of things.

CONSTANZE

I know, I know.
(They embrace warmly)

ALOYSIA

A new life.

I wonder what he'll be like – our new father.

CONSTANZE

He's a Clockmaker.

ALOYSIA

Yawn.

CONSTANZE

We'll be alright as long as we stick together.

ALOYSIA

(Constanze pulls away)

I don't want to be stuck together. Oh, Aloysia, how can you be so cheerful?

CONSTANZE

Practice. I wonder where mother is?

ALOYSIA

She's probably trying out the new bedroom with her new husband.

CONSTANZE

Don't be rude.

ALOYSIA

It's not rude – it's ML.

CONSTANZE

ML?

ALOYSIA

Married life.

CONSTANZE

Oh poor dear father – I miss him so much.

ALOYSIA

So do I.

CONSTANZE

I know you do.

ALOYSIA

I miss you as much as you.

CONSTANZE

(They embrace again and this is how Cinderella finds them.)

Hello, a servant?

CONSTANZE

Things are looking up.

ALOYSIA

CONSTANZE

But she looks down...how sweet. I am Constanze.

(She dances a few steps.)

ALOYSIA

And I Aloysia. *(She sings her name)* And you are?

Silence.

CONSTANZE

Mute?

ALOYSIA

Can you speak? How strange?

CONSTANZE

Perhaps she has no tongue.

ALOYSIA

(Slowly) Can you speak?

Cinderella nods.

CONSTANZE

Then why don't you?

CINDERELLA

I had nothing to say.

ALOYSIA

That doesn't stop us.

CONSTANZE

In fact it spurs us on.

ALOYSIA

The less there is to say, the greater the urge to speak, don't you find?

CINDERELLA

No.

ALOYSIA

How long have you worked here?

CONSTANZE

Do you know Cinderella?

ALOYSIA

What's she like?

CONSTANZE

Is she ugly?

Is she pretty? ALOYSIA

Like me. CONSTANZE

Hush. ALOYSIA

You're pretty too. CONSTANZE

Yes? ALOYSIA

Pretty ugly. (*They laugh in unison*) Not that it matters. CONSTANZE

What do looks matter? ALOYSIA

Nothing in your case. (*They laugh in unison*) CONSTANZE

Does she have a sense of humor? ALOYSIA

That's important in times like these. CONSTANZE

One has to laugh. ALOYSIA

Or one would cry. CONSTANZE

And that would never do. ALOYSIA

Would it? CONSTANZE

What? CINDERELLA

Do. CONSTANZE

Do what? CINDERELLA

Do tell us about Cinderella. CONSTANZE

We're rather nervous you see. ALOYSIA

Meaning she is.	CONSTANZE
It's not everyday you get a new Sister.	ALOYSIA
Off the shelf as it were.	CONSTANZE
We're twins you see.	ALOYSIA
You see.	CONSTANZE
And we're very used –	ALOYSIA
To it being just –	CONSTANZE
US.	ALOYSIA/CONSTANZE
Why don't you speak?	ALOYSIA
Why don't you wash?	CONSTANZE
Well?	ALOYSIA/CONSTANZE
Well what?	CINDERELLA
Tell us about Cinderella?	ALOYSIA
Is she looking forward to meeting us?	CONSTANZE
No.	CINDERELLA
No?	ALOYSIA/CONSTANZE
She's very used to it being just her.	CINDERELLA
<i>Enter Sigmund and Maria</i>	
Ah, here she is – Cinderella. <i>(Notices her face)</i> These are your new sisters.	SIGMUND

Cinderella Curtsies.

SIGMUND

And this is Maria – your new Mother.

MARIA

Cinderella, it's a beautiful name...and I'm sure behind that smut you're a beautiful girl. Indeed you are.

SIGMUND

She's been working in the kitchen –

Maria extends her hand to Cinderella to kiss. Cinderella approaches slowly and bites Maria's hand. Maria shouts out, the twins scream.

What on earth - ?

MARIA

She bit me – she bit me!

SIGMUND

Cinderella?

CONSTANZE

You little vixen.

ALOYSIA

So you want to bite, do you?

CONSTANZE

Playing tricks –

ALOYSIA

We've got teeth too. *(they snarl in unison)*

MARIA

Stop it girls. Stop it.

SIGMUND

Apologize to your Mother.

CINDERELLA

She is not my Mother.

MARIA

It's alright, husband, Please – Cinderella, I know how you must feel.

CINDERELLA

No one knows how I feel.

MARIA

I understand...please...let us all be calm. You may call me Maria, and I hope that in time, we can become friends. *(pause)* But never – ever bite me again.

The twins snarl.

MARIA

Stop it. Take your bags to your rooms.

SIGMUND

Room. They will have to share.

ALOYSIA/CONSTANZE

Share?

CONSTANZE

With – her?

ALOYSIA

We can't

CONSTANZE

She bites people.

SIGMUND

You may have the room to yourself. Yourselves – I mean.

CONSTANZE/ALOYSIA

Thank you Stepfather.

Exit with Maria

CINDERELLA

My bedroom? My own bedroom?

SIGMUND

What else could I do after such a display? How could you behave like this?

CINDERELLA

How could you?

SIGMUND

Go to the kitchen Cinderella – make your bed there, and lie in it.

Exit Sigmund. Cinderella goes to the kitchen hearth and washes her face, so that it looks as if she has been weeping. The Fairy Godmother lands the Bird close by.

CINDERELLA

Go away, go away. *(She weeps)*

FAIRYGODMOTHER

(Aside) Cinderella sat down in the kitchen hearth and wept. Never had a girl been so poorly treated. If only her mother was there to see her plight, but she was not. Cinderella was alone, or so she thought. *(She sings a lullaby as Cinderella cries herself to sleep)* Time will pass and time will tell. Time will sweep your cares away, Time will sweep your cares away, Time will dry your tears and say, all's well, all's well, all's well.

She waves her wand and the scene changes.

ACT 1: SCENE 3

The Castle. The King's Bedroom. Enter a large bed, in which sits King Leopold, shouting and ringing his bell. The bed is filthy – as is the King's nightwear.

LEOPOLD

SEBASTIAN – SEBASTIAN! Has anyone seen that good for nothing boy?

Enter Prince Sebastian at pace

SEBASTIAN

Yes, Father.

LEOPOLD

Where have you been?

SEBASTIAN

For a walk.

LEOPOLD

A walk, at this time of night?

SEBASTIAN

But it's –

LEOPOLD

Where did you walk?

SEBASTIAN

(Looks down) In the castle garden.

LEOPOLD

Don't lie to me

SEBASTIAN

The town. I went into town.

LEOPOLD

(Apoplectic) You – you – stupid – oh, if I could get out of bed I'd tear you to pieces, because that's what they'd do – the "people" if they found you, the 'prince' strolling around like –

SEBASTIAN

I was in disguise.

LEOPOLD

(Apoplectic) In Disguise? You – You – How dare you disguise yourself? You are the King's son. You are what you are and the people hate what you are.

SEBASTIAN

That isn't true.

LEOPOLD

Oh, I suppose you know the people better than I?

SEBASTIAN

I didn't say –

LEOPOLD

I know the people. When the sun shines, it's 'Long live the King'. When it starts to rain it's 'Off with his head' – huh, walking around the streets at midnight.

SEBASTIAN

Father, it isn't midnight, it's midday.

LEOPOLD

Don't be ridiculous. You think I've lost track of time, just because I've been in bed for a few years.

SEBASTIAN

Four years.

LEOPOLD

It's midnight! Open the curtains and you will see the stars.

Sebastian opens the curtains and a shaft of light hits the King in the face.

LEOPOLD

Turn that blasted light off.

SEBASTIAN

It's midday, Father.

LEOPOLD

Midday? *(Suddenly a complete collapse in confidence)* Perhaps I'm sick. Perhaps I'm going to die of the sickness, like the rest of my people. I deserve it.

SEBASTIAN

No Father, you don't have the sickness.

LEOPOLD

Oh listen to him, he's a doctor now.

SEBASTIAN

Open your mouth.

LEOPOLD

What for?

SEBASTIAN

To see the color of your tongue. Open –

Leopold sticks out his tongue. It's bright red and gives Sebastian a shock.

LEOPOLD

What?

SEBASTIAN

Your tongue is bright red.

LEOPOLD

Sherbet...Strawberry – So what? So what? So what?

SEBASTIAN

You're perfectly well.

LEOPOLD

Nonsense...if I was perfectly well I'd get out of bed. Don't look at me like that, as if the sickness was my fault.

SEBASTIAN

No one blames you for the sickness.

LEOPOLD

Oh, they do, I can see it in their eyes. The cook, the chambermaid they all looked at me – that's why I sacked them.

SEBASTIAN

Sacked them?

LEOPOLD

Sacked them all. Sent them home, what else could I do?

SEBASTIAN

All of them?

LEOPOLD

Don't look at me.

SEBASTIAN

You mean we have no servants?

LEOPOLD

Well – no. Oh my son what am I going to do?

Fairy Godmother/Bird flies into the room.

SEBASTIAN

Look Father – you have a visitor come to cheer you up.

LEOPOLD

Get it out! Get it out!

SEBASTIAN

It's only a bird, it must have followed me.

LEOPOLD

Followed you? From where?

SEBASTIAN

From the town.

The Bird lands on the end of the King's bed.

LEOPOLD

Why would it follow you? Does it belong to someone? Well does it?

The Bird looks at Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Well – I -?

LEOPOLD

Does it?

The Bird nods.

Who? Who were you with in the town?

SEBASTIAN

No one.

The Bird nods

LEOPOLD

Don't lie.

SEBASTIAN

A girl.

The Bird nods.

She was talking to this dove – it was very strange.

LEOPOLD

Wait, what kind of girl?

SEBASTIAN

An ordinary girl, a Clockmaker's daughter.

LEOPOLD

(Apoplectic) You – you ! (He comes to the end of the bed, making it clear that he is physically able to get out of bed if he wants to. He hits out at Sebastian with a rolled up paper and hits the Bird instead) How many times must I tell you, not to talk to ordinary girls? You're a Prince. If you want to talk to a girl, you have to talk to a Princess, come here.

Sebastian approaches warily

LEOPOLD

Do you love her? This Clockmaker's daughter? Do you?

Sebastian shakes his head. The King looks at the Bird, the Bird nods.

SEBASTIAN

No –

LEOPOLD

You – You – Don't know how dangerous love is? It upsets everyone. It upset me for years. *(He swipes again and hits the Bird again.)*

Sudden burst of music from the courtyard below, where Wolfgang has been waiting.

LEOPOLD

It's him – he's back. *(He goes under the bedclothes)*

SEBASTIAN

It's Wolfy. With a new hairstyle.

LEOPOLD

Tell him I've got no money and to go away.

SEBASTIAN

Wolfgang is my best friend. Do you want me to live here, completely alone, with no one to talk to in the whole world?

LEOPOLD

How dare you approach me...I'm the King...Send him up.

SEBASTIAN

You may come up Wolfy.

Enter Wolfgang, with an outrageous wig. The King tries to gather his composure, which includes putting on his crown. Wolfgang ignores him.

WOLFGANG

Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN

Wolfgang!

They embrace

SEBASTIAN

My friend.

WOLFGANG

As long as I live.

The King coughs.

WOLFGANG

I see your father has not yet found his way to the edge of the bed.

LEOPOLD

Kneel. Kneel. KNEEL.

WOLFGANG

You mistake me, sir. My name is Wolfy – Wolfy – Wolfy.

LEOPOLD

Yes – Ha, ha. Your sense of humor is a menace to western civilization. I mean kneel as in get on your knees. *(Wolfy kneels)* It is customary to greet the King before the Prince.

WOLFGANG

It is also customary to save the best dumpling till last.

LEOPOLD

What do you want? Apart from a new hairdresser.

WOLFGANG

To be of service.

LEOPOLD

Then don't play any of your music. It upsets everyone. It's upset me for years. Sebastian –

SEBASTIAN

Yes Father.

LEOPOLD

I'm about to upset you. Ready? You will not see this...ordinary girl...this clockmaker's daughter ever again. You see, I understand young people. You're upset.

SEBASTIAN

But Father.

LEOPOLD

You will do as you are told. Now I will speak to your friend alone, Go.

Sebastian takes Wolfgang to one side.

SEBASTIAN

What am I going to do?

WOLFGANG

You've met someone

SEBASTIAN

Yes, I think so.

WOLFGANG

My friend, at times like this there is only one thing to do – listen to your heart, and do as it commands. If it tells you to disobey your father, then do it. Do it now!

SEBASTIAN

That's easy for you. I am the Prince. It's my duty to obey the King – my Father.

WOLFGANG

You also have a duty to yourself.

LEOPOLD

Go! Go! *You* stay.

Exit Sebastian.

WOLFGANG

Ah kids.

LEOPOLD

Shut up. They tell me you're a genius. And you are my son's best friend.

WOLFGANG

That is my happy condition.

LEOPOLD

Speak plainly yes or no.

WOLFGANG

Plainly yes.

LEOPOLD

Then you may be of some service. Sebastian appears to be falling in love. We have to stop it, before it's too late.

WOLFGANG

Stop it, why?

LEOPOLD

Because – oh child prodigy – she's not a princess. If he doesn't love a princess, then everything will collapse around our ears. No Kings, no Princes, no castles – no more music. Herr composer. You will stop him, you're a genius. Think of an idea, think of it now!

The Bird lands on his arm.

WOLFGANG

I have one.

LEOPOLD

Just one?

WOLFGANG

One more than you.

LEOPOLD

Speak.

WOLFGANG

We'll have a dance – a ball. And to this ball, we'll invite every princess for a thousand miles – a hundred miles.

LEOPOLD

What for?

WOLFGANG

Sebastian will, I am sure, meet someone else.

LEOPOLD

Music?

WOLFGANG

Music, my King, is the key that unlocks the beating heart from my chest.

LEOPOLD

Rubbish, speak plainly, yes or no.

The Bird lands on the King's arm.

LEOPOLD

I love my son, his happiness is my concern. For him we shall have the greatest ball ever seen on earth. See to it Herr Composer, see to it!

He rings the bell by the side of his bed and the bed swivels round and vanishes. Beautiful music fills the air.

ACT 1: SCENE 4

Cinderella's house.

Enter Aloysia clutching her throat and gasping for water. Constanze and Cinderella follow.

CONSTANZE

What have you done to my sister? What have you done?

ALOYSIA

Water, water –

Constanze exits

CINDERELLA

Does your throat burn? Much?

Enter Constanze with a glass of water.

ALOYSIA

(Rasping) Water...

Constanze in a panic throws the water into Aloysia's face. Cinderella laughs. She laughs and laughs. Constanze and Aloysia stare at her in amazement.

CONSTANZE

It's not funny.

CINDERELLA

No?

CONSTANZE

She hasn't laughed in a year, Sister and the first thing that causes her any mirth, is your discomfort. What have you done?

CINDERELLA

She said she liked mustard.

ALOYSTIA

Custard – not mustard, custard.

CINDERELLA

Both yellow aren't they?

Constanze, much to her own surprise slaps Cinderella's face, not hard, but enough to chock them both.

CONSTANZE

(Turns to her sister, but points at Cinderella) She made me do it.

ALOYSIA

(Still Rasping) What have I ever done to you?

CONSTANZE

Cinderface. Cinderbutt, Cindersleep...

ALOYSIA

Forever.

Cinderbacktowheresheshecamefrom.	CONSTANZE
Hell.	ALOYSIA
Hell is full of Cinders.	CONSTANZE
Something good has come of it then.	CINDERELLA
<i>Silence.</i>	
<i>(In total disbelief)</i> What did you say?	CONSTANZE
You heard.	CINDERELLA
<i>(Now full of indignation)</i> My sister has the finest voice in all Germany. The King's own composer said she sang – <i>(She clicks here fingers at her sister)</i>	CONSTANZE
<i>(Rasps)</i> Like an Angel.	ALOYSIA
Like an Angel, sing Aloysia, sing – like an Angel.	CONSTANZE
I can't.	ALOYSIA
Sing, sing, sing, sing...	CONSTANZE
<i>Aloysia tries to sing but fails.</i>	
That's an Angel? No, that's a dog howling at the moon.	CINDERELLA
How dare you.	CONSTANZE
Only the dog would howl in tune.	CINDERELLA
AHH!	ALOYSIA
You sing then.	CONSTANZE
Cindertongue	ALOYSIA

You sing – **CONSTANZE**

Show us your talent. **ALOYSIA**

If you're so great. **CONSTANZE**

I can't sing, I never said I could sing – **CINDERELLA**

Scared are you? That I'm better... **ALOYSIA**

No. **CINDERELLA**

Go on then, sing. **ALOYSIA**

Sing – **CONSTANZE**

Sing, sing, sing, **CONSTANZE/ALOYSIA**

The Fairy Godmother/Bird gives Cinderella a note and she sings beautifully.

CINDERELLA
(Sings) As I was walking one morning in May
I heard the sweet voice of a boy who did say
Come be my true love, come be my wife,
And I'll love you truly, all of my life.

The sisters stand mouths open, then almost unconsciously Constanze slaps Cinderella for having such a beautiful voice. Then she looks down at her hand in disbelief.

CONSTANZE
She made me do it, she made me do it.

Enter Maria who has been watching.

MARIA
That's quite enough girls, go to your rooms...room.

They exit, enter Sigmund.

SIGMUND
What's all this shouting about? I'm trying to work – and if I don't work then there's no money – no money, no food. We are poor people and I must work, but all I hear is shouting, squabbling as if there was a war going on.

MARIA
How perceptive you are Sigmund.

CINDERELLA

Send them away father, I beg you, send them all away.

SIGMUND

My child, I can't.

MARIA

You are right Sigmund – there is a war and it must end.

SIGMUND

What do you suggest?

MARIA

I suggest that Cinderella stays below stairs – in the kitchen, and leaves the rest of the house to my girls.

SIGMUND

But –

MARIA

They are two, she is one – they need more space and it will keep the warring factions apart. More importantly, cooking and cleaning will occupy her mind, which is what you wanted, isn't it.

SIGMUND

Yes, I suppose –

MARIA

That's settled then. Cinderella, from now on you will not come upstairs, unless to bring us food of course.

There is a sudden scream of delight offstage, then Constanze/Aloysia enter at speed with an invite.

CONSTANZE

Mother –

ALOYSIA

Have you heard?

CONSTANZE

Look – the royal seal.

MARIA

Calm yourselves girls, let me read.

CONSTANZE

It's an invite father – you don't mind if we call you father, do you?

SIGMUND

I'd be honored.

MARIA

An invite to a grand ball.

ALOYSIA

To be held in honor of Prince Sebastian.

MARIA

Ahh.

CONSTANE/ALOYSIA

Mother?

MARIA

It means that the Prince is looking for a wife.

CONSTANZE/ALOYSIA

ML.

CONSTANZE

In a castle, with a Prince.

ALOYSIA

We'd be separated forever.

Constanze grins from ear to ear.

MARIA

Come, we must make preparations.

Exit Maria and Constanze/Aloysia. Sigmund is left standing, as if in shock.

SIGMUND

Cinderella...

Cinderella raises her hand as if to say she does not wish to talk to him.

SIGMUND

I didn't think it would be like this...but it will all work out well in the end, I think. Time, you see, no one understands it (*sees the clock*) not even me – but – it sorts things out. It just takes a little – time... (*He exits*)

The Fairy Godmother/Bird sings in the garden. Lights rise on the Hazel Tree and Cinderella goes into the garden. Sebastian enters, dressed as a poor boy.

PRINCE/BOY

You've been crying.

CINDERELLA

So? (*She looks at him*) What's the matter? Why don't you speak?

PRINCE/BOY

I have to tell you something.

CINDERELLA

Bad news, I recognize the face.

PRINCE/BOY

Yes.

CINDERELLA

Well say it then – unless you're too scared.

PRINCE/BOY

Cinderella – I can't come here again, not ever.

CINDERELLA

So? Why should that be bad news? I'm used to people leaving and not coming back, I don't care.

PRINCE/BOY

You don't mean that.

CINDERELLA

Yes, I do, I mean...it's not as if we love each other, is it?

PRINCE/BOY

No.

CINDERELLA

Then go, go – I don't need you, go...

PRINCE/BOY

Please, Cinderella – let me explain...

CINDERELLA

No, just go – go go go go (*She forces him out*) No, please, don't go, please, please come back....come back (*She falls to her knees in tears*)

The Bird approaches

Tell me.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

What, dear child?

CINDERELLA

When will things start to get better?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Oh, Cinderella, they already have.

CINDERELLA

What's that?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

He left his shoe behind.

CINDERELLA

So...? What good is that to me? How is that going to make anything better? What do I want with a boy's smelly shoe?

She exits

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

(Aside) This really is a very difficult occupation for which one gets no thanks.

The Fairy Godmother/Bird makes a spell and the scene changes.

ACT 1: SCENE 5

The Kings Bedroom.

Enter the King in bed, shouting and ringing his bell.

LEOPOLD

SEBASTIAN – SEBASTIAN! Has anyone seen that good for nothing boy?!

Enter Wolfgang and Sebastian, still in rags. Wolfgang pulls Sebastian to one side.

SEBASTIAN

I can't see him – not dressed like this.

WOLFGANG

You went to see her?

SEBASTIAN

Yes.

WOLFGANG

Excellent friend, you disobeyed him, at last. *(He embraces Sebastian)* You told her that you loved her and that nothing else matters in the world?

SEBASTIAN

No, I told her that I could never see her again. I could not disobey him – I'm a Prince – things are expected of me. Don't look at me like that.

WOLFGANG

One of these days – you will have to stand up to him, our friendship relies upon it.

LEOPOLD

SEBASTIAN!

WOLFGANG

I'll see him.

Exit Sebastian

LEOPOLD

Where is my son? I told him not to leave the castle – if he has disobeyed me...

WOLFGANG

Was there something you wanted?

LEOPOLD

Don't use that rebellious tone with me. I ordered some food. I waited and waited, thirty seconds passed and it still hasn't arrived, where are the servants?

WOLFGANG

You sacked them.

Silence

LEOPOLD

I still need to eat, I still need breakfast.

WOFLGANG

Breakfast?

LEOPOLD

You know, breakfast, porridge, not too thick, egg, not too runny – soldiers – not cut too thin. Breakfast.

WOLFGANG

It's six o'clock in the evening, Breakfast is over.

LEOPOLD

You – ha ha! It is six o'clock in the morning.

Wolfgang pulls back the curtains and a red shaft of light hits the King as before.

LEOPOLD

Sunrise?

WOLFGANG

Sunset.

LEOPOLD

It's a trick – it's a trick – a plot to overthrow me. The sickness is not my fault, Herr Composer, its not it's not its not!

WOFLGANG

No, your majesty, it's not.

LEOPOLD

Then why's it here? Why doesn't it go away? Why does it strike down my people, whom I love – I love? Every night and every day I hear their sorrow. Children weeping for their mothers. Where does it come from? Why does it not take me? Don't look at me, go back to bed, Herr Composer, don't you know what time of day it is?

WOLFGANG

Yes, your majesty.

LEOPOLD

How are preparations for the ball?

WOFLGANG

Everything is arranged.

LEOPOLD

Good, change of venue, we'll have it in here.

WOFLGANG

Have what in here?

LEOPOLD

The ball – the dance – the party. You remember Herr Composer – the plan. My son will meet someone else and forget this ordinary girl, the non-princess.

WOLFGANG

What do you mean, in here?

LEOPOLD

In here – half wit.

WOLFGANG

This is a bedroom.

LEOPOLD

Yes, my bedroom – the King's bedroom – we'll have the ball in here.

WOLFGANG

In your bedroom?

LEOPOLD

YES.

WOLFGANG

We have a thirty six piece orchestra and two hundred princesses, how are we going to fit into your bedroom?

Silence.

LEOPOLD

I thought you were a professional.

WOLFGANG

Perhaps if you were to pay me, I might call myself a professional, once again.

LEOPOLD

How dare you raise your voice at me – just because you wrote, 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star', when you were two weeks old. You are plotting to overthrow me – you and this ordinary girl, why do you all hate me so much?

WOLFGANG

I don't hate you, your majesty.

LEOPOLD

Don't you? Why not? What have I done for the people? (*grabs Wolfgang*) What can I do Herr Mozart-to help my people?

WOLFGANG

Have you ever thought about getting out of bed?

LEOPOLD

Get out of bed?

WOLFGANG

It's simple really...just pull back the sheets... (*he does so*) and get out of bed.

LEOPOLD

(*pulls back the sheets*) Never.

WOLFGANG

Your Majesty –

LEOPOLD

Revolt, treason, insurrection and sheet pulling!

WOLFGANG

(His hands are black) Your bed – your sheets – your night gown...

LEOPOLD

What...

WOLFGANG

Are filthy, they haven't been washed for years.

LEOPOLD

So? The people live and die in filth. So should I.

WOLFGANG

You must wash...wash... *(They struggle over the sheets)*

LEOPOLD

Wash? I will not wash – I hate washing. I will not get out of bed – and I will not wash. *(He pulls back the sheets finally)* The ball will be held in this bedroom. If you are not happy with the arrangement – cry about it.

He pulls the bell by the side of his bed, which then swivels round, and he exits on it.

ACT 1: SCENE 6

Cinderella's House

CINDERELLA

Father, father are you there?

Dark music – enter Maria

CINDERELLA

Where's father? I want to see him.

MARIA

You can't, he's working and asked not to be disturbed, may I help?

CINDERELLA

No.

MARIA

I know what you want Cinderella – you want to go to the ball? *(Silence)* And you're jealous that you can't?

CINDERELLA

I will if I want to.

MARIA

No, not on this occasion. *(Comes face to face with her)* You will not! *(She withdraws)* Please try to understand...my girls have lost everything in the past two years. Their father, their house, their friends, the future they thought was theirs. This ball at the King's place is an opportunity for them – to go forward in society – an opportunity you don't need, because – you and Father have always been poor and never expected to be anything else – but for Aloysia and Constanze...do you understand? No, you don't, because you really are a most selfish child.

Exit Maria. Cinderella hears the girls approaching and leaves. Enter Aloysia and Constanze who go to the chest.

ALOYSIA

You can't do this, Constanze.

CONSTANZE

No?

ALOYSIA

It doesn't belong to you.

CONSTANZE

Our new father says, everything in the house belongs to us.

ALOYSIA

It has a big C on the lid.

CONSTANZE

Cinderella?

ALOYSIA

Then it's hers, don't open it.

CONSTANZE

What? Are you scared of her? That little weevil who mopes around as if she's the only person who has ever suffered anything, who has made our lives misery, playing tricks on us, putting coal in your bed, pins in my slippers-? Not me.

ALOYSIA

But why do you want to open it?

CONSTANZE

It's got a dress in it.

ALOYSIA

You've already looked?

CONSTANZE

I didn't look, I peeped.

ALOYSIA

Same difference.

CONSTANZE

No, a peep is like... *(She peeps inside and shuts lid)* and a look is like... *(She opens the lid fully and a golden light shines out. They gasp and Constanze pulls out a golden dress).*

ALOYSIA

Oh that's gorgeous.

CONSTANZE

Yes, and I shall wear it to the ball.

ALOYSIA

Why should you wear it, Sister? I have as much right.

CONSTANZE

You? You wouldn't even open the box. I found it – I wear it. *(She holds the dress up to herself and dances around.)*

ALOYSIA

I know what you want, Sister. *(She stops)* You want to leave me. You want to meet some prince in a castle and get married and never see me again.

CONSTANZE

(Gently) I'll always want to see you, but we can't spend our whole lives together, can we?

ALOYSIA

Can't we?

CONSTANZE

No – no.

ALOYSIA

I can't bear to think of life without you. When you leave the room, I find it hard to breathe.

CONSTANZE

Don't talk like this Aloysia, it suffocates me. Who knows, perhaps you'll meet someone before I do.

ALOYSIA

Perhaps I will. *(She grabs the dress and begins to dance.)*

CONSTANZE

Give it back, give it back.

As they fight over the dress Cinderella enters. They stop.

CINDERELLA

That's my mother's dress.

CONSTANZE

Your Father said I could wear it – to the ball.

ALOYSIA

Did he?

CONSTANZE

Yes.

CINDERELLA

Your mother has hired dresses for you. You can't wear it.

ALOYSIA

Don't you talk to my sister like that.

CINDERELLA

My box of special things – how dare you – how dare you...? Give me the dress.

They all grab hold of it, then pull

ALOYSIA

What do you want it for?

CONSTANZE

You can't go to the ball.

ALOYSIA

You're not invited.

CONSTANZE

They don't invite kitchen staff.

CINDERELLA

I will go to the ball. I will. I will.

The dress rips, they fall back. Cinderella stares at the dress.

CONSTANZE/ALOYSIA

You made us do it! You made us!

They run out. Cinderella is left weeping into the dress. Enter the Fairy Godmother with the Bird. The Bird flies around her head.

CINDERELLA

Go away. Go away. Can't you see how miserable I am?

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

Yes, I think therefore, it's time for a little more magic. Please close your eyes and count to ten.

CINDERELLA

No.

FAIRY GODMOTHER/BIRD

I see.

She waves her wand and Cinderella falls into a trance, and counts to ten. During the spell, the Fairy Godmother puts the Bird back into the cage and transforms herself into a visible entity. Cinderella opens her eyes and sees her.

CINDERELLA

Who are you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER

A friend.

CINDERELLA

(sees the Bird in the cage) I don't understand –

FAIRY GODMOTHER

I'm not really a bird, it's just so much easier to get around as a bird. It's a – a disguise. Everyone has one.

CINDERELLA

You're a witch?

FAIRY GODMOTHER

NO, no – I'm you're – your Fairy Godmother. I'm here to look after you until such time, well, until such time. There's no need to be frightened.

CINDERELLA

I'm not. I should be, but I'm now.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

Good. Now we have work to do. I understand that you wish to go to the ball-at the castle.

CINDERELLA

Not really, I just said that because – they were going.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

What do you want then?

CINDERELLA

I want my mother back – that's what I really want. Can you bring her back? Can you?

FAIRY GODMOTHER

No my child, that is the one thing I cannot do. But I know this – your Mother would want you to be happy, to enjoy life. To live and love. Now every young girl in her secret heart of hearts wants to go to the biggest, brightest party in town – it's perfectly normal.

CINDERELLA

But I can't go, I'm not a princess, I'm a serving girl, a kitchen maid.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

Tush – tush –

CINDERELLA

I have no dress, no carriage, no coachman.

FAIRY GODMOTHER

You have a pumpkin by the hearth. Some mice in a cage and a nice big rat behind the skirting. *(She pulls it out)* Now then, close your eyes and count to ten. *(She pulls it explosion and a plume of smoke from which emerges a Coachman with big whiskers. The rat disappears. Another explosion and the coach and hear the whinny of horses.)* And finally... *(Another explosion, Cinderella emerges out of the smoke in a beautiful dress.)* Yes, Cinderella, you shall go to the ball.

Music – Lights Fade.