

THE SMALL PRINT

Thanks for your interest in this script. If you have any questions at all about technical issues, cast numbers, alternate versions with or without a dame, please e-mail me at ca.lane@familylane.plus.com .

If you like the script but it doesn't work for your stage or cast, then let me know and I will gladly tailor it to your needs at no extra cost.

As soon as you have decided that you love this script I will send you a normal Word version. You can then make your own adaptations to the local audience (and whatever is in the news at the time) **in the marked grey areas only** – the rest has been proved to work in successful performances (and any necessary changes already made) so just trust the script and don't try to 'improve' it. You CAN cut out some songs or dances if you need to save time. Once you have made the selections & adaptations then you can print as many as you want at no extra cost. You ARE allowed to print small sections of it, e.g. just bits that the chorus need, but these must still have a title and © **Chris Lane** on it somewhere.

If you have any questions at all at any time during production (such as 'How do Snow White's dwarfs juggle the sausages?') **I will be very delighted to answer them; I have directed all of these pantos and can help you with just about anything!**

Frequently Asked Questions:

QUESTION: Can we alter the script?

ANSWER: Certain bits only. It is designed to be adapted to make the local jokes work (there are specially highlighted grey bits with hints). Please do add 'Adapted for *** Drama Club by Fred Jones' or whoever did this. Also adapt it if you have to change the sex of a character (ideally not during the performances, but accidents do happen) but you cannot take chunks out of it and use it in 'your own' work: small legal thing called 'copyright'. Someone will 'dob' on you - they always do. And you cannot rewrite bits of it; though you may think it hilarious it may not be - and it will have my name on it!

QUESTION: Are there any other petty demands?

ANSWER: Yes: I need to know where and when performances would take place, which club would be performing them, and to what size audiences. In part this also alerts me if you are putting on the same show as another club nearby.

QUESTION: Is that all?

ANSWER: Almost - but you must put my name on all posters and programs and all copies of the script must have this somewhere: © **Chris Lane**

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CHRIS LANE

NZ Writers Guild

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PANTO TITLES

CINDERELLA
DICK WHITTINGTON
HANSEL AND GRETEL
RED RIDING HOOD & THE THREE PIGS
ROBIN HOOD
SLEEPING BEAUTY
SNOW WHITE
THREE MEN IN A TUB

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THE DAFF WAR
THE SWIPERS

*I live in Auckland with my wife, Norma
(Head of Operations, St John Ambulance,
New Zealand) and family
As well as writing scripts, film screenplays
and bestselling books I direct for the stage
and actively supports new writers in many
genres.*

*From 1953 to 2013 I lived in England, with
over 30 of those years spent in teaching,
until I worked out why I woke up
screaming.*

CINDERELLA

Chris Lane

www.pantoscripts.me.uk

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: The ROSE GARDEN

*A beautiful garden entirely pale pastel colours & cream (no primary colours). Stage Right is the side of a manor house with posh door up two steps. Stage Left is an ornate tall white metal double gate between tall white pillars. A tall wall covered in climbing flowers runs across the back of the stage, tree tops can be seen beyond. The garden is full of pastel rose bushes. Ella is sitting on a bench with **a book & small blackboard: '10 things for a perfect boyfriend'**. Village children sit at her feet. Servants & gardeners are busy in the background. All characters are in pastel colours, cream or white.*

SONG: ELLA & CHILDREN & CHORUS: staff & gardeners: "Doe a deer"

ELLA: Quick – back to your books! Someone's coming! *(They pretend to study)*

Chorus exit gradually during the following lines. Remove blackboard.

BUTTONS: *(enters through door with loo brush)* Hmmm. Ella, you look very guilty. You all look very guilty. *(Is only teasing them)* *(To children)* Have you been working hard? *(Nodding.)* Or has Ella been telling you her romantic twaddle again?

ELLA: Me, Buttons? Romantic twaddle? Not at all. Why - you can ask the children.

BUTTONS: *(pretends to be suspicious)* I just might. *Name of Boy 1.* Tell me – what have you been learning?

BOY 1: *(Not pleased)* Hnn. Romantic twaddle!

GIRL 1: *(Grins widely. Pause)* It was lovely. *(All girls agree)*

BUTTONS: *Laughs.* If your father finds out ...

ELLA: *(joking)* And who's going to tell him?

Boy 1 puts hand up but they over-rule him.

BUTTONS: Ha! Well I'm not saying anything! But don't forget: he's due back today, so he might catch you himself! *(Turns to leave into house)*

ELLA: Buttons?

BUTTONS: Mmm?

ELLA: Don't rush around. Sit in the garden a while.

BOY 1: Yes: we're going to do some hard sums!

BUTTONS: Er. That sounds lovely. But, you do the sums for me! Sadly, got to unblock the toilet again! *(Waves loo brush)*

BOY 1: Ooh! Can I help you will that?

BUTTONS: No, *name*, not after the last time. Remember? If I hadn't caught your ankles you'd have been gone! *(Ruffles hair with loo brush)* I know you blame yourself for blocking it, but...

BOY 1: Not my fault; my mums a vegetarian.

BUTTONS: Ah, right: *(confused)* I'm a Capricorn myself. Be good! *(Exits)*

ELLA: Poor Buttons. I'd better give him a hand. *(Gets up. To kids)* The place must look its best: have you heard the news - father is bringing home his new wife today.

CHILD 2: A new mother for you!

BOY 1: What's she like? Do you think she enjoys doing long division?

ELLA: I expect so!

CHILD 4: Tell us about her!

CHILD 5: Does she give children sweets?

ELLA: Slow down! *(Stops on steps)* I can't tell you anything about her – except father met her in Paris; she's a widow; and she has two children already.

GIRL 1: Children? I hope they're not smelly boys?! Eugh! *(Other girls groan)*

BOY 1: Typical sexist remark. *Tut!* Just what I'd expect from a girl.

ELLA: I don't know any more than that! Now, back home with you. Same time tomorrow! And read those books!

Children exit through the gates saying: Bye! We will! Goodbye! They close the gates.

ELLA: Right – I must give Buttons a hand. He works really hard – I don't know what we'd do without him. *There is a commotion outside the gate.*

ELLA: Now what?

COWSLIP: *(offstage)(common voice)* More faster like! Run!

PEASBLOSSOM: *(posh voice)* I am running!

NUTMEG: *(Breathless)* Is there a reason for running?

COWSLIP: Yeah – it is stayin' alive! Quick! In here!

They appear outside the gates. They are not all obviously fairies, but all have wings.

PEASBLOSSOM: Hurry – open the gates!

COWSLIP: I is hurryin' – they is locked!

NUTMEG: *(Enthusiastic but dopey)* Do you want me to bang my head on them - like the other ones?

COWSLIP: Yeah – go on then. But you is not to get blood all over us this time! Right?

NUTMEG: No blood. Right. *(Takes a few steps back)*

ELLA: It's not locked!

COWSLIP: What?

ELLA: I said – the gates – they're not locked.

COWSLIP: Not locked?

ELLA: No. You just have to push them.

COWSLIP: Yeah, right – I is knowin' that. Quick – everyone in. *(they enter)*

NUTMEG: Do you still want me to bang my head on the gates?

COWSLIP: Perhaps later on – if we gets bored. *(They close gates quickly & hold them shut)*

PEASBLOSSOM: I don't think these gates will keep out – you know who-ee.

COWSLIP: Oh crikey! *(To Ella)* Is you having somewhere for us to hide? *(Ella shakes head)* Or for defence!! Like maybe a great big cannon? *(Ella shakes head)* Any weapons? A spear!

PEASBLOSSOM: Sword?

COWSLIP: Dagger?

PEASBLOSSOM: Pointed stick?

COWSLIP: Sharp pencil?

PEASBLOSSOM: Drawing pin?

NUTMEG: *(Slowly)* How about a sausage roll that is past its sell-by date? *(Others look in disbelief)*

COWSLIP: Anything at all to defend ourselves with?!

ELLA: No. Not really. Why?

PEASBLOSSOM: Too long to explain. Just let me put it this way: we are in mortal peril! Running for 20 miles. Horrible death approaching. And *(looks around)* rather desperate for the loo actually.

COWSLIP: Too late! Look! *(Points at wall behind them)*

Lights dim. Ominous music. Above wall can be seen the top of the hairy head and horns of some huge shuffling creature. Grunting noises. It moves toward the gate & out of sight.

FAIRIES: Aargh! *(Try to hide behind each other)*

ELLA: What is the matter?

COWSLIP: *(panicking)* It seems – apparently - we is upsetin' someone. So they is comin' to kill us in a slow and terrible manner.

Gates slowly open with a horror creak. Lights dim. Rumble of distant thunder.

FAIRIES: Aargh! *(All try to hide behind Cinderella. Menacing music.)*

RED RIDING HOOD: *(enters through gates. She carries basket but her hood is not red but purple)* Ha! At last! You are mine! Prepare - **to die!**

NUTMEG: No, not to-die; how about to-morrow!

COWSLIP: Hang about. Here. Is this it? Is this who we is runnin' from? *(Circles her)*

PEASBLOSSOM: *nods frantically, still hiding.*

COWSLIP: Then who was dat wot we just saw behind that wall?!

ELLA: Oh, him. He lives there. He's in a different panto.

Theme: Beauty and the Beast (Tale as old as time).

COWSLIP: *(to music)* Oy! Listen up: 'a different panto'! *(Glares until it stops.)* I as 'ad trouble wiv you before! *(Gives the evils.)* *(Sound fx – raspberry)* *(Waves fist)*

RED RIDING HOOD: So – I say again – prepare to die!

ELLA: I know you; you're Little Red, Little Red ... oh dear! Quite little - but not very 'red'.

RED RIDING HOOD: Exactly: no longer Little **Red** Riding Hood – not since these idiots tried to help, by washing it!

COWSLIP: It is not entirely our fault. Some of da washing got – sort of - mixed up.

PEASBLOSSOM: That's right. Your super little red cape, yah? Well, rather funny actually; it went into the wash with Cowslip's navy blue knickers!

RED RIDING HOOD: I know! She can have them back! *(Reaches into cloak)*

COWSLIP: No! Er ... not now! ... No – don't ... Aah!!

RED RIDING HOOD: *(pulls out very large blue drawers)* Here.

COWSLIP: *(embarrassedly goes and gets them, RRH hangs on and they stretch to large size)* They stretched in the machine! *(Mutter from Buttons to Peasblossom)* What did he/she say? What?!

PEASBLOSSOM: He/She said you must have washed your bottom in the same machine! I say – that is rather witty.

COWSLIP: I'll give him/her witty. *(A fight is prevented.)*

ELLA: I must say it does seem a bit much to kill someone, just because they made a mistake with the washing.

RED RIDING HOOD: Tell her. *(Fairies look guilty)* Go on – tell her what else you did.

COWSLIP: Not entirely our fault. We wus confused.

RED RIDING HOOD: Tell her about the wolf.

NUTMEG: *(Alarmed)* Which wolf?

COWSLIP: No wolf. There never wus no wolf!

PEASBLOSSOM: No. We didn't meet **any** wolf in the forest. Not jolly likely; not us!

NUTMEG: *(thinks)* Was that the wolf who asked us the way to Granny's house?

COWSLIP: No – dat never happened.

NUTMEG: And you told him there was a **shortcut** to Granny's house.

COWSLIP: Dat never happened neither.

NUTMEG: And you asked him *why* he was going to Granny's house.

COWSLIP: Never happened!

NUTMEG: And he said – you'll like this – he had a really gruff voice *(does the voices)* "I am going to granny's house and she will say '**My what big ears you have**' and I will say 'All the better to hear you with' and then she will say '**My what big eyes you have**' and I'll say 'All the better to see you with' and then .. then – this is the funny bit – then she'll say '**My what big teeth you have**' and I'll say – wait for it – 'All the better to eat you with!' and then I will swallow her whole!

COWSLIP: Never happened. Peasblossom; tell them: all that NEVER, EVER happened!

PEASBLOSSOM: No – indeed not. None of that ever happened. But Nutmeg **did** get the voice just right though! Just like the wolf! (*Gets hit*)

ELLA: My word. That’s not good. But my understanding is, what normally happens in these cases, is that a passing woodman comes by, with his axe, opens up the wolf and lets the Granny out, still all in one piece.

PEASBLOSSOM: (*guilty shuffling*) Normally Yes.

COWSLIP: Not **entirely** our fault.

ELLA: (*suspicious*) What did you do?

NUTMEG: I remember now! You said to the wolf: ‘That is not nice – swallowing an old lady whole’!

COWSLIP: Yes! YES! **THAT** happened. “Not nice – swallowing an old lady whole”! I did indeed say that! (*Looks smug*) Yes indeed.

NUTMEG: (*Happy to be right for once.*) So you gave him a food-mincer!

RED RIDING HOOD: Ha! Prepare to die!

BUTTONS: (*enters hurriedly from door.*) What’s going on? Who’s going to die?

NUTMEG: (*Hand up & smiles*) We are.

RED RIDING HOOD: Yes! These useless fairies are about to die!

BUTTONS: (*Looks at RRH*) How?

RED RIDING HOOD: What?

BUTTONS: How are they going to die? (*Checks her basket*) You don’t seem to have any weapons. Do you do magic?

RED RIDING HOOD: Well ... no.

BUTTONS: So?

RED RIDING HOOD: Don’t know really.

BUTTONS: You haven’t really thought it through properly. (*Kindly*) Tell you what. Why don’t you go and make a proper plan! Perhaps get a really big weapon?

RED RIDING HOOD: A really big weapon?

NUTMEG: Like a cannon! (*Others hit him*)

RED RIDING HOOD: Right. OK then. (*Turns to leave*) I’ll be back! (*Exits*)

COWSLIP: Yeah, whatever. Well done matey; nice one.

BUTTONS: You’re very welcome.

ELLA: Right then, glad we could help; was there anything else...?

COWSLIP: Hang about. Hang – a - bout. Show us today’s diary. Who was it we had to find?

PEASBLOSSOM: Here. (*Shows diary/phone*)

COWSLIP: OK. No mistakes this time. Proper check before we does anyfink.

PEASBLOSSOM: You see, we - are Fairy God-mothers.

COWSLIP: Nutmeg. Peasblossom. And Cowslip.

PEASBLOSSOM: Only a temporary position. Until we can find something better. Perhaps (*something topical*)

COWSLIP: And we ‘as bin sent to help a young lady – (*excited*) a young lady very much fitting your description. What’s your name?

ELLA: My name is Ella. Short for Eleanor. My father is Lord Table.

COWSLIP: (*reads*) Bum. Sorry not you. Right address: Rosebud Lane, but wrong name. We want a Sindy-Something.

BUTTONS: Oh! Do you perhaps think it’s the girl next door? I don’t suppose that ‘Beauty’ is her real name, do you?

Music plays Beauty & Beast again.

COWSLIP: (*To orchestra*) Oy! Different panto! What is your problem? (*As Cowslip walks away music plays snippet of ‘fat bottomed girls’.*) Hold me back!

ELLA: Oh my! Well; it could be the girl next-door you’re looking for. But I think she’s gone home, to see her father.

COWSLIP: Next door? Sorted. Come, fellow fairy-godmothers. We is away!

PEASBLOSSOM: Very lovely to meet you.

NUTMEG: *(To Ella)* Did you use to be in the All Blacks?

COWSLIP: *(Hits Nutmeg)* Idiot! Come on! *(They exit)*

ELLA: *(As she EXITS into house)* What unusual people.

BUTTONS: Yes indeed. I hope they find this 'Sindy' they're looking for. *(EXITS)*

PEASBLOSSOM: *(voices from behind wall; tops of heads showing)* Shall we ring the bell?

COWSLIP: Just go on in, girl! Hello! Anyone home? Hello – er - what's her name?

PEASBLOSSOM: Sindy ... Rella. *(Louder)* Sindy Rella?! Hello?! Fairies here with good news!!

NUTMEG: Look! Someone's coming! *(Beast's head appears again)*

COWSLIP: Oh blimey. Hello – kind sir – does Sindy Rella live here? We are her fairy god... aaargh! *(Much snarling, panic and yelling)*

PEASBLOSSOM: Aaaaooooaaahh!

NUTMEG: No – don't bite that! Aarr! He's bitten it!!

COWSLIP: Shut up – you 'as got anover one!

PEASBLOSSOM: Arrgh – I really need the loo! oOoOooOoooooh!!!

COWSLIP: RUN!!! *(Growling & shrieking. Bits of clothing, hair etc fly in air.)*
(They EXIT. Mrs McChucker – security / body guard with ear-piece appears at the gate, looks around furtively)

MRS McCHUCKER: *(presses earpiece and speaks into wrist)* Area secure: *(looks around)* Perimeter secure. *(Louder, through gate)* Bring in PAPOP! *(pay-pop)*

HERALD: *(Very posh)* What a dreadful noise; I said we should have started in *(Posh place)*. Are you sure it's safe? Sounded dreadful!

MRS McCHUCKER: Positive to the safety request. No obvious danger to PAPOP. Bring them in.

HERALD: Do you have to call them that silly name?

MRS McCHUCKER: Security code: PAPOP. Prince and Princess of Pimplevania.

HERALD: Good grief. *(Checks list)* In here, your Highnesses. Number One, Rosebud Lane.

PRINCESS: *(Enter Prince, Princess: smart but not in royal gear)* What a lovely garden! Who lives here?

HERALD: *(Reads from clipboard)* One gentleman – Lord Table; a widower. Aha! And one daughter name of - Eleanor.

PRINCE: Are you sure we have to sell tickets like this? I don't think a Prince and a Princess should really – you know – be doing this! Can't we just put an ad in the *(name of paper)*: "Grand Ball at palace: all welcome"?

HERALD: Not really, you see, your highness – how can I put it?

MRS McCHUCKER: Security! Don't want just anyone turning up. They have to be – 'vetted'.

HERALD: Really?! Seems a bit drastic. Mind you, had it done to my dog. Don't think it minded much. Wouldn't like it m'self though.

MRS McCHUCKER: Not that sort of vetted!

PRINCESS: The reason you have to do this yourself is "Only beautiful girls wanted!" Remember you said that?

PRINCE: Maybe.

PRINCESS: And you are loving it! Admit it! Go on – how many really stunning girls have you invited so far?!

PRINCE: No idea. Not really noticed. *(Princess gives him that look)* OK: 37 and two 'not bads'. *(Another look)* And one a bit rough – but she can play the ukulele!

PRINCESS: Exactly. So stop complaining. *(To Herald)* Harold, you can go back to the palace now, if you like, this is the last one. Mrs McChucker will look after us. *(they look at Mrs. M who is searching oddly)* Give me a handful of tickets and we'll see you later.

HERALD: Very well, your highness. *(Notices aud.)* Ah – can I sing my song now? *(Starts song)*

PRINCE: Ah ... not really the best time now, Harold.

PRINCESS: Definitely later though.

HERALD: Oh. *(Looks sad)* Alright then. *(Bows and exits sadly)*

Buttons appears, followed by Ella.

BUTTONS: Good morning. Can I help?

PRINCESS: Hello.

PRINCE: Hello. *(To Ella, bit shy)* Hello.

ELLA: *(shyly)* Hello. How can we help?

PRINCE: *(bit awkward)* Er....

PRINCESS: Good grief. My brother and I are here raising money for charity. We are selling tickets for a Grand Ball to be held at the Royal Palace tonight. *(Goes toward Buttons)* Not just girls – hunky-looking chaps invited too!

BUTTONS: Crumbs. *gulp*

PRINCE: It will be a really splendid ball. *(To Ella)* I do hope you can come. *(Nudge from Princess)* That is – I hope you both can come.

BUTTONS: At the Palace? They don't have parties up there. The king is too old for that sort of thing.

PRINCE: That's true, our – er – *(gestures from Princess to be secretive)* - the King! The king is a little past party age but – well, he's away at the moment so I – that is, the Prince, is back from his travels now, and wants everyone to enjoy the palace!

ELLA: The Prince? What's he like? I would so like to meet a prince.

BUTTONS: *(who guesses the truth)* I hear the Prince is really, really - **ugly**.

MRS McCHUCKER: *appears from behind hedge and laughs:* Ha!

ELLA: Oh my! Is this true?

PRINCESS: It certainly is. As ugly as can be. *(The Prince nudges her)* That's why he has to sell charity tickets. Nobody would dance with him if it wasn't for a good cause!

ELLA: I don't believe it. By law all princes have to be handsome!

PRINCE: Well spoken. And if it isn't a law then it should be!

BUTTONS: Perhaps you would like a cold drink? Cup of tea? Cake? I'll fetch you some if...

PRINCE: Not for me, very kind but...

PRINCESS: I could manage something!

BUTTONS: A pleasure – I'll just ...

PRINCESS: I'll come and help.

BUTTONS: There's no need, I can...

PRINCESS: Come on – it's just an excuse to have a nose round inside.

BUTTONS: OK then. Follow me. *(They start to go in)*

MRS McCHUCKER: Hold on! Security clearance needed!

PRINCESS: *(sighs)* This is Mrs McChucker; our ... er ...

MRS McCHUCKER: 'Friend of the family'. How-do-you do. Marjorie McChucker. Personal Security, self-defence instructor and expert in camouflage.

ELLA: Camouflage?

MRS McCHUCKER: *(smug grin)* Watch. *(Hides very badly in corner)* There. Be honest! You can't see me can you!

ELLA: Er – no. Quite amazing!

MRS McCHUCKER: Just a natural talent I have. Before you go in can I just ... *(she lifts Button's arms and frisks him)* All clear. Now – the interior check!

Buttons panics and guards his rear but Mrs. M ignores him and does a spy entry into building then summons them. Buttons & Princess follow. Awkward silence.

ELLA: So; do you live around here?

PRINCE: Er – sort of. But enough about me! Tell me about yourself. *(Awkward silence)* Do you play golf?

DUET: Getting to know you?

They sit down. Mrs M, Buttons & Princess reappear.

PRINCESS: Thanks for the drink. We'd better be going; we have to get ready for the ball! *(To Prince)* It's a lovely house! You ready? *(Gets Prince's attention)* Hello? Shall we go - um -, Fred? *(He is looking at Ella)* Fred!

PRINCE: Fred?! Yes. Fred. Yes – right.

PRINCESS: We will leave you these tickets. Will three be enough?

ELLA: Why, yes - but we haven't paid.

PRINCE: You have paid with your kindness.

MRS McCHUCKER: (*secretly to aud*) Not too sure about this place; I mean – all that screaming when we arrived. I need to come back – under cover!! (*Exits stealthily*)

PRINCE: Until the ball. *Bowing and curtseys. They exit.*

BUTTONS: Today is getting more and more interesting! Just think – when I got up I thought the highlight of the day would be unblocking the toilet, and now...!

ELLA: I don't mind visitors who look like that.

BUTTONS: No – not at all! Wonder who'll be next through the gaa...aah!!(*Goes to shut gate but as he turns he is suddenly faced with a woman all in black except a flash of crimson*) (*Crack of thunder*)

MOTHER: Step aside! We have travelled a long way and we expect a better welcome than that!

BUTTONS: (*Looks behind her for others*) We?

MOTHER: What?

BUTTONS: You said 'we'.

MOTHER: (*impatient*) Yes – we!

BUTTONS: (*confused, looking past her*) We?

MOTHER: We! WE!

BUTTONS: Oh! Right! Upstairs. Little room on the left. Make sure you wash your hands!

MOTHER: What! I have never ...!

ELLA: (*quickly*) Madam – I don't – I mean: who are you?

MOTHER: Me? I am the one who asks the questions, not you. You! Your name?

BUTTONS: Me? Buttons. I work here.

MOTHER: Hmm. We shall see about that. And you? Do you work here also?

ELLA: Me? No? I ...

MOTHER: I thought not. (*Sneers*) I know who you are. You are the daughter – 'Ella'. What a common name. Never mind – I shall change that to something more 'appropriate'. (*Circles*) But your father said that you were a beauty! Ha! Not where we come from. If you want to see beauty – take a look at my daughters: Whinge and Gripe! Girls! In here! (*Two tasteless chavs enter sluggishly and look about rudely. Probably Dame roles*)

GRIPE: Yuk – this place is so – you know - minging.

ELLA: Hello; welcome to ...

WHINGE: Like – whatever!

GRIPE: What is she, you know, wearing? (*They circle Ella sniggering*)

WHINGE: Like, such a dork.

BUTTONS: Ladies! (*Steps up to sisters and bows*) Enchanted.

MOTHER: Ah – nicely spoken!

BUTTONS: Yes. You look as if you have been enchanted. (*To aud*) Turned into toads!

MOTHER: What? What was that?

BUTTONS: I said – let's help you with your loads. (*Gets bags & puts on ground by gate*)

ELLA: You are a friend of my father?

MOTHER: Friend? Friend?! My dear girl..... I, am his **wife**!

ELLA: So you must be...

MOTHER: Yes. Your new mother. And these are your new sisters: Whinge and Gripe.

ELLA: (*Curtseys*) Lovely to meet you. Will you be using the title?

MOTHER: Of course – your father and I will be referred to as 'Lord and Lady'. Why ever not?

ELLA: Well, my mother never used the title. She said it caused amusement.

MOTHER: Then she was a fool. I can see nothing amusing in being called Lady Table. You – Bottom!

BUTTONS: Buttons!

MOTHER: Whatever. Show me to my room.

ELLA: *(At gate, looking out)* And is Father close behind?

MOTHER: Who? Oh, him. He's still back in Paris trying to sort out dreary business affairs. Now, let's have a look inside. *(To Buttons)* You. Butt-wipe!

BUTTONS: Buttons!

MOTHER: Whatever. *(Waves arm vaguely)* Get the bags inside!

BUTTONS: Right. *(To the sisters)* Oy – you two. Inside! *(Grabs arms and rushes at house)*

MOTHER: Not them! The suitcases! *(Buttons returns them to starting place)* *(Up close to him and nasty)* Take care – I am not always this nice. *(Mother exits into house and Buttons follows with cases, hitting sisters on bums)*

There is critical circling as the sisters eye Ella up.

GRIPE: *(about Ella)* It is so – you know – totally ugly.

WHINGE: Totally. Mingerrrr. They should not, like, allow something looking like this out in daylight.

GRIPE: No. Children might, you know, see it and have, you know, nightmares!

WHINGE: And, like, look at that face. No idea how to do make-up, proper like. *(Models own over-made-up face)*

GRIPE: None at all. Can hardly, you know, even see it. Totally feeble.

WHINGE: And, like, look at her figure. Totally nothing!

GRIPE: No wonder she is, you know, still single. No man wants to, you know, marry that.

WHINGE: They way like a bit of meat. *(Slaps a belly if appropriate)*

GRIPE: *(Looks up at house)* What a dump. Totally, you know, minging.

ELLA: It is a very nice house. It has lovely views of...

WHINGE: Like whatever. Come on, we'll chill in the dining room. Just looking at that 'bone' makes me, like, want more food. *(They exit; jostling to go first)*

Village children reappear.

CHILD _: Have they gone?

ELLA: Who?

CHILD _: *(mimics)* 'Like, whatever – you know'. *(All giggle)*

ELLA: They're inside. Why?

CHILD _: We were sent to follow them; see where they went!

CHILD _: They tried to steal things from every stall in the market!

BOY 1: I estimate the value of stolen goods was a least two gold coins! Plus tax!

Servants appear from house carrying bundles.

ELLA: What's happening? Where are you all going?

SERVANT 1: We've been told to get out.

SERVANT 2: And with no wages!

ELLA: But where will you go?

SERVANT 3: We'll manage. We've got family in the village.

SERVANT 4: Poor, Ella. Without us here, who's going to do all the cooking and the cleaning?

ELLA: Well, I don't really ...

MOTHER: *(appears at top of steps with sisters behind her, eating)* Cooking? Cleaning? Why, my dear girl, who do you think? *(Walks close)* YOU will!

ELLA: But...

MOTHER: But?! Are you – refusing to help about the house? I have more than enough to do – I have 'duties'. It's not easy - being a **Lady**!

WHINGE: I dunno about that.

GRIPE: Not that hard really. Bit of lippie; some padding...

MOTHER: Surely you don't expect ME to do all the work?! *(Ella shakes head)* I should think not. Good. First you can clean that grubby little room at the top of the tower.

ELLA: My room? But...

WHINGE: Like – it is so totally OUR room now. Remove your junk, like, at once.

GRIPE: Or we will, you know, remove it for you.

WHINGE: Like, through the window.

GRIPE: Yeah! And it is, you know, totally minging. You clean it.

ELLA: But...

MOTHER: Again – another ‘but’.

ELLA: But where will I sleep?

MOTHER: You, Ella? (*Leans close*) Do I look as if I care? (*Turns to leave then has idea*) You can sleep in the kitchen! You can curl up on the floor in the ashes and cinders! Cinders! I say! I have it! I have your new name! Everyone! She is to be called – **CINDER-ELLA!**

WHINGE: CINDERELLA! Perfect!

GRIPE: Just right.

SONG: Disney’s CINDERELLA “Work Song” amended lyrics: sisters & mother plus Buttons & chorus

MOTHER: (*to children & servants*) Now get out of here before I set the dogs on you! (*Some start to leave*) (*To Buttons who has reappeared carrying cases/trunk*) No – not you, Buttocks!

BUTTONS: Buttons!

MOTHER: Whatever. I need someone who at least looks clean to wait on me. You can stay. At half the money. (*Snarl!*) What are you peasants waiting for?! (*All servants EXIT*) Now – you. (*To Cinders*) Get out of those clothes into something more suitable and get to work! Hurry up ... **CINDER-ELLA!** (*They EXIT laughing*)

BUTTONS: They can’t do this! You can’t just let them...

CINDERELLA: We have to do what she says. She ...

MRS McCHUCKER enters badly disguised under a white sheet to match wall, holding two plastic roses. Stands in flower bed. They see her.

BUTTONS: Er – is that you, Mrs Muck-Chucker?

MRS McCHUCKER: Er ... might be. (*Reluctantly steps forward and goes to leave*) (*Pokes head out*) And it’s McChucker – not MUCK Chucker! (*Exits*)

CINDERELLA: Rather odd. Anyway, this new woman runs the house now – at least until Father returns. We just have to stay cheerful.

BUTTONS: If you say so – but I’m still going to call you Ella – not ‘CINDER-Ella!
Cinders looks sad. They both trail into the house. Fairies’ faces appear over the back wall.

COWSLIP: Is you hearing that? I says – is you hearing that?!

NUTMEG: Yeah, sorry. Brussels sprouts last night. Always make me f...

COWSLIP: No, not that! Her name!

PEASBLOSSOM: Cinderella! Not a very nice name.

COWSLIP: No, but **look - in - your - planner!** Look at the name!

PEASBLOSSOM: Cinderella! Oh yah! What a coincidence!

COWSLIP: It is not a co-inki-dinky-dingle! It’s her! She is da one we ‘as come to help!
Top of Beast’s head appears again next to Nutmeg but only Nutmeg notices.

NUTMEG: Cowslip!

COWSLIP: Not now – I is plannin’.

NUTMEG: But Cowslip!

PEASBLOSSOM: Shhh!

NUTMEG: But ...

COWSLIP: What is it?

NUTMEG: *Is speechless and can only nod at monster. Others do double take then shriek. They disappear rapidly. Repeat of shrieking, tufts of hair flying, roaring etc. BLACKOUT*

SCENE 2: THE SISTER’S ROOM (formerly Ella’s)

Chair, large wooden box with double flaps on top with half circles cut out for head to poke through; trick door at rear in solid wall (hinged both sides: double frame) Dressing table. Sisters close door.

WHINGE: Now, like, what?

GRIPE: Live the life of, you know, luxury. Waited on, you know, foot and mouth.

WHINGE: Yeah, (*unsure*) or somefin'. Sweet as! (*Bounce knuckles*)
 BUTTONS comes in door at rear and tries to go back out, but is seen.

GRIPE: Like, stop right there! You are so, you know, caught! You – come here. (*Gestures at Whinge who drags him down by the arm.*)

BUTTONS: What do you want?

GRIPE: That's more, like, respectin of our new position. You know what I, you know, really want?

BUTTONS: No, I don't – you know – know. If I did, you know, – know – I wouldn't – you know ask. You know? Like?

WHINGE: Is you, like, dissin' me and my sister and I? Is you, like, showing disrespect to me and my sister.

BUTTONS: Not never! I is like totally, you know, not never, you know, like dissin, like. You know?

GRIPE: Er, (*confused*) that's cool then. I know! You can get us something - cool!

WHINGE: Yeah! I think, like, I would like an ice-lolly to lick. Go and fetch me one, quick like.

BUTTONS: You, like, would like a licky lolly, like. And you, (*to Gripe*) would you, like, like a licky lolly, like?

GRIPE: Er, (*confused*) No. I'll have a, you know, cream cake. Any sort. (*Suspicious*) But one I'll like – nothing horrid!

BUTTONS: Like, you know, a cream cake, you know you will, you know, like, like? Or, like, a cream cake you don't, you know, know you will like, like, but, like, might like anyway, like? You know?

GRIPE: Aaaah.....

WHINGE: Just get it! And be quick! (*Boots him as he runs off through door.*)

GRIPE: This is the life. (*Settles into chair.*)

WHINGE: I wish I'd asked for a cream cake. I'll go and, like, tell him to get me one. *She goes toward the door but it flies open and hits her in the face.*

BUTTONS: Cream cake! (*Runs forward, slaps it into Gripe's face. Runs off out door again. Slams shut.*)

WHINGE: (*rubbing nose. Comes forward*) Is it nice?

GRIPE: What do you mean, *is it nice?! Look what he's done! I'll get him!*

WHINGE: Yeah – let's get him! (*Confused*) What shall we do?

GRIPE: Here – take this. (*Hands her heavy object*) You stand by the door. I'll get him to bring another, you know, cream cake and when he does – you whack him over –

WHINGE: - over the rainbow?

GRIPE: No! Over the head!

WHINGE: Head! Right! Wicked plan, like!

Gripe goes to the door, partly opens it and shouts:

GRIPE: Buttons! Buttons! Get me another cream cake! (*Shuts door and rushes to seat.*) Are you ready?

WHINGE: (*Runs to stand by doorway but on wrong side.*) Ready! Ha! We'll show the little...

BUTTONS bursts through door, slamming onto Whinge (sound fx: thump/crunch + Aargh!), who holds it shut. Buttons runs to Gripe to slam cake into face then runs off leaving door open. Whinge slowly lets door drift shut to show her holding nose & groaning.

GRIPE: The horrible little... We'll get him! Do it again!

WHINGE: Yeah – do it again!

Gripe goes to the door, partly opens it and shouts:

GRIPE: Buttons! Buttons! Get me another cream cake! (*Shuts door, rushes back to seat.*)

WHINGE: (*Runs to stand beside doorway on the wrong side.*) Ready! Here he comes!

BUTTONS bursts through door, slamming on Whinge (sound fx) and runs down to Whinge to slam cake into face. Buttons runs off leaving door open. WHINGE slowly lets door drift shut.

GRIPE: You were supposed to whack him over the head!

WHINGE: (*rubbing nose & moaning*) He's too fast, like!

GRIPE: OK. Change of plan.

WHINGE: What?

GRIPE: Exactly the same idea – **but** - I'll hide, inside this box. **YOU** call him! (*Climbs in*)

WHINGE: Brilliant. *(Goes to the door, partly opens it and shouts)* Buttons! Buttons! Gripe wants another cream cake! *(Shuts door and stands back, beside doorway – wrong side)*. Haha! This time we'll show him he can't mess with... *(or ad lib)*

BUTTONS *bursts through door, slamming on Whinge (sound fx) and runs down to box.*

BUTTONS: GRIPE!!

GRIPE: *(pokes head out of hole in top)* What? *(Gets cake in face)*

BUTTONS *runs off.*

WHINGE: *(Slowly lets door drift shut.)* I don't think I like this plan. *(Concussed)*

GRIPE: One more go! You call him again!

WHINGE: *(opens door)* Buttons! Buttons! Gripe wants another cream cake!

Gripe goes back down into box. Buttons rushes in and crushes Whinge again (fx)

BUTTONS: *(Taps on box)* Is that you in there, Whinge?

GRIPE: *(pokes head out)* No it's me, Gripe! *(Gets cake) (Buttons runs off)*. Aargh!

WHINGE: *(slowly lets door drift)* Do you have a slightly different plan we could try?

GRIPE: One more go! He won't trick me this time! *(Gripe goes back down into box.)*

WHINGE: Oh no! Not again. *(Reluctantly)* Buttons! Buttons! Gripe wants another cream cake!

Buttons rushes in and crushes Whinge. He has TWO cakes.

BUTTONS: Oy! Gripe! Do you want cherry cake or chocolate cake?

GRIPE: *(pokes head out)* Chocolate! *(Gets both cakes, one each side) (Buttons runs off)*.

WHINGE: *(slowly lets door drift shut)* I really think this plan isn't good; I give in.

GRIPE: Nonsense. All I have to do is stay inside the box. Whatever he says I will NOT come out! One more try!

WHINGE: *(opens door)* Buttons! Buttons! Gripe wants another cream cake!

Gripe goes back down into box. Buttons rushes in and crushes Whinge. He has a very large cake (open, hollow base but filled with cream/foam) and a large winding handle. He puts the cake on top of the box where Gripe will pop out. He fixes the winding handle to the side of the box and starts turning slowly. Sound fx: music box: 'half a pound of two-penny rice'. At the last note Gripe pops up, pushing head into cake and stands up with it on her head. Buttons may need to press it down, then runs off.

WHINGE: *(slowly lets door drift shut) (coming forward dizzy)* Why have you got that hat on? *(Or "necklace" if it goes right down) (Helps her out of box)* Do you think we could change places? I keep getting bashed on the nose

GRIPE: Bashed on the nose?! How?

WHINGE: I don't know! *(Runs back)* I'm standing here, like this and ...

GRIPE: THIS side!

WHINGE: No. I'm standing here, like this ...

GRIPE: Then stand THIS side?! You idiot! Stand THIS side! *(Blank face)* Give me that. Let me show you how to do it. I will stand THIS side! You just sit over there and watch the master at work! *(Gripe goes to the door, partly opens it and shouts)* Buttons! Buttons! Get me another cream cake! *(Shuts door on 'safe' side and raises club.)* Watch this, now you'll see...

Buttons rushes in. This time the door opens with hinges on the other side (second frame) and crushes Gripe. (New fx: crash/crunch + Aargh!) Buttons runs to a relaxed Whinge, splats giant cake in face and runs off. Gripe lets door slowly swing away from her, says "ha-ha!" and falls forward onto floor.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3: IN THE GARDEN

Cinderella is sat peeling potatoes at a stool by a long table (with a long cloth on it). Mrs McChucker is there in another awful disguise as a bush. Mother enters haughtily in fancy clothes. She is wearing an elaborate hat.

MOTHER: So – this is where you're hiding, is it? *(Comes down steps)* Out here by yourself? Answer me girl? *(Hat on table)* Out here by yourself?

CINDERELLA: Yes. Just me – and the mice of course.

MOTHER: Mice? (*Whirls around angrily*) Mice?! I see no mice? (*Puppet mouse through hole in wall*) (*To aud*) You! Yes, you peasants! Do you see any mice? (*Mouse goes*) I see nothing! I tell you – there are no mice here! (*Repeat. Oh yes there are, etc – 3x*) Nonsense! If there are mice, where are they?! (*Puppet mice appear again – in different places.*) Where?! Where?! (*Business*) Enough! (*To Cinderella who is caught encouraging audience*) Girl! Are you mocking me, for if you are – let me tell you – I will not ... (*as she talks her hat starts to move on its own*) What is going on here?! What are you doing, girl?

CINDERELLA: Me? Nothing. (*Mother lifts hat to show mouse. Squeak!*)

MOTHER: Grr. Stand back. (*She gets a piece of wood and raises it.*)

CINDERELLA: No – don't hurt it! Look out little mouse! (*WHAM!!*)

MOTHER: There. (*She looks at the ruined hat then picks it up.*) Nothing! (*Glares at Cinders. Puts hat down again.*) I don't need this stress! I don't need you making me look like a fool. Do you understand? I said – do you understand?

CINDERELLA: Yes – you don't need me to make you look like a fool.

MOTHER: Precisely. (*Thinks*) I'll be watching you. (*She picks up the ruined hat. There is now a mouse on the table. Mother screams, leaps back, stares at the mouse again who squeaks, then she exits out gate screeching.*)

CINDERELLA: Well done little fellow – you taught her a lesson. Would you like to see something secret? You would? (*To aud*) Can you keep a secret from that horrid woman? You promise? You can? Then I'll show you. (*She lifts a suitcase and brings out a ball gown*) I hid it out here so those "sisters" don't take it from me. (*She carefully folds it into a suitcase.*) I'll hide it in the garden until the ball tonight. I might even get to meet the Prince!

BUTTONS: (*ENTERS from house in a rush, carrying 2 cream cakes he puts on the table*) Waah! Quick – hide me – those awful sisters are after me.

CINDERELLA: Behind the bush! Not that one! It's Mrs McChucker! (*Mrs M slouches off despondently*) The other one!

BUTTONS: What?! (*Goes to hide but Cowslip is there*) Whoah!

COWSLIP: You is not to be alarmed, bro! It is me! Fairy Godmother Cowslip!

BUTTONS: Well we are alarmed! You should warn people if you plan to turn up suddenly like that: I have delicate bowels at the best of times!

COWSLIP: Yes! You is totally right. It was very thoughtless. That shall now be our new policy (*notebook/phone*) - Note: 'Do not frighten the pants off the customers'.

CINDERELLA: Is it just you today?

COWSLIP: De uvvers is on da way. Ah! Here – I shall tell them of our new 'Do not frighten the pants off the customer' policy. Hang on a tick. (*Mobile phone*) Ere, Nutmeg – Nutmeg? Nutmeg (*loudly*) Hold it de other way up! Yeah, dat's better. It is me.... Cowslip. Cowslip the Fairy. Cowslip wiv da (*colour*) jacket. And da (*colour*) wings! Nutmeg! Give da phone to Peasblossom! ...to Peasblossom! (*Exasperated pause*) About (*height*) (*Colour*) wings NUTMEG! She is probably standing next to you! (*To others*) A slight problem wiv my staff. Peasblossom! Ere – listen. We is dealing with some very nervous types here. Do not suddenly appear and alarm them. Arrive in a friendly and not threatening manner. What? I dunno – think of something! (*Closes phone*) Sorted.

CINDERELLA: Did you find who you were looking for the other day?

COWSLIP: Ah – well. We checked our files and it definitely said this address for a girl who is called Ginderbready – Umberella – sumpin like dat.

CINDERELLA: Well – my new mother calls me 'Cinderella' but it's not my proper name.

COWSLIP: Dat is it girl! Cinderfeller! Proper wicked! If dat is you, den we is here to be helpin' you!

CINDERELLA: Help me? Super! How can....? (*There is a knock at the gate*)

PEABLOSSOM: (*offstage: loud and slowly, as if speaking to an idiot*) Do not be alarmed – it is just the man to read the electricity meter. Do not be alarmed in any way!

BUTTONS: Man to read the electricity meter?

COWSLIP: It's Peasblossom. Come in you fool! (*Peasblossom enters dressed as a clown – top half only - but with a fairy skirt on below & wings*) Why is you dressed up like a clown?

PEABLOSSOM: Well – you remember your phone call, yah? So Nutmeg and I thought we would dress up in not-frightening disguises, so as not to alarm folk.

COWSLIP: I is knowing all that – but you said you wuz the elec-trickery man and in fact you is wearing the top half of a clown costume.

PEABLOSSOM: Ah – well spotted! On reflection I felt that a clown was very safe and not likely to frighten!

COWSLIP: (*rising irritation*) But you said you wuz the elec-trickery man!

PEABLOSSOM: Yah. Duh! Why would a clown be knocking on the door?!

COWSLIP: But why not dress as a elec-trickery man? Who would be frightened by the elec-trickery man?!

PEABLOSSOM: OoooH! My Great Aunt Veronica was very badly frightened by the electricity man!

CINDERELLA: Oh my!

PEABLOSSOM: Yes! And - coincidence - I understand he was only wearing the top half of HIS uniform as well! (*Looks from others*)

COWSLIP: I is dealing with idiots. Never mind all that – I 'as found this Sindy Dolly.

BUTTONS: Cinderella?

COWSLIP: Dis is da one. Right here before your eyes!

PEABLOSSOM: Oh splendid. (*Checks instructions. Very excited*) So, first we have to get her tickets for the ball.

CINDERELLA: Oh – I already have some tickets. Sorry.

COWSLIP: OK – but second, we 'as got you a really wicked dress to wear so that ... (*fades as the dress is held up then put away in the suitcase*).

PEABLOSSOM: How about a carriage to take you there?

CINDERELLA: It's not far to the palace– I'll be OK to walk if I set out in good time. (*Fairies deflated*)

COWSLIP: Shoes? (*There is nodding from Cinders*)

PEABLOSSOM: Oh. (*Sad*) Right. (*Inspired*) Here – have this deodorant foot-spray! I always need it when I go dancing! (*Confidential*) Bit cheesy, you know?

CINDERELLA: Lovely. How thoughtful.

COWSLIP: Job sorted. Done something right at last! Have a lovely time!

BUTTONS: Hang on! Where's the other one? The other fairy?

PEABLOSSOM: Nutmeg? Lost again I expect. Happens a lot.

NUTMEG: (*OFF*) Ho-ho-ho. (*they all look up and round*) Ho-ho-ho!
They look under table and pull. Nutmeg's legs appear in Santa Claus outfit.

COWSLIP: Nutmeg? Is dat you under there?

NUTMEG: (*off*) I don't know – it's too dark to see.

PEABLOSSOM: Nutmeg? What are you doing in there?

NUTMEG: Me? Well – mostly I am lying in mouse poop.

BUTTONS: Is she alright?

COWSLIP: No, dopey-as, pal. (*Meaningful look*) She's from (*unpopular town*).

BUTTONS: Ah! Er... Shall we help her out?

COWSLIP: (*shrugs*) Suppose we'd better. Come on – give a hand. (*They just pull Nutmeg's trousers down to show amusing long-johns/bloomers.*)

CINDERELLA: Oh my! This is embarrassing!

NUTMEG: (*off*) I have suddenly got cold draughts in unusual places. What are you doing out there? Is that you Derek? (*They pull trousers up then tug again and she slides out with Santa beard & hat*)

COWSLIP: What is you dressed like that for?

NUTMEG: You said not to look frightening, so I thought...

COWSLIP: You is a half wit!

NUTMEG: Don't you go at me – I never wanted to be a fairy. Even my mother was against me being a fairy.

BUTTONS: She was?

NUTMEG: She was. I remember the day I left home; she said to me: I didn't spend fourteen years changing your nappies so you could go off and be a fairy! *(All think about that: horror)*

PEABLOSSOM: Here! Who is this 'Derek', eh?

COWSLIP: Never mind all dat now – we 'as done our job 'ere and can go.

NUTMEG: *(worried)* Have we killed anyone?

PEABLOSSOM: No – not this time. Not even their granny. Gone remarkably smoothly really!

MOTHER: *(has appeared at gates and watched the last bit)* And WHO are these people? *They all jump in appropriate ways.*

CINDERELLA: These people are ... er ...

BUTTONS: From the village!

COWSLIP: That is it; we is just - village people!

MOTHER: Hmm. If you are indeed "Village People" – then sing something!

COWSLIP: What?

MOTHER: I said, if you are the Village People – then sing something!

COWSLIP: Err...

NUTMEG: *(brightly)* I can sing you something: *(Big breath)*
*A wizard had a magic bean. T'was really rather **class***
*Twas small and brown and wrinkly, And he kept it in a **glass,***
... (knowing look at aud)
*But people tried to steal it; now he couldn't let that **pass***
And so they wouldn't find it, well, he stuck it up his...

PEABLOSSOM: COWSLIP: Nutmeg!!

NUTMEG: ... up his nose. They spoilt my song then!

BUTTONS: I think she is rather expecting something by THE Village People – you know - the 70's group? *Whinge & Gripe enter from house.*

WHINGE: Not that I care but, like, what is going on? Are we missing something?

GRIPE: Yes – you, Butt-face.

BUTTONS: Buttons!

GRIPE: Whatever. We said – what are we missing?

BUTTONS: Hard to know where to start: *(counts on fingers)* brains, good looks, clean teeth, deodorant...

MOTHER: Enough! Sing. **Now!**

COWSLIP: Come on; we can do this. Village People: YMCA! All together. *(Music)*

NUTMEG: Stop! Stop! I'm not quite sure I know that one. What are the words?

COWSLIP: Words? *(Disbelief)* Y-M-C-A.

NUTMEG: Right. *(Stands in position)* *(Music)* Stop! Stop! What's the first word again?

PEABLOSSOM: Y.

NUTMEG: So I can sing it.

COWSLIP: It is da letter 'Y'! Now – is you ready?

NUTMEG: I am ready *(Looks nervous as they all watch her. Eventually ...)*
 A wizard had a magic bean. T'was really rather

PEABLOSSOM: No! Just follow us. And don't forget the actions.

NUTMEG: There are actions for "magic bean". Do you want to see them? A wizard had a magic bean.
 T'was really rather

COWSLIP: Just start without him.

It's fun to stay at the Y-M-C-A
(As they do this Nutmeg is plainly forming the wrong letters with arms: T.W.I.T.)

BUTTONS: Hang on. Hang on! Hang on!! Those aren't the right letters. Nutmeg, do them again.

NUTMEG: *(sings)* Y-M-C-A *(signs T.W.I.T.)*

PEABLOSSOM: Do them again. T-W-I-T. That spells 'twit'!

NUTMEG: Does it? It's the way my mother taught me. *(Grins)* 'Twit' was her nick-name for me.

COWSLIP: Good grief. Let's just get on with it. Come on you lot – you can all join. Yes – *(Gripe and Whinge)* you two with the faces like monkeys' bottoms. Come on.

All except the mother join in. Gripe and Whinge stand either side of Nutmeg (who is in the CENTRE). With the first Y & the A (or T & T) Nutmeg repeatedly slaps both sisters in the face. They cry out.

GRIPE: Stop! Stop!

MOTHER: What is it my dumpling?

GRIPE: This fool keeps hitting us!

MOTHER: Does she now?

WHINGE: Yes, she does.

MOTHER: That is easily solved, girls – change places.

The sisters simply swap and the action repeats exactly the same.

WHINGE: *(very loud at music)* Stop!

MOTHER: What is it my now, my little teacake?

WHINGE: *(sobbing)* She's still, like, hitting us!

MOTHER: Then move right away from her.

*They now stand: Buttons, **Whinge**, Cowslip, Nutmeg, Peasblossom, **Gripe**, Cinderella.*

COWSLIP: Are we all ready? *(They are)*

This time as they sing YMCA only Whinge and Gripe do YMCA. All the rest do TWIT. The sisters get battered.

MOTHER: Stop this nonsense! Move around. There! *(They now stand: Nutmeg, Cowslip, **Whinge**, Buttons, **Gripe**, Peasblossom, Cinderella.)* And if these morons swing their arms around, all you have to do is duck! *(Shows them how – by leaning forward)*

(Meanwhile the audience see that Buttons now has the 2 cream cakes behind his back.)

COWSLIP: One last try!

They all sing. Chorus runs twice. On the very last A (or T if you are doing the TWIT version) the sisters duck forward and get the cakes in the mug. Much wailing and fuss.)

COWSLIP: Right – that's our cue. Everyone out! Come on! Cheers Cinders! Good luck!

PEASBLOSSOM: So lovely to meet you all! *(They exit very fast)*

GRIPE: *(eating cream)* I'm, you know, hungry. When's dinner?

WHINGE: Me too. Like, very hungry. I want dinner and supper together!

GRIPE: I bet she's, you know, hiding food in here. *(Suitcase)*

CINDERELLA: No! That's mine! I mean – there's no food in it!

GRIPE: *(Opens suitcase)* Oooh!

MOTHER: What is it?

WHINGE: Is it, like, food?

GRIPE: No – look!

MOTHER: A ball gown? *(Slow & menacing)* What on earth do you need that for?

GRIPE: For this! *(Finds ball tickets)*

MOTHER: *(calmly looks at tickets)* Three tickets! My, my! For a ball – tonight, at the palace!

BUTTONS: Give them back – they're Cinderella's!

MOTHER: But she doesn't need them. After all, she doesn't have anything to wear. *(Nods at girls. They slowly rip the dress in two. Sisters exit into house waving tickets, pushing Buttons before them.)*

Oh – and another thing – if you are tempted to find another dress and somehow get yourself into that ball at the palace – that is fine by me. *(Smiles horribly)* But when you get back – don't expect to find your friend Buttons still has a job here. *(She goes up steps but at top stops and turns back).* Oh – and one other thing.

CINDERS: What?

MOTHER: *(smug pause)* Ha! Ha! **BLACKOUT**

SCENE 4: THE BEDROOM

Peasblossom & Cowslip appear through the door. Mrs McC is there badly camouflaged.

PEASBLOSSOM: Shushy-shush!

COWSLIP: I is not shushy-shushin'. If you 'ad not left our make-up at 'ome we would not be sneakin' around in 'ere; like, nicking some!

(They look round and spot Mrs McC)

PEASBLOSSOM: Look!

COWSLIP: What is it?

(They sneak closer and reveal Mrs McC's face)

PEASBLOSSOM: Hello.

COWSLIP: Can we help you?

MRS McCHUCKER: Muriel McChucker. Security. Licenced to kill.

PEASBLOSSOM: Really?

MRS McCHUCKER: Indeed. *(Holds up one finger)* This finger could kill.

COWSLIP: That finger?

MRS McCHUCKER: *(now unsure)* Or ... or maybe it's this one?

COWSLIP: OK. So how could it kill, exactly?

MRS McCHUCKER: Ah-er. Yes! Look! If I lick it *(does)* and then push it in an electric socket! BAM! I will be dead in two seconds!

PEASBLOSSOM: Er - doesn't 'licenced to kill' usually mean 'kill other people'?

MRS McCHUCKER: Really? Oh – YES! Well; if there was a bad villain I would lick HIS finger then get him to push – it - in ... *(Realises flaw in plan)* I'll be off then. *(Exits)*

COWSLIP: Bizarre. Remind me – why are we here?

PEASBLOSSOM: I am not going to the ball without makeup! Look – they've tons of the stuff. Midnight Mystery, or *(topical / local name)*? Gosh; look! *(Gasps & holds up botox needle)* They are – druggies!

COWSLIP: Not wiv dis dey aint. Dis is 'bum-tax'.

PEASBLOSSOM: *(pause)* Botox?

COWSLIP: That's it! You sticks it in your face and it freezes da muscles so they can't move - to make your face all smooth and lovely. *(Gives her the needle. Stretches face to demonstrate)* Here – sit down. *(Pushes her into chair with back to audience)* I will give you some!

PEASBLOSSOM: You certainly will not! Take it away at once! *(She tries to pass it back but instead stabs COWSLIP in the leg)*

COWSLIP: Ow! Be careful. That was my favourite leg!

PEASBLOSSOM: Stop moaning, and do my makeup.

COWSLIP: Alright – let's see what they is havin' in here. You'll need plenty of ... ooer *(as she walks her leg goes numb and floppy)*

PEASBLOSSOM: Get on with it! I'm going to shut my eyes and then you can surprise me when I'm done. Here – take this filthy bum-tox stuff. *(This time it sticks in Cowslip's arm – same result)*

Cowslip has to fetch make-up from the dressing table with one dead leg and apply masses of it to Peasblossom with one dead arm that she has to flap about like a paintbrush. She explains what she is doing as she does it (ad lib) but her face shows rising horror. At end stands back and looks at her work in terror.

PEASBLOSSOM: All done? Right. *(Turns to show audience)* What do you think? Has she, like, done a good job? Am I beautiful? Eh? *(ad lib)* What? Let me see – fetch me a mirror.

COWSLIP: Aaaah... No mirror!

PEASBLOSSOM: There is – over there. *(Has a look)* Waah! Where's that needle?! I'll make your sorry! Come back here.

She chases the still floppy Cowslip off (maybe through aud?). Ad libs.

SCENE 5: THE GARDEN AT SUNSET

Garden at evening. Small lights are lit. Mrs Mc.M is there on hands and knees disguised as a bench. Cinderella and Buttons come out of the door. She has a rug for beating.

BUTTONS: Evening Mrs Muck-Chucker.

CINDERELLA: How are you today?

MRS McCHUCKER: *(turns and leaves on all fours)* I keep telling you! McChucker!

BUTTONS: At least they've got a lovely evening for the ball.

CINDERELLA: Was it tonight? I don't really remember.

BUTTONS: You fibber. You know very well.

CINDERELLA: Anyway ... *(looks up)* What's that noise?

BUTTONS: *(Runs to the gate)* It's the people from the village! They're all dressed up. *Villagers enter in their ball gowns etc. Even the children.*

VILLAGER 1: Hello, Buttons. Aren't you ready yet?

CHILD 1: *(runs to Cinders)* Come on; we're here to take you both to the ball!

CHILD 2: Yes – you need a bit of cheering up.

BOY 1: I estimate that if you walk at three leagues an hour you will take fourteen minutes to reach the palace.

CINDERELLA: I'm afraid I've got too much work to do here. You can go, Buttons.

BUTTONS: er... they took the tickets.

PERSON: I've got a spare!

BUTTONS: Well – thanks, but I can't go and leave ... I mean – what if the loo gets blocked again!

BOY 1: Should be OK. I went at home.

CINDERELLA: There! Now, no more excuses. You go to that ball.

BUTTONS: But –

CINDERELLA: If you don't go then who can tell me all about it in the morning?

BUTTONS: But –

CINDERELLA: *(sighs)* I'll be fine! Go!

They reluctantly leave but Boy 1 comes back.

BOY 1: Don't be sad! Statistically there's a one in three chance the ball will be boring, and a one in three thousand chance the palace will be struck by lightning! Cheer up!

MUSICAL CHORUS NUMBER: 'Always look on the bright side'.

All children and chorus & Buttons joining one-by one.

Finally, Mrs McChucker disguised as child.

They all exit, Buttons & Mrs McC being forced to go by Cinders.

CINDERELLA: Have a wonderful time! Goodbye! *(Waves them off)* Right – what's next?

MOTHER: *(appears at door dressed for the ball)* What's next? Not enough to do? *(reaches back in and throws out a rug)* This needs scrubbing clean! *(Grinds her foot on it)* Hurry up girls or you'll be late!

Sisters appear in appalling ball gowns & wigs. Gripe has fixed grin & raised eyebrows.

MOTHER: Gripe? What on earth have you done to your face?

WHINGE: It's this *(holds up botox jab)* Botox! I told her not to use too much, like. And she's even, like, taking more of the stuff with her!

GRIPE: *strange noises through gritted teeth.*

MOTHER: What did she say?

WHINGE: She says you can give me her pocket money for the rest of the month.

MOTHER: How kind. Off you go then girls. Be quick – it will be starting soon! *(Girls exit through gate)* Enjoy your cleaning, Cinderella. *(Pauses)* Oh.... and if I find out that you have somehow made your way to that ball then remember, Buttons is out of here! *(Exits through gate)*

CINDERELLA: *(walks to face audience)* And if you think I am going to sing another soppy song about always being cheerful, well I'm not. I am really fed-up. Horrid rug. *(Throws rug out of gate)*

NUTMEG: *(Enters fighting rug)* Aaargh! Help! Monster! *(Fairies enter wearing fairy ball "gowns")*

PEASBLOSSOM: It's just a rug! *(Takes it off & throws out gate again)*

COWSLIP: Hello – we was just looking for Cinder ... oh – it is you. Where’s that proper good frock what you showed us?

CINDERELLA: Those sisters ripped it up.

COWSLIP: I is going off those two!

PEASBLOSSOM: Surely you have other gowns? Come on – we’ll help you choose.

CINDERELLA: No – it’s alright. They’ve wrecked all my nice clothes; and I don’t have a ticket; and it’s too late to get ready now anyway, and ... and ... if SHE finds out I’ve been to the ball then Buttons gets the sack!

NUTMEG: (*nods wisely*) My mum gave me a sack once. She said it was my school uniform, but it wasn’t like the other kids’. (*They look at her*) Smelt of turnips, too.

COWSLIP: I fort dis job was goin too easy like. I finks there is only one solution to dis crisis.

PEASBLOSSOM: (*Hopefully*) Gin?!

COWSLIP: No. Magic!

NUTMEG: Right. (*Thinks*) I’m not sure I got that. Run it past me again.

COWSLIP: We is going to do magic. Pass me the wand. Stand back! First – da dress! (*Waves wand; drum roll*) Poshyfrockium! Ahum ... Poshyfrockium! Perhaps the batteries are flat? Poshyfrockium! (*Angry*) **Poshy-ffff** (*Peasblossom stops her swearing*) **frockium!** (*Nothing*) Grrr! Do not be worrying – it sometimes takes a couple of minutes to kick in like. (*Pause*) Any minute now. Er – (*Gives wand to Nutmeg then stamps to Cinders & adds something to her, like a cheesy novelty apron etc.*) Da-da! Lovely.

CINDERELLA: That’s very nice of you. But they still might recognise me!

PEASBLOSSOM: Here – I have it! Glasses! (*Turns Cinder’s back to aud*) Transform you. (*Gives her joke glasses with big nose and moustache. Turns her back*) Hmm. Something is not quite right here. Perhaps it’s your hair?

CINDERELLA: (*indicates the nose*) I’m not sure this is the look I really wanted ...

PEASBLOSSOM: Fair comment. Try these. (*Hands her nice glasses but she does not put them on yet*) They are only little but they are ... (*Magic music; they all look around in confusion*) magic glasses! (*Music again; more confusion*) Nobody is like going to recognise you at all.

CINDERELLA: What does this tag say? (*Looks at large dangling label*)

COWSLIP: Er ... (*takes & reads*) “Magic glasses. Best before midnight”. (*Music*) Alright – we ‘as it! Enough with the tinkly winkly! (*Glares*) I is remeberin’! You must be out of dere before de last chime of midnight or Buttons, he is history!

CINDERELLA: Midnight! Right. (*Puts on glasses*) Now what?

COWSLIP: Ere! Who is you? Wot as you done with Cinder-inder?

CINDERELLA: Look! (*Glasses off*) It’s me!

NUTMEG: (*looks close*) I still don’t recognise you.

COWSLIP: Dat is awesome. Put ‘em back on! Perfect!

PEASBLOSSOM: Next! You need a horse to pull your carriage. Fetch me a mouse and I will turn it into a lovely little prancing white pony! Cooee? Mousey? Cinderella needs you! Can anyone see a mouse? (*Mouse appears through a hole in the wall of the house, or near the edge of the stage*) Come on! Cinderella needs a mouse? (*Business*) Super; hold still mousey. (*To aud*) Never done this one before. I’m thinking big, strong, fast. Here goes – Mouseygrowbigeo!

Thunder and lightning. (pyro??) Small mouse goes and giant, ugly, snarling mouse appears in place. It pushes them aside and marches down into the audience, terrorises the kids and exits to sound of smashing and screaming. They watch it go in stunned silence.

PEASBLOSSOM: Do you want me to try again?

ALL: **No!** *Snatch wand away. Peasblossom goes and sulks, sitting on the bench*

NUTMEG: I have an idea. You see that pumpkin by the gate?

COWSLIP: Right ... stop! What is you planning? Our insurance is not covering major disasters. Not since that last thingy. You remember? That thing wot happened when we helped dat poor, cold, Little Match Girl who was sat in the doorway – a’freezin’? What did they call dat fing wot we did?

PEASBLOSSOM: The Great Fire of London.

COWSLIP: Dat wuz it.

NUTMEG: I am planning to turn this pumpkin into a means of transporting Cinderella to the ball! (*Moves it in front of the bench. Peasblossom lifts her legs clear*)

PEASBLOSSOM: I say – have you done this before, Nutmeg?

NUTMEG: Loads of times.

PEASBLOSSOM: Show me how many ‘loads of times’ is - on your fingers.
Proudly holds up no fingers.

PEASBLOSSOM: That’s what I thought. (*Covers head with hands*)

NUTMEG: Stand back. I’m not a very good aim!

Stage light is slowly dimming.

NUTMEG: Transportiamus!! (*Nothing*) (*To aud*) Here – you lot can help. When I wave the wand I want you all to say the magic word: transportiamus. Ready? (*Practice as necessary*) Right!
Transportiamus!!

COWSLIP: Nuffink has happened yet.

NUTMEG: Try again. Louder! Transportiamus!! No? One more try!! Everyone! **Transportiamus!!**

Sound of magical rumbling grows.

PEASBLOSSOM: I say – what’s happening?

The bench starts to wobble. Sound of engine revving then bench slides off with Peasblossom on it, screaming. They go & watch it vanish over horizon, her screams fading away.

NUTMEG: **You** were supposed to be on that! Oy! Come back! (*Runs off after it.*)

CINDERELLA: I was rather expecting a beautiful white carriage.

COWSLIP: Beggars is not to be choosers. Here... (*Hands her magic wand*) Hold that! Be back later! Hey! Wait for me! (*Runs of after others calling after them.*)

CINDERELLA: Bye then! (*Turn to aud*) Oh dear. And I did rather want to go to the ball, but everyone else has gone and I’m left here with an old pumpkin and a magic wand. What am I supposed to do with these? (*Business with aud.*) Me? Do Magic? Do you think I could? It’s worth a try! (*Carries pumpkin to back of stage by rear wall, puts behind bush. Returns to front with wand*) Now – what was the magic word? What was it? Will you help me say it? You will? Super. Here goes!
Transportiamus!!

Stage goes very dark except for spot on rear wall / or localised lighting effect. Smoke. CINDERELLA SLIPS INTO WINGS AND CHANGES INTO BALLGOWN. Smoke. Sound effect grows louder, music swells, rear wall splits along jagged brick lines (sound fx) and opens to show beautiful white carriage. Cinders is back in place by now and thanks audience for their help: she climbs in the carriage. Music peaks; if possible carriage moves off with her waving.

BLACKOUT: END OF ACT ONE: CURTAIN: INTERVAL

ACT TWO: SCENE 6: PALACE BALLROOM

Traditional lavish ballroom, with steps rear right. There is a very large cuckoo clock as part of one side wall (Stage Left). Chair/throne with red cushion. Trays of fizzy drinks on table.

DANCE: CHORUS, HERALD, Mrs McC, PRINCE and PRINCESS. Children.

Old-fashioned ding-dong door bell. Herald runs up the steps. Mrs McChucker frisks Buttons.

BUTTONS: Getting to quite like that! (*Hands ticket to Herald*)

HERALD: Your Royal Highnesses; Lords, Ladies, commoners & peasants. Mr – er – is that all? ‘Buttons’

BUTTONS: Just Buttons.

HERALD: **Mister Just Buttons!** (*Buttons enters*)

BUTTONS: (*Goes over to Prince and Princess*) Hello again! Nice do!

PRINCESS: My brother and I are very pleased that you could come to our ball.

BUTTONS: Your ball? But – I thought? You mean – you’re the Prince? (*Prince grins, hands glass to Herald, who drains it, then Prince bows.*) So that means you must be ...

PRINCESS: The Princess. (*Hands drink to Herald – who drains it - then curtseys*)

BUTTONS: Blimey. *(To aud)* Never saw that coming! Did you?

PRINCE: And your friend – the girl from your house – is she here with you?

BUTTONS: No. She really wanted to come but – bit of a problem at home.

PRINCE: Oh. That’s a shame. I was hoping ...

PRINCESS: Oh dear. Don’t worry – we’ll think of something. *(To Buttons)* Come on – you can get me a drink. *(Moves Buttons away.)*

Doorbell rings. Herald finishes drink & runs. Mother and sister arrive. Mrs McC tries to frisk. Business.

HERALD: Royal Highnesses, Lords, Ladies, other people: Lady Table – Seriously? Lady Table?! Whatever.

Lady Table and her daughters, **Gripe and Whinge**.

MOTHER: Here we are girls – where we belong – the royal palace. And I am feeling HOT! *(She licks finger, bends and touches bum with Hiss! as in ‘very hot’)*

WHINGE: You? I’m the hot one here! *(Repeats action: lick, touch, HISS)*

GRIPE: Yeah – like, me too. *(She bends and touches bum then licks finger. Horrid taste and disgust. Others go Yuck)*

MOTHER: Now – to work. The Prince is here somewhere: go get him!

GRIPE: Which one’s the Prince, like?

WHINGE: Here – you! *(To Princess. Buttons hides)* Which one is, like, the Prince or whatever then?

PRINCESS: He would be the one with the crown on his head. *(Points)*

WHINGE: We knew that. Come on. *(Goes over and does awful curtseys)* Good evenings your Princey.

PRINCE: Princey?

WHINGE: Duh, yeah. Tradey, boatey – Princey!

GRIPE: *(worse curtsey)* Greetings, your ferrero rocher.

PRINCE: Er – a pleasure... ladies? *(To Herald)* Help!

HERALD: *(Hands them tray of drinks)* If you ladies will excuse us, I am about to call the first dance.

WHINGE: Good idea, like. Liven this place up a bit. *(Drink to Herald; over the top dancing)*

GRIPE: Princy wincy! Remember to save a dance for me! *(Gives drink to Herald, puts down handbag, clears space then ‘twerks’, winking at Prince)*

PRINCE: A dance? Why - I am sure that would be something I would never forget.

WHINGE: And, like, save the last dance for me, cute stuff.

PRINCE: I assure you that a dance with you will definitely be the last thing I do. Excuse me. *(Pushes off her advances)* *(Sisters try to follow but Mrs McC blocks them)*

WHINGE: I’m in there. He couldn’t keep his hands off me.

GRIPE: He was brushing your dandruff off!

MOTHER: Don’t argue - just get after him.

(Doorbell. Herald drains drinks & runs, breathless.)

HERALD: Ahem! Your highnesses, Lords, whatsits: The fairy god-mothers.

Frisking business with Mrs McC: maybe find rubber chicken or similar?

PEASBLOSSOM: How could you have left without her? That was the whole point!

COWSLIP: It wuz not entirely our fault. It wuz all so fast like!

NUTMEG: We was worried about you!

COWSLIP: Look – here is that Buttons. Hello!

BUTTONS: *(joins them, with Princess)* Hello again. I was hoping you might have brought *(looks around)* you-know-who with you.

COWSLIP: Cinder-inder. No – bit of a muck up there really.

PEASBLOSSOM: But we can still put in a good word for her, with the Prince!

NUTMEG: Which one is the Prince then?

PRINCESS: He would be the one with the crown on his head.

NUTMEG: But so have you.

PRINCESS: I am a Princess.

COWSLIP: Oooh! A Princess! *(Exaggerated bowing from both fairies)*

PRINCE: *(To all)* Now – Herald Harold has an announcement! Herald? *(No response)* Herald? Your speech?

HERALD: *(as if waking)* I never really believed in herbal remedies but once I had taken Herbal Ignite it seemed to work for me. My wife was very pleased but the staff at Countdown say we can never go in there again, so we ...

PRINCE: No! The letter from the King!

HERALD: Oh blimey. *(Runs up stairs)* Highnesseseses, Lads and – ah - Loonies. Pray silence. I have a message from his Majesty the King. *(Coughs: reads, slightly drunk)* My loving and happy pimple – er - people. I send you greetings on this very special evening and hope that you all have a really wonderful time. *(Ripple of applause)* To add to this special occasion, I wish to announce that tonight my son – you know, the whatsit... Him there! The Prince! – will tonight choose, from amongst you, the young lady who will become his wife. Yes; it could be you *(attractive person who looks excited)* or you *(repeat)* or *(goes to point to sisters but cringes and goes back to first girl)* or you! *(Looks at paper)* Blah blah – boring bit. Er ... ooh – here’s a good bit! **If** he is unable to find a suitable wife tonight then I will find one for him – that’s the king, not me. Blah blah. OK. Have a lovely evening. The King!

PRINCE: What?! But ...

PRINCESS: Did you know about this?

PRINCE: Of course not! *(He is suddenly surrounded by females)*

MOTHER: There you are girls – your chance to bag yourself some royalty! Go get him – but be subtle! *(They grab Prince under arms & drag him backwards)* SUBTLE!

Door bell. Herald runs very breathless now.

HERALD: Oy! You lot! *(Wobbles slightly and stares at them for silence)* Your Highs, Gents and Lavvies. Another one! *(Looks at card in hand)* Miss Ann Oni-mouse.

(Music. Cinderella appears at the top of the steps.)

PEASBLOSSOM: Look! I think it’s her! I recognise the glasses!

COWSLIP: How did she get ‘ere so fast?

Crowd parts; Herald escorts her down the steps and across to the Prince

HERALD: May I introduce you to Prince ...

CINDERELLA: You! But ... I mean ... you’re the Prince?! *(In panic turns to run but Cowslip stops her)*

PRINCE: I think – I mean – *(looks closely)* Have we met before?

CINDERELLA: I – ah – I don’t think so. Perhaps I just look like someone else?

PRINCE: *(Uncertain)* Perhaps – *(smiles)* perhaps in a dream? *(Sisters groan in disgust)*

WALTZ: CINDERELLA WALTZ (Disney) or similar

The sisters keep getting in the way and taking over the Prince. The fairies try to help by dancing with the sisters & getting Cinders & the Prince together but Nutmeg gets very confused and makes things worse. This will take a lot of practice & tight planning but is worth it. Music & dancing continues over:

COWSLIP: Here – this is awful. These freaks is getting in the way and Cinders is only havin’ until midnight!

BUTTONS: Cinderella – you mean! Wow! I never recognised her!

PRINCESS: Who is it?

MRS McCHUCKER: What’s this? Security breach?!

BUTTONS: Er – no. *(Fairies signal to say nothing)* just someone from the village.

PRINCESS: She’s very pretty. I think my brother looks rather keen on her.

COWSLIP: Well, ‘e only ‘as till midnight! And those two is getting’ in da way of true love.

PRINCESS: Midnight? Why?

NUTMEG: Magic spell. *(Taps nose)* Say-no-more!

PRINCESS: Wow! Midnight, eh. Right! Come on, Buttons – let’s see what we can do! *(They run to Herald and tell him to say ...)*

HERALD: Oy! Supper time! Grubs on the table!

All EXIT except Cinders & Prince. Sisters run off, shoving greedily.

DUET: Cinders & Prince (the chorus can drift back in to support the song?)

At end the sisters split them up, carrying the Prince off in an amusing manner. Cinders runs after Princess, Buttons and Mrs McCHUCKER enter.

PRINCESS: I think you're right. Mrs M. Something going on here.

Mrs M presses ear-piece and speaks into wrist again.

BUTTONS: Does that thing actually work? I mean – who are you talking to? Let me listen. *(He pulls the ear-piece out. Tinny music – I will always love you, from The Bodyguard.)*

MRS McCHUCKER: Er...

People start to drift back in.

PRINCESS: We can't have that awful noise. Can you turn it off?

MRS McCHUCKER: Er ... not sure...

BUTTONS: Just push it back in! *(He pushes it back her ear, very hard) (The music gets quieter but is still heard, with echo)*

MRS McCHUCKER: Ah! You've pushed it right in! *(Rolls head)* I can feel it rolling round inside!!

PRINCESS: We can still hear it! *(Presses finger on Mrs M's other ear. Music quitter but still heard)*

BUTTONS: *(leans close)* It's coming out of your nose! *(He takes Mrs M's forefingers and jams one up each nostril. Music stops.)* Sorted.

MRS McCHUCKER: *(unclearly)* I can't stay like this all night!

PRINCESS: Neither can I!

Fairies & rest of chorus enter. They look at the odd trio, who shuffle aside.

PEASBLOSSOM: This calls for some cool thinking and cunning plans! *(Pause)* I'm going to give those sisters such a whacking ... *(Advances in violent fashion)*

COWSLIP: *(holds her back)* Ere! Steady on – you is not in *Local Place* now!

NUTMEG: I know! I will do some magic! *(Waves magic wand)*

COWSLIP: No! You is not – you is never yet getting nuffink right! You is gonna kill someone!

PEASBLOSSOM: But look at the clock! The time!

NUTMEG: Hmm. Remind me again ...

PEASBLOSSOM: I keep telling you – when the big hand is on the...

NUTMEG: No – which one is the CLOCK? Is it the one with the little bird?

PEASBLOSSOM: Cuckoo!

NUTMEG: *(smiles)* Cuckoo! When I was born that was what my mum wanted to call me!

COWSLIP: The cuckoo! I has an idea! Peasblossom – we need a LADDER!

MRS McCHUCKER: *(dismantles ear piece & breaks pose)* Hold on! Health and Safety! Ladder? What's going on?!

COWSLIP: Right: listen! That clock must never reach twelve.

BUTTONS: You have a plan?

COWSLIP: I do.

PRINCESS: Super. What is it?

COWSLIP: No cuckoo – no twelve-o-clock! We is goin' to get that cuckoo out of dat clock! That's why we need the ladder!

MRS McCHUCKER: OK – hang on! *(Exits to get ladder)*

PEASBLOSSOM: Jolly good plan, Cowslip!

BUTTONS: Right – but will it work? *(assorted responses)*

PRINCESS: Is this an adventure?

BUTTONS: I think it's turning into one!

MRS McCHUCKER: *(returns with ladder)* Where do you want it? Here?

PRINCE: Now what are you up to?

MRS McCHUCKER: Er – security matter. Stand aside, your Highness!

At the clock Mrs M goes up the ladder trying to get the cuckoo out of its door.

PEASBLOSSOM: Do hurry up! It's almost midnight! Grab it when it comes out! *(The clock reaches 12.*

CUCKOO 1).

MRS McCHUCKER: Aargh!! The little brute moves so fast! (**CUCKOO 2**).

PEASBLOSSOM: Hurry – it’s going to ... (**CUCKOO 3**).

BUTTONS: GRAB IT!

COWSLIP: Right!

MRS McCHUCKER: Ready! READY! (**CUCKOO 4**) Aargh! Missed! (*Reaches inside door as it disappears*) Got it! (*Appears to have it in both hands. No more cuckoo appearances from clock*)

PEASBLOSSOM: Jolly well done, you! Bring it down! We shall hide it! (**CUCKOO 5**).

COWSLIP: Aargh! No! It is still going! What is we to do?!

PEASBLOSSOM: I don’t know! I don’t know! (**CUCKOO 6**). Aargh! Do something!

MRS McCHUCKER: What?!

PRINCESS: Here! (*Grabs cushion off chair and pushed over cuckoo*)

COWSLIP: Good finking, girl! (**CUCKOO 7 muffled**). Aargh!

NUTMEG: I know!! **Eat it!**

MRS McCHUCKER: What?!

PEASBLOSSOM: YES! Eat it! (**CUCKOO 8**). Quick! (*Pushes it into Mrs.M’s mouth.*) There. Sorted! (*Looks at friend’s awful expression.*) Do you need a drink?

MRS McCHUCKER: (*Opens mouth to speak*) (**CUCKOO 9 + echoing burp**).

COWSLIP: Aaaargh!! That’s nine! Stop it!

BUTTONS: Keep your mouth shut!

CINDERELLA: (*enters and rapidly rushes over*) What shall I do? It’s almost midnight!

PEASBLOSSOM: (*rapidly*) Don’t worry - he can’t take his eyes off you!

CINDERELLA: Really?

PEASBLOSSOM: Really! Isn’t that right, Cowslip!

COWSLIP: Not half!

BUTTONS: You OK, Mrs Muck Chucker?

MRS McCHUCKER: *Opens mouth to speak:* (**CUCKOO 10 + burp**).

PEASBLOSSOM: Aaargh! Ten! (*Holds Mrs M’s’s nose.*) Swallow it!

BUTTONS: (*to Cinders*) Quick! Get back to the Prince. You only have seconds left! (*Cinders runs off toward Prince*)

PEASBLOSSOM: Swallow! SWALLOW! (*Big gulping sound.*) Well?

MRS McCHUCKER: (*Cautiously opens mouth. No sound.*) There. Sorted. Oh my ...!

NUTMEG: What is it?

MRS McCHUCKER: Feeling rather strange – er – down below. Mmmm. Oh my goodness!

PEASBLOSSOM: Down below? Oh my – (*to Buttons*) For pity’s sake – move the Princess! (*Princess is at the bottom end of MrsM. Buttons leaps and rescues her just before MrsM suddenly bends double. **Farting CUCKOO** sound (11). Fairies scream; hold cushion over Mrs M’s bottom. Princess joins the chain. Drunken Herald joins end, for no obvious reason*)

PEASBLOSSOM: **Eleven! One to go!**

COWSLIP: Quick – get her out of here! (*Prince enters*)

PRINCE: (*to Cinders*) Ah – there you are. I was afraid you’d gone. I was wondering if perhaps, if you weren’t too busy tomorrow, you might like to ... (*the cushion-holding line moves*). (*Prince notices but tries to carry on*) I was saying, I was wondering if perhaps, if you weren’t too busy tomorrow, you might like to ... (*the cushion holding chain moves*). My word! Is anything wrong? (*They all very innocently answer “No!”*)

PRINCESS: Quick! Ask her out or something!!

PRINCE: (*embarrassed*) Well, that’s a bit ... I mean.

ALL: Hurry up!

MRS McCHUCKER: (*desperate*) I can’t hold it in much longer!!

PRINCE: Err ...

MRS McCHUCKER: (*Wails*) My bottom’s going to explode!

PEASBLOSSOM: (*To Prince*) Isn’t this so romantic!

CINDERELLA: Yes; you were saying??

PRINCE: Tomorrow? Yes! Perhaps a picnic? (*Cinders smiles and nods excitedly*)

GRIPE: (*SISTERS ENTER*) Princey poohs! Don't forget you promised me a dance!

WHINGE: And me! (*Pushes sister aside.*) In fact – me first.

PRINCE: Ladies – as soon as I have a name and address of this young lady, so I may collect her for tomorrow's picnic, then I will be delighted

CINDERELLA: Name? (*Looks at glaring sisters.*) Address? Well Er ...

COWSLIP: Do something!

PRINCESS: (*loudly*) I say – is that more champagne they're opening over there?

GRIPE: More bubbly!

WHINGE: Make way! (*They rush off for booze. Mother stays watching from edge*)

PRINCE: As I was saying; if you could let me have your name and address?

CINDERELLA: Why, of course, (*tries to whisper so Mother does not hear*) it's ...

MRS McCHUCKER: It's too late! I can't hold it!

NUTMEG: She's going to blow!

BUTTONS: This is the last cuckoo! Midnight!

COWSLIP: Get Cinders of here NOW!

CINDERELLA: What?

ALL: RUN!! (**ENORMOUS FARTING CUCKOO.**)

Cinders half carried off by Fairies & Buttons. The crowd leap aside, amazed by the noise.

MRS McCHUCKER: Sorry about that; something I ate!

PRINCE: What's going on?!

PRINCESS: Not too sure really. But it's very exciting.

HERALD: I don't feel well.

PRINCE: Where has she gone? That girl? She's the one I want to ...

MOTHER: So – your highness. This seems to be the end of the ball. And – as your father instructed – you have to choose your bride. (*Pushes daughters forward*)

HERALD: She's right. Just choose quickly. (*Looks ill*)

MOTHER: So – name your choice!

PRINCE: Very well –

WHINGE & GRIPE: Yes!

PRINCE: I name - the girl who just left!

MOTHER: So ... (*Comes close to him, menacing*) ... name her then. Go on – **what** is her name?! (*Prince can't; neither can anyone else*)

HERALD: Ann –Ony-Mouse! Hic!

MRS McCHUCKER: Ha! *Anonymous!* A false name!

MOTHER: Pah! You can't name her!

PRINCESS: Look! She left a shoe behind! A glass slipper! Really nice. Dolce and Gabana I think! I've got some that... sorry.

PRINCE: There! I know one thing about her! She has lost one glass slipper – and her feet are this size!

MOTHER: That's not a **name!**

PRINCESS: No – but if you remember – my brother has to select a bride tonight!

HERALD: Yesh!

PRINCESS: And the night will not end until...

PRINCE: **Dawn!** I will find her before dawn! Everybody! Quickly! Find the girl whose feet fit this slipper, for she is the one I will marry!

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO: SCENE 7: PART OF THE KITCHEN

The fairies, Buttons & Cinders (no longer in gown) rush excitedly into the kitchen.

BUTTONS: Quick – get everything back to normal before they get home from the palace!

NUTMEG: Shall I use magic?

ALL: No!

COWSLIP: OK. *(Stops to think)* So – what is ‘normal’ in this place?

BUTTONS: Ah – perhaps cooking the supper for their return?

NUTMEG: Oh no! The words ‘panto’ and ‘cooking’ is not good news! No way! I am not as stupid as I look!

PEASBLOSSOM: I’m afraid you are, dear. Never mind. Anyway, we really should get changed out of these things.

CINDERELLA: I don’t really feel like doing any cooking. Perhaps they can have this custard pie? *(On table)*

NUTMEG: Panto – cooking – **custard pie**!! That’s it – I’m off! *(Runs away)*

BUTTONS: Don’t be sad; we all saw the way the Prince was looking at you. Even his sister noticed it!

COWSLIP: Yeah – you is in there!

PEASBLOSSOM: I did sense a certain electricity between you! *(Cinders looks coy)* I’m sure this will all have a happy ending. Come, fairies – away! *(They exit off stage)*

BUTTONS: Right then: I’d better get their bedrooms ready. Goodnight!

CINDERELLA: Buttons!

BUTTONS: Yes?

CINDERELLA: I think you were getting on really well with the Princess!

BUTTONS: Yeah – like that’s going to happen! Goodnight! *(Exits)*

CINDERELLA: Goodnight! Right – better get this place clean. *(Sings a tune from the ball)*

MOTHER: *(Enters and watches)* I knew it. I knew it. It was you!

CINDERELLA: You made me jump! *(Thinks)* It was me what?

MOTHER: Don’t play innocent, you scheming, ungrateful child! That tune! It was you at the ball. Admit it!

CINDERELLA: I don’t know what you’re ...

MOTHER: You are a very poor liar. *(Walks closer)* It was you ... at the ball – wearing those stupid glasses. Did you think you had any chance with the prince when my daughters were there to show him what real quality looked like?!

CINDERELLA: Me? At the ball ... I mean

MOTHER: *(suddenly thinks)* Be silent! *(Cunning)* If it was **not** you at the ball, where are your glass slippers?

CINDERELLA: What?

MOTHER: You heard me! Where are those glass slippers?

CINDERELLA: I haven’t got them – er - I mean, I ...

MOTHER: As I thought. *(Quietly and nastily)* Your dainty feet will be the death of you, my dear. But ... no time to do it now. *(Thinks)* I know. In ... here! *(Pushes Cinders into cupboard & locks door, leaving key in lock)* Now nothing can stand in my way! Before tonight is out, one of my daughters will marry that prince! *(EXITS laughing)*

Silence. Buttons enters from side.

BUTTONS: What’s going on in here? I heard noises? *(To aud)* What’s going on? Where’s Ella? Not all at once! *(There is a sound at the door.)*

PRINCESS (V.O.): Hello? Anyone home?

BUTTONS: *(To aud)* Hang on a second!

Buttons opens door. It is the Princess.

BUTTONS: But – what? How ...?

PRINCESS: I knew this was the place! *(Over shoulder)* I was right! In here!!
She enters followed by Prince, Mrs M and Herald.

PRINCE: Hello again. Sorry to disturb you in the middle of the night.

BUTTONS: No problem, squire. How can I help?

PRINCE: Well: there was a rather lovely young lady at the ball with you earlier and – silly really – she ran off before I could get her name. So ...

MRS McCHUCKER: So who was she? Real name needed. Legal reasons.

BUTTONS: With me? Well Errr ... *(To aud)* If I tell them I'll lose my job! What shall I do? Shall I tell him it was Cinderella? *(Business with aud)* You're right – this is a horrid job anyway! Yes – I will tell you – the girl at the ball was ...!

MOTHER: *(Appears in doorway.)* BE SILENT! Not another word. Your Majesties. *(Curtsey)* What an honour!

PRINCE: Lady Table - *(Herald sniggers)* – so sorry to disturb but ...

MOTHER: No, no, no. In fact – I think I can be of assistance here.

BUTTONS: In answer to your question, your Majesty – the girl at the ball was...

MOTHER: **Enough!!** Thank you, Buttons!

BUTTONS: Buttocks! Bottom! Er! *(Stamps)* Buttons!

MOTHER: *(nicely)* That will be all.

BUTTONS: But ...

MOTHER: THAT WILL BE ALL! Kindly leave us *(Viciously but so others don't hear)* **now**, or that girl will not live to see another morning. *(He reluctantly exits)* *(She turns and is suddenly pleasant)* If you are looking for the young girl to whom that slipper belongs, then look no farther. Come in, girls. *(The sisters enter).* Your majesty, my beautiful daughters. I believe you said that whomever that slipper fits - will be your bride? *(To Herald)* Mmm?

HERALD: *(cautiously)* Something like that; it's a bit of a blur to be honest. *(Looks ill.)*

MOTHER: First the fitting - then the wedding! Girls! CHAIR!

WHINGE: Me first – I'm not putting it on after her – she's got athlete's foot!

GRIPE: Well you've got bunions, corns, verrucas AND stinky feet!

WHINGE: *(to prince)* Mine might be a tiny bit stinky but hers are like stilton cheese smeared on a pig's bottom!

GRIPE: That's not true. Here *(to Herald)* you! Whose feet are the stinkiest?! *(Perch on chair. Hold feet up)*

HERALD: I can't really say. In fact, I can't really breathe!

MOTHER: Quick – the slipper!

HERALD: *(kneeling woozily)* Right, you first! *(Gripe sits and the slipper is pushed hard)*

GRIPE: Push harder you fool! It's almost on! There! *(It is hanging off)*

HERALD: Not even close!

MOTHER: *(produces large scissors)* Perhaps – without those toes ...?
Mrs. M takes the glass slipper back and it is snatched by Whinge.

GRIPE: Yes. I'm sure those wiggly bits weren't there last night! **Cut them off!**

PRINCE: Enough! *(Stops the amputation at the last moment)*

WHINGE: *(Suddenly lifts leg with shoe fitting)* It fits! It fits!

PRINCESS: What? No way!

PRINCE: No! Let me see. That's not possible.

WHINGE: Well it does fit, matey; just you look! *(Waves false lower leg with slipper under his nose)*

PRINCESS: What a faker! *(Looks round)* There's something wrong here. Where's the other girl?

PRINCE: Yes – I was here today and there was another girl! Where's the girl I met in the garden?

MOTHER: What? That girl? She's just a servant! She is nothing! Look: my daughters have charm, poise, breeding; Cinderella has nothing – she is just ...

BUTTONS: *(dramatic entrance)* Stop! Even if I do get the sack you must know the truth! The girl at the ball was the girl you met in the garden!

PRINCE: I suspected as much!

BUTTONS: But – **this awful old boot** said something nasty would happen to her if I told you! You've got to protect her!

PRINCE: So where is she? What have you done with her?!

MOTHER: (*Calms*) Cinderella? She left. Ages ago. Said she'd had enough. Was too lazy to do the work here, if you ask me. She left - didn't she, girls! (*They agree*)

WHINGE: Miles away by now, like.

GRIPE: No idea which, you know, direction.

BUTTONS: (*to aud*) Is this true? Did Cinderella leave?

PRINCE: Then where is she? (*Business*)
Cinderella is released from the cupboard by Mrs M. Heroic music.

PRINCE: Please. (*Kneels*) Will you do me the honour of ...?

HERALD: Your Majesty. May I remind you – “Whoever this slipper fits will be my bride” ...

PRINCE: I remember. (*To Cinderella*) Please....

CINDERELLA: I will gladly try on that glass slipper – but first, perhaps you would like the other, to make the pair! (*Excitement. Hands him the other*) (*Cinderella sits and the slippers are fitted. Cheers.*)

PRINCE: Yes! I was hoping it was you!

CINDERELLA: I always knew it was you. (*Sisters groan etc.*)

HERALD: Your Majesty – it's almost dawn!

PRINCE: Quickly – everyone - back to the palace!

MOTHER: (*smarmy*) My dear, loving, daughter. I could not be more delighted. (*Pushes sisters aside*) Get out of my way. (*Curtsey*) Allow me to be the first to congratulate you both. Now, for the wedding, I think we should...

BUTTONS: Oh – get real! (*Quickly slaps cream pie on her. Cheers*) To the palace!!

ACT TWO: SCENE 8: TABS (community scene)

OPTION 1: Herald Harold stays on/enters. He seizes the moment and starts his song. But Fairies enter in finale costume & stop him.

COWSLIP: Not now – we 'as to do da business and stuff!

PEASBLOSSOM: Super. My favourite bit. What shall we do?

NUTMEG: I've got a song (*starts Bean Song, with actions*)

ALL: NO!

HERALD: Well, we could always sing my song!

They all agree to this and get the kids up.

COWSLIP: Right then – we is going to talk to da kiddies then sing the song of Harold the Herald. Give 'im da microfonic thingy and he can starts us off. Ready then?

HERALD: Super (*taps mike to test*) Hello – testing. OK – here goes! (*Starts but looks distressed*) Oh no – all those drinks! Got to go! Sorry! Won't be a minute! (*Runs off with microphone*)

PEASBLOSSOM: I say – we need that microphone! Harold! Oh never mind.

NUTMEG: We don't need the microphone – we will be loud as anything! Here goes!

Before they sing they hear Harold run down stairs, door open & close, echoing steady stream of water (3 times, then drips), flushing, door, running up stairs. Embarrassed faces. They sing the song. Harold returns in time for end of song.

PEASBLOSSOM: You missed it!

HERALD: But I didn't hear anything!

COWSLIP: Maybe not – but we was hearin' you!

Herald looks at microphone in horror then runs off to get changed.

PEASBLOSSOM: What do you say, little kiddies – one more time for Harold the Herald?
Thanks and sweets.

(If time is short do not bother with the Herald business & fx in this scene)

OR 2: Business with any child dressed as fairies, princesses or princes.

SCENE 9: THE BALLROOM

Children then Chorus enter and take their bow and sit along front.

Herald and Mrs McChucker: (*enter and take bows*)

HERALD: My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen: His Royal Highness, Prince Charming and his lovely bride.
(Enter and take their bow)
MRS McCHUCKER: Er ... what is your real name, just for the security check?
CINDERELLA: My real name is just plain, simple, Ella.
PRINCE: I love it. Princess Ella.
HERALD: Please welcome her Royal Highness the Princess, and Mr Buttons.
(Enter and take their bow)
ELLA: There is just one thing ...
PRINCE: Anything. What is it?
ELLA: My new mother – and my sisters. I know they were not very kind – but I do forgive them. Can they come to the ball? Just this once?
PRINCE: *(shrugs)* Alright. Just this once! Herald!
HERALD: Please welcome – the ugly old boot and her revolting stinky daughters!
(Enter and take their bow)
PRINCE: Anyone else?
ELLA: There were three others who tried really hard to help me.
PRINCE: Who was that?
ELLA: Well – they were fairies! *(Prince shrugs and nods to Herald)*
HERALD: Finally, please welcome the fairy god-mothers!
(Enter and take their bow)
PRINCE: Once more our ancient tale is told,
CINDERELLA: with an ending that is happy.
COWSLIP: So sing a song,
PEASBLOSSOM: But don't take long.
NUTMEG: I need to change my nappy.
(Music starts: "Sleeping Beauty waltz": I know you.)
RED RIDING HOOD: *(enters and stands)* Oy! **OY!!***(Music stops clumsily)*
PRINCE: What? Who?
RED RIDING HOOD: Not so fast! It is me – Little Red Riding Hood! And I have a bone to pick with them!
(huge cannon rolled on: fuse is visibly burning – possibly a sparkler) Say your prayers, you miserable, low-down fairies!
PEASEBLOSSOM: My word! Somebody do something!
COWSLIP: Right! *(Thinks)* I shall panic!
NUTMEG: I shall wet myself!
MRS McCHUCKER: Stand back! I'll save you! *(Grabs cannon and swings it round madly, as it points at people they panic and/or duck. Finally it is pointing at the audience. All stand back in silent horror and watch as it explodes and EITHER showers audience with confetti/tinsel.*

FINALE SONG

BOW *(including one for Red Riding Hood who has not had one yet)*

CURTAIN

