CINDERELLA'S SHAKESPEARE

By Lindsey C. Craig

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Cinderella (that isn't her real name!) labors away for her wicked aunt and evil cousins. Her stepmother believes learning just monopolizes the time a woman can spend being beautiful and burns all the books in their cottage. Cinderella manages to save a copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, which she reads whenever she gets a free moment, but eventually even that is discovered and burned.

With a little help from a silly fairy godmother, Cinderella attends a palace ball and impresses the Prince not only with her loveliness, but her intellect as well. After Cinderella flees the ball, the Prince pursues her looking not for a woman who can fit in a slipper, but one who can complete his Shakespearean quote. When he finds the one woman in the kingdom with an intellect to match his own, he snatches her up, learns her true name, and they live happily ever after.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 M, 8 W, 8 Flexible)

NARRATOR
CINDERELLA: Heroine.
AUNT BRAGONIA: The wicked aunt.
BERTHA: The evil cousin.
BELINDA: The other evil cousin.
HENRY: The dog.
TIC: Mouse.
TAC: Mouse.
SQUIRE: Member of the royal court.
PAGE: Member of the royal court.
SIMON: Bragonia's cat.
FAIRY GODMOTHER: Your regular, half-deaf wish-granter.
TALL CLOWN: Friend of the godmother.
ARISTOTLE: Assistant fairy.
SOCRATES: Assistant fairy.
PRINCE: Intelligent SMISO intelligent SF to live with happily ever after.
MAN: Guy at the ball.
3 MAIDENS: Also at the ball.
KING: Prince's Pop.

Many parts can be doubled such as the Clown and the King, and the Page and the Man at the Ball. Fairies and a female Simon can also double as maidens at the ball.

PROPS

NARRATOR: Newspaper, sign.
CINDERELLA: Bucket with confetti, scrub brush, apron, book of *Romeo and Juliet,* tea tray.
PAGE: Horn.
SQUIRE: Scroll, invitations, large feathered hat.
BRAGONIA: Powder and puff.
EVIL COUSINS: Armloads of gowns and stockings.
TIC and TAC: Large trunk, ball gown shredded at the skirt.
FAIRY GODMOTHER: Bar of soap and carpetbag containing doll dress, ball gown, and glass slippers.
CLOWN: Bar of soap.
PRINCE: Book of *Romeo and Juliet*.
SET PROPS: Burned book remains, 2-1/2' x 2' book, small wagon.

SCENERY NOTES

Scenery can be very representational with simple unit pieces that roll on and off the stage as needed along with simple furniture pieces. Sets needed include kitchen with fireplace, ballroom, and several exterior cottage doors. Bragonia's bedroom can be represented DS with a simple dressing table and stool for her and small table and chairs for the two sisters.

Prologue

NARRATOR: Ouch! Ooh! Hot off the press!! *(Blows on newspaper)* It says here, Cinderella was once happy living with her dear papa. Isn't that sweet. And that her real name wasn't Cinderella at all...it was... Hah! Reeeally??!

CALLER: *(SOMEONE from cast in audience)* Tell us! Tell us her name!

NARRATOR: Oh no! Can't do! See, it says right here. *(Holds up sign that reads)* MUSTN'T TELL CINDERELLA'S NAME. It's a surprise, you know! *(Continues reading)* Oh, but, hah! Oh dear, it says Cinderella's dear papa died and that her wicked Aunt Bragonia came to take care of her, and with that wicked Aunt Bragonia came her two stupid daughters, Bertha and Belinda. Oh! It's such a tragedy! But no! It gets worse. Bertha and Belinda and wicked Aunt Bragonia hated Cinderella because she was so intelligent, so kind and so beautiful. So what do you think they did? Oh! It's too much! They took away her freedom!!! They made her their servant to clean and cook and wait upon them, and...and...oh, you don't want to hear anymore!

CALLER: Pleease.

NARRATOR: Well then, *(Clears throat)* the wicked three began to burn all of the books in her father's great library. One by one they set them ablaze, using them as firewood to keep the fire burning in the hearth and thus...thus, Cinderella, who is not Cinderella at all, became known as Cinderella because she was always at the hearth -- that's where the cinders are, you know -- trying to stop the wicked three from burning her beloved books. Alas, she could not stop them and soon all the books were gone! Gone except for one! A play by Shakespeare called, *Romeo and Juliet*. This one book Cinderella kept hidden within the folds of her apron, *(The CURTAIN opens slowly behind NARRATOR to reveal CINDERELLA scrubbing the kitchen floor.)* secretly reading it only when she thought no one was near. *(Points)* There's Cinderella now! *(Puts finger to lips to indicate silence and tip-toes off stage)*

Scene 1

(AT RISE: In the kitchen. CINDERELLA is never aware of the NARRATOR, but as he exits, she stops scrubbing and looks this way and that. Then carefully she pulls a book, Shakespeare's, Romeo and Juliet*, from her apron. She stands and begins to dramatically read text. Henry the dog, who has been sleeping in the corner, now wakes and listens. SIMON, the sleeping cat, does not awake.)*

CINDERELLA: "But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!"

HENRY: Say, what's that you're reading there, Cinderella? *(Scratches HIMSELF with hind leg)*

CINDERELLA: It is *Romeo and Juliet*, my dear, Henry. A play by William Shakespeare, the greatest writer of them all! *(Crosses to HENRY, shows him book)* Here, in these pages, Henry, are worlds! Worlds just waiting to be explored! Once I had hundreds, thousands of worlds.

HENRY: You mean books, Cinderella?

CINDERELLA: Yes! Yes, beautiful books! And in each one there lay a wonderful, fascinating new world, Henry! *(SHE rushes to CS and transforms herself into the worlds of different books::* Wizard of Oz) "Oh no, Toto! I won't let them take you away I...!" (Hunchback of Notre Dame*)* "Yes master, I'm coming. I'm..." *("Jabberwocky")* "Beware the Jabberwock, my son! The jaws that bite, the claws that catch! Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun the..." (*And at last* Hamlet) "Alas, poor Yorick!"

HENRY: Oh, Cinderella, read me a book! Read me a book now!

CINDERELLA: *(Exuberance vanishes, with a great sigh she collapses near her scrub bucket)* Alas, I have but this one book left... *(Presses* Romeo and Juliet *to HER heart)*...its world only just enfolding its lofty boughs of wonder.

HENRY: You mean you just started it?

End of Freeview

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