

STEPHAN FILMS PRESENTS:

CINDERELLA SECRET

Directed by Vera Belmont

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## **1A. EXT. FOREST - DAY**

An aerial view of a forest. It is a green sea in motion, ebbing and flowing, a living organism on which the credits appear, written in leaves and branches. A deep rumbling sound begins to grow...

When the title appears, the trees burst into flame. Fire fills the screen.

## **1B. EXT. CARLA'S MANOR, GROUNDS - NIGHT**

### **MIDSUMMER FOLK DANCE**

A huge Midsummer bonfire is blazing in front of the home of Lady CARLA, mistress of a huge estate. The forest stands in the distance.

With her two foolish, unpleasant daughters GERTRUDE and BERTHA at her side, Lady CARLA is presiding over the folk celebrations from a platform under a canopy. GERTRUDE is tall, lanky and bony, while BERTHA is short, clumsy and podgy.

#### **CARLA**

Such a vulgar custom...

### **FOLK SONGS AND DANCES: FIFES, TRUMPETS AND DRUMS**

Men continually chop wood and carry it over to feed the bonfire, whose flames light up the night.

The tension is palpable as hands grope for bodies and flesh is exposed. The fever grows. Both boys and the girls follow the same ritual, blackening their hands with charcoal and smearing it on the face of the sweetheart they have their eye on.

Once this is done, the chosen partner must kiss their "marker" and jump through the flames with them, holding their hand. If they land on the other side of the fire together, they are sure to marry before the year is out.

LADY CARLA's two daughters, GERTRUDE and BERTHA, are visibly dying to join in the dancing and merrymaking, but girls of their "refinement" are not allowed to mix with the peasants.

#### **GERTRUDE (TO HER MOTHER)**

Mama, guess what Cinderella's doing!

#### **LADY CARLA**

Dancing with her pigs again?

#### **BERTHA**

No, with the yokels. She's trying to find a husband!

#### **LADY CARLA (WITH A SIGH)**

She's wasting her time. Who'd marry a guttersnipe like her?

**GERTRUDE**

But what if somebody did?

**BERTHA**

We have to stop her stealing our trees!

**GERTRUDE**

They are ours, aren't they, Mother?

**CARLA**

They soon will be.

**GERTRUDE**

Well I don't think we should take any chances!

GERTRUDE and BERTHA slip away from their mother and hurry off into the crowd.

Some way off, CINDERELLA is among the peasants. Wearing a shabby, patched, stained dress, her feet bare, her hair a mess and her face dirty, she goes from one boy to the next, trying to make as good an impression as possible.

Her smile is radiant and her eyes sparkle with vitality, sharply at odds with her unkempt appearance.

A coarse-looking peasant (GLOBO) comes up to her.

**GLOBO**

It ain't just you, no-one want to marry me neither. The girls reckon I'm too ugly an' stupid.

**CINDERELLA (DESPITE THE EVIDENCE)**

You aren't ugly or stupid. I'll marry you if you like.

**GLOBO**

You? But you ain't a proper girl!

**CINDERELLA**

What do you mean, I'm not a proper girl?

**GLOBO (TRYING TO LOOK SMART)**

You don't got the right stuff. Real girls got braids an' all ribbons in them hair!

**CINDERELLA**

If that's all it takes...

CINDERELLA is starting to plait her hair when a horde of girls swoop down on her. They are all waving torches.

**YOUNG GIRL 1 (TO CINDERELLA)**

I'll teach you to try it on with my boyfriend!

**YOUNG GIRL 2**

And Martin's mine! You stay away from him!

**YOUNG GIRL 3**

And Luke!

**YOUNG GIRL 4**

And my Pete!

**YOUNG GIRL 5**

Even Globo's too good for you!

CINDERELLA makes a run for it, but the gang are hot on her heels.

**YOUNG GIRL 1 (CHASING CINDERELLA)**

We'll scratch your itch for you!

**YOUNG GIRL 2**

Yeah, you're gonna get well scratched!

Left behind, GLOBO starts to run after CINDERELLA too.

**GLOBO (SHOUTING TO CINDERELLA)**

Hey, wait for me! I'll marry you!

**2. EXT. FOREST – NIGHT**

CINDERELLA runs into the forest, chased by the girls. The breathless GLOBO is falling further behind.

CINDERELLA is fast and agile.

She jumps over a stream and one of her pursuers goes face first into the water.

Another one falls down a hole.

A third finds herself face to face with a biker dressed all in black leather and mounted on a motorcycle that spits flame into the night, like some terrible demon. Everyone freezes.

A fourth gets snarled up in brambles.

The fifth is caught in a snare.

A sixth.

A seventh.

One by one, the girls drop out of the chase.

Finally, only GLOBO, GERTRUDE and BERTHA are still on CINDERELLA's heels... but not for long.

As GLOBO passes GERTRUDE and BERTHA, they grab at him, but he pulls clear. Unable to stop in time, LADY CARLA's two daughters go face first into a quagmire, to the annoyance of the frogs they disturb and the toads they offend.

CINDERELLA is still running with GLOBO just behind her.

**GLOBO**

Wait! Wait! I'll marry you!

GLOBO runs into a low oak branch and CINDERELLA comes to an abrupt halt. Turning, she sees him sitting slumped unconscious against the tree trunk.

**CINDERELLA**

You'll marry me?

GLOBO does not answer.

**CINDERELLA**

Cat got your tongue?

Still nothing.

GLOBO's head drops to his chest and he remains motionless.

CINDERELLA looks at him sadly.

**CINDERELLA (WITH A SIGH)**

Just when I'd finally found one.

The oak branch moves slightly, pointing the way. CINDERELLA instinctively heads off in that direction. Other trees show CINDERELLA which way to go and she follows their signals every time. At last, she finds herself on a path.

Suddenly, she sees a rough forest shack built of branches and mud, and hears a song.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (O.S.)**

*Fairies can do many things*

*Magic, spells and tricks*

*Hocus-pocus, bewitchings*

*Enchantments just for kicks*

She looks through the keyhole and sees....

## **2A. INT. FOREST SHACK - NIGHT**

... MERLIN and the FAIRY GODMOTHER. MERLIN, a very old man with a mane of white hair, is continually mumbling to himself as he conducts chemistry experiments in an extricable maze of bubbling retorts and fuming flasks.

The FAIRY GODMOTHER is wearing a kangaroo skin coat with a head. It covers her completely. Sensing that someone is at the door, she whips it open, interrupting her song.

CINDERELLA falls through the doorway and lands sprawling.

### **FAIRY GODMOTHER (O.S.)**

How many times have I told you  
Never to listen at doors?  
Now you've found out when you do  
You end up on the floor!

For a moment, CINDERELLA is lost for words. MERLIN continues to work on his magic formulas, tending to his retorts.

### **CINDERELLA (TAKEN ABACK)**

Do we know each other?

### **FAIRY GODMOTHER**

You mean you don't recognise me?  
I'm your fairy godmother.

### **CINDERELLA**

Yeah, right. And I'm Little Red Riding Hood.

### **MERLIN (SUDDENLY INTERESTED)**

So that's why you're deep in the forest!

### **FAIRY GODMOTHER (IRRITATED)**

(to MERLIN) No it isn't. Get on with your experiments.

### **CINDERELLA (POINTING AT MERLIN)**

So who's he, Merlin?

### **MERLIN (FLATTERED, TO THE FAIRY GODMOTHER)**

She recognises me! You see? I'm a celebrity!

### **FAIRY GODMOTHER (HIGHLY IRRITATED, TO MERLIN)**

Don't be so childish, Merlin, you're 450!

**MERLIN (GRUMBLING TO HIMSELF)**

449 and a half, actually.

**CINDERELLA (SUSPICIOUS)**

You aren't my Fairy Godmother and he isn't Merlin the Enchanter! I've seen the movie and you look nothing like them!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

I *am* your Fairy Godmother and that's that. Are you hungry, dear?

**CINDERELLA (TEARS WELLING UP)**

A bit. And... can I give my dress a quick clean?

**MERLIN (GRUMPILY)**

What do you think this is, a launderette?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (ANNOYED)**

Stop it, Merlin! That's no way to talk to a lady!

**MERLIN**

One day, my research will pay off and I'll be a match for you. Then I'll show you magic can't compete with science!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (INFURIATED)**

I said stop it, Merlin! Cinderella, dear, you do realise your father's forest's in danger, don't you?

**CINDERELLA**

Of course I do. That's why I have to get married. (suddenly, to Merlin) Would you like to marry me?

**MERLIN**

Sorry, poppet, I prefer more mature ladies. And believe me, marriage is a lot more hazardous than any forest.

The FAIRY GODMOTHER looks daggers at him and turns him into a toad.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (GENTLY TO CINDERELLA)**

You're too naive, you believe everything you see. You don't look under the surface of things and individuals. Darling Cinderella, Merlin and I will always be there when you need us.

**MERLIN (TO THE FAIRY GODMOTHER)**

Ribbit! Ribbit!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO CINDERELLA)**

From now on, whenever anyone lies to you, their hair will change colour, but you'll be the only one to see it. All right?

**MERLIN (TO THE FAIRY GODMOTHER)**

Ribbit! Ribbit!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO MERLIN)**

(to MERLIN) We'll see about that when you've eaten all the flies and creepy-crawlies in the shack. (to CINDERELLA) Now get some sleep. You can start searching for your true love in the morning.

FAIRY GODMOTHER takes CINDERELLA in her arms and holds her tight. The girl falls fast asleep instantly.

MERLIN starts to hop around wildly in search of insects. He seems to be in a hurry to get the job done quickly.

**3. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE – DAY**

It is early morning.

The SENESCHAL, the King's brother. is riding out with five of his men. His eyes are cold as ice above his pitch-black beard.

Struggling to keep up with the horsemen is a cart pulled by four straining horses. It carries a cage full of destitute, homeless and orphaned children caught wandering on the roads or lost in the countryside.

A young Indian boy called APU is running ahead of the SENESCHAL like a hunting dog. He is dressed only in a loincloth and shows no sign of being hurt by the stones under his feet or the brambles and nettles that scratch and sting his calves.

**SENESCHAL (SITTING UP STRAIGHT ON HIS HORSE)**

See these mighty oaks, firs and... oaks! Soon, gentlemen, they will be felled to build the greatest of warships! None shall be able to stand against us!

Suddenly, APU leaps into a thicket and flushes out four young boys (PIP, BEN, WILL and VICTOR) who run for their lives.

**SENESCHAL (STANDING UP IN THE STIRRUPS)**

There they go!

The horsemen immediately give chase.

The children run for their lives.

A rider blocks their way.

They climb an embankment.

Another rider forces them to turn back and they scramble back down the slope.

VICTOR makes for the forest.

He is about to disappear into the trees when the SENESCHAL catches him by the scruff of the neck and, still at a gallop, carries him off.

The child screams, struggles and calls for help, but in vain. The SENESCHAL tosses him into the cage as the three others make their escape.

#### **4. INT. SENESCHAL'S CASTLE – DAY**

A pit holds a pack of howling dogs - mastiffs, wolfhounds and pinschers - rivalling each other in savagery and all famished!

The SENESCHAL smiles at his hounds and strides over to the cart with APU following him like a faithful mutt.

**SENESCHAL**

Quiet, my children. Daddy's brought back dinner!

He pulls VICTOR, the boy he has just captured, from the cage

**SENESCHAL**

First, let's put these children to work...

**VICTOR**

That's against the law! We're underage!

**SENESCHAL**

Well, well, we seem to have a union agitator here. Tut-tut.  
Too skinny. He'll need fattening up.

Looking disgusted by the lack of meat on the child, he returns VICTOR to the cage and leans over the pit. His hounds bark and bare their fangs.

**SENESCHAL (TO THE DOGS)**

Patience, my children. Soon I'll serve you up a royal feast!

He burst into braying laughter, revealing teeth as sharp as the dogs'.

## **5. EXT. FOREST – DAY**

CINDERELLA walks on through the forest and comes to a pool. She kneels on the ground and looks at her reflection in the water. Her face is smeared with soot and her hair is a tangled mess.

CINDERELLA sings as she grabs branches to pick up tree leaves.

### **CINDERELLA**

*Mother, this forest is yours  
The haven where you sleep  
With Father by your side  
And me, a watch to keep*

In the bushes, we glimpse two pairs of unblinking eyes staring at CINDERELLA as she strips.

Cinderella has a swim in the pool with yellow and red leaves embracing her body.

The two pairs of eyes move to keep her in view.

The willow branches close over CINDERELLA's rags and begin to rustle.

## **DANCE**

The pool carries her round in its watery arms, caressing and hugging her. It forms eddies, fountains and curtains of every shape imaginable to wash the young woman.

### **WILL (WHISPERING)**

Budge up!

The two pairs of eyes move through the reeds, getting closer as CINDERELLA steps out of the water.

The girl hears a noise followed by the sound of running footsteps in the bushes and she draws a blank. There is no-one in the bushes

Now the patter of footsteps comes from another direction.

She hurries after them, but again finds nothing.

Now the noise is coming from behind her. She whirls round and races after it. Suddenly, she hears whimpers.

She approaches cautiously.

Among the thickets, CINDERELLA finds the three wild boys who escaped from the SENESCHAL: PIP, BEN and WILL.

PIP, 9, a little white boy wearing the uniform of an orphanage and, as always, his beloved school tie.

BEN, 8, a little Arab with frizzy hair who, Tom Thumb style, has left his family of illegal immigrants whose eight children his parents were unable to feed properly.

WILL, 10, a black orphan, is a Nigerian refugee.

PIP's foot is stuck fast in a wolf trap, BEN has snare round his neck and WILL is dangling upside down with his ankle caught in a noose.

**PIP**

Help, it hurts!

**BEN**

Get this off me, I can't breathe!

**WILL**

Please, my stomach's in my throat!

CINDERELLA eyes them suspiciously.

**CINDERELLA**

Were you spying on me?

**PIP (MOURNFULLY)**

No, I was out hunting with my dad and I got lost.

His hair changes colour.

**BEN**

I was in the forest with my brothers and they left me behind.

His hair flares scarlet.

**WILL**

I was taking a pie and a little tub of butter to my gran when the big bad wolf caught me.

His hair turns green.

**CINDERELLA (SCORNFULLY)**

Yeah, right.

**PIP**

We're lost children!

**BEN**

Babes in the wood!

**WILL**

We don't even have mums and dads!

Their hair turns back to its normal colour.

**CINDERELLA (BLUSHING)**

All right. But why were you spying on me?

The three hang their heads.

**PIP & BEN**

Actually, we did not get it, we were expecting a strip

**CINDERELLA**

My trees prefer me with their leaves

The three meanies show disappointment.

**FAST MOTION:**

CINDERELLA frees the three boys.

PIP's leg is bleeding, BEN's neck is black and blue, and WILL's face is purple.

CINDERELLA treats the children's injuries.

**CINDERELLA**

So what do you say to Cinderella?

**THE THREE (IN UNISON)**

Thank you, Cinderella!

**CUT**

The three lost boys walk CINDERELLA to the edge of the forest. WILL has a bandage on his ankle, BEN a scarf around his neck and WILL a damp cloth on his head. Suddenly, the three boys stop together.

**CINDERELLA**

What's wrong? Have you put down roots?

**BEN**

If we leave the forest, the Seneschal will catch us just like he did Victor...

**WILL**

... and turn us into his dogs' dinner...

**PIP**

... to punish us.

**CINDERELLA**

Punish you for what?

**PIP**

For being orphans!

**BEN**

For being foreigners!

**WILL**

For being children!

**CINDERELLA (WITH A SIGH)**

Right, well, you stay if you want, but I have to go.

**PIP**

Can't you stay a little while?

**CINDERELLA**

No, I have to look after my stepmother as my father asked me to do on his deathbed, and wait on my sisters who can't do a thing for themselves. And I have to find a husband too if I don't want to see this forest sold and chopped down.

**PIP**

Marry us !

**CINDERELLA**

I'm not a cradle snatcher!

**PIP (VEXED)**

But I'm nine!

**BEN**

And I'm eight, which makes seventeen.

**WILL**

And I'm ten, so we're twenty-seven, which is well older than you!

With a bound, WILL leaps onto BEN's shoulders and PIP climbs onto his. Standing on each other's shoulders, the three wild boys make up a man of imposing bearing and height.

PIP holds out a hand to CINDERELLA.

**PIP (TO CINDERELLA)**

May I have the pleasure of this dance, princess?

**BEN**

It'd be rude to say no.

**WILL**

Can you dance?

**BALLET:**

CINDERELLA accepts the invitation and waltzes on the edge of the forest in her triple partner's arms.

They dance until they are ready to drop.

**CUT**

The FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN are sitting side by side and watching the animated dance in an e-book, where the letters turn into pictures.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TOUCHED)**

Isn't she graceful?

**MERLIN (WHO LOOKS LIKE QUASIMODO)**

Almost as graceful as you.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (FLIRTATIOUSLY)**

You old sweet-talker!

**MERLIN**

If only I were a hundred years younger!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Are you feeling your age?

**MERLIN**

Well don't you?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (RAISING A HAND TO SILENCE HIM)**

Not another word! (generously) All right, I'll make you young again for an hour.

**MERLIN**

You're too kind.

The FAIRY GODMOTHER waves her magic wand and the elderly MERLIN turns into an elegant, personable, charming young man.

**MERLIN**

You see, when I'm loved, I look good.

He leans over to kiss the FAIRY GODMOTHER and knocks over the e-book. As it hits the ground, it turns back into a paper book and then a young tree.

**6. EXT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

CINDERELLA returns to the manor. Her dress is clean, her complexion clear and her cheeks pink. She does not look as if she has spent the night in the forest at all.

Her stepmother CARLA is looking stern as she waits on the steps with her two daughters, GERTRUDE and BERTHA. She is holding a leather strap.

**CARLA (STRAP IN HAND)**

Where have you been, you brazen little minx!

**GERTRUDE**

I had to empty my own chamber pot this morning! Have you any idea how that made me feel?

**BERTHA**

And you weren't there to put my petticoat on for me! It took me ages to get into it!

**CARLA**

We thought you'd been kidnapped by bandits. Or that you were dead. I was beside myself with worry.

CARLA's hair changes colour.

**GERTRUDE**

I prayed you'd be safe!

GERTRUDE's hair changes colour.

**BERTHA**

I'm so happy you're alive!

BERTHA's hair changes colour.

**CINDERELLA (APOLOGISING)**

I got lost in my forest and I slept among my trees.

**CARLA**

Did you hear that, girls? Miss Precious slept in *her* forest!

GERTRUDE AND BERTHA burst out laughing.

**GERTRUDE**

*Your forest? You don't have a forest!*

**BERTHA**

All you have is the rags on your back, if that!

**CINDERELLA (OUTRAGED)**

*It is my forest! My grandfather planted it when he came back from his travels and he left it to my father, who made me promise to protect it and be a loving sister to it.*

**CARLA**

What rubbish is this?

**CINDERELLA**

It's the truth!

**CARLA**

I say what the truth is here.

**CINDERELLA (STUBBORNLY)**

The forest belongs to me.

**CARLA**

I'll teach you to contradict me! You need a lesson!

**CINDERELLA (FALLING TO HER KNEES)**

No! Not a beating! I haven't done anything wrong!

**CARLA**

Goodwife Stout! Goodwife Stout!

GOODWIFE STOUT emerges from the kitchen. Her features have been coarsened by a lifetime of hard work. Her face would be frightening if her gaze were not so tender and her smile not so sweet.

**CARLA (HOLDING OUT THE STRAP)**

Goodwife Stout, give the scallion a good whipping. Teach her I won't be flaunted and mocked!

GOODWIFE STOUT takes CINDERELLA by the arm and pulls her to her feet.

**GOODWIFE STOUT(TO CARLA)**

Leave it to me. Don't you mind this thankless wretch, I've a good right arm.

**CINDERELLA**

Not the strap!

GOODWIFE STOUT takes the leather strap from CARLA.

**GOODWIFE STOUT**

See the state you've got your poor stepmother in, who's so good to you! She thinks of nothing but your happiness! I'll teach you how to show a woman like her the respect she deserves. Such a sainted lady!

GOODWIFE STOUT's hair turns violet.

CINDERELLA stares at GOODWIFE STOUT in surprise as the servant drags her into the kitchen.

**GERTRUDE**

Oh, poor Cinderella, I feel so sorry for her.

GERTRUDE's hair flashes yellow.

**BERTHA (TO CARLA)**

Mother, let me take the little slattern's place!  
(her hair turns blue)  
Oh yes, I want a good, hard beating!

Strangely, her hair returns to its usual colour, as if she likes the idea.

**CARLA**

Your generosity will be your undoing, my girls! But being good Christians should never make you forget your sense of duty, something we have to instil in the lower orders.

GERTRUDE and BERTHA smile contentedly: this is a philosophy they can share.

**7. INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

GOODWIFE STOUT leads CINDERELLA into the kitchen like an executioner marching a prisoner to the gallows...

**GOODWIFE STOUT (IN A TERRIBLE VOICE,  
MAKING SURE SHE IS HEARD OUTSIDE)**

Go to the window, hold the bar and bend over for your correction!

**8. EXT. COURTYARD- DAY**

CARLA and her two daughters are perfectly placed to see CINDERELLA appear at the window, grip the support bar and bend over to be whipped.

GOODWIFE STOUT lifts CINDERELLA's dress to her shoulders, supposedly to bare her behind, but actually to whisper in her ear.

**GOODWIFE STOUT (SOFTLY)**

Make sure you squeal nice and loud.

The three outside sigh in anticipation.

GOODWIFE STOUT calls to CARLA.

**GOODWIFE STOUT**

The ground's laid bare. How many strokes should I give her?

**CARLA**

Ten lashes!

**CINDERELLA**

Pity, mother! I swear I won't do it again!

**CARLA**

Five more lashes for answering me back!

The first stroke whistles down, forcing a scream from CINDERELLA.

BERTHA and GERTRUDE are beside themselves with delight. They skip, jump and clap as each blow falls.

During CINDERELLA's ordeal, BERTHA and GERTRUDE sing.

**BERTHA AND GERTRUDE (DUET)**

*My name's Gertrude, hard of heart  
I sneer and scratch and belch and fart*

*My name's Bertha, fat and drear  
I fart and belch and scratch and sneer*

*We are the wicked sisters  
Ugly faces, hearts of stone  
We can't bear Cinderella,  
So we sing to hear her groan!  
Whack! Whack! Whack!  
Tan her backside black and blue*

*Whack! Whack! Whack!  
Watch her squeal and wriggle too*

*Whack! Whack! Whack!*  
*Make her suffer, whip her red*

*Whack! Whack! Whack!*  
*Till she wishes she was dead!*

etc.

After each blow, GOODWIFE STOUT calls out “six!”... “seven!”... “eight!”... in time to the sisters’ duet.

CARLA affects disinterest as she watches, but her eyes cannot conceal the pleasure the show is giving her.

## **9. INT. KITCHEN – DAY**

GOODWIFE STOUT sends her leather strap whistling through the air, raising her arm and bringing it down like a metronome.

CINDERELLA’s shrieks match the movement. The whip rises and... whacks down on a ham!

### **GOODWIFE STOUT**

How can they? How can you beat a child?

*(still whipping the ham)*

Our poor Master... Before he passed on and went to join your mama, he said: “It’s a good thing I married again. Cinderella won’t be alone... He said it again and again, our poor Master... He said it so many times... and he wasn’t a man to repeat himself.

The scene ends with a shot of the ham shuddering under the twelfth blow.

### **CARD:**

“MEANWHILE, AT THE PALACE...”

## **10. INT. PRINCE CHARMING’S BEDROOM - DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING is sitting at an unusual and complex musical instrument. It is a sort of complex organ with hundreds of pipes, a thousand wires, keyboards, stops and pedals. He plays it with maestia.

The monster is a hybrid of many different instruments: familiar ones (violins, trumpets, drums) and stranger varieties, such as a feline keyboard whose cats meow whenever the machine pulls their tails, a frog triangle, a nightingale harp and - finest of all - a choir of maidens who appear and disappear in time with the music.

**PRINCE CHARMING (PLAYING AND SINGING)**

*I'm the great Prince Charming  
So gifted it's alarming  
A brilliant musician  
And accomplished mathematician*

**CHOIR OF MAIDENS**

*He's the great Prince Charming  
Gifted and enchanting*

**PRINCE CHARMING AND THE CHOIR**

*I'm the great Prince Charming  
So gifted it's alarming  
Who among you can resist  
The artist currently known as Prince?*

**11. INT. ROYAL PALACE – PASSAGES - DAY**

As the music continues in the background, PRINCE CHARMING bounds down a great staircase in the palace. He is surrounded by the pretty young girls in the choir, who are still singing. They all look so alike they could be sisters.

Girls find Prince Charming very attractive.

Still surrounded by his bevy of young, formatted beauties, he pushes open doors, climbs stairs, heads down others, pushes open more doors, etc.

This joyful choreography takes us on a tour of the bewildering maze that is the palace.

**12. INT. KING'S CHAMBER - DAY**

**BALLET**

PRINCE CHARMING and his flock of young ladies enter the chamber of his father, the King. A group of doctors in dark robes are hovering around the royal bed. They are wearing masks with pointed noses.

PRINCE CHARMING claps his hands.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Right, crows, be off with you! You know I hate black!

The doctors flap away like a flight of crows and the PRINCE goes over to his father's bed, followed by the girls (who are all dressed in white).

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You had me summoned, father?

**KING**

I'm dying, my son...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Again?... Weren't you dying last week already?

**KING**

Yes, it *has* been a long illness. Have you thought about what I asked of you?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I haven't stopped, father, but I can't decide. All these girls have me at my wits' end!

He pirouettes from girl to girl, singing.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

*Which one should I choose  
This one or another?  
The delicious Marion  
Or her cousin Summer?*

*Eleanor has gorgeous eyes  
And an inquiring mind  
While Lucy's skin is smooth and white  
And firm as her beh...*

**KING**

My son, as the future king, you must marry. You have to choose just one to be your queen.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SINGING)**

*Pity my predicament  
Just how can I decide  
Of all these lovely Venuses  
Which one should be my bride?*

*Margaret's smile is paradise  
Befuddling my wits  
Elspeth has such perfect legs  
But then there's Anna's...*

**THE KING (EXAMINING THE GIRLS)**

I understand your dilemma, my son, but you really must choose.

**THE GIRLS (IN CHORUS)**

*The Prince belongs to all of us  
He's handsome, bright and gay  
We won't allow some arranged bride  
To spirit him away*

**THE KING (STERNLY)**

(to the girls)

Silence!

(to his son)

When Death wraps me in his dark cloak, do you know what will happen? The Seneschal, my brother, won't hesitate to snatch your rightful throne. Don't you care?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

My poor uncle is so deceitful and full of malice. If the crown may bring him a little happiness, well, I'll leave it to him without a second's thought.

**KING**

By all the Saints! Sometimes I wonder if you are really my son!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You taught me that love was the greatest of all virtues.

**KING**

But this isn't about love, you sot, it's about marriage!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No love, no marriage. Isn't that right, ladies?

**ALL THE GIRLS (IN UNISON)**

The Prince belongs to us... to us... to us...

**THE KING (STERNLY, SILENCING THEM)**

No he doesn't! My line must continue! So I've come to a decision...

Now the King's brother enters the chamber. The SENESCHAL is followed by the doctors, who huddle fearfully behind him, and APU, the young Indian, with five huge hounds on leashes.

The SENESCHAL is wearing a robe as black as his beard (and his heart, as some mutter behind his back).

**SENESCHAL (CARRYING A BOWL OF BROTH)**

Brother, what are you doing out of bed?

**KING**

Good Lord, I'd quite forgotten how ill I am! (he lies down again) As I was saying, I've come to a decision...

**SENESCHAL**

You? A decision? Wonders never cease! Anyway, here's your spider and cockroach broth.

The SENESCHAL brings the KING his broth. PRINCE CHARMING arranges a napkin around his father's neck and presents him with the royal spoon.

**THE KING (RAISING THE SPOON LIKE A SCEPTRE)**

As King of this Kingdom and surrounding districts, it is my decree that all damsels of an age to bear children, with no exception to be made for any rank or condition, shall be summoned to a great ball. There, before the hour of midnight, the Prince must choose his future consort. Once the continuation of my line is ensured, I can die with an easy conscience.

The girls all look round at the Prince and flutter their eyelashes.

**SENESCHAL (CLAPPING HIS HANDS)**

Leave now, ladies. You're tiring the king.

The girls look alarmed and hurry off.

**THE KING**

I'm counting on you, brother, to see that my decree is obeyed.

**SENESCHAL**

You can count on me. But first, you must drink your broth. Doctor's orders. Especially since we went to so much trouble to catch the cockroaches.

All the doctors nod. The KING begins to sip the broth.

The SENESCHAL flings the door wide and leaves, followed by the doctors.

**13. EXT. BY THE COMPOST HEAP – DAY**

CINDERELLA is mixing a compost heap with a pitchfork. Taking a break, she slips away to a barn where REBEL, an old dog, is lying on a pile of straw. His paw is injured and he is whining.

**CINDERELLA**

Quiet, Rebel. I've made you a powder of yellow flowers the way my father taught me.

She rubs yellow powder into the injured paw, then covers the wound with leaves.

**CINDERELLA**

You have to get better. I need you to help me look after the forest.

She strokes him lovingly.

**GERTRUDE & BERTHA (YELLING O.S.)**

Cinderella! Where have you got to again? Get back here, there are all the dishes to be washed!

**CUT**

**14. INT. SENESCHAL'S CHAMBER – DAY**

The SENESCHAL is in his chamber, examining a map of the Kingdom and the great forest, slashed by broad red lines.

**SENESCHAL**

We're facing disaster. My brother the King wants my nephew to wed at once.

**CARLA**

So much the better, my lord. The Prince has the brain of a five-year-old. We'll marry him to one of my daughters and that'll be the end of it.

**SENESCHAL**

Well, my lady... The thing is, your daughters have... well... rather *unusual* charms. An idiot like the Prince may not appreciate their inner beauty.

**CARLA**

You don't need to mince your words, I'm well aware that they're graceless and stupid. They're just like their father. But aren't those the very qualities expected of a queen: a low brow and a fruitful belly?

(CARLA smiles) Persuade the Prince that it would be in his interest. If he marries one of my daughters, he can do as he wants. We'll make sure Cinderella finds no suitor... until the forest is ours by right!

The SENESCHAL smirks. He obviously likes the idea

## **15. EXT. FOREST – DAY**

The SENESCHAL and CARLA are riding side by side. A company of servants is marching out in front on foot, carrying buckets of paint and brushes. Hounds are trotting at their side, along with APU (the servant), always on the lookout for fresh quarry.

They enter the forest, watched closely by PIP, BEN and WILL who hide in bush after bush.

The Seneschal's servants begin to mark the trees with white S's.

### **SENESCHAL**

I shall use Cinderella's forest to build the greatest armada ever to sail the seas! A fleet of five hundred ships under my flag!

### **CARLA**

Every king will kneel before you.

### **SENESCHAL (IMPASSIONED)**

Yes, the sun will never set on my empire! It will outshine Rome and Babylon...

### **CARLA**

Caesar and Alexander will seem petty, petty princelings in your shadow! Fleas!

### **SENESCHAL**

And you'll be my Cleopatra, my Evita Peron, my... my...  
*(unable to think of anything else, he stands up in the saddle)* We shall bring civilisation to the world, even if I have to kill a thousand, a million or ten million savages to do it! After all, that's what Columbus and Cortez did.

### **CARLA**

It just goes to show that where there's a will, there's a way...

Suddenly, the SENESCHAL catches sight of WILL peering out of a bush.

### **SENESCHAL**

There! I see one!

Looking in another direction, CARLA sees BEN and PIP.

### **CARLA**

There are two more over there!

The SENESCHAL and CARLA gallop off after the children. The servants act as beaters, escorts and support. The dogs snarl and foam at the mouth as they hunt the three boys.

APU is not to be outdone. He runs, jumps, sniffs the ground and tracks his quarry so well that he finally traps our three lads (PIP, BEN and WILL) up a tree.

PIP's teeth are chattering, tears are rolling down BEN's cheeks and WILL wets himself a little. They are lost and frightened.

Then, to their amazement, APU puts a finger to his lips, signalling them to keep quiet, and suddenly dashes off in the opposite direction, leading the SENESCHAL, CARLA and their men away.

**CARLA**

Are you sure about your tracker?

**SENESCHAL**

Apu? Of course! Given the price I paid...

CARLA rides down the path, looking puzzled.

**16. INT. GERTRUDE AND BERTHA'S CHAMBER – DAY**

**BALLET**

The MASTER TAILOR, CINDERELLA and GOODWIFE STOUT are dressing GERTRUDE and BERTHA. CARLA looks on coldly.

The MASTER TAILOR slips a red dress over BERTHA's head.

**MASTER TAILOR (SYCOPHANTIC)**

Red becomes you wonderfully, young mistress. It sets off the crimson of your lips so beautifully.

**CARLA (TO BERTHA)**

Do you like it, girl?  
(to the tailor)  
What's the shade?

**MASTER TAILOR (PROUDLY)**

Pepper red.

**BERTHA (EXAMINING HERSELF IN THE MIRROR)**

Just what I thought.

**Indeed, in the mirror, we see an enormous red pepper.**

The MASTER TAILOR goes through the same rigmarole with a green dress for GERTRUDE.

**MASTER TAILOR**

Oh, such a tender green will bring out the blaze of this young beauty's eyes!

**CARLA (TO GERTRUDE)**

What do you think, my girl?  
(to the tailor)  
What's the shade?

**MASTER TAILOR (VERY PROUDLY)**

Gherkin green.

**GERTRUDE**

Ah, so that's it.

**The mirror does not show GERTRUDE, but a huge gherkin.**

**CARLA (TO THE TAILOR)**

Master Tailor! Are you sure this is the fashion? They look like... outsize vegetables to me.

**MASTER TAILOR (SINGING)**

*Market garden chic's the rage!  
Carrots, onions, thyme and sage  
Peas, tomatoes, leeks in rows  
Artichokes and potatoes*

As he works, the MASTER TAILOR describes his actions in song, first for CARLA and her daughters, then aside to the camera.

**MASTER TAILOR**

*First buttocks and waist  
(aside) In quite the worst taste  
Then round to the belly  
(aside) That wobbles like jelly  
Now tighten the laces  
(aside) Try not to pull faces  
And next we'll adjust  
(aside) This limp, sagging bust  
Just pull that in, dear  
(aside) Get me out of here!  
(spurring himself on to greater efforts)  
We'll give you a squeeze  
And give you a press  
And give you a tug  
And let out the dress*

*And give you a heave...  
Heave-ho!*

Finally, the two girls are dressed.

**MASTER TAILOR (TO CARLA)**

I return these two colourful angels to your care!

**CARLA**

Hurry up! The carriage is waiting!

**GOODWIFE STOUT**

Aren't you forgetting Cinderella, madam?

The King has ordered that all maidens of an age to marry  
must be present at his son's ball.

CARLA smiles. Then, after a silence...

**CARLA (DRIPPING HONEY)**

But of course CINDERELLA shall come to the ball!  
She'll join us as soon as she's tidied the house!

**GERTRUDE**

And washed my underwear!

**BERTHA**

And ironed mine!

**CARLA**

You can wax the stairs too!

**GERTRUDE**

And don't forget to scrub the hearth!

**BERTHA**

And boil the curtains!

**CARLA**

Polish the windows!

**GERTRUDE**

And rinse the tiling!

**BERTHA**

And paint the camel!

Everyone turn to stare at BERTHA in surprise. She smiles foolishly, as if she has amazed even herself with that suggestion.

**CARLA (TO CINDERELLA, DRIPPING HONEY)**

Your father entrusted you to my care and you're my daughter now. I want only what's best for you... so don't dawdle. It will be an unforgettable ball!

The dejected CINDERELLA remains silent as CARLA's hair changes colour constantly.

**17. INT. ROYAL PALACE – DAY**

The SENESCHAL is standing in front of PRINCE CHARMING, who is busy with his musical invention.

**SENESCHAL**

My nephew, I'd like to speak to you man to man.

**PRINCE CHARMING (ANNOYED AT BEING DISTURBED)**

What is it, uncle?

**SENESCHAL**

Since you're going to choose a wife, I'd like to give you some advice as a friend and fond kinsman.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I'm all ears.

**SENESCHAL**

Is a woman's beauty important to you?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

As it is to you, uncle.

**SENESCHAL**

Well, you're wrong.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What do you mean?

**SENESCHAL**

Forget about beauty and marry the ugliest of all the maidens presented to you.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SHOCKED)**

The ugliest?!

**SENESCHAL**

The ugliest.  
(in a low voice)

Beauty is a short-lived thing  
And once it's gone, it's gone  
But when a girl is ugly, then  
She stays so all life long

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Go ahead if that's what floats your boat, uncle. Find yourself a truly horrendous wife. But I'm going to pick a stunner, myself.

**SENESCHAL (STILL IN A LOW VOICE)**

Beauty can be dangerous  
A pretty wife is bait  
An ugly one's a safer bet  
To trust around your mates

**PRINCE CHARMING (IRONICALLY)**

Oh yes?

**SENESCHAL**

We weary of the beautiful  
But get used to the plain  
Ugly girls are better since  
They're... they're...  
(he searches in vain for an argument, then snaps)  
Damn it, boy, just choose the ugliest!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Whatever. Anyway, I don't really care if she's beautiful or not. If I'm going to get married, I want a wife I love and who loves me.

**SENESCHAL**

A wife who loves you? How childish, nephew. Quite irrational. Marriage needs love like a horse needs...

Once again, he is unable to find the right words.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SMILING AT HIS UNCLE)**

To make sure the girl I choose will want me for myself and not because I'm the future king, I've had an idea.

**SENESCHAL**

What have you come up with now?

PRINCE CHARMING opens the door of a drawing room to reveal twenty lads who all look exactly like him. Twenty perfect clones of the Prince. It is impossible to tell the real one from the fakes.

## **18. INT. ROYAL PALACE – DAY**

To gain entry to the Prince's ball, the candidates must submit to inspection by what look very much like an army medical board. The inspection area is equipped with airport detection gateways and an impressive level of security.

### **BALLET**

Supervised by doctors, an army of nuns measure and weigh the girls. Then, away from prying eyes, they make sure they are virgins allowing their admissions to the ballroom.

The ballet unfolds in time with the opening and closing of examination booth curtains and the (amplified) sound of scales, height gauges and admissions' stamps.

GERTRUDE and BERTHA take their place in a long line of candidates waiting to be inspected.

Each in turn gives her details to the clerk keeping the register.

#### **BERTHA**

Bertha, daughter of Dame Carla of Grimstone Manor...

#### **GERTRUDE**

Gertrude, daughter of Dame Carla, widow of the King's companion...

### **INSPECTION BALLET**

It is now GERTRUDE's turn to stand under the height gauge.

#### **NUN 1 (BELLOWING LIKE A US ARMY MASTER SERGEANT)**

Five foot nine!

The NUN responsible for the moral examination (in a rather Ellis Island atmosphere) asks...

#### **NUN 2 (ALSO BELLOWING LIKE A US ARMY MASTER SERGEANT)**

Do you have children? No. Check!

Do you have a boyfriend? No. Check!

Do you have a transmissible disease? No. Check!

Do you have any particular talent? No. Check!

The clerk takes notes.

A visibly pregnant girl heads for the door, rejected.

#### **GERTRUDE (CALLING TO HER)**

Why are you crying, Pandora?

**PANDORA**

They don't want me!

**BERTHA (ALARMED)**

Why? Don't they like plump girls?

The NUN in charge of weighing calls BERTHA. She steps forward on tiptoe.

**NUN 3**

Get on!

Hesitantly, BERTHA steps onto the scales. The gauge moves in a blur... then, to the sound of a gong, stops on 173½ pounds.

A young man six feet tall and dressed as a woman steps up to the last nun who measures his height. A light begins to flash and a siren wails.

**NUN 4**

Security to desk 4! Security to desk 4!

**19. INT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

CINDERELLA realises that the whole house is a complete mess. It looks as if it has been hit by a hurricane.

Pots have been spilt, drawers emptied and furniture overturned: chaos reigns. She begins to tidy up, helped by GOODWIFE STOUT.

**GOODWIFE STOUT (TALKING TO HERSELF)**

When I think of your poor father!...

*(to Cinderella)*

Believe me, my sweet, men are blind when it comes to women...

*(then, smiling)*

You deserve to find a kind husband who'll love you and give you lots of children!

**CINDERELLA**

No-one will ever want me.

**GOODWIFE STOUT**

That's your stepmother talking! She's nastier than the most vicious of vipers! I know what I'm talking about. One day, a man will fall in love with you and you with him, and you'll see the world through the eyes of love and realise your true worth...

**CINDERELLA (SURPRISED)**

Wow! Doesn't your hair ever change colour?

**GOODWIFE STOUT**

Why, don't you like it as it is?

**CINDERELLA (SURPRISED)**

Yes, I do. It's just that I'm going to have to start believing in magic.

CINDERELLA smiles.

**20. INT. CARLA'S MANOR – EVENING**

We hear a commotion at the door and PIP, WILL and BEN slip into CARLA's manor house.

In the great hall, they find CINDERELLA kneeling on the floor and scrubbing the tiling. They eat the leftover food on the table.

**CINDERELLA**

What are you doing here?

**PIP (HIS MOUTH FULL)**

We've come to warn you...

**WILL (DITTO)**

About something well bad.

**BEN (DITTO)**

Badder than that, even! Badder than bad!

**CINDERELLA**

I haven't got time for your stories! If I'm not finished by the time my stepmother and her daughters get home, I'll be whipped.

**PIP**

The Seneschal's men are marking all the trees in the forest!

**WILL**

They're getting ready to cut them all down!

**BEN**

Your stepmother's so sure you won't ever get married that she's handed the whole forest over to him.

CINDERELLA leaps to her feet.

**CINDERELLA**

How do you know all this?

**PIP**

We were hiding in the trees. We heard everything.

**CINDERELLA**

But she has no right! That's stealing! It's a crime! My trees are mine and no-one has the right to cut them down!

**PIP**

Well, you know what to do... Marry me!

**WILL**

Marry me!

**BEN**

No, me! (self-pitying) I still haven't seen you in the...

**CINDERELLA**

You're mixing me up with Snow White. Dwarves aren't my thing!

**PIP**

Well, marry the King if you prefer old men!

**WILL**

But hurry!

CINDERELLA looks at the three boys affectionately.

**CINDERELLA (BLINKING BACK TEARS)**

No-one can help me now.

**PIP**

Why don't you call your Fairy Godmother?

**CINDERELLA**

Do you think I should?

**PIP**

Go on, call. All the gentlemen are at the ball. Perhaps you can find a husband.

**WILL**

Then the forest will be yours and we can carry on living there.

**BEN**

And you can go on bathing in the pool...

CINDERELLA stands there at a loss, brush in hand. She looks at the three boys in turn. Finally, she puts the brush to her ear like a mobile phone and timidly says...

**CINDERELLA**

Fairy Godmother?

The FAIRY GODMOTHER appears with MERLIN.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Emergency Fairy Service. You called?

**CINDERELLA**

Er... yes... (looking admiringly at her FAIRY GODMOTHER) You're so beautiful!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (PRETENDING MODESTY)**

Let's not get carried away. What did you want, my dear?

**CINDERELLA**

My stepmother's promised my forest to the Seneschal and he's already marked the trees to cut them down. I have to get married at once.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

What time is it, Sir Merlin?

**MERLIN**

One minute to. Registration is about to end and the ball will begin...

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Well stop time then! What are you waiting for?!

**MERLIN**

For you to ask... (engagingly) my angel.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Well go ahead then! Work your magic!

MERLIN pulls out the winder of his watch and the hands freeze. He looks pleased with himself: mission accomplished.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO CINDERELLA)**

Now, listen to me very carefully...

CINDERELLA (and the three boys) show they are all ears.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

As a Fairy Godmother, I can do anything that takes my wand's fancy, but I still have to keep to FAT regulations.

**CINDERELLA**

FAT?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Fairies and Allied Trades.

**CINDERELLA**

Er... OK.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

You can only summon me three times... and never twice the same day...

**CINDERELLA (REPEATING)**

Three times... twice... the same day...

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TAKING OUT A CALCULATOR AND SHOWING IT TO CINDERELLA)**

That's right, three wishes. That's what the FAT regulations say. You've just used the first one, which means you only have two left. So don't call me unless it's important.

The Fairy Godmother takes a deep breath.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO MERLIN)**

Merlin, pass me the Spells "R" Us catalogue.

MERLIN passes the book to the Fairy Godmother who looks for the right page.

They all lean over her shoulder.

We see a wonderful engraving of a carriage pulled by six white horses.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO CINDERELLA)**

How does this model suit you? Power reins. Six horsepower. Leather seats.

**CINDERELLA**

It's beautiful!

**MERLIN (TO CINDERELLA, POINTING OUT A FOUR-HORSE CARRIAGE)**

That one's nice too. It's only four horsepower so the hay consumption's lower.

**CINDERELLA**

Er, right.

**MERLIN (TO CINDERELLA, NOW POINTING OUT A TWO-HORSE CARRIAGE)**

Of course, there's a special offer on that one...

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

That's quite enough, Merlin! Let's get to the ball. We can't keep time waiting forever.

**PIP**

What about us?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

What about you?

**BEN**

I want to be the coachman!

**WILL**

I want to be the liveried footman at the back of the coach!

**PIP**

Me too, with a wig!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

What do you think this is, a fairy tale? Off with you! You can do the cleaning and I'll look after the rest, OK?

Suddenly, the three boys find themselves alone. CINDERELLA, the FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN have vanished.

The boys lean over the book, which is still open: the magnificent carriage is racing through the sleeping countryside. As the vehicle leaves the frame, the dust in its wake forms golden letters: FIRST WISH.

**21. EXT. ROYAL PALACE – DAY**

Pulled by four horses, CINDERELLA's splendid carriage stops at the gates of the palace. CINDERELLA climbs down, helped by a valet (MERLIN) and a lady-in-waiting (the FAIRY GODMOTHER).

CINDERELLA is dressed in a magnificent gown made of leaves from every kind of tree.

She shakes her hair, falling in lustrous curls to her shoulders.

She is unrecognisable.

## **22. INT. ROYAL PALACE – DAY**

With green glass slippers on her feet, the enchanting, delicate, angelic CINDERELLA enters the palace.

Everything seems to be frozen, as if a sudden frost has paralysed the hopeful maidens, the doctors, nuns, notables and so on.

In passing, we catch sight of BERTHA with the back of her dress raised, ready to have her enormous behind stamped “Fit for Service”.

CINDERELLA cannot believe her eyes. She moves from one figure to the next in the overpowering silence. She seems a little lost.

### **FAIRY GODMOTHER**

It’s as if they’ve been waiting for us.

### **MERLIN**

Go and register quickly, child.

MERLIN leads CINDERELLA over to the clerk in charge of the great enrolment register.

### **MERLIN**

I’m going to start time again. Get ready to give your name.

MERLIN THE ENCHANTER takes the large watch from his pocket. Its hands are still immobile.

He presses the winder and the second hand begins to turn.

The palace immediately springs to life.

### **CLERK (TO CINDERELLA)**

Just in time! Three seconds more and you’d have been too late to register! Your name?

### **CINDERELLA (SHYLY)**

Cinderella.

Every head turns, as if she had yelled instead of whispering.

## **23. INT. BALLROOM – EVENING**

The festivities are in full swing. The Prince's music machine is playing like an orchestra all by itself.

The dancers are dancing. Arms folded, the SENESCHAL is keeping a close eye on everything and everyone. Nearby, CARLA too is watching everyone like a hawk. Beside them are the five huge hounds and APU, dressed as a page.

CINDERELLA looks a little lost. She is dressed in every kind of forest leaf and looks very colourful. She stands out from all the young women dressed in pink.

A young man, the image of PRINCE CHARMING, bows to her.

**YOUNG MAN**

Would you do me the honour, my lady?

**CINDERELLA (CAUTIOUSLY)**

Who am I addressing?

**YOUNG MAN**

Who? Prince Charming, of course!

The young man's hair turns mauve.

**CINDERELLA (SHRUGGING)**

You're very nice, but you're *so* not a prince.

**YOUNG MAN**

How come you're so impudent?

**CINDERELLA**

Necessity?

**CUT**

CINDERELLA is waltzing in the arms of a partner, one of PRINCE CHARMING's twenty doubles.

The SENESCHAL strikes three blows on the floor with a long staff and gives an order.

**SENESCHAL**

Change partners!

The girls obey immediately.

**CINDERELLA (SUSPICIOUS)**

Are you Prince Charming?

**PRINCE CLONE**

Naturally I'm Prince Charming.

The CLONE's hair turns green. Cinderella shrugs.

The music machine continues with a march. The dancers weave in and out of each other's line.

GERTRUDE and BERTHA fail to recognise CINDERELLA.

**GERTRUDE** (PASSING)

Who's she? Do you know her?

**BERTHA** (PASSING)

Never seen her before, but I don't like her.

**GERTRUDE** (PASSING)

Let's step on her dress!

**BERTHA** (PASSING)

Let's pinch her bottom!

**GERTRUDE**

Let's pull her hair!

**BERTHA**

Let's tread on her toes!

The SENESCHAL bangs his staff on the floor again.

**SENESCHAL**

Change partners!

The dancers form new couples.

**PRINCE CLONE (TO BERTHA)**

So what qualities are you looking for in a husband, my lady?

**BERTHA**

For him to treat me like a queen and give me everything I want.

**PRINCE CLONE**

And what if I had the fancy to whip you?

**BERTHA**

I'd love that. After all, I'd be queen.

Now CINDERELLA is dancing with PRINCE CHARMING.

CARLA and the SENESCHAL are watching the dancers. CARLA sees PRINCE CHARMING laughing in CINDERELLA's arms.

**CARLA (POINTING AT CINDERELLA)**

Do you know that wench? I believe I've seen her somewhere...

**SENESCHAL**

She's very beautiful!

**CARLA (JEALOUS)**

More than me?

**SENESCHAL**

I love it when your eyes blaze like that! But rest assured, my dear, I had no thought of bedding her. In fact, I was toying with the idea of dishing her up to my dogs. A sort of appetiser.

(he turns and shouts)

Change partners!

The hounds bark. They would be delighted to wolf down Cinderella.

CINDERELLA has just changed partner again. There are so many clones of the Prince around that she does not realise she is dancing with the real one.

**CINDERELLA (STUMBLING)**

I don't know how all the girls manage to dance in high heels.

**PRINCE CHARMING (HOLDING HER A LITTLE TOO TIGHT)**

Is this your first ball?

**CINDERELLA**

And it's one too many. I'm only here because I had to come.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You're dancing with Prince Charming because you have to?

**CINDERELLA**

Yes, I have to marry the Prince as soon as possible.

**PRINCE CHARMING (HE STOPS DANCING)**

Why in such a hurry?

**CINDERELLA**

My forest is in danger. The Seneschal is marking my trees to cut them down. If I get married, I'll inherit the forest in perpetuity and he'll be forced to stop.

PRINCE CHARMING examines her with feeling.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

My lady, you're worrying needlessly. Trees are just wood. I don't understand why you think it's so important to...

**CINDERELLA**

You don't understand?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You should realise that the Seneschal wants to build ships and carry our civilisation to lands across the oceans. His aim is honourable indeed.

**CINDERELLA**

What? Honourable? Do you know what the word means?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Words are like trees. They can be cut, planed, assembled and turned into whatever we want.

**SENESCHAL**

Change partners!

CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING move through the crowd. CINDERELLA does not realise she has changed partners.

**CINDERELLA**

But that's terrible! Do you realise what you're doing?

**PRINCE CLONE**

Of course I know what I'm doing! It's a "chaconne" - one step forward, one step back and hup!, we turn. There! I learned this dance when I was five.

**CINDERELLA**

You... You're not Prince Charming!

**PRINCE CLONE**

Of course I am!

The CLONE's hair flares green.

CINDERELLA leaves him and looks around for the real PRINCE CHARMING. She picks one randomly. His hair changes colour. Then another. Finally, it is the genuine PRINCE CHARMING who joins her.

**CINDERELLA**

Are you Prince Charming?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Yes. Is that all you can ask?

The PRINCE's hair stays the same colour.

**CINDERELLA**

You may be the Prince, but you're not charming at all!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Really? Well, my impudent young lady, may I ask your name?

**CINDERELLA**

Let's talk about the forest again first. So you think cutting my trees down to build warships is "honourable"?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Oh no, are you going to go on about that again? I'm trying to have fun here.

**CINDERELLA**

And you think deforestation's fun?

GERTRUDE and BERTHA sidle towards CINDERELLA, intending to trip her up.

**GERTRUDE (AS SHE PASSES)**

Are you ready? I'll get her legs.

**BERTHA (AS SHE PASSES)**

And I'll push her! One... two...

**SENESCHAL**

Change partners!

Unable to stop in time, GERTRUDE and BERTHA fall heavily as CINDERELLA slips away. She laughs to see them go sprawling. PRINCE CHARMING follows her as the SENESCHAL bangs his staff on the floor once again.

**24. EXT. ROYAL PALACE TERRACE – NIGHT**

**CINDERELLA (BREATHLESS)**

Neatly done, but that's not enough!

The PRINCE smiles at her as she catches her breath. He is actually very attractive. CINDERELLA has fallen under his charm.

**CINDERELLA**

The problem is that you're completely, totally, desperately...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Charming?

**CINDERELLA (RECOVERING)**

No. Totally ignorant.

She turns her back on him. From this vantage point, she can see out over the vast, magnificent forest. The trees are singing "*Cinderella, we love you*" all together, channelling the wind in their branches.

**CINDERELLA**

Oh... I've never seen the forest from so far up before. It's so beautiful.

The PRINCE joins her, curious.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

And you really don't want to tell me your name?

**CINDERELLA**

No.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Why not?

**CINDERELLA**

It wouldn't mean anything to you I'm not part of your world.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

So what *is* my world?

**CINDERELLA**

A world of elegant, good-looking, carefree people. People who spend their time chatting and playing cards.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I'm also a musician, physician and academician.

**CINDERELLA**

That's just what I've been saying, you're a good-for-nothing.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

So what can you do apart from being hurtful and beautiful?

**CINDERELLA**

I can heal souls, creatures and trees.

The Prince comes closer and puts his hand on hers.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Beauty moves us. Through it, we feel love. Life would be nothing without it. You were saying that the forest was beautiful, weren't you?

**CINDERELLA**

And long may it be so.

The wind sighs in the trees and the forest canopy ebbs and flows like an ocean. CINDERELLA is helpless with emotion. The Prince is the first man ever to pay attention to her. We can hear the music swell in the ballroom. CINDERELLA moves further from the PRINCE, but he follows.

**CINDERELLA (SINGING TO HERSELF)**

*Although he may be ignorant  
He's still so very innocent  
To think this boy could one day be  
A noble king and the man for me*

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What was that?

**CINDERELLA**

Nothing. I think I'm wasting my time here.

PRINCE CHARMING watches her pass.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SINGING)**

*She's like no other girl I know  
The brightest and the best I've seen  
Her beauty comes from deep within  
Could it be that she's my future queen?*

**CINDERELLA (SINGING)**

*How is it that you move me so  
And fill me with this yearning glow?  
I long to fall into your arms...*

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I'm sure you said something then.

**CINDERELLA**

No, I didn't. It was you.

**PRINCE CHARMING AND CINDERELLA  
(SINGING TOGETHER)**

*I love you, I love you, I love you (repeat)*

*Take me in your arms*

*Carry me away, my love!*

*Far from here, far from the world*

*To an enchanted land*

*Where happiness reigns...*

PRINCE CHARMING gazes at her longingly.

**CINDERELLA**

So you like me at least a little, Prince.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You're joking. I'd have left you here long ago if I weren't too polite.

The PRINCE's hair glows red and CINDERELLA hides a smile.

**CINDERELLA**

Really? Yet I had the feeling...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You were wrong. Your voice grates on me like a rusty pulley!

The PRINCE's hair flashes yellow.

**CINDERELLA**

But my gown pleases you at least.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

It's the ugliest thing I've ever seen.

The PRINCE's hair turns blue. He pulls a leaf from the dress in a mixture of playfulness, awkwardness and desire. It stains his finger.

**CINDERELLA**

Don't hurt my gown! It's a robe of life from my forest!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I really didn't mean to...

CINDERELLA is delighted to see the PRINCE's hair return to its normal colour.

Back in the ballroom, all the young women are calling for him, chanting "Charming! Charming! Charming!" and clapping in time.

**CINDERELLA**

What's happening?

**PRINCE CHARMING (MODESTLY)**

I have a few fans. They want to hear me play and I can't disappoint them.

**CINDERELLA**

Go quickly and hurry back!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Can I borrow this?

He kneels and carefully removes one of CINDERELLA's glass slippers.

**CINDERELLA**

Why?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I want to be certain you won't try and get away.

He starts to get up, then stops and presses his lips to CINDERELLA's foot before heading off.

**CINDERELLA (REMOVING THE OTHER SLIPPER)**

Take both of them!

PRINCE CHARMING comes back to fetch the other slipper and seizes the opportunity for another kiss.

CINDERELLA finds herself alone, barefoot on the terrace.

**24 A. INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

PRINCE CHARMING replaces one of his clones at the keyboard and begins to play and sing.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

*I can see, I'm very sure  
That your heart is good and pure  
You're the one, I know it's true  
I can see and feel it too  
So smile at me again*

*I don't even know your name  
But no matter what it is  
I'll give you mine...*

The SENESCHAL is still in the ballroom. He is furious when he realises Gertrude and Bertha have failed.

**SENESCHAL (TO CARLA)**

Since your daughters haven't taken care of business, I'll have to do it myself.

He tries to push through the crowd to PRINCE CHARMING, but cannot get past the densely-packed fans.

**24B. EXT. ROYAL PALACE, TERRACE - NIGHT**

CINDERELLA watches PRINCE CHARMING perform from a distance. The words of the song form clouds and dance around her, friendly ghosts.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

*I can see, I'm very sure  
That your heart is good and pure*

Suddenly, she hears shouts from the forest. Alarming cries mingle with the sighing of the wind in the treetops. The voices call, "Help! Cinderella!" Without a second's hesitation, she climbs onto the parapet and jumps. Her ball gown inflates like a parachute and she lands gently on the ground at the foot of the palace wall.

**24C. EXT. FOREST – NIGHT**

CINDERELLA runs through the forest. We hear the cries of children gradually drowning out the singing from the palace.

**PIP, BEN, WILL (FRANTIC)**

Help! Help!

When CINDERELLA reaches the shack, it has been demolished and the surrounding trees felled.

**PIP**

The soldiers have started chopping down the trees! We've got nowhere to go!

**CINDERELLA**

That's awful!

CINDERELLA looks at the destruction around her. Everywhere, the trees are marked with an S for “SENESCHAL”. When she touches a trunk, sap flows. She can hear a muffled moaning, the moaning of the trees.

**CINDERELLA**

Stop crying. Pick leaves up off the ground and rub them on the trunks to wipe off the paint. Scrape everything off the bark with your knives.

CINDERELLA pulls leaves from her gown and begins to wipe marks off trees.

**CINDERELLA**

The Seneschal want a fight, but we'll win! I think the Prince is in love with me. He misses me already.

**24D. EXT. ROYAL PALACE TERRACE – NIGHT**

PRINCE CHARMING and the SENESCHAL reach the terrace. APU and the hounds follow behind them.

**SENESCHAL**

It'll soon be midnight. You must choose, Prince. Have you considered my suggestion?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What suggestion?

**SENESCHAL (SOFTLY SO AS NOT TO BE OVERHEARD)**

As I said, a fecund, willing, ugly maiden.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No, uncle, no! I won't marry your Bertha with her wobbling behind, or your Gertrude with her pointed teeth. I'll marry this one and let's hear no more about it!

PRINCE CHARMING and the SENESCHAL stop in front of the bench. There is only a frog sitting on it. It hops away.

**SENESCHAL**

You want to marry a frog?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You scared her away with your dogs!

**SENESCHAL**

Well call her. I'd like to see her.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I don't know her name. I forgot to ask.

**SENESCHAL**

And you don't know where she lives? You don't know anything, not even her address?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You don't just come out and ask a young lady you're courting for her address!

**SENESCHAL**

In a nutshell, you don't know anything about her.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Yes, I do, I actually know a lot! She likes trees, she talks about the forest as if it were her mother, her gown is made out of leaves that hang together with a will to protect her modesty. Her eyes are clearer than font water, her lips are so delicately curved that they make the Mona Lisa look like a grimacing jester, her hands...

**SENESCHAL**

Enough, nephew, you're raving. The girl you're describing only exists in fairy tales.

**PRINCE CHARMING (GIVING HIM THE SLIPPER)**

What's this then? An army boot?

**SENESCHAL**

A glass slipper, green in colour and pretty enough, I'll admit...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

And she's pretty enough too. I'll only marry the maiden whose foot fits this slipper...

SENESCHAL drops the slipper and it shatters on the ground.

**SENESCHAL (CYNICALLY)**

Oh, how clumsy I am! The glass slipper's broken. What a shame, it would have been such fun to search for Prince Charming's shepherdess.

PRINCE CHARMING contains his anger.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Don't worry, uncle, there's no great harm done.

**SENESCHAL**

You've given up the idea of marrying your phantom sweetheart?

PRINCE CHARMING produces CINDERELLA's second slipper from his robe.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

The left foot for luck! And I'll make sure I find the beauty who can wear it.

The SENESCHAL looks furious.

**25. EXT. FOREST – NIGHT**

**BALLET**

There is a full moon.

The pale moonlight gives the forest an unreal quality as CINDERELLA moves from tree to tree. They are crying heavy tears of resin that trickle down their trunks. At each one, CINDERELLA tears a leaf from her gown and uses it to rub off the paint, which disappears. As she goes on, she uses more and more of her gown, exposing herself a little more each time.

When CINDERELLA stops, only three leaves of her gown remain. She halts by her parents' grave.

**CINDERELLA (WHISPERING THE SONG)**

*Oh mother and father, your love for me  
Lives on among these precious trees  
So through them, help me find my way...*

**26. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE – NIGHT**

PRINCE CHARMING is riding through the forest on his white horse.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SINGING)**

*Where can she be, the glass-slipper maid  
Whose endless love  
Will be my delight?  
Where can she be, the girl of my dreams  
The shepherdess  
Who'll warm my nights?*

Suddenly, his horse shies. In front of him, CINDERELLA - her tear-streaked face smeared with mud and her hair wild - appears like a ghost from nowhere.

PRINCE CHARMING reins in his horse, which rears in front of CINDERELLA, frightening her.

**PRINCE CHARMING (TO CINDERELLA AS SHE MOVES AWAY)**

Wait, urchin! Have you seen a golden carriage pass by carrying the most beautiful of princesses?

CINDERELLA is amazed that PRINCE CHARMING does not recognise her. The words catch in her throat.

**CINDERELLA (POINTING AT HERSELF)**

But... but... I...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What language do you speak?

**CINDERELLA**

I... You're my... I've...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Good grief! A simpleton!  
(*seeing she is almost naked*)  
And not a stitch on her!

He tosses her his cape to cover herself.

**CINDERELLA (WRAPPING THE CAPE ROUND HER)**

Th... Thank y-you...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Don't thank me, the Lord will reward me a hundredfold.  
(confidentially) He made Martin a saint for half a coat, so  
imagine what I can expect in heaven for a whole cape!

CINDERELLA remembers that when she went to the ball, she was stamped on the buttock and can use the mark to identify herself.

**CINDERELLA**

B... Brand...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Yes, it's a designer cloak, but you can keep it. I have others.

**CINDERELLA (TURNING)**

I have... brand....

She starts to raise the cloak to show the stamp on her buttocks.

PRINCE CHARMING looks away.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No! Good Lord, you poor girl!

PRINCE CHARMING spurs his horse away and disappears.

**PIP (COMING OUT FROM BEHIND A TREE)**

Are you sure the Prince is in love with you?

**WILL (COMING OUT FROM BEHIND A TREE TOO)**

It didn't really look like it.

**BEN (ALSO COMING OUT FROM BEHIND A TREE)**

Can I see your brand?

CINDERELLA gives them a very stern look that says there is a time and place for everything and this is definitely not it.

**27. EXT. CARLA'S MANOR - DAY**

Served by CINDERELLA, CARLA, BERTHA and GERTRUDE are having breakfast on the manor patio. Suddenly, a crow lands on CARLA's shoulder.

CARLA gently grasps the bird and unties the message from its leg.

**CARLA (READING THE NOTE)**

"His Royal Highness Prince Charming will be pleased to visit your abode today in order to see each person of the female gender try the mysterious viridescent glass slipper."

The two girls giggle in delight.

**BERTHA**

Very what?

**CARLA**

Viridescent. Greenish. Like emerald.

**GERTRUDE**

Emma who?

**CARLA**

Right, girls, hurry along and get yourselves ready. The Prince is on his way. This is your opportunity.

(to Cinderella)

Off with you! Get out of my sight! Don't you have work to do?

Cinderella heads off. She looks delighted at the prospect of seeing the Prince again.

**29. INT. STAIRS OF CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

In a speeded-up sequence, we see BERTHA and GERTRUDE leave their room and leap down the stairs four at a time...

**30. INT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

... BERTHA and GERTRUDE pull up (to the sound of screeching racing-car brakes) in front of PRINCE CHARMING, adjusting their clothing as best they can.

**BERTHA (WITH A CURTSY)**

Bertha at your service, Your Highness.

Her breasts are bulging over her corset.

**GERTRUDE**

Gertrude, your servant, Prince.

Her hair comes loose from its bun.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Please remove your shoes, ladies.

**CARLA (OFFENDED)**

I beg your pardon?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Madam, with the approval of my father, the King, I will wed the maiden whose slender foot fits this slipper.

At a sign from the Prince, the valet takes out CINDERELLA's glass slipper.

**BERTHA**

I recognise it, it's mine!

**GERTRUDE**

No it isn't! That's my slipper!

**BERTHA**

Your feet are so long you'd need five like that to fit you!

**GERTRUDE**

Speak for yourself. Your feet are so fat the stairs splinter when you tread on them!

**SENESCHAL**

Are you sure this examination is quite necessary?

**CARLA**

Yes, it's humiliating. Especially since I know their wardrobe like my own and I believe that slipper belongs to... my elder daughter.

**BERTHA (THE YOUNGER DAUGHTER, FURIOUS)**

What?!

**CARLA**

The younger girl sometimes borrows them.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No, no, no! I want them to try it on.

(confidentially to the camera)

I'm quite an expert on the experimental method.

CARLA and the SENESCHAL can only accept.

Pulling faces, GERTRUDE and BERTHA finally agree to take off their shoes.

The trial is over very quickly. BERTHA's feet are too fat...

**PRINCE CHARMING (TO BERTHA)**

The elegance of your foot matches your sharpness of mind, girl. You're the first to try a left slipper on her right foot...

... while GERTRUDE's are too long.

All their efforts, those of their mother and even a helping hand from the SENESCHAL (who is very familiar with the torture of the boot) come to nothing: neither BERTHA nor GERTRUDE can get the glass slipper on their foot.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

The experiment is conclusive. I'm sorry, ladies, but you'll have to look elsewhere for a shoe that fits.

GERTRUDE and BERTHA rush off to their room in tears.

### **30. EXT. COURTYARD, CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING with his valet and the SENESCHAL with his men are leaving to visit another house when they come face to face with CINDERELLA as she emerges from the pig shed. GOODWIFE STOUT is with her.

#### **GOODWIFE STOUT**

Excuse me, Prince, but this girl deserves to try on the slipper too...

PRINCE CHARMING looks CINDERELLA up and down with a single glance. She is absolutely filthy - more manure than maiden - with straw in her hair and dark smears on her arms, legs and face.

#### **PRINCE CHARMING (PINCHING HIS NOSE)**

Gods! You're not serious! She stinks to high heaven and my nose is wise enough to suggest I take my leave.

**PRINCE CHARMING hurries away and all his entourage follows.**

### **30A. INT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

CARLA, BERTHA and GERTRUDE look at each other, lost for words.

Suddenly, CARLA explodes.

#### **CARLA**

I know what I'm going to do!

#### **BERTHA**

You're going to whip Cinderella?

#### **GERTRUDE**

It's her fault the Prince ran away. You should beat her!

#### **CARLA (TO HER DAUGHTERS)**

Silence!

(to CINDERELLA)

You! Get out of my sight!

CINDERELLA backs away, unable to tear herself away completely, while GERTRUDE and BERTHA go cautiously over to their mother looking slightly worried.

#### **CARLA (TO HER DAUGHTERS)**

I'm too kind to you. My mother was right. I should take a switch to you and whip you as I was whipped; to give you some character! I'll show you...

CARLA searches deftly through a drawer and takes out some long strips of cloth.

**GERTRUDE**

Mother, beating's only for poor people!

**BERTHA**

If you need to whip someone, then whip Cinderella as much as you please!

**CARLA (TO GERTRUDE)**

Sit down!

GERTRUDE obeys, watched by her sister and CINDERELLA, who is hiding in the shadow of the stairs, unwilling to miss this.

CARLA begins to bind GERTRUDE's feet Chinese-style.

**CARLA**

Your feet will stay bound until they fit the Prince's slipper! If it works for the Chinese...

(to BERTHA)

Now your turn!

GERTRUDE gets up and staggers off like a ballerina on points, moaning and snivelling.

CARLA takes a large ball of string from the drawer. Giving BERTHA no time to resist, she begins to bind the girl with it to make her thinner.

**BERTHA**

No, mother, stop, I can't breathe!

**CARLA (HAULING ON THE STRING)**

I'll make an dragonfly of you, a shrinking blossom!

Now... show me.

GERTRUDE and BERTHA pose for inspection.

BERTHA looks like a trussed, oven-ready chicken.

GERTRUDE's feet look a yard high.

**CARLA (TO HER DAUGHTERS)**

You'll stay like that until the Prince chooses one of you.

### **30B. EXT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

In a series of scenes, we see every young woman throughout the Kingdom preparing their feet for the Prince's visit. Some bathe their feet in steaming water, some bury them in ice and others plunge them into mud. We see the Prince try one after the other. Each time, he looks disappointed and despondent.

### **30C. EXT. CARLA'S MANOR – DAY**

Like COSETTE in "Les Misérables", CINDERELLA is sweeping the yard with a broom too big for her. CARLA marches out of the house and bears down on her.

#### **CARLA**

I told you to stay out of my sight! I don't want to see you again, inside or out!

CARLA grabs CINDERELLA by the arm and drags her along.

#### **CARLA**

You can live with the pigs in future. You can eat with them and with a little luck, they'll eat you!

#### **CINDERELLA**

But why? I haven't done anything!

#### **CARLA**

Oh yes you have! God has cursed me with two daughters who are an offence against nature, while you're blessed with every refinement. It's not fair! I was married against my will to a man three times my age who, although he left me his fortune, also left me with the two liabilities who bear his name!

When your father came along, I dared to hope my life had changed, but then he died and left me with you. You're like a constant reproach!

I'm cursed! I'm cursed! I was beaten as a child, locked up, abused, mistreated and insulted, but now all that's going to stop! It's going to end and no-one will ever cross me again!

CARLA opens the door to the pig shed, shoves CINDERELLA inside and slams it shut.

She then walks back to the manor, smiling in satisfaction.

#### **CARLA**

No-one will ever cross me again. No-one.

### **30D. INT. PIG SHED – DAY**

The grunting pigs crowd around CINDERELLA. She strokes and makes a fuss of them. Leading the largest hog over to a wall, she climbs onto his back, hauls herself up to a tiny opening and slips through it.

### **31. EXT. FOREST – DAY**

Followed by PIP, BEN and WILL, the lost children, CINDERELLA is walking through the forest with her fists clenched. She looks stubborn and determined. The four of them are followed by the old dog CINDERELLA was caring for: REBEL. His paw is still bandaged. CINDERELLA climbs to the top of a great oak.

**PIP**

You can't stay up there!

**CINDERELLA**

I'll come down again soon. Look after Rebel.

The tree begins to walk towards the King's palace.

**PIP**

Cinderella! The tree... It's walking!

**BEN**

I'm *so* into that girl!

**WILL**

She's *well* fit!

**PIP**

Er, guys? Remember she's already taken.

### **32. INT. ROYAL PALACE, KING'S CHAMBER - DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING, the SENESCHAL and APU have come to bring news of their search to the King. They look exhausted, worn out by all the visits they have made.

The King is still in his bed and does not look much better. There are bags under his eyes, his beard is wispy and his hair unkempt.

His doctors are hovering at the bedside.

**KING**

Dear brother, if you have news for me, then be quick about it. I feel my penultimate hour is approaching.

**SENESCHAL**

Not your last hour?

**KING**

All in good time.

**SENESCHAL (IN A DOOM-LADEN VOICE)**

At this very moment, eco-terrorists are conspiring to undermine state security. Investigations into their identity continued overnight. We should be declaring martial law rather than wasting our time slipping our way around the country!

The King calls his son over and speaks to him solemnly but sympathetically.

**KING**

Have you really searched everywhere?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Everywhere, father, from duchesses' daughters to chambermaids. I can't go on! If I smell one more unwashed foot, I shall lay down and die!

**KING**

So was this girl with the slender feet just a dream?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

She was no dream, father! I even gave her my word I'd marry her!

**SENESCHAL**

If I might make a suggestion...

**KING**

Speak, my brother. I can feel myself slipping away.

**SENESCHAL**

Dame Carla – whom you know – has two lovely daughters with wide hips, generous breasts and fertile wombs, perfect to provide the Crown with the heir it deserves. Let the Prince marry one of them and then he can chase after his slender-footed ghost all he wants.

**KING**

That's good advice, my son. Marry one of the two.

**PRINCE CHARMING (LEAPING TO HIS FEET AND WAVING THE GLASS SLIPPER)**

No, no and no! I'll only wed the girl whose foot fits this slipper!

**SENESCHAL**

No such woman exists!

**CINDERELLA (O.S.)**

Oh yes I do.

They all turn to look at the window. CINDERELLA appears, lifted from the ground on the branch of a great oak as if in a lift. She enters through the window and bobs a clumsy little curtsy to the KING.

**KING (TO CINDERELLA)**

Come closer, child, I can't see you...

As CINDERELLA approaches the KING, PRINCE CHARMING stares at her with unconcealed disgust.

**KING**

What do you want, my child?

**CINDERELLA**

To try the slipper!

**KING**

Haven't you already tried it?

**CINDERELLA (POINTING TO THE PRINCE)**

His Highness felt I was more suited to clogs, that I stank and that I was too simple to try on the slipper.

**SENESCHAL (WITH A BROAD SMILE, TO THE PRINCE)**

Shall I have her fed to my hounds, nephew?

The dogs lick their chops.

**CINDERELLA (TO THE PRINCE)**

Let me just try it on and I'll leave.

**KING (TO PRINCE CHARMING)**

Come, my son, do as she says! I would have you be scrupulously fair in this matter.

Grumbling, PRINCE CHARMING kneels and slips the shoe onto CINDERELLA's foot. It fits like a glove (to use a mismatched simile).

**CINDERELLA**

You see? It's mine. What did you do with the other one I gave you?

PRINCE CHARMING cannot believe his eyes.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

But that's impossible!

**CINDERELLA**

Remember... the ball, the terrace...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No... Yes... Oh yes, of course, the simpleton in the woods. (to the King) I gave her my Carducci cloak.

CINDERELLA smiles.

**CINDERELLA**

That wasn't so hard, was it?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

No, I won't... It's impossible!

**CINDERELLA**

Oh dear. You really are short on vocabulary.

**KING**

Let there be much rejoicing! At last, my son has found a bride!

**SENECHAL AND PRINCE CHARMING**

Her?

**CINDERELLA**

Me!

**KING**

My son, did you not give your word and have it proclaimed throughout the Kingdom that you would marry the girl whose foot fits the slipper? Yes or no?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

She's a ninny with no more brains than a guinea fowl!

**KING**

Did her foot fit easily into the slipper or did it not?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Well... Yes.

**KING**

Then there can be no question of your perjuring yourself, my son. Be true to your promise and the crown, and marry this girl before eternal night parts us!

There is a long silence.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

So be it! I'll marry the guttersnipe since you order it, but don't count on me to give you an heir. No way.

**34. INT. PRINCE CHARMING'S CHAMBER - DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING sits down at his music machine, but it all goes wrong. Everything is mistimed and off-key: the cats croak like frogs, the nightingales moo like cows, the violins are out of tune, the drums are off beat and the brass hoots as if it were stuck in a traffic jam.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SINGING)**

*Why should I get hitched up?  
That's not where I'm at  
I should be a rocker, a rapper, a star  
Not one more married cat  
So don't you call me Majesty  
That's really not my thing  
I'd rather be like Elvis  
It's good to be the King*

**35. INT. KING'S CHAMBER – DAY**

CINDERELLA and the King are alone now.

**KING**

Come closer...

CINDERELLA goes over to the KING.

**KING**

You really bear an amazing resemblance to... (he pauses)  
Well, you wouldn't know who I was talking about.

**CINDERELLA**

Try me.

**KING**

My poor late friend and the finest doctor in the land,  
Charles the Just.

**CINDERELLA**

I'm his daughter, Majesty.

**KING**

His daughter?! But look at you! You could have come straight from a pigsty!

**CINDERELLA**

I live in one. My stepmother has thrown me out of my home, your brother wants to cut down my forest to build warships, your son thinks I'm a simpleton and you...

**KING**

I'm dying.

CINDERELLA puts a hand to the KING's forehead.

**CINDERELLA**

Then stop dying, tell your brother to go to the Devil and teach your son that you can't judge a book by its cover... or a ragamuffin by her rags!

**KING (MOVED)**

I could almost believe it was your father talking. Come here, child!

The KING spreads his arms and CINDERELLA hugs him with great pleasure.

**KING (TO CINDERELLA)**

My son will honour his promise, believe me. He's the King's son!

**CINDERELLA**

I don't mind if he doesn't want me. I just want him to help save my forest.

**KING**

It will all come right in the end. I've never known a love affair that didn't blossom in the greatest disorder. (calling) Chamberlain! Chamberlain!

The High Chamberlain enters the room.

**KING**

It is my pleasure that this lady be lodged in the great pink chamber and treated as my daughter-in-law and heiress to the throne, a princess to be equipped, combed and perfumed as is her right, whatever the expense.

The Chamberlain stares at CINDERELLA in shock. Who is this waif in rags smiling so candidly at him?

### **35B. INT. SENESCHAL'S CHAMBER – DAY**

The SENESCHAL stalks into his chamber where CARLA is waiting for him.

**CARLA**

So you couldn't persuade him to marry one of my daughters.

**SENESCHAL**

No.

**CARLA**

Not even Bertha? She's the better of the two.

**SENESCHAL**

The less repellent. No, the slattern has actually achieved the impossible!

**CARLA**

Then it's time for plan B.

### **36. INT. PALACE CHAMBER – DAY**

#### **BALLET**

A gaggle of women are bustling around CINDERELLA. She is washed and combed, her hair is styled and she is perfumed, made up and dressed to the beat of mechanical music that turns the scene into a ballet of jointed puppets.

The movements are brusque and speeded-up, like the actions of automatons.

### **37. EXT. PALACE CHAMBER – DAY**

Two valets suddenly throw open the doors and we see CINDERELLA surrounded by ladies-in-waiting. She has been turned into an expensive doll with white make-up, rouged cheeks, mascaraed eyes and a wig, corset and crinoline.

In fact, she looks exactly like the women around her: unrecognisable.

PRINCE CHARMING comes over to her with a valet on either side.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Oh, good grief! So this is what I'm condemned to.

**CINDERELLA**

Isn't this how you wanted to see me?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I don't want anything! Things are done as they've always been done, that's all.

PRINCE CHARMING leads CINDERELLA off to the gallery of his ancestors. All the ladies follow: fifteen replicas of CINDERELLA, fifteen clones.

The group stops in front of a painting, then moves on a few steps and stops before the next. The forefathers look very proud in their gilt frames.

Now the group has gathered in front of a formidable knight in armour, surrounded by other knights who are similarly clad.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Ivan the Brief...

**LADY 1**

... son of Edward the Great.

**CINDERELLA**

Are you sure?

(she goes back to the last portrait)

Wouldn't he be the son of that gentleman there behind the King?

Indeed, a to-and-fro movement comparing the faces shows that the Ivan in question is the spitting image of one of King Edward's knights.

**CINDERELLA**

He's much more like him. See for yourself.

PRINCE CHARMING steps forward, curious. The ladies-in-waiting are shocked.

**LADY 2**

Future queens don't make that sort of comment!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Now that you mention it...

**LADY 1 (INTERVENING)**

Perhaps we should move on, my lady. You have many more ancestors to see.

Each time, they stop to admire a noble, male figure.

**CINDERELLA**

I don't see any portraits of Queens. Did your Kings have their children with each other?

### **38. INT. ROYAL PALACE, HUNTING GALLERY – DAY**

The PRINCE, CINDERELLA and their entourage enter a gallery whose walls are entirely covered with hunting trophies: the heads of boars, stags, bears, wolves and so on.

#### **PRINCE CHARMING (ACTING AS A GUIDE)**

The Hunting Gallery!

CINDERELLA is staring at an enormous boar's head. She runs a hand over the snout, equipped with formidable tusks.

#### **CINDERELLA**

Adrianus ...

This startles everyone.

#### **PRINCE CHARMING**

Did you know this ferocious beast?

#### **CINDERELLA**

Adrianus... My father brought you up as a baby when your mother was killed. Adrianus... We used to play at pushing each other into the mud...

CINDERELLA wanders up the aisle, looking at the trophies on the wall. Her eyes fall on a bear's head.

#### **CINDERELLA**

Urso... You were so fond of wood strawberries and blackberries. Milva had a wonderful son. He has that same mark on his ear.

The group passes in front of a wolf...

#### **CINDERELLA**

Grey Wolf... You held the dogs at bay. Fileta fled with your cubs.

... and then a stag. She lays a cheek against its muzzle and her eyes fill with tears.

#### **CINDERELLA**

Nestor... All my friends... No-one else wanted me, but you made me welcome, all of you.

**PRINCE CHARMING (CHOOSING HIS WORDS CAREFULLY)**

Cinderella, your friends are here to honour their strength and valour...

**CINDERELLA**

Oh, so that's it, strength and valour...

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Of course!

**CINDERELLA**

Then why didn't you stuff your ancestors?

**39. INT. SENESCHAL'S CHAMBER – DAY**

CARLA (in a negligée) is in the SENESCHAL's bed.

The SENESCHAL (in his underwear) is at the window, a telescope to his eye.

**CARLA**

Well, my friend? Are they where you said they'd be?

**SENESCHAL**

Yes. Everything's going to plan.

Through the SENESCHAL's telescope, we see CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING by the stables.

**40. EXT. STABLES – DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING is introducing his favourite horse to CINDERELLA. The horse is licking her hand and the Prince is amazed. Usually, the stallion is much less tame.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You know your animals too?

**CINDERELLA**

Don't you?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Naturally. I'm an excellent horseman and hunter, I jump and gallop bareback. Would you like to see?

**CINDERELLA**

So when do you find time for work?

**DAME 1 (INTERVENING)**

Work? Whatever next? Why would Prince Charming work?

**PRINCE CHARMING (LAUGHING)**

In fact, my uncle has forbidden me to work. He says one should always be wary of people who work.

**CINDERELLA**

If I were you, I'd be wari-er of my uncle.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I know. He's a sneaky, duplicitous, lying, weak, thieving, conceited, treacherous, coarse megalomaniac, and that's putting it mildly. And all because he wants my throne... (confidentially) ... but he won't get it.

**CINDERELLA (IN THE SAME TONE)**

He wants my trees, but you're going to stop him.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Oh yes, your trees. You care about them that much?

**CINDERELLA**

Not just for myself. We can't live without them. And he wants to use them to carry his weapons of war.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

For now, his fleet's only afloat in his dreams.

**CINDERELLA**

And we should make sure it stays there!

**PRINCE CHARMING (WITH A SIGH)**

My father always says that he came into the world like an ill wind that blows nobody any good!

**41. EXT. ROYAL PALACE, GARDENS - DAY**

CINDERELLA and the PRINCE are walking side by side on a path in the gardens, sneaking sly, uncomfortable looks at each other. The ladies are some way off.

Trying to look nonchalant, CINDERELLA touches a weed that has grown from between the stones of the palace. The PRINCE thinks she means to pull it out.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You don't have to worry about weeds any more, the gardeners will deal with them for you.

**CINDERELLA**

This isn't a weed. In fact, it's a remedy for upsets, insomnia and melancholy.

PRINCE CHARMING is amazed.

**CINDERELLA**

And it decided to grow here! It must have thought that someone needed it. Bergamot, mint, myrtle... Do you realise you have a complete apothecary here at your feet?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You know the science of plants?

PRINCE CHARMING stares at her, increasingly intrigued.

**CINDERELLA**

I was born under a weeping willow. When mother brought me into the world, she left it, returning to the earth that called her.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

So your father was a gardener?

**CINDERELLA**

No. My father travelled all over the world. He followed Indian sages, studied under Chinese doctors, assisted Turkish scholars and learned many other things in countries with unpronounceable names. Didn't your father ever tell you about him? The King called for him almost every day. He refused to be treated by any other doctor.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You were lucky you to have a father like that. The only thing mine talks to me about is carrying on the succession.

**CINDERELLA (FEELING MORE CONFIDENT)**

Well, he can stop now.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

He either wants to marry me to a peasant covered in manure or a gaudy doll who reeks of perfume.

**CINDERELLA**

Do you think I enjoy being gift-wrapped like this?

**BALLET – SONG**

CINDERELLA suddenly pulls off her wig and shakes her hair free.

**LADY 2 (SHOCKED)**

Oh!

**CINDERELLA (TO PRINCE CHARMING)**

Do I look better like this?

**PRINCE CHARMING (DOUBTFULLY)**

Er... ye-s...

He does not seem convinced.

Now CINDERELLA tears off the puffed sleeves of her dress one after the other, revealing the milky skin of her arms.

**LADY 1 (APPALLED)**

Really!

**CINDERELLA**

What do you think of that?

**PRINCE CHARMING (POLITELY)**

Delightful...

Seeing PRINCE CHARMING's lack of enthusiasm, CINDERELLA sighs in frustration.

But determined to carry on, she turns her back to the PRINCE.

**CINDERELLA**

Unlace me, please.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Shall I call your ladies?

**CINDERELLA**

Do it yourself, you silly boy. I'm suffocating!

PRINCE CHARMING undoes CINDERELLA's dress. Twisting and turning, she frees herself like a chick struggling out of an egg.

**LADY 3 (SCANDALISED)**

Eek!

Now dressed in her slip, CINDERELLA turns to face PRINCE CHARMING.

**CINDERELLA**

And like this?

**PRINCE CHARMING (UNSURE WHAT TO THINK)**

Are you mad... or is this a game?

**CINDERELLA**

Give me your handkerchief.

PRINCE CHARMING passes CINDERELLA his lace handkerchief.

As she wipes away the make-up covering her face, the ladies, gasp, shudder and shriek in a chorus of native vocal exercises.

**42. INT. SENESCHAL'S CHAMBER – DAY**

Everything is a mess in the Seneschal's chamber.

Standing bare-chested at the window, the SENESCHAL lowers his telescope and turns quickly to CARLA, who is still lying in bed holding a sheet to her chest, her hair ruffled and her eyes dreamy.

**SENESCHAL**

She's getting undressed in the garden!

**CARLA (SITTING UP HURRIEDLY)**

So, my friend, are you waiting for her to strip off completely before you give the signal?

**SENESCHAL (FLUSTERED)**

Yes... er... no!

Pulling himself together, he picks up a trumpet and blows hard. His shorts slip down to his knees. The camera shows only his legs.

**43. ROYAL PALACE, GARDENS - DAY**

**DAME 4 (HURRYING OVER)**

The Seneschal requires you to attend, madam. He has spoken to the King about your trees.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Hurry before he changes his mind!

He picks another plant as CINDERELLA races off to find the Seneschal.

Masked and gloved men in black suddenly appear from the four corners of the garden, bear down on PRINCE CHARMING and carry him off.

#### **44. EXT. ROYAL CASTLE – DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING is bundled into a black carriage with no windows.

#### **45. EXT. FORTRESS – DAY**

Moving at speed, the coach leaves the town and heads for a fortress whose huge keep looms over the surrounding countryside.

#### **46. INT. FORTRESS – DAY**

Bound hand and foot, PRINCE CHARMING is pushed roughly into a chair.

The head kidnapper turns to the men in black.

#### **HEAD KIDNAPPER**

Leave us now! Make sure no-one enters!

The men in black file out of the room at once, leaving PRINCE CHARMING alone with the head kidnapper and the second-in-command.

As soon as they are alone with their prisoner, the two kidnappers throw off their disguises. Under the hoods, broad hats and black capes are BERTHA and GERTRUDE, CINDERELLA's two spiteful sisters!

#### **GERTRUDE**

You won't leave here without agreeing to marry one of us.

#### **PRINCE CHARMING**

Sorry, but I'm already taken.

#### **BERTHA (SMILING BROADLY)**

How funny he is! Of course you're taken, we've taken you.

They laugh.

#### **BERTHA**

Would you like me to show you what my mother did to my breasts and bottom just to make you happy?

#### **PRINCE CHARMING**

Absolutely not!

#### **GERTRUDE**

Do you know what state my feet are in, crushed to fit in your rotten slipper? A word and I'll show you.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Mercy!

**BERTHA**

Would you like us to sing about how much we'd like to be your wife, like the sirens singing to the divine Ulysses?

BERTHA and GERTRUDE launch into their duet, puffing in his face as they loosen their clothes. Their singing, dancing and prancing is pure torture for PRINCE CHARMING.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Stop! Stop! No! Be silent!  
Someone help me!

**BERTHA**

Well, Prince, have you decided?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I'd rather be broken on the wheel than see you undressed!  
I'd rather be thrown to the wolves than come across your feet again! I'd rather have my ears torn off than hear you sing!

The two sisters glance at each other.

**BERTHA (TO HER SISTER)**

How disappointing! I thought he was a gentleman.

**GERTRUDE (REPLYING)**

True, he's vulgar and quarrelsome.

**BERTHA**

We're too beautiful and sweet for such a brute.

**GERTRUDE**

It's a shame, but he leaves us no choice.

PRINCE CHARMING is looking increasingly worried.

**GERTRUDE**

It has to be done.

**BERTHA (FIRMLY)**

Yes, it has to be done.

**PRINCE CHARMING (ALARMED)**

What are you going to do?

**GERTRUDE AND BERTHA (TWO MONSTERS TOGETHER)**

Gaaaaaaaahhhhh!

PRINCE CHARMING shrieks “NO!”, but it is too late.

**SPEEDED-UP SEQUENCE:**

BERTHA and GERTRUDE fly at PRINCE CHARMING. A few seconds later, he is stripped to his undershorts.

With a “one, two, three”, GERTRUDE and BERTHA haul open a hatch.

Beneath it is a bottomless well.

**47. EXT. FORTRESS KEEP – DAY**

From outside the keep, the camera follows Prince Charming’s plunge down the well. The keep is really very, very high and the well very, very deep.

There is a loud splash as Prince Charming reaches the bottom.

BERTHA and GERTRUDE emerge from the fortress, soaked but content.

They head off singing their song.

**48A. INT. FORTRESS CORRIDOR / SENESCHAL’S CHAMBERS - DAY**

Guards are lined up on either side of the corridor. As CINDERELLA walks slowly towards the Seneschal’s chambers, she looks at each of the menacing figures in turn. They leer back at her, baring rotting teeth.

At last she arrives at the door.

**CINDERELLA**

I have an audience with the Seneschal.

**GUARD**

His Royal Highness is expecting you. You may enter.

**48B - INT. SENESCHAL’S CHAMBERS - DAY**

CINDERELLA enters the room. CARLA is sprawled on the king-size bed strewn with rumpled silk sheets, drinking tea. The bare-chested SENESCHAL is doing push-ups.

When he sees CINDERELLA, he leaps to his feet and heads over to join her, pulling on his shirt.

**SENESCHAL**

My dear Cinderella, future... queen of this kingdom!  
Heheh! Do come in!

Hearing the SENESCHAL's words, CARLA splutters into her tea. Pushing the tray away, she springs off the bed, struts across to a sideboard loaded with bottles, sweeps up an empty glass and a bottle of whisky and begins to drink.

CINDERELLA stands silently in the middle of the room.

The SENESCHAL paces around CINDERELLA as he speaks haltingly.

**SENESCHAL**

I'll make you the most powerful queen in history... given my razor-sharp business acumen... and your little trees.

CARLA moves in front of CINDERELLA, still holding her glass of whisky.

**CARLA**

Well played, guttersnipe. Respect!

**SENESCHAL**

I've sold the rights to the wood to the highest bidder countries, child. Imagine all the spices, the silk, the go-o-old...

**CARLA**

Gold! Hee-hee!

CARLA throws herself on the bed and rolls around in the sheets, laughing hysterically.

**CARLA**

You're going to be amazingly rich! I'm so happy for you!

CARLA's hair turns red.

**CINDERELLA**

Of course you are, Lady Carla. It's as plain as the hair on your head.

CARLA looks at CINDERELLA blankly and then turns to look at her shock of red hair in the cheval glass by the bed. The mirror reflects a brunette (or blonde?) CARLA.

**CARLA**

Have you been drinking?

CINDERELLA turns to the SENESCHAL, ignoring the woman.

**CINDERELLA (SLOWLY)**

There'll be no gold, no spices and no silk. The "little trees" will stay where they are. Should it be necessary to cut down any of the oldest, they'll be used to build shelter for the orphans in the forest. Of course, you don't have to take the "child's" word for it. Ask the King. He's approved my plans.

CARLA and SENESCHAL stare at CINDERELLA in amazement and then burst out laughing. The SENESCHAL starts pacing around CINDERELLA again, chewing a short straw.

**CARLA**

Hee-hee!

**SENESCHAL**

Ha-ha! Aren't you a crafty little thing? The King! Say it again for me... The King! Heh-heh.  
Guards, bring in His Majesty!

The guards enter, dragging the King. His wrists and ankles are chained. CINDERELLA lets out a shriek. The SENESCHAL enfolds her in his arms.

**THE KING**

Don't sign anything, Cinderella. The Prince will soon be here to save us.

**SENESCHAL (WHISPERING TO CINDERELLA)**

Oh dear. I'm afraid it might be a bit late for him.

**49. (EX 53) INT. COUNCIL CHAMBER – DAY**

CINDERELLA is seated on a low stool in chains, a gag over her mouth.

She is sitting in a shaft of light, while her accusers are all backlit as they speak, their faces in shadow.

In court are the SENESCHAL, the PROVOST, the DOCTORS and NOTABLES. We also recognise the FAIRY GODMOTHER, disguised as a bishop, and MERLIN, dressed as a Franciscan monk.

**PROVOST**

Gentleman of the jury, we shall now hear the evidence of our first witness: Mistress Bertha, the younger daughter of Dame Carla.

BERTHA enters the witness box.

**BERTHA (GIVING EVIDENCE, UNAWARE THAT  
HER HAIR IS TURNING GREEN)**

She talked to cats and dogs  
To rats and toads and hogs  
Among her familiars  
Were garter snakes and vipers  
Lord Provost, I believe  
She's a devil and a witch!

**PROVOST**

Pursuant to justice and the common good, we shall now  
hear Mistress Gertrude, the elder daughter of Dame Carla.

GERTRUDE follows BERTHA into the witness box.

**GERTRUDE (HER HAIR TURNING YELLOW AS  
SHE LOOKS AT CINDERELLA)**

That slattern straight from hell  
Can recite a thousand spells  
Call up storms over the ocean  
And brew many evil potions  
So Lord Provost, I'm afraid  
That she really is a witch

**PROVOST (TO THE WITNESSES)**

Thank you.

GERTRUDE returns to her seat next to BERTHA.

**PROVOST**

Dame Carla, if you would be good enough to enlighten the  
Court with your evidence.

CARLA steps forward. She is dressed all in black like a model churchgoer.

**CARLA**

What can I say of Cinderella?  
When her poor father died  
I lavished love and care on her  
As if she were my child  
She did not want for anything  
Let there be no doubt  
I'd rather have cut off my own hand  
Than let her go without  
I lavished on her tenderness  
Food and instruction too  
Expecting nothing in return

But the love a mother's due

CARLA wipes away a tear as her hair turns an alarming scarlet colour, its intensity matching the outrageousness of her lies.

Lost for words, CINDERELLA trembles in rage.

**PROVOST (PUTTING ON A SHOW OF  
COMPASSION)**

Continue, Dame Carla, painful as it may be. We are with you.

**CARLA**

Have I nurtured a viper in my bosom?

*(turning to CINDERELLA)*

Today, I see the wicked gaze of a demon, and I fear that this witch, plotting misery and upset, cast a spell on my daughters. Prince Charming, whom they adore, a man one of them was to marry, has vanished who knows where.

*(with a deep sigh)*

Yes, my heart will bleed if this court sentences her to the stake, but Satan must be defeated. *(she crosses herself)*

Yes, Satan must be defeated.

**MERLIN (WHISPERING TO THE FAIRY  
GODMOTHER)**

We have to do something.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Only if she asks for her second wish.

**MERLIN**

But she's got a sock in her mouth!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

I didn't write the rules.

**MERLIN**

Your damned union should ease up a bit on the bureaucracy!

MERLIN snaps his fingers. CINDERELLA's gag disappears and she immediately begins to shout...

**CINDERELLA**

They're lying! I swear by the Lord of the Rings! It's all nonsense!

The public gape in amazement. There is obviously sorcery in the air.

**PROVOST**

Blasphemy! How dare you swear such an oath? You're a witch!

(banging his gavel)

Guilty, guilty, guilty!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (SARCASTICALLY TO MERLIN)**

Well that went well, didn't it?

**PROVOST**

Cinderella has been found guilty of witchcraft and will be burned at the stake in the same square as Joan of Arc!

The public clap and cheer. At the back of the courtroom, we see APU making a hurried exit.

**50. (EX 54) EXT. TOWN SQUARE – DAY**

Surrounded by four men at arms and a drummer, a sergeant of the Seneschal's guard is making a proclamation in the town square.

**SERGEANT**

Whereas the aforementioned CINDERELLA, ragamuffin, has been found guilty of witchcraft:

- firstly, in that she caused the Crown Prince and King to vanish;
  - secondly, in that she administered forbidden herbs;
  - thirdly, in that she incited rebellion in the forest;
- she is sentenced to be burned at the stake before the people. May God have mercy on her soul!

There is a roll on the drum.

At the front of the crowd, REBEL, CINDERELLA's old dog, has his ears pricked up. He seems to be listening more closely than any of the people around him.

As soon as the proclamation ends, he bounds away.

**51. (EX 55) EXT. COUNTRYSIDE / FOREST – DAY**

REBEL races through the countryside, his tongue lolling. Suddenly, he is overtaken by APU, who is running even faster.

**CUT**

APU enters the forest carrying REBEL on his shoulders. The animal is too old and tired to run like a young dog.

APU passes under the foliage and through the undergrowth until he at last finds PIP, BEN and WILL hiding nervously in the stump of a dead tree.

On APU's shoulders, REBEL barks so loudly that the three boys emerge from their hiding place one by one, their arms raised above their heads like outlaws surrounded by the police.

REBEL barks even louder. PIP, BEN and WILL look around, certain that the SENESCHAL and his men have caught them. But there is no-one to be seen.

Suddenly, the FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN appear.

APU lowers REBEL to the ground. The dog begins to bark again. APU speaks in a strange language, but the FAIRY GODMOTHER seems to have no trouble answering him.

PIP, BEN and WILL roll their eyes: they have no idea what the two are saying.

MERLIN translates.

**APU**

Nagalo upsula nigita yuhi jikuta...

**MERLIN (POINTING AT APU)**

This young man was stolen from his parents and sold to the Seneschal because he was better at castrating tigers than anyone else in his land.

**PIP, BEN & WILL**

Huh?

**APU**

Jikuta! Mish jikuti!

**MERLIN**

Excuse me. Better at *locating* tigers.

**PIP, BEN & WILL**

Ah!

**REBEL**

Woof... Woof-woof!

**MERLIN (TRANSLATING REBEL'S BARKS)**

This old dog also fled the palace to get help. They've sentenced Cinderella to be burnt at the stake!

**PIP, BEN & WILL**

Oh!

APU speaks again, looking grim.

**APU**

Uglo taloma pizza carbo natata.

The FAIRY GODMOTHER answers him in English.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO APU)**

It's very brave, very chivalrous of you to offer to rescue her. But how?

**PIP, BEN & WILL**

We want to rescue her too!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Now the three dwarves want to stick their oar in!

REBEL barks loudly.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Plus the old mutt.

**MERLIN**

Well, do something! You're the fairy godmother, aren't you?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

I can't do anything until Cinderella calls me. FAT rules are rules. (*sounding very "jobsworth"*)

I only work to order!

The FAIRY GODMOTHER leaves APU, PIP, BEN, WILL and old REBEL standing there, staring at each other in bewilderment.

**52. (EX 56) EXT. PRISON COURTYARD – DAY**

Slavering jaws yawning, the SENESCHAL's hounds are barking for fresh meat: they are hungry! A GUARD watches them from the edge of the pit where they are kept. There are cages full of children nearby: fresh meat.

The terrified children scream.

**GUARD (OPENING A CAGE)**

Silence in there! Stop crying! The Seneschal's dogs don't like their steaks too salty!

Suddenly, hearing a strange cry, he looks up. It is APU, perched above the cage.

**GUARD**

Get down from there! Get back in your own cage!

APU leaps at his throat. As they fight, old REBEL heads over to the dog pit and reduces the hounds to silence with an imperious bark.

The GUARD is soon trussed up like a turkey. The children are cheering APU who is smiling for the first time. PIP, BEN and WILL open the cages and release the captured children. The first out is VICTOR. The kids hug each other.

**53. (EX 57) INT. CINDERELLA'S PRISON CELL – DAY**

The despondent CINDERELLA is chained up in her cell.

Suddenly, she stares in amazement as the door opens and the FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN enter, disguised as a bishop and Franciscan monk.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO CINDERELLA)**

I've come to hear your confession, child.

**CINDERELLA**

I want to make my second wish!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Elementary, my dear Cinderella. You want me to get you out of here...

**CINDERELLA**

No, him!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Merlin? Where do you want me to put him?

**CINDERELLA**

The Prince! You have to save the Prince, they're going to kill him!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Be careful what you wish for.

**CINDERELLA**

You can save me afterwards.

**MERLIN**

That won't be possible. Not today, anyway. The FAT "Magic and Conjuring" regulations clearly state that you only get one wish a day.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (EXPLAINING)**

If I rescue the Prince, I won't be able to do anything for you.

**CINDERELLA**

Well it can't be helped.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

What do you mean, it can't be helped?

**CINDERELLA**

I want him to live.

**MERLIN (SMOOTHING HIS HAIR)**

He's not the only eligible bachelor around, you know.

**CINDERELLA**

Well, he's the only one for me. If he dies, I'll die too.

Just then, the cell door is thrown open. The assistant executioners enter and grasp CINDERELLA roughly.

**CINDERELLA (CRYING OUT)**

Save him!

Engraved in the stone of the wall, we see: SECOND WISH.

**54. (EX 58) EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY**

CINDERELLA is in chains and wearing the undershirt of a prisoner bound for execution as she stands in the tumbrel carrying her to the stake.

A vast crowd lines the way.

**CINDERELLA**

Death to the witch! Burn her alive! Avaunt, Lucifer!

A stand has been set up opposite the stake.

Along with the rescued children, APU, PIP, BEN, WILL and VICTOR slip behind the royal box and into the crowd, near to the soldiers who are standing guard.

The SENESCHAL is seated in the stand with CARLA at his side. Just behind them are BERTHA and GERTRUDE.

**EXECUTIONER (TO THE SENESCHAL)**

I await your orders, Majesty.

The SENESCHAL is flattered and smirks at CARLA, who returns the smile. He calls to the executioner.

**SENESCHAL**

On with the show!

The executioner tosses a flaming brand into the firewood.

Everyone holds their breath. The fire takes hold.

The hostile crowd screams even more loudly.

**CROWD**

Kill her! Kill the witch!

The woodland children answer all together, chanting...

**CHILDREN'S CHORUS**

Cry, cry, CINDERELLA...

Cry and you'll be saved!

Cry, cry!

CINDERELLA begins to cry.

Her tears flow and flow. When they reach the burning wood, the flames die and the branches begin to bud and flower.

The crowd lets out a great gasp of astonishment. The wood is refusing to burn CINDERELLA.

**CROWD**

Sorcery! Magic! Sleight of hand!

God protect us from the demon!

The SENESCHAL leaps to his feet.

**SENESCHAL (TO THE EXECUTIONER)**

If that witch isn't burnt in the next five minutes, getting fired will be the least of your worries!

**54A. INT. BOTTOM OF THE BOTTOMLESS WELL – DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING is at the bottom of the bottomless well. He has muddy water up to his knees. When he looks up, he can see a tiny dot far above: the sky. His situation seems hopeless.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Alas, I shall never see my Cinderella again!

Just as he says this, there is a terrible rumbling sound. Tons of water flood into the well and PRINCE CHARMING is fired into the air on a geyser. He finds himself in... Trafalgar Square, where nobody seems particularly surprised by his state of undress. A little confused, he turns to the camera.

**PRINCE CHARMING (LOOKING STRAIGHT INTO THE CAMERA)**

There must be some mistake...

A policeman comes over.

**POLICEMAN**

Lost our way to the swimming pool, have we?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I have to get to the burning. Is it far?

**POLICEMAN (WITH A LAUGH, TAKING HIM FOR A LUNATIC)**

Oh, you want hell. Hell's that way...

**54B. EXT. TOWN SQUARE – DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING finds himself in the town square in his undershorts. He is a little dazed and not quite sure how he got there. He fails to notice the FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN who are holding him up.

Suddenly, with horror, he sees the assistant executioners replacing the wood with straw and hay. This time, there are 10 of them with torches in their hands as they wait for their master's order. CINDERELLA is still tied to the stake!

**CHILDREN'S CHORUS (YELLING)**

Cry, Cinderella  
Cry and you'll be saved!

As the assistant executioners go to light the straw, PRINCE CHARMING quickly pushes his way through the crowd. The FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN look on approvingly.

**PRINCE CHARMING (SHOVING ASIDE SPECTATORS AND GUARDS)**

Let me through! Let me through!

Punching and kicking, PRINCE CHARMING climbs to the stake despite the assistant executioners' attempts to stop him.

**CINDERELLA**

What are you doing here?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I've come to free you!

**CINDERELLA**

Get out of here! I don't want you to die!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What business is it of yours?

**CINDERELLA (ANNOYED)**

You could thank me at least!

**PRINCE CHARMING (UNTYING HER BONDS)**

Stop moving, I can't get the knots!

When the SENESCHAL sees PRINCE CHARMING at the stake, he leaps to his feet like a man possessed.

**SENESCHAL (TO THE GRUMBLING MOB)**

Look, the witch has conjured up a vision of the Prince in an attempt to escape her fate!

It's a trick! CGI! Burn her enchantments along with her!

**CARLA (JOINING IN)**

Burn her! Satan stands at her side in the guise of the Prince! Burn them both!

The assistant executioners plunge their torches into the straw and it flares up at once.

The Prince finally loosens CINDERELLA's bonds.

Meanwhile, PIP, BEN and WILL sever the guy-ropes holding up the great canopy of the royal box. It collapses onto the SENESCHAL, CARLA and their court.

The soldiers try to intervene, but the freed children throw themselves at their legs, five against one.

Jumping, leaping and flying like a Kung-Fu hero, APU strikes out right and left.

Old REBEL nips at the leg of a horse and it gallops away through the crowd.

There is general panic.

The SENESCHAL struggles to free himself from the tangle of canvas trapping him. CARLA rages and shrieks. GERTRUDE and BERTHA are breathless with fear and choking with rage.

As the runaway horse passes, PRINCE CHARMING leaps into the saddle, carrying CINDERELLA with him.

The rescued children are like crazed imps. The little devils bite, punch, kick and tear at the hair of anyone within reach, spurred on by APU who lends them a helping hand.

The scene freezes and turns into an engraving in a picture book: a jumble of bodies in the style of Breughel.

#### **55. (EX 59) EXT. FOREST – DAY**

The FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN are leaning over the picture, which is in their great book.

##### **FAIRY GODMOTHER**

You see? You just have to let them get on with it.

##### **MERLIN**

It's a little sad, isn't it, to think that a day will come when children and kings have no more need of fairies or wizards?

#### **56. (EX 60) INT. FORTRESS - DAY**

The SENESCHAL is slumped on the throne, apparently deeply depressed. CARLA is berserk with rage.

##### **SENESCHAL**

I'm depressed. So depressed. Sad, sad, sad.

##### **CARLA**

You're a slug, that's what you are! A slug, a worm, a spineless chicken!

##### **SENESCHAL**

Children! How could I have suspected that children would dare attack us? They were barely good enough to feed my dogs and then they go and lay into my black guards! Now our dogs don't have a thing for dinner.

##### **CARLA**

How many times do I have to tell you? Children are like farts: your can live with your own but other people's are unbearable!

##### **SENESCHAL (DESPONDENT)**

And sometimes even your own smell rotten.

##### **CARLA (INCREASINGLY FURIOUS)**

Stop whining and have a little backbone. There are only so many places where they can hide!

**SENESCHAL**

I know... I know...

**CARLA**

Then get moving! You look like a portion of overcooked pasta!

**SENESCHAL**

I'm overcooked pasta, chicken breast, tapioca, an oyster...

**CARLA (IMPASSIONED)**

Depressed? Good grief! Snap out of it, man! Pull yourself together! March on the forest and raze it! Destroy everything that lives and grows there. We'll build a castle on the site to our greater glory, with the flesh of those who stood against us as its mortar! Cinderella, the children, the peasants, your nephew, your brother and your little savage who bit my daughters' backsides!

Suddenly, the SENESCHAL seems to come to his senses. He gets up and goes to fetch his sword, which is lying on the ground.

**SENESCHAL (TO CARLA)**

You're right, I'll go to war. That should pep me up again! There's nothing like a little bloodletting to clear your mind and get you on track again!

**CARLA (HANDING OUT WEAPONS)**

Now you're talking! No more dreaming, let's get to work! To work! To war!

The SENESCHAL straightens, full of dark energy. CARLA is purring like a cat, lolling on the throne.

**SENESCHAL (TO CARLA)**

Not a single tree will remain standing! Not a blade of grass will survive! Attila himself will be green with envy! I'll find those vagrants!

**56A. EXT. FORTRESS WALLS – DAY**

APU, VICTOR, PIP, BEN and WILL climb an oak tree. A dozen other orphans climb other trees.

**VICTOR (TO HIS FRIENDS IN THE OTHER TREES)**

If you see any sign of danger, whistle twice! Until then, keep your mouths shut.

**PIP**

We have to hurry if we're going to save the coffin-dodger!

**VICTOR**

Show a little respect! That's the King you're talking about.

**PIP**

Yeah, right, but he is *well* old!

The oak tree carries APU, VICTOR, PIP, BEN and WILL to a window of the room where the King is imprisoned in the Seneschal's apartments. It tosses them inside, straight onto the King's bed.

**56B. INT. FORTRESS - KING'S ROOM – DAY**

The King is startled when five filthy urchins suddenly land on his bed. A guard is sleeping at the door

**KING (WHISPERING)**

I don't believe it. Haven't you ever heard of doors? Swinging sets of upright planks on hinges. So what brings you here?

**VICTOR**

The revolution, Sire!

**PIP**

We need you to take its head.

**KING**

Whose head?

**WILL**

We're here to rescue you!

The five orphans take the King to the window where the oak is waiting. Victor carries him on his back.

**KING**

I'm too heavy a burden for your little shoulders, child.

**VICTOR**

I've managed everything the Seneschal's dumped on them for the last ten years, so I think I can uphold the monarchy for a while.

**57. (EX 61) EXT. WOODS, CLEARING – DAY**

We see PRINCE CHARMING arrive on his horse with CINDERELLA still lying across the saddle.

PRINCE CHARMING dismounts and heaves CINDERELLA down, like a peasant unloading a sack from his mule. CINDERELLA is taking all this very badly.

**CINDERELLA (FURIOUS)**

Don't ever do that again! Ever!

**PRINCE CHARMING (SMUGLY)**

Ha! You see what it's like when someone does something you wanted to do?

**CINDERELLA**

And to think I was willing to give my life to save yours!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

To think I risked mine to rescue you from the flames!

They turn their backs on each other.

Sitting on the branch of a tree, MERLIN and the FAIRY GODMOTHER watch the couple.

**MERLIN (LEANING OVER TO THE FAIRY GODMOTHER)**

They're in love, aren't they?

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Of course they are. You can't quarrel like that unless you're in love.

CINDERELLA turns on her heels and stalks away from PRINCE CHARMING.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Where are you going now?

**CINDERELLA**

Since I can't do anything right in your eyes, I'm going to throw myself in the lake!

With no hesitation, CINDERELLA stalks over to the pool and throws herself in. PRINCE CHARMING cannot believe his eyes. He rushes over.

**PRINCE CHARMING (ALARMED)**

Come out! You'll drown!

**CINDERELLA (STRUGGLING IN THE WATER)**

Come and get me if you care about me!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What if I can't swim?

**CINDERELLA**

Always an excuse!

CINDERELLA stops struggling and sinks.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Cinderella!

CINDERELLA does not come up again. Throwing caution to the winds, PRINCE CHARMING dives in too.

CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING come to the surface, clinging to each other.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Help, I'm drowning!

**CINDERELLA**

Is that all you have to say to me?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I don't need a woman who sulks at the slightest excuse!

**CINDERELLA**

Then marry Bertha or Gertrude. They never need an excuse to sulk.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I want to marry *you*!

**CINDERELLA**

You're just saying that so I'll rescue you.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

I'm saying that because I love you!

**CINDERELLA (HOLDING HIM ABOVE WATER)**

Really? And what about all those pretty girls fluttering their eyelashes at you?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

That was just for fun!

**CINDERELLA**

And what am I for?

**PRINCE CHARMING**

You, it's because...

PRINCE CHARMING gets a mouthful of water. Although all CINDERELLA can hear is “glug, glug”, it is the sweetest of answers to her ears. The words “I love you” appear on the surface of the water.

**58. (EX 62) EXT. FORTRESS – DAY**

Clad in armour, the SENESCHAL is hoisted onto his horse with a winch. CARLA stands nearby with BERTHA (who is eating) and GERTRUDE (who is picking her nose). She admires the warrior as he inspects his troops. An army has been raised and is ready to begin its expedition.

In the first section are sappers armed with axes; in the second, more sappers with saws; in the third, men equipped with cutters, and so on. Anything that can slice, cut or saw has been pressed into service. There are even a few period chainsaws.

**SENESCHAL**

Men! We're going to march on the forest where the rebels have taken refuge! And we're going to level that forest!

**59 (EX 63) EXT. WOODS – DAY**

The SENESCHAL's army forms an imposing line covering the entire width of the woods. The SENESCHAL and his men march forward. Axes, saws, cutters, sickles, scythes and chainsaws swing. Nothing can stand against the advance of the woodcutters. From the greatest trees to the smallest shoots, everything is felled, lopped and razed.

The SENESCHAL is triumphant. Beside his horse, the hounds growl.

**60. (EX 64) EXT. FOREST – DAY**

Surrounded by all the children and the old dog REBEL, CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING see the Seneschal's army approaching and forming a battle line.

**CINDERELLA**

We're finished!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What do you mean, finished? I'll deal with this.

**CINDERELLA**

What with? You have no weapons or soldiers.

**CHILDREN (PROTESTING)**

He's got us! We'll fight!

Old REBEL barks. He is ready to fight too.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Can't you call your Fairy Godmother? We could use a little help.

**CINDERELLA**

I can always call her, but I've used up my share of wishes for today.

CINDERELLA and the others are standing at the foot of the GREAT OAK. Suddenly, it turns towards them. A breath of air ruffles CINDERELLA's hair.

**CINDERELLA**

What can trees do against saw, axes and chainsaws?

There is a sudden rumbling in the air, the same noise as at the start of the film. Something is happening. Everyone looks at the shaking ground and quivering trees.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

What's going on?

**60A - EXT. ROYAL PALACE - DAY**

The tremor reaches the Palace. GERTRUDE and BERTHA dive under a wooden table to shelter from the earthquake, but the table and all the rest of the wooden furniture in the room comes to life and leaves through the windows and door. GERTRUDE and BERTHA run to the window. Hundreds of pieces of wooden furniture and utensils - tables, chairs, bed frames, spatulas, brooms and buckets - head over the plain in the direction of the forest.

**60B -EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY**

PRINCE CHARMING, the children and CINDERELLA cannot believe their eyes as the trees and furniture form a battle line behind them. The delighted CINDERELLA high-fives the PRINCE.

## **61 - EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY**

The SENESCHAL reviews his troops, whipping them up into a frenzy.

### **SENESCHAL**

Forward, my pitiless murderers! Cut! Saw! Kill at will!  
Yeaaaargh!

### **SOLDIERS**

Yeaaaargh!

### **SENESCHAL (LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY)**

Oh, this is going to be good! Hah!

The SENESCHAL turns and his laughter dies. The forest is advancing on him and his troops.

### **SENESCHAL**

Charge!

The battle is joined between the trees and the SENESCHAL's wood cutters. In the terrible fray, bludgeoning branches meet swinging axes, saw blades grapple with flying wood and chainsaws parry deadly roots. Blood spurts and woodchips fly.

CINDERELLA and the children are fighting too, kicking and punching. PRINCE CHARMING finds himself face to face with his uncle, the SENESCHAL, who has fallen from his horse. They fight with broadswords. The PRINCE swings his blade at his opponent.

### **PRINCE CHARMING**

Uncle, order your men to stand down!

The SENESCHAL dodges the blow.

### **SENESCHAL**

Why don't you order your infernal forest to withdraw?

### **PRINCE CHARMING**

The trees will stop fighting when your men lay down their weapons. Or would you prefer to decide this man to man?

From his trousers, the PRINCE pulls a broadsword twice the size of the one he has been wielding.

### **SENESCHAL**

You and I in single combat? Oh yes! Ha-ha!

The SENESCHAL pulls out a sword three times bigger than the one he has been using. He repels PRINCE CHARMING and bellows...

**SENESCHAL**

Stop the fight!

The battle stops immediately.

The SENESCHAL and the PRINCE face each other in a small clearing. The SENESCHAL grips his sword firmly.

**SENESCHAL**

Farewell, nephew! My darling doggies are ravenous!

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Your sword is twice as large as mine, uncle. It isn't a fair fight.

**SENESCHAL**

Oh dear. Well you can have it if you want it. Come and get it! Heheh!

Suddenly, a tree steps forward from the forest line and joins the PRINCE. It tosses a branch to him, a hefty club much bigger than the SENESCHAL's sword. The PRINCE plants his sword in the ground and rushes at the SENESCHAL with the club.

The fight begins: they strike, smash, shout, hit, jump and struggle until blood flows.

CINDERELLA pushes through the crowd encircling the fighters and reaches the front row.

The PRINCE is very brave. Faced with the SENESCHAL's brute force, he uses cunning and agility, ducking and weaving. Each of his blows leaves fresh dents in his uncle's armour. Clang! Bang! Boom!

Suddenly, the SENESCHAL sends the PRINCE's club flying from his hands and through the air. The crowd surrounding the fighters reach up to catch it like a bridal bouquet. It falls directly into the hands of... CINDERELLA!

PRINCE CHARMING is sprawling on the ground. The SENESCHAL raises his sword two-handed, ready to deliver the coup de grâce.

**SENESCHAL**

Ha-ha! See how I pin this... er... how I pin this...

**CINDERELLA (O.S.)**

Butterfly?

**SENESCHAL**

That's it! Thank you.

Belatedly, the SENESCHAL realises he is talking to CINDERELLA and turns. Swinging the branch like a baseball hitter, CINDERELLA connects solidly with the SENESCHAL's head, knocking him out cold.

The PRINCE gets up.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Look, I was doing perfectly well by myself...

**CINDERELLA (DUSTING HIM OFF)**

Perhaps you should let me imagine I saved your life. That way we can be quits and get married.

The PRINCE grabs her hand to stop her dusting off his jacket in front of the crowd.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Fair enough. All square.

They walk away, holding hands. The PRINCE is now dusting himself off with his free hand.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Even so, I was doing perfectly well by myself...

**62 - EXT. CASTLE - DAY**

Tightly bound, the SENESCHAL is brought back to the palace by PRINCE CHARMING, CINDERELLA, PIP, BEN, WILL, APU and REBEL, the old dog. They are followed by the band of peasants who have joined the Prince's side and are escorting the SENESCHAL's beaten soldiers.

PRINCE CHARMING sings a song about the forest having been saved and how they plan to prevent trees from being chopped down anywhere.

They stop in front of the raised drawbridge. The palace is impenetrable.

**PRINCE CHARMING**

Hear me, the palace! Open up in the King's name!

BERTHA and GERTRUDE appear on the battlements.

**BERTHA**

Go away! Mummy doesn't want to see anyone!

**GERTRUDE**

You can keep the Seneschal! He's no use any more!

CINDERELLA steps forward to speak to them.

**CINDERELLA**

Sisters, I forgive you. Open up! We have my wedding to prepare. The Prince will find you proper suitors, I

promise. I know your spite was prompted by your mother's greed. (more sternly) Quick, open up, we haven't much time!

Suddenly, BERTHA and GERTRUDE step aside to reveal CLARA behind them, armed with a bow.

**CLARA (TO CINDERELLA)**

You'll never marry!

She aims at CINDERELLA's heart and lets fly.

**SLOW-MOTION SHOT:**

*The arrow streaks towards CINDERELLA: she is facing certain death!*  
But then APU leaps forward, taking the arrow meant for her.

**CINDERELLA**

Apu!

APU falls to the ground.

**APU**

Adonga madingo...

His eyes close: he is going to die.

CINDERELLA cradles him in her arms and calls out urgently...

**CINDERELLA**

Fairy Godmother! Fairy Godmother!

**END OF SLOW-MOTION SHOT**

The FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN appear immediately.

**CINDERELLA**

Fairy Godmother, quick, the wish!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (TO CINDERELLA)**

You know this is your last one?

**CINDERELLA (SOBBING)**

Hurry, Fairy Godmother, please!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (CHECKING THE TIME)**

Ah no, I can't. The twenty-four hours aren't up yet. You'll have to wait an hour, Cinderella.

**CINDERELLA (SOBBING)**

Fairy Godmother! That's quite enough of your nitpicking!

MERLIN stealthily adjusts his watch. Time flies by at lightning speed. The FAIRY GODMOTHER looks daggers at the enchanter.

**MERLIN (FEIGNING SURPRISE)**

Oh no! I seem to have slipped.

MERLIN takes a green card from up his sleeve and holds it out to CINDERELLA.

**MERLIN**

Third wish....

He is interrupted by an "ambulance carriage" which races up and screeches to a halt. Two lackeys dressed in white and wearing caps with large red crosses on them hurry over to APU with a stretcher.

They lift him onto the stretcher, load him into the carriage and race off as quickly as they came.

**CINDERELLA**

Thank you, Fairy Godmother.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER (FURIOUS)**

This is unbelievable! A flagrant breach of the Magic, Necromancy and Resurrection Act! (she turns to leave, still grumbling) What am I supposed to put in my report, then?

She finds herself face to face with the crowd of defeated troops who laugh at her.

**SOLDIERS**

Ha-ha! Hee-hee!

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

What have you got to laugh about, you bunch of hooligans? Get to work! You're going to clean up this palace. There's a wedding to be held!

Magically, brooms and tools of every kind appear in the soldiers' hands. She makes a discreet sign in the direction of the drawbridge, which comes down at once.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Unbelievable!

MERLIN, who missed her sign, follows her.

**MERLIN THE ENCHANTER**

The drawbridge wasn't me!

## **63 - EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - DAY**

### **MUSIC**

The brooms force some of the soldiers to sweep up, while the tools force others to repair furniture “wounded in action”, all in a choreographed dance. In this wonderful setting, everyone sings and even objects come to life. The royal throne slips out of the busy courtyard, carrying the sleeping King. CINDERELLA goes over to him and speaks softly into his ear.

#### **CINDERELLA**

Majesty, it’s time to wake up.

#### **KING**

Ah, breakfast...

#### **CINDERELLA**

Your son and I are waiting for you so we can marry.

#### **KING**

Oh, by all means, as soon as you’ve fed me! You’ll be sure to give me plenty of heirs?

#### **CINDERELLA (LOOKING AT ALL THE CHILDREN BELOW)**

We already have at least a hundred!

#### **KING**

Oh! Have I been asleep as long as that?

## **64 - EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - DAY**

### **A MAGICAL SETTING.**

### **BALLET**

Rose bushes moves into line to form a guard of honour. At their end is an altar covered with flowers of every shade.

To the sound of a wedding march rearranged and sung by the chorus of trees, PRINCE CHARMING and CINDERELLA slowly walk up the aisle.

As they move, all the film’s characters appear behind them: GOODWIFE STOUT dressed as a great lady, PIP, BEN and WILL, washed and brushed, the woodland children, the rescued children, APU who is at last wearing clothes, and so on.

Backed by the trees who wave their branches and leaves, the choir of children sings.

#### **CHOIR OF CHILDREN**

*Here's to life, here's to the woods,  
Here's to life in the woods!*

The SENESCHAL, CARLA, GERTRUDE and BERTHA are as sorry sight. They have been turned into animals but are still recognisable. The SENESCHAL is a mule and CARLA a cow, while GERTRUDE and BERTHA are now geese. CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING kneel before MERLIN, proudly officiating as REGISTRAR.

**FAIRY GODMOTHER**

Come on, Merlin, stop showing off and marry these youngsters!

**MERLIN (LOOKING SOLEMN)**

Does Your Highness take the ragamuffin Cinderella here present to be his lawful wedded wife?

**PRINCE CHARMING (SURPRISED BY MERLIN'S VOCABULARY)**

I do.

**MERLIN**

Cinderella the ragamuffin, do you take his Royal Highness Prince Charming here present to be your lawful wedded husband?

**CINDERELLA (LOOKING AT THE PRINCE)**

Yesssssssss!

**MERLIN**

Then by the occult powers vested in me, I pronounce you man and wife.

PIP, BEN and WILL begin to cheer.

**PIP, BEN & WILL**

A kiss! A kiss! A kiss!

CINDERELLA and PRINCE CHARMING exchange a long kiss... and then begin to dance, signalling the start of a long rustic wedding feast.

**CHOIR OF MAIDENS (SINGING)**

*We've all found our Prince Charming...*

**WEDDING BALLET:**

PRINCE CHARMING and CINDERELLA dance together.  
The children dance in pairs.  
The KING dances with GOODWIFE STOUT.

APU dances with REBEL.

Animals dance with humans.

The trees waltz too.

In their new animal guises, the SENESCHAL, CARLA, GERTRUDE and BERTHA move nervously among the dancers.

### **65 - EXT. - HILL - DAY**

On top of the hill overlooking the palace, the FAIRY GODMOTHER and MERLIN are sitting in a tree whose branches form a double seat.

#### **MERLIN (WATCHING THE CELEBRATIONS IN THE DISTANCE)**

Do come and dance, my dear!

#### **FAIRY GODMOTHER (WRITING IN A HUGE BOOK RESTING ON HER KNEES)**

Stop pestering me, I haven't finished my report yet.

#### **MERLIN (WATCHING THE WEDDING FEAST)**

Ah, love's a beautiful thing!

MERLIN rests his head on the shoulder of the FAIRY GODMOTHER, who is concentrating on her work.

The feast scene freezes and the picture splits into a myriad of crystals that glitter and fly straight into the book open on the FAIRY GODMOTHER's lap.

The picture of the feast reforms on the two open pages of the book.

The FAIRY GODMOTHER closes the book.

The words "THE END" are written on the cover.

#### **MERLIN**

Can we dance now?

#### **FAIRY GODMOTHER**

The music's stopped.

#### **MERLIN**

Yes, it has. You've shut it away in the book!

**THE END**