

Spotlight Publications

**Cinderella's
Time Out**

**A Christmas play in one act
by Jane Lockyer Willis**

COPYRIGHT © JANE LOCKYER WILLIS 2011
Published by Spotlight Publications

All rights are reserved including performances on stage, radio and television. **No part of this publication may be copied by whatever means without the prior permission of the copyright owner.** It is an infringement of the copyright to give any performance or public reading of the play before a licence has been issued.

Drama groups must obtain a full acting set of scripts (a minimum of one script per actor plus one for the director) before a performing licence can be issued.

The name of the author shall be stated on all publicity including posters and programmes. Programme credits shall state "script provided by Spotlight Publications".

All enquiries to:
Spotlight Publications, 259 The Moorings, Dalgety Bay, Fife, KY11 9GX
Tel. 01383 825737

Email: enquiries@spotlightpublications.com

Website: www.spotlightpublications.com

ISBN 978-1-907307-30-0

CHARACTERS

Cinderella 18/ 20s, pretty and slim - edgy, independent but kind.

Ratty The footman, any age. Rough round the edges; loyal, kind.

Ermyntrude Ugly Sister, 20s - devilish to start with, but improves!

Dorinda Ugly Sister, 20s and of a similar nature.

The Prince Charming: 20s and charming!

Bo Peep 18/20s, pretty, spoilt, manipulative, Daddy's girl.

Bertie Fairy Godfather - 20s, effete, vain, efficient, kind.

Dad Bo Peep's father, - 40s, rough, with a good heart.

4 Sheep Any age.

The Dragon any age. Fiery!

Time: The distant past.

Place: Various simple sets.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Scene 1 - Kitchen in Cinderella's and Ugly Sisters' mansion

Scene 2 - The Palace grounds

Scene 3 - An inn

Scene 4 - Bedroom at the Palace

Scene 5 - *En route* to the mansion

Scene 6 - The mansion's drawing room

Scene 7 - Inside the magic coach

MUSICAL NUMBER

Scene 7 - Cinderella's Song (lyrics by the author)

Suggested music for it: 'Dreaming' from CD: British Light Music Classics the New London Orchestra (Hyperion)

NOTES ON TEXT

This is a one act Christmas play that can be staged in one of two ways - this depending on the director's view point, budget and availability of set designers, builders and wardrobe.

It is possible, I think, to create a great deal of fun from the use of minimal props, disguise and the utilizing of the auditorium. Less is more! If the play was performed by a youth theatre, the members could make their own sheep masks, and dragon outfit and a coach for the final scene. If a coach is difficult, then improvise using chairs. Holding the reins can be mimed by Ratty. The horses could be hobby horses. It would be an opportunity to engage all members of a club for it to become a real team effort.

At the opposite end of the scale, where the theatre is flush with funds, the play could take on a more traditional style. The choice is entirely up to the theatre and director.

Scene 1

The kitchen of a mansion that has been left to Cinderella and her three sisters by their mother. The sisters, however, dislike and are jealous of Cinderella because she is the pretty one. She is, therefore, relegated to the basement kitchen where she is treated like a servant

When the play opens Cinderella is seen pacing the kitchen floor. She brandishes the glass slipper, while Ratty looks on helplessly

Cinderella I won't! I won't! I won't! *(She slings the slipper into a wheelie bin in the corner of the room)*

Ratty Temper! Temper!

Cinderella I won't! I say! Read my lips.

Ratty So what do I tell the Prince?

Cinderella Tell him to go to hell!

Ratty My instructions is to get you to the palace pronto.

Cinderella Yes! I don't need reminding.

Ratty Wedding preparations is already under way - lovely invitations this year, headed as per with the royal coat of arms. The cathedral's been booked, not to mention the

Cinderella Oh shut up, you silly little man! Don't you get it?

Ratty No. Can't say I do.

Cinderella Yet once again The Prince, the courtiers, the whole damned lot of them assume, take for granted that I'm going to fit in with their plans. Just like that! Just like I've done every year since the beginning of this stupid tale.

Ratty So? What's wrong wiv that?

Cinderella It's exploitation, that's what's wrong. If it weren't for me, the Cinderella pantomime wouldn't exist. If it weren't for me, there'd be a massive gap in the book market. The whole thing is a commercial racket. I want out!

Ratty Now look 'ere!

Cinderella Go and bother another fairytale. Crack on to Sleeping Beauty. She needs waking up, the lazy cow! Just leave me out of it.

Ratty You want to think careful about this, gal.

Cinderella I have thought 'careful'. Just tell the Prince that the slipper doesn't fit.

Ratty I can't say that! I'd lose my job.

Cinderella Too bad!

Ratty Thanks very much.

Cinderella Puppets! That's all we are - nothing more than puppets.

Cinderella goes to the cupboard and brings out a bottle of sherry

Fancy a glass of cooking sherry? Those hideous sisters of mine ration me to a bottle a week.

Ratty I won't say no.

She takes out two glasses fills them and gives one to Ratty. She sits with her feet up on the kitchen table while Ratty sits on a kitchen chair

Cinderella *(takes a sip)* My point is this. When the pantomime lot have finished with us, laughed themselves silly over us, made a packet from royalties, book sales and so on, what do they do with us?

Ratty *(sampling the sherry)* You tell me.

Cinderella They change the theatre programmes, close the story book and forget us for another year. I hate being used. I've had enough of it, I tell you. That I have!

Ratty I don't understand you, Cinderella. I really don't. *(He wipes his whiskers)* You enjoy the balls, don't you?

Cinderella Ugh!

Ratty Your fairy godmother then. You like *her*.

Cinderella Sanctimonious busybody!

Ratty Your ball gown then. Lovely that last one with those lacy bits round the collar!

Cinderella Tat!

Ratty Better than that ancient shell suit of yours.

Cinderella True. (*Rises and peers at him closely*) Is this your first year as footman?

Footman nods

Cinderella You know, I could swear I've seen you somewhere before. (*Pause*) Wait a minute! Wasn't it you drove me to this year's ball?

Ratty (*uncomfortable*) May 'ave done.

Cinderella I know who you are! You're our resident rat!

Ratty Was your resident rat, if you don't mind.

Cinderella So what're you doing poncing about as a footman?

Ratty (*straightening*) Now look 'ere! There's no need to take that tone. I'd rather serve royalty any day than 'ang about these drains.

Cinderella stares at him hard

Cinderella Fancy a piece of pumpkin pie with your sherry?

Ratty Very kind, I'm sure.

Cinderella reaches for the cake tin and cuts him a large slice of 'coach'. She watches him closely as he eats

Cinderella Why haven't you changed back into a rat? Slipped through the net did you?

He is busy nibbling and does not reply

You have! You've beaten the system, haven't you?

Ratty Pr'aps

Cinderella I'm impressed! (*She refills their glasses*) How did you do it?

Ratty takes out a red pocket handkerchief, dabs his lips and burps

Ratty After your Godmother waved 'er magic wand over you, the pumpkin, me and those six kitchen mice...

Cinderella Rats, darling! Cart horses to pull the coach this year. We haven't had mice now for over two years.

Ratty Of course, yes.

Cinderella Ridiculous woman! She can't even get that right. No finesse. None!

Ratty Well anyway, I drove you to the palace in your glass carriage. When we got there, I escorted you up the main staircase and into the ballroom. The guests gazed with wonder at your beauty and the Prince danced with you all evening.

Cinderella He's got two left feet. They don't mention that in the story, do they?

Ratty (*sighs*) I obeyed your Godmother's instructions to the letter.

Cinderella Go on.

Ratty I was back at the coach nice and early, waitin' to drive you 'ome because we all know what happens if you don't show up by midnight.

Cinderella My evening gear turns into grunge, the horses back into mice and my natty coach, minus springs, into a pumpkin. Yes.

Ratty Well?

Cinderella What do you mean, well?

Ratty What 'appened to you? You wasn't wiv the Prince, I know that much.

Cinderella Yes, well this year, the poor man was more besotted with me than ever. The orchestra played his favourite sappy numbers and we staggered around the floor like a couple of crinklies at a tea dance. By eleven fifteen, I'd had enough. My feet were killing me. They've given me gyp for years. That slipper has never fitted properly, you know.

Ratty Go on!

Cinderella I excused myself from the ball saying that I needed to powder my nose. I ran down the great staircase, which incidentally needs re-carpeting, placed my slipper on the bottom step for the Prince to find later then fled to the Ladies to bathe my feet. I must have dropped asleep because the next thing I knew, I was back in my shell suit.

Ratty Yeh - wouldn't want to be seen in that.

Cinderella Oh Lord! I thought, now what? Anyway, I managed to squeeze through the lavatory window and landed in a soggy cabbage patch just as the clock struck the quarter.

Ratty Twelve fifteen?

Cinderella Yes. I knew there was no point in going back to the coach, far too late for that, so I took a back route and walked home.

Ratty Interesting. (*He helps himself to more sherry and refills Cinderella's glass*)

Cinderella So, carry on with *your* story, Ratty.

Ratty Well, while I was waitin' for you by the coach, the Prince, he comes runnin' up to me. Stone the crows! 'E's never done that before. A fair old lather 'e's into.

Cinderella Because he'd found the slipper and lost *me*. He loves all that heartbreak stuff.

Ratty Nah! But there wasn't no slipper, see?

Cinderella Of course there was. I left it on the step, like I said.

Ratty Yeh, but the Queen's dog got it, didn't 'e?

Cinderella That mangy old King Charles spaniel?

Ratty That's the one. 'E must 'ave found the shoe, nicked it, and buried it. That's what the Prince thought anyway. Well after that the ball comes to a grinding halt and all the guests is ordered to search the garden and the palace.

Cinderella What a drag! And in all their finery too. Did they find it?

Ratty Nah! That's why 'e comes to me. Had *I* seen it? And what was 'e to do? How was 'e to pull the plot together and tie up the ends? No slipper, no story.

Cinderella (*pointing to the wheelie bin*) So what's that I threw into the wheelie bin?

Ratty (*sheepishly*) That belongs to his mother, the Queen.

Cinderella The Queen? You took the Queen's slipper and then made out it was mine?

Ratty It was the Prince's suggestion. 'E didn't know what else to do. It's an exact copy of yours, you see. The King's rather partial to feet, if you get my meaning. He wanted Her Majesty to possess a pair like yours, so 'e had them made special like. That is in strictest confidence, you understand.

Cinderella How pathetic! And the Prince told you all this?

Ratty (*suddenly formal*) That is correct.

Cinderella (*to herself*) Sharing confidences with the footman now, is he?

Ratty I felt most honoured. (*Pause*) Anyway, in gratitude for my unstinting emotional support, he offered me the prestigious post of footman.

Cinderella But you were already a footman. (*Thinks*) Oh I see. You were only footman as long as the spell lasted. And then not to him, not to anyone, I suppose.

Ratty That's right. But now he offered me a job. And I was to be permanent.

Cinderella I see.

Ratty That's 'ow I slipped through the net, as you put it. And that's why I don't approve you slaggin' off your Godmother. Wivout 'er 'elp, I'd still be vermin. She's been good to me. The minute His Royal Highness offered me the post, she appeared out of nowhere. Looked real nice too, carryin' that wand of 'ers. If I wanted the job, she said, I could 'ave it - stay a footman for as long as I liked, and there would be no fear of my changing back into a rat, she'd make sure of that. They've both been such a help to me, her and the Prince.

Cinderella Well good on you. Yes. Well done, Ratty. But still! How dare you all lie and cheat on me like that!

Ratty Now look 'ere, Cinderella. I do my job, same as most. I obey orders. That is my life now. And it's no joke I can tell you, trailing round the kingdom viewing ladies' smelly deformed feet. Anyway, none of this would 'ave come out if you 'adn't kicked up just now. You've never kicked up in the past. You loved him. You always loved the Prince. You can't deny that.

Cinderella Perhaps I do love him, yes. But I feel so shackled, so hemmed in by my tale which never changes. No, I'm finished with it all. They come as a package. No fairytale, no Prince. So that's it. I want a new life without straight roads and predictable endings. I want to be free to make my own decisions - my own choices, right or wrong. In short, I'm off, and if you've any sense, you'll come with me.

Ratty You got to be jokin'. I don't miss bein' a rat one bit. I do worry though in case I change back one of these days by accident. Your Godmother does make the odd mistake, I grant you. Sometimes I feel a bit twitchy round the whiskers and go for the cheese big time, you know? But thanks, but no thanks. I've chosen my destiny.

Cinderella Well said, Ratty! I admire your loyalty I must say.

Cinderella's Time Out

Jane Lockyer Willis's delightful new take on the classic fairytale.

Plot Summary

Cinderella yearns for 'a new life without straight roads and predictable endings.' Abandoning the story and the doting Prince Charming, she travels the world seeking her independence. Meanwhile the Prince, now at a loose end, meets Bo Peep. She temporarily fills the emotional gap, and together they set up home at his parent's palace. Cinderella finally returns to live with her ugly sisters, now kind and loving, owing to the positive influence of a new, innovative Fairy Godfather. Worried that Cinderella's behaviour has influenced other fairytales, the Prince and Bo Peep visit her to see what can be done. *En route*, a dragon pursues them and attacks Bo Peep's sheep. All is resolved, when Godfather issues invitations to the annual ball. Bo Peep's father slays the dragon and Bo Peep, ever devoted to her flock, decides to return to her nursery rhyme. The liberated Cinderella and the Prince, having attended the ball, are reunited and arrive back at the palace just before midnight. The fairy tale is back on track.

ISBN 978-1-907307-30-0