

NODA presents

# Cinderella

by John Birchley

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## CAST LIST

Cinderella

Buttons

Prince Charming

Dandini

Baron

Baroness

Ugly Sister 1

name as you wish, perhaps topically or locally, they are not referred to in the script by name but might be nice for the programme

Ugly Sister 2

name as you wish, perhaps topically or locally, they are not referred to in the script by name but might be nice for the programme

Broker's Man 1 – name as Ugliers if you like

Broker's Man 2 – name as Ugliers if you like

Fairy Godmother

Major Domo

Footman

Chorus of Villagers, Huntsmen, Children and Ball guests

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Act One Scene 1 A Forest glade near Woodvale
- Scene 2 The kitchen of Hardup Hall
- Scene 3 The Forest
- Scene 4 Outside Hardup Hall and the kitchen of Hardup Hall
- Scene 5 Somewhere in Woodvale
- Scene 6 The kitchen of Hardup Hall, early the following evening

## INTERVAL

- Act Two Scene 1 The Castle Ballroom
- Scene 2 A path in the Forest
- Scene 3 Hardup Hall
- Scene 4 The Market square in Woodvale, the next day.
- Scene 5 Hardup Hall

**ACT 1****SCENE ONE**

*A Forest glade near Woodvale. Early morning.*

*The scene opens with the whole chorus as villagers singing and dancing to welcome the day in Woodvale.*

<b>MUSIC 1</b>	<b>CHORUS</b>
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*At end of song and dance villagers clear to reveal Prince Charming and Dandini have entered US, much fuss and bowing as they realise who it is.*

**Villager 1** Look who it is !

**Villager 2** Dandini, the valet to the Prince.

**Villager 3** But who's that handsome fellow with him ?

**Villager 4** It's Prince Charming himself.

**Villager 5** He's even better looking than they say.

**Villager 6** But there's a sadness in his eye, they say it's because he has not yet found his perfect princess.

*General agreement between Villagers*

**Dandini** Villagers of Woodvale, Good day !

**Villagers** Good day, sir !

**Dandini** Another beautiful day, is it not ?

**Villagers** Yes, sir !

**Dandini** We are here with an invitation, (*excitement from Villagers*) and his highness, Prince Charming of Woodvale. He will tell you himself of the good news.

**Charming** Good day, my loyal villagers.

**Villagers** (*much bowing and curtsying*) Good day, your highness !

**Charming** As you all know today is the day of the Royal Hunt. Many important visitors from across the kingdom will be here and I know many of you will be joining us in the hunt.

*Villagers react excitedly*

But more importantly, should hunt goes well and I'm sure that it will, I intend to throw a celebration ball tomorrow night.

*More excitement from Villagers*

And I want as many of you, my loyal subjects and friends, especially the ladies, to join me tomorrow at the Palace.

**Villagers** The Palace !?

**Charming** Yes, the Palace !

**Villagers** What us ?

**Charming** Yes, you.

**Villagers** What all of us ?

**Charming** Yes, all of you, I look on all of you as my friends, come to the Palace tomorrow and celebrate a great day for Woodvale. Dandini, my valet, will personally deliver invitations to you all. I hope hunting is good and that he is a busy man tomorrow.

**Villager 7** Hurrah for Prince Charming!

**Villagers** Hurrah!

**Dandini** And now off you go to prepare.

*Villagers exit variously, leaving Charming and Dandini*

**Dandini** A popular move, your highness, no doubt about that.

**Charming** Yes, Dandini, a lot to look forward to, some excellent sport and I am going to hold the largest ball in the history of Woodvale. Who knows I may even meet the girl who is to become my princess there.

*Charming and Dandini exit*



## SCENE TWO

*The kitchen of Hardup Hall.*

*A fireplace or kitchen range etc.*

*Perhaps two stools either side of the fire.*

*Buttons enters, he carries an opened letter.*

**Buttons** *(to audience)* Hello, everybody ! *(waits for reaction)* My name's Buttons, hello. And how are you all? *(reaction)* I'm glad to hear that you're ok; I've forgotten what that feels like things have been so bad here in Hardup Hall recently, I think I might soon be out of a job. *(indicating letter)* All we ever seem to get is bills, or worse! My boss The Baron had to open the grounds to the public as a theme park, he hoped it would be as good as Alton Towers, but it's not doing very well. I'm an Under Footman not a great job but it's all I have. I'm the only servant left here at Hardup Hall now and if I lose my job I'll have nowhere to live and I don't know what I'll do.

*Cinderella enters, with a besom and busies herself at rear of stage.*

If I had to leave here I may never see Cinderella again *(indicates Cinders over his shoulder to audience)* that's her, I think she's lovely. She's the baron's daughter but since his wife died a year ago he treats her more like a servant, it's so unfair. She's always sad, I try to cheer her up by telling her one of my jokes, but it doesn't always work. Would you like to hear one of my jokes? *(waits for audience reaction)* Okay, what about this one? *(thinks for a moment)* I know *(clears throat)* What a frog's favourite drink? Croaka-cola! Cinders didn't think it was very funny either. No matter how hard I try she spends all day moping, she thinks no one loves her anymore but . . . can I tell you a secret? *(waits for reaction)* I do. I'm in love with her I have been since the first moment I saw her and I've decided that today's the day I'm going to tell her, I can't wait any longer,. Here goes, wish me luck!

*Buttons turns to Cinders.*

**Cinders** *(realising she is not alone)* Buttons! You made me jump, how long have you been there?

**Buttons** Just a moment, Cinders. How are you today?

**Cinders** Oh, the same as usual, Buttons, all I ever seem to do is clean and cook and sew and iron and wash and I'm always tired. I'm fed up.

**Buttons** I know, Cinders, I'm sure things will improve soon, you must look on the bright side. That's what I try to do, in fact there's a song that I sing to myself to help, would you like to hear it ?

**Cinders** If it's what keeps you happy, Buttons, then, yes, I would.

<b>MUSIC 2</b>	<b>BUTTONS AND CINDERS</b>
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**Buttons** Does that help, Cinders ?

**Cinders** It's so kind of you to try to help, Buttons, but I work all the time and my father seems to do nothing and he's just taken himself away on holiday, how can we afford that?

**Buttons** Well, he must think you can. But we get on well don't we, Cinders? I do enjoy being with you.

**Cinders** Yes, Buttons, so do I. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't here with that smile of yours and your silly jokes.

**Buttons** *(turning away from Cinders, trying hard to find the right words)* I'm glad you've said that because it's exactly how I feel Cinders and I was wondering ...

*Cinders is not listening, she has picked up something and is polishing it furiously.*

I was wondering... I was wondering ...

*(he turns to face Cinders)*

if you...

*(he realises that Cinders is not listening to him)*

Oh, Cinders!

**Cinders** *(starts)* Oh, I'm sorry Buttons, I was miles away. What were you saying?

**Buttons** *(sad, feeling that the moment has gone)* Nothing, Cinders, it's not important.

**Cinders** What is that letter, Buttons, it's not another bill?

**Buttons** This is much worse than any bill.

**Cinders** Oh, dear, what is it?

**Buttons** It's a letter from Quick, Grabbit and Runn, the debt collectors. It says that as your father is behind with his payments for almost everything they are

sending men round in next few days to (*refers to letter*) 'seize property to the value of outstanding debts'.

**Cinders** Oh, no, Buttons, that's terrible, what are we going to do?

**Buttons** Well, I don't think that they will find anything worth having, your father sold anything worth anything already. But I do wish he were here to face them himself.

*Baron Hardup enters, stage left, bags and suitcases weigh him down.*

**Buttons** (*to audience*) Well, I wonder if all my wishes will be answered so easily, it is a pantomime, I suppose.

**Baron Hardup** Hello, my dear (*drops bags and hugs Cinderella*) how are you?

**Cinders** Father, you're back, and not a moment too soon.

**Baron** Whatever's wrong my dear?

**Cinders** Buttons, will tell you father ?

**Baron** Oh, you're still here are you? Hurry up because I have some exciting news for you.

**Buttons** It's all in this letter, your lordship, it arrived today. (*hands letter to Baron*)

*Baron reads letter getting more and more angry as he does so, Buttons clears bags and cases US*

**Baron** (*as he reads letter*) What ... how dare they? ... Preposterous! (*finishes reading letter and puts it in his pocket*) Well, my dear, it seems that I have arrived in the nick of time, my news will help us in our hour of need. (*takes Cinders by the hand*) You know how lonely I have been since your dear mother died and I do know how sad you have been. Now all of that is over ... while I was away I met someone who I thought was wonderful (*aside*) – and rich - luckily she thought so too. Cinderella, darling I want you to meet ...

*Baroness Hardup enters, she is old, as ugly as her daughters and bad tempered, she inspects the surroundings obviously not impressed with what she sees.*

My new wife, your new stepmother!

**Cinders** (*shocked, but trying to be polite*) Father, this is such a surprise! (*turns away in horror*)

**Baron** I know my dear, it all happened so quickly, but we got on so well, I know it's the right thing to do (*aside*) at least I hope it is! (*turns to Baroness*) Lucretia, my dear, welcome to Hardup Hall. Do you like what you see?

**Baroness** Not so far, someone has just tried to charge me to enter the grounds, what's that all about?

**Baron** It's because they don't know you yet my dear, but when they do it'll all be different.

**Baroness** You can say that again! There need to be some serious changes around here.

**Baron** If you say so, my dear.

**Buttons** Baroness, May I introduce myself my name is Buttons, I am the Under Footman, can I take this opportunity to welcome you on behalf of all the staff to Hardup Hall?

**Baroness** No, you cannot. Servants only speak to me if I speak to them first, you had better remember that - make sure all the other servants know too.

**Baron** I'm afraid there are no other servants, my dear, I did tell you that times have been hard recently.

**Baroness** What! Who is going to cook and clean and sew and iron and wash?

**Cinders** I think that's where I come in.

**Baroness** (*aghast, to Baron*) What is that?

**Baron** That's my daughter, Cinderella. She has looked after the Hall and me since my dear wife ..

*Baroness glares at him.*

... my dear first wife

*Baroness glares again*

... my first wife died so sadly.

**Baroness** But you never mentioned you had a daughter!

**Baron** No, it never seemed to be the right time. But I'm sure you'll soon get to know each other.

**Baroness** Yes, I expect we will, I'm very good at that! Just listen to this.

<b>MUSIC 3</b>	<b>BARONESS</b>	<b>(optional) if not used cut Baroness' last line</b>
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**Baroness** Well, since she's has been so successful as a servant that's how she will stay.

**Cinders** Father, say something! Do Something!

**Baron** *(to Cinders)* I will, my dear, but just now is not the right time.

**Buttons** Well, if you won't I will have to. *(to Baroness)* Now look here your ladyship, Cinderella is the Baron's daughter, she's not just a servant and I really don't think ...

**Baroness** *(cutting him off)* That's obvious, if you did think you would realise that you are just a servant and that, as your employer's new wife, I can fire you. If you were to lose your job here you'd probably have nowhere else to go. Am I right?

*Buttons says nothing but looks sheepish.*

... I am, aren't I?

*Buttons nods*

Well in that case you had better think before you open your mouth again, hadn't you?

*Buttons nods again*

Good, I always find it best to start as I mean to go on.

*Banging and loud raucous voices are heard off stage.*

**Baron** What's that? Buttons are we expecting any guests?

*Buttons is too taken aback to reply, but the Baroness gets in first anyway*

**Baroness** They are not guests. Now it is time for my little surprise! *(calls off stage)* This way, my darlings! These are my daughters!!

*Baron is shocked, Cinders and Buttons support him.*

*The Ugly Sisters burst onto the stage carrying suitcases and bags, they are younger, even more gruesome versions of the Baroness. They end up in a heap in the middle of the stage.*

**Ugly 1** *(getting to her feet and seeing her mother)* Mummy! That's where you are! *(goes to Baroness and hugs her)*

**Ugly 2** *(also picking herself up, elbowing Ugly 1 out of the way)* Mother dearest! We've been looking everywhere for you!

**Baroness** And now you're here. My dears, this is my new husband Baron Hardup, your new stepfather.

*Uglies look him up and down*

**Ugly 1** *(looks Baron up and down, she is unimpressed)* Very nice Mummy, does he have lots of money for us to spend?

**Ugly 2** *(even less impressed)* Seen one step father, seen them all.

*Baron is about to introduce Cinders, but doesn't get the chance.*

**Ugly 1** As I was saying, Mummy, we got lost in that dreadful theme park next door. It's terrible, full of ordinary people all chewing gum and wearing baseball caps backwards.

**Ugly 2** Yes, you wouldn't believe it, Mother dearest, there were crowds everywhere, and we got stuck in one queue for hours and hours.

**Ugly 1** It was for the Ghost ride

**Ugly 2** Yes, and as we got to the entrance the man taking the tickets said to us 'The staff entrance is round the back!' He seemed to think we were part of the ride, cheek!

**Ugly 1** And then we had to go through this part with speak your weight machines and I couldn't resist trying one, see how my new diet is going ...

**Baroness** What new diet it that, my cherub?

**Ugly 1** It's the Seafood diet, Mummy, I found it in Goodbye magazine.

**Ugly 2** And she's doing very well on it every time she sees food she eats it!

**Ugly 1** *(not realising the insult)* And do you know what it said when she got on ?

**Buttons** *(aside to audience)* I think I can guess.

**Ugly 1** I was so embarrassed it said 'One at a time, please!' I couldn't believe it. I didn't realise the case I was carrying was so heavy.

**Ugly 2** (*sniggering*) Yes, dear, that must have been what it was.

**Ugly 1** And we finally headed in the right direction, but as we were coming through the Hall of Mirrors next door ...

**Ugly 2** Yes, it was full of those awful mirrors that make you look ugly and distort your bodies hideously.

**Baron** But we haven't got any of those.

**Ugly 2** There must be something wrong with those mirrors.

**Cinderella** I don't think the mirrors are the problem!

*Both Uglies round on Cinders, realising for the first time that someone else is there.*

**Ugly 1** What do you mean ? ...

**Ugly 2** ... How dare you ?

*They look at Cinders, then each other, then the Baroness*

**Ugly 1**

**Ugly 2** (*together*) WHAT ... IS ... THAT ?????

**Baron** Why, girls, that is my daughter, Cinderella, your new step sister.

*Uglies look at each other bemused*

**Ugly 1**

**Ugly 2** (*together*) But we've never had one of those before ..... AAAHHHH !!!!!!!!!!!!!

*Uglies run round and round in ever decreasing circles and collapse in a heap together. Others look on in astonishment.*

**Baroness** (*distraught*) My babies, my babies! Don't just stand there, do something!

*Cinders and Buttons each help an Ugly to their feet and onto the stools, Baron and Baroness fan them with handkerchiefs, lots of fuss.*

**Ugly 1** (*as she recovers*) Mummy, we don't want one of them! Make it go away!

**Ugly 2** It's horrible! Why can't it be just us?

**Baron** But I thought you'd all get on together. It would be nice for Cinders to have some company; you can help each other with things.

**Ugly 1** *(now fully recovered and thinking clearly again)* Oh, don't you fret, step father dear, she will be able to help us with things.

**Ugly 2** *(also recovered)* Yes, she can help us, can't you my dear? You can help us with everything, just you wait and see.

*Uglies get up and tower over Cinders.*

**Baron** Oh, good, I can see you will get along splendidly. Now you must all be tired after the journey you've had, let me show you to your rooms to freshen up. Buttons, the luggage!

*Baron and Baroness exit stage right, Uglies load luggage onto Buttons and lead him off, Cinders is left DSC, saddened.*

**Cinders** And I thought things couldn't get any worse. They're not very nice, are they? What is to become of dear father and me?

<b>MUSIC 4</b>	<b>CINDERS</b>
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*Cinders exits*

### SCENE 3

*The Forest. Later that day.*

*The scene opens with some of the junior chorus on stage as woodland creatures, others join them as dance begins.*

<b>MUSIC 5</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTAL</b>
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*Chorus exit as dance ends, except one creature that appears to be caught on a branch or a root.*

*Cinders enters, carrying a basket to collect twigs for kindling.*



**Cinders** (*seeing creature*) Oh, dear what do we have here? (*goes over to creature*)  
 What have you done? Don't be scared I'm only going to help. (*untangles creature*)  
 There, that's better, isn't it?

*Cinders watches as creature exits*

**Cinders** (*speaking to audience as she picks up twigs*) Poor thing, I hope it'll be all right. (*sighs*) That horrible pair have sent me to collect some wood for the fire and I'm glad to be out of the house. It's been just horrible since those two arrived. The only time they stop arguing is when they're giving me lists of things to do or moaning at me for the way I'm doing them. I thought things were bad before they arrived. I never thought it could get so much worse.

*Fairy Godmother dressed in a cloak as an old woman enters SR she too carries a basket and struggles to pick up twigs*

And I don't think Daddy is happy, I don't know why he married that woman, perhaps she has loads of money. But that's not everything, is it? Not if we're going to be unhappy. (*sees Fairy Godmother*) Oh, I thought I was on my own, hello,

**Fairy Godmother** Why, hello, my dear, I didn't see you there. I'm just collecting a few twigs to get the fire in my little cottage started (*sighs*) but everything seems to take so much longer now than it used to (*bends down very slowly to pick up a twig*) Oh, my poor old back.

**Cinders** Here, let me do that for you, (*bends down and picks up twigs for Fairy Godmother*) there you are.

**Fairy Godmother** (*taking twigs*) Thank you, that is good of you.

**Cinders** No need to thank me, I'd do it for anybody, in fact here, take these (*takes twigs she has gathered out of basket and holds out to FG*) I can easily collect some more.

**Fairy Godmother** (*taking twigs*) Thank you, what a kind girl you are.

**Cinders** Well, I do try to help people if I can.

**Fairy Godmother** Not only people is it, my dear, I saw you a moment ago helping that poor creature.

**Cinders** I didn't think anyone else was around.

**Fairy Godmother** Oh, I see a lot of things you know.

**Cinders** Do you? Well, yes, I like to help any living creature if I can.

**Fairy Godmother** And you really do make a difference. You'll be rewarded for it, my dear.

**Cinders** But you don't need to be rewarded for doing the right thing. Although it certainly doesn't seem to have done me much good recently.

**Fairy Godmother** But it will, believe me, it will.

**Cinders** I hope you're right.

**Fairy Godmother** Oh, I am, my dear. Now I must be getting back, goodbye, my dear, until we meet again.

**Cinders** Take care, I can walk with you to your cottage if you'd like.

**Fairy Godmother** That won't be necessary, you've already done more than enough.

*They part going off in different directions, Cinders continues to pick up twigs US. Fairy Godmother goes to exit but returns DSC and talks to audience.*

<b>MUSIC 6</b>	<b>FAIRY GODMOTHER THEME</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTAL</b>
<i>Heard quietly under dialogue.</i>		

**Fairy Godmother** *(to audience)* So that is Cinderella. She really is a good girl, as good as I've been told. She's going through a bad time, but things will get better. That's where I come in *(pulls back hood of cloak)* her Fairy Godmother. I'll look after her, I'll see that everything's alright in the end, you wait and see. And now, goodbye, my dears. *(drops star unseen by audience then exits SR)*

**Cinders** *(coming to front of stage)* Perhaps I could come and visit you one day, just to make sure you're alright ..... *(seeing no one)* ... Oh, she's gone. But, what's this?

*bends down and picks up a star, which FG dropped*

<b>MUSIC 7</b>	<b>FAIRY GODMOTHER THEME is heard again briefly</b>
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This must be hers, that's strange. Oh, well, I'll keep it until I see her again, perhaps when I'm next collecting kindling. *(puts star into basket)* I'd better collect some more before I go back, I expect those two will have more jobs to be done. *(exit)*

*Dandini and Charming enter, they are dressed for hunting..*

**Charming** How are the preparations going, Dandini?

**Dandini** Preparations are going well, your highness, for the hunt and the ball. The guests have begun to arrive, the royal horses are all groomed and fed, the kitchen staff are all working overtime to spring clean the palace and the ballroom is being decorated – just in case!

**Charming** Just in case! You know as well as I do, Dandini, that the ball is the most important part, that's why every unmarried girl in the kingdom must be invited. My parents are concerned that I am not yet married they want an heir to the throne. Well, all seems to be going splendidly, you've done a fine job of organising Dandini.

**Dandini** Thank you, your highness, we have much to look forward to, but the thing I'm looking forward to most is a rest tonight, just taking my boots off and sinking into a chair.

**Charming** You are lucky Dandini, I have all those important guests to entertain tonight, I have to remember who is who, when I last saw them, the names of all their wives and children and these things always go on so, I'll be lucky if I can relax before midnight. It's one of the drawbacks of this job you're always on show, always under pressure. Pressure to say the right thing, to be seen with the right people.

**Dandini** Eating the best food in the kingdom? Drinking the best wines? Being photographed with Little Mix for Goodbye magazine? That's the kind of pressure I would hate!

**Charming** It sounds as if you doubt me, Dandini.

**Dandini** Well, your highness, there do seem to be some benefits.

**Charming** Do there, indeed? Well, why don't you try it?

**Dandini** Your highness?

**Charming** There's a little time until the hunt starts, until then, you, my friend, will be the prince.

**Dandini** I don't understand.

**Charming** (*taking off jacket*) Here, give me your jacket.

*Dandini does as he is told, Charming hands over his jacket. They put them on.*

There, now you will see, for just two hours you will carry the responsibility of the kingdom and I will be able to relax for probably the first time in my life. Right, go and do princely things ... don't just stand there, off you go!

**Dandini** (*haughtily*) I beg your pardon, my man?

**Charming** I said off you go (*realising*) oh, I see what you did there. (*bowing*) Might I suggest that you make your way back to the palace, your highness?

**Dandini** That's better! I think I shall. I will see you later, my man. (*exits SL*)

**Charming** Well, at last I have a chance to see how other folks live. I think I will stroll into the village and see what is going on ...

*Cinders enters SR*

... wait a moment! What a beauty! Perhaps I shall have more fun here. (*Turns to Cinders*) Good day to you.

**Cinders** Oh, sir, you startled me.

**Charming** I'm sorry I didn't intend that. A beautiful day, isn't it? (*turns to audience*) She is beautiful!

**Cinders** It is, sir, but you must excuse me I have a lot of work to do. (*turns to audience*) What a handsome gentleman! (*turns to go*)

**Charming** But what brings you to the forest today?

**Cinders** (*turning back*) I was collecting kindling for the fires, sir, but I must go, my sisters will be expecting me.

**Charming** Sisters? And are they as pretty as you?

**Cinders** Sir! You have made me blush.

**Charming** Then I must apologise again. May I ask your name and where you live?

**Cinders** My name is Cinderella, my father is Baron Hardup. I live at Hardup Hall, not far from here. And you, sir, may I ask your name?

**Charming** (*turning towards audience*) She's of noble birth, it just gets better. (*turns back to Cinders*) Why, I am Prince Charming ... 's valet. Dandini's my name and I live at the castle.

**Cinders** That must be a very important job.

**Charming** Oh, yes, he takes some looking after, I can tell you, wouldn't know where he was without me, er, even though I do say it myself.

**Cinders** Nothing wrong with taking a pride in your job.

**Charming** Why, thank you, and I would not be doing my job properly if I did not ask if you had heard about the celebration ball the Prince intends to have tomorrow night to celebrate the success of the hunt.

**Cinders** I'd heard about the hunt, but not the ball.

**Charming** Well, now you have and you must be there, the prince wants all the villagers, especially the unmarried girls to be there. You're not married, are you?

**Cinders** No, I'm not.

**Charming** *(to audience)* Better still! *(to Cinders)* Then you must be there! Invitations will be delivered tomorrow, but do say you will be there.

**Cinders** I really don't think I would be able to.

**Charming** Nonsense, it's almost a royal decree! You must come; you said that you lived at Hardup Hall. I'll make sure you get an invitation.

**Cinders** Thank you, I really would like to come ... but you must excuse me now. Goodbye.

*They turn in opposite directions to go, Cinders pauses DSR, Charming DSL*

**Cinders** *(to audience)* What a wonderful man and an invitation to a royal ball ... if only!

**Charming** *(to audience)* What a wonderful girl. Is she the one ... if only!

*They sing together, but on separate sides of stage.*

<p><b>MUSIC 8 CINDERS AND CHARMING</b></p>
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*Charming and Cinders exit*

*Villagers enter variously excited making their way onto the stage, facing upstage*

**Villager 1** Look, here they come !

*Huntsmen enter SL moving to SR as if they are riding horses.*

*Reaction from villagers*

*Huntsmen exit SR*

**Villager 2** Was that it ?

**Villager 3** No, here they come again.

*Huntsmen enter SR moving to SL*

*Reaction from villagers*

**Villager 3** The fox is leading them a merry dance today!

*Huntsmen enter SL moving to SR, when all are on stage they freeze mid movement.*

*Villagers turn towards audience*

<b>MUSIC 9</b> <b>VILLAGERS</b>
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*All exit*

#### SCENE 4

*Outside Hardup Hall. A cloth or in front of half tabs*

*Two Brokers Men enter SL, Brokers Man 1 carries a clipboard, they are obviously looking for something, they come to front of stage.*

**Brokers Man 1** Well, it must be around here somewhere, that old man said just around the corner and we've walked for ten minutes since then.

**Brokers Man 2** What's it called again?

**BM 1**     *(consulting clipboard)* Hardup Hall, we need to speak to Baron Hardup.

**BM 2**     I hope it's going to be easier than last job in *(local town)* I reckon it was the most difficult we've ever had.

**BM 1**     Well, that was your fault, it's not much fun taking things from people who've fallen on hard times. But with you insulting the customers as well! Fancy asking that woman what her monkey's name was.

**BM 2**     How was I to know it was a baby? It was the ugliest thing I've ever seen.

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**BM 1** I agree, but I had the sense not to say so. You need to be subtle in this profession; you need to show some decorum.

**BM 2** Decorum, what's decorum?

**BM 1** Don't you know?

**BM 2** I thought it was what you did to apples before you cooked them.

**BM 1** How did I end up working with you?

**BM 2** It's because you wasted your time at school.

**BM 1** I didn't waste my time, I didn't used to go.

**BM 2** That's what I mean.

**BM 1** Most of the teachers hated me, not like you, you were always teachers pet.

**BM 2** I was not teacher's pet!

**BM 1** Oh, yes, you were!

*Hopefully audience will join in*

**BM 2** Oh, no I wasn't!

**BM 1** Oh, yes, you were!

**BM 2** Oh, no I wasn't!

**BM 1** *(cutting audience off)* You were! You were! You were!

**BM 2** Wasn't! Wasn't! Wasn't!

**BM 1** You were, you were teacher's pet, why else do you think they kept you in that cage at the back of the classroom?

**BM** We're wasting time, what's the name of this place again?

**BM 1** Hardup Hall.

**BM 2** *(pointing to front doors)* Looks like we're here, let's get on with it. *(goes over to front doors)* See if anyone's at home. *(knocks on door, waits)*

**BM 1** Try again.

*BM 2 tries again*

**BM 1** Looks like a wasted journey.

**BM 2** I'm not wasting my time, let's try the door.

**BM 1** You can't do that!

**BM 2** Yes, I can - they often leave front doors unlocked out in the country.

**BM 1** No, I mean you can't because it's illegal.

**BM 2** It's not illegal.

**BM 1** It is, it's illegal.

**BM 2** No, it might be unlawful but it's not illegal.

**BM 1** That's what I said isn't it ?

**BM 2** No, there's a difference between unlawful and illegal.

**BM 1** OK, I give in, what is it? What is the difference between unlawful and illegal?

**BM 2** Well, unlawful means against the law ...

**BM 1** ... that's what I said!

**BM 2** Let me finish! Unlawful means against the law and illegal is ... *(giggles)* ... is ... *(giggles)* a sick bird of prey! *(collapses laughing)*

**BM 1** I still don't understand.

**BM 2** Why am I not surprised? Go on, try the door.

**BM 1** I still don't like it but, here goes. *(tries front doors which swing open)*

**BM 2** There we are, we're in. Give me the clipboard and in you go and make a start.

**BM 1** *(hands BM 2 the clipboard)* Me? Why me?

**BM 2** Because I'm in a management position.



**BM 1** How'd you work that out?

**BM 2** (*triumphant, holding clipboard up*) Because I have the clipboard.

**BM 1** But I had it a minute ago.

**BM 2** Yes and you gave it to me.

**BM 1** Only because you told me to.

**BM 2** And you did, see that's because of my management experience, now, get on with it.

**BM 1** Oh, it's always me.

*BM 1 goes through front doors into house, after slight pause, comes flying back out*

**BM 2** Stop mucking about!

**BM 1** I'm not, something picked me up and threw me out.

**BM 2** A likely story. Get back in there and hurry up about it.

*BM 1 goes through front doors into house, after slight pause, comes flying back out*

**BM 2** I've told you once, stop mucking about.

**BM 1** And I've told you, there's something in there and it threw me out.

**BM 2** You big baby, here, hold this (*hands clipboard to BM 1 and goes into house, after a slight pause emerges with a framed portrait of Baron Hardup*) See?

*BM 1 is astonished, stands open mouthed.*

**BM 2** Don't stand there like that ... (*takes clipboard*) your turn, in you go.

**BM 1** Right, anything you can do! (*winds himself up and goes into house, after a slightly longer pause he comes flying out, followed by the Baroness*)

**Baroness** Out! This is the third time! And stay out! (*sees BM 2*) Another one, what do you want? This part of the Hall is not open to visitors,

**BM 2** I'm afraid we're not members of the public, madam, we are here on business.

**Baroness** Well, what'd' you want?

**BM 2** We represent the firm of Quick, Grabbit and Runn (*produces letter*) and I have here a letter from the court allowing us to seize goods owned by Baron Hardup to the value of his outstanding debts. Now, if you would kindly step aside ...

**Baroness** Right, my man, there has been some sort of mix up and if you will follow me my husband will be able to sort it out. Come along!

*Baroness, BM 1 and BM 2 exit through the front doors into the Hall – half tabs open to reveal Hardup Hall.*

*Baron enters SR, goes DSL*

*Baroness, still talking, followed by BM 1 and BM 2 enters SL*

**Baroness** Ah, there you are Henry. Perhaps you can sort this out. These two ruffians seem to think that you owe people money; in fact they're saying that you are bankrupt. I've told them there must be some kind of mistake.

**Baron** Good morning, gentlemen (*looks at clipboard BM 2 has*) may I have at look at that?

*BM 2 hands clipboard to Baron, who looks at it then returns to BM 2*

Oh, dear I was afraid that this would happen, but I didn't think it would be so soon.

**Baroness** What are you talking about, explain to them, and tell them to go.

**Baron** I can't do that my darling, you see ...

**Baroness** What d'you mean you can't? Of course you can! For heavens sake stand up for yourself, man!

**Baron** There is something I have to talk to you about my dear.

**Baroness** What do you mean, talk to me about, about what?

**Baron** You see, my precious, I have been experiencing what you might call cash flow problems. I'm sure it's just a temporary problem and now I have you with me it'll be easier facing that problem together.

**Baroness** (*beginning to get worried*) What do you mean, facing the problem together?

**Baron** Well, my little honey bunch, if you could see your way to helping me out financially, on a temporary basis of course, after all we are a couple now aren't we? It'll only be for a short while; I know we'll make a great team if we can just get over this little hiccup.

**BM 1** Sorry to interrupt, squire, but the clock is ticking and we'll have to start charging you for our time on top of what you already owe soon.

**BM 2** Yes and as we are highly skilled professionals our time doesn't come cheap!

**Baron** Can't you see I'm trying to sort things out? Now, shall we say perhaps a thousand ducats cash today and then the rest in instalments when the theme park starts to make a profit?

*BM 1 and BM2 look at each other and nod*

**BM 1** That sounds a reasonable offer, your worship, I'm sure our bosses would be happy with that.

**BM 2** And so will I, we can get off and I can rest my weary feet.

**Baron** There, I knew we could sort this out sensibly. (to Baroness) Could you my dear?

**Baroness** Could I what?

**Baron** Could you pay the man?

**Baroness** Exactly what do you propose I pay him with?

**Baron** *(to Brokers' Men)* Will you accept a cheque?

**BM 1** I'm afraid we are unable to do that sir, it might bounce you see.

**Baron** Of course, well, it will have to be cash, my little sweet pea.

**Baroness** Can we have a quiet word? *(takes Baron to one side)* Look I just don't have that kind of money.

**Baron** Well, we'll have to take them to Woodvale to the bank.

**Baroness** That won't be any good either, when I say I don't have that kind of money I mean it. In fact I don't have any kind of money. I'm broke, not a sausage.

**Baron** What!!! But you always talked about having loads of money and spending it like it was going out of fashion.

**Baroness** Yes, I may have been a little economical with the truth. I did have loads of money and I did spend it like it was going out of fashion ...

*(Baron realises the truth and begins to shake)*

... and I was looking forward to doing it again, with your money. Henry, you see I have absolutely nothing. I was hoping you had so I could get back to my old ways.

**Baron** But I have nothing, I was hoping you were as rich as you were beautiful, I don't have a penny either.

**MUSIC 10**

**BARON, BARONESS & BROKER'S MEN**

**Baron** That's all very well, they say that love conquers all, but what are we going to say to them, my little poison ivy?

**Baroness** Leave it to me, I'll use my feminine charms on them. Oh, Mr Broker's Men, could I have a little word?

**BM 2** Well, it'll have to be quick, madam, we had hoped to have the money by now.

**Baroness** It seems we have a teeny, weeny little problem.

**BM 1** Oh, no, I hate it when they say that.

**Baroness** Don't worry nice, kind Broker's Men, it's nothing that we can't solve.

**BM 2** Oh, good, I was beginning to get a bit worried then.

**BM 1** Yes, I thought for a moment you were going to say that you couldn't pay **all** the money.

**Baroness** No, no it's not that ...

**BM 1**

**BM 2** ...*(together)* that's alright then ...

**Baroness** ... We can't pay **any** of the money.

**BM 1** *(laughing)* Oh, I do like customers with a sense of humour.

**BM 2** *(also laughing)* Yes, for a moment I thought you said that you couldn't pay any of the money.

**Baroness** I did.

**BM 1** (*still laughing*) She did!

**BM 2** (*laughing*) That's right, she did. (*They both realise*) She did!!

**BM 1** Oh, no !! Why do we always get the difficult ones?

**BM 2** This makes things very awkward for us.

**Baron** What about us? It's very embarrassing to be in this situation, you know. Couldn't we pay you a little each week?

**BM 1** How little?

**Baron** What about one hundred ducats a week, starting in six months time?

**BM 2** Starting in six months time? We're not DFS. We don't do interest free credit you know.

*Buttons enters, doing chores, but listens to conversation with interest.*

**Baron** In that case we can't pay anything. (*sighs*) What happens now?

**BM 1** I'm afraid we will have to start removing your property to sell to pay some off your debts, sir. If you excuse us for a moment we'll see what's worth taking. (*BM 1 and 2 look around kitchen, making notes on clipboard.*)

**Baroness** (*to Baron*) We'll, you're a fine one, aren't you? You really led me up the garden path, didn't you? I thought I was marrying into a well to do family and look what's happened.

**Baron** It seems that we were leading each other up the garden path as you put it.

**Buttons** Is there a problem, your lordship, anything I can do to help?

**Baron** (*getting more and more despondent as he speaks*) I'm afraid it's long past that, Buttons; this really is the last straw. The bailiffs are here because I owe so much money, I have none left and I have just found out that my new beloved has no money either and I only really married her because I thought she had. So it looks as if that is finally it. I'm going to lose the family home, my dear Cinderella and you, my faithful Buttons it's the end of everything.

**Buttons** (*comforting Baron*) Sir, I never thought I would see the day ...

*UG 1 and UG2 burst into kitchen lots of noise and fuss*

**UG 1** What's going on here?

**UG 2** Mummy dear, why the long face?

**UG 1** As the man said to the horse *(UGs both giggle)*

**Baroness** My darlings, I have bad news, I'm afraid.

**UG 2** What is it, Mummy?

**Baroness** It seems that Henry does not have as much money as I had hoped. In fact he has none.

**UG 1** But that was why you married him, you said we would have all the money we would ever want!

**Baroness** Well, it seems that I was wrong, the bailiffs are here because he cannot pay his bills and they're going to start taking things away to sell.

**UG 2** But you promised! How could things get any worse? *(suddenly spots Brokers Men)* Oh, look, sis, MEN!!!!

**UG 1** *(notices Brokers Men)* Oh, I say! Come on let's introduce ourselves.

*UGs make straight for BMs*

**UG 2** Hello gentlemen, it must be your lucky day.

**BM 1** *(over his shoulder)* It hasn't been so far.

**BM 2** *(looking over his shoulder and seeing UGs approach)* And, unless I'm very much mistaken it's about to get a lot worse very quickly. What can we do for you, ladies?

**UG 1** Ooo, he called us ladies!

**Buttons** *(to audience)* Funny, he doesn't look short sighted.

**UG 2** It's not what you can do for us, it's what we can do for you.

**BM 1** And what might that be?

**UG 1** Do you need to ask?

**UG 2** You're two handsome gentlemen and we're two DIVINE ladies.

**Buttons** *(to audience)* If you're here with children, I'd cover their eyes now.