

La Cenerentola: A Verse Play

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NARRATOR

Our story begins,
As all fairy tales should,
With meeting the characters
Both bad and good.
The two sisters, we see
Are just silly and vain,
To live with them
Would be such a pain.
Clorinda, the oldest,
With lots of pluck
Tries to learn a new dance step
Without any luck!

CLORINDA

One-two-three, One-two-three.
Look at me now.
There's no one more graceful.
Just watch me bow.
(She falls as she curtseys)

NARRATOR

Her sister, Tisbe,
With an air most refined
Gazes at her reflection
With love on her mind.

TISBE

(Combing her hair)
Look at that face.
Look at that hair.
There's no one more beautiful.
I'm beyond compare.
(Comb gets stuck in her hair)

NARRATOR

While the two girls are
In odd ways behaving,
Their poor stepsister
Is working and slaving.
Poor Angelina, or Cenerentola
As she's known,
Is the only sister
Who works in this home.
But the girl of the ashes

Keeps her dreams alive
By singing a song
Of a King and his bride.

CENERENTOLA

There once was a story
Of a lonely king
Who searched the land
For only one thing.
His quest was for a maiden
To share his life
Who would love him always
And be his wife.
Three sisters he found
All wanting to be a bride.
Each pledged her love
And promised to stay by his side.
The King scorned the two
Filled with pomp and beauty.
He chose the one of
Truth and duty

CLORINDA

Cenerentola, please!
Enough of this song!

TISBE

We tire of hearing it
All day long!

CENERENTOLA

I'm sorry, dear sisters.
I meant no harm.
Let me go on working
While you practice your charms.

NARRATOR

At that very moment
From the door came a knock!
(*Sound: Knock, knock, knock*)
Who could it be
At just eight o'clock?
The door flew open
And there at the sill
Was a tired old man
Standing quite still.
Cenerentola, hurrying
Like a house maid,
Ran to the door
To offer her aid.

CLORINDA

Oh, you foolish girl!
Come away from that man!

THISBE

He is merely a beggar
Seeking money in hand.

BEGGAR

No, my young beauties.
I come not for gold,
But for a bit of food
And an escape from the cold.

CENERENTOLA

Please, dear sir,
Have a seat by the fire.
Some coffee and bread
Should fill your desire.

CLORINDA/TISBE

What are you doing
You dirty wench,
Seating a beggar
On our fireside bench?
Papa won't like it,
That much we know.
Your punishment will come
And we'll watch every blow.

BEGGAR

Have no worries!
Have no fear!
I will watch over you
And always be near.

CENERENTOLA

(Please forgive my sisters
For acting so dumb.)
But tell me, kind Sir,
Why have you come?

BEGGAR

All in good time,
But for now you must wait.
As the day unfolds
It will bring you your fate.

CLORINDA/TISBE

Cenerentola, stop!
Enough now, we say.

This old man is filthy
And must go away.

CENERENTOLA

I'm afraid I must ask
You to go on your way,
But thank you for coming
And brightening my day.

BEGGAR

Remember, dear child,
These words as I'm parting.
Today, your new life
Is only just starting.
Remain kind and good,
Remain true and strong,
Virtue is rewarded
By love all life long.
(He goes)

CLORINDA

What a bunch of
Nonsense and drive!
I could just barely keep
My tongue civil.

TISBE

Imagine a beggar
All tattered and old
Talking of virtue
And destiny foretold.

CENERENTOLA

Sisters! Please listen.
You must not be rude
He may speak with wisdom
Though his clothing is crude.
For true love will come
To those who can wait
Though our role in the world
May be small and not great.

NARRATOR

Just as the beggar
Was taking his leave
Came a noise from outside
They could not believe.
A message from the palace
The courtiers did bring.
An invitation to the ball
And a song they did sing.

CLORINDA

Oh, my dear!

TISBE

Oh, my goodness!

CLORINDA/TISBE

What should we do?
The Prince is arriving
And a bride he will chose.

CLORINDA

Cenerentola, quick!
There's a spot on my dress.

TISBE

My fan, Cenerentola!
This place is a mess!

CENERENTOLA

Cenerentola, here.
Cenerentola, now.
How they keep me running
And watch me kowtow!

TISBE

Cenerentola, enough!
I tire of your chatter!

CLORINDA

The Prince will choose me
And that's all that matters!

TISBE

The Prince will choose you?
Oh that's a good jest.
Why would he do that
When I am the best

CENERENTOLA

Please no more fighting,
Your father will wake.
And you know his temper:
One can feel the room shake!

NARRATOR

A yell came from the bedroom.
Listen, do you hear it?
(Don Magnifico yells "Quiet!")
Don Magnifico was awake

And not in good spirits.

DON MAGNIFICO

(Entering)

Enough of this yammering,

You disturb my sleep!

Cenerentola, get to work!

You must earn your keep.

(Cenerentola curtseys and exits)

Now my two darling daughters,

Mild as little sheep,

Listen to your Papa

And the vision of my sleep.

The dream that I had

As I lay in bed

Was hazy and fuzzy

And still swirls in my head.

I was a donkey,

A great flying horse.

What could this mean?

I've got it, of course!

I am the donkey

Flying far from here

With lots of little children

Who call me "Grandpa, dear."

CLORINDA

Papa, please listen

I have something to say . . .

TISBE

(Interrupting)

Prince Ramiro is coming

To visit today.

MAGNIFICO

With all this good news

I know what my dream means.

Ramiro will choose one of

You as his queen.

Oh, this is marvelous

And now we must dress.

We all must look splendid

His Highness to impress.

(They all exit)

NARRATOR

When the room was deserted

A young man came hence.

Though he looked like a servant

He was really the Prince.

RAMIRO

My tutor, Alidoro
As a beggar came here.
Now it's my turn to search
For a love to hold dear.
Now this is the place
He said I would find
A beautiful maiden with
Goodness on her mind.

CENERENTOLA

(Singing as she enters)
There once was a king ...
(Drops her tray)
Oh, who are you there?

RAMIRO

(Coming to her aid)
I'm sorry to scare you
Or cause you a care.
(Aside)
This girl looks so gentle
In her poor dress of tatters.
But her manners are charming
And that is what matters.

CENERENTOLA

(Aside)
He may be just a servant,
Only a man.
But there's kindness in his eyes
And strength in his hand.

RAMIRO

Please tell me, who are you?
Do you live in this place?
I'm here to see the Baron's daughters
And gaze upon each face

CENERENTOLA

My two step-sisters
Are dressing in a flurry.

CLORINDA/TISBE

(Yelling from offstage)
Cenerentola!

CENERENTOLA

Please, excuse me
For now I must hurry.

RAMIRO

(Aside as Cenerentola goes)

I'm enchanted and
Spellbound by her innocent charm.
I would just like to help her
And keep her from harm.
For dressed like a servant,
It's easier to find
The truth in men's hearts
And the thoughts in their minds.
But now who is coming?
It's my servant in disguise.
Dandini will play the prince
While I use my eyes.

(Enter Dandini, Clorinda, Tisbe and Don Magnifico. Cenerentola enters and watches from the side)

DANDINI

Yes, I am the Prince
And I've come to look you over
As I fly through the kingdom
Like a honey bee in the clover.

CLORINDA

(Grabbing Dandini)

Oh, please look at me!
It's an honor, your Highness.

DANDINI

(Aside to Ramiro)

Now, this girl is bold.
Don't accuse her of shyness!

TISBE

(Pulling Dandini away)

Oh, don't talk to her!
I have waited so long!

DANDINI

(Aside to Ramiro)

This one's not bashful,
Though, I admit, she's quite strong.

(To the Family)

Many thanks for this welcome.
I appreciate this meeting.
It's not everyday
I receive such a greeting.

CLORINDA/TISBE

Did you hear what he said?

His heart I have captured.
One look at my face
And he was enraptured.

DANDINI

And now "my two lovelies"
Let us go on our way
At the Royal Ball I'll choose
My bride this very day.
(Exit Dandini and the two sisters; Ramiro watches from the side)

CENERENTOLA

(To Don Magnifico, who is trying to leave)
Please sir, I beg you
To grant with your power. . .
May I go to the ball
For only one hour?

DON MAGNIFICO

Don't be absurd!
You at the ball?
You're not even my daughter,
I hardly know you at all.
Now stop this sniveling!
To the dance I'll be late.
My daughters are going
And they will be great.
(Exit Don Magnifico and Ramiro who has been watching)

NARRATOR

Cenerentola is shaking
From all that transpired
And she calms herself
Sitting alone at the fire.
As over the room
There spreads a soft hush.
The beggar returns
All in a rush.

ALIDORO

Don't worry my child.
Today things will change
For now I am here
Your future to arrange.
You will go to the ball,
With the Prince you will dance.
Come with me now.
Will you take a chance?

CENERENTOLA

Please sir, I beg you.

Don't make fun of me
I've nothing to wear,
Surely that you must see.

ALIDORO

Ah dear girl, forgive me.
You will have a gown
And you will be lovely,
The talk of the town.
And one other gift
I must present to you:
Two crystal bracelets
"For goodness, pure and true."
And now, we must hurry!
Your destiny waits!
The ball is beginning!
Already we're late!

(Alidoro and Cenerentola exit)

NARRATOR

To the palace they went
As quick as a spark,
As we change the scene from
Daylight to dark.
The ballroom was dazzling,
The candles were glowing,
But the guests at the ball were
Quite snooty and knowing.
And poor Dandini,
Still in disguise
Was hiding from the sisters
With love in their eyes.
(Pantomime running to escape Clorinda and Tisbe)

CLORINDA

Where did that Prince go?
This is not very fun.
It must be my beauty
That causes him to run.

TISBE

Your beauty? How funny?
You must be delirious!
The Prince worships me.
Dear sister, get serious!
(The sisters begin to argue)

DON MAGNIFICO

(Entering to stop the argument)
Clorinda, Tisbe.
Let us not have a riot.

Remember your charm.
Be graceful and quiet.
Now let us go
And continue our quest.
The Prince will choose one and
She'll be the best.
(They depart as Dandini and Ramiro enter)

RAMIRO

Dandini, come quickly.
We must have a word.
What are the sisters like?
Are they sweet? Are they good?

DANDINI

I must tell the truth
Though I know it won't please.
Those two sisters are
Much worse than a disease!

RAMIRO

But I trust Alidoro
And to me he has told
That one of the Baron's daughters
Has a heart of pure gold.
And now Dandini,
So brave and so loyal,
You continue to play the
Part of a royal.
But now I must rush,
For the sisters are here.
Good luck, Dandini!
And try not to fear.
(Ramiro stands to one side)

TISBE

Oh Princey! Oh, Princey!
Where can you be?

CLORINDA

There he is. Now I see him.
Why have you left me?

DANDINI

Now, my dear ladies.
Though your beauties abound,
There's just not enough
Of me to go 'round.
But since only one of you
Can I choose,
I have a plan for

The one who will lose.
My servant right here
Is quite a good lad.
(Ramiro steps forward)
As a husband for "the other"
He wouldn't be bad.

CJORINDA

Marry a servant?
Him for a groom?

TISBE

Why, I can't stand
To be in the same room!

CJORINDA

Sir, this is not funny.
I don't like this joke.

TISBE

I never would marry
So lowly a bloke.

NARRATOR

When just at that moment
Came a voice from offstage.
It was Alidoro
The tutor, wise and sage.

ALIDORO

(Entering)
A mysterious lady
Has come to this place.
I don't know who she is.
There's a veil on her face.

CENERENTOLA

(Entering)
Thanks for this greeting.
I don't deserve such mention.
True love and kindness
Will hold my attention.

CJORINDA

Who could she be
To cause such a fuss?

TISBE

Now that she's here
The Prince doesn't see us.

DANDINI

Who is that beauty
With manners so fine?
If I were the Prince
She could be mine.

RAMIRO

A beauty so rare,
Such poise and such grace.
Her voice sounds familiar
If I could just see her face.

DANDINI

I beg you, dear lady
(For I must not fail),
Let us see your face.
Let me take off your veil.
(Dandini removes the veil)

DANDINI/RAMIRO/SISTERS

(Together)

Why, she looks familiar!
Have I seen her before?
How could this be?
She just walked in the door.

DON MAGNIFICO

(Entering)

Hurry Lords and Ladies.
The dinner is served.
Who is this girl?
Has she got a nerve!
Why, she looks like Cenerentola
But that can't be the case.
Our girl is simple.
With ashes on her face.

DANDINI

Come, let us depart,
For our meal is inside
And after the dinner
I will choose my bride.
(Exit all except Ramiro)

RAMIRO

That beautiful lady
Has captured me without warning
And yet she looks like
The maid from this morning.
But look, here she comes
With Dandini, my valet.

I must listen to them
From out of the way.
(He hides to the side)

DANDINI

(Entering with Cenerentola)
Please don't run away.
Do I scare you, my dear?
I would just like to talk.
Have a seat over here.

CENERENTOLA

Oh, please, your Highness.
I must speak the truth
For I love another
And he's only a youth.

DANDINI

My dear, you must tell me
Who is this boy?
Out with his name,
You must not be coy.

CENERENTOLA

He is your servant.
I know he's not rich
But he's kind and good -
What more could I wish?

RAMIRO

(Rushing forward)
Oh, what joy!
I am filled with such pride.
Would you take my hand?
Would you be my bride?

CENERENTOLA

Please, do not rush!
This is not the real me.
You must seek me out
And then you will see.
(Alidoro re-enters to watch)
Take this crystal bracelet.
Let it be your guide.
When you find its partner,
I will be your bride.
(She rushes out)

RAMIRO

When you find its partner. . .
What should I do?

Tell me, Alidoro,
I need advice from you.

ALIDORO

My young student,
Your future will start.
You will know what to do
If you follow your heart.

RAMIRO

(To Dandini)

You are Prince no more
But I need your aid.
Summon my courtiers,
We will search for that maid.
I will look high and low
Through mountains and valleys.
I will search in the towns
In the byways and alleys.
(Ramiro and Alidoro exit)

DANDINI

My day as a Prince
Is over for now.
But it was great fun
Watching them scrape and bow.
Oh look, here's the Baron
Coming quite fast.
I'll play the Prince once more
But this is the last.

DON MAGNIFICO

Excuse me, your Highness!
I don't mean to pry.
Have you chosen a bride?
Could you give it a try?

DANDINI

No problem, dear Baron.
I have chosen my mate.
But I can't tell you now,
I'm afraid you must wait.

DON MAGNIFICO

Please, just a clue!
Now, don't be shy.
Is it Clorinda or Tisbe
Who has caught your eye?

DANDINI

Come closer, dear fellow,

Let me confess.
Now, this is the secret,
The truth and nothing less.
You see me as
A great man on the throne.
But I'm not a prince,
I'm a servant in his home.

DON MAGNIFICO

This must be a joke.

DANDINI

I assure you it's not.
To be the Prince's servant
Is my life and my lot.

DON MAGNIFICO

(Yelling for the girls who enter)

Come, my two daughters.
Let us leave this place.
We are not wanted here
And we have to save face.

NARRATOR

Once more to the house
Of the Baron we go
To find Cenerentola
In her rags all alone.
She sits at the hearth
Singing her song,
Thinking of the young man
And she tries to be strong.
Flying through the door
With great injured pride
Come the baron and his daughters
With revenge on their minds.

CLORINDA

See, there she is.

TISBE

Don't you think it odd.

DON MAGNIFICO

Why, they're as alike
As two peas in a pod.
She looks like that Princess
Who came to the dance.
I would punish this one
If I had half-a-chance.
(To Cenerentola)

Now you go get our supper.
Enough of your blundering.
(Cenerentola exits)
This is such a strange night
With the rain and the thundering.

NARRATOR

Then there came a sound
Of a carriage arriving.
It was the real Prince Ramiro
And Dandini was driving.
(Ramiro and Dandini enter)

CLORINDA/TISBE/DON MAGNIFICO

(To Dandini)
No, not you again!
(To Ramiro)
And who is this man?

DANDINI

This is His Highness,
The ruler of our land.
(All bow)

DON MAGNIFICO

Of course it is he.
But haven't we met?
(Looks closely at the Prince)
Quickly, my daughters,
There is hope for you yet.
Please have a seat.
Cenerentola, bring a chair!
Good help is hard to find
As I'm sure you're aware.

CENERENTOLA

Here is the chair.
I came as fast as I could.

DON MAGNIFICO

Give it to His Highness!
Is your head made of wood?

CENERENTOLA

The Prince . . . Oh my goodness!
What can this be?

RAMIRO

The bracelet on her arm!
She's the one meant for me.
At last I have found you!

CENERENTOLA

Are you really the Prince?

CLORINDA/TISBE

This is just awful!

Quite an offense!

RAMIRO

Hold your tongue! Not a word!

You must not be mean,

For this lovely lady

Will soon be your queen.

CENERENTOLA

My Prince, now I beg you.

Please, don't be too curt.

We must forgive them.

I do not want them hurt.

RAMIRO

Come, love will guide us

With you at my side.

All bow to Cenerentola,

My most gracious bride.

NARRATOR

Once more to the palace

As Alidoro sings

Of the triumph of love

And the joy that it brings.

ALIDORO

The story is ending

Just as it should,

With Cenerentola on the throne

All will be good.

(All enter, followed by Ramiro and Cenerentola)

DON MAGNIFICO

(To Cenerentola)

Your highness, I'm sorry

To have caused you such pain.

CENERENTOLA

Please call me daughter.

Forgiveness must reign.

No more crying, I tell you.

No sighing or tears.

Old wrongs have been banished,

They are gone with the years.
Family and friends,
Please take my hands.
Fortune is smiling
Upon this fair land.
(They all join hands)

NARRATOR/ALL

As our story ends
Amid joy and laughter,
You can be sure they all lived
'Happily ever after.'