



Cinderella Superstar

A Traditional Family Pantomime by Brian Luff

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Cinderella Superstar

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LIST OF CHARACTERS

Cinderella.....A beautiful servant girl
Prince Charming.....Handsome son of the King & Queen
Fairy Godmother.....A Fairy Godmother
Buttons.....Cheery Manservant at Hardup Castle
Melania HardupCinderella's Stepmother
Baron HardupCinderella's Father
Britney Cinderella's Ugly Stepsister
DonatellaCinderella's Even Uglier Stepsister
Dandini.....Prince Charming's Loyal Valet
Muggsy}
Puggsy.....} Television Producers
The King Prince Charming's Father
The QueenPrince Charming's Mother

Plus villagers, dancers, singers, and courtiers.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT 1

Scene 1The Village Green
Scene 2A Clearing in the Woods
Scene 3..... Hardup Castle
Scene 4.....A Clearing in the Woods
Scene 5..... Hardup Castle
Scene 6The Village Fete
Scene 7.....The Kitchen at Hardup Castle
Scene 8.....You Shall Go To The Palace

ACT 2

Scene 1.....A TV Talent Show at The Palace
Scene 2.....A Spooky Bedroom at Hardup Castle
Scene 3..... Next Morning At Hardup Castle
Scene 4.....Grande Finale

ACT I

Scene 1

Overture. Enter Fairy Godmother on tabs.

Fairy Godmother Welcome to our pantomime,
A place of festive cheer.
Now our story will unfold
And *magic* will appear.

There'll be lots of adventure,
As well as lots of laughter.
If things go well,
As I weave my spell,
We'll live happily ever after.

I am a Fairy Godmother,
A role that's unforgiving.
The hours are long, the pay is poor,
(But it's better than working for a living.)

Soon you'll meet Cinderella,
A poor and wretched girl
Whose life will be turned up-side-down
And end up in a whirl.

As Cinder's Fairy Godmother,
I promise and proclaim,
She'll go from rags to riches
And find happiness and fame!

She exits. Tabs open to reveal the village green. Opening routine featuring dancers, villagers and chorus.

Song 1

At the end of the song, all exit. Enter The Ugly Sisters in spectacular attire, accompanied by a suitably amusing musical theme.

Britney Good evening, peasants!

Donatella Bonjour, mon yokels!

Britney That's French, that is.

Donatella Stand by your beds, the *ladies* have arrived.

Britney The weekend starts here, lads!

Donatella Party time!

Britney Yes, it's time to introduce a bit of well needed *class* into the proceedings.

Donatella I am the *very* brassy and classy Donatella Hardup from Hardup Castle, and this is my twin sister...

Britney Britney Hardup at your service, ladies and gentlemen.

Donatella And she's serviced plenty of gentlemen I can assure you.

Britney Cheeky mare.

Donatella Now, let's see what we have here.

Britney (*Looking at audience*) Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear, look at this lot. Ugggh! They're even scruffier than the audience we had in here for the last show.

Donatella Oy, you lot. Don't you know there's a dress code in here?

Britney Yes, only beautiful people...

Donatella Like us...

Britney Beautiful people in beautiful clothes are allowed. And if your name's not on the door, you're not coming in.

Donatella And Britney here will be checking. She used to work as a bouncer.

Britney I did, Donatella, I did.

Donatella That's after she finished working as a professional boxer in the East End.

Britney Fifty fights, no defeats.

Donatella Ugggh! There's a woman down there in the front row, she's so bloomin' plain, I'll bet when she peels onions it's the onions that cry.

Donatella sneezes into a huge handkerchief.

Britney Bless you.

Donatella Thank you.

Britney Have you got a cold, Donatella?

Donatella No, it's not a cold, it's my allergies again.

Britney Oh no, not your allergies again. You're a martyr to your allergies.

Donatella I am. I'm allergic to *everything*.

Britney She's allergic to everything.

Donatella Cheese makes me sneeze.

Britney It does. Peas make her wheeze.

Donatella I call them wheezy peas.

Britney Not cheesy peas, wheezy peas.

Donatella If I have a Chinese, it gives me knobbly knees.

Britney Oooh, I love a Chinese. But I wouldn't eat a Chinese if it gave me knobbly knees.

Donatella You'd be a fool. A fool!

Britney Trees give her Dutch Elm Disease.

Donatella And that's a tree's disease.

Britney Tell them about the meat.

Donatella Ooh, I don't dare.

Britney Go on, tell them.

Donatella Meat makes me bleat. *(She bleats like a sheep)*

Britney Meat makes her bleat.

Donatella It makes me bleat like a sheep. *(She bleats like a sheep again)*

Britney That's very unusual isn't it?

Donatella "Medically exotic" my doctor calls it.

Britney Tell them about the eggs.

Donatella Eggs give me skinny legs.

Britney Like a daddy longlegs.

Donatella They do.

Britney And she can't eat bread.

Donatella No! If I eat bread...

Britney Tell them...

Donatella I have to go into the shed...

Britney She does...

Donatella And go to bed.

Britney So, cheese makes you sneeze.

Donatella Yes.

Britney Peas make you wheeze.

Donatella Yes.

Britney A Chinese gives you knobbly knees.

Donatella Tick.

Britney Trees give you Dutch Elm Disease.

Donatella Very painful.

Britney Meat makes you bleat.

(Donatella bleats like a sheep)

Britney Eggs give you skinny legs like a daddy longlegs.

Donatella Yes.

Britney And if you eat bread you have to go into the shed and go to bed.

Donatella I'm a martyr to me allergies.

Britney You poor thing. I'd feel terrible if it wasn't for the fact...

Donatella What?

Britney That I don't like you very much.

Donatella Sorry?

Britney Can't stand the sight of you, dear.

Donatella I don't like you either.

Britney Snap.

Donatella But then, whoever said sisters have to be the best of friends?

Britney No-one. Most of the time we hate each other.

Donatella Swords drawn.

Britney Handbags at dawn.

Britney Shall we go and squabble over a nice cup of tea?

Donatella Good idea.

Britney She's not allergic to tea.

Donatella I'm not allergic to tea, no. *(Beat)* Tea just makes me wee.

Britney & Donatella *(To audience)* See ya. Wouldn't wanna be ya.

Donatella Au revoir, peasants!

The pair exit to their funny music. Enter Buttons.

Buttons *(To audience)* Hello everybody! My name's Buttons and I'm very pleased to meet you. I see you've already met the Ugly Sisters, Britney and Donatella. Britney's got a face like a flower hasn't she? A cauliflower. And Donatella's got so many lines on her forehead she has to screw her hat on like this. *(He demonstrates while making metallic squeaking noises)*. But let's not talk about that horrible pair. Let's get to know each other. Are you going to be my friends, boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Buttons I'll start off by telling you that Buttons is *not* my real name. It's just a nickname. I got the nickname "Buttons" because when I was a kid I always forget to do up the top two buttons on my jacket. Tell you what, whenever I come on stage, will you shout out, "Button up, Buttons!" to remind me? Shall we try that, boys and girls? I'll go off and come on again...

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up, Buttons!

He practices with the audience a couple of times.

I work for Baron Hardup and his new wife Baroness Melania at Hardup Castle. It's a hard life at Hardup Castle. The Baron's not a bad boss but his wife is horrible, which is probably why Britney and Donatella are so bloomin' horrible as well. But there is one beautiful person at Hardup Castle. The Baron's daughter, Cinderella. I love Cinderella, but I'll probably never pluck up the courage to tell her. Cinderella's always so kind to me. Even through she has by far the hardest time of all at Hardup Castle. Donatella and Britney make her work so hard and they never lift a finger to help. Poor Cinderella...

Enter Cinderella.

Cinderella Button up Buttons!

Buttons Cinders! I was just talking about you.

Cinderella What were you saying? Something nice I hope.

Buttons I always say nice things about you, Cinders.

Cinderella Are you blushing, Buttons?

Buttons No.

Cinderella I'm only teasing. Your step-mother sent me to fetch you. You'd better come back to the castle with me right now and see what she wants.

Enter Prince Charming and Dandini, deep in royal gossip.

Prince Charming So I said to Prince Harry...

Dandini What did you say?

Prince Charming "Harry," I said, "You really don't look *anything* like your father."

Dandini What did he say?

Prince Charming Well, he looked me square in the face, and he said...

Dandini What?

Prince Charming is suddenly distracted by seeing Cinderella for the first time.

Prince Charming I say, Dandini. Who's that very pretty girl over there?

Dandini Prince Harry said *that*?

Prince Charming No! He didn't say that. I'm saying that now. Who's is that very pretty girl?

Dandini I don't know, Your Highness. I haven't seen her before. But I can find out for you.

Melania Hardup can be heard calling from off stage.

Melania Hardup *(off)* Cinderella! Buttons! Where are you, you lazy pair? There's firewood to be gathered and floors to scrub.

Buttons Come on Cinderella, we'd better go. I'll race you to the castle.

Cinderella and Buttons run off. Dandini and Prince Charming walk downstage. Tabs close behind them.

Dandini It sounded like the lad called her "Cinderella".

Prince Charming Cinderella? What a lovely name.

Dandini But she's a servant girl, Your Highness. Your parents the King and Queen would never let you date a girl like that.

Prince Charming I know. Sometimes I envy you, Dandini. You can go out with whoever you choose.

Dandini True. But I'd rather be a prince like you. Instead of being a servant.

Prince Charming So you'd like to be a prince would you?

Dandini Your Highness?

Prince Charming You know, my friend, I think you may have given me an excellent idea.

Dandini Idea?

Prince Charming Dandini, you and I are going to *change places*.

Dandini What?

Prince Charming Switch identities.

Dandini But, why would we want to do that?

Prince Charming So that I can meet Cinderella, of course.

Dandini But...

Prince Charming No buts, Dandini. While we're away from the palace we shall swap clothes and I'll pretend to be *your* servant. It's agreed.

Dandini Very well. But now we need to head back towards the palace. And you need to tell me the end of that story about Prince Harry...

Dandini and Prince Charming exit.

Scene 2

Tabs open to reveal a Clearing in the Woods. Enter Buttons.

Buttons Hello again, boys and girls!

Audience Button up, Buttons!

Enter Dandini and Prince Charming.

Buttons Hello, gentlemen. You're a couple of faces I haven't seen around here before. Are you lost? Can I help you?

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) Show some respect boy! You are addressing the heir to the throne.

Buttons Oh dear. Am I?

Prince Charming (*Pointing at Dandini*) This is Prince Charming from the Royal Palace.

Buttons Forgive me your Royal Highness (*He bows*).

Dandini That's OK my boy. You weren't to know that I was Royalty. (*Indicating Prince Charming*) May I introduce my loyal servant Dandini.

Buttons Charmed, I'm sure. My name's Buttons. I work at Hardup Castle.

Prince Charming I couldn't help noticing earlier that you were chatting with a very pretty girl.

Buttons That was Cinderella. She's Baron Hardup's daughter.

Prince Charming I should very much like to meet this Cinderella. Your Highness, perhaps you would like to call and pay your respects to Baron Hardup sometime?

Dandini (*To Prince Charming*) Good idea, Dandini. Send a message to Baron Hardup right away.

Prince Charming Buttons, perhaps you would be kind enough to inform the Baron and Baroness that His Royal Highness will be visiting them later today.

Buttons Wow. Short notice. I'm guessing around dinner time?

Dandini Naturally. See to it that arrangements are made in the kitchen.

Buttons Are either of you vegetarians?

Prince Charming No.

Buttons Anything you don't like?

Prince Charming I'm not very fond of semolina pudding. Or Brussels Sprouts.

Dandini I don't like jellied eels or parsnips.

Buttons I shall inform chef.

Dandini (*To Prince Charming*) Come on Dandini, we must be off. My mother and father will be expecting me back at the palace. It's scrabble night tonight.

Prince Charming and Dandini exit. Tabs close

Scene 3

Baron Hardup and Melania Hardup enter on tabs.

Baron Hardup Well, well, well, a royal visit to Hardup Castle. We're going up in the world at last, Melania.

Melania Hardup About time too. We haven't had visitors since those nice boys from One Direction stopped by to borrow a cup of sugar.

Baron Hardup And that was six years ago.

Melania Hardup Prince Charming obviously wants an introduction to my beautiful daughters Britney and Donatella.

Baron Hardup And to *my* daughter Cinderella, of course.

Melania Hardup Cinderella? She's far too busy to meet the prince. She's got to sweep the floors, polish the doors, beat the rugs, and wash up the mugs. Then she's got to dust the book shelves and the cook's shelves and then empty the hearth and rinse the bath.

Baron Hardup That's far too much work for one girl. She hasn't got time to sweep the floors, polish the doors, beat the rugs, wash up the mugs, dust the book shelves and the cook's shelves and empty the hearth and rinse the bath.

Melania Hardup Oh, yes she has.

Baron Hardup Oh, no she hasn't!

Melania Hardup Oh, yes she has!

Audience Oh, no she hasn't!

Ad lib with audience.

Baron Hardup What are Britney and Donatella doing while all this work is going on?

Melania Hardup Their diary is absolutely crammed. Mondays at the nail bar, Tuesdays at the hairdressers, Wednesday dress fittings, Thursdays at the tanning salon, Friday afternoon Botox, and Friday evening is their speed dating night.

Baron Hardup Speed dating night?

Melania Hardup Yes. They go to the one at the Olympic Stadium. They give the men fifty metres start, then try and catch up with them and get a date.

Baron Hardup What about the weekends?

Melania Hardup Well they sleep, of course. All those beauty treatments are completely exhausting.

Exit Baron Hardup and Melania Hardup. Tabs open to reveal interior of Hardup Castle. Enter Ugly Sisters.

Donatella *(To Britney)* So Britney, is it true that Prince Charming is coming round for dinner tonight?

Britney I believe that is true, yes. I'm so excited. I've had to change me knickers three times already today.

Donatella Of course the prince will only have eyes for me. I'll win him over with my English Rose beauty.

Britney English Rose? More like a great big stinging nettle.

Donatella Oooh, you're nasty.

Britney You're nastier.

Donatella Let's face it...

Donatella and Britney *(Together)* We love being nasty!

The Ugly Sisters perform a nasty duet together.

Song 2

At the end of the song, enter Buttons.

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up, Buttons!

Donatella Buttons, I've been looking for you all day. Have you finished putting Odour Eaters in all my shoes.

Buttons Yes, Miss Donatella.

Britney And have you sprinkled talcum powder in my wigs.

Buttons Yes, Miss Britney.

Britney Including the chest wig?

Buttons Yes, Miss Britney.

Donatella Good. Now go and fetch a big pair of tweezers, I need you to spend the rest of the afternoon plucking the hairs out of my back.

Buttons *(To audience)* Ugggh! *(To Donatella)* Yes, Miss Donatella.

Britney He's cutting by toenails first.

Donatella No he isn't.

Britney Yes he is...

The ugly sisters exit, still arguing. Tabs close.

Scene 4

Enter Fairy Godmother on tabs.

Fairy Godmother Our story's under way now
And the prince has seen Cinderella.
He's hatched a plan to meet with her,
And he seems a decent feller.

The Prince is wearing a disguise,
A clever little device.
Now, I'll dress as an old woman
and give poor Cinders some advice.

Fairy Godmother exits. Tabs open to reveal a clearing in the forest. Enter Cinderella, singing quietly to herself.

Cinderella What a beautiful day. The sky is blue, the grass is green and there feels like there's magic in the air. Even those gnarled old oak trees look beautiful today.

Tree Oy, who you calling gnarled?

Cinderella Pardon me?

Enter Fairy Godmother

Fairy Godmother Cinderella! Don't you know that you should *never* talk to trees.

Cinderella *(To Fairy Godmother)* Oh! You startled me.

Fairy Godmother I'm sorry my dear.

Cinderella I don't mean to be impolite, but who are you exactly? And how do you know my name?

Fairy Godmother Oh, I know everything. But, I think I may have taken a wrong turning somewhere this morning. Which way is it to the village?

Cinderella It's that way. Just follow the path.

Fairy Godmother I heard you singing to yourself just now and it was very beautiful. You're a very talented young lady, you know.

Cinderella Talented? Why, thank you.

Fairy Godmother You should definitely enter a talent competition.

Cinderella A talent competition? Should I really?

Fairy Godmother Absolutely. Now, I must be going. Good-bye, my dear.

Exit Fairy Godmother.

Cinderella Good-bye. *(To audience)* Well, that was very strange. I wonder how that old woman knew my name. And what did she mean about a talent contest? There are no talent contests around here.

Enter Prince Charming and Dandini. The prince spots Cinderella.

Prince Charming What an extraordinary coincidence. Aren't you Cinderella?

Cinderella Suddenly *everyone* knows my name.

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) We saw you in the village. But you ran away.

Cinderella Yes, I had to dash off and do my chores at Hardup Castle. We have a royal visit today.

Prince Charming A royal visit?

Cinderella Prince Charming is coming to dinner. Although I won't get to meet him.

Dandini And what if I told you that *I* am Prince Charming.

Cinderella You?

Dandini And this is my loyal valet and friend, Dandini.

Prince Charming (*Bowing to Cinderella*) At your service.

Dandini If you'll excuse me I have to go on a royal walkabout in Stoke-on-Trent and then open a supermarket in Cricklewood Broadway.

Cinderella Cricklewood Broadway?

Dandini Christopher Biggins was unavailable.

Cinderella Oh dear.

Dandini Farewell.

Cinderella (*Bowing*) Good bye, Your Highness.

Dandini exits

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) I thought he'd never leave.

Cinderella Sorry?

Prince Charming Well, now we can talk about things that... um.... servants talk about.

Cinderella And what exactly do servants talk about?

Prince Charming Oh, I don't know... cleaning products?

Cinderella Cleaning products? I don't want to talk about cleaning products?

Prince Charming Yes, quite right. You're far too beautiful to talk about cleaning products.

Cinderella You flatter me, Dandini.

Prince Charming I have to admit, I do feel a little flutter in my heart when I'm talking to you, Cinderella. Don't you feel it too?

Music starts.

Cinderella Where's that music coming from?

Prince Charming It's magic.

Cinderella dances with Prince Charming (as Dandini) and they sing a love duet.

Song 3

Prince Charming Oh Cinderella you have such a beautiful voice. You simply must enter for the competition we're holding at the royal palace next week.

Cinderella That's odd.

Prince Charming What?

Cinderella An old lady in the woods told me that I should enter a competition.

Prince Charming Was she your agent?

Cinderella No! I don't have an agent! I don't know who she was. She just appeared out of nowhere.

Prince Charming Well, she was right. It's going to be on national television and the winner gets a big recording contract.

Cinderella But Dandini...

Prince Charming Don't tell me, let me guess. "You have nothing to wear for a talent competition".

Cinderella How did you know I was going to say that?

Prince Charming Lucky guess. It won't matter what you wear, my love. You will win the contest easily and then you'll be famous and you'll be able to buy as many beautiful clothes as you like.

Cinderella That would be wonderful.

Prince Charming Come on, let's go and think about what song you're going to sing.

They run off together. Tabs close. Enter Muggsy and Puggsy on tabs. They are carrying suitcases and a big TV camera on a tripod.

Puggsy We've been walking for miles. I'm exhausted. Tell me again why we have to go all the way to the royal Palace.

Muggsy Because the king and queen advertised for the two best TV producers in the kingdom to put on their talent show.

Puggsy So... why are we going to the royal palace? We haven't worked in TV since 1982. And that was just one episode of Blue Peter. I will never forgive you for letting that dog eat that tortoise.

Muggsy What about when we produced Ant & Dec?

Puggsy We were FIRED from that show!

Muggsy Oh yes.

Puggsy Because you kept calling Ant "Dec", and Dec "Ant".

Muggsy It was an easy mistake to make. I always thought Ant was Dec, and Dec was Ant. How was I supposed to know that Ant was Ant and Dec was Dec. Anyway, you used to call them Dick and Dom.

Buttons enters.

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up, Buttons!

Muggsy Excuse me, lad. Is this the right way to the royal palace?

Buttons Yes, it's just at the end of this road. May I ask, why are you going to the palace?

Muggsy I am Mr. Lampwick Muggsy and this my business associate Mr Boregard Puggsy.

Puggsy We are television producers.

Muggsy (*Quotation fingers*) "By Royal Appointment."

Buttons What would the king and queen want with television producers?

Puggsy You mean, you haven't heard about the talent show at the palace?

Buttons Talent show?

Puggsy It's being announced today. And *we* are the producers.

Buttons Wow! Real life TV producers. Do you think you could get me into showbusiness?

Puggsy Can you sing?

Buttons Not really.

Muggsy Can you dance?

Buttons Not very well.

Puggsy Can you tell jokes?

Buttons Only rubbish ones.

Muggsy Any other talents?

Buttons None.

Muggsy In that case...

Button Yes?

Muggsy You were *born* to be on television.

Puggsy, Muggsy and Buttons walk downstage. Tabs close behind them.

Puggsy Why don't you let us teach you a few tips?

Buttons Tips?

Muggsy Yes. If you're going to be on TV, you have to learn how to speak proper.

Buttons Speak proper?

Puggsy First, you have to warm up your voice.

Muggsy We'll teach you a voice exercise. Now, repeat after me. "Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!"

Buttons I'm not saying that.

Puggsy You want to be on TV?

Buttons Yes.

Muggsy Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Buttons Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Muggsy Again.

Buttons Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Puggsy Faster.

Buttons (*More quickly*) Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish! Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Muggsy Excellent.

Puggsy Now you have to learn physical co-ordination.

Buttons Physical co-ordination?

Muggsy Stand on one leg.

Buttons Like this?

Muggsy Perfect. Now, hop up and down.

Buttons (*Hopping*) Like this?

Puggsy Splendid. Now say the line again.

Buttons (*Hopping*) Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Muggsy Again.

Buttons (*Hopping*) Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish! Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish! Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Puggsy And relax.

Buttons Are you sure I need to do this to get on TV?

Muggsy Absolutely. How do you think Dermot O'Leary warms up before a big TV show?

Buttons I don't know.

Muggsy & Puggsy *(Together)* Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Puggsy Clive Myrie before he reads the news?

Muggsy & Puggsy *(Together)* Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Muggsy Ed Sheeran before he sings a song? Matt Baker before *Countryfile*?

Muggsy, Puggsy & Buttons *(Together)* Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Muggsy *(To audience)* Everyone!

All Har! Yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish!

Ad lib with audience.

Puggsy There you go buttons, now you're ready to be on TV.

Muggsy Never forget that advice.

Buttons I promise, I won't. Thanks guys.

Puggsy You're welcome.

Buttons exits.

Muggsy *(Aside to audience)* Well, I can't believe he fell for that.

Puggsy He even did it on one leg.

They exit, chuckling. Tabs open for...

Scene 5

The great hall of Hardup Castle. A long table is set for dinner. Cinderella is laying the table and cleaning glasses. Enter Buttons.

Buttons *(Under his breath)* Ha, yar, bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish! Har, yar! Bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish...

Cinderella spots him.

Cinderella Button up, Buttons!

Buttons Hello Cinders.

Cinderella What was that you were saying?

Buttons Oh, nothing. Fancy coming for a walk?

Cinderella I can't, I'm afraid. I have so much work to do.

Buttons Are you going to enter the talent contest?

Cinderella I'd love to. But I don't think Donatella and Britney will let me. I'll probably be stuck in the kitchen while it's going on.

Enter Melania Hardup and Baron Hardup.

Melania Hardup What are you doing in here you lazy, good-for-nothing boy?

The doorbell rings.

Baron Hardup Go and answer the door.

Buttons On my way.

Buttons exits.

Melania Hardup Cinderella, why aren't you hard at work?

Cinderella Sorry, stepmother. I'll get on with it right away.

Cinderella exits tearfully, pursued by Melania Hardup. Buttons comes back in again.

Buttons Baron Hardup, there are two men outside to see you.

Baron Hardup Ooooh yes, show them in right away. They're in town to produce the talent show at the palace and the king has asked us to put them up here.

Buttons exits and re-appears immediately with Mr Muggsy and Mr Puggsy.

Buttons Please, come in gentlemen.

Baron Hardup Welcome to Hardup Castle!

Puggsy (*Looking around*) I'd rather stay at the palace.

Muggsy (*To Puggsy*) Sssshhhh! (*To the Baron*) Baron Hardup! What a pleasure to meet you. Thank you so much for letting us stay with you.

Baron Hardup You are most welcome.

Muggsy I'm Mr Muggsy and this is Mr Puggsy.

Buttons Sorry to interrupt, Baron Hardup but I've just remembered. I have a message for you. The Prince and Dandini *aren't* coming to dinner tonight after all. They've been called back to the palace unexpectedly.

Baron Hardup Oh dear. Does Baroness Melania know about this?

Buttons I haven't told her yet.

Baron Hardup She will be so disappointed.

Buttons Maybe another time.

Baron Hardup But wait. I think I have an idea.

Buttons An idea? *(To audience)* I don't like the sound of that.

Baron Hardup Buttons, has the Baroness ever met Prince Charming or Dandini?

Buttons I don't think so.

Baron Hardup Well then, we just need to find two fine, handsome gentlemen who can *pretend* to be Prince Charming and Dandini.

Buttons But where are we going to find two fine, handsome gentlemen at such short notice?

Baron Hardup *(To Muggsy & Puggsy)* Can you recommend two fine, handsome gentlemen?

Puggsy Jedward?

Baron Hardup Most amusing. But I think you two gentlemen know exactly to whom I am referring.

(Beat)

Muggsy & Puggsy *(Together)* Us?

Baron Hardup Why not?

Puggsy *We* can't pretend to be royalty.

Muggsy We're producers, not actors!

Buttons I'll find you something smart to wear.

Puggsy *(To Muggsy)* We're going to regret this!

Buttons exits with Muggsy and Puggsy. Enter Baroness Melania.

Melania Hardup My dear, Prince Charming and Dandini will be here at any minute. Have you put out the nibbles?

Baron Hardup The nibbles?

Melania Hardup The nibbly nibbles. We cannot entertain royalty without putting out the nibbly nibbles.

Baron Hardup I will see to it right away, my treasure.

Melania Hardup Britney and Donatella are beside themselves with excitement. When Prince Charming and Dandini set eyes upon them, there will be the sweet perfume of love in the air.

Baron Hardup That reminds me.

Melania Hardup What?

Baron Hardup I must put a new air freshener in the loo.

Melania Hardup Isn't it delightful that my lovely daughters will soon be marrying into the royal family.

Baron Hardup Delightful.

Melania Hardup Do you remember when we first met, my dear?

Baron Hardup It is a moment that will be forever chiselled into my heart.

The Baron and Baroness sing a comical love duet.

Song 4

After the duet, enter Buttons.

Buttons Baroness Melania, *(winking knowingly at the Baron)* Prince Charming and Dandini are have arrived.

Melania Hardup Then show them in. I shall receive them right away.

Buttons Shall I fetch Britney and Donatella?

Melania Hardup With the greatest of haste, dear. I believe they are putting on their make up.

Baron Hardup They've been putting on their make up for six hours.

Buttons *(To audience as he exits)* It was delivered this morning in a shipping container. The lipstick had to be transported into the castle on a fork lift truck.

Buttons exits and returns with Muggsy and Puggsy who are now dressed as royalty.

Buttons May I introduce Prince Charming and his valet Dandini.

Melania Hardup *(To Muggsy)* Your Highness, we are indeed honoured that you have chosen to grace our humble little castle.

Muggsy *(As Prince Charming. Posh voice.)* Baroness.

He kisses her hand.

Melania Hardup Ooooh. I won't wash it for a week. My two *dazzling* daughters will be joining us for dinner in a moment. May I offer Your Royal Highness a drink?

Muggsy That's most kind. A pint of lager, please.

Melania Hardup Oh dear, I don't believe we have any lager.

Puggsy *(Whispering to Muggsy)* Pint of lager? Royal princes don't drink pints of lager.

Muggsy *(Whispering)* What do they drink?

Puggsy *(Whispering)* I don't know. Martini?

Muggsy (*Whispering*) Martini? (*To Melania Hardup*) Baroness, I should very much like... a Martini, please.

Melania Hardup Splendid.

Muggsy A pint of Martini, in a straight glass.

Puggsy Oh, no.

Muggsy With a packet of salt and vinegar crisps.

Baron Hardup Buttons...

Muggsy Have you got any pickled eggs?

Baron Hardup Buttons, could you please organise drinks for His Royal Highness.

Buttons Right away, Baron Hardup.

Enter the Ugly Sisters with a flourish.

Britney & Donatella (*Together*) Hello boys!

Donatella Here I am, Princey Wincey! I'm here to sweep you off your feet!

Britney (*To audience*) And she'll do anything for a bag of chips and a doughnut. Your Highness, won't you come and join us at the table?

Donatella Walk this way.

Donatella walks with an exaggerated wiggle as she leads Muggsy (As Prince Charming) to the table.

Puggsy If I could walk that way I'd be on *Strictly Come Dancing*.

The sisters sit either side of Muggsy. They are both rather too close to him. Puggsy sits at the end of the table and watches in horror.

Melania Hardup While the social *glitterati* are all getting to know each other, we'll go and see how dinner is progressing in the kitchen. Come on dear.

Baron Hardup Coming my love.

The Baron, Baroness Melania and Buttons exit.

Britney Oooh, he smells gorgeous, doesn't he Donatella?

Donatella Gorgeous. What is that after shave?

Muggsy I'm not wearing any after shave.

Britney Oh?

Muggsy But I did spray some air freshener under my armpits this morning.

Donatella That'll be it, then.

Britney (*Deep breath*) It really clear the sinuses, doesn't it?

Donatella (*Fanning herself*) I may swoon.

Britney She's swooning. She's going....

Puggsy I think perhaps the Prince would like to find out a bit more about you two ladies.

Muggsy tries to get up but the sisters push him down.

Donatella I'm *very* sophisticated, Your Highness. I'd make a wonderful princess.

Britney So would I. I buy all my clothes in Milan.

Donatella I didn't know there was a *Primark* in Milan.

Britney I'll get you for that.

They exchange little slaps. Muggsy separates them.

Muggsy Ladies, ladies, please. I'm sure you would both make wonderful princesses.

Enter Baroness, Baron and Buttons carrying snacks.

Melania Hardup How are you love birds getting on?

Baron Hardup I hope you're taking care of your V.I.P guests.

Buttons puts some food on the table.

Britney My favourite! nibbly nibbles.

Donatella Let me feed you, your Highness.

Muggsy No!

She feeds a nibble into the prince's mouth, treating him like a baby.

Donatella Come on, Princey Wincey. It's a yummy, wummy nibbly nibble. Here comes the train into the tunnel.

Muggsy No!

Britney I want to feed him. Let me do it.

Donatella I'm doing it.

They both compete to put nibbles into Muggsy's mouth. He struggles.

Puggsy Need any help there, Your Highness?

Muggsy Mmmpph. Nmmpph. Stop it, ladies! Please! I am perfectly capable of feeding myself!

Enter Cinderella

Cinderella Excuse me, Baroness Melania.

Donatella What's that scruffy girl doing in here? Cinderella go back to the kitchen!

Cinderella Pardon me but the king and queen are outside.

Melania Hardup The king and queen?

Cinderella They say they're looking for their son Prince Charming and his valet Dandini.

Melania Hardup Well don't just stand there, show them in.

Cinderella and Buttons exit. The Ugly Sisters stand with the baron & baroness and prepare to meet the king and queen

Puggsy (*Whispers to Muggsy*) Now what do we do?

Muggsy (*Whisper*) Well as I see it we have two options.

Puggsy What?

Muggsy We can leg it...

Puggsy What's the other option?

Muggsy Come to think of it, that's the other option as well.

Puggsy Oh.

The king and queen enter with Buttons. Muggsy and Puggsy creep towards the door.

Buttons Their royal majesties the king and queen!

Melania & Baron Hardup (*Bowing low*) Welcome to Hardup Castle, your majesties.

King Thank you. We understand that our son Prince Charming is visiting with you at the moment. May we see him?

Muggsy and Puggsy leg it.

Buttons I'm afraid you've just missed him, Your Majesty. He and his valet left just a moment ago. Actually, they looked like they were in quite a hurry.

Donatella Left? They can't have left. We hadn't even *begun* to make wedding plans.

Britney Well the prince would never have left if you hadn't stuck your tongue in his ear.

Donatella I did not stick my tongue in the prince's ear.

Britney You little trollop!

They do their slapping routine again.

Queen Such a pity we missed the Prince. We were going to give him a lift home in our brand new royal coach.

King It's got air conditioning, an MP3 player and a rear parking sensor.

Britney *(To Donatella)* Now what are we going to do?

Donatella Well I know what I'm going to do.

Britney What?

Donatella I'm going after them and fetching them back.

Britney Wait for me!

The Ugly Sisters run off stage. Awkward silence.

Melania Hardup I'm sure Britney and Donatella will be back with your son very soon.

Awkward silence. Buttons produces another tray of nibbles.

Buttons *(To the King)* Would you like a Twiglet, Your Majesty?

King No thank you.

Buttons *(To the Queen)* Twiglet?

Queen No thank you.

Buttons Anyone else want a Twiglet?

Baron and Baroness *(Together)* No!

Baron Hardup Buttons, the King and Queen do not eat Twiglets!

(Beat)

Buttons Do you mind if I have a Twiglet?

All No!

Buttons slowly eats a Twiglet. He crunches very loudly. Everyone is embarrassed. After a short pause he eats another one even more loudly. Finally, the Ugly Sisters enter, dragging Muggsy and Puggsy with them.

Britney Here they are!

Baron Hardup Excellent! Where did you find them?

Donatella They were hiding behind a great big hedge in the castle grounds.

Britney Cheeky monkeys. I reckon they were playing Hide 'n' Seek and they *wanted* us to come and find them. Didn't you Princey Wincey?

King Princey Wincey? That isn't the Princey Wincey. I mean, that's not Prince Charming!

Melania Hardup It isn't?

King No!

Queen Who *are* those two buffoons?

Puggsy Buffoons? Here, steady on.

Melania Hardup Buttons, throw these men thrown out!

Buttons Come on you two...

Muggsy Wait! You can't throw us out! We're in town to produce the talent show at the palace.

Britney & Donatella (*Together*) Talent Show?

King But, of course! Forgive me gentlemen, we've not been introduced before.

Queen Baron Hardup, you must of course enter *all* of your daughters in the competition. I'm sure they are a very talented trio.

Baron Hardup They will be honoured, Your Majesty. Britney, Donatella and Cinderella will all be there to perform.

Queen Excellent! Now, we must be going. I have to choose some new curtains for the theatre at the palace and the king wants to get back to watch the football on TNT Sport.

King Come on you Spurs!

The King and Queen exit.

Baron Hardup Come, Melania, let us go and change for dinner.

Baron and Baroness exit, followed by Buttons.

Donatella Cinderella in a talent show? Over my dead body.

Britney Cinderella will never, never, *never* go to the royal palace.

Donatella And that's *three* nevers!

Britney (*To Muggsy & Puggsy*) Gentlemen, would you like to go for a walk with us?

Muggsy (*To Puggsy*) I'm scared.

Puggsy (*To Muggsy*) Just look straight ahead. Don't make eye contact.

Britney & Donatella march Muggsy & Puggsy downstage and tabs close behind them.

Muggsy Where are we going?

Donatella Let us go to the woods and tiptoe through the flowers.

Puggsy Tiptoe through the flowers?

Muggsy What kind of flowers?

Britney We can tiptoe through the tulips.

Donatella Have you ever tried to tiptoe through the tulips? It's terribly intoxicating.

Puggsy I don't know if I want to tiptoe through intoxicating tulips.

Britney In that case... let us go and whistle in the thistles.

Muggsy Whistle in the thistles?

Donatella Or we could have a few laffs in the daffs.

Puggsy (*Aside*) That doesn't even rhyme.

Britney How about sharing a Mars *bar* in the laven-*dar*.

Donatella I've got it! We'll go and blow our noses in the roses.

Britney How romantic!

Puggsy Look, we do not want to tiptoe through the tulips, whistle in the thistles, or have laffs in the daffs.

Muggsy (*Aside*) Still doesn't rhyme.

Puggsy And we do not want a Mars *bar* in the laven-*dar* or to blow our noses in the roses.

Donatella Well what *do* you want to do?

(*Beat*)

Puggsy & Muggsy Run away!

Muggsy and Puggsy run off.

Britney Well, really. Some men just don't know when they're being shown a good time.

Donatella Come Britney, let us go and seek flirtations in the carnations.

They exit. Tabs open for....

Scene 6

The village fete. Some stalls have already been prepared on the village green. Enter Prince Charming and Dandini.

Dandini Good morning your Highness. What a lovely day it is today.

Prince Charming I wish I could enjoy it with you, Dandini. But I'm so worried.

Dandini Let me guess. How are you going to tell the king and queen that you're in love with a servant girl?

Prince Charming You read my mind.

Dandini Why don't you just tell them that Cinderella's *my* girlfriend. She thinks you're Dandini anyway.

Prince Charming It's such a mess. You don't know any Fairy Godmothers by any chance?

Dandini Fairy Godmothers? There's no such thing as a Fairy Godmother.

Prince Charming Yes there is.

Dandini Oh, no there isn't.

Prince Charming Oh, yes there is.

Dandini Oh, no there isn't.

Audience Oh, yes there is.

Ad lib with audience.

Prince Charming You'll see, Dandini. There *are* Fairy Godmothers and there *is* magic in the world. Everyone here agrees with me. Don't you boys and girls? I *will* find a way to marry Cinderella!

The Prince exits. Buttons and a few of the villagers enter.

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up Buttons!

Buttons I'm here to help the villagers set up the stalls for the village fete. It'll be a fun day, but it would be a lot more fun if Cinderella was here. I do miss her when she's not around. Oops, look out, here come the king and queen...

Enter king and queen.

King Ah, the Village Fete! My favourite day of the year! I love it more than anything. It's better than the BAFTA's...

Queen Really dear?

King It's better than the Oscar's...

Queen Are you sure, dear?

King It's even better than the opening night of Big Brother.

Queen Never mind all that. The Prince has obviously met a girl and I'm sure he's planning to introduce her to us today.

King Well, let's hope it's someone with a bit of royal blood.

Enter Muggsy & Puggsy. Puggsy is holding a TV camera, Muggsy holds a big fluffy microphone.

Puggsy Right, let's do some interviews with the villagers and find out how excited they are about the talent contest.

Muggsy Turn the camera on.

Enter Ugly Sisters. They wave at Muggsy and Puggsy.

Britney *(Calling out)* Hello boys!

Donatella Ooh look, they've brought the camera with them. Let's see if we can get on TV.

Puggsy Lookout Muggsy, the Muppet Show is on its way. Do an interview with them and then maybe they'll go away.

Muggsy shoves the microphone in front of Britney's face.

Muggsy Here are two lovely local ladies. Can I ask your names?

Britney Yes, you can.

(Beat)

Donatella Well, go on then!

Muggsy What are your names?

Britney I'm Britney and this is my sister Donatella.

Donatella *(To camera)* Hello!

Muggsy Ladies, will you be entering for the talent show?

Britney Abso-bloomin-lutely, sunshine. I shall be doing my world-famous impression of Dolly Parton.

Muggsy Really?

Donatella And I'll be doing my critically acclaimed impression of Kylie Minogue.

Britney Which is something you *really* don't want to miss. My sister in skin tight, gold, hot pants.

Donatella Jealous cow.

Muggsy Thank you ladies, and good luck in the competition.

Britney While we're on TV, can we just say hello to a few people?

Muggsy If you're very quick.

Donatella *(To camera)* I'd like to say hello to our friends Belinda, Linda, Lucinda and Melinda.

Muggsy Lovely.

He tries to take the microphone away but they snatch it back.

Britney *(To camera)* Ooh, and Bonnie, Connie, Johnny, Lonnie, Ronnie and Tommy.

Donatella You missed one.

Britney Lonnie?

Donatella You said Lonnie.

Britney Oh. Donny?

Donatella Donny, lovely Donny.

Muggsy Is that all?

Donatella Just a few more. Charlene, Christine, Colleen, Eileen, Eugene, Francine, Irene, Janine, Jean, Kathleen, Maureen, Maxine, Nadine and Auntie Pauline. Oh, and Keith.

Muggsy All done?

Britney and Donatella *(Together)* And everyone else who knows us.

Muggsy Thank you.

Britney and Donatella *(Together)* You're very welcome.

Prince and Dandini enter and approach the king and queen.

Queen My darling boy.

Prince Charming Mother.

Queen Well, where is she?

Prince Charming Where is who?

Queen Your bride to be? Your fiancé? Come on my boy, I know something's going on. When are we going to meet her?

Prince Charming I'm sorry to disappoint you, mother, but I don't have anyone to introduce you to today.

Queen Well, there's only one thing for it, then. I will invite every single beautiful girl in the kingdom to the show at the palace.

King Every one? How are we going to fit them all in? There must be ten thousand young girls in the kingdom.

Queen We'll build an extension.

King It'll have to be a very large extension, my dear.

Queen Then, we'll put up a marquee in the garden.

King That won't be big enough!

Queen We'll move the show to Wembley Stadium if we have to. And if Prince Charming can't find a princess among that lot, I will put him in a monastery.

Prince Charming A monastery?

Britney Oh great, that's all we need. More competition.

Donatella Ten thousand beautiful women crammed into the royal palace? We don't stand a chance!

Buttons addresses the villagers as the king and queen step forward.

Buttons Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome their majesties the king and queen.

King My loyal subjects, the queen and I would just like to say that we hope you all enjoy your day at the village fete, and we're looking forward to seeing you all at the big talent show.

Villagers Hoorah!

King It's going to be a spectacular affair and we hope to find the most talented person in the kingdom.

Villagers Hoorah!

Queen We can assure you that the winner of the competition will be richly rewarded.

King *(To Muggsy and Puggsy)* Gentlemen, how go the preparations for the big event?

Puggsy Very well, your majesty.

King Have you found a famous presenter?

Muggsy Er.. well it's someone who's very well known around these parts.

King Davina McCall?

Muggsy No.

King Emma Willis?

Muggsy No.

King Is it Jonathan Ross?

Puggsy Not exactly, no.

Muggsy They were all terribly expensive.

King Well who is it?

Puggsy Well, we thought we'd ask Buttons to do it.

Buttons Me?

The villagers all cheer.

King Buttons?

Puggsy Yes.

King Baron Hardup's hapless servant Buttons?

Muggsy He's *very* popular, your majesty.

Puggsy He'll be marvellous. Trust us.

King Oh, very well. Buttons it is.

Buttons Wow! I'm going to be on TV.

King *(To Muggsy & Puggsy)* He had better be good, or it'll be curtains for you two.

Muggsy Oh dear.

King *(To Muggsy & Puggsy)* I will throw you both into my deepest, darkest dungeon.

Puggsy Yikes.

King You will be fed nothing but stale bread and tap water.

Muggsy Oh no!

King And you will be forced to watch "The Only Way Is Essex" twenty four hours a day.

Muggsy & Puggsy Not that!

The Ugly Sisters enter and approach Prince Charming and Dandini.

Donatella *(Whisper)* Look, over there! That's the *real* Prince Charming and Dandini.

Britney *(Whisper)* Are you sure?

Donatella *(Whisper)* Yes! I can smell royal blood at twenty paces.

They lurch towards the prince.

Britney Oh, there you are Princey Wincey! You're looking terribly handsome today. Isn't he looking handsome Donatella?

Donatella Very handsome. Very, very handsome.

Britney Very, very, very handsome.

Donatella Very, very, very, very...

Prince Charming I'm sorry to interrupt you ladies, but I'm afraid I have absolutely no idea who you are.

Donatella *(High pitched notes)* Awkward!

Britney *(Whispers to Buttons)* Psssst. Buttons, introduce us to the prince.

Buttons Oh dear, if I must. *(To Prince Charming)* Begging your pardon Your Royal Highness, and Dandini, may I introduce Britney and Donatella, the... *(clears his throat)* beautiful daughters of Baroness Hardup.

Prince Charming What lovely names. And such *unusual* fashion sense.

Donatella We make *all* our own dresses. I trained under Dolce & Gabbana.

Britney She was under them for years.

Donatella And on top. And we make all our own lingerie.

Britney Eat your heart out Ann Summers.

Prince Charming How delightful.

Donatella We'll both be appearing in the talent competition at the palace. Will you be there?

Dandini Of course the prince will be there. He's one of the judges.

Britney A judge? In that case you simply *must* let us buy you a quick Mocha Choco Latte at Starbucks.

Donatella How about a nice big chocolate muffin?

Dandini Ladies, I do hope you're not trying to bribe one of the judges.

Britney Absolutely not.

Donatella Furthest thing from our pretty little heads.

Prince Charming I'm sorry, ladies, I have urgent business at the palace.

Britney (*To Muggsy & Puggsy*) Oy, you two. Let us promenade around the green.

Muggsy I'm sorry?

Britney Grab an arm, sunshine.

The Ugly Sisters grab Muggsy and Puggsy by the arms and yank them away. Enter Cinderella.

Buttons Hello Cinders.

Cinderella Button up, Buttons!

Buttons Glad to see that your sisters have decided to let you out of the kitchen for a change.

Cinderella I'm afraid they didn't let me out. I snuck out while no-one was looking. It's such a lovely day, isn't it?

Buttons It's always a lovely day when you're around Cinders.

Cinderella Is it true you're going to be hosting the big talent show?

Buttons Wow! News travels fast. How did you know about that?

Cinderella It's trending on Twitter that's not called Twitter anymore. Isn't that Dandini over there?

Buttons Yes.

Cinderella He's so dreamy. I'm sure I'm falling in love with him.

Buttons Oh dear.

Cinderella What's the matter, Buttons?

Buttons I wish you'd fall in love with *me*.

Cinderella I *do* love you, Buttons. You're like a brother to me.

Buttons I know, Cinders. I suppose I'll just have to settle for that.

Cinderella kisses Buttons on the forehead and he exits along with the villagers. Cinderella makes as if to leave and bumps into Prince Charming, not entirely by accident.

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) Cinderella! How lovely to accidentally bump into you.

Cinderella Dandini! I wasn't expecting to meet you either.

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) Isn't that the most marvellous thing about the world, Cinderella. Sometimes when things happen by accident it can make dreams come true.

Cinderella Do you really think so?

Prince Charming (*As Dandini*) Absolutely.

The Prince takes Cinderella's hand and they sing a love duet together.

Song 5

Tabs close after the song. Enter Fairy Godmother on tabs.

Fairy Godmother The contest will search far and wide
For a bride to be at Charming's side.
Be they great singer or fine actor,
They must be blessed with the X Factor.

When Cinders walks before lights
Her time will come to hit the heights.
But Cinders' rags must first be gone,
The duckling must become a swan.

Her makeover's my sacred duty,
From servant into stylish beauty.
But today must first become alarming
When she learns Dandini is Prince Charming.

Fairy Godmother starts to exit.

Fairy Godmother (*Aside*) Would you believe it, the batteries in my bloomin' wand have run out. I'll have to go WH Smiths and buy some more. I think it takes three double A's.

She exits. Tabs open for....

Scene 7

The kitchen at Hardup Castle. Cinderella is mopping the floor.

Cinderella The work here at the castle never seems to end. *(Reads list)* Now, let me see, I've got to sweep the floors, polish the doors, beat the rugs, and wash up the mugs. Then I've got to dust the bookshelves and the cook's shelves and then empty the hearth and rinse the bath. *(Sighs)* Oh well, at least when I'm working on my own I have time to think about Dandini.

Enter Baroness Melania.

Melania Hardup Cinderella! Daydreaming again, instead of getting on with your duties.

Cinderella I'm sorry, stepmother, I've nearly finished.

Melania Hardup Well get on with it. It's almost time for you to go and help Britney and Donatella get ready for the talent show.

Enter Buttons waving a piece of paper.

Buttons Hi boys and girls!

Audience Button up Buttons!

Buttons Cinders! I have fantastic news! Prince Charming has sent you a *personal* invitation to take part in the talent show this evening.

Cinderella An invitation? For me? But how?

Melania Hardup Invitation? What invitation?

Button Baroness Melania. I didn't see you there.

Melania Hardup Give me that!

She snatches the invitation from Buttons.

Melania Hardup *(Reads)* "Prince Charming requests that you enter the Royal Palace Talent Show..." What nonsense! Why would His Royal Highness invite a scruffy girl like Cinderella to be on television?

Buttons But Baroness Melania, she simply *has* to go. Cinderella has the most beautiful singing voice in the kingdom. Please let her have the invitation.

Melania Hardup I can assure you, young man, that the only ladies who will be going to the Palace with me tonight are my daughters Britney and Donatella.

Baroness Melania tears up the invitation and throws the bits of torn paper up in the air. The Baroness then exits with an evil laugh. Cinderella begins to cry.

Buttons Please don't cry Cinders.

Cinderella I really thought I was going to sing for Prince Charming at the palace. But then, now that I come to think about it, I have absolutely *nothing* to wear. I can't go to the Palace in these tatty old rags.

Buttons Cinders, you would look beautiful if you went to the palace wearing a black, plastic bin liner.

Cinderella Oh, Buttons, you are funny. You've really cheered me up. It's so nice to have a friend like you.

Buttons and Cinderella sing a song together about being friends.

Song 6

At the end of the song...

Buttons Don't worry Cinders, I'm sure you'll go to the Palace one day.

Cinderella I *wish* that was true.

Enter Fairy Godmother.

Fairy Godmother Perhaps it is true, Cinderella.

Cinderella Who are you?

Buttons How did you get in here? You're not one of those door-to-door sales people, I hope.

Fairy Godmother No, young man, I am not selling anything. I was just wondering if I could sit down for a moment. I've walked all the way from the village and my feet are killing me.

Cinderella Wait a moment, I recognise you now. You're the lady I met in the woods. The one with the kind face.

Fairy Godmother Cinderella, I am your Fairy Godmother.

Buttons No way!

Fairy Godmother Way! And I am going to use my magic powers to make sure that you *do* go to the Palace tonight.

Cinderella But Fairy Godmother, I can't sing in the competition dressed like this!

Fairy Godmother With the greatest respect, Cinderella, clothes are the least of your problem.

Cinderella Are they?

Fairy Godmother Because you don't even have a carriage to take you to the palace.

Buttons Can't we just call an Uber?

Fairy Godmother Of course not! You must arrive in style. So you'll need a coach and a driver, and a couple of footmen. Oh, and a nice white horse.

Buttons Where are we going to get that lot? Amazon?

Fairy Godmother We will use magic, of course. First, I will need a pumpkin.

Cinderella We've got some pumpkins in the larder.

Buttons What else do we need?

Fairy Godmother We will need two lizards.

Cinderella We haven't got any lizards!

Buttons Who has lizards?

Fairy Godmother Oh dear. That's rather inconvenient. Do you have any frogs?

Cinderella No! Why would we have frogs?

Buttons I think there might be a few wiggly worms in the garden.

Fairy Godmother That will have to do. Now, let me see. A mouse?

Cinderella There's definitely a mouse living under the sink.

Fairy Godmother And a rat.

Cinderella Oh, the castle has *hundreds* of rats. They're everywhere.

Fairy Godmother Yuk.

Buttons So, what are you going to do with that lot?

Fairy Godmother I will use my magic wand.

She waves her magic wand around.

Fairy Godmother Hold on, it's not switched on.

She fiddles with it and switches it on. It glows at the end.

Fairy Godmother *(Aside to audience)* There we are. Lovely. Nice new batteries. *(To Cinderella)* I will use my magic wand to turn the pumpkin into a coach made of gold.

Buttons I'd pay to see that.

Fairy Godmother The lizards... sorry... the *wiggly worms* will turn into two footmen.

Cinderella Really?

Fairy Godmother The rat will become your coach driver.

Buttons Will it need a driving licence?

Fairy Godmother Don't be sarcastic boy, I'm working here.

Buttons Sorry.

Fairy Godmother The mouse will become the most handsome white horse you have ever seen.

Cinderella What about my *dress*?

Fairy Godmother Oh really, Cinderella, you really are quite obsessed with your appearance. There is nothing quite as unattractive as vanity.

Buttons But she has to wear something beautiful.

Fairy Godmother Sigh! The clothes you're wearing now will magically turn into fine lace.

Cinderella Oooh...

Fairy Godmother Do you want to be dripping with jewels, or just have one tiny, understated little diamond in your hair?

Cinderella Dripping in jewels, please.

Fairy Godmother Are you sure? Less is more.

Cinderella I'm sure.

Fairy Godmother Stockings of finest silk?

Cinderella Oh yes!

Fairy Godmother Right. I think that's everything.

Buttons What about shoes?

Fairy Godmother Well remembered, lad. What type of shoes would you like, Cinderella?

Cinderella It's so hard to choose.

Fairy Godmother Well hurry up. I haven't got all day.

Cinderella Can I be... *awkward*?

Fairy Godmother Awkward?

Cinderella I've always dreamed of wearing slippers that are fashioned from crystal glass.

Fairy Godmother Glass?

Cinderella Yes.

Fairy Godmother Won't that be terribly uncomfortable?

Cinderella Oh please, Fairy Godmother.

Fairy Godmother They're your feet, dear. Very well. You shall have glass slippers. What size are you?

Cinderella Two and a half.

Fairy Godmother Wow! Small feet!

Buttons Small and dainty.

Fairy Godmother Done.

Cinderella I'm so excited.

The Fairy Godmother, Buttons and Cinderella walk forward and the tabs close behind them.

Fairy Godmother Oh, there is one condition.

Cinderella Condition?

Fairy Godmother There's always small print.

Buttons What's the condition?

Fairy Godmother It's nothing too inconvenient. Just that Cinderella *must* leave the royal palace before the stroke of midnight.

Cinderella Midnight? What happens if I leave *after* midnight?

Fairy Godmother My, my, you are a *curious* girl. You'll find all the terms and conditions on my web site. Now, run along both of you and fetch everything we need.

Cinderella and Buttons exit.

Fairy Godmother (*To audience*) I don't know, kids today. What can you do with them?

The Fairy Godmother starts to sing - a romantic song above love.

Song 7

Half way through the song, the tabs open.

Scene 8

On stage stands a golden coach with a driver and two footmen. There is a horse ready to pull the coach. Villagers and courtiers enter and join in with the Fairy Godmother's song. Escorted by Buttons, Cinderella enters in her brand new dress and sparkling glass slippers. She climbs into the coach and it begins to move off. Curtain.

ACT II

Scene 1

The theatre at the palace. Enter Buttons.

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up Buttons!

Buttons It's the day of the big TV show at the palace! I'm so excited.! I'm going to be on TV. Imagine that! Maybe if I become a big television celebrity, Cinderella will fall in love with me. Oh well, I can always dream.

Dancers and villagers enter to join Buttons for the opening number of the second act..

Song 8

At the end of the song, Buttons exits. Enter the king and queen.

Queen Now, are you sure everything is ready for the show?

King Absolutely, my dear. I think Mr Muggsy and Mr Puggsy have done a splendid job.

Queen Where did you find those two, anyway?

King I put an advert in the newsagents' window.

Queen How many replies did you get?

King A quarter of a million. But Muggsy & Puggsy were the only applicants who were actually TV producers.

Queen Well, I think they're a very dodgy pair. You simply can't trust showbusiness people.

Enter Muggsy and Puggsy, who is holding a big TV camera on his shoulder. The pair flit around filming everything that moves.

King Here they are now.

Muggsy (*Pointing camera at the king & queen*) Act natural, your majesties. Act natural.

Puggsy Don't look at the camera.

Muggsy We are live on air to the nation, Your Majesty.

Puggsy Yes. Please don't swear.

Queen Is my son here yet?

Puggsy Not yet your majesty.

King Well I wish he'd hurry up. He's supposed to be one of the judges tonight.

Muggsy (*Pointing a big fluffy microphone at the king*) As are Your Majesty and the queen, of course. Are you looking forward to choosing the most talented person in the kingdom?

King (*To camera*) Oh yes! And I do hope there are a few good dog acts. I love a good dog act.

Queen Dog acts? Nonsense. We're looking for someone to marry Prince Charming!

Muggsy Naturally, Your Majesty. Someone with a beautiful voice, of course.

Queen (*To camera*) Beautiful voice? I don't care if they sound like a strangled cat in a blender, as long as they are pretty, rich and they own a huge palace.

Enter Buttons holding a microphone. He mutters under his breath to himself.

Buttons Har, yar bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish, har, yar bibberty, bobberty, fiddly fish.

Muggsy and Puggsy pan the camera to him.

Buttons (*To camera*) Your Majesties, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Big TV Talent Show at the Royal Palace!

Applause.

Buttons Please welcome his Royal Highness Prince Charming!

Prince Charming enters with Dandini. The camera follows them.

Dandini (*Whispering to Prince Charming*) Do you mind if I just quickly check something, Your Highness.

Prince Charming Of course.

Dandini Am I still you, or am I back to being me again?

Prince Charming You're back to being you again. I'm me and you're you.

Dandini But am I me as you, or am I me as me?

Prince Charming You're me as me. I mean, you're you as you.

Dandini You as you?

Prince Charming No, you as you. Which isn't me, it's you.

Dandini So, just to summarise...

Prince Charming Ssssh. We're on TV.

Prince Charming joins the king and queen. The camera goes back to Buttons while he mimes interviewing villagers upstage.

Prince Charming Mother, father. You wanted to see me?

King Yes we did. Now, don't forget, there will be lots of eligible...

Queen Rich...

King Rich, young women here this evening. Not just in the contest but in the audience as well.

Queen Your father and I feel confident that your new Princess will be somewhere in this room. All you have to do is find her.

Prince Charming You make it sound like a celebrity auction, mother. Do my own feelings count for nothing?

Queen Well, I can assure you of one thing, my boy, if you don't choose a wife, I will choose one for you.

Puggsy points the camera at Prince Charming.

Prince Charming (*Mugging and waving at the camera*) Hello everyone!

Queen I'm surprised you even want to speak to those awful television people after the deception they pulled at the castle.

Prince Charming Deception?

Queen Haven't you heard? They pretended to be you and Dandini.

Prince Charming (*Fake smile to camera*) Really mother? They seem like such nice chaps.

King Oh it's all forgotten now. They've received their punishment. They've ended up being stalked by the Baroness's two dreadful daughters.

He realises he's on TV.

King I mean, the Baroness's two *beautiful* daughters.

Queen Where are Britney and Donatella, by the way?

Muggsy They're making themselves beautiful for the cameras.

Puggsy I just saw their wigs being delivered by an articulated lorry from Eddie Stobart.

Puggsy pans the camera back to point at Buttons.

Buttons Ladies and gentlemen, we will soon be watching the first acts of the evening. So, lets meet two of those acts now, with their family who are here to support them.

Enter the Baron and Baroness. Applause.

Buttons And here are the Baroness's two very talented daughters.

The Ugly Sisters enter. They are dressed to kill. The camera follows Prince Charming and Dandini as they move to greet them.

Prince Charming Welcome to the royal palace, baron and baroness. And of course a very special welcome to your lovely daughters.

Donatella *(To camera)* Hello everyone! We are absolutely *thrilled* to be here!

Britney *(To camera)* We're on a roller-coaster of emotions!

Prince Charming But Baroness Melania, isn't one of your family missing?

Dandini Surely we delivered another invitation to Hardup Castle!

Melania Hardup I can assure your Royal Highness, that all of my party are here.

Donatella *(To the Prince)* Are you looking forward to hearing us sing, Princey Wincey?

Prince Charming Of course. I wouldn't miss it for the world.

Donatella notices Puggsy behind the camera.

Donatella *(Flirty)* Oooh oooh! Mr. Puggsy! Make sure you get my good side.

Muggsy *(Aside to Puggsy)* And you know which side that is.

Puggsy Which?

Muggsy The back of her head.

Puggsy pans the camera around to Buttons.

Buttons So, the excitement is building. We've met the judges and we'll soon be meeting the first act. That's all coming up after this short commercial break.

Puggsy Cut! Take five everybody.

Muggsy and Puggsy put the camera and microphone down.

Puggsy Thanks goodness for that. That bloomin' camera weighs a ton. Next time I'm shooting the whole thing on my phone.

Muggsy Oh stop complaining. You know you love the buzz of live TV.

Puggsy Well, I suppose it's better than having a proper job. And you know what they say. There's no business like showbusiness.

Buttons joins Muggsy and Puggsy as they perform, a very showbizzy song and dance routine.

Song 9

After the routine, Puggsy picks up the camera and points it at Buttons.

Muggsy Coming back in five, four, three cue Buttons.

Buttons Welcome back to the Royal Palace for the biggest showbiz night of the year.

Puggsy pans the camera to point at Prince Charming and the king and queen.

King Come on lad, why aren't you talking to any of these young ladies? You'll never find a wife at this rate. What about that very pretty girl over there?

Prince Charming She was in my class at school. She's got terrible breath.

King Is she rich?

Prince Charming Yes.

King Well, put on a cycling mask and go and talk to her.

Prince Charming Father!

Queen What about that girl over there? She's beautiful.

Prince Charming Mother, she has a simply *awful* laugh.

Queen So, don't tell her any jokes.

Prince Charming Mother, please. I *did* send an invitation to a very special girl. But she doesn't seem to have turned up.

The camera pans to Buttons.

Buttons Your Majesties... ladies and gentlemen... please welcome our first contestant of the evening the Masked Lady!

Fanfare. X-Factor music. Enter Cinderella. She holds an elegant mask over her eyes. Buttons escorts her into the room.

Britney O-M-G, it's Lady Gaga!

Donatella Either that or it's the Lone Ranger in drag.

Britney *(Aside)* Lone Ranger?

Donatella *(Aside)* One for the granddads.

Buttons *(Aside to Cinders)* Cinderella, you look amazing!

Puggsy pans the camera to Prince Charming who is clearly very taken with this masked beauty.

Prince Charming Wow! What an entrance!

Cinderella *(Whispers)* I'm so nervous, Buttons. I don't know whether I can go through with it.

Buttons *(Whispers)* You'll be fine, Cinders. But before you go on, I think there's something you should know.

Cinderella *(Whispers)* What?

Buttons *(Whispers)* Dandini *isn't* Dandini.

Cinderella *(Whispers)* Well, who is he then?

Buttons *(Whispers)* Dandini is Prince Charming.

Cinderella *(Whispers)* Dandini *isn't* Dandini

Buttons No.

Cinderella *(Shouts)* What?

Everyone turns and looks at Cinderella momentarily. Then they turn back to their conversations.

Cinderella *(To Buttons)* I mean *(whispers)* what?

Buttons The Prince disguised himself as his servant because he wanted to meet you.

Cinderella I can't do this. I want to go home.

Buttons You can't go home. You're the Masked Lady and you're about to win a big talent show and become a superstar.

Cinderella I'm scared.

Puggsy pans the camera to Buttons.

Buttons *(To camera)* Let's just have one last quick word with the judges.

Puggsy pans the camera to Prince Charming, the queen and the king who are now seated behind a judge's desk in true X-Factor style. Buttons feeds the mic to each in turn as he speaks to them.

Buttons *(To the king)* Your Majesty, are you ready for the first act?

King Bring it on!

Buttons *(To the queen)* All set?

Queen Oh, for heavens sake, get on with it, boy!

Buttons *(To Prince Charming)* Your Highness?

Prince Charming I just want to know one thing. Who is that beautiful girl in the mask?

Buttons *(Turning to camera)* Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the stage your first contestant of the evening... the mysterious Masked Lady!

Cinderella steps into the spotlight and sings like an angel.

Song 10

At the end of the song the crowd go wild and the judges rise to their feet to applaud. Enter the Fairy Godmother. Everyone on stage freezes in a pose and the lighting changes.

Fairy Godmother

Cinderella won the nation's hearts,
Her song was destined for the charts.
For many hours the show went on,
And *everyone* seemed to sing a song.

So much to applaud, so much to offend,
It seemed the show would never end.
Donatella and Britney were absurd,
The most awful racket you've ever heard.

But at the end of the voting, remarkably,
The pair were both in the top three.
And before the audience reached for their coats,
It was Buttons who revealed the votes...

The lights change to a dramatic state. Puggsy points the camera at Buttons.

Buttons Here is the result of the public vote. In no particular order. I've always wanted to say that. In no particular order, the first act in the final three is *(Pause)* Donatella!

The audience boo. Donatella runs around punching the air like a footballer who has scored a goal.

Donatella Yes! In your face, Britney!

Button The second act through to the final three is.... Britney.

The audience boo some more. Britney dances around the stage in wild celebration.

Britney *(Singing and dancing)* Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah!

Button And the third act in the final three.... The Masked Lady!

Cinderella I don't believe it.

Applause. The audience go wild. Cinderella, Britney and Donatella line up in front of the judges.

Buttons It's now up to our three very distinguished judges to choose the winner. I'm going to ask each of them in turn for their votes. I will come first to the queen. Your Majesty, who are you going to vote for tonight?

Puggsy points the camera at the judges.

Queen Well, Buttons, I would hate to influence my son in his choice of bride, but I have decided to vote for the very beautiful and talented... Masked Lady.

Applause.

Buttons That's one vote for The Masked Lady. I'm now coming to the king. Your Majesty, who is your vote going to?

King Well, Buttons, I think we all have a pretty good idea who's going to win... so I've decided to use my vote to keep the suspense going, and spin it out for a bit longer. My vote goes to... Donatella.

The audience boo. Donatella fans herself and faints with shock.

Buttons Which means that the deciding vote goes to Prince Charming. Your Royal Highness, who are you going to vote for?

Prince Charming stands up.

Prince Charming Buttons, there is only one girl has won the hearts of everyone here tonight, and she has won my heart too.

Queen Finally!

Prince Charming My vote goes to... The Masked Lady!

The camera pans to Buttons, now standing side by side with Cinderella.

Buttons Then I declare that the winner is... The Masked Lady!

The audience applaud and cheer.

Donatella *(Aside to Britney)* Are you sure that isn't Lady Gaga?

Britney No. Her feet are way too small.

Buttons *(To Cinderella)* Your prize also includes a one million pound recording contract

All Ooooooh.

Buttons A National Tour of the Kingdom, supported by Take That.

All Ooooooh.

Buttons And thirty pounds worth of gift vouchers from Boots!

More audience applause. Prince Charming runs towards Cinderella and they embrace. Romantic waltz music begins to play.

Prince Charming May I have this dance, mysterious lady?

Cinderella You may.

The Prince and Cinderella dance a great swirling waltz.

Prince Charming Congratulations, Masked Lady! You are going to be very famous.

Cinderella It can't be true. It's all like a wonderful dream.

Prince Charming You are so beautiful. Do I dare ask you to take off your mask?

Cinderella Perhaps, when we get to know each other a little better, Prince Charming.

Prince Charming Very well. But in the meantime, please allow me to show you around the royal palace.

Cinderella Oh dear, I'd love to but I'm afraid I have to leave before midnight.

The camera pans away from Cinderella and the Prince and sweeps around the dance floor which is now filled with other dancing couples including the king & queen and Baron and Baroness Hardup.

Queen *(To the king)* It seems our son has made up his mind at last. But I wish we knew who that girl was.

King *(To the queen)* Surely it doesn't matter, dear, as long as he's happy.

Melania Hardup *(To the baron)* Well, I thought Donatella and Britney were both miles better than that awful woman in the mask. Who wears a mask unless they have something to hide?

Baron Hardup *(To the baroness)* Looks like Cinderella's going to become a very rich and famous Princess.

Melania Hardup *(To the Baron)* A rich and famous princess? What could *possibly* go wrong?

Britney suddenly grabs Muggsy and waltzes with him.

Britney Tell me Mr. Muggsy, do you think you could get *me* into the TV business?

Muggsy Well, the king did say that he was hoping to find a good dog act.

Donatella grabs Puggsy and waltzes with him.

Donatella Oh Mr. Puggsy. You're so strong and dominant. You could turn a girl's head.

Puggsy In your case I'd like to grab hold of it and turn it about 360 degrees.

Prince Charming and Cinderella dance to the front of the stage.

Prince Charming You dance so beautifully.

Cinderella Oh, Prince Charming, I could dance with you all night!

Enter Fairy Godmother who talks to Buttons.

Fairy Godmother Buttons, the hour fast approaches when Cinderella has to be gone. You must go and warn her.

Buttons I'll try my best, Fairy Godmother, but I think she's going to take some shifting.

Fairy Godmother But didn't Cinderella read the terms and conditions? Doesn't she know that at the stroke of midnight her beautiful clothes will disappear and she will once again be dressed in rags?

Buttons Oh dear. *(To audience)* This is going to get worse before its gets better.

The Fairy Godmother exits. The clock begins to chime twelve. Cinderella reacts as she hears the clock.

Cinderella On no! It's twelve o'clock already! I have to go!

Prince Charming Don't go!

Cinderella Thank you for a wonderful evening.

Prince Charming But I don't have your phone number!

Cinderella Good-bye, Prince Charming.

Buttons and Cinderella beat a hasty retreat.

Prince Charming Please don't leave! I love you! Come back, beautiful Masked Lady!

Enter Dandini.

Prince Charming Dandini?

Dandini She's gone. She just vanished into the night.

Prince Charming No!

Dandini But she left this. On the staircase.

Dandini hands a glass slipper to the prince. The king and queen, Baron and Baroness Hardup and the Ugly Sisters gather around to see what has happened.

Prince Charming A glass slipper. She's left nothing but this glass slipper.

Dandini It's tiny. She must have very small feet.

Britney *(Whispers)* Who wears *glass* slippers?

Donatella *(Whispers)* Health and Safety nightmare!

Britney *(Whispers)* They must have been agony to dance in.

Dandini *(To the Ugly Sisters)* Sssssh!

Muggsy and Puggsy point their camera at the slipper.

Prince Charming (*To Muggsy & Puggsy*) Will you please turn that camera off !

Muggsy & Puggsy (*Together*) Sorry.

Prince Charming The one girl I could have shared my life with has vanished, and all I have left is this glass slipper. What am I going to do?

King Well I should have thought that was fairly obvious, boy.

Prince Charming What?

King You must *find* that girl!

Queen Absolutely! What are you waiting for?

Prince Charming You're right! I'll do it!

Britney (*Dabbing her eyes*) I'm filling up.

The Prince holds up the glass slipper.

Prince Charming I hereby proclaim, "Whoever this crystal slipper fits shall become my bride". We will search every house in the kingdom until that girl is found!

Grand music. Tabs close. Enter Dandini and Buttons on tabs.

Dandini Well, now the Prince loves *two* girls. Cinderella and that mysterious Masked Lady. What a muddle.

Buttons Oh, I've got a feeling that that muddle will sort itself out fairly soon, Dandini.

Dandini Let's hope so.

Buttons But that still doesn't help the fact that *I'm* in love with Cinderella as well.

Dandini I thought that was the case. I saw the way you looked at her at the palace.

Buttons Oh well...

Dandini I'll tell you what, Buttons. Why don't we sing a song to cheer you up. You'll help us with that, won't you boys and girls?

Audience Yes!

Buttons And all the grown-ups too?

Audience Yes!

Dandini Ok, here we go.

Dandini brings on a big board with lyrics on it and he and Buttons sing a noisy audience participation song.

Song 11

At the end of the song, tabs open on a dark, spooky bedroom at Hardup Castle. A portrait that looks like Baron Hardup hangs in the centre of the back wall. There's a big double bed downstage centre, and a large cupboard upstage right.

Scene 2

Enter Muggsy, Puggsy and Buttons, who is struggling to carry the visitors' suitcases. Puggsy is holding the TV camera on a tripod.

Muggsy I don't want to stay at the castle again tonight. I want to stay at the Palace with all the posh people.

Buttons Well I'm sorry but the palace is full.

Puggsy Well, can't we stay at the Hilton?

Buttons Full.

Muggsy There's a nice little AirBnB in the village.

Buttons Booked.

Muggsy Oh dear.

Puggsy Why can't we stay in the nice comfortable room we had last night?

Buttons It's still being fumigated.

Muggsy Charming.

Buttons So you'll have to sleep in this room tonight. The darkest, creepiest room in the castle.

Puggsy Is it haunted?

Buttons Of *course* it's haunted. Haven't you ever seen a panto before?

Muggsy I want to go home.

Buttons Well you can't. You've missed the last bus.

Puggsy When's the next bus.

Buttons Next Thursday. Now, why don't you both go to bed.

Muggsy Good idea.

Puggsy looks at the portrait on the wall. The eyes are moving.

Puggsy That's weird.

Muggsy What?

Puggsy I could have sworn that the eyes on that portrait are following us around the room.

Muggsy Nonsense.

Puggsy Alright, I'll show you. Follow me.

Accompanied by creepy music, Muggsy, Puggsy and Buttons stride across the stage and back again. The eyes on the portrait follow them all the way.

Puggsy See, I told you.

Buttons There's no need to be scared of a dusty old painting. The eyes on paintings always follow you around the room.

Muggsy Do they?

Buttons That is a portrait of Baron Hardup's great, great, great, great, great, great, grandfather.

Muggsy & Puggsy *(Together)* Great, great, great, great, great, grandfather?

Buttons No. You missed a "great".

Muggsy & Puggsy *(Together)* Great, great, great, great, great, *great*, grandfather.

Buttons Yes. I like to think of that painting as the old man keeping an eye on the guests.

Muggsy Well it's giving me the willies.

Buttons You'll just have to put up with it. I will bid you good night, gentlemen. Sleep well.

Buttons exits. Muggsy gets into bed, fully clothed.

Muggsy I don't want that painting watching me all night. Go and hang your coat over it.

Puggsy Righto.

Puggsy tries to drape his coat over the portrait, but the coat keeps falling down as soon as he has walked away from it. He goes back and tries again three times then gives up.

Puggsy Oh bother! I'll go and hang it up in the cupboard instead.

Puggsy opens the door on the left side of the cupboard. There's a skeleton inside. He slams the door shut.

Puggsy Uggghhhhh!

Muggsy *(Getting up)* What is it now?

Puggsy In the c-c-cupboard.

Muggsy What's in the cupboard?

Puggsy A skelling-ton.

Muggsy A what?

Puggsy A skelling-ton.

Muggsy You mean "skeleton".

Puggsy Skelling-ton.

Muggsy Skeleton.

Puggsy Skelling-ton.

Muggsy Skeleton.

Puggsy Well I don't care what it's called, it's in there. If you don't believe me, go and look.

Muggsy opens the door on the right side of the cupboard. It's empty.

Muggsy There's nothing in there.

Puggsy Try the other door.

Muggsy opens the door on the left of the cupboard and sees the skeleton. He slams the door shut again.

Muggsy Ugghhhhhh! You're right. It's a skeleton!

Puggsy Skelling-ton.

Muggsy Skeleton.

Puggsy Skelling-ton.

Muggsy I'm going back to bed.

The pair both get into bed and pull the covers up as far as their noses.

Puggsy I don't like it here.

Muggsy I don't suppose there's a *real* ghost in the castle.

Puggsy You don't think there's a *real* ghost here, do you boys and girls?

A ghost appears upstage behind them and quickly crosses the stage.

Audience Behind you!

Muggsy What's that? Did you see a ghost?

The pair turn around to look. The ghost is gone.

Puggsy There's no ghost. The boys and girls are just trying to scare us. You're just trying to scare us, aren't you kids?

A ghost appears again upstage.

Audience Behind you!

Muggsy Now what? What's all the fuss about? We know there's nothing there.

They turn around and the ghost has disappeared again.

Puggsy I'll tell you what, I'll set up the camera and if there's a ghost we'll catch it on video.

Muggsy Good idea.

Puggsy quickly sets up the camera on its tripod behind the bed and he points it at the back wall. Then he gets back into bed.

Puggsy Right, I'm going to sleep. Goodnight.

Muggsy Goodnight.

The ghost appears again. It steals the camera and quickly disappears.

Audience Behind you!

Puggsy (*Sitting up*) What's that? Did you see something, boys and girls?

Muggsy Go and check the camera. If there was a ghost, the camera will have recorded it.

Puggsy goes to look for the camera. It's not there.

Puggsy The camera's gone.

Muggsy stays in bed under the covers.

Muggsy Gone? It can't be gone. You're imagining things.

Puggsy Did you see who took the camera, boys and girls?

The audience noisily explain to Puggsy what has happened to the camera.

Muggsy Just go to sleep.

Puggsy I'll try.

Puggsy gets back into bed. The ghost appears one last time and returns the camera to where it was.

Audience Behind you!

Muggsy and Puggsy jump out of bed.

Muggsy What? What is it?

Puggsy The camera's back!

Muggsy What do you mean, it's back? It never went anywhere in the first place, you great nelly! You imagined the whole thing! There's *no* ghost!

Puggsy Well, if there's no ghost, there's only one explanation.

Muggsy What?

Puggsy The camera must have been taken ...

Puggsy By who?

Muggsy The skelling-ton.

Puggsy Skeleton?

Muggsy Skelling-ton.

Puggsy Skeleton!

Muggsy Skelling-ton.

Puggsy Skeleton!

Muggsy I don't care what you call it! It's a big scary pile of bones and it's escaped from a graveyard!

Puggsy Calm down. I'm sure it can't hurt you.

At this point the skeleton climbs out of the cupboard and creeps towards them. The audience scream their warnings.

Audience Behind you!

Muggsy What's that? What's behind us?

Puggsy Oh, they're just trying to scare us again.

The pair turn around and see the skeleton. It chases them around the bed.

Muggsy & Puggsy Agggghhhhhhh! Skelling-ton!

They run off pursued by the skeleton. Tabs close to the sound of a ghostly laugh. Enter Prince Charming on tabs.

Prince Charming I just can't understand why the Masked Lady ran away. I wonder what was wrong. She seemed so happy. But I *will* find her. Tomorrow I'll take that glass slipper to every house in the Kingdom until I find a girl whose foot fits it. And when I find her, I will marry her.

Prince Charming sings a love song.

Song 12

At the end of the song Prince Charming exits.

Scene 3

Tabs open to reveal Hardup Castle. It's the next day. A cockerel crows. We can hear the dawn chorus. Enter Buttons.

Buttons Hello boys and girls!

Audience Button up Buttons!

Buttons Welcome to the morning after the night before. I didn't sleep very well. I had a strange dream about Cinderella dancing with the prince and then running off and dropping her slipper on the staircase. And then when I woke up I remembered that it wasn't a dream at all. It was all true. But then, anything can happen in a pantomime.

The doorbell rings.

Buttons Now, who can that be?

Buttons runs off stage to open the door and quickly returns with Prince Charming and Dandini who is carrying the glass slipper on a cushion.

Buttons Your Highness...

Prince Charming Good morning, Buttons.

The baron and baroness come running in.

Baroness Melania Visitors at this hour? *(She sees that it's the Prince.)* Ah, your Royal Highness, to what do we owe this great honour?

Prince Charming As you know, I am visiting every household in the kingdom.

Baron Hardup How's that working out for you?

Dandini We have searched high and low and this is the prince's *final* call.

Buttons Already? You were up early!

Dandini We have been to every single house, but we are yet to find a foot that the glass slipper fits.

Melania Hardup Well, I'm sure my daughters Britney and Donatella will be happy to try it on for size.

Prince Charming Very well.

Dandini *(Whispers to Prince Charming)* Are you sure you want to do this? It can't be either of them. They were both *in the room* while you were dancing with the Masked Lady.

Prince Charming *(Whispers to Dandini)* Those are the rules. I have to be fair. Whoever the shoe fits will be my wife.

Dandini *(Whisper)* But what if it fits one of the Ugly Sisters?

Prince Charming *(Whisper)* It won't fit one of them. They both have feet the size of Wales.

Melania Hardup The *last* call you say? *(Calling out)* Donatella! Britney! Prince Charming is here to see you!

Donatella & Britney *(Off stage)* Coming mummy!!!

Wearing comical night attire, the Ugly Sisters appear in an instant.

Buttons *(To audience)* That was quick. They must have been listening at the door.

Donatella Your Highness, Dandini. How lovely to see you.

Britney Oh, how kind of you to return my glass slipper! I must have dropped it at the Palace.

Donatella *Your* glass slipper? No it isn't you lying old bag! It's mine!

Melania Hardup Ladies, please! Prince Charming is here so that you can try the slipper on.

Dandini Yes, ladies. You must *both* try on the slipper.

Melania Hardup Just to be absolutely clear on this, if the slipper fits either Britney or Donatella, you will marry them.

Prince Charming Yes.

Melania Hardup No catches.

Prince Charming No.

Melania Hardup No pre-nup.

Prince Charming No.

Donatella Let me go first, I'll go first. I have such pretty little feet.

Donatella grabs a stool and sits down. The Prince tries to get the shoe onto her foot.

Dandini It doesn't fit.

Donatella Let me take me sock off.

She removes a long stripy sock and tries again without success.

Baroness Melania Try the other foot!

Dandini But it's a *left* shoe!

Donatella I don't care!

Groaning with pain, she tries it on the other foot.

Prince Charming I'm sorry Donatella... the slipper definitely does not fit you!

Dandini (*Whispers*) Phew!

Donatella I *knew* I should have had plastic surgery on me big feet.

Britney You'd need more than plastic surgery to fit that shoe. You'd need to have your toes cut off.

Donatella Wash your mouth out.

Britney My turn! My turn!

Britney sits on the stool and tries to fit the slipper on her foot.

Britney (*Grunting and groaning*) Come on, come on, come on, come on! YES!!! It fits! I've done it. I'm a Princess!!!

Dandini What?

Prince Charming That's impossible. It can't fit. Let me see.

She reveals the shoe dangling from her big toe.

Prince Charming It doesn't fit at all.

Britney It fits my *big toe*. You didn't say anything about it fitting the *whole foot*!

Dandini Phew! Nasty moment.

Prince Charming Well, it seems that my search has proved fruitless. We will be on our way.

Dandini Unless, of course, there are any other eligible ladies in this house.

Melania Hardup I'll have a go. Give it here.

Britney You're married, mother.

Melania Hardup Oh, yes. I forgot.

Baron Hardup What about Cinderella?

Donatella Cinderella?

Prince Charming *(As if in a dream)* Cinderella!

Baron Hardup Buttons, fetch Cinderella from the kitchen.

Buttons exits.

Baron Hardup Surely Cinderella must be eligible to try on the glass slipper.

Donatella Oh, no she isn't!

Baron Hardup Yes, she is!

Donatella & Britney Oh, no she isn't!

Baron Hardup Oh, yes she is!

Ad lib with audience.

Britney But, Cinderella is a servant girl!

Donatella She's common as muck!

Enter Buttons with Cinderella.

Baron Hardup Here's my daughter, Your Highness.

The Prince takes her by the hand.

Prince Charming We've met before, I believe?

Cinderella That's true, Your Highness.

Prince Charming Cinderella! Or should I say "The Masked Lady"?

All Gasp!

Cinderella Yes, it's true. I *was* the Masked Lady. But only for one night. I'm sorry for deceiving you, Prince Charming.

Prince Charming It doesn't matter. All that matters is that we spend the rest of our lives together.

They kiss.

All Aaaaaahhh!

Dandini (*Offering her the glass slipper*) Cinderella...

Cinderella sits on the stool and puts on the slipper.

Prince Charming It's a *perfect* fit!

Donatella (*Whispers*) How *did* she get such tiny, little feet?

Britney (*Whispers*) Witchcraft, I reckon.

Prince Charming I proclaim that Cinderella will be my bride! With your permission, of course Baron Hardup?

Baron Hardup Permission granted.

Britney (*Sobbing*) We're ruined! Ruined! How are we *ever* going to get married now?

Donatella We'll be a couple of dried up old maids.

Britney We need a miracle!

Enter Muggsy and Puggsy

Muggsy Hello everyone!

Donatella Ooh look, a miracle.

Muggsy We just wanted to say goodbye before we left.

Puggsy Yes, thanks everybody. Great show! The ratings were fantastic. We beat "Celebrity Big Brother" and "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here."

Muggsy Which reminds me.

Puggsy What?

Muggsy *We* need to get out of here.

Britney (*To Puggsy*) You! Get over here. You've pulled.

Puggsy Oh dear.

Donatella *(To Muggsy)* Mr Muggsy! Play your cards right, and I'm all yours.

Puggsy *(To Muggsy)* Puggsy, I don't know about you...

Muggsy *(To Puggsy)* What?

Puggsy *(To Muggsy)* But I'd rather get married to a skelling-ton.

Puggsy runs off. Muggsy runs after him.

Muggsy *(Calling out)* It's skeleton! SKELETON!!!

The Ugly Sisters run after them.

Britney *(Calling out)* Ooooh, ooh! Come back here, boys!

Donatella *(Calling out)* We need you to give us a foot rub!

Ugly Sisters exit. Enter king and queen.

King *(To Prince Charming)* So, my lad, you *did* manage to track down the mysterious Masked Lady?

Prince Charming I did indeed, father. Here she is.

Queen But she's dressed in rags!

Prince Charming This is Cinderella. *She* was the Masked Lady who won the talent show. And now she's going to become a big TV star!

Melania Hardup You mean, she's going to be rich and famous.

Prince Charming More famous than her wildest dreams. And a Princess too.

Buttons *(To audience)* Well, there's our happy ending, folks! And that's my cue to leave. I've been offered a job as the presenter of *Blankety Blank*.

Cinderella Oh well done, Buttons! That's amazing news!

She runs and hugs him.

Buttons Thanks Cinders. And I hope you'll be very happy with Prince Charming.

Melania Hardup Oh Cinderella! *(To Baron Hardup)* Aren't you proud of our daughter?

Baron Hardup I notice that now she's going to be rich and famous, she has suddenly become *our* daughter.

Melania Hardup Of course, dear. I admit it. I'm shallow. But if only Britney and Donatella could find happiness as well!

Enter Britney and Donatella dragging Muggsy and Puggsy behind them.

Britney We *have* found happiness!

Donatella Yes, mummy. These two were in the castle grounds.

Britney They were digging a great big hole and trying to bury themselves.

Donatella But we found them! And now we're both going to marry into showbusiness. Aren't we boys?

Britney They've promised us our own TV show.

Muggsy *(To Puggsy)* I don't remember saying that. Do you remember saying that?

Puggsy *(To audience)* I need a drink.

Melania Hardup Well, I think I'd better buy a new hat. It looks like we're going to be having *three* weddings!

All Hooray

Fanfare. Tabs close. Enter Fairy Godmother. Music under.

Fairy Godmother

Now it's almost time to go and leave our pantomime.
We hope you've liked our story and have had a special time.
The prince has found his princess after searching near and far.
Cinderella's found her Charming and become a superstar.

We've learned that daydreams can come true and life's a carousel.
But fame and fortune's not enough, we must have love as well.
We've laughed, we've cried, we've shouted but the time has come at last
To open up the curtains and say farewell to our cast!

Music swells. Tabs open for...

Scene 4

Walk down and Grand Finale with full company.

Song 13

Curtain.