

Anna

. . . And in the theatre we sit in the director's seats.

Stepmother

Soldiers salute us!

Sara

And soon they'll write down our names into the velvet book of the first Beauties of the Royal Court!

Stepmother

And who do you think turned our fingernails into rose petals? The Royal Manicurist, at whose door ladies with impressive titles wait for weeks for an audience.

Sara

And yet it is she who comes to *our* house!--personal visits by the Royal Manicurist herself!

Anna

So, once again, we're the envy of the neighborhood!

Stepmother

And just yesterday, the royal chef sent some sumptuous smoked pheasant as a gift.

Forest Keeper

I bring you all the pheasant you can eat from the woods.

Stepmother

As usual, you're missing the point entirely.

Anna

Daddy's always missing the point!

Stepmother

You see, my dear, it isn't the pheasant itself that's important--it's the fact that people in high places step all over themselves to see that we get it. In other words, we have so many connections that we'd go crazy trying to keep track of them all. And where is your gratitude?

Anna

Yeah, like my nose is itching, but I can't scratch it!

(Cinderella obediently starts toward her)

No, no, Cinderella--go away, or I'll bite you!

Cinderella

But why, Anna?

Anna

Because it didn't come into your head to help me on your own!

Cinderella

But I didn't know!

Sara

Sister, I think what Anna is saying is . . . You are so plain-looking that you need to make up for it by showing a little more sensitivity.

(They all laugh.)

Anna

Yes, and you're so clumsy that you should compensate for it by being a better servant.

(They laugh again. Cinderella sighs.)

Sara

Don't you dare sigh, or I might get upset before the ball.

Cinderella

All right, sisters, I'll try to be cheerful.

Stepmother

Well, let's just see if you have the right to be so cheerful. Are our dresses for the ball ready? The ones I ordered you to sew in seven nights?

Cinderella

Yes, Stepmother.

(She opens the screen, revealing three beautiful dresses on three mannequins. Her look turns to sadness when she sees them eyeing the dresses suspiciously, coldly, gloomily)

Sisters! Stepmother! Why are you looking at them so crossly? I sewed your dresses for you. They are festive, joyful dresses. Really they are!

Stepmother

Quiet! We have thought about what you have done and now we are going to discuss it.

(They talk in serious, sinister whispers.)

Cinderella--we have decided that

(Sadly)

... we have no grounds to reject your work. Help us get dressed.

Anna

Oh, I'm so excited!

Stepmother

But remember, girls, only one of you can win the prince's heart.

Sara

Well, I've got the looks, it's plain to see!

Anna

But you've got no brains--that's where I'll win the day!

Stepmother

May the best girl win . . . fight fair . . . don't fail me!

Sara

And let the *loser* find someone who has money, at any rate.

Stepmother

Yes, wealth means more than personality. Remember, girls: Always aim for men of higher quality!

[Song: Men of Higher Quality] (Track 4)

Stepmother

YOU MUST MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION AT THE BALL
SO YOU'LL NEED SOME LESSONS IN DECORUM

Anna

BUT MOM, WE'RE PRETTY AS WE ARE

Anna and Sara

ANYONE WHO DISAGREES, WE'LL IGNORE 'EM

Stepmother

WEALTHY MEN LOVE A LADY
WITH POISE AND CLASS AND THAT JE NAIS SE QUOIS,
YOU'LL BE JUDGED ON WHAT THE PEOPLE THINK YOU ARE!
STOMACH IN, CHEST OUT!

Sara

OW!

Stepmother

LOOK DOWN YOUR NOSE!
ALWAYS WALK AS IF YOUR KNEES ARE TIED TOGETHER

Anna

WE'LL LOOK SO DUMB

Sara

IT'S UNDIGNIFIED!

Stepmother

DO YOU THINK HE'S GONNA WANT SOMEONE TO
TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER?
THE PRINCE WILL WANT TO FIND A LADY
WHO MOVES WITH GRACE

Anna and Sara

THEN THAT'S WHAT WE WILL DO

Stepmother

IF YOU REALLY WANT THE PRINCE TO DANCE WITH YOU.

Anna and Sara

OH, WE DO! WE DO!

Stepmother

IF YOU DO EVERYTHING I TELL YOU TO DO
THE PRINCE WILL CROSS A CROWDED ROOM FOR YOU

Anna and Sara

WE MUST SHINE BRIGHTER THAN THE BRIGHTEST STAR
TO SHOW THEM ALL JUST HOW REFINED WE ARE!

Stepmother

KEEP YOUR VOICE HIGH PITCHED AND GIGGLE LIKE A GIRL
EVEN IF YOU THINK THAT HE'S NOT FUNNY

Anna

OLD MEN BORE ME!

Sara

THE YOUNG ARE IMMATURE!

Stepmother

THEN GRIT YOUR TEETH AND THINK ABOUT THEIR MONEY.
SOCIAL STATUS IS IMPORTANT

Anna and Sara

AND WEALTH MEANS MORE THAN PERSONALITY

Stepmother and girls

WE MUST ALWAYS AIM FOR MEN OF HIGHER QUALITY!

(Lights down on the women and up on Cinderella, busily working. A strange light grows brighter and brighter. Suddenly, the Fairy Godmother appears with her young page boy)

Godmother

Hello, Cinderella.

Cinderella

Fairy Godmother! Dear Fairy Godmother! You always appear so suddenly!

Godmother

I know! Isn't it great!?

Cinderella

The last time you appeared from a dark corner in the kitchen, and now you've appeared out of thin air from a beam of light!

Godmother

Yep, I'm pretty creative, all right.

Cinderella

I think it's wonderful! I love miracles so much!

Godmother

That shows you have good taste, my girl. But there weren't really any miracles--yet! It's just that we Fairy Godmothers are so extremely light that we walk on air or through solid objects as easily as you people blush or become pale. Now then, down to business: today you have been insulted, humiliated and ridiculed . . .

Page (*checking clipboard*)

24 times

Godmother

....And of those 24 times, you have been deserving of such abuse . . .

Page

Not once.

Godmother

Today, you have deserved praise

Page

333 times.

Godmother

And they actually praised you . . .

Page

Not a single time.

Godmother

I hate this old forester's wife, your evil Stepmother, and her daughters, too. I would have punished them all a long time ago, but they've got connections in such high places. They don't love anyone, don't think about anything, don't do anything . . . and yet they manage to live even better than some real fairies. It's kind of discouraging. But anyway, that's enough about them. Do you want to go to the ball?

Cinderella

Yes, Godmother, but . . .

Godmother

Don't argue, don't argue--not another word! You'll go! It's not very good for you to have to stay home when you want to go to the ball, especially when you deserve to go as much as you do. I have a feeling that miracles are going to happen tonight!

Cinderella

You make it sound so easy . . . but I have so much work to do, Godmother.

Godmother

Don't you fret, my dear! The bears can polish the floors--they have plenty of wax to spare, that they've stolen from the beehives. The evening dew will wash the windows. Squirrels will whitewash the walls with their tails. Roses will grow by themselves, with a little help from me, rabbits will weed the garden, and cats will grind the coffee.

Cinderella

Oh, thank you, Godmother! But . . . I'm wearing such a dress, that . . .

Godmother

Don't argue! You'll go to the ball in a carriage with four horses, and in a beautiful dress!

(The Page opens the case he is carrying.)

See? Here is my magic wand. Very modest, without any decorations--just a diamond star and a golden handle.

(She takes the wand. Mysterious music plays.)

Now I'll work wonders. I just adore doing that. Now then, let's get to work. In essence, what I'm about to do is not too hard, my dear. A magic wand is similar to a conductor's baton. Musicians obey their conductor, but everything living in the world obeys the magic wand of a Fairy Godmother. To begin with, I'll get to work on that pumpkin over there.

(She rotates the wand, and a beautiful pumpkin carriage appears.)

Cinderella

What a beautiful carriage!

Pumpkin Carriage *(Curtseying)*

Merci beaucoup.

(The Godmother works her wand again, music sounds, and four beautiful horses and a coachman appear.)

Godmother

And now for the final touch! You say you wanted a new dress?

(She waves her wand, and the page, who has stepped offstage, re-enters, presenting her with a beautiful dress.)

Cinderella

I'll just go into the drawing room so I'll be able to see my new dress in the big mirror!

(She exits, the lights fade on all except the Pumpkin Carriage.)

Godmother

In our fairy workshop, when the last stitch was done on this dress, even the chief seamstress was so touched that she began to cry. Everyone stopped working. That day was declared a holiday. One time in a hundred years you might encounter such luck.

(Cinderella re-enters in a beautiful gown)

This is a happy, comforting dress--a dress that will bring you luck. Do you like your new dress?

(Cinderella kisses her)

Very well then, let's go.

Godmother

And now, my dear, remember something--something very important--you must come home by 12 o'clock. At exactly midnight, your new dress will turn to rags, the horses will turn back into mice . . .

(The horses prance)

. . . the Coachman into a rat . . .

Coachman

Dang it!

Godmother

And the carriage into a pumpkin.

Pumpkin Carriage

Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!

Cinderella

Thank you so much, Godmother. I will remember it very well.

Godmother

Bye, then.

Cinderella

Good-bye.

[Song: No Longer Mice]

Horses

HEY LOOK AT US
WE'RE NO LONGER MICE
WE NEVER THOUGHT THAT MERELY BEING RODENTS WOULD SUFFICE
WE'RE GLAD THAT WE'RE HAPPY
AND WE'RE HAPPY WE'RE GLAD
GLAD IS GOOD
WE'D BE GLAD ALL THE TIME IF WE COULD
SORRY WE CAN'T THINK OF SMART THINGS TO SING
BUT POETRY'S NOT OUR THING

GLAD TO BE GLAD
SUCH GLADNESS IS BLISS
WE REALLY COULDN'T BE ANY GLAD-IER THAN THIS
WE WISH THAT WE COULD THINK OF SOME CLEVER REFRAINS
TO SAY HOW WE FEEL WITHOUT HURTING OUR BRAINS
WE WERE ONLY MICE BUT NOW WE'LL SHOW THEM ALL
THAT IT'S TIME FOR FUN AND WE'RE GONNA HAVE A BALL

OH WHAT JOY
WE COULDN'T ASK FOR MORE
A GLORIOUS CHANGE FROM WHAT WE WERE BEFORE
WHEN OUR ONLY FUN
WAS CATCHING LADIES UNAWARES
AND MAKING THEM SCREAM
AND CLIMB UP ON THE CHAIRS

IT'S TIME TO PARTY AND WE'RE GONNA DO IT RIGHT
SO PUT AWAY THE CHEESE,
IT'S CHAMPAGNE FOR US TONIGHT
WE HOPE THAT OUR SONG ISN'T BORING FOR YOU
BUT THIS IS THE BEST THAT A MOUSE CAN DO
WE NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL BUT WE DO KNOW HOW TO ROCK
SO DON'T WAIT UP 'CAUSE WE'RE NOT COMING HOME TILL TWELVE O'CLOCK!

(Cinderella is now at the palace. As she walks through the corridors, a procession of lackeys passes her, holding signs that read: "Clear your throat", "Soon the King himself will talk to you", "Smile" and "Around the corner you'll see the royal family!". Two children enter, one holding a mirror, the other holding a sign saying "Don't forget to fix your hair!")

Cinderella

Oh, something will happen. I have the feeling something very good will happen.

King

Hello, our mysterious, wonderful, unknown visitor! No, no, don't curtsy on the stairs, it is too dangerous. Don't take off your gloves. How do you do? I'm glad that you could come.

Cinderella

How do you do, your majesty! I'm also very glad I came. I like it here very much.

King (*Laughing*)

What joy! She speaks sincerely!

Cinderella

Certainly, your majesty!

King

Yes, I'm glad you are here! *Old* friends are certainly wonderful, but nothing surprises them. But *you!*--well, you're new! No one knows what *you're* going to do!

Cinderella

Thank you, your majesty!

King

Yes, being the king of a wonder kingdom, I feel you are the threshold of amazing fairy tale events!

Cinderella

Really?

King

My king's word of honor

[Song: Come and Join the Ball]

Guests

COME AND JOIN THE BALL, MY DEAR
COME AND MEET US ALL, MY DEAR
WE'RE ALL HAVING SO MUCH FUN
HAPPY SMILING FACES HERE
DROPPING AIRS AND GRACES DEAR
THAT'S HOW THINGS SHOULD BE DONE
COME JOIN THE LAUGHTER
AND THEN AFTER
WHEN WE'VE DROPPED NAMES
WE'LL PLAY SILLY GAMES
'CAUSE THIS KING KNOWS HOW TO MAKE PARTIES SWI
WHO IS SHE
WITH HIS MAJESTY?
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN HER BEFORE?

Guests (Cont)

WHERE IS SHE FROM?
SHE JUST HAS TO BE SOMEONE WHO'S VERY IMPORTANT
SOMEONE FAMOUS, MAYBE ROYALTY
QUITE A MYSTERY IS SHE!
DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO SHE IS?

WON'T YOU COME AND DANCE MY DEAR
COME AND FEEL THE ROMANCE HERE
THIS WILL BE A NIGHT OF WONDER
ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT FOR YOU
SO YOUR WISHES MIGHT COME TRUE
IT'S A WONDERFUL SPELL WE'RE UNDER
AND I FEEL WONDERFUL, MARVELOUS, WHAT A BLAST!
EVERY HAPPY HOUR SEEMS TO FLY PAST!
JOIN IN THE FUN
FOR THE NIGHT'S JUST BEGUN
HOPE IT'S NEVER DONE!

WON'T YOU COME AND DANCE MY DEAR
COME AND FEEL THE ROMANCE HERE
THIS WILL BE A NIGHT OF WONDER
ALL THE STARS ARE BRIGHT FOR YOU
SO YOUR WISHES MIGHT COME TRUE
IT'S A WONDERFUL SPELL WE'RE UNDER
AND I FEEL WONDERFUL
MARVELOUS, WHAT A BLAST
EVERY HAPPY HOUR SEEMS TO FLY PAST
JOIN IN THE FUN
FOR THE NIGHT'S JUST BEGUN
FRIVOLITY, JOLLITY
SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE
TONIGHT!

WHO IS SHE?
WITH HIS MAJESTY?
HAVE YOU EVER
SEEN HER BEFORE?
WHERE IS SHE FROM?
SHE JUST HAS TO BE
SOMEONE WHO'S
VERY IMPORTANT.
SOMEONE FAMOUS
MAYBE ROYALTY
QUITE A MYSTERY IS SHE
DOES ANYONE KNOW
WHO SHE IS?
WELL, SHE'S A STAR TONIGHT!

[The song ends]

(The Prince enters. Cinderella blushes)

King

Prince! Hey, Prince! Son! Look who came to visit us! Do you recognize her?

(The Prince nods)

Who is it?

Prince

A mysterious and beautiful stranger!

King

Absolutely correct!

(To Cinderella)

Can you believe how clever he is?

(To the Prince)

Son! Why are you so pale? Have you finished your milk? Have you eaten your roll? You haven't been standing in a draft, have you? Why are you so quiet?

Prince

Oh, sir, I'm quiet because . . . I can't talk!

King

Oh, don't believe him, miss--that's not true at all. Despite his years, he talks, and how!--speeches, compliments, poems . . . Would you like to hear him give a speech or something?

Cinderella

Oh, yes, I'd like that very much!

King

Sincerely! Keep that in mind, son--she speaks sincerely! Hey, I know what. Why don't you recite a poem, son . . . or at least say something clever? Go on, don't be shy!

Prince *(Shyly)*

The, uh . . . the weather is wonderful today, isn't it?

Cinderella

Yes, Prince. Today's weather is . . . wonderful!

Prince

I hope you didn't get too tired during your ride.

Cinderella

No, Prince. I rested on the way, thank you.

(They see a woman approaching them, dancing. She bows several times, jumping very high)

King

Ah, allow me to introduce my Mistress of Ballroom Dancing. Do you understand ballet language?

Cinderella

Not really.