

CINDERELLA!

By Craig W Stump

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11 WOMEN, 9 MEN, 5 EITHER, EXTRAS)

- THELMA (F)**..... Storyteller, 103.5 years old, stubborn, funny, animated lady from the swamps of Louisiana, and talks as such, although she thinks and tries to act a lot younger. She uses hand motions frequently when describing things. Has many, many stories about alligators. (52 lines)
- LOUISE (M/F)**..... Storyteller Thelma's sidekick. Always trying to keep her on the topic and behaved. This part can be played by a female or male. If a male is selected, perhaps Bonnie and Clyde would be more appropriate names for the Storytellers. (37 lines)
- SIR REGINALD (M)**..... Cinderella's loving, caring, rich father. He would do anything for Cinderella. Unfortunately he dies when she is 8. (21 lines)
- ELLA (F)** Cinderella at the age of 8. A very cute, enthusiastic, little girl. She is mature beyond her years. (22 lines)
- YOUNG PRISCILLA (F)**..... 9 years old. She should hopefully have the same color hair as the older Priscilla. (1 line)
- YOUNG PENELOPE (F)**..... 8 years old. She should hopefully have the same color hair as the older Penelope. (1 line)
- CINDERELLA (F)**..... 16 years old. She is kind, gentle, forgiving, beautiful, well mannered, and loving. She believes in her dreams which maintains her through her awful life with her step family. (128 lines)
- BRUTUS (M)**..... Cinderella's dog. Played by a person in a dog costume. S/he has lots of human characteristics and motions. (0 lines)
- BEN, JERRY, ALFY (M)**..... The 3 mice who are friends of Cinderella. A variety of voices goes well here. Played by people in mice costumes. (15 lines each)

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- DAMION (M)**..... Stepmother's ever-so-fat cat. The fatter the costume, the funnier the character. Played by a person in a cat costume. *(0 lines)*
- BARONESS LADIANNA POUSANT (F)** Cinderella's evil stepmother. She is very strict with Cinderella, but not with her daughters. She feels she is better than the rest of the world- emphasis on better. She cares about nothing else but the well being of herself and her daughters. *(101 lines)*
- PRISCILLA (F)**..... The older stepsister. She is a nasty girl about the same age as Cinderella. She argues frequently with her sister, Penelope. She is the Baroness' favorite daughter, especially since Penelope is so dumb. *(61 lines)*
- PENELOPE (F)**..... The younger of the stepsisters. She is simply dumb. She talks a great deal in a rambling fashion, frequently changing what she was talking about. Her rambling is funny, as are all of her body movements. *(50 lines)*
- KING GEORGE (M)**..... An older king, who desperately wants his son, the Prince, to get married. He wants grandchildren. He does not understand why his son is the way he is. He is a bit on the bumbling side, and comedic. *(45 lines)*
- QUEEN HENRIETTA (F)** Slightly younger than the king. She understands her son and his desires. She is very straight laced. She loves the king; she keeps him in order and focused. *(34 lines)*
- THE PRINCE (M)** He simply does not want to be royalty. He has just returned from touring the countryside, just being himself. He really does not want to get married. He loves and appreciates his mother, but he does not see eye-to-eye with his father, but they are very civil to each other. *(60 lines)*
- ROYAL GUARD (M)** Always present around the King and Queen. Several brief lines. *(10 lines)*
- TOWN HERALD (M/F)** S/he announces the Royal Ball and Slipper Fitting. A strong voice is helpful. *(20 lines)*
- ROYAL ASSISTANTS to the TOWN HERALD (M/F)** 2 assistants, who bring out the stool which the Town Herald speaks from, carry the glass slipper. *(0 lines)*

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FAIRY GODMOTHER (F)..... A funny, forgetful, not-your-normal fairy godmother. *(20 lines)*

COACH DRIVER (M/F) S/he is dressed as a formal coach driver. *(0 lines)*

CINDERELLA AT THE BALL (F) Dressed all in white, beautiful. She should be about the same height and hair color as Cinderella. *(15 lines)*

PRINCE'S ROYAL VALET (M/F) Formal. S/he is a good servant to the Prince. S/he is forceful when s/he needs to be. *(23 lines)*

SERVANTS Any number. They can say a few words during the first 4 scenes if desired. *(0 lines)*

ROYAL BALLROOM DANCERS As many as you would like. They dance during the Royal Ball. They can be played by the Townspeople. Four of do have a few lines. *(0 lines)*

TOWNSPEOPLE As many as you would like. They are strolling through the town square. They respond to the Town Herald as a group. They can also be the Royal Ballroom Dancers. *(15 lines as a group)*

RUNNING TIME: Approximately 90 minutes.

SETS: The sets can be as simple or elaborate as you are able, and willing, to do. If desired, the play can be produced without any sets, just a few simple props. The script allows for ample time to change larger sets if utilized.

MUSICAL SCORE: One or two different waltzes.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE, SCENE 1:	SIR REGINALD AND ELLA READING
ACT ONE, SCENE 2:	THE RETURN OF SIR REGINALD WITH A NEW WIFE
ACT ONE, SCENE 3:	ELLA'S BED
ACT ONE, SCENE 4:	SIR REGINALD'S DEPARTURE
ACT ONE, SCENE 5:	CINDERELLA'S THOUGHTS BEFORE SLEEP
ACT ONE, SCENE 6:	MORNING
ACT ONE, SCENE 7:	MEETING DAMION
ACT ONE, SCENE 8:	BREAKFAST
ACT ONE, SCENE 9:	THE KING AND QUEEN DISCUSS THE PRINCE
ACT ONE, SCENE 10:	CEMETERY
ACT ONE, SCENE 11:	ANNOUNCEMENT OF ROYAL BALL
ACT ONE, SCENE 12:	PREPARATIONS FOR ROYAL BALL
ACT ONE, SCENE 13:	FINDING CINDERELLA'S DRESS
ACT ONE, SCENE 14:	LEAVING FOR THE BALL
ACT ONE, SCENE 15:	CINDERELLA'S FAIRY GODMOTHER

• INTERMISSION •

ACT TWO, SCENE 1:	ROYAL BALL
ACT TWO, SCENE 2:	CINDERELLA AND THE PRINCE AT THE BALL
ACT TWO, SCENE 3:	DIRECTLY AFTER THE BALL
ACT TWO, SCENE 4:	THE NEXT MORNING AT THE PALACE
ACT TWO, SCENE 5:	THE NEXT MORNING AT CINDERELLA'S
ACT TWO, SCENE 6:	ANNOUNCING THE SLIPPER QUEST
ACT TWO, SCENE 7:	EXPLAINING THE SLIPPER FITTING
ACT TWO, SCENE 8:	BEFORE THE SLIPPER FITTING
ACT TWO, SCENE 9:	THE SLIPPER FITTING
ACT TWO, SCENE 10:	THE WEDDING

ACT ONE, SCENE 1
SIR REGINALD AND ELLA READING

Storytellers Thelma and Louise walk in from the side of the theater across the front of the stage. Thelma spends some time talking with the audience.

THELMA: So how is everybody today? Are you all doing well? Ohhhh my, I'm sure not! I have this pain right here in my back. (*Shows everyone where her pain is.*) I've had this darn pain for weeks now. I went to the doctor, she said I should get some bed rest! Do you believe that?!? Bed rest, hah! At my age, if you get too much bed rest, people think you're pushing up daisies! You know, dead! As in not alive! Bed rest...hogwash!

Why, I remember when my grandma got pains in her back...she'd strip down to her bloomers, wade out to about knee deep in the swamp and smack the water with her hands. That was sure to get the attention of an alligator or two. One time my grandma smacked the water too much and **three** alligators showed up. Well my grandma was one tough woman, oh Lordy was she tough, but three alligators was a might much even for her. But...she wupped them three alligators, and got rid of the pain in her back naturally! She slept for a whole week afterward! I never saw my grandma sleep like that before!

Now in Louisiana, where I grew up, we have plenty of them alligators. Up here in [name of your town/area], I ain't seen not one alligator. I figure, that's why I have this pain in my back. You ain't got no swamps or alligators in [name of your town/area]! You do have (*Say something funny about your town/area like "a nice smell," "lots and lots of car dealerships," "a lotta flat ground," etc.*) ...but how do you people live without swamps and alligators?! You all must have lots a back pain in these parts...

LOUISE: Would you just hush up and come on now. (*Starts to gently nudge Thelma along.*) These kind folk don'ts wants to hear about your swamps of Louisiana stories.

THELMA: (*To the audience.*) Besides this here pain in my back, I also have me a pain in my butt...it's called Thelma! (*To Thelma.*) Would you stop pushing me?!? I'm getting there! It takes me a little longer anymore...I'm no 90 year-old spring chicken you know!

It works well if Louise can push Thelma up onto the stage with a good bit of slapstick. [Old folks trying to climb on stage.] Thelma and Louise walk to stage right or stage left, or a platform off stage right or stage left, and sit on rocking chairs. Thelma makes herself comfortable, looking around the audience and stage. A long pause...

LOUISE: *(A bit impatiently.)* Well aren't you going to tell them the story?

THELMA: Oh yes, yes, which one? *(Excitedly.)* Do you think they'd like to hear the one where an alligator bit a hole in the bottom of my granddaddy's row boat? Or maybe the one where grandma tried to use an alligator to learn to water ski? She lassoed a big old alligator, and that alligator took off pulling her along. Well she was standing up all right for a few seconds...but then she hit a tree branch, flying up into the air...

LOUISE: No, no, no! Don't you remember? You're here to tell them the timeless riches to rags, to riches, story of Ashputtle.

THELMA: Ashputtle?! But there ain't no alligators in that story...and I still have this pain in my back. You know there ain't nothing better than a good alligator story to get rid of back pain!

LOUISE: I am sorry about your back pain, but the story must be Ashputtle! That's what the people paid their money for.

THELMA: Oh all right! Well if I must, I must. Now nobody knows if this story is true, but our great, great, great, great, grandfathers, the Brothers Grimm, heard a story from China about a girl with tiny, little feet *(Shows the audience how small her feet were.)* who marries this good looking hunk of a prince. You see, in China, really tiny feet are a sign of beauty. *(Acting pretty, then showing the size of her feet, then pretty again.)* Of course, I don't know how I got to be so beautiful with my big old klodhoppers...I guess some of us are just naturally pretty! Well, being that our great, great, great, great grandfathers were story tellers, they liked this story, but they changed things around, added some stuff, and called the young girl with tiny feet, Ashputtle, mostly because they couldn't write her Chinese name! Now the Ashputtle story had a couple of really disgusting parts! Like in the one part, the slipper didn't fit, so they had to...

LOUISE: *(Interrupting her so that she does not continue.)* But Thelma's not going to tell you those parts, now are you Thelma?

THELMA: I don't have to because as the years passed, and the story was passed down through the generations, the disgusting, awful parts were taken out, and it was renamed, Cinderella.

LOUISE: Which sounds a tad better than Ashputtle, if you ask me!

THELMA: My goodness, yes! Well the story begins many years ago in a far off kingdom. Farther away than even the swamps of Louisiana! It was like one of those places you hear about in those fairy tales...which...I guess, this is one of them thar fairy tales, isn't it? Well, well, well, a wealthy nobleman, named Sir Reginald was married to a down right beautiful woman, named Ellanora. He loved his wife ever so much. Ellanora was so kind and gentle that not one person ever said a nasty thing about her. Tragedy struck these two wonderful people when Ellanora died while giving birth to their first child, a beautiful baby girl. Devastated by the loss of his wife, Reginald named their child Ella, after his wife, the baby's mother, Ellanora.

LOUISE: Wait, wait! Her name was Cinderella, not Ella!

THELMA: Listen Ms. Smartypants, are you telling this story or am I telling this story? Be patient. Her name was Ella, you'll understand later in the story. So...Sir Reginald was an affectionate and generous father to Ella, spending as much time with her as he was able to.

SIR REGINALD AND ELLA READING. If there is room, this scene can be performed in front of the main curtain. A rocking chair is all that is needed. Sir Reginald is reading to Ella, who is sitting on his lap. Ella is an eight year old [a fourth grader is old enough to handle the lines and acting].

SIR REGINALD: As Robin Hood slumped into Little John's arms, Little John picked him up and laid him on the bed, whispering, "Sleep mighty Robin Hood, sleep. May your legend live forever! The end."

ELLA: Oh father, that was ever so exciting! Robin Hood defending the poor and mistreated people. Thank you, thank you for picking such a wonderful book! May I keep it and read it again on my own!

SIR REGINALD: But of course my loving daughter! Read, read, and never stop reading! It is the wise who pick books up, it is the foolish who put books down! Now young lady, it is bed time for you!

ELLA: Oh father, do I have to? Please read some more!

SIR REGINALD: Ella, my dearest, that is enough for tonight! It was the end of the book! Tomorrow, we will begin reading...King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table! Now off with you!

ELLA: Oh all right. *(She hugs him.)* I do love you daddy! *(Pauses. Sort of gets up, sits back down.)* Daddy, did mommy like to read?

SIR REGINALD: No, your mother did not like to read, Ella... She loved to read... *(Sentimentally.)* Oh how I wish that she were still here so that you could have gotten to know her.

ELLA: When you tell me stories about her, Father, it is almost like I do know her.

SIR REGINALD: Then there is only one thing I am to do, I must continue telling you stories about your mother, forever! Is it a deal?

ELLA: *(She holds up her pinky, they shake pinkys.)* It's a deal! Good night father! *(She gets up and begins to walk off stage.)*

SIR REGINALD: *(Sentimentally.)* Ella... *(Ella stops and faces the audience.)* you do so very much look like your mother.

ELLA: *(With a smile.)* Mommy looked like an 8 year old?! *(She giggles.)*

SIR REGINALD: *(Smiles, chuckles, and chases after her, as he says:)* Oh you silly young lady! Race you to the bed! **(BLACKOUT.)**

ACT ONE, SCENE 2
THE RETURN OF SIR REGINALD WITH A NEW WIFE

THELMA: Maybe next year I can come back and tell these folks the story of Robin Hood? Nothing like a story where a bunch of folks who live in the forest jump out of trees on top of rich people! No alligators in Robin Hood though...

LOUISE: Do you think you could finish Cinderella first, before you start on Robin Hood?

THELMA: Yes, yes. Well as time went on, Sir Reginald felt that Ella needed the influence and caring of a momma, especially since his business required him to travel all across the land. On one of his longer trips, he sent word back to Ella that he would be coming home with a new wife and her two daughters. Ella, who trusted her father completely, was very excited about the news!

THE RETURN OF SIR REGINALD WITH A NEW WIFE. Again, this can be in front of the main curtain if possible. The main curtain is partially open. Ella comes on stage, looks through the opened curtains, and...

ELLA: *(Excitedly.)* Oh they are coming! They're here! Father is home!
(Ella rushes to stage right but still on stage, and motions for the servants to come out.) Come on! Come on!

Servants line up on stage with Ella nearest to the opening in the curtain. Ella and the servants wait excitedly. If possible, the main curtain can open wide enough to see a carriage; if no carriage is possible, Sir Reginald can walk down two or three steps [from the side behind the curtain], and once on stage facing the audience:

SIR REGINALD: *(Stretches.)* Gosh, it is good to be home!

ELLA: Father!! *(Rushes into his arms. He sweeps her up, swinging her around.)*

SIR REGINALD: How's my all time favorite daughter?

ELLA: Oh daddy, I am your only daughter! Oh I missed you! Why were you away so long?

SIR REGINALD: Business, pumpkin, business. *(Greets all of his staff down the line. They are all smiling and happy to see him. They can greet him in return with a brief line or two. Sir Reginald walks back to center stage next to the open curtains or carriage door.)* Ella, staff, I would like you to meet Priscilla, *(Leans toward Ella.)* your new stepsister *(Priscilla gets out of coach, does a very clumsy curtsy.)*

YOUNG PRISCILLA: I am Priscilla, not Penelope!

SIR REGINALD: —and Penelope, *(Leans toward Ella.)* your other new stepsister *(Penelope gets out of coach and also does a clumsy curtsy, pushing Priscilla a bit.)*

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YOUNG PENELOPE: I am Penelope, not Priscilla! (*Priscilla and Penelope push each other and stick their tongues out at each other.*)

SIR REGINALD: And my new wife, the Baroness Ladianna, (*leans to Ella.*) your new stepmother (*the Baroness, very snotty, gets out of coach, bows to everyone.*)

BARONESS LADIANNA: (*With her nose very much up in-the-air.*) I am pleased to meet all of you.

SIR REGINALD: Well, it has been a long trip! Let us freshen up and all have our first meal together! (*All file off stage.*)

ACT ONE, SCENE 3
ELLA'S BED

LOUISE: Whewwwy! Did you see that Baroness Ladianna? Looks a good bit like one evil stepmother to me!

THELMA: Now don't go giving any of the story away, you old coot! Well as the days passed, the whole bunch of them was looking like one big happy family. Ella, being kind and sweet and understanding got along with her two new stepsisters, even though they were a bit on the selfish side. And the Baroness simply loved being waited on hand and foot by the servants. She was living the life of the rich and pampered.

ELLA'S BED. In front of the main curtain if possible.

SIR REGINALD: Do you like your new stepsisters?

ELLA: They are fine father, although they do trip over a lot of things.

SIR REGINALD: And how about your new stepmother?

ELLA: She's fine too. (*Pause.*) Is something on your mind father?

SIR REGINALD: Ella, I just want you to be happy with your new family.

ELLA: I am happy father! I have you...and now a stepmother, and two stepsisters. What more could an 8 year old want out of life?

SIR REGINALD: (*Hugs her.*) Ella, I do love you! (*Pause.*) I must travel again.

ELLA: Oh father, when?

SIR REGINALD: The day after tomorrow.

ELLA: So soon? How long will you be gone?

SIR REGINALD: About three weeks, in Liverpool.

ELLA: Three weeks!! That's too long! You can be gone one week, no more.

SIR REGINALD: Two weeks!

ELLA: One week, and that's my final offer!

SIR REGINALD: Two weeks, and that's my final offer!

ELLA: Okay, I will shoot you for it!

They both do rock-paper-scissors.

SIR REGINALD and ELLA: Rock, paper, scissors, shoot! *(Ella is “paper,” and Sir Reginald is “rock.” Ella, delightedly, covers her father’s hand with her “paper.”)*

ELLA: It is settled, one week!

SIR REGINALD: How do you always win?

ELLA: Not always... *(With a big smile.)* just most of the time!

Sir Reginald tickles her stomach, tucks her in, and kisses her on the forehead.

SIR REGINALD: Good night pumpkin. *(BLACKOUT.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 4 SIR REGINALD’S DEPARTURE

THELMA: Do you believe that? They played rock-paper-scissors way back then, too! Now down in Louisiana, we have a slightly different version, it is called alligator, human, mosquito. You see an alligator *(Makes an alligator mouth eating with her hand.)* eats a human *(Makes a person walking with her other hand, which gets eaten by the alligator hand.)* and a human *(Makes a walking figure with her fingers.)* squishes a mosquito *(The other hand is a mosquito flying around which gets swatted by the first hand.)* and a mosquito *(Makes a mosquito flying around.)* irritates an alligator *(Makes the alligator mouth shape.)* by buzzing all around its eyes, making the alligator blink, and flying all up its nose, making the alligator sneeze...

LOUISE: *(Cutting off Thelma.)* Okay, okay, we get the idea! But...we want to know what happens to Ella and her father. Could you continue the story?

THELMA: Why sure I can! *(Irritated that Louise cut her off, so she throws her nose up into the air to the side and waits.)*

LOUISE: Well?

THELMA: *(Still irritated with her nose up in the air.)* Well what?

LOUISE: Are you going to continue the story?

THELMA: Now?

LOUISE: Yes now!!

THELMA: Well as I was saying, Sir Reginald had to leave on another business trip...

SIR REGINALD’S DEPARTURE. *The main curtain is in the same position as when the carriage arrived in ACT ONE, SCENE 2. The order of individuals standing from where the curtain is open to the side of the stage is: Ella, Young Penelope, Young Priscilla, Baroness Ladianna, Servants. Sir Reginald enters from the side of the stage, saying goodbye to the servants who can respond if desired; The Baroness offers him her cheek, which he*

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kisses; he pats Young Priscilla and Young Penelope on the heads; and turns to Ella.

SIR REGINALD: *(Speaking like an army general.)* Captain Ella!

ELLA: Sir, yes sir!

SIR REGINALD: It is your duty to take care of this fortress, everyone and everything which is found within and around its premises. At any time the enemy might attack, and you must be ready. There can be no breach of security. Are you prepared to accept your duty?

ELLA: Ready and willing! *(They both salute; he leans over giving her a big hug.)*

As Sir Reginald attempts to get into the carriage, he falters a bit, looks a bit weary, coughs, pats his chest, tries again, grabs his chest, and collapses backward onto center stage. Lots of commotion ensues; the Baroness bends over Sir Reginald, Servants crowd around looking astonished. The commotion should last for several seconds.

ELLA: *(Terrified.)* Father! Oh father!

BARONESS LADIANNA: No! Nooooo! *(Sobbing, screaming, frequently looking at Ella.)* You can't do this to me!

ELLA: *(After a few moments, the Servants gently take Ella away.)* No! No! Father! Please father! Oh daddy! **(BLACKOUT.)**

ACT ONE, SCENE 5 CINDERELLA'S THOUGHTS BEFORE SLEEP

THELMA: Sir Reginald's death was rough on everybody in the whole house. The servants were just besides themselves. Sir Reginald was the kindest master the servants had ever known. Ella was feeling very alone, she had lost her daddy, the most important person in her life. She cried for many days and many nights. Young Priscilla and Penelope, who had just met their new stepfather, didn't care hardly at all. That Baroness woman, although upset for a few days, realized that all of Sir Reginald's money was now hers! She sold all of Sir Reginald's businesses in hardly no time at all, and she started spending all the money on herself and her daughters.

Well time passed and the years went by, the house started to fall apart. All of Ella's nice things were taken and sold to pay for all the fancy stuff the Baroness bought for herself and her daughters. Well the money eventually got low, and one by one, the Baroness fired the servants. It was not long before there were no servants left. So without any more servants, Ella was forced to wait on her stepsisters and her Stepmother. Poor old Ella became their servant, waiting on them hand and foot, night and day!

At the end of each long old day, Ella was plum tuckered out. She was too pooped to walk to her bedroom, and she frequently fell asleep on a pile of straw near the fireplace.

In the morning she would get up from her straw bed, covered in cinder ashes from the fireplace. Her evil stepsisters began to call her "The Cinder Girl," which they thought was really funny! It became a game with Priscilla and Penelope to try and come up with a new Cinder name each day. They called her Cinder Servant, and Cinder Soot, and Cinder Maid. But they were too simple-minded and wore the game out. They ended up calling her Cinder-Ella, as her permanent name. She was never upset when she was called Cinderella, because she thought it was a rather pretty name actually.

LOUISE: Now I got it! Cinder-Ella...Cinderella! It is a right pretty name!

THELMA: Through all of this, Cinderella stayed polite, and gentle. She became as sweet as sugared milk, as kind as a mother's kiss, and as pretty as the setting sun in the sky. As each day passed, Cinderella became prettier and kinder. Her Stepmother, Priscilla, and Penelope just couldn't stand it! It drove them crazy cause they definitely weren't getting any prettier, or kinder, that's for darn sure!

CINDERELLA'S THOUGHTS BEFORE SLEEP. Kitchen. Something to represent a fireplace. From this point forward, Cinderella has soot on her face in all scenes. Cinderella, now about sixteen, walks onto stage [through a kitchen door if possible] towards the fireplace. It is night. Brutus is seated by the fireplace, faithfully waiting for Cinderella. The lights come up as she enters.

CINDERELLA: *(Looking off stage, or through a kitchen doorway.)* Oh they are finally asleep. *(Looks up.)* Thank you. This is the only time that I can call my own. All day long, from sunrise to sunset, it's Cinderella do this, Cinderella do that! Scrub the pots, clean the dishes, make the beds, wash the laundry, sweep the floors, but of course when I think I am all done, there is always more...

I am left with nothing more than rags to wear, and scraps to eat. I am a prisoner in my father's house. *(Leans over to pet Brutus.)* They can take everything else away from me, but they can't take away my dreams. I can dream whatever I want to! My dreams can take me to far off lands for exotic adventures! I can boat the mighty Nile [acts out rowing a boat] or trek the snowy mountains of the Swiss Alps [acts out being cold and walking] or journey to Africa to see wild animals like lions, and buffalo, and giraffes [acts out like she is looking across the savanna]!

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I can dream of being in a different time as a different person! I can be Sinbad the Sailor sailing around the world [acts out standing at the front of the ship looking across the sea] or a Princess from the desert riding camels through the night [acts out riding a camel], or Queen Elizabeth, the bravest of queens, ruling over all of England [acts out looking royal, and nods to her subjects]!

My favorite dreams are those when I am a mystical creature like a forest elf running through the woods [acts out running through the trees] or a mermaid swimming the open seas [acts out swimming], or a mountain giant living so high up in the mountains [gestures way up high]! (*Sits down on the straw.*) Perhaps my dreams will come true, and tomorrow will be better. (*Yawns.*) Who knows, maybe I'll meet the King, or the Queen, or even the Prince and we will fall in love and get married. (*Lies down.*) Tomorrow has to be better than today... doesn't it? (*Falls asleep.*) **BLACKOUT.**

ACT ONE, SCENE 6 MORNING

Thelma is snoring in her chair, humorously.

LOUISE: (*Pushing Thelma a little.*) Would you wake up?! Just because Cinderella fell asleep doesn't mean you have to fall asleep too!

THELMA: Oh, sorry...all the lights went out and I plum fell asleep. (*Yawns, stretches.*) What's for breakfast?

LOUISE: Breakfast?! You are not in the story, you are just telling the story!

THELMA: Oh yeah. Well right after I wake up I just got to have scrambled eggs with grits on the side...

LOUISE: (*A bit irritated.*) Theeeelmaaaaaaa....

THELMA: Yes...yes...Well, the next morning, Cinderella wakes up at her fireplace...

MORNING in the kitchen. The lights come up on Cinderella and Brutus, both asleep at the fireplace. We hear birds begin to sing. Then the gong of a tower clock in the distance.

CINDERELLA: (*She stirs a little. Starts to mumble. Brutus is having a dream (Makes dog sleeping sounds and kicks Cinderella in his sleep.) Yes Father, just a few more minutes, (Continued gongs and Brutus kicking.) ...soon, very soon. (Continued gongs and Brutus kicking.) ...five more minutes, please... (Louder gong strikes in the distance. Gets up on her knees.) Oh, I'm up, I'm up! (Puts head into the straw with her butt in the air.) Oh I'm not up! (One last loud gong.) Okay, okay.*)

(Sits up, looks out at the audience, wide-eyed.) I have to get a new alarm clock! *(Pause.)* Brutus...Brutus! Time to wake up. Come on, it's morning! And what a lovely morning it is! Were you dreaming again? *(Brutus nods yes.)* Chasing carriages? *(He shakes his head "No.")* Chasing squirrels? *(He shakes his head "No.")* Chasing rabbits? *(He shakes his head "No.")* Chasing Stepmother's cat Damion? *(He shakes his head "Yes.")* Did you finally catch him? *(He shakes his head "No.")* Oh I'm sorry! Maybe next time, huh? Then perhaps your dream will come true, and then I won't have to wait on him too. But I am sure that they would find something else for me to wait on... *(Stands, walks to window (Facing out to audience, looks out.)* Brutus! Look! A rainbow! Father used to say that when a day started with a rainbow, you must make a wish! *(Looks skyward.)* Thank you daddy!

Closes her eyes, holds her hands to her chest, makes a wish. Brutus, who is standing next to her, nudges her. Talking to Brutus.

CINDERELLA: What kind of wish? Oh I can't tell you! A wish would never come true if you tell someone what you wished for!

Humming the entire time; Cinderella dusts herself off; washes in basin. Ben and Jerry rush in:

BEN/JERRY: *(You can't really understand either of them because they are talking too fast and at the same time. High squeaky voices work well here.)* Cinderelly! Cinderelly! There's an intruder! New mouse! Big mouse! What do we do? Come help!

CINDERELLA: Wait, wait! What is all the fuss? *(They all quiet down.)* I can't understand you, slow down! *(They all talk again, slower, but still all together.)* No, no. One at a time! Ben, you go first.

BEN: We have an intruder! There's a new mouse in the house! We've never seen him before!

CINDERELLA: Is he a friendly mouse, or a mean mouse?

JERRY: Don't know! He looks mean, but he is in the trap, and you know how being stuck in a trap drives us mices crazy!

CINDERELLA: In the trap! Oh my! We must go help him! We must get him out!

They run off stage and around the theater if possible. This allows time to change scenes. When they arrive back on stage, there is a mouse trap with a new mouse cowering in the corner of the trap.

CINDERELLA: Oh look at the poor thing! He looks terribly scared. Ben, go and talk to him. Explain things to him.

BEN: Why me? He looks mean! Send Jerry.

JERRY: Me? She asked you first! You go!

CINDERELLA!

CINDERELLA: Oh you scare-dee-cats! Or should I say scared-OF-cats? Oh, no matter, why don't you both go talk to him?

They both head into trap. The new mouse takes a swing at both of them.

BEN: Wooooah! Take it easy pal! We're not going to hurta you.

JERRY: We're here to helpa you!

NEW MOUSE (ALFY): *(If this mouse has a very different voice from Ben and Jerry, it works well.)* Oh sure you are, sure you are! You want me to trust you two mice who are friends with that human-person? *(Points at Cinderella as he says it.)* Do you think I'm crazy?!?

BEN: You got it all wrong! We're friends with Cinderelly because she is nice! She is very nice!

JERRY: She helps us out! She watches out for us!

BEN and JERRY together: *(With their arms around each other's shoulders.)* She's on our side!

NEW MOUSE (ALFY): How can she be on your side when we are in a mouse trap! Huh? Huh?

BEN: This is not Cinderelly's trap! Her dumb stepsisters set the trap! They hate us mices, they do!

NEW MOUSE (ALFY): *(Pointing to Cinderella.)* So she didn't set the trap? She is OK? Doesn't that beat all? A human-person who is nice to us mice?! *(All three walk out of trap with Ben and Jerry escorting the New Mouse on either side.)*

CINDERELLA: Well hello Mr. Mouse. How are you? Have Ben and Jerry explained everything to you? *(New Mouse nods.)* Well good. First things first, you need a name. Let me see. How about, Alfredeleonais! *(He looks rather perplexed.)* But we'll call you Alfy for short.

ALFY: Al-fre-de-leo-nais...hmmmm, Alfy, yes, yes, Alfy sounding good!

CINDERELLA: *(Realizes she must go get breakfast.)* Oh my! I must hurry! *(To Ben and Jerry.)* Show Alfy around the house, but stay away from Damion. *(Cinderella exits.)*

ALFY: Who's Damion?

BEN: Damion is a house cat. He not likea us mice! He chases after us, but he's fat! He's a fat cat! So he's not very fast! We can run faster than Damion!

JERRY: But if he does catch you...watch out! He'll eata you for breakfast!

ALFY: Damion, fat cat, huh? Got it! **(BLACKOUT.)**

**ACT ONE, SCENE 7
MEETING DAMION**

THELMA: Did you see them rodents? They are some old big mice! They are as big as Cinderella! Are mice that big in [Name of your town/area]? They ain't that big in Louisiana!

LOUISE: This is a play! You can't shrink humans down to mouse size!

You have to just dress people up as mice and let the audience use their imagination!

THELMA: (*Pointing to the audience.*) So they are just supposed to imagine that the mice are little?

LOUISE: Yes. That is exactly what they are supposed to do!

THELMA: (*Talking to audience.*) Everybody got that? Just imagine that those mice, which are as big as Cinderella (*stands up and gestures as big as Cinderella is.*), are really the size of normal mice (*gestures the size of mice, close to the ground.*) I hope you got good imaginations...on with the story. Cinderella has to feed Damion each and every morning...

MEETING DAMION. Cinderella, [with Ben, Jerry, and Alfie following, but not too closely] enters in front of the main curtain, if possible. Cinderella stops near center stage.

CINDERELLA: (*Whispering upstage.*) Damion...nice kitty...come on breakfast time...Damion....get over here right now! (*Damion, a very fat mouse, slowly comes on stage through the main curtains, center, stretching, yawning, and making cat noises.*) It is not I who wants you fed first thing. (*Cinderella and Damion exit through the opening in the curtains.*)

ALFY: That's Damion? Ha, ha, ha! I'm supposed to be scared of Damion? Who are you kidding? What a fat cat!! Why he couldn't catch his own tail!!

JERRY: But if he does catcha you... (*Makes a motion like slitting the throat, and falls over like he's dead, lifts his head.*) ...and then he eats you! (**BLACKOUT.**)

ACT ONE, SCENE 8 BREAKFAST

LOUISE: Hooo baby! That really is one fat cat!

THELMA: Almost looks like one of those sumo wrestlers! What do you think, Damion The Sumo Wrestling Cat! Now that would be funny! (*Gets out of seat to show audience.*) Damion with one of those white diaper looking things those sumo-wrestlers wear that wraps around your waist, [turns around pushing her butt towards the audience] and comes up right between you...

LOUISE: (*Panicked with what Thelma might say.*) Stop! These kind folks do not want to hear you describe where a sumo wrestler's diaper thing goes!

THELMA: I was just trying to be helpful. Damion, a sumo wrestling cat...Ha, I do like that one! So anyway, Cinderella is making breakfast for her Stepmother, and her stepsisters...

CINDERELLA!

BREAKFAST in the kitchen. Main curtain opens onto the kitchen; Ben, Jerry, Alfie are near the fireplace; Cinderella is setting the table for breakfast; Brutus, the dog, is present.

STEPMOTHER: *(From off stage, or peaking her head through a doorway, or around a curtain.)* CINDERELLA!

CINDERELLA: Yes Stepmother.

STEPMOTHER: Is breakfast ready?

CINDERELLA: Soon Stepmother.

STEPMOTHER: Well stop lollygagging around, and get to it child.

CINDERELLA: Lollygagging!?! One of these days I'd like to see any of them do anything around here. I wait on them from sun-up to sunset! They wouldn't survive for one day without me tending to their every care and need. Oh, sometimes I just don't know... *(Calls to them.)*
BREAKFAST!

Stepmother, Priscilla, Penelope, and Damion walk in, prim and proper, but clumsy. If possible, a wall unit on wheels can be rotated as Cinderella walks through it with the breakfast tray and places it on the table. Cinderella waits as all stand by their chairs.

STEPMOTHER: *(If there is a door, it was left open by Cinderella. Stepmother points at the door.)* The door Cinderella.

CINDERELLA: Yes Stepmother. *(Cinderella closes the door.)*

STEPMOTHER: *(Stepmother points at the chairs.)* The chairs Cinderella.

CINDERELLA: Yes Stepmother. *(Pushes the chairs in for each of them; Stepmother first, then Priscilla, then Penelope who very exaggeratedly pushes her butt backwards, and sits.)*

PRISCILLA: It's about time!

PENELOPE: I'm famished! I'm so hungry I could eat a whole stack of pancakes as tall as I am! With lots of butter and syrup dripping down the sides! I just love pancakes! Of course, I do like eggs and bacon too. Scrambled eggs with the bacon all broken into tiny little pieces throughout the scrambled eggs! So that every time you take a bite, you get both eggs and bacon in the same bite! *(You can almost see the saliva dripping out of her mouth at this point.)* I really need breakfast, soon!

PRISCILLA: Mother, if she can't make breakfast on time, what good is she? *(Pointing to Cinderella.)*

STEPMOTHER: What were you doing this morning Cinderella, breakfast is rather late? *(Cinderella serves them as the conversation follows.)*

CINDERELLA: I found a new mouse in the trap.

PRISCILLA: A mouse! Oh I hate mice!

PENELOPE: They're so icky!

PRISCILLA: And hairy!

PENELOPE: And creepy!

Ben, Jerry, Alf all react to each of these statements.

STEPMOTHER: What do you mean a new mouse, Cinderella? You don't keep them as pets, do you? *(Cinderella looking a bit surprised. Ben, Jerry act all proud.)*

CINDERELLA: *(Not knowing exactly what to say.)* Well, I...

PRISCILLA: *(With food in her mouth.)* Keep mice as pets? Oh yuk!

PENELOPE: *(With food in her mouth.)* Who would ever think of such a thing?

STEPMOTHER: Girls! Girls! How many times have I told you, we never talk with food in our mouths. We are refined, polite, gracious; we have manners beyond reproach. We are ladies! *(Back to Cinderella, petting Damion.)* No, of course you don't have mice as pets, Cinderella, now do you? Damion would never allow it, would you Damion my sweet?

PRISCILLA: Cinderella! I like my bacon crispy, not soft and squishy! Is it so very hard to make bacon the way I like it?! Take this back! Make me new!

CINDERELLA: Yes, Priscilla. *(As Cinderella picks up her plate, Priscilla pulls her napkin, knocking over her milk glass, spilling milk all down her front.)*

PRISCILLA: Why you!

CINDERELLA: Oh my! *(As she starts to clean it up.)*

PRISCILLA: Mother! Look at me! My dress! I am soaked! *(Turning to Cinderella.)* Why you...you did this on purpose!

CINDERELLA: No, no, I was just getting your plate! You pulled your napkin and spilled the...

STEPMOTHER: Cinderella, Priscilla would never have been so clumsy... *(Gives Cinderella an evil look.)* That was very clever the way you spilled the milk on her...

CINDERELLA: You don't really think that I would...

STEPMOTHER: Silence! This can not be left alone without punishment! Perhaps then, you will learn to be more careful!

CINDERELLA: Yes Stepmother.

STEPMOTHER: You will see me in my room once you have cleaned up all this mess. I will decide what to do with you then. *(BLACKOUT.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 9 THE KING AND QUEEN DISCUSS THE PRINCE

THELMA: What a lousy step-family poor Cinderella has! She didn't spill the milk on Priscilla, it was clumsy Priscilla who spilled the milk on herself! And poor Cinderella gets punished. Why if I were Cinderella, I'd...

LOUISE: Well, you're not Cinderella! Now continue the story. These folks are a waiting.

CINDERELLA!

THELMA: Okay, okay. Well, while Cinderella is dragging herself through another day, the King and the Queen are at the palace...

THE KING AND QUEEN DISCUSS THE PRINCE. Main curtain opens onto King George and Queen Henrietta talking in a room; the Royal Guard is by the door.

KING: (*Agitated.*) My dear Henrietta, I don't really care if the boy doesn't want to get married! He is my first born son, the Prince, and he will succeed me as King! This is the way that it is! There is simply no discussion!

QUEEN: But he is not ready yet! He is young, he needs more time to...to...be himself.

KING: To be himself? Who has he been all these years if he hasn't been himself? Has he been someone else? He has always looked like the same person! Was he not himself when we let him "travel the countryside," "see the Kingdom," "get to know the common people"? When all he really did was ride his horse through every wood he could find! Racing any fool idiot who would race him! Climbing every hill for "a better view"! Jumping off cliffs into the ocean, "just for fun"! He's lucky the Royal Guards were with him, otherwise he would have been arrested, or killed, or something worse!

QUEEN: What can be worse than being killed dear?

KING: (*Flustered, but polite.*) Oh you know what I mean Henrietta!

QUEEN: George, he is young, he still needs to grow up.

KING: Young! Grow up? He just turned eighteen! In another year he'll be...he'll be... (*Almost counting on his fingers.*) ...19! And then he'll never get married, he'll just live with us...as my son...the unmarried Prince...forever! No, no! I won't have it! The boy will settle down and get married! GUARD!

ROYAL GUARD: Yes your majesty.

KING: Call in my son!

ROYAL GUARD: As you wish Your Highness. (*Guard exits.*)

QUEEN: He hasn't really thought about marriage. He needs to get comfortable with the idea.

KING: Get comfortable with the idea? What does getting comfortable have to do with getting married? Everyone knows that marriage is not comfortable! Have we not raised him as royalty? Have we not taught him all the manners and responsibilities that go along with being the heir to the throne? If he is not comfortable with the idea at this point, he may never be! It does not matter if he is ready, it is time!

Prince enters.

PRINCE: Good morning Father. (*Bowing to him.*) Good morning Mother. (*Giving her a kiss on the cheek.*) I understand that you called for me.

KING: My son...your mother has decided that it is time for you to get married. (*The Queen clears her throat, loudly.*) Son, I have decided that it is time for you to get married.

PRINCE: (*Perplexed.*) Father...

KING: Let me finish. You have just turned eighteen. You have been educated and trained as well as any Prince in all of the world to rule the kingdom. You have traveled all of the land. It is now time to select a bride.

PRINCE: Father...don't you think it would be best for me to find someone I want to marry first?

KING: But you are not even trying! We have introduced you to princesses from all across the land, and you have turned your nose up at every last one! We are out of princesses! There is not a single one left!

PRINCE: They were all so...so...royal!

KING: Royal!! What do you think you are?! You are the Prince! You are royalty!

PRINCE: Yes, I am the Prince, as I have been reminded so many, many times. But I am not like them. They are princesses, living with servants waiting on them hand and foot, unable to do anything for themselves, only seeing people they are told to see, never venturing out of their protected little castles. They know nothing of life! I want someone who has lived, who has gotten dirty, who has picked apples off a tree, who has fallen off a horse and not been caught by a servant on the way down...

KING: (*Amazed.*) You want to marry a commoner? (*Talking to himself. The lights can dim down, a soft spotlight on the King as he steps downstage.*) It's not traditional...people will talk...the law doesn't forbid it...we are out of princesses... if this will get my son married... (*Back to the Prince and the Queen.*) Excellent idea! Not everyone will think so, but, what the hay, am I not the King? Why you can have any maiden in the kingdom! You are the Prince! Every maid across the land would jump at the chance to marry you!

PRINCE: How could they jump at the idea when they have never met me?!

KING: You want to meet them first? Why? What would the purpose be? (*Queen and Prince act exasperated.*) Okay, okay, I know...I know... (*Acting it out.*) How's this? I'll line up every unmarried maiden in the kingdom in a long line. Then you can walk down the line, say hello to each one, and then pick the one you want to marry! A brilliant idea! Every man alive would love to be able to do that! I'm glad I thought of it! That should make you happy, yes?

QUEEN: Oh George, dear...that is a terribly dumb idea!

KING: Dumb?! I am just trying to get my son married, Henrietta. He wants to marry a commoner, he wants to meet her first, it was a way to do just that. So what do you suggest?

PRINCE: How about if we let me decide on a bride when I am ready to decide?

CINDERELLA!

KING: Let me think about it...absolutely not! It may take you weeks, months, years...forever! I do not have weeks, months, years! I am not getting any younger you know! What happens if I die before you are "ready"? Then we would have the kingdom run by a bachelor King. We'd be the laughing stock of the land! It would never do!

QUEEN: Your Father does have a point there dear. Without a wife, men are terribly unable to do anything well...

KING: Why thank you dear for seeing my side.

PRINCE: Father, Mother, I want nothing more than to make you happy. But I am unwilling to make you happy by marrying someone I do not know, someone who I may not be happy with.

QUEEN: *(Pause.)* Why, I think I have an idea! George, what do you think about having a ball?

KING: A ball? What for?

QUEEN: Yes, a ball! A ball inviting absolutely every single maiden in the kingdom! *(Turning to the Prince.)* You will get to meet all the eligible ladies!

PRINCE: But Mother, it seems so "planned"! It is not natural, not... spontaneous!

QUEEN: Yes I know dear, but it is a start, and it will make your father so very happy. Won't it George?

KING: What? Happy? *(To himself.)* A ball...to meet all the eligible maidens...If this will get my son married, I am all for it! We will invite the entire kingdom! It can't miss! *(Turning to the Prince.)* Yes! A ball it is! You will dance, have fun, pick a bride! Yes, yes, I like it! When should it be? The sooner the better! There are so many things to do! Plans to be made!

QUEEN: I will take care of all the arrangements, George.

KING: Excellent my dear! Thank you, thank you *(Kisses her on the cheek.)*

PRINCE: I will attend, but don't expect me to enjoy myself!

QUEEN: For your father's sake, at least try, dear. Who knows, maybe, just maybe, you will have a nice time.

KING: *(Putting his arm around his son, walking him off stage.)* Now that that is settled, can we talk about...grandchildren? *(BLACKOUT.)*

ACT ONE, SCENE 10
THE CEMETERY

THELMA: That is one hot young Prince if I ever laid my eyes on one! Why, if I weren't 103 and a half years old, I'd be knocking on that Prince's door!

LOUISE: To ask him what?

THELMA: To ask him out on a date, that's what!

LOUISE: Like a good looking young Prince like that would want to go out with an old bag-of-bones like you!

THELMA: I said if I were younger!

LOUISE: But you are not younger, so tell us some more of the story.

THELMA: Well okay. Cinderella sneaks away from home and heads to the cemetery...

THE CEMETERY. In front of the main curtains if possible; there are gravestones. Cinderella walks out, with a hooded shawl on. The lights are low.

CINDERELLA: *(Talking to her parents tombstones.)* Father, Mother, how are you today? I am sorry that I have not been able to visit more often, *(Sarcastically.)* but my lovely stepmother and stepsisters have been keeping me busy. They are ever so lazy. Did they ever have to take care of themselves? They would be very upset if they knew that I came here. But I will never stop visiting you. *(The Prince enters in common clothes, but Cinderella does not see him.)* But I am not here to talk about them. I want to thank you for bringing me into this world. My life may not be perfect, but it could be so much worse. I am grateful for the things I do have, especially all the wonderful memories of you, Father! You made me what I am today! I do miss you ever so much...

PRINCE: Are they your parents?

CINDERELLA: *(Startled, pulls the hood over her face a bit, peeking out to see if she recognizes him.)* Oh my! Forgive me! I didn't see you there! I will be leaving soon.

PRINCE: No, I am sorry. I did not mean to startle you. My apologies. *(He bows.)*

CINDERELLA: Should I know you sir? I do not believe that we have ever been introduced.

PRINCE: No, we have never been introduced, but, who I am is not important. If you knew, it would cause you to act differently.

CINDERELLA: Cause me to act differently? I do not understand.

PRINCE: You do not have to. It doesn't make any sense to me either sometimes. *(Pause.)* I walk here often, and I hardly ever see anyone else. Again, my apologies for upsetting you. I will leave.

CINDERELLA: *(Now a bit interested.)* No! I mean, you don't have to leave, if you don't want to.

PRINCE: Well, I would like to stay. *(Motioning to the tombstones.)* So, are they your parents?

CINDERELLA: Yes. My father died when I was eight. He was the best father on Earth! I have wonderful memories of doing so many things with him! He taught me so very much.

PRINCE: My father's still living, although he keeps telling me how old he is. I want him to live a lot longer so that I don't have to take over.

CINDERELLA: Take over what?

PRINCE: Take over what he does for a living.

CINDERELLA: Take over his business?

CINDERELLA!

PRINCE: Well, sort of...you might call what my father does a business. You see I do not really want to do what my father does, but I am obligated.

CINDERELLA: But can't you pick your own career? Why don't you just tell your father that you are going to do something else with your life.

PRINCE: I wish it were that easy.

CINDERELLA: Yes, me too.

PRINCE: I am sorry, I am being rather confusing. Tell me about your mother.

CINDERELLA: My mother died when I was born. I never knew her. My father told me that she was the kindest and most beautiful woman he had ever met. My father loved her so...

PRINCE: My mother is also kind and beautiful. She understands me better than my father does. She appreciates my needs and desires, my yearning to be myself, not to be what I am supposed to be. At least she understands me...

CINDERELLA: Your mother sounds nice. It would have been wonderful to have grown up with my mother.

PRINCE: Yes, I am sorry that you were unable to. Since your father and mother have passed away when you were young, who has taken care of you?

CINDERELLA: My stepmother, but it is more like I have taken care of her.

PRINCE: What do you mean? Is your stepmother sickly; is she unable to take care of herself?

CINDERELLA: No, not at all. She is very able to take care of herself. I am her servant.

PRINCE: (*Amazed.*) Her servant? Is this what you want to do?

CINDERELLA: No, it is not what I want to do, but I am obligated.

PRINCE: I thought she was your stepmother? A stepmother does not make her stepdaughter her servant!

CINDERELLA: Mine does.

PRINCE: But that is not right!

CINDERELLA: But it is my duty. It will be okay. Someday, maybe, things may change. (*Pause.*)

PRINCE: It seems that we have something in common. We are both in situations of obligation. (*Pause.*) Where do you live?

CINDERELLA: (*Startled with this question.*) Oh I can not tell you. No, you can not know! I would be in such trouble if my stepmother found out that I came here. Oh, I have lost track of time! I must leave... (*She hurries off.*)

PRINCE: (*Calling after her.*) Please stay! Why would you be in trouble? Will I see you again? (*Pause.*) I don't understand. (**BLACKOUT.**)

BY CRAIG W. STUMP

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