Cinderella

By Chris Weitz
Once upon a time, there was a girl called Ella. And she saw the world not always as it was, but as perhaps it could be, with just a little bit of magic. My darling! To her mother and father, she was a princess. True, she had no title, nor crown, nor castle, but she was the ruler of her own little kingdom, whose borders were the house and meadow on the forest's edge where her people had lived for generations. With Mr. Goose and all their animal family. Hello, there. What do you think you're doing? Let the little ones have their share. We don't want you getting an upset stomach. Gus-Gus, you're a house mouse, not a garden mouse. Isn't he, Jacqueline? And you mustn't eat Mr. Goose's food. Isn't that right, Mummy? Do you still believe that they understand you? - Don't they, Mother? - Yes. I believe that animals listen and speak to us if we only have the ear for it. That's how we learn to look after them. Who looks after us? Fairy godmothers, of course. And do you believe in them? I believe in everything. Then I believe in everything, too. Her father was a merchant who went abroad
and brought tribute back from all of Ella's subject lands.

Ella!
Where are my girls, my beautiful girls?
Where are my darlings?
Ella missed him terribly when he was away.
But she knew he would always return.
- There she is!
- Papa, welcome home!
How are you?
You've grown!
Haven't you, now?
- There you go, sir.
- What was that?
This?
I found it hanging on a tree.
I think there may be something inside.
It's so pretty.
In French, that is un papillon.
You're standing on my feet.
Shall we?
Look, Mummy! I'm dancing!
Little papillon.
All was just as it should be.
They knew themselves to be the most happy of families to live as they did and to love each other so.
When I am king
dilly, dilly
You shall be queen
Lavender's green
dilly, dilly
Lavender's blue
You must love me
dilly, dilly
For I love you
But sorrow can come to any kingdom,
no matter how happy.
And so it came to Ella's home.
I'm so sorry.
Thank you, Doctor.
This must have been very difficult for you.
Come.
Ella.
Ella, my darling.
I want to tell you a secret.
A great secret that will see you through
all the trials that life can offer.
You must always remember this.
Have courage and be kind.
You have more kindness
in your little finger
than most people possess
in their whole body.
And it has power, more than you know.
- And magic.
- Magic?
Truly.
Have courage and be kind, my darling.
Will you promise me?
I promise.
Good.
Good.
And...
I must go very soon, my love.
Please forgive me.
Of course I forgive you.
I love you.
I love you, my darling.
I love you.
Time passed,
and pain turned to memory.
In her heart, Ella stayed the same.
For she remembered
her promise to her mother.
Have courage, and be kind.
Father, however, was much changed.
But he hoped for better times.
"And thence home,
"and my wife and I singing,
to our great content,
"and if ever there were a man
happier in his fortunes,
"I know him not."
Thus ends Mr. Pepys for today.
I do love a happy ending, don't you?
They're quite my favorite sort.
As well they should be.
Ella,
I have come to the conclusion
that it's time, perhaps,
to begin a new chapter.
Indeed, Father?
You'll recall that some time ago,
in my travels,
I made the acquaintance
of Sir Francis Tremaine.
Yes.
The Master of the Mercer's Guild,
is he not?
Was.
The poor man has died, alas.
His widow,
an honorable woman,
finds herself alone,
though still in the prime of her life.
You're worried about telling me.
But you mustn't be.
Not if it will lead to your happiness.
Yes.
Happiness.
Do you think
I may be allowed one last chance,
even though I thought
such things were done with for good?
Of course I do, Father.
She'll merely be your stepmother.
And you'll have two lovely sisters
to keep you company.
Have courage, be kind.
Welcome, ladies. Welcome!
She's skinny as a broomstick!
And that stringy hair!
You're very nice.
Welcome. I'm so happy to meet you.
You have such pretty hair.
- Thank you.
- You should have it styled.
I'm sure you're right.
- Would you like a tour of the house?
- What did she say?
She wants to show us
around her farmhouse.
- She's proud of it, I think.
- Do they keep animals inside?
Lucifer.
Her stepmother-to-be
was a woman of keen feeling
and refined taste.
And she, too, had known grief.
But she wore it wonderfully well.
You did not say
your daughter was so beautiful.
She takes after her...
Her mother.
Just so.
What does Mummy mean?
What's so charming about it?
She's lying. That's just good manners.
Shut up.
How long has your family lived here?
Over 200 years.
And in all that time,
they never thought to decorate?
Anastasia, hush.
They'll think you are in earnest.
Ella's stepmother,
high-spirited lady that she was,
set out to restore life
and laughter to the house.
You are awful, Baron.
Fortune favors me again.
Well, look who's having
a party of their own.
Jacqueline, Teddy, Matilda,
greedy Gus-Gus.
Just what...
Yes, what do you think
you're up to, Lucifer?
Jacqueline is my guest,
and the eating of guests is not allowed.
Go on, now.
You've plenty of cat food
to keep you happy.
We ladies must help one another.
You're missing the party.
I imagine it's much
like all the other ones.
And I'm leaving first thing, EI.
No. But you're...
You're hardly back from the last trip.
Do you have to go?
It's just a few months, my darling.
What would you like me
to bring you home from abroad?
You know, your sisters...
Stepsisters, have asked for
parasols and lace.
What will you have?
Bring me the first branch
your shoulder brushes on your journey.
That's a curious request.
Well, you'll have to take it with you
on your way
and think of me when you look at it.
And when you bring it back,
it means that you'll be with it.
And that's what I really want.
For you to come back.
No matter what.
I will.
Ella, while I'm away,
I want you to be good
to your stepmother
and stepsisters,
even though they may be
trying at times.
- I promise.
- Thank you.
I always leave a part of me behind, Ella.
Remember that.
And your mother's here, too,
though you see her not.
She's the very heart of this place.
And that's why
we must cherish this house,
always, for her.
I miss her.
Do you?
Very much.
Remember the lace!
I simply must have it!
And my parasol!
For my complexion!
That means skin, if you don't know!
Bye!
Bye, Ella!
I love you!
I love you, too!
Bye!
Ella, dear.
Now, now. Mustn't blub.
Yes, Stepmother.
You needn't call me that.
"Madam" will do.
There isn't room for me
and all of your clothes!
Well, then make yourself smaller!
Anastasia and Drisella
have always shared a room.
Such dear, affectionate girls.
Or... Or better yet, disappear entirely!
You'd like that, wouldn't you?
Sometimes I could scratch
your eyes out!
I think they're finding
the sleeping quarters rather confining.
Well, my bedroom's the biggest
besides yours and Father's.
Perhaps they'd like to share it.
What a wonderful idea.
What a good girl you are.
I can stay in the...
The attic.
Quite so.
The attic?
Yes.
Only temporarily, while I have
all the other rooms redecorated.
The attic's so nice and airy
and you'll be away
from all of our fuss and bother.
You'd be even more cozy
if you kept all this bric-a-brac
up there with you.
Keep you amused.
Well,
no one shall disturb me here.
Hello, Gus-Gus.
Go on, Gus-Gus, you can do it.
So this is where you take refuge.
Me too, it would seem.
Right.
Who's going to help me?
Simpleton.
That is the last straw.
Our little sister, up there,
talking to the woodworm.
How very pleasant.
No cats,
and no stepsisters.
We have a halfwit for a sister.
I've got two.
I heard that.
- Who is she talking to?
- She's mad.
Sing, sweet nightingale
- Good morning.
- Good morning, Miss Ella.
Good morning, Tom!
Sing sweet...
Hello. Don't mind if I...
What a lovely Chantecler. Well done.
Thanks.
- 'Morning.
- 'Morning.
Thank you, Miss Ella.
You're welcome.
Ella!
Wake up, girls! It's lunch time!
Mornings did not agree
with Ella's stepsisters.
And they lacked accomplishment
in such domestic arts
as keeping house.
In fact, they lacked accomplishment in any art.
It was a lover and his lass
With a hey, and a ho
And a hey nonino
That o'er the green corn-field did pass
Sweet lovers love
The spring
Sweet lovers love
The spring
Do shut up.
Ella's great comfort were the letters that Father would send from his travels.
The weeks away lengthened to months, but every day would bring his thoughts from some distant part.
Miss Ella, it's the mail coach!
Until late one afternoon...
Farmer John? Miss Ella.
It's your father, miss.
He took ill on the road.
He's passed on, miss.
He's gone.
To the end, he spoke only of you, miss.
And your mother.
I was to give you this.
But what about my lace?
My parasol?
Can't you see? None of that matters.
We're ruined.
How will we live?
Thank you.
It must have been very difficult for you.
How indeed to live.
Economies had to be taken.
Ella's stepmother dismissed the household.
Her stepmother and stepsisters ever misused her.
And by and by they considered Ella
less a sister than a servant. And so Ella was left to do all the work. This was a good thing, for it distracted her from her grief. At least that was what her stepmother said. And she and her two daughters were more than happy to provide Ella with lots and lots of distraction. In their defense, they did share with her the very food they ate, or rather, the scraps from their table. She had little in the way of friends. Well, her friends were very little. There you are. Have dinner with me, won't you? But those friends she had, she treated with an open heart and an open hand. Your table. Sometimes, by the end of the day, the drafty attic was too cold to spend the night in, so she lay by the dying embers of the hearth to keep warm. I thought breakfast was ready. It is, madam. I'm only mending the fire. In future, can we not be called until the work is done? As you wish. Ella, what's that on your face? Madam? It's ash from the fireplace. Do clean yourself up. You'll get cinders in our tea. I've got a new name for her! Cinderwench. I couldn't bear to look so dirty. Dirty Ella. Cinder-ella!
That's what we'll call you.
Girls, you're too clever.
Who's this for?
Is there someone we've forgotten?
It's my place.
It seems too much
to expect you to prepare breakfast,
serve it and still sit with us.
Wouldn't you prefer to eat
when all the work is done, Ella?
Or should I say, "Cinderella"?
Cinderella.
Names have power, like magic spells.
And of a sudden, it seemed to her
that her stepmother and stepsisters
had indeed transformed her
into merely a creature of ash
and toil.
Run!
Quickly, my friend, or they'll catch you!
Go!
Easy!
Perhaps it was just as well
that Ella's stepsisters were cruel.
For had she not run to the forest,
she might never have met the prince.
Easy! Easy!
Easy, boy!
Come on, boy, slow down!
Miss!
Miss! Are you all right?
Hold on!
I'm all right, thank you!
That's fine.
- Are you all right?
- I'm all right,
but you've nearly frightened
the life out of him.
Who?
The stag.
What's he ever done to you
that you should chase him about?
I must confess
I've never met him before.
He is a friend of yours?
An acquaintance.
We met just now.
I looked into his eyes,
and he looked into mine,
and I just felt he had a great deal
left to do with his life.
That's all.
Miss, what do they call you?
Never mind what they call me.
You shouldn't be this deep
in the forest alone.
I'm not alone. I'm with you, Mister...
What do they call you?
You don't know who I am?
That is...
They call me Kit.
Well, my father does
when he's in a good mood.
And
where do you live, Mr. Kit?
At the palace.
My father's teaching me his trade.
You're an apprentice?
Of a sort.
That's very fine.
Do they treat you well?
Better than I deserve, most likely.
And you?
They treat me as well as they're able.
I'm sorry.
It's not your doing.
Nor yours either, I'll bet.
It's not so very bad.
Others have it worse, I'm sure.
We must
simply have courage
and be kind, mustn't we?
Yes.
You're right.
That's exactly how I feel.
Please don't let them hurt him.
But we're hunting, you see.
It's what's done.
Just because it's what's done
doesn't mean it's what should be done.
Right again.
Then,
you'll leave him alone, won't you?
I will.
Thank you very much, Mr. Kit.
There you are, Your High...
It's Kit! Kit!
Kit! I'm Kit. I'm on my way.
Well, we'd better get a move on,
Mr. Kit.
As I said.
On my way.
I hope to see you again, miss.
And I, you.
You sound as if you're the first fellow
ever to meet a pretty girl.
She wasn't a "pretty girl."
Well, she was a pretty girl,
but there was so much more to her.
How much more?
You've only met her once.
How could you know
anything about her?
You told me you knew right away
when you met Mother.
That's different.
Your mother was a princess.
You would have loved her anyway.
I would never have seen her,
because it wouldn't
have been appropriate.
And my father would have told me
what I'm telling you
and I would have listened.
- No, you wouldn't.
- Yes, I would.
- No, you wouldn't.
- I would.
- You wouldn't.
- You're right.
Well, how is he?
Your Majesty...
Never mind.
If it takes that long to work out a way
to say it, I already know.
Father...
Way of all flesh, boy.
Come.
We shall be late.
And punctuality is the...
...politeness of princes.
His Majesty, the King!
I'm sure your father spoke to you
of your behavior in the forest.
Is it any business of yours,
Grand Duke?
Your business is my business,
Your Royal Highness.
It will not do to let the stag go free.
Just because it's what's done
doesn't mean it's what should be done.
Or something like that.
Master Phineus,
master of the paintbrush,
patiently awaits.
Make him look marriageable,
Master Phineus.
We must attract a suitable bride,
even if he won't listen to a word I say.
I shall endeavor to please,
Your Majesty.
But I can't work miracles.
A splendid canvas, Master Phineus.
Thank you.
As if he knows anything about art.
So, these portraits
will really be sent abroad?
To induce the high and mighty
to attend this ball you insist upon.
Which is a tradition. Which is beloved.
At which you will choose a bride.
Fascinating.
If I must marry, could I not wed, say,
a good, honest country girl?
How many divisions will this
"good, honest country girl" provide us?
How will she make
the kingdom stronger?
We are a small kingdom amongst
great states, Your Royal Highness.
And it's a dangerous world.
Listen, boy.
- Taking you up, Master Phineus.
- Good.
I want to see you and the kingdom safe.
All right, Father,
on one condition.
Let the invitations go to everyone,
not just the nobility.
The wars have brought sorrow on us all.
What do you think?
Would that please the people?
It's beyond my wit, Your Majesty.
But I wouldn't mind a bit of a jolly.
I think we might have made a bargain.
A ball for the people,
and a princess for the prince.
Sounds like a step in the right direction,
if you ask...
We didn't ask you.
I'm so sorry.
Naughty paint, naughty brush.
Down, please, Samson.
Haven't even got a cushion.
Right, down, down. Not that...
Oi! I'm on the ground.
I am literally on the ground. Sorry.
Actually this is
a very good angle for you.
Great nostrils.
Could I have a longer brush?
You don't look well, miss.
Not at all.
Why do you stay there,
when they treat you so?
Because I made my mother
and father a promise
to cherish the place we were so happy.
They loved our house
and now that they're gone,
I love it for them.
It's my home.
Hear ye! Hear ye!
Quiet!
"Know,
"on this day, two weeks hence,
"there shall be held, at the palace,
"a Royal Ball.
"At said ball,
"in accordance with ancient custom,
"the prince shall choose a bride.
"Furthermore,
"at the behest of the prince,
"it is hereby declared
that every maiden in the kingdom,
"be she noble or commoner,
"is invited to attend.
"Such is the command
of our most noble king."
Excuse me, madam.
Ella was enormously excited
to see Kit, the apprentice.
And her stepsisters
were mildly intrigued
by the notion of meeting the prince.
I shall trick him into loving me.
See if I don't!
This is the most hugest news!
Calm yourselves.
Now listen to me.
One of you must win
the heart of the prince.
Do that, and we can unwind the debt
in which we were ensnared
when we came to this backwater!
I, a princess?
Or rather, I,
a princess?
Having delivered your news,
why are you still here?
You must return to town right away
and tell that seamstress
to run us up three fine ball gowns.
Three?
That's very thoughtful of you.
What do you mean?
To think of me.
Think of you?
Mummy, she believes
the other dress is for her.
Poor, slow, little Cinders.
How embarrassing.
You're too ambitious for your own good.
No. I only want to see my friend.
Let me be very clear.
One gown for Anastasia,
one for Drisella,
and one for me!
She doesn't know what that means.
Good. Right. That's settled then.
Now go!
Every girl in the kingdom
will be chasing the prince.
You must get there first before
the seamstress is drowning in work!
Tell me what she said, Drisella.
I speak French, not Italian!
Wake up, Your Royal Highness.
You're in a daze.
I'm sorry.
You've been off since the hunt.
It's that wonderful girl.
I can't stop thinking about her.
But there are plenty of girls.
But her spirit, her goodness...
You don't suppose
she has a sister, do you?
I don't know.
I don't know anything about her.
Perhaps your mystery girl
may come to the ball.
That is why you threw
the doors open, is it not?
Captain.
It was for the benefit of the people.
Of course. How shallow of me.
And if she comes, then what?
Then you will tell her you're a prince.
And a prince may take whichever bride he wishes.
- Ha!
- Ha?
Yes, "ha."
You know my father and the Grand Duke will only have me marry a princess. Well, if this girl from the forest is as charming as you say, they may change their minds.
The day of the ball arrived and the entire kingdom held its breath in anticipation.
You want me to be your queen?
Who? Me?
Tighter.
Tighter!
Tighter.
That's it!
A vision, sister.
Likewise.
We must compete for the prince's hand. But let it not mean we harbor dark thoughts against each other.
Of course not, dear sister.
I wouldn't dream of poisoning you before we leave for the ball. Nor I of pushing you from a moving carriage on the way there. Or I of dashing your brains out on the palace steps as we arrive. We are sisters, after all. And blood is so much thicker than water.
We shall let the prince decide. What will he be like, I wonder? What does it matter what he's like? He's rich beyond reason. Wouldn't you like to know a bit about him before you marry him? Certainly not. It might change my mind. I bet you have never ever spoken to a man.
Have you, moon-face?
I have, once.
To a gentleman.
Some menial, no doubt.
Some 'prentice.
He was an apprentice, yes.
All men are fools,
that's what Mama says.
The sooner you learn that, the better.
The first dance, milady?
Prince Charming, you're so naughty!
- I want to try it.
- No, I'm wearing it.
No! No!
Not for the first time,
Ella actually felt pity
for these two schemers,
who could be every bit as ugly within
as they were fair without.
My prince!
He will love me!
But I will be his queen!
If her stepmother
would not have a fourth dress made,
it seemed to Ella
that there was no reason why
she would not try to run it up herself.
And besides, she did have a little help.
My dear girls.
To see you like this,
it makes me believe
one of you might just snap the prince.
And to think
I have two horses in the race!
I daresay no one in the kingdom
will outshine my daughters.
Cinderella?
It cost you nothing.
It was my mother's old dress, you see.
And I took it up myself.
Cinderella at the ball!
No one wants a servant for a bride.
After all I've done...
I don't want to ruin anything.
I don't even want to meet the prince. 
And you won't, because 
there's no question of your going. 
But, all of the maidens 
of the land are invited, 
by order of the king. 
It is the king I am thinking of. 
It would be an insult 
to the royal personage 
to take you to the palace 
dressed in these old rags. 
Rags?
This was my mother's. 
I'm sorry to have to tell you 
but your mother's taste 
was questionable. 
This thing is so old-fashioned 
it's practically falling to pieces. 
The shoulder's frayed. 
- It's falling to bits. 
- And this! 
It's a ridiculous, old-fashioned joke! 
How could you? 
How could I otherwise?
I will not have anyone 
associate my daughters with you. 
It would ruin their prospects 
to be seen arriving 
with a ragged servant girl. 
Because that is what you are. 
And that is what you will always be. 
Now mark my words!
You shall not go to the ball! 
Go on, get going! 
I'm sorry, Mother. 
I'm sorry.
I said I'd have courage, but I don't. 
Not anymore. 
I don't believe anymore. 
Excuse me. 
Can you help me, miss? 
Just a little crust of bread, 
or better, a cup of milk? 
Yes.
Yes, yes, yes.
I think I can find something for you.
Why are you crying?
It's nothing.
Nothing?
Nothing.
What is a bowl of milk? Nothing.
But kindness makes it everything.
Now, I don't mean to hurry you,
but you really haven't got long, Ella.
How do you know me?
Who are you?
Who am I?
I should think
you'd have worked that one out.
I'm your hairy dogfather.
I mean, fairy godmother!
You can't be.
Why not?
They don't exist.
They're just made up for children.
 Didn't your own mother
believe in them?
Don't say no, because I heard her.
You heard her?
Fiddle-faddle, fiddle-faddle.
Right! First things first.
Let me slip into something
more comfortable.
That's better.
Now, where was I?
How did you...
Yes. Let's see.
What we need is something
that sort of says, "coach."
That trough?
Doesn't really say "coach."
No, no, I'm liking fruit and veg.
Do you grow watermelons?
No.
Cantaloupe?
I don't even know what that is.
Artichoke?
Kumquat?
Beef tomato?
We do have pumpkins.
Pumpkins?
This will be a first for me.
Always interesting.
I don't usually work with squashes.
Too mushy.
Let me see. That'll do. Yes. Knife?
- There you are.
- Thank you, darling.
Hello, my strangely orange vegetable friend.
A quick snip for you.
Lovely!
Heavy pumpkin!
Look out, mices!
Well. Never mind.
Let's do it here.
Do what here?
Turn the pumpkin into a carriage.
You're making me nervous, actually.
- Shall I shut my eyes?
- It might be better.
For heaven's sake. Let's just go for it.
Well, something's definitely happening.
You see, the trick is...
Actually, I've forgotten what the trick is.
I just thought, if it...
If it does get much bigger...
Yes?
Hang on.
Is that what you meant to do?
Do you think that's what I meant to do?
Run! Run, darling!
Take cover!
There! One carriage.
You really are my fairy godmother.
Of course.
I don't go about transforming pumpkins for just anybody.
Now, where are those mice?
- Mice?
- Yes.
Mice, mice, mice.
There they are.
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo!
Four white chargers.
Gus-Gus, how fine you look!
But how did you...
Now, where are we?
Got carriage, horses... Footmen!
Footmen?
Hello, lovely Mr. Lizard.
Bibbidi-bobbidi-boo!
Hello!
You called?
Now, I need that coachman.
Coachman?
Did I say "coachman"? I meant "goose."
I can't drive. I'm a goose.
Now, shoo!
Everyone into place, no time to be lost!
Come on!
Fairy Godmother!
Yes, what?
My dress.
I can't go in this dress.
- Can you mend it?
- Mend it?
No, no. I'll turn it into something new.
No, please don't.
This was my mother's.
And I'd like to wear it
when I go to the palace.
It's almost like taking her with me.
I understand.
But she wouldn't mind
if I gee it up a bit?
Wouldn't mind a nice blue?
No.
There.
It's beautiful.
She'd love it.
Now, come on. Off you go. Quick!
You'll be late!
I'm very new at this!
Oh, boy.
Stop that blooming coach!
Thank you.
Just a moment!
Are those the best you have?
It's all right. No one will see them.
No, they'll ruin the whole look.
Quick, quick.
Take them off. Really quite hideous.
Let's have something new for a change.
I'm rather good at shoes.
But...
They're made of glass?
Yes.
And you'll find
they're really comfortable.
Ella, you really must go now.
Fairy Godmother?
What is it?
My stepmother and the girls?
Don't worry.
I'll make sure they don't recognize you.
Now, off you go.
For you shall go to the ball.
In you get. So lovely.
Do stop wittering on.
Ella!
I almost forgot.
Remember, the magic
will only last so long.
With the last echo of the last bell,
at the last stroke of midnight,
the spell will be broken
and all will return to what it was before.
Midnight?
Midnight.
That's more than enough time.
- Off you go then.
- Thank you.
Thank you.
Goosey, go!
Goodbye!
Chandeliers, aloft!
Princess Mei Mei of Fujian.
Princess Shahrzad of the Seljuqs.
Your Highness!
Princess Chelina of Zaragosa!
Princess Imani of Shona!
Princess Hiina
of the Chrysanthemum Throne!
Lady Tremaine and her daughters.
The Lady Tremaine and her daughters.
I'm Drisella.
And I'm Anastasia.
- People will want to know.
- I'm the clever one.
I'm very beautiful.
The very clever Miss Drisella,
and the very beautiful Anastasia.
Do come on!
The Lord Veneering.
Who are you looking for?
No one.
It's that girl in the forest, isn't it?
That's why you were so generous
with the invitations.
Father, it was for the people.
I know you love the people, Kit.
But I also know
that your head's been turned.
But you've only met her once,
in the forest.
And you would have me
marry someone I met once, tonight.
A princess.
It's a princess or nothing.
Hold the doors! One more coming in.
May I present Her Royal Highness,
the Princess Chelina of Zaragosa.
You are as handsome as your picture.
And your little kingdom is enchanting.
I hope the princess will not find
our "little kingdom" too confining.
Miss Ella.
Thank you.
I'm frightened, Mr. Lizard.
I'm only a girl, not a princess.
And I'm only a lizard, not a footman.
Enjoy it while it lasts.
Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness,
My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, distinguished visitors and people of our land, the prince shall now choose his partner for the first dance. Let our ball commence!

Excuse me.
A thousand apologies, Your Royal Highness. I don't know what happened.

Mr. Kit. It's you, isn't it? Just so. Your Highness...
If I may, that is, it would give me the greatest pleasure, if you would do me the honor of letting me lead you through this... the first... Dance?
Yes, dance. That's it. They're all looking at you. Believe me, they're all looking at you.

Who is she? I have no idea. Who's that, Mama? I'm not exactly sure, but this does not bode well. That's a lovely dress she's got on. - And how pretty she is. - Concentrate!
You must turn the prince's head, you fools! Now, get out there! But no one's asked us to dance.

Over there. Smile.
So, you're the prince!
Not "the prince," exactly.
There are plenty of princes in the world.
I'm only a prince.
But your name's not really Kit.
Certainly it is,
and my father still calls me that,
when he's especially un-peeved at me.
But you're no apprentice.
I am. An apprentice monarch.
Still learning my trade.
Oh, gosh!
Look, please forgive me.
I thought you might treat me
differently if you knew.
I mistook you
for a good, honest country girl,
and now I see you didn't want
to overawe a plain soldier.
Little chance of that.
No more surprises?
No more surprises.
Is that you?
I hate myself in paintings. Don't you?
No one's ever painted my portrait.
No? Well, they should.
Who is she?
She gave no name, Your Grace.
You didn't ask?
I was out of breath, Your Grace,
on account of introducing
Princess Blodwyn
of Llanfairpwllgwyngyll...
- Shut up, will you?
- "Shut up." Absolutely.
I don't believe this!
No! Not her!
Won't they miss you at the ball?
Maybe.
But let's not go back just yet.
What's wrong?
When I go back,
they will try to pair me off
with a lady of their choosing.
I'm expected to marry for advantage.
Well, whose advantage?
That is a good question.
Well, surely you have a right
to your own heart.
And I must weigh that
against the king's wishes.
He's a wise ruler and a loving father.
Well, perhaps he'll change his mind.
I fear he hasn't much time to do so.
Poor Kit.
People are saying she's a princess.
Our prince seems quite taken with her.
She went straight for him.
You have to appreciate her efficiency.
But surely, if she is a princess,
this may be good.
I've already promised him in marriage,
to the Princess Chelina.
But...
Forgive me, Your Grace.
I did not mean to intrude.
No, it's you who have
to forgive me, madam.
Your secret is safe with me.
I've never shown this place to anyone.
A secret garden.
I love it!
Please.
No, I shouldn't.
You should.
- I shouldn't.
- You should.
I will.
May I?
Please.
It's made of glass.
And why not?
Allow me.
Thank you.
There.
There.
Won't you tell me who you really are?
If I do, I think
everything might be different.
I don't understand.
Can you at least tell me your name?
My name is...
I have to leave.
It's hard to explain.
Lizards and pumpkins, and things.
Wait!
Where are you going?
You've been awfully nice.
Thank you for a wonderful evening.
I've loved it.
Every second!
"Lizards and pumpkins."
Excuse me.
Sorry! Terribly sorry.
My goodness!
My prince!
You've got the wrong one!
He needs her name!
I know he needs her name.
Her name, you ninny. Get her name!
That really hurt!
Your Majesty.
Young lady.
I am so sorry.
Think nothing of it, my dear.
I wanted to say, Your Majesty,
your son Kit
is the most lovely person I ever met.
So good and brave.
I hope you know
how much he loves you.
Excuse me!
Wait!
Wait!
Where are you going?
Hurry, hurry!
Come back!
Hurry!
Hurry, please, Mr. Goose!
Wait!
Watch out!
Captain, my horse.
No!
This may be some intrigue
to lure you from the palace.
Your father needs you here.
Captain!
I was having a fine old time.
You had to go and choose that one,
didn't you?
Yes, I did.
Hurry, Mr. Goose!
Come on!
Hee-ya!
Be careful, Mr. Goose!
Oh, my goodness!
You there! Stop in the name of the king!
Such bad timing.
Halt there!
I know what to do!
Yes!
Get this thing open!
Oh, dear!
No, no, no.
I'm sorry.
You'll find it's very comfortable.
Do shut up!
Cinderella!
Cinderella! We'll have to wake her up.
Cinderella!
Wake up, lazy bones!
Tea and a plate of biscuits.
Welcome back!
- You look cheerful!
- And wet!
I took a walk in the rain
to cheer myself up.
Typical.
Tea.
We did not communicate
through mere words.
Our souls met.
Precisely.
My soul and the prince's soul.
Your soul was over
by the banquet tables.
You didn't see him dance with me.
Dance with you?
He didn't even speak to you.
It was not our fault, Mother.
It was that girl.
The mystery princess.
Mystery princess?
My, what a charming notion.
She was no princess.
She was a preening interloper
who made a spectacle of herself.
A vulgar, young hussy
marched into the ball,
unaccompanied, if you will,
and to the horror of everyone,
threw herself at the prince.
And he actually danced
with the ugly thing.
- Yes?
- Yes.
It was pity.
He was too polite to send her packing
in front of everyone, you see.
But not wanting to expose us
to the presumptuous wench any further,
- he took her apart.
- And told her off.
But she refused to leave
and the palace guards
chased her from the party!
I pity the prince. Such bad taste.
They belong with each other.
Well, it's no matter, girls.
The ball was a mere diversion.
The prince is not free to marry for love.
He's promised to the
Princess Chelina of Zaragosa.
The Grand Duke told me himself.
It's so very unfair.
Yes.
The way of the world.
Hello again.
Thank you for your help.
It really was like a dream.
Better than a dream.
Ella couldn't wait to write down
all that had happened,
so that she might remember
every single bit of it
just as if she were telling
her mother and father
about the palace ball
and her time with the prince.
Above all, the prince.
You've come.
Good.
Father.
Don't go.
I must.
You needn't be alone.
Take a bride.
The Princess Chelina.
What if I commanded you to do so?
I love and respect you, but I will not.
I believe that we need not
look outside of our borders
for strength or guidance.
What we need is right before us.
And we need only have courage
and be kind to see it.
Just so.
You've become your own man.
Good.
And perhaps, in the little time left to me,
I can become the father you deserve.
You must not marry for advantage.
You must marry for love.
Find that girl.
Find her.
The one they're all talking about.
The forgetful one
- who loses her shoes.
- ...loses her shoes.
Be cheerful, boy.
Thank you, Father.
Thank you, Kit.
I love you, son.
I love you, Father.
Once the time for mourning
had passed,
a proclamation was sent out.
Hear ye! Hear ye!
Hear ye!
Know that our new king
hereby declares his love for
the mysterious princess
as wore
glass slippers to the ball.
And requests that she present herself
at the palace,
whereupon, if she be willing,
he will forthwith marry her
with all due ceremony.
Are you looking for this?
There must be quite a story to go with it.
Won't you tell me?
No?
All right then.
I shall tell you a story.
Once upon a time,
there was a beautiful young girl
who married for love.
And she had two loving daughters.
All was well.
But, one day, her husband,
the light of her life, died.
The next time,
she married for the sake
of her daughters.
But that man, too, was taken from her.
And she was doomed to look
every day upon his beloved child.
She had hoped to marry off
one of her beautiful,
stupid daughters to the prince.
But his head was turned
by a girl with glass slippers.
And so,
I lived unhappily ever after.
My story would appear to be ended.
Now, tell me yours.
Did you steal it?
No.
It was given to me.
Given to you?
Given to you. Nothing is ever given.
For everything, we must pay and pay.
That's not true.
Kindness is free. Love is free.
Love is not free.
Now, here is how you will pay me,
if you are to have what you desire.
No one will believe you,
a dirty servant girl without a family,
if you lay claim to the prince's heart.
But with a respectable gentlewoman
to put you forward,
you will not be ignored.
When you are married,
you will make me
the head of the royal household.
Anastasia and Drisella
we will pair off with wealthy lords.
And I shall manage that boy.
But he's not a boy.
And who are you?
How would you rule a kingdom?
Best to leave it to me.
That way we all get what we want.
No.
No?
I was not able to protect
my father from you,
but I will protect the prince
and the kingdom,
no matter what becomes of me.
Well, that is a mistake.
No!
Why?
Why are you so cruel?
I don't understand it.
I've tried to be kind to you.
You? Kind to me?
Yes.
And though no one
deserves to be treated
as you have treated me.
Why do you do it?
Why?
Because you are young,
and innocent, and good.
And I...
No!
May I ask where you got this?
From a ragged servant girl
in my household.
The mystery princess is a commoner.
You could imagine when I discovered
her subterfuge how horrified I was.
You told no one else?
Not even my own daughters.
No one need ever know the truth.
You've spared the kingdom
a great deal of embarrassment.
And I should like to keep it that way.
Are you threatening me?
Yes.
So what do you want?
I should like to be a countess.
And I require advantageous marriages
for my two daughters.
Done.
And the girl?
Do with her what you will.
She's nothing to me.
- Where?
- Abandoned on the side of the road.
- And have you found her?
- The girl?
No, she's disappeared.
There must be some reason
she vanished.
Perhaps she has been prevented
from speaking.
Do not lose heart, Kit.
On the contrary,
lose heart and gain wisdom.
The people need to know
that the kingdom is secure.
That the king has a queen,
and the land may have an heir.
They want to face the future
with certainty!
Agreed! Then let us be certain.
I am king.
I say we shall seek out
the mystery princess,
even if she does not want to be found.
I have to see her again.
But if she's not found,
then for the good of the kingdom,
you must marry the Princess Chelina.
For the good of the kingdom.
Very well, agreed.
But Your Highness...
But you will spare no effort.
Your Majesty, of course.
You have my word.
Next.
The slipper traveled
the length and breadth of the kingdom,
visiting every maiden
both high and low,
and every sort in between.
Oh, Lord!
You first, madam.
Well, I'll give it a go.
Right. I say. Where do you want me?
Up! Up I go.
Careful, my foot's a bit swollen.
I've been...
It's the yeast.
The Grand Duke was true to his word.
He spared no effort
to demonstrate to the prince
that the mystery princess
was not to be found.
It fits!
- It doesn't fit you.
- It does fit!
- It doesn't fit.
- It's mine!
- I am the mystery princess!
- Give back the shoe.
Take the shoe away from her!
Don't take the shoe away from me,
please, please!
Please, it's my shoe!
Make way for the slipper!
Can I try the other foot?
I don't think so.
But whatever they tried,
the magical slipper refused to fit
even the most eligible of maidens.
We found the mystery princess for ya!
What's wrong, Captain?
We haven't found the girl.
I'm disappointed for our king.
Come on, now! Don't lose heart.
There's one more house.
We must leave no stone unturned.
- Horses!
- Horses!
Mother, it's our chance!
Let them in!
Gentlemen! What a wonderful surprise.
A moment of your time, good lady.
Of course, Your Grace.
Please. This way.
Ella did not know who was downstairs.
Nor did she care.
For surely no one had come to see her.
Jacqueline, stop it!
It shrunk.
Try again.
Enough!
You must love me...
Though Ella was sad,
her spirit was not broken.
She knew that the ball,
and her time with the prince,
would become
beautiful, distant memories,
like those of her father and mother,
and her golden childhood.
It fits me!
Bad luck, miss.
Lavender's green
dilly, dilly
Lavender's blue
You must love me
dilly, dilly
For I love you
Very well.
Our task is done, Captain.
But fate may yet be kind to us, girls.
Indeed, madam!
When I am king
dilly, dilly
You shall be queen
Lavender's green
dilly, dilly
Lavender's blue
If you love me
Dilly, dilly
I will love you
Let the birds sing
dilly, dilly
And the lambs play
We shall be safe
dilly, dilly...
Do you hear that, Your Grace?
Let's be off, Captain.
Just a moment.
Madam,
there is no other maiden in your house?
None.
Then has your cat learned to sing?
There's been enough play-acting today,
Captain. Let's be off.
But she's lying, Your Grace.
Nonsense! I trust the lady.
We're leaving.
Grand Duke!
Your Majesty.
What sweet singing.
Makes me want to tarry just a little.
Your Majesty, I did not know...
Captain, would you be so kind
as to investigate?
It would be my pleasure, Your Majesty.
If you love me
dilly, dilly
I will love you
There! You see?
I told you
it was no one of any importance.
We'll see about that.
Miss.
You are requested and required
to present yourself to your king.
I forbid you to do this!
And I forbid you to forbid her!
Who are you to stop
an officer of the king?
Are you an empress?
A saint?
A deity?
I am her mother.
You have never been
and you never will be my mother.
Come now, miss.
Just remember who you are,
you wretch!
Would who she was,
who she really was, be enough?
There was no magic
to help her this time.
This is perhaps the greatest risk
that any of us will take.
To be seen as we truly are.
Have courage, and be kind.
Who are you?
I am Cinderella.
Your Majesty,
I'm no princess.
I have no carriage,
no parents,
and no dowry.
I do not even know
if that beautiful slipper will fit.
But
if it does,
will you take me as I am?
An honest country girl who loves you.
Of course I will.
But only if you will take me as I am.
An apprentice still learning his trade.
Please.
Cinderella!
Ella!
My dear sister! I'm sorry.
So very sorry.
Shall we?
I forgive you.
Forgiven or not,
Cinderella's stepmother
and her daughters
would soon leave with the Grand Duke,
and never set foot
in the kingdom again.
They would have loved each other.
We must have a portrait of you painted.
No. I do hate myself in paintings.
Be kind.
And have courage.
And all will be well.
Are you ready?
For anything, so long as it's with you.
My queen.
My Kit.
And so Kit and Ella were married,
and I can tell you,
as her fairy godmother,
that they were counted to be
the fairest and kindest rulers
the kingdom had known.
And Ella continued to see
the world not as it is,
but as it could be,
if only you believe in courage
and kindness and occasionally,
just a little bit of magic.
Where did everyone go?