

CINDERELLA'S LAST STAND

by Jon Jory

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ISBN: 978-1-64479-190-5

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CINDERELLA'S LAST STAND

A Comedic One Act

by Jon Jory

SYNOPSIS: A testament to the power of the backstage crew and an empowered heroine! This rollicking gallop through a high school production of *Cinderella* takes on new life when a crisis allows the Stage Manager to save the day. Clever dialogue, tons of physical action, great character roles, accommodates a large cast. Your audience will laugh out loud!

DURATION: 45 minutes.

SETTING: School stage.

TIME: Present day.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 females, 3 males, 5 either gender)

MADGE (f)..... Cinderella's stepsister. *(43 lines)*
 DIANE (f)..... Cinderella's stepsister. *(32 lines)*
 LOLO (f)..... Stage manager. *(169 lines)*
 MOUSE 1 (f)..... *(9 lines)*
 MOUSE 2 (m/f) *(2 lines)*
 MOUSE 3 (m/f) *(1 line)*
 DANCER 1 (f)..... *(5 lines)*
 DANCER 2 (m/f)..... *(2 lines)*
 PRINCE (m)..... *(46 lines)*
 STEPMOTHER (f) *(28 lines)*
 MISS THORNTON (f) Director. *(128 lines)*
 HENRY (m)..... Assistant to the Director. *(57 lines)*
 FAIRY GODMOTHER (f) *(24 lines)*
 BOBBY LEE (m)..... Costume Designer. *(11 lines)*
 AUDIENCE MEMBER (m/f)..... *(15 lines)*
 CINDERELLA (f)..... *(13 lines)*
 STAGEHAND'S VOICE (m/f) *(2 lines)*

SET: None, only furniture.

COSTUMES: Contemporary with pieces.

PROPS

- Makeup/Beauty items
- Bullhorn
- Piece of paper
- Mt. Dew bottle
- Flashlights for whole cast
- Colorful running shoe

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AT START: *An empty stage. Actresses MADGE and DIANE are at makeup tables facing out to us. During the scene they continue making up. LOLO, the stage manager passes behind them.*

MADGE: Okay, Diane, I want an absolutely honest opinion...

DIANE: I can't be counted on for an honest opinion.

MADGE: No, really.

DIANE: Really. People say they want honest opinions, but trust me, they don't want honest opinions. When anybody says they want an honest opinion, they're really just desperate for a compliment.

MADGE: I am not doing that.

DIANE: Yeah, yeah.

LOLO passes upstage of MADGE and DIANE and keeps walking as she's talking.

LOLO: Fifteen minutes, ugly stepsisters.

MADGE: Nice of her to holler it out like that.

DIANE: So what's the question?

MADGE: Am I unattractive enough for a stepsister?

DIANE: You mean generally?

MADGE: No, I don't mean generally, I mean the makeup.

DIANE: *(Looks at her.)* No.

MADGE: What?!

DIANE: You need moles, maybe black out some teeth, wear an eye patch or something.

MADGE: I'm not a zombie.

DIANE: You need moles.

MADGE: I have one here.

DIANE: Multiple moles. All you've done is your usual beauty makeup with one lousy mole.

MADGE: I'm walking a fine line here, Diane. I can't really look ugly because someone will post it and my followers will hate it. I want to look as if I did an ugly stepsister makeup, but my extraordinary natural beauty shines through.

DIANE: Well, that seems... logical... or something.

LOLO passes the other way.

LOLO: Seven and a half minutes to places.

MADGE: I mean what's the deal with Miss Thornton casting us as "ugly stepsisters" anyway? I mean, first of all it's demeaning to stepsisters generally because I have a friend who has a stepsister and says she's perfectly nice she just happens to be messy.

DIANE: Miss Thornton cast you because you're a good actress.

MADGE: Well, I am a pretty sensational actress. *(Brief pause.)* Tell me I'm a sensational actress.

DIANE: You're a sensational actress.

MADGE: Tell me again.

DIANE: The stepsisters are acting roles whereas Cinderella just has to be cute.

MADGE: So, being cast as an "ugly stepsister" is actually an affirmation, while being cast as Cinderella is a punishment for lacking talent. Of course no one in their right mind would believe that.

LOLO enters the dressing room.

LOLO: Hey, have you guys seen Cinderella?

MADGE: Why?

LOLO: We can't find her.

MADGE: She was throwing up in the green room a half hour ago.

LOLO: What?

MADGE: All over Prince Charming actually.

LOLO: So she was sick?

MADGE: No, she was throwing up for the fun of it.

LOLO: *(Loudly.)* Company meeting onstage immediately!

Stagehands rush on and strike the makeup tables and two chairs. At the same time, COMPANY MEMBERS in the last stages of getting ready pour out on the stage.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: What's happening?

STEPMOTHER: Was it an earthquake? Did anyone feel an earthquake?

DANCER 1 and DANCER 2: We'll never be ready for the ball scene!

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Somebody said the theatre was on fire.

MADGE: Who said that?

PRINCE: I think I have to lie down. *(He does.)*

STEPMOTHER: If the theatre's on fire, why are we having a meeting in the theatre?

LOLO: Everybody calm down.

MOUSE 1: Is this a warm-up? Are we doing a warm-up?

MOUSE 2: The mouse warm-up is in the rehearsal room.

MISS THORNTON enters with her assistant, HENRY. HENRY carries a bullhorn.

MISS THORNTON: Give me my bullhorn, Henry.

HENRY: *(As he gives MISS THORNTON the bullhorn.)* Yes, Miss Thornton.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Is this a drill of some kind?

DANCER 1 and DANCER 2: Is it a pep talk?

STEPMOTHER: You are interrupting my slow breathing.

MISS THORNTON: Artists of the theatre!

PRINCE: I think my eardrum is pierced.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: What is it, I'm practically naked.

MISS THORNTON: *(Still striving for quiet.)* Lay it on them, Henry.

HENRY: Quiet!!

MISS THORNTON: Well done, Henry.

HENRY: Thank you, Miss Thornton.

LOLO: We're almost all here, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: Who exactly are you?

LOLO: I'm Lolo, your stage manager.

MISS THORNTON: I thought Lolo was my stage manager.

STEPMOTHER: She is Lolo.

MISS THORNTON: Who's Lolo?

HENRY: She's your stage manager.

MISS THORNTON: I thought Lolo was my stage manager.

ALL: She is Lolo!

STEPMOTHER: The play.

MISS THORNTON: What did I change it to?

ALL: *Cinderella!*

MISS THORNTON: Did I? Oh, is it good? Does it shimmer?

ALL: It shimmers, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: Yes, *Grease* speaks to all of us.

LOLO: You've done a really boffo job with *Cinderella*.

MISS THORNTON: Ah *Cinderella*! The greatest of all fairy tales. The story of the young girl who grows her lovely hair so long that an adorable Prince climbs up her hair to the third story of a dreadful turret to claim her love.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: That's *Rapunzel*, Miss Thornton...

STEPMOTHER: You're doing...

ALL: *Cinderella*!

MISS THORNTON: Of course I'm doing *Cinderella*. Have you lost your mind? Every young girl dreams of growing up to be...

HENRY: *Cinderella*.

MISS THORNTON: It's aspirational.

MADGE: I didn't.

MISS THORNTON: Don't mess with me, Miss Snippy.

MADGE: Sorry.

MISS THORNTON: Hand me my notes, Henry.

HENRY: Right here. (*Gives them to her.*)

MISS THORNTON: (*Dramatically.*) A ham sandwich on rye, hold the mayo.

HENRY: Other side, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: What?

HENRY: That's your lunch order.

MISS THORNTON turns the paper over and reads dramatically...

MISS THORNTON: It has been my dream to direct *Cinderella* for over fifty years here at... whatever high school this is with all my heart. (*Puts her hand over the right side of her chest.*)

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Your heart's on the left side, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: I'm not speaking medically, Miss Priss, I am speaking metaphorically. Metaphorically my heart can be wherever I want it to be and metaphorically I'm feeling it today on my right side.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: I thought a metaphor was one thing representative of another thing.

MISS THORNTON: What's your point, Miss Snooty?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: I'm asking that if you metaphorically feel your heart on the right side, where no heart exists, what is that symbolic of?

MISS THORNTON: It's symbolic of me whacking you upside the head, snittypoo!

HENRY: *(To MISS THORNTON.)* Easy, Daphne.

MISS THORNTON: Which I would never do... except metaphorically. So, in conclusion... *(To HENRY.)* What's my conclusion?

HENRY: Cinderella.

MISS THORNTON: What?

HENRY: Cinderella.

MISS THORNTON: What?

HENRY: Cinderella!

MISS THORNTON: Don't shout at me, Henry, I'm not deaf. Why do you keep saying Cinderella?

LOLO: Because she's gone.

MISS THORNTON: Who is?

LOLO and HENRY: Cinderella.

MISS THORNTON: Gone where?

LOLO: We don't know that's the whole point.

MISS THORNTON: Oh, I see!

MISS THORNTON and HENRY: Cinderella's gone.

LOLO: Exactly.

MISS THORNTON: Well, why didn't you tell me?

LOLO: Maybe I'm in an asylum.

MISS THORNTON: What?

LOLO: Nothing!

MISS THORNTON: There's no need to shout, Lulu. Shouting is the most despicable ageism.

LOLO: But you said you couldn't hear me?

MISS THORNTON: That was a metaphor.

LOLO: Kill me now.

MISS THORNTON: *(To ALL.)* Dearest theatre nerds! We have what we call in our profession... *(To HENRY.)* What do we call it in the profession?

HENRY: A situation.

MISS THORNTON: I can't hear you.

HENRY: A situation.

MISS THORNTON: Use your consonants.

HENRY: A sit-u-a-tion.

MISS THORNTON: We do. (*To ALL.*) That's exactly what we have!
Now I've forgotten what we have.

ALL: A situation?

MISS THORNTON: How did you guess?

HENRY: (*Exiting.*) I think I have to get a diet cola.

MADGE: We only have five minutes, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: Five minutes until what?

DIANE: Our performance.

MISS THORNTON: The audience is in the house?

MADGE: Just sitting in the house.

MISS THORNTON: They can't already be in the house.

DIANE: But look...

MADGE: They're sitting right there.

MISS THORNTON: Sitting there? Just sitting there?

HENRY: (*Enters with Mt. Dew.*) I brought you a Mountain Dew, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: Have you no knowledge of the theatre? You know not that an audience "just sitting there" is like a pride of lions, crouched, their tails whipping back and forth and back... (*Looks at HENRY.*)

HENRY: Forth.

MISS THORNTON: ... where was I?

HENRY: The audience is a crouching lion.

MISS THORNTON: That's rather good.

HENRY: An untamed, unmanageable, brutish beast, saliva dripping from its scabrous jaws, gnashing its razor sharp teeth, ready in an instant to rip us apart, blood pouring from the stumps that were once arms and legs, tearing out our very hearts and eating our eyeballs as if they were hors d'oeuvres!! (*Sweetly.*) And we love them soooooo much! They are our life's blood, our little tootsie-wootsies, our dear companions on the rough seas of art... our dear, dear, lovely audience.

MISS THORNTON: That was really very, nicely done, Henry.

HENRY: It's something I feel deeply.

MISS THORNTON: Of course you do.

HENRY: (*Suddenly raging.*) Until they strike and strike again like cold blooded cobras or fear maddened rabid weasels!!

LOLO: Okay, put a cork in it, Henry.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Excuse me, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: Yes, Fairy Godmother?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: I don't think you've put your finger on the problem.

MISS THORNTON: I told you the problem very clearly.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: You actually left that part out, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: The problem is actually the problem that is problematic and is thus a problem.

ALL: There is no Cinderella!

MISS THORNTON: Well, where is she?

MADGE: She was throwing up inside—

DIANE: And now she's probably throwing up outside.

MISS THORNTON: Well, go get the little twit!

LOLO: We can't find her.

MISS THORNTON: The play must go on.

MADGE: I'll do it.

DANCER 1: No, I'll do it.

STEPMOTHER: I should do it.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Actually I'm the one who should do it.

MISS THORNTON: Do what?

MADGE, DANCER 1, STEPMOTHER, and FAIRY GODMOTHER:
Play Cinderella.

MISS THORNTON: (*Delighted.*) There you are, problem solved. Dear little Madge will play Cinderella.

LOLO: She's a stepsister.

STEPMOTHER: I could play the stepsister.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: And I could play the stepmother.

LOLO: No way! No, no. Huh-uh. Absolutely not!

MISS THORNTON: But why not?

HENRY: You can't replace Cinderella with the stepsister, and the stepmother with the Fairy Godmother and then replace the Fairy Godmother...

LOLO: Because pretty soon we would have an entire cast who don't know what they are doing.

MISS THORNTON: And who are you again, Lulu?

LOLO: I'm Lolo the stage manager, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: You can't be the stage manager. Lulu is the stage manager.

LOLO: You keep calling me Lulu, but I'm Lolo.

MISS THORNTON: You mean you're in disguise?

HENRY: Actually, Miss Thornton...

BOBBY LEE, the costume designer, enters rushing on in a panic.

BOBBY LEE: No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

MISS THORNTON: Who are you?

BOBBY LEE: I'm Bobby Lee Washington Smith, the costume designer, Miss Thornton. If you replace Cinderella, the only other people who could fit in the glass slipper I made are the stepsisters, which completely destroys the plot! Plus, I had to learn glass blowing to make the glass slipper and now my lips have turned purple.

MISS THORNTON: Are you sure it isn't lip gloss?

BOBBY LEE: If I have to make another slipper my lips will probably fall off and I'll be lipless.

MISS THORNTON: We must do what must be done.

BOBBY LEE: *(Running off.)* No, no, no, no, no, no, no. *(Exits.)*

MISS THORNTON: *(Looking after him.)* What a charming young man.

HENRY: We need to concentrate, Miss Thornton.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: I suppose we'll just have to cancel.

MISS THORNTON: Cancel? *(To HENRY.)* Did she say cancel?

HENRY: There's a time to sow and a time to reap, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: *(To FAIRY GODMOTHER.)* Did you dare say, "cancel"?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Kind of.

MISS THORNTON: There is only one commandment in the theatre, the show must go on!

HENRY: I'll play Cinderella.

MISS THORNTON: What, Henry?

HENRY: Because the show must go on. *(Feeling his forehead.)*

MISS THORNTON: You feel very warm, Henry, go lie down in my office and drink chamomile tea.

HENRY: *(Exiting.)* I love chamomile tea.

MISS THORNTON: *(Looks after HENRY sadly and shakes her head.)*
Not everyone can have talent. Ah, well, the show must go on. I don't know why, you don't know why... *(Pointing at the audience.)* They don't know why.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Then why?

MISS THORNTON: Ours is not to reason why. I am Daphne Olivier Thornton and I have played Queen Sarabi in *The Lion King* in a snowstorm in The Sahara Desert. I have triumphed as Sweeney in *Sweeney Todd* at the American Barbers Association. I will not betray my beloved Thespis who is looking down from Olympus and is frowning. Do you hear me? Frowning. The only sensible course is to play Cinderella myself.

ALL: Maybe we should think that over.

MISS THORNTON: It's rather a good idea actually.

BOBBY LEE enters rushing back onstage.

BOBBY LEE: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. *(He reaches MISS THORNTON and shakes a finger in her face saying...)* No, no, no. *(He rushes off saying....)* No, no, no, no, no, no, no. *(Exits.)*

MISS THORNTON: I don't listen to reviews.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: It would be unusual casting.

MISS THORNTON: I will play Cinderella as no one has played her before!

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Well, that's true.

MISS THORNTON: And I'll need a tiara. You can't play Cinderella without a tiara. *(Shouts offstage.)* And a blonde wig!

BOBBY LEE rushes on.

BOBBY LEE: No, no, no, no, no. *(He rushes off.)*

LOLO: Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: What is it, child?

LOLO: You wouldn't fit the costume.

ALL: Uh-oh.

MISS THORNTON: Get it, Lulu, or I will shred you like rotten silk!

LOLO runs off to start fast change.

MOUSE 1: You're a foot taller.

MOUSE 2: A foot wider.

MOUSE 3: And you would look like a deranged tuba.

MISS THORNTON: What?

FAIRY GODMOTHER: You are a remarkable director and a brilliant teacher, with stunning good looks and a long and glorious career.

MISS THORNTON: I know.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: One wouldn't want to sully your shine by risking the ridiculous.

MISS THORNTON: Well, I certainly can't afford to look ridiculous.

ALL: Huh-uh.

MISS THORNTON: I am considered to have been one of the great beauties of Fairfield, Connecticut—and was called, "stunning" and "achingly beautiful" by *The Susquehanna Bugle* as villager-third-from-the-left in *Beauty and the Beast*.

MOUSE 1: Villager-third-from-the-left?

MISS THORNTON: I turned down the leading role because I've never been attracted to beasts.

ALL: So, what's the deal?

MISS THORNTON: (*She raises her hands to the heavens.*) Oh Dionysus, god of the harvest, winemaking, theatre, and ritual madness, who can save our groundbreaking production of *Cinderella* by playing what's-her-name?? (*Points at the CAST.*)

ALL: Oh who?

LOLO: (*Enters dressed as Cinderella.*) I can, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON: And who, in blue blazes, are you?

ALL: She's Lolo, the stage manager.

LOLO: And in case you don't know what a stage manager is...

ALL: Tell her what a stage manager is, Lolo!

LOLO: When the props are on fire, the costumes lost in a tsunami, and the set shipped to the Seychelles Islands, who do you call?

ALL: The stage manager!

LOLO: When Hamlet has been run over by the Mr. Peanut mobile, the lighting system is on fire, and the program has been printed in the obscure dialect of a tribe in the Amazon, who do you call?

ALL: The stage manager!

LOLO: When Cinderella has become irrelevant, a terrible role model, and an insult to the aspirations of every young woman who has a contribution to make and a dream of being relevant in contemporary society, who do you call?

ALL: If only we knew.

LOLO: Plus, I fit in the costume.

Applause and bravos from the CAST.

LOLO: I am ready to rumble!

ALL: Huzzah!

LOLO: But, before you thank me, we need to get a couple of things straight.

MISS THORNTON: *(A tad insulted.)* I beg your pardon?

LOLO: No need to apologize.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: You tell her, Lolo.

LOLO: We must realize that *Cinderella* is completely outdated. Women don't live in fairy tales. You and me, Miss Thornton, we have to drag Cinderella into the twenty-first century and let that child kick some butt!

MADGE: You tell her, sister.

LOLO: This is your moment, Miss Thornton, the moment when you are no longer a museum piece, but an agent of change. A director of the avant-garde.

MISS THORNTON: I am?

ALL: You betcha!

LOLO: You are an innovator...

DIANE: An agitator.

LOLO: A director who drags fairy tales kicking and screaming into the now. Your name will be sewn with golden thread into the robe of Thespis!

BOBBY LEE: *(Rushes out. Stops dead.)* And I'll sew it.

ALL cheer.

BOBBY LEE: Thank you, thank you very much. *(Rushes off.)*

MISS THORNTON: Well, I like the sound of golden thread.

LOLO: Are you ready to grab this moment and produce a new *Cinderella* for a new century?

MISS THORNTON: You mean destiny calls?

ALL: You hoo, Miss Thornton, you hoo!

MISS THORNTON: You hoo, destiny.

LOLO: Cinderella, Miss Thornton, is not a twit in a tiara. She is not a doormat that the stepsisters can wipe their muddy boots on. She is a powerful, masterful woman who sees what she wants and takes it!

Cheering, whistling, and applause from the CAST.

MISS THORNTON: You are getting me really hot.

LOLO: She's a cage fighter, a marathoner, a tri-athlete...

MADGE: Rock it out, Lolo!

LOLO: She's carried to the ball on the shoulders of NFL linemen wearing thongs.

DIANE: Oh yeah!

LOLO: She doesn't need a Prince, she needs a partner, an equal, who is ready to create a brave new world, even if they have to carve it out of stone with their bruised and bloody bare hands!

MISS THORNTON: Bada-boom!

STEPMOTHER: But *Cinderella* is a beloved fairy tale. She comes to birthday parties with Snow White and The Little Mermaid.

DIANE: Yeah maybe, but we can't live in fairy tales where the only way out of a woman's problems is to marry some random Prince.

FAIRY GODMOTHER: Trust me, there aren't enough Princes.

MADGE: Plus, they're all moving to Canada.

LOLO: Let's get some Princesses who run tech companies and become President.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Let's get this show on the road!

DIANE: *(Looking out.)* Wow.

MADGE: Let's get started before they flood the stage and eat us.

MISS THORNTON: Please don't eat me, I'm all gristle.

LOLO: Alright! Everybody sit.

ALL sit on the floor at once including MISS THORNTON.

LOLO: Hi, I'm Lolo Poropopolos.

ALL: Hi, Lolo Poropopolos.

LOLO: You don't know me very well because I just moved here from Athens, Greece. I tried out but originally I was cast as one of the mice who pulled the pumpkin coach and I had only one line which I will say for you now, "Eek, eek." I was told I didn't bring my truth to the role so I became stage manager, the quarterback of play production.

PRINCE: You go, Lolo!

LOLO: But now due to dire necessity, I seem to be Cinderella.

PRINCE: Next day on your dressing room they hang a star, baby.

LOLO: Obviously I don't know Cinderella's lines because I was busy working on, "Eek, eek."

MADGE: We'll improv it.

LOLO: Plus, in case you haven't noticed, I am not some dopey Princess.

MISS THORNTON: *(Rising.)* I feel I should say...

LOLO: *(Firmly, but not meanly.)* Down, Miss Thornton.

MISS THORNTON sits.

LOLO: Thank you. For instance, have you noticed that all three mice who pull the pumpkin got cast as women?

MISS THORNTON: But they have really cute costumes.

LOLO: Right, but women are not mice who pull Princesses around in pumpkins.

MISS THORNTON: But, I must put in a word for the Fairy Godmother, she...

MADGE: We don't need Fairy Godmothers to get what we want.

LOLO: But it's all good, Miss Thornton, you'll like it because I'll be the director and you'll be the one person in theatre more powerful than the director.

MISS THORNTON: *(Excited.)* But who will I be?!

LOLO: The stage manager.

MISS THORNTON: A stage manager is more powerful than a director?

LOLO: Way more. Infinitely more.

STEPMOTHER: Everything a director thinks is actually done behind her back by the stage manager.

MISS THORNTON: So I'd be the power behind the throne?

LOLO: Exactly.

MISS THORNTON: Oh goody. I was born for power. I radiate power! I will be a ray of light and shine upon the multitudes!

LOLO: I feel shined on already. Now here's the production book.

MISS THORNTON: (*Pleased.*) Ooooo, it's heavy.

LOLO: You stand over there, just offstage, and if anything goes wrong, fix it.

MISS THORNTON: Oh, this is glorious fun! I accept my new position and will execute it with delicacy and verve! Oh, I just pray something goes wrong so I can fix it! (*She begins a strange dance. The actors clear.*)

LOLO: Miss Thornton?

MISS THORNTON: Yes, dear?

LOLO: Would you mind going off-stage?

MISS THORNTON: But I'm doing my warm-up.

LOLO: I need a word with the audience.

MISS THORNTON: Oh, I see, a pre-show. I love pre-shows. (*Starts dancing off.*)

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