

Heather Lynn
Adapted from the play by J. M. Barrie

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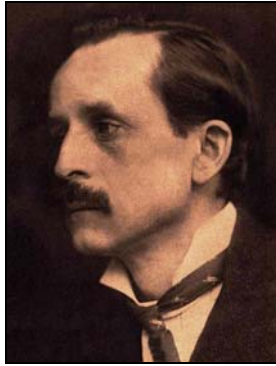
A Kiss for Cinderella
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A Kiss for Cinderella was first performed at the Empire Theater, New York, NY, on Dec. 25, 1916 and starred Maude Adams as Cinderella.

A Kiss for Cinderella

CLASSIC. Adapted from the play by J. M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan and Wendy*. In this retelling of “Cinderella,” Miss Thing, a penniless London girl in WWI London takes in four starving war orphans. She builds the children makeshift beds out of wood planks and shares with them her boiled potatoes and milk. She and the children adore the story of “Cinderella” and dream of attending a ball. One snowy night, Miss Thing falls asleep in her doorway and dreams that she is Cinderella. In her dream, a Red Cross nurse appears as her fairy godmother, a kindly neighborhood policeman is Prince Charming, a cockney King and Queen sit in rocking chair thrones, and everyone celebrates by eating ice-cream cones. Audiences of all ages will delight in this whimsical, charming comedy.

Performance time: Approximately 90 minutes.



J. M. Barrie (1860-1937)

About the Story

J. M. Barrie is a Scottish novelist and playwright who is best known for his 1904 play *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, which he later adapted into a children's novel *Peter and Wendy* (1911). Barrie was ninth of 10 children and his father was a weaver. Barrie was shy and introverted and considered short at just 5'3" tall. As a child, Barrie loved to read books and set his mind to becoming an author, which his family discouraged. Barrie worked as a journalist before publishing his first novel, *Auld Licht Idylls*, in 1888. Before his death in 1937, Barrie had written dozens of novels and plays and had a host of literary friends that included Robert Louis Stevenson, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, and Arthur Conan Doyle.

Characters

(8 M, 23 F, 4 flexible, extras)

(With doubling: 6 M, 19 F, 1 flexible)

MISS JANE THING "CINDERELLA": Kind young woman who works as a servant and cares for four war orphans though she is poor; she adores the story of Cinderella and dreams of attending a ball; wears servant attire and is thin from prolonged hunger; has a sort of refinement in her voice and manner; female.

POLICEMAN/PRINCE HARD-TO-PLEASE: A curious, kindly, and handsome police officer who thinks Cinderella may be a spy; transforms into Prince Hard-to-Please for ball scene; wears a police uniform and helmet and royal garb for ball scene; male. (Note: Prince can be played by another actor as well.)

MR. BODIE: Kindly bachelor who has a fondness for Cinderella, who works for him as a maid; male.

MR./MRS. JENNINGS: One of Cinderella's customers; flexible.

MR./MRS. MALONEY: One of Cinderella's customers; flexible.

MARION: One of Cinderella's customers, a dejected woman whose husband has abandoned her for another woman; female.

MAN/WOMAN: One of Cinderella's customers; flexible.

MARIE-THERESE: French orphan who Cinderella cares for; wears a nightgown and a ring; female.

DELPHINE: Belgian orphan; wears a nightgown; female.

GLADYS: English orphan; wears a nightgown; female.

GRETCHEN: German orphan who is the youngest/smallest of the orphans; wears a nightgown; female.

GODMOTHER: Cinderella's godmother, a Red Cross nurse; wears a Red Cross nurse's uniform; female.

KING: Cockney king who is anxious for his son to get married; looks like a king on a deck of cards since this is the only king Cinderella has ever seen; male.

QUEEN: Cockney queen and mother of Prince Hard-to-Please; looks like the queen on a deck of cards since this is the only queen Cinderella has ever seen; female.

LORD MAYOR: Lord mayor of London, an authoritative government figure; wears an enormous watch and chain; male.

LORD TIMES: Authoritative, all-powerful figure who represents the "Times" newspaper; male.

CENSOR: An executioner; tall and thin, wears all-black clothing, and carries an executioner's axe; male.

PENGUIN: Bishop who marries Cinderella and Prince Hard-to-Please; resembles the stuffed penguin in Mr. Bodie's studio; male.

DR. BODIE: Mr. Bodie's stern, no-nonsense sister, a medical doctor who cares for wounded soldiers; female. [Note: Can double as Godmother.]

DANNY: A soldier who is slightly lame and has a glass eye; wears hospital blue; male.

NURSE: Nurse who helps Dr. Bodie care for wounded soldiers; female.

MAID: No-nonsense maid who works for Dr. Bodie; female.

BEAUTY 1-12: Ball attendees hoping to marry Prince Hard-to-Please; wear ball gowns; female.

PAGE: Non-speaking; flexible.

VENUS DE MILO (opt.): Non-speaking; female.

EXTRAS (opt.): As Trumpeters, Guests, Soldiers, and Customers.

Options for Doubling

GODMOTHER/DR. BODIE (female)

LORD MAYOR/MR. JENNINGS (flexible)

LORD TIMES/MAN (male)

CENSOR/DANNY (male)

BISHOP/MR. MALONEY (flexible)

QUEEN/NURSE (female)

MAID/BEAUTY 1 (female)

MARION/BEAUTY 2 (female)

Setting

London, WWI.

Sets

Mr. Bodie's studio. Its window is heavily screened due to war regulations. On a shelf is a large stuffed penguin, and on each side of this shelf are two or three tattered magazines. There is a wicker chair, an easy chair, and a small table. The woodstove is placed so that Mr. Bodie can rest his feet on it when he is sitting in his chair. A large replica of the "Venus de Milo" stands so prominent that the studio looks to be hers rather than his.

On a street outside Celeste et Cie. There is a streetlamp whose glass is painted red in obedience to war regulations. Light from the window is shrouded with suspended articles of apparel. There is a signboard that reads, "Celeste et Cie. The Penny Friend." The exterior of the shop should be on wheels so that it can be rolled off to reveal the interior.

Interior of Celeste et Cie. A tiny room in which the chief pieces of furniture are a work table and a bench, both of which have been handmade out of boards. On the table is a box with a slot for pennies. On the floor is a threadbare piece of carpet and a hearth rug constructed out of brilliant rags. The room is lit by a lamp. There is a penny-slot stove. Four large wooden boxes made from wood planks sit against the wall and are large enough for the orphans to sleep inside.

Ballroom. Nearly everything in the ballroom is golden including the walls and furniture. The royal thrones consist of three golden rocking chairs. There are four illuminated streetlamps with red glass, opt. At the back, there are golden steps and curtains.

Dr. Bodie's house. The house is decorated with practical furnishings and there is a writing table CS.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I

Scene 1: Mr. Bodie's studio, winter evening.

Scene 2: On a street in front of Celeste et Cie and inside Celeste et Cie, later that evening.

Intermission

ACT II: A royal ballroom.

ACT III: Dr. Bodie's house near the sea, two months later.

Props

- | | |
|---|---|
| Handgun (toy), for Policeman | Jug of milk |
| Lantern | Traditional short brown dress,
for Cinderella |
| Small notebook | Cups |
| Flower bowl | Saucer of melted lard |
| Calling cards (business cards) | Scarf, for Policeman |
| Statue of a bishop that looks
like a penguin | Oranges |
| Servant's hat and jacket, for
Policeman | Paper lunch bags filled with
two sandwiches, a piece of
cake, hardboiled egg,
orange or a banana. |
| Pipe | Banana skin |
| Money folded into packet | Swords |
| Hat with feathers and a jacket,
for Cinderella | Glasses, for King |
| Wooden board | Axe |
| Measuring tape | Box filled with thermometers |
| Fake snow | Cards that read, "First,"
"Second," "Third" |
| Large used coat with tails | White ball gown, for
Cinderella |
| Pins for hemming | Hairpin |
| Picture of a man in a coat | Engagement ring, for
Cinderella |
| Cane | Crown, for Cinderella |
| Hat, for Gentleman | Long train, for Cinderella |
| Penny | Large picture of a penny on a
pole (One side is the picture
of a penny and the other
side is a picture of
Cinderella) |
| Box with a slot for pennies | Royal ice-cream barrow/cart
on wheels |
| Seafaring overalls, for
Policeman | Gold paper ice-cream cones |
| Bushy fake beard, for
Policeman | |
| Stiff starched linen | |
| Barber's implements | |
| Bowl of water | |
| Soap | |
| Hand towel | |
| 5 Potatoes | |

Stethoscope	Coat, for Dr. Bodie
Daybook	Tea service
Dressing jacket and nurse's cap, for Cinderella	Additional teacups
Metal hospital bed or cot on wheels	Hand mirror
Hospital blanket and pillow	Small parcel containing shoes for Cinderella
Fishing rods	White high heels, for Cinderella
Croquet mallets and balls	

Special Effects

Clatter of horses	Buzzer
Unearthly trumpet sounding three times	Fake blood
Heavenly music	Sound of someone breaking rocks
Dainty music	Triumphant music
Clamor	Ballroom music
Bugles	Clock striking 12 times
Clock ticking	Music on gramophone

**"Sweetheart,
I couldn't come sooner
because in these days, you know,
even the fairy godmother
is with the Red Cross."**

—Godmother

Act 1

Scene 1

(AT RISE: WWI London, Mr. Bodie's studio, a winter evening. It is so dark Mr. Bodie is nearly invisible. He is curled up in a wicker chair with his eyes closed. One dim ray from the stove strikes his face. Policeman enters with his hand on his weapon and holding a lantern. Policeman shines the lantern on a large replica of the "Venus de Milo." He then shines his lantern on Mr. Bodie. Mr. Bodie blinks and sits up.)

MR. BODIE: (*Annoyed.*) I beg your pardon, Officer.

POLICEMAN: Sir?

MR. BODIE: But I insist on begging your pardon, Officer.

POLICEMAN: I don't see what for, sir.

MR. BODIE: For walking uninvited into the abode of a law-abiding London citizen with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted.

POLICEMAN: (*Ponders this.*) But I'm the one as has done that, sir.

MR. BODIE: So you are, I beg your pardon, Officer.

(*Mr. Bodie turns on the light. Mr. Bodie gives the Policeman a look that means "And now, my man, what can I do for you?" The Policeman goes to the door and points his lantern in the passage.*)

POLICEMAN: (*Points.*) Look here, sir, it's that.

MR. BODIE: I don't follow.

POLICEMAN: (*Points.*) Look at that passage window. You are showing too much illumination.

BODIE: Oh, well, surely –

POLICEMAN: It's the regulations. A party in the neighboring skylight complained.

BODIE: (*Puts out the light.*) If that will do for tonight, I'll have the window boarded up.

POLICEMAN: Anything so long as it obscures the illumination.

BODIE: (*Irritated.*) Shuts out the light.

POLICEMAN: (*Determinedly.*) Obscures the illumination.

BODIE: I remember now, I did have that window boarded up.

POLICEMAN: I don't see the boards.

BODIE: Nor do I see the boards. (*Thinks. To himself.*) Could she have stolen them?

POLICEMAN: *She?*

BODIE: You are right. She is scrupulously honest, and if she took the boards, we may be sure that I said she could have them. But that only adds to the mystery.

POLICEMAN: Mystery?

BODIE: (*To himself.*) Why this passion for collecting boards?

POLICEMAN: I don't know what you are talking about, sir. Are you complaining of some woman?

BODIE: Now that is the question. Am I? As you are here, Officer, there is something I want to say to you. But I should dislike getting her into trouble.

POLICEMAN: No man that is a man wants to get a woman into trouble unnecessarily.

BODIE: That's true! That's absolutely true, Officer!

POLICEMAN: It's true, but there's nothing remarkable about it.

BODIE: Excuse me.

POLICEMAN: See here, sir, I'm just an ordinary policeman.

BODIE: I can't let that pass. If I may say so, you have impressed me most deeply. I wonder if I might ask a favor of you: Would you mind taking off your helmet? As it happens, I have never seen a policeman without his helmet. (*Perplexed, the Policeman takes off his helmet and puts it on the table.*) Thank you. Of course I knew they took off. You sit also? (*Policeman sits.*) Very interesting...

POLICEMAN: About this woman, sir –

BODIE: We are coming to her. Perhaps I ought to tell you my name. Mr. Bodie. (*Indicating the "Venus de Milo."*) This is

Mrs. Bodie. No, I am not married. It is merely a name given her because she is my ideal.

POLICEMAN: You gave me a turn.

BODIE: Now that I think of it, I believe the name was given to her by the very woman we are talking about.

POLICEMAN: *(Takes out a small notebook.)* To begin with...who is the woman we are talking about?

BODIE: On the surface, she is just a little drudge. These studios are looked after by a housekeeper who employs this girl to do the work.

POLICEMAN: Hmmm, does she sleep on the premises?

BODIE: No. She is here from eight to six.

POLICEMAN: Place of abode?

BODIE: She won't tell anyone that.

POLICEMAN: Aha! What's the party's name?

BODIE: Cinderella. *(Unmoved, Policeman writes it down. Amused.)* Haven't you heard that name before?

POLICEMAN: Can't say I have, sir. But I'll make inquiries at the Yard.

BODIE: It was really I who gave her that name because she seemed such a poor little neglected waif—after the girl in the storybook, you know.

POLICEMAN: No, sir, I don't know. In the Force we find it impossible to keep up with current fiction.

BODIE: She was a girl with a broom. There must have been more in the story than that, but I forget the rest.

POLICEMAN: The point is...that's not the name she calls herself by.

BODIE: Yes, indeed, it is. I think she was called something else when she came—Miss Thing, or some such name—but she took to the name of Cinderella with avidity, and now she absolutely denies that she ever had any other.

POLICEMAN: Her parentage?

[END OF FREEVIEW]