

Cinderella

Prince Charming (P), a Prince
Minister (M), the Prince's right-hand man
Cinderella (C), a serving girl

Florinda (F), a nasty little suitor-ess
Tisbe (T), another nasty little suitor-ess
Lady Tremaine (L), their mother

A number of men in the Prince's entourage
A number of female suitors, desperate to endear themselves to the Prince
--

Enter Charming with his entourage.

P: Gentle cousins! Royal friends! What a splendid celebration! All around us the sweet voices of angels! Alas, I only wish my heart were not burdened thus.

M: Your highness, do tell these good people why you fret so.

P: I shall. Noble patrons, moments ago I encountered a lady so fair that the very snow would not fall on her for envy of her delicate features! Oh! how we danced! But then, as suddenly as she appeared, she vanished into the night. I called for these fine men to find and detain her, but she bested them each with her flashing steel! Imagine! A woman whose skills nearly rival mine own!

M: Surely not, sire!

P: I did say "nearly." My men and I pursued her here into this hall. I come now to ask her for her fair -- and evidently dangerous -- hand. The woman who can wield this silver saber shall be my wife!

F: Rest thy weary bones and pleasure thine eyes, my prince. Here is thy mighty maiden, fresh from the fray, standing here until you sweep me off my feet!

T: Sister, you mistake yourself! No meek thing like you could have bested these men. This prince seeks a tigress, a woman implacable in arms and impeccable in taste. You, kitten, would hardly move a man to yawn!

F: I'm sure the prince prefers a kitten to its counterpart, sister.

T: What do you mean by that?

F: Only that there's a word for women like you. It's not often heard in civilized circles -- outside of kennels.

T: Why, I never!

F: Oh no? Then the prince will definitely not be interested.

L: Florinda! Tisbe! Please! Must I separate you? I do apologize for their rudeness, Highness. Forgive my daughters, please. They are young and unschooled. They haven't my years of experience and education in all the finer points of being a lady: etiquette, court dancing, *fencing*, et cetera.

F, T: Mother!

L: Later, dears. Mother's talking to the prince.

A general clamor ensues, with the female "suitors" to the Prince engaging his entourage in an attempt to reach him.

P: Ladies, contain yourselves!

M: I have never seen such outrageous behavior.

P: You are not a prince. Such a thing is commonplace.

M: But, surely this has never happened to Prince Ludwig of Austria?

P: No, but he is not charming. But... no! The saber! One of these mindless harridans must have stolen it from me in the fray! Oh, agony!

C: *(from stage)* If I may speak, your exalted highness.

L: Cinderella! I thought I left you to your cleaning! How dare you show your smudged face to our prince!

C: I am sorry, Lady Tremaine, but during the ruckus, I recovered this from between the tables. *(holds the saber)*

F: *(rushing the stage)* Pay her no mind, your highness. She is nothing but a filthy cleaning wench. Thank you, girl, I will take that.

T: Sister, do not dirty your hands with this sullen wretch. Leave it to a real woman to handle the Prince's mighty weapon.

F: Over my dead body, you noxious harpy!

T: Now you're beginning to understand, you iniquitous termagant! Aha! See! I can be clever too!

L: Florinda! Tisbe! Hand over that blade this instant, you spiteful, lascivious ingrates!

Florinda and Tisbe begin to fight again. Cinderella is unwittingly brought into the struggle. Once the battle begins, Cinderella goes berserk and easily defeats them both, as well as Lady Tremaine.

C: Oh dear. What have I done? Sire, I do apologize. I know not what came over me, but when they tried to take this from me... I have been scolded before to act more in the manner of a lady, but they just make me... SO... FURIOUS! Please forgive me.

P: Forgive? There is nothing to forgive!

F, T, L: Speak for yourself!

P: Tosh! I have searched my whole life for a woman with such fire! These court ladies are far too proper for my tastes.

C: You mean... ? Oh, my Prince!

The Prince attempts to take the saber from Cinderella to hold her. Cinderella flies into a fury and roughs the Prince up a bit.

P: You just keep it then.

C: Oh, I'm so sorry!

Exeunt Cinderella with the Prince's entourage in celebration. Exeunt ladies in various states of hilarious lamentation, with Lady Tremaine pulling the ears of her daughters in improvised chastisement.