

BUTTONS 1

Act one

Scene one: Village street near Hardup Hall

(Fairy joins Villagers, who welcome her under Music intro.)

Song 1

Fairy: (To Dancers) So, which way's the party?!

(Dancers beckon to her to follow them off stage right as Music fades on track. As they do so, we hear Buttons from off stage right.)

Buttons: (From off) Make way! Make way! Handsome man with large present coming through!

(Buttons Enters, carrying a large gift-wrapped box in front of him, obscuring his view, and Dancers, including Fairy, get out of his way as he passes them.)

Buttons: (Dodging in and out) Excuse me; pardon me, thank you...

(As he makes his way further on stage, Dancers and Fairy exit past him. Buttons heads to the front of the stage and seems about to step off, when he suddenly stops, lowers the box and looks out.)

Buttons: (Looking down at the drop) Woo! I'm sure that hole wasn't there yesterday! (To audience) Hey, were you lot going to let me fall off the stage just now? You rotten lot! (Puts box down) Allow me to introduce myself. I know, I'm going to see if you can guess my name. I'll give you a clue. I'm named after what I've got all down the front of my jacket. Who said, dribble?! Check! (Gets answer) That's right; my name is Buttons, and I work for Baron Hardup, here at Hardup Hall. So, now you know my name, whenever I shout out, Hiya kids! I want you all to shout back Hiya Buttons!. Will you do that for me? Shall we give it a try?

(Tries it)

Buttons: That's great. Now we're all friends, I'm going to tell you a little secret. You might not think it to look at me, but I don't have much luck when it comes to finding a girlfriend. (Gets reaction) It's sadder than that! Yeah. In fact, I've been on so many blind dates, I recently qualified for a guide dog. So I've just been out to buy this present, for a girl I've fancied for ages. I've always been too scared to tell her how I feel, but today I'm going to give her this present and declare my undying love. But I'm not going to do it just yet, so for now I'm going to put it out of the way over here.

(Places it stage left)

Buttons: Will you all keep an eye on it for me? Will you? Oh, thanks. Tell you what; if you see anyone except me try to take this present, I want you to shout out Oi, Buttons! and I'll come running. Will you do that? Shall we have a practice? Right then, I'll pretend I'm someone hanging about on the village green. (He folds his arms and whistles to himself) So, I'm hanging about... I notice the box... I check there's no one around... (He mimes all this) ... then I head over to the box... (He does so) and you lot shout out... (Holds hand up to his ear to listen to them shout) Well, that wasn't very good, was it? By the time I'd heard you, they'd've been miles away. Let's try it again, but this time you've got to be ten times louder. Right, I'm hanging around... (He does so) ... I see the box... (He does so) ... I check the coast is clear... (He does so) ... I head over to the box, and... (Gets reaction) That's more like it! So don't forget to shout Oi, Buttons! if you see anyone try to take this box. (Thumbs up to audience)

(Baron Hardup comes out of his house SR.)

BUTTONS 2

Buttons: (To audience) Ah, here comes my boss, Baron Hardup. (To Baron) Morning, sir.

Baron: (Distractedly) Good morning, Buttons. (Crosses USL and looks off into distance)

(Cinderella exits from house.)

Buttons: (Aside) And this is his lovely daughter, Cinderella. (Giving a soppy wave) Woo-hoo, Cinders!

Cinderella: (Waving back) Hello, Buttons.

(Cinderella joins Buttons downstage and looks out over audience.)

Cinderella: It's a beautiful morning, isn't it?

Buttons: (Looking at Cinderella) It certainly is.

Baron: (Noticing present) What's that over there, Buttons?

Buttons: (Not paying attention; still looking at Cinderella) No idea.

Cinderella: I think this must be my favourite view.

Buttons: Mine too!

Baron: Someone must have lost it.

Cinderella: I could just stand here and look at it for hours.

Buttons: So could I!

Baron: (Moving towards box) I think I'll open it and see what's inside.

Buttons: Ok. (Suddenly realises and is reminded by audience) What?! No! No!... (Rushes over and pulls Baron away just in time) ... No, no, there's no need for you to worry about that, sir. No, it's just a little something I've bought for C... C... Someone. (Looks lovingly over at Cinderella)

Baron: Really? Well, I wouldn't leave it there, if I were you. There are some pretty unsavoury characters about.

Buttons: (Looking at audience) Yes, I've already spotted them! (Mouths) Only joking (to same section, then) I'm not (to another). Talking of unsavoury characters, sir; when's that new wife of yours due back from London?

Cinderella: Not to mention her two dodgy daughters.

Baron: Now, now, you two. (To Buttons) That's no way for you to talk about the new lady of the house. (To Cinderella) Or for you to talk about your two step sisters. I, for one, hope they'll all be home very soon indeed.

Cinderella: You do?

Baron: Yes. Because the longer they're in London, the more of my money they'll be spending. Money I haven't got.

Cinderella: You've got to see the funny side though, Daddy. You two marrying each other, each thinking the other one was filthy rich.

(Baroness takes it and makes as if to tear it up.)

Baroness: (To audience) Should I? (Gets reaction) Should I? Should I? No? Then here, Cinderella (gives it back) I've changed my mind.

Cinderella: Thank you.

BUTTONS 3

Baroness: I want you to tear it up.

Cinderella: What?!

Baroness: You heard. Tear it up. Well, go on. Tear it. (Cinderella tears it) That's it. Now tear it again. (Cinderella tears it again) Tear it into tiny... Little... Pieces. (Cinderella tears it a third time) Good. (Knocks torn pieces out of Cinderella's hands) Now get back to the kitchen, where you belong, among the cinders in the hearth.

(Cinderella runs off in tears. Baroness looks down at the torn pieces and starts to laugh. As it builds in intensity she exits, her laugh still echoing.

(After a beat, Buttons enters.)

Buttons: Hiya kids! (Gets reaction; sees torn pieces on floor) What's this? (Picks up pieces and gets info from audience) Is this Cinderella's invitation? Who made her do it? The Baroness? I told you she was evil. Where is Cinders now? The kitchen? Right, I must go to her. (Picks up box) Wish me luck!

(Buttons exits, front cloth lifts to reveal...)

Scene Seven: Kitchen Of Hardup Hall

(Music. Cinderella is discovered sitting by the fireplace.)

Song 5

(Buttons enters for the end of the Song, puts the box down and watches, unseen by Cinderella.)

Buttons: I'm so sorry, Cinderella. (Holds up torn invitation)

Cinderella: Oh, let's face it; even with an invitation, I couldn't have gone to the ball. I've got nothing to wear.

Buttons: You'd look lovely with nothing to wear! But never mind; if you can't go to the stupid old ball, we can enjoy ourselves here. We'll have our own party.

Cinderella: What sort of party could we have, with just the two of us?

(Buttons raises his eyebrows to the audience. Cinderella notices the box.)

Cinderella: What have you got in there?

Buttons: I'll show you later. First I want to tell you something that I hope will cheer you up. (To audience) Shall I tell her? Shall I? (To Cinderella) Cinderella?

Cinderella: Yes?

Buttons: (Taking her hands in his) You know how I feel about you, don't you?

Cinderella: Of course I do.

Buttons: I love you.

Cinderella: I know you do, Buttons. And I love you too.

BUTTONS 4

Buttons: You do?! (Hugging her to him) Oh, Cinders!

Cinderella: I love you like a brother.

Buttons: (Still holding her, so she can't see the look on his face change) Like a brother?

Cinderella: Yes.

Buttons: Well... That's... I don't suppose you fancy moving to Norfolk?

Cinderella: What?!

Buttons: Nothing. Like a brother. (Turns away)

Cinderella: Why? You didn't think I meant... I mean, you and I...? You weren't saying...?

Buttons: What? No! Good grief, no! What; you and me? Imagine! Yuk!

Cinderella: Ah! You had me going for a moment there! You big tease.

Buttons: Yeah; that's me. Buttons the great big tease.

Cinderella: So, are you going to show me what's in the box now?

Buttons: What? Nah, it's nothing. Just some stuff I've got no use for any more. (Chucks it offstage) No, I've got a much better surprise for you. We're going to have our very own royal ball right here. And I'm going to be your dashing prince. (Bows with a flourish)

Cinderella: (Curtseying) Why, thank you, your highness. But I haven't a thing to wear.

Buttons: Fret not, Mademoiselle. For I have ordered you a gown of the finest damask silk. (Pulls table cloth off table and wraps it around Cinderella)

Cinderella: (Modelling it) It's marvellous, dahling.

Buttons: (Looks at her up and down) But you need accessorizing. I know! (Grabs a string of carrots and puts it around her neck)

Cinderella: What's this?

Buttons: A nine carrot necklace.

Cinderella: But there are only seven carrots.

Buttons: Really? Must be the credit crunch! Oh, and you'll need this. (Picks up metal colander and places it on her head) There we are.

Cinderella: And this is?

Buttons: Your tiara, of course.

Cinderella: Of course. Fancy me forgetting that. I've got a mind like a sieve! (Points to it)

Buttons: All right. Don't strain yourself! Now close your eyes and wait there... (Cinderella does so) ... No peeping... (Uses the table, 2 chairs and plate chargers - for wheels - to create a coach) while I make all the necessary arrangements.

Cinderella: What are you doing?

Buttons: You'll see. (He finishes) Ok, open your eyes. (She does so) Your carriage awaits, Mademoiselle. (She takes his hand and they get into the coach) Where to, my lady?

BUTTONS 5

Cinderella: The Royal Ball, if you please.

Buttons: The Royal Ball? (He pretends to be driving the coach) How posh. Where's it being held?

Cinderella: At the [Pantomime venue]

Buttons: Isn't that where they produce the best pantomime in [Area or County] ?

Cinderella: I do believe it is. The one with that gorgeous principal girl in it.

Buttons: Yes; and that ruggedly handsome comic.

Cinderella: No, I think that's [Another Local Venue].

Buttons: Cheek! You can go off people, you know!

Cinderella: (Sniffing the air) Phwarr! What's that awful smell. I hope it's the horse!

Buttons: Yes, sorry about that. We feed him on Brussels sprouts.

Cinderella: Doesn't that make him ill?

Buttons: No, but it gives him the trots! (He stops the coach) Whoa! We're here. Let me help you down. (He does so)
The prince takes one look at you... (He mimes being the prince) comes straight over, and asks you to Dance.

Cinderella: I'd love to, your highness. (Gives a curtsy)

Buttons: He bows... (Does so) takes you in his arms... (Does so) looks longingly into your eyes... (Does so; for a moment he forgets himself) and then... And then... (SFX: 3 door knocks) Was that me?

Cinderella: I think there's someone at the door. (Goes to answer it)

Buttons: (Annoyed) Oh pooh.

(Cinderella opens the door and Fairy is there, in old woman disguise.)

Cinderella: It's you! (Old Woman enters)

Buttons: Who?

Cinderella: The poor old woman I met in the forest.

Buttons: Huh! If you knew the trouble you caused Cinderella...

Fairy: (As Old Woman) I know. But I had good reason, as you will soon discover. For I am not a poor, old woman, but...
(Fairy drops cloak to reveal her costume)

(SFX: Fairy sting)

Fairy: Cinderella's Fairy Godmother!

Buttons: Cor!

Cinderella: I didn't know I had a Fairy Godmother.