

Cindy/Ella
By
Elisabeth Giffin Speckman

CINDY/ELLA

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CINDY/ELLA

To my mom, for raising me as a writer.

To my supportive family and husband, Chris, for always believing in me.

To Fox, for recognizing my potential and never letting me dismiss or forget it.

CINDY/ELLA

Cindy/Ella was originally produced at the IndyFringe Basile Theatre in Indianapolis, Indiana, as part of the IndyFringe Theatre Festival. Directed by Laura Baltz, the play featured the following cast:

Cindy/Ella.....Abby Gilster
Deirdre.....Melissa Cleaver
Prince.....Jason A. Plake
Waiter/News Anchor.....Michael Cleaver
Dontrell.....Josiah Ray McCruiston
Kendra.....Amity Monize Aschliman
Publicist/Krystal.....Amanda Bell
Detective.....Scott Prill
Kyra/Lyra.....Audrey Duprey

CINDY/ELLA

CAST: 9+ (4-7F, 3-5M, 0-2NB)

CINDY/ELLA	20s, female, a princess
DEIRDRE	40s-50s, female, a personal assistant to Cindy
PRINCE	20s-30s, male, a prince
WAITER	30s-60s, any, a waiter
NEWS ANCHOR	30s-60s, any, a news anchor
DONTRELL	20s-30s, male or NB, gay, store clerk
KENDRA	20s-30s, female or NB, his roommate
PUBLICIST	40s-50s, female, publicist to the Prince
DETECTIVE	40s-50s, male, a detective
KRYSTAL	40s-50s, female, a mother
KYRA	16-18, female, a Valley Girl
LYRA	16-18, female, her twin

NOTE: Actors may also play various ONLOOKERS, POLICE OFFICERS, etc. The role of DONTRELL should be played by a Black actor; diversity in casting of the remaining roles is not only encouraged but expected.

TIME: The 2010s

PLACE: The Kingdom of California

CINDY/ELLA

CINDY/ELLA

ACT 1
SCENE 1

A bedchamber. It is opulent, but not garish. CINDY is asleep in bed. DEIRDRE, her personal assistant, enters with breakfast on a tray. She sets it on the nightstand and throws open the curtains.

DEIRDRE. Good morning, Princess Cynthia. And what a lovely morning it is.

CINDY. (*Grumpily waking up.*) It's always a "lovely" morning, isn't it?

DEIRDRE. You say that as if you wish it weren't!

CINDY. No, no. I don't mean that. It's just...

DEIRDRE. What?

CINDY. Everything's always so "perfect." I just wish I knew what it was like to be ordinary. Or, better yet, to be a nobody. Being constantly hounded by the paparazzi, it's enough to make me wish I was nonexistent. Forgettable.

DEIRDRE. I wouldn't wish a life like that on my worst enemy. Can you imagine? Just being—average? Being normal?

CINDY. I can't help but feel that I *am* normal. I just don't get to live like it.

DEIRDRE. But you're a princess! You live in a palace in Malibu! And you're engaged to the prince!

CINDY. I hardly see him. I don't know anything about him. (*She pauses.*) What's his name again?

DEIRDRE. Very funny. (*Deirdre begins to drag Cindy out of bed. Cindy resists.*) Come now, best get dressed. You've got a full schedule. There's the hospital wing dedication at 9, followed by brunch with the Queen on Rodeo at that new little spot, Tarte. We've scheduled *People* and *US Weekly* to "happen upon you" at 10 after 12, so you'll have to eat quickly so they don't get any unfortunate chewing pictures like last month. Then, you're to go to a dress fitting at Angelo's, before stopping by the

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elementary school and reading to the kindergartners. (*Deirdre begins helping Cindy get dressed.*)

CINDY. And then what? That's hardly a full schedule.

DEIRDRE. After your reading, you've got dinner with the Prince, just you two, then the premiere of the Prince's newest biopic. The red carpet is scheduled for 6, and we've got you arriving at 6:15 for a short walk and press event before the screening starts at 7. Then there's the press conference and after-party.

CINDY. Any time to myself?

DEIRDRE. Let's see. We have you scheduled to leave the after-party with the Prince at a quarter 'til midnight. You should be home just as the clock strikes.

CINDY. Of course. Well, it's better than nothing. Maybe I'll even get ten minutes to read before bed.

DEIRDRE. Oh, I wouldn't count on it.

CINDY. Don't worry. I've learned not to.

DEIRDRE. That's the spirit. Now, the prince has sent a special package for you. Would you like to open it?

CINDY. I suppose. (*Deirdre grabs a package and hands it to Cindy. Cindy pulls out a fancy, sparkly heel.*) More shoes.

DEIRDRE. The Prince has excellent taste in footwear.

CINDY. Next time, I wish he would get me some slippers. And not like those glass ones— what a ridiculous idea. Whoever decided to make shoes out of glass?

DEIRDRE. They were the same designer as your ruby slippers, I believe. He's French.

CINDY. Someone needs to introduce him to the concept of comfort. Here, go ahead and put these in the closet.

DEIRDRE. You don't want to wear them? I think he wanted you to—

CINDY. No, I think I'd rather wear flats today.

DEIRDRE. Yes, of course. It's just—

CINDY. The Prince can wear heels if he wants to—but I'm wearing flats.

DEIRDRE. Yes, ma'am. I just think—

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CINDY. Oh, FINE. Give them here. *(A clock chimes. Deirdre jumps.)*

DEIRDRE. You're going to be late! Come, come! *(They exit. Before she leaves, Cindy secretly sneaks a book and a pair of flats along with her.)*

SCENE 2

Evening. A private-ish table at the newest "in" restaurant. Cindy and PRINCE are sitting across from one another. Cindy has snuck her book out from her purse and has it on her lap beneath the table. She is attempting to read.

PRINCE. So I said to him, "I hope you don't expect me to wear that!" *(Cindy doesn't respond.)* I said, "I hope you don't expect ME to wear THAT!" *(Cindy sighs.)* Are you even listening to me?

CINDY. What? I'm sorry. I...was lost in thought, I guess.

PRINCE. It's fine. I was just telling you—*(A WAITER enters, perhaps followed by some onlookers who snap a few photographs of the couple.)*

WAITER. *(Putting a tray down.)* Your highness.

PRINCE. Mmmm. Looks delicious. *(The waiter serves Cindy as the Prince poses for the onlookers.)*

WAITER. Is there anything else I can help you with this evening?

CINDY. I'd like—

PRINCE. No, thank you.

WAITER. Enjoy! *(The waiter bows and begins to exit. Once he is a few feet from the table, he pulls out his cell phone and snaps a selfie with Cindy and the Prince in the background, then exits.)*

PRINCE. Anyway, what was I saying?

CINDY. I'm not sure.

PRINCE. You never listen to me.

CINDY. That's not true. I do.

PRINCE. Then why don't you know what I was talking about?

CINDY. Why don't you? You were the one talking.

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PRINCE. Because *I* was interrupted and lost my train of thought. You, on the other hand, weren't ever onboard. You were—you've got a book, don't you? (*Looking under the table.*) It's under your napkin, I can see it.

CINDY. I'm sorry. Really. It's just—I never get any time to myself.

PRINCE. Tell me about it. I'm always being scheduled for meetings and yacht launches and dedications and dinners—

CINDY. Dinners. (*They look at each other.*)

PRINCE. I don't mean...I mean. You know what I mean.

CINDY. Yes. Yes, I do. (*They eat. Every so often, onlookers walk past and flash photos, or wave, or exclaim "Look! The Prince! And his fiancée! The Princess!" Cindy picks at her food.*)

PRINCE. I couldn't help but notice you aren't wearing the shoes.

CINDY. Hmm?

PRINCE. When I saw you were reading, I also saw what you're wearing. I assume Deirdre gave you my gift? The shoes?

CINDY. Oh, yes. They were lovely.

PRINCE. But not lovely enough to wear apparently.

CINDY. (*Taking shoes out of her bag.*) No! I did wear them. Before. See? I just—

PRINCE. Took them off?

CINDY. I just wanted a change. And—

PRINCE. And?

CINDY. Well, they're not comfortable.

PRINCE. I see. Well. If they don't fit you—

CINDY. Oh, they fit perfectly. It's not the fit. It's just they're not—

PRINCE. Comfortable.

CINDY. Do you think you could get your money back?

PRINCE. It's not about the money. (*The Prince takes them lovingly. The waiter returns to clear their trays. The Prince swiftly puts the heels away. The Waiter presents them with a small dessert.*)

WAITER. Your royal highnesses. For you, on the house. (*He bows and*

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exits. The Prince is delighted, as if the earlier tense conversation never happened.)

PRINCE. Oh, custard! What more could you want? *(Cindy forces a smile. Paparazzi walk by and flash photos, and the Prince poses with the custard spoon in various positions. He is having the time of his life.)*

SCENE 3

The next morning in Cindy's bedroom. As before, Deirdre has come in to wake Cindy and help her prepare for the day. Cindy begins to brush her hair, and Deirdre comes to help her.

CINDY. Dee, did you ever want to be something else?

DEIRDRE. Other than personal assistant to the next queen of California? Why would I? *(Deirdre pauses, before hesitantly starting.)* I guess if I had to be anything else...well... I like dogs.

CINDY. *(Snorting.)* What?

DEIRDRE. I like dogs.

CINDY. So you'd be a dog?

DEIRDRE. No, silly. I'd breed them. Have a whole farm. Fields full of my "flock." Like a shepherd. Only, instead of sheep...

CINDY. Sheepdogs.

DEIRDRE. Probably something a little sexier. Like...Irish Setters or English Springer Spaniels. I like the ones with ears that look like pigtails, you know?

CINDY. *(Slowly.)* And you'd breed them?

DEIRDRE. Maybe not *breed* them so much as...let them be. They could match up and mate if they like, but not anything forced, no.

CINDY. It sounds nice.

DEIRDRE. Dogs?

CINDY. No. The not being forced part.

DEIRDRE. Cynthia...you were born a princess. Ever since you were little, you've been trained in the ways of being in the public eye. It's who you are. If I ever thought it wasn't what you really wanted—

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CINDY. What?

DEIRDRE. Well, I'd worry about you. Who doesn't want to be royalty?

CINDY. (*Exiting into closet.*) Sounds like you'd choose dogs over being royal—

DEIRDRE. I never said that. I wasn't born royal, I thought you meant if I could reasonably do anything else.

CINDY. (*Offstage.*) Dreams don't have to be reasonable! (*Deirdre sits on the bed and turns the TV on. It is the news. It drones on in the background.*)

DEIRDRE. I know that you've been under a lot of pressure lately, but--

CINDY. (*Reentering with a glass slipper.*) Look.

DEIRDRE. What?

CINDY. There's only one of my glass slippers in the closet. They were both there yesterday, I know it.

DEIRDRE. That's strange. Oh, but—look.

CINDY. There's a crack in it! It's cracked.

NEWS ANCHOR. And next, Royal Prince Makes a Glass of Himself: stay tuned to hear more about the emerging scandal of Los Angeles' own dirty devil. The prince has been accused by not one, not two, but three separate women of attempting to, get this, force them to try on glass slippers, even going so far as to offering to pay—(*Deirdre has rushed and turned the TV off.*)

DEIRDRE. Now, don't pay any mind to that ridiculous trash, the news these days is as bad as the tabloids. I'm sure that...(*She stops upon seeing Cindy's expression. She is holding up the cracked glass slipper with a look of beatification.*)

CINDY. It all makes sense now.

DEIRDRE. What? What makes sense?

CINDY. Do you remember that time we found the Dr. Scholl's pad in my emerald slippers? That wasn't mine? (*Deirdre gasps.*)

DEIRDRE. He's a podophile.

CINDY. WHAT?!

DEIRDRE. (*Near tears.*) A podophile! Obsessed with feet!

CINDY. Or at least with shoes. A fetishist.

DEIRDRE. (*Composing herself.*) Oh, my. But—Cynthia—

CINDY/ELLA

CINDY. Wait. Wait...Do you know what this means?

DEIRDRE. It doesn't mean anything!

CINDY. No, it means—there's a crack.

DEIRDRE. Yes, in the shoe, but we can fix that. I think we have bigger things—

CINDY. No, not—yes, a crack in the shoe. But also, in the relationship. There's a crack, an opening. It's small, but...

DEIRDRE. Oh, honey. These things can be fixed.

CINDY. No! Listen. Don't you know what happens to cracks under pressure?

DEIRDRE. Cynthia—

CINDY. They grow. *(She presses on the crack. It splinters. The sound of glass shattering. Cindy shrieks as she cuts herself. Deirdre quickly comes at her and wraps her hand with a ribbon from her fanny pack/bag.)*

DEIRDRE. Cynthia, what were you thinking?

CINDY. It seemed like a metaphor, I guess.

DEIRDRE. Lord, what would you do without me here to take care of you?

CINDY. I'm not a child, Deirdre.

DEIRDRE. I know, honey. I know that. It's just...well.

CINDY. What?

DEIRDRE. Nothing. Well, I should sweep up this glass.

CINDY. I can get it.

DEIRDRE. Please, princess. It's my job to take care of you.

CINDY. But I don't need you to.

DEIRDRE. But you pay me to.

CINDY. Then you're fired.

DEIRDRE. What?

CINDY. You're fired. You're no longer my personal assistant. I don't need one. I don't *want* one.

DEIRDRE. Why—do you have the authority to—

CINDY. Dee! Yes! That's the problem! I have authority! I have a life! And it isn't to just be a princess. To be the female version of the prince. And I'm glad I broke the shoe because now he can't—he can't—sneak around town trying it on all kinds of women!

DEIRDRE. Cynthia—

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CINDY. Who knows where that shoe's been? *(They both pause and look at her wrapped hand.)*

DEIRDRE. Perhaps I should've applied some antiseptic.

CINDY. Yeah...yeah, let's get the Neosporin. But—wait. No! *I'll* get it.

DEIRDRE. Cynthia, you can't be serious.

CINDY. I want to do things for myself! By myself. *(Deirdre pauses, crestfallen. She nods. Cindy rushes off. Deirdre, without betraying any emotion, exits. Cindy reenters.)*

CINDY. Dee—is Bacitracin the same...thing...*(She looks around at the empty room. She nods to herself and rushes off again. She reenters with a large suitcase. She looks determined.)*

SCENE 4

The News Anchor stands outside the Royal Palace of Malibu. He goes live.

NEWS ANCHOR. Breaking news! Our own Princess of Malibu, Cynthia, has gone missing! Reports from the palace and the Malibu bungalow both indicate there has been no sign of forced entry, but one of the royal Range Rovers has been taken. Security tapes will be reviewed, and anyone with any information should come forward immediately. There's no news on whether the disappearance of Cynthia is at all related to the Prince's very recent and very public indiscretions, which you heard here first! And wait a minute, I'm hearing that Detective Dick Davies of the Kingdom of California Royal Police has been assigned to the case. No word yet on when an official press conference will be held, but we will be sure to let you know. Until then, Princess Cynthia, if you can hear us...we hope you come home soon.

SCENE 5

Cindy enters Fay Wray's Godmother, an adult store, dancing from one foot to the other. She has sunglasses on. A person dressed in black with dyed purple hair, KENDRA is at the counter chewing gum, next to DONTRELL, who is sticking price stickers on bras. Kendra speaks with

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very little affect and hardly any facial expression, whereas Dontrell is full of life.

CINDY. Hi—I'm sorry, I really need to use the restroom—(*The phone rings.*)

DONTRELL. (*Holding up a finger.*) One second. (*Into the phone.*) Fay Wray's Godmother, providing the Kink for your Kong since 1997. How may I help you? (*He listens.*) Boy, you didn't! No, you did not! No! (*Cindy clears her throat and he pauses. Into the phone.*) Hold on, let me go in the back— (*He wanders off, talking and laughing, still on the phone. Kendra chomps on her gum loudly, staring at Cindy, who looks to be in pain.*)

CINDY. Do you have a bathroom? (*Kendra pushes a sign that says, "Restrooms are for paying customers only" towards Cindy.*) Of course! I will be buying. I will buy. Anything. I just—can you please point me to the restroom? (*She dances about trying to hold in her pee. Kendra stares for a moment. Slowly she lifts a set of keys and hands it to Cindy.*) Which— (*Kendra points towards the restroom.*) Thank you, thank you! (*Cindy rushes off. Kendra blows a bubble with her gum. Dontrell reenters.*)

DONTRELL. Kendra, pull up the news! You'll never guess what's happened! (*She opens a laptop and types. Dontrell impatiently looks over her shoulder.*) There! Look. Click. (*Kendra clicks on a video and the News Anchor is interviewing the Prince.*)

NEWS ANCHOR. We've caught up with the Prince of Malibu. Prince, how are you feeling?

PRINCE. I'm feeling great!

NEWS ANCHOR. Really? What about the allegations against you? Your missing fiancée? It's been an exciting 24 hours.

PRINCE. I'm sorry, what?

NEWS ANCHOR. We broke the news that Cynthia left your side, or perhaps has been taken—

PRINCE. Cindy left?

NEWS ANCHOR. ...yes. You didn't notice?

PRINCE. Well, we have our own rooms. What was she (*leaning in*) what was she wearing when she left? Specifically her shoes? Was she running?

PUBLICIST. (*Entering.*) YOUR HIGHNESS.

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PRINCE. (*Chummy, to News Anchor.*) Oh, my publicist.

PUBLICIST. Your highness, please come with me.

NEWS ANCHOR. Ma'am, what do you have—

PUBLICIST. No comment. (*The Publicist drags the Prince off.*)

NEWS ANCHOR. Well, you saw it here first. The Prince seems a little less than concerned about his missing fiancée's whereabouts. Remember, we do not know yet whether any foul play was involved, though considering the Prince's recent allegations, it seems possible she might have left on her own. Taken things into her own hands, or her own feet, I should say. We're putting the tip line up now.

KENDRA. I think she's here.

DONTRELL. What?

KENDRA. The princess. Cynthia. She's in the bathroom.

DONTRELL. Kendra, are you crazy? We're out in the middle of the Valley. Princesses don't--(*There is a flush. Cindy reenters. They stare at her.*)

NEWS ANCHOR. So again, that number is--(*Dontrell closes the laptop quickly. The News Anchor disappears.*)

DONTRELL. Um, ma'am—is there anything I can help you with?
(*Kendra clears her throat and points to the sign again.*)

CINDY. Oh, right, of course. Um...you know, maybe *you can* help me.

KENDRA. (*Shaking her head.*) I doubt it.

CINDY. Do you have any literature on um, I don't know, like fetishes?

KENDRA. We don't carry literature here.

DONTRELL. We have a selection of books in the back. I'm not sure we have anything on shoes—

CINDY. I didn't say a particular fetish. I'm open to reading about them all, no judgement.

DONTRELL. Of course. We don't judge either. Kendra, why don't y—

KENDRA. What's your name? (*Dontrell freezes and glares at Kendra.*)

CINDY. What?

KENDRA. What's your name?

CINDY. Cindy—er.... (*She sees a sign about L.A.*) El...Ahhh. Ella. My name is Ella. (*Kendra stares at her blankly. She blows a bubble with her gum and pops it, then sucks it into her mouth loudly.*) So...about those

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books?

KENDRA. (To Dontrell.) This is Ella.

DONTRELL. Yes, Kendra, I heard the woman.

KENDRA. Can I see your ID?

CINDY. Excuse me?

DONTRELL. Excuse you?

KENDRA. We have to check every customer ID. This store is 18 and over.

CINDY. But I'm already inside. (*Kendra pulls out another sign from behind the counter that says something like "All Customers Are Subject To Showing Identification."*)

CINDY. Well, I don't—I don't have my ID on me.

DONTRELL. We don't need to see your ID. We know you're over 18.

KENDRA. But—

DONTRELL. (*With clenched teeth.*) Drop it, Kendra. We know the princess is—

CINDY. What?

DONTRELL. Nothing.

CINDY. What did you call me?

DONTRELL. I said—

KENDRA. He called you princess. Princess.

CINDY. I—I don't—I'm not...

KENDRA. Why'd you say your name was Ella?

CINDY. Because—(*Giving up.*)

DONTRELL. Girl, it's ok. Are you running away? About time, if you ask me.

KENDRA. We heard the news.

CINDY. It's on the news? (*Kendra opens the laptop again to show Cindy.*)

DONTRELL. Listen, lots of men have kinks and quirks, it's nothing against you, I'm sure. Heck, lots of men have princess quirks. We have a whole novelty section dedicated to it. I'm sure the Prince's foot shoe thing doesn't mean you aren't doing it for him. But if he's not doing it for you, well...like I said, I don't judge.

KENDRA. (*Reading online.*) They're looking for you though. There's a kingdom-wide alert on a black Range Rover.

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DONTRELL. (*Panicked.*) Is that what you drove here?

KENDRA. With no license?

CINDY. There are plenty of Range Rovers in Malibu.

DONTRELL. But you aren't *in* Malibu anymore, honey! This is the Valley. Things are different here. Let me see that. (*He grabs the laptop and reads, growing increasingly distressed.*) Alright, Cindy, Ella, whoever you are—

KENDRA. It's the Princess. Cynthia.

DONTRELL. (*Ignoring her.*) It was nice to meet you, but you have got to go.

CINDY. Wait, why?

DONTRELL. There are things in this shop that I would prefer not to have searched, so you and your Range Rover need to beat it.

CINDY. Where am I supposed to go? They're looking for the car.

KENDRA. You can have my Prius.

CINDY. Yes!

DONTRELL. No! Kendra! That Prius belongs to the both of us, so unless you want to give up driving in the carpool lane you better walk it back. We are not taking a stolen car from a runaway princess! What would we do with it?

KENDRA. Hide it.

DONTRELL. How can we hide it? It's a RANGE ROVER! Am I supposed to do a spell? What do I look like to you some kind of fairy god-- (*He stops himself.*)

KENDRA. We have a garage. At home.

CINDY. Yes! If I could just, store it in your garage for a bit—

DONTRELL. No.

KENDRA. And then you can stay with us.

DONTRELL. Shhhhhutttt it.

CINDY. You guys live together?

DONTRELL. Yes—

KENDRA. We're best friends. Duh.

DONTRELL. But, you, unfortunately, cannot stay with us.

KENDRA. Sure she—

DONTRELL. (*To Kendra.*) I AM THE ONLY QUEEN IN MY HOUSE!

CINDY/ELLA

(To Cindy.) We just don't have room. Sorry.

CINDY. Oh. Okay. That's fine.

KENDRA. Maybe you could stay next door.

DONTRELL. Kendra—

KENDRA. They're looking for a live-in nanny.

DONTRELL. You do not want to stay next door.

CINDY. Why?

DONTRELL. Some crazy lady and her two daughters live there. Three grown-ass baby women under one roof.

CINDY. How old are her daughters? Why would they need a live-in nanny?

DONTRELL. They don't call it a nanny. We do.

CINDY. What do they call it?

DONTRELL & KENDRA. "Personal assistant."

CINDY. Oh. *(She is embarrassed but hides it. There are sirens in the distance. All three pause. The sirens pass. All three breathe a sigh of relief.)* I've gotta get out of here.

DONTRELL. You sure do.

CINDY. Please, can you take me to your neighbor's? It sounds perfect. A job and a place to stay. It's just what I need. *(There are sounds of sirens in distance, again. A moment as Dontrell looks from Kendra to Cindy.)*

DONTRELL. Oh, fine, fine! But Lord, I will not be a part of a car chase. You girls go on ahead, take the Range Rover, and I'll close up shop alone. *(Kendra hands Dontrell the keys to the Prius from her purse.)*

CINDY. *(To Dontrell.)* Thank you. For your help. I hope I'll see you again.

DONTRELL. Girl, I haven't even started to help you yet. I'm gonna need at least three days to get you disguised enough to keep from drawing any attention. Put this on. *(He throws a hat or wig at her.)* We're in too deep now, Kendra! And I will not go down as an accomplice! *(To Cindy.)* I am about to make you so unrecognizable, so...plain...it almost makes me sick. Kendra, as soon as you're home: prepare my studio. And you, miss Princess of Malibu—you best prepare yourself. Find a mirror and say your goodbyes, girl. Cuz it's time for a whole new you. *(The sirens grow louder as Cindy and Kendra exit. Dontrell does the Sign of the Cross and shakes*

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his head, closing out the register and looking around.)

SCENE 6

The Prince's chambers.

PRINCE. I just don't understand! Where would she go? Where COULD she go? Why go at all?

DETECTIVE. Your Highness, that's what we plan on finding out. My office has handled some of the most famous missing person cases in the kingdom. Sherri Crowder, the Nelson Triplets—

PRINCE. I haven't heard—

DETECTIVE. Precisely. Because we found them before word even got out that they were missing.

PRINCE. Well, it's too late for that now. It's on every station. It's even a meme, already. A meme! "What brand of running shoe does the Princess wear when she runs away?"

DETECTIVE. I'm not—

PRINCE. None, because if she's barefoot the Prince won't follow her. How did this happen to me? *(To Publicist.)* You were supposed to protect my reputation!

PUBLICIST. Your Highness, I spin what I can. This particular behavior—well, the damage was done before—

PRINCE. Well, I want damage control!

PUBLICIST. The best things we can do for your image are to have Princess Cynthia return and issue a statement that her departure had nothing to do with your...hobby...and for you to admit that you have a problem and are seeking treatment.

PRINCE. Treatment! What kind of treatment?

PUBLICIST. Rehab.

DETECTIVE. They've got those places for...well, for what he's got?

DEIRDRE. *(Entering.)* There's rehab for everything.

PUBLICIST. Excellent, Deirdre. I'm glad you joined us. Just the woman I was looking for.

CINDY/ELLA

DEIRDRE. That's funny, since I'm not the one missing.

DETECTIVE. (*Laughing.*) That's a good one. That was funny. Detective Dick Davies.

DEIRDRE. Deirdre. Princess Cynthia's... friend.

PUBLICIST. Personal assistant.

DEIRDRE. No. She fired me.

PUBLICIST. She what?

DEIRDRE. Right before she left. We...we had an argument.

PUBLICIST. This is wonderful news! We can spin this!

DETECTIVE. I'm going to need you to give me all of the details, starting with where you were.

DEIRDRE. Listen, I really don't want to go into it. It was personal.

DETECTIVE. If you want us to find your friend, we're going to need your help.

PRINCE. Great. So you guys talk and figure out where she went, and let me know when she's back. I've got—

PUBLICIST. You've got NOTHING. You're on lockdown until we have this situation figured out.

PRINCE. Lockdown?!

PUBLICIST. I can't have any paps catching shots of you 10 ft within any ladies' shoes. Your plans are cancelled from here on out until I say so.

PRINCE. But I'm the Prince!

PUBLICIST. And I'm your publicist. And I'm going to do my job. (*To Detective.*) And I suggest you do yours and make mine a little easier. (*Publicist grabs the Prince by the hand and drags him off as a parent would a small child.*)

DETECTIVE. Yes, ma'am. Now, if you could come with me to answer some of those questions, Miss...?

DEIRDRE. Deirdre is fine. Just Deirdre.

DETECTIVE. Whatever you say, Deirdre. After you. (*Deirdre and Detective exit. The Detective checks her out from behind as she leaves and scribbles down a little note.*)

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