

AFTER
by Carol K. Mack

Directed by Sandra Grand
Dramaturg: Abby Weintraub

Cindy: Shelley Kay Wollert
Glynda: Brook Hanemann

Stage Manager: Megan L. Kelly
Assistant Stage Manager: Omar Kamal
Costume Designer: Kevin R. McLeod
Lighting Designers: Michele Gallenstein, Brian Shippey
Sound Designer: Shane Rettig
Properties Designer: Mark Walston

CHARACTERS

Cindy — a journalist
Glynda — a fairy

SETTING

A field near the parking lot in a remote corner of Disney World. It is defined by light. A sense of vast space beyond should house the two actors.

SOUND

Cartoon music, fairy music,
munchkin giggles.

AFTER

(PRECURTAIN: A medley of cartoon music is interrupted by a loudspeaker announcement.)

TOUR BUS DRIVER. *(Voice-over.)* Right over here, folks! That's all, folks! Let's go ... time's up. Back on the bus now, boys and girls, we've got lots more to see! Hi! Step right up ... Hi there. How're ya doin' ... everybody here? Aaalll aboard! ... Hello? ExCUSE me, Miss. HEY, you over there? Hello?! We're boarding ... Lady?! Hey, you can't go over there! Ma'am ... Nobody's allowed over there ... HEY! Hey you, get back here!

(During above, CINDY enters, alert, but casual, then, aware she's off-limits, she runs across stage. She wears baseball cap, jeans, knapsack, sneakers, sunglasses and I.D. tag from tour. CINDY is slightly gruff, down-to-earth, independent, bright.)

TOUR BUS DRIVER. *(Voice-over. Very hostile to way out-of-control.)* Somebody get that visitor. She's off-limits! GET HER! GET HER!

(During above noise: Offstage shouts, horns, a bewildered CINDY runs across and flees offstage. GLYNDA enters, dressed in a technicolor uniform, and too-high heels, chases her, wobbly. Sparkledust falls in GLYNDA's wake, then a harp strum as she exits in delicate pursuit. CINDY darts back across, looking behind her, then skids to a stop. The cyclorama lights up and there's a "new dawning" sound as CINDY looks straight out, amazed.)

CINDY. *(Awestruck, looks out to back of house.)* Oh! ... WHOA!
(Lowers her sunglasses, removes cap.) What the ...

Star

GLYNDA. (*Sweetly, out of breath.*) There you are!

CINDY. Where?!

GLYNDA. (*Graciously.*) Off-limits, I fear but ...

CINDY. What is this place!?

GLYNDA. Please come with me now, dear.

CINDY. (*Grabs GLYNDA's wrist, points to rear of house.*)

What's that?!

GLYNDA. What ... ?

CINDY. Who are they?

GLYNDA. Come along please?

CINDY. They're all over the grass!

GLYNDA. It's not real grass, it's... (all right)

CINDY. All over!

GLYNDA. This isn't part of the tour.

CINDY. As far as the eye can see!

GLYNDA. It's not for Visitors ...

CINDY. (*Confrontational.*) Why not? Why is it Not For Visitors?

GLYNDA. (*Whispering.*) He wouldn't like it.

CINDY. Who?

GLYNDA. Mr. Walt.

CINDY. Walt ... ? (*Peering at GLYNDA.*) But he's ...

GLYNDA. Yes! But he still cares.

CINDY. (*Is she crazy?*) Oh yeah?

GLYNDA. He doesn't like our visitors to be unhappy. Look how upset you're getting. And for what?

CINDY. For what?! You see them? There must be *hundreds* of white horses ...

GLYNDA. This is an unscheduled stop and we must disclaim any ...

CINDY. (*Finally completely realizing.*) This is where they all wind up, isn't it?

GLYNDA. (*Simply, GLYNDA the Good.*) Oh my, oh my, oh my.

CINDY. And all of those couples were princes and princesses?

GLYNDA. Are princes. Are! We can't have this!

CINDY. (*Into her recorder, a reporter.*) Hundreds of white horses have fallen here along with their riders and they're all gorgeous!

GLYNDA. Oh no!

CINDY. The women are dressed up in, (*Squinting.*) *prom* dresses. Many have blond braids.

GLYNDA. (*Aghast.*) You're a journalist!

CINDY. All the guys are hunks in helmets ...

GLYNDA. Forget you saw this please, for your own sake! For your *species*!

CINDY. (*Into recorder.*) They all appear to be smiling expectantly, as if ...

GLYNDA. It had to end! Try to understand, it had to end!

CINDY. (*Childlike anger.*) WHY!?! It says Happily Ever After!

GLYNDA. (*Brightly.*) That's right, dear!

CINDY. That's RIGHT?!

GLYNDA. (*With a sweeping gesture accompanied by stardust.*) Why yes! This is Happily Ever After.

CINDY. This is IT? A dump site!?! (*To her recorder darkly.*) They're all just *laying* there, thick as penguins, far as the eye can see.

GLYNDA. But happily.

CINDY. You call that happily!?

GLYNDA. Goodness, yes. They're just ... (*A rainbow gesture.*) Over.

CINDY. That's not fair.

(*CINDY unexpectedly bursts into tears.*)

GLYNDA. Go ahead and cry if it makes you feel better!

(*GLYNDA hands CINDY a twinkling handkerchief.*)

CINDY. (*Crying.*) It's ... I always thought that *after* was only the Beginning. I thought they'd go a long way after After!

GLYNDA. Oh dear, I know. But you see nothing was written for them.

CINDY. What?

GLYNDA. Just: "The End."

CINDY. (*Explosively ranting.*) That's not fair! After they worked so hard? With the *moats* and the monsters, all the dragons and the towers and hacking through bramble with *witches* flying after them and does the slipper fit or doesn't it and then finally *finally* it's all okay and what!?! They wind up sprawled all over some stupid theme park in Florida!?! That is sick!

GLYNDA. (*Beat, then lamely.*) It's sunny. (*At CINDY's look.*) And you can see they're all quite ... content.

CINDY. Forty acres of horses and lovers ... (*Thought, turns dismayed to GLYNDA.*) Oh no! I bet they didn't even... (get a chance.)

GLYNDA. Into the sunset! Hoofbeats, anticipation! A brief and shining moment. En route. It does keep them smiling. Forever. (*Lamely.*) Jellybean?

CINDY. No thanks. I just lost my appetite.

GLYNDA. This isn't an easy job for me either, being a part-time guide here!

CINDY. ... You an actress?

GLYNDA. A fairy.

CINDY. (*Flatly.*) A fairy.

GLYNDA. An unemployed fairy.

CINDY. Oh yeah?

GLYNDA. You couldn't tell?

CINDY. No, actually, I never met one before.

GLYNDA. So you think!

CINDY. Right. Do I get three wishes or what?

GLYNDA. That's *genies!* That's what I mean! Fairies are completely misunderstood and it's impossible to find work. A tooth here, a tooth there ... *We* are the endangered species nobody talks about. Children ignore our random acts of kindness. Cynics abound. Our forests are cut down and we have nowhere left to go. There are horrible waves in the air from your new-fangled inventions! Oh, how we used to dance to the music of the wind-up Victrola as it wafted gently to the bottom of the garden. And now? We get struck down by words flying through the ether like arrows! "You've got mail!" A million times a night! And what does it *mean* anyhow? (*Disdainfully.*) And the New Age? They've got their angels and their channels but what about us? Nobody cares. You think *you're* disillusioned? I'm disenchanted! I wish I could cry. Fairies can't cry you know. Of course you don't know! Why would you? (*Breaking down.*) Now all I can get is "After"! And it's not even supposed to *exist*. It's strictly Off-Limits ... after all these millennia, I'm NOWHERE!

CINDY. I'm really sorry ... I don't know what to *say* ... (*Looks at her uniform I.D. tag.*) "Glynda". Should I clap? Would that help?

GLYNDA. That doesn't work. Applause and barking and car horns all scare us to death. And by the way, we hate caraway seeds.

CINDY. Oh. Then, well what can I do?

GLYNDA. Just make up your mind! (*At puzzled look, pointedly.*) Before you go back to the Bus.

CINDY. (*Jolted back to reality.*) Bus.

GLYNDA. (*Coaching.*) Your *Beau* on the Bus?

CINDY. Oh ... (*Remembering problem.*) Him. Right.

GLYNDA. Yes *him!* That was why you wandered off, wasn't it?

CINDY. Yeah, I guess it was ... It's such a big commitment! I mean I don't know if I can go through with it. I just ...

GLYNDA. You must decide!

CINDY. Well, if this is Happily Ever After, you know what you can do with it!

GLYNDA. Well, if you've decided against a wedding celebration, I'll just fade out now.

CINDY. Wait! I, I didn't say that. All I said was I don't *know* ...

GLYNDA. Tell me: Does he have a horse?

CINDY. No, they don't ride horses anymore (*With grudging belief.*) Glynda.

GLYNDA. (*Wistfully.*) Things change.

CINDY. Yes!

GLYNDA. But fairies don't. Neither do fairytales.

(*Tiny ping sound.*)

CINDY. (*At ping, small fond smile.*) ... He's got a Jeep Wrangler.

GLYNDA. Ah.

(*Tiny ping sound.*)

CINDY. It was really mine and I sold it to him. That's how we met. See I was selling my car to finance a trip to Nepal and this guy shows up to buy it and then, well we wound up going trekking together and, he's really, uh ... (*Doesn't say "great," but her recall is positive, romantic.*) He's ... we've got a lot in common and ... y'know he's a journalist too ... in fact, he's covering this place ... I mean not *this!* (*Stops abruptly, staring at field, realizing.*) So, you gotta write you *own* After. That's the deal, huh?

GLYNDA. Exactly!

CINDY. (*Gesturing to field.*) It's gotta be better than ...

GLYNDA. It *could* be!

CINDY. (*Getting her point.*) Yeah ... It *could* be anything! Right?

GLYNDA. Right!

(*A small ping.*)

CINDY. Thank you! I want to go back now!

GLYNDA. Good! (*As CINDY turns.*) But you can't take anything with you.

CINDY. What do you mean?!

GLYNDA. Memory. We can't let you ...

CINDY. Look, I swear I won't print the story, okay?

GLYNDA. It's too dangerous. It would end your species.

CINDY. Okay, okay, but you can't make me forget!

GLYNDA. Don't force me to do anything unkind.

CINDY. Now what are you, a *hit* fairy?

GLYNDA. (*Touches CINDY with wand, immediate effect. CINDY freezes in place. Casts spell with wand.*) Now, forget this

field and all tale-spinning, the horse, and all the princes grinning. Forget The End and make a *new* beginning! Forget the pumpkins, the mice, and all witchcrafter, forget it all in love and laughter. Forget, and keep your dream of After.

(*Ping.*)

CINDY. (*Opens her eyes, slight disorientation.*) Hello? ... I thought I ... Excuse me? Where's the bus!?

GLYNDA. It worked! *There* you are, we were just getting worried about you. I'm your tour guide, Glynda?

CINDY. Don't I know you from ... ?

GLYNDA. The Bus. We must hurry. There's a nice young man on line who's waiting for you ...

CINDY. (*Face brightens.*) Oh yeah, *him!* We're getting *married* this weekend!

GLYNDA. How lovely! I'll be there ... (*Correcting her slip.*) in spirit.

CINDY. (*Disoriented.*) I feel like, like I forgot something.

GLYNDA. Like a toothbrush? Here. I carry extras.

CINDY. Thanks ... Did you see a tape recorder anywhere?

GLYNDA. Is this yours? (*Handing her recorder with tape dangling.*) I think it... dropped.

CINDY. (*As jellybeans fall from tape recorder.*) Where did they come from? (*Shaking her head.*) I'm feeling kinda weird.

GLYNDA. (*Steering her away from site.*) Probably something you ate in the cafeteria. Did you eat an apple? Don't worry it's just a spell ... Now what did you say your name was?

CINDY. Cindy?

(*As they exit.*)

GLYNDA. Cindy! Ah, I knew a Cindy once upon a time, long long ago ...

END OF PLAY

LUNCHTIME

by

Rob Marcato