

Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom
Webb County Court-at-Law II
Judge Victor Villarreal

Cinderita versus Stepsisters: A civil mock trial script
appropriate for 4th-5th grade students

Claims: bullying, cyberbullying, mental anguish

Participants in Trial

Presiding Judge	Judge Victor Villarreal
Plaintiff: Cinderita	INSERT
Defendant: Ciruela Malboca	INSERT
Defendant: Amuela Malboca	INSERT
Witness: Prince Guapolindo	INSERT
Witness: Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca	INSERT
Attorney for Plaintiff	INSERT
Attorney for Defendant	INSERT
Bailiff	INSERT

Props

Bag of assorted wrapped candies (Royal Milk Maids, butterscotch discs, strawberry hard candy) (To be removed from judge's sight)

Scene

12 student jurors are seated in the jury box in Webb County Court-at-Law II.

Junior court officers are seated or stand at appropriate stations.

Students comprising the Court of Public Opinion sit on benches with their teachers.

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: All rise.

(Judge enters and sits at his bench.)

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: Webb County Court-at-Law II of the State of Texas is now in session. Judge Victor Villarreal presiding.

JUDGE: Please be seated. Welcome to Webb County Court-at-Law II.

(Judge names each school or college/university represented and asks its students and teachers to stand and be recognized. They are likely to remain standing until asked to be seated, so be sure to ask them to sit.)

JUDGE: Today we have some very special guests. Would the students, teachers and sponsors from (INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL) please stand and be recognized? (APPLAUSE) *(Repeat for each school)*

Please be seated. *(Judge introduces elected and appointed officials and sponsors who are present. He introduces others throughout the trial as they arrive.)*

JUDGE: Three honor guests also are sponsors of our mock trials, Senator Judith Zaffirini, Webb County Commissioner John Galo, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioner Anna Galo. *(Don't introduce them again as honor guests or sponsors.)*

Other honor guests with us today are (INSERT). *(Introduce only those present.)*

Other sponsors with us are (INSERT).

We also are pleased to acknowledge the assistance and inspiration of former U.S. Appellate Judge Ed Prado, now U.S. Ambassador to Argentina, and Webb County's Patty Tijerina San Miguel.

JUDGE: Bailiff!

BAILIFF: The case of Cinderita *(Pronounced in Spanish throughout, seen-dehr-ee-tah—rhymes with Margarita)* versus her Stepsisters is now ready for trial.

(Theme music from “The People’s Court” begins and continues as litigants enter. It should be lowered at appropriate times so that the judge can be heard when introducing and swearing-in the witnesses.)

(Judge calls the plaintiff and her attorney, the defendants and their attorney, the plaintiff’s witness, and the defendant’s witness. As they are called, they enter from the door opposite the judge’s bench, stand before him to be sworn-in, and then sit at their assigned places as the next group is introduced and sworn-in.)

JUDGE: The plaintiff is Cinderita, *(Pronounced in Spanish throughout, seen-dehr-ee-tah—rhymes with Margarita)* and her attorney is (NAME).

(The plaintiff walks in, led by her attorney. She acts sweet, approachable, and humble throughout. They stand before the judge so she can be sworn-in, and then they take their seats at the plaintiff’s table.)

JUDGE: Please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CINDERITA: I do.

(Plaintiff and attorney sit at the plaintiff’s table.)

JUDGE: The defendants, Cinderita’s stepsisters, Ciruela *(Pronounced in Spanish, seehr-weh-lah)* and Amuela *(Pronounced in Spanish, ah-mweh-lah)* Malboca, *(Pronounced in Spanish, mahl-boh-kah)* are represented by their attorney, (NAME).

(Defendants walk in, led by their attorney. They act haughty, conceited, and aloof throughout. The three stand before the judge so the sisters can be sworn in, and then they take their seats at the defense table.)

JUDGE: Please raise your right hands. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: I do.

(Defendants and their attorney sit at the defense table.)

JUDGE: The witness for the plaintiff is Prince Guapolindo.

(Witness walks in, acting charming, approachable, and humble throughout. He stands before the judge to be sworn-in, and then sits at assigned place.)

JUDGE: Please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

GUAPO: I do.

(Witness sits at assigned seat in front of judge's bench, facing the courtroom.)

JUDGE: The witness for the defense is Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca.

(Witness walks in, acting superior, obnoxious, and condescending throughout. She stands before the judge to be sworn-in, and then sits at assigned place.)

JUDGE: Please raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

STEPMOTHER: Seriously, young man? ¿Me ves cara de mentirosa, o que? Do I look like a liar, or are you stupid? ¡No seas topo! (Pronounced in Spanish, noh, seh-ahs, toh-poh)

JUDGE: *(Controlled, but bordering on angry)* This is a court-of-law, ma'am. The proper response is "I do." If you are so rude or sarcastic again, I will hold you in contempt of court and fine you \$500 each time.

STEPMOTHER: Hmmph! "I do," I guess—although it might be worth the \$500 to express myself!

(Judge shakes his head. Prosecutor is mortified.)

(Witness sits at assigned seat in front of judge's bench, facing the courtroom.)

JUDGE: I understand the claims against Ciruela and Amuela Malboca are bullying, cyberbullying, and mental anguish. Is everyone ready to proceed?

ATTORNEYS: Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Will the bailiff please swear-in the jury?

(After the 12 jurors are chosen, the bailiff needs to tell them what they will do during the trial and how they will answer during their swearing-in. If they do not respond appropriately, the bailiff needs to prompt them.)

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: Will the jurors please stand and raise your right hands?

(Jurors stand and raise their right hands.)

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: Do you solemnly swear that you will listen to all the testimony today and decide the issues fairly?

JURORS: I do.

Do you swear that you will not discuss this case with anyone until after you have reached a verdict?

JURORS: I do.

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: You may be seated.

(Jurors sit.)

JUDGE: Does the plaintiff have an opening statement?

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the plaintiff will show that Ciruela and Amuela Malboca are guilty of bullying, which is defined as deliberately hurting, threatening, or scaring someone with words or actions; guilty of cyberbullying, which is bullying through the Internet; and guilty of mental anguish, which is making someone feel really bad, nervous, or depressed.

You will be dismayed to hear evidence about their cruelty to their beautiful stepsister, Cinderita. Some of the names these viejas gachas (*Pronounced in Spanish, vee-eh-hahs, gah-chas*)—these mean bullies—called her are unspeakable because of their crude vulgarity. Some of the vicious pranks they played on her caused her mental anguish, as did the humiliating and embarrassing pictures of her they posted on the Internet.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, prepare to be shocked. When you hear the evidence, you most certainly will agree that Ciruela and Amuela are guilty of

bullying, guilty of cyberbullying, and guilty of mental anguish. They are two rude rucas celosas (*r-roo-kahs*, *sell-loh-sahs*)—jealous hags--nothing more, nothing less.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! We're just starting, and Counselor has already insulted my clients twice. She is badgering them when they're not even on the stand.

JUDGE: Objections sustained. (*Bangs gavel*)

(*Addressing plaintiff's attorney*) Counselor, don't let this be an omen of things to come. In this courtroom we must be respectful to everyone.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: We'll do better, Your Honor.

(*Shrugs shoulders; dismissive*) That concluded my opening statement, anyway.

(*Looking at jury and bowing, charmingly*) Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

JUDGE: Counsel for the defense?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, these charming sisters, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, are innocent of all claims.

We will show that they and their glamorous stepmother, Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca, took Cinderita into their hearts and fabulous mansion after her father died. They allowed her to live with them rent-free, gave her free food, and even free clothes. In exchange, all they asked was that she do her chores. But that wasn't enough for that (*Pointing at Cinderita*) huerquita chiflada. (*Pronounced in Spanish, wehr-kee-tah, chee-flah-dah*) That (*Pointing at Cinderita*) spoiled brat—wanted a totally free ride.

At no time did Ciruela and Amuela bully, cyberbully, or cause Cinderita any mental anguish. You most certainly will disappoint the plaintiff when you hear the evidence and find Ciruela and Amuela innocent of all claims. La celosa apestosa (*Pronounced in Spanish, sell-ohw-sah, ah-pehs-toh-sah*) is Cinderita!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Objection, Your Honor!

Counselor is doing exactly what you just ordered me not to do. She badgered my witness twice in six sentences!

JUDGE: Objection sustained. (*Bangs gavel*)

But what's good for the goose is good for the gander, Counselor. Both of you: Be respectful!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: We will, Your Honor.

(*Addressing jury*) That concludes my opening statement. Thank you.

JUDGE: The plaintiff may call its first witness.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Thank you, Your Honor.

We call Cinderita.

(*Plaintiff takes the witness stand.*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: State your name for the record, please.

CINDERITA: (*Charmingly, engaging audience*) Cintia (*Pronounced in Spanish, Seen-tee-ah*), but my father always called me Cindi (*Pronounced in Spanish, Seen-dee*). After he died, my stepmother and stepsisters started calling me Cinderita. It stuck.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why did they change your name from Cintia (*Pronounced in Spanish, Seen-tee-ah*) or Cindi (*Pronounced in Spanish, Seen-dee*) to Cinderita?

CINDERITA: Since I was always covered in ashes, which they called "cinders" or "cenizas" (*Pronounced in Spanish, seh-knee-sahs*) in Spanish, at first they called me Cinder Ella or Ceni Cienta (*Pronounced in Spanish, Sen-ee, see-en-tah*) in Spanish. Now they call me Cinderita. So does everybody else. Everyone thinks that's my name.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why were you always covered in ashes?

CINDERITA: They made me sleep on the ashes of the coal fire on the laundry room floor.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: You slept on the laundry room floor?

CINDERITA: Yes, sir/ma'am. It was "my own little corner of the world." (*Quoted from "My Own Little Corner of the World" in the Cinderella movie, but, if possible, singing it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ECJ7jSsQws>*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why didn't you sleep on a bed in your room?

CINDERITA: I didn't have a bed or a room.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: What did you do for your stepmother or stepsisters?

CINDERITA: I was their one-person household and personal crew.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Personal? What did you do for them personally?

CINDERITA: They made me do pretty personal things. Like put acne medicine on their pimples and ronchas. (*Pronounced in Spanish, rohn-chahs*) (*Shudders*) (*Pointing at stepsisters*) They both have reddish, evil-looking zits and blemishes.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did you get paid?

CINDERITA: No, sir/ma'am.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: How did your stepsisters treat you?

CINDERITA: Awful! They bullied me day and night, just for fun.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did they call you names?

CINDERITA: Non-stop. Like "cara de rana" (*Pronounced in Spanish, kah-rah, deh, rrah-nah*) and "cola de changa." (*Pronounced in Spanish, koh-lah, deh, chan-gah*) "Frog face" and "monkey tail" were their mild insults. The worst ones were really crude and hurtful, usually about different parts of my body. Downright dirty. Even filthy.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did they harass (*Pronounced in English, harass*) you, that is, pick on you?

CINDERITA: In countless ways. They loved playing sick, cruel jokes on me, like putting worms in the one plate of food I got each day and placing a dead rat on my chest when I slept. (*Shaking her head*) Sooo mean.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did your stepmother ever try to stop this bullying?

CINDERITA: Stop it? No way! She made it worse—and joined them.

All three would hold their noses as if I smelled bad and saying, “¡Pooooo-cheee!”

One time they ganged-up on me and sang, *(Singing:)* “¡Como te apestan las patas! ¡Cera que no te las lavas!” *(Pronounced in Spanish, koh-moh, teh, ah-pehs-tan, las, pah-tahs; seh-rah, keh, noh, teh, lahs, lah-vahs)* In English, that’s, *(Singing in same tune as in Spanish)* “Oh, my, how your feet stink. Must be ‘cuz you never wash them.” I cried all night.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did you at least get to rest when they left the house?

CINDERITA: Never. Whenever they left, they bombarded me with mean lies and rumors sent through text messages and emails.

On Instagram Ciruela and Amuela posted a picture of me sitting on the floor polishing their toe nails at the same time with their four patotas *(Pronounced in Spanish, pah-toh-tahs)*—their four big feet—crowded on my lap. They thought it was hilarious.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did they tweet about you too?

Constantly. They’d post photos of themselves ruining the one meal I got every day. The picture of them pouring smelly, dirty, day-old kitty litter on my food got the most retweets.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did everybody in the household eat only once a day?

CINDERITA: No, sir/ma’am. They ate at least six times a day!

My stepmother and stepsisters regularly had breakfast, lunch, at least three meriendas, and dinner.

(Giggling) That’s probably why they’re not exactly petite! Gorditas, rechonchitas, *(Pronounced in Spanish, gohr-dee-tahs, rreh-chon-chee-tahs)* to be exact! *(Stepsisters act insulted.)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: If they caused you such mental anguish, why did you stay there?

CINDERITA: I had no choice. My mother died when I was a baby. My father married my stepmother when I was almost six, and then he died when I was seven. I had no money and no grandparents or relatives that I know of. Where would I go?

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did you have any happy moments at all during your childhood?

CINDERITA: Oh, yes! I loved the animals in the monte (*Pronounced in Spanish, mohn-teh*) by the Rio Grande.

Also, my father left a magnificent library that my stepmother remodeled into her huge bedroom. Lucky for me, she threw my father's books into the laundry room and never stepped foot in it. They never knew I read every day—and learned many things. I planned for the day I could leave and get a job.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What did you learn on your own?

CINDERITA: Self-esteem books taught me to see the positive side of things. While I worked, for example, I pretended to be in my own study hall and gym. I burned calories and built muscles while scrubbing, ironing, cleaning, and carrying around all that heavy equipment. It worked!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: When did you leave there?

CINDERITA: (*Smiling*) Well, everyone knows my fairy tale dream came true when my madrina, (*Pronounced in Spanish, mah-dree-nah*) my fairy angel Godmother, prettied-me-up to go to the prince's ball. I lost my shoe there when I ran back before midnight. After a year of searching for me, the prince found me—and I had the matching shoe! (*Showing shoe*)

You can imagine my stepsisters' surprise when I left with him.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Did you marry him?

CINDERITA: Not right away, though he asked me to, right away.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why did you decide to sue your stepsisters?

CINDERITA: I realized they're bullies because they're so ignorant and unhappy. And because they're so mean and ugly, and jealous of anyone prettier or richer. That's why I have no need for revenge, but I do believe they should be punished and taught a lesson.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Do you seek monetary damages from your stepsisters?

CINDERITA: Yes, not for me, but for victims of bullying. Whatever the jury would like to award is fine with me.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: No further questions.

JUDGE: Does the defense wish to cross-examine?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did your stepmother and stepsisters allow you to live with them?

CINDERITA: They did.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: And they allowed you to roam freely throughout the house?

CINDERITA: I "roamed" only where I went to clean, cook, wash, or otherwise work.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did make you pay rent?

CINDERITA: They did not.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: So you lived in that enormous, beautiful mansion, rent-free?

CINDERITA: I worked in that mansion, salary-free.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! The witness is being non-responsive.

JUDGE: Sustained. (*Bangs gavel*)

Cinderita, please answer the question.

CINDERITA: Yes, Your Honor.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: How could you look so healthy and so beautiful if you ate such little food?

CINDERITA: (*Smiling*) Well, I had a little secret. I made friends with a cow that lived freely in the monte (*Pronounced in Spanish, mohn-teh*) and sometimes came by to visit. She let me milk her, so I could drink her delicious milk and make some butter and cheese for myself. It was delicious!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: So you stole milk and cheese from your stepmother and stepsisters?

CINDERITA: No sir/ma'am. The cow was as independent as I wanted to be. Nobody owned her. She was nobody's chattel.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did your stepsisters or your stepmother ask you to do chores?

CINDERITA: They never asked. All three commanded. They forced me to "stay in my own little corner of the world" and expected me to "be as mild and as meek as a mouse. When I hear a command, I obey." (*Quoting lyrics from "My Own Little Corner of the World" in the Cinderella movie, but, if possible singing them.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ECJ7jSsQws>)

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Aren't you exaggerating their teasing and their trying to have a little fun with you, by calling it bullying, cyberbullying, or mental anguish?

CINDERITA: No, sir/ma'am. It is what it is.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Why didn't you ever fight back?

CINDERITA: I was afraid they'd throw me out of the house.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: But, meanwhile, you lived in a beautiful mansion, rent-free.

CINDERITA: Yes, sir/ma'am.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: No more questions.

JUDGE: You may step down.

(*Witness returns to her seat at plaintiff's table.*)

JUDGE: The plaintiff may call your next witness.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: The plaintiff calls Prince Guapolindo.

(Witness takes the stand.)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: State your full name for the record, please.

GUAPO: Ricardo Eduardo Francisco, Tomás Sánchez, Montemayor, Medellín, Guapolindo, Alvarado.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: A fittingly long and impressive name for a prince! And as our local genealogist extraordinaire, John Campbell, would point out, a descendant of Laredo's founder, Don Tomás Sánchez, a son of Laredo's first family.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor. That's not a question. And it's not the plaintiff's job to offer fun facts about the founder of the City of Laredo.

JUDGE: Sustained. *(Bangs gavel)*

Counselor, please ask a question.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What do your friends call you?

GUAPO: Guapo. *(Pronounced in Spanish, wah-poh)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: ¡Guapo! *(Pronounced in Spanish, wah-poh)* When girls say, "¡Que guapo!", they mean a man is handsome, chulísimo, *(Pronounced in Spanish, choo-lee-see-moh)* a hunk—right?

And your last name, "Guapolindo," *(Pronounced in Spanish, wah-poh, leen-doh)* that means "darling hunk," right?

GUAPO: *(Smiles)* That's sure not what my guy-friends mean. To them I'm just another vato. *(Pronounced in Spanish, vah-toh)* Another dude. Please call me whatever you like.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: I'll stick to "Prince."

How did you come to know Cinderita and the Malboca family?

GUAPO: They came to my birthday ball at the palace. The stepmother tried mightily to interest me in Ciruela, but, frankly, "Ciruela" is Spanish for "prune," and that's

what her face and personality reminded me of. In English she would be called “Prune-ella.” I associated her with prune juice. Not good!

When that didn’t work, the stepmother tripped Amuela so she’d fall into my arms. Her head hit my jaw, breaking one of my muelas (*Pronounced in Spanish, mweh-lahs*)—my farthest back molar. That’s what her name means in English—a molar.

(Touching the back of his jaw) I thought, what a perfect name, “Ah-muela,” for this girl who broke my muela. Literally, ¡Amuela me amoló! (*Pronounced in Spanish, meh, ah-moh-loh*) She did me in.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Then what happened?

GUAPO: (*Looking dreamily*) The most beautiful princess walked into the ballroom—straight out of a classic fairy tale. ¡Una hermosura! (*Pronounced in Spanish, un-ah, ehr-moh-soo-rah*) She was magical—perfect in every way, inside and out. Beautiful, yes, but, more important, kind, sweet, humble, loving, giving.

It was love at first sight, but, just before midnight, she ran away before I could get her name. She dropped her shoe, and I traveled throughout the land looking for the *chavita bonita*, (*Pronounced in Spanish, chah-vee-tah, boh-nee-tah*) the lovely young lady, who owned the other one.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: How did you find her?

After a year, I approached the Malboca mansion and saw this rather filthy, barefoot ragamuffin (*Pronounced in English, rag-ah-muf-fin*) with even filthier hair. She was cleaning an enormous driveway with a toothbrush. Ciruela and Amuela were laughing maliciously at the windows when I stopped. “¡Bien gachas, las viejas!” (*Pronounced in Spanish, bee-ehn, gah-chas, lahs, vee-eh-hahs*) Totally mean!

The minute I approached the cleaning lady and heard her sweet voice, I knew she was my lost love. I took her in my arms, and, at least in my mind and in my heart, if not in my nostrils, she was transformed into the most exquisite, radiant beauty I saw at the ball, though a lot smellier.

Much to the surprise and chagrin of her stepmother and stepsisters, I asked her to go away with me.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: It didn't matter to you that she was dirty and doing menial work?

GUAPO: Not at all. Although I have to admit, her BO, her body odor, wasn't exactly pleasant, but, geez, at least she didn't have gunk or hairballs in her mouth. I got her to a bathtub as soon as I could. We joke about it to this day.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What do you think of Cinderita's filing a lawsuit and dragging your name through the media and Internet, getting bad press for your royal family?

GUAPO: I think it's great.

(Looking at Cinderita) ¡A todo dar, mamita! *(Pronounced in Spanish, ah, toh-doh, dahr, mah-mee-tah)* Go for it!

She was bullied, harassed, *(Pronounced in English, harassed)* and even physically and emotionally endangered. Now, together we are fighting day and night to stop bullying in our schools and to send appropriate messages to bullies and their victims.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And what message is that?

GUAPO: First, that bullying is against the law, and bullies should be punished. They should either straighten-out, or be sent to the Webb County Youth Village. That's like a scary little jail for children younger than 17. *(Making gesture of bringing his fingers up to his thumb repetitively)* ¡Fuchi! ¡Que miedo! *(Pronounced in Spanish, foo-chee, keh, mee-eh-doh)*

Second, that those who are bullied like Cinderita have to speak up and get help to stop the bullying. They can't just suffer in silence as victims. They need to turn to their parents, teachers, friends, or someone who can help. Third, that we can't ignore this problem. We must help stop it. If not, we are silent conspirators and just as guilty.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Is she happier now as your pretty little princess?

GUAPO: She's pretty, but certainly not my little princess. She is queen in the hearts of all victims of bullying.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And you're giving her the money to go into business?

GUAPO: Oh, no, sir/ma'am. She has her own. She learned so many skills while being held captive. She used that knowledge to establish Cinderita Enterprises. She teaches, consults, and writes books about time management, multi-tasking, domestic science, and personal care. Her favorite topics are self-esteem, self-improvement, and the power of positive thinking. ¡Chiquita, pero picona! (*Pronounced in Spanish, chee-kee-tah, peh-roh, pee-koh-sah*) She may be small, but she sure is spicy!

We also started our own candy making company, Cinder Sweets. (*Holding up bag of assorted candies*) It's fun to give our most popular treats away free to children, but we sell them to adults. (*Showing the bag of assorted candies so the judge, jury, and audience can see it*) In fact, Judge, we brought some for the children who are here today.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! The prince is trying to bribe the judge and jury.

JUDGE: I didn't hear him mention the judge or the jury, Counselor. Objection overruled. (*Bangs gavel*)

Bribery certainly is against the law, but he's not committing it.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Who keeps the profits?

GUAPO: We invest the profits in education, bullying-prevention programs, and scholarships for victims of bullying.

If she wins monetary damages in this lawsuit, she is going to invest that money in her program. ¡Nada tonta, mi guerita! (*Pronounced in Spanish, nah-dah, tohn-tah, mee, weh-ree-tah*) Don't even think of calling her a "dumb blonde."

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! Neither the question nor the response is relevant, and those facts are not in evidence.

JUDGE: Your objection is sustained. (*Bangs gavel*)

The jury will disregard that exchange.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What lesson did you learn from your experience with Cinderita and the Malboca family?

GUAPO: First, that good can triumph over evil, as it should.

Second, that bad things sometimes happen to good people, but good people must persevere.

Third, that bad people can be forgiven, but they must be held accountable, sometimes in court.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: No more questions, Your Honor. Thank you, Prince.

JUDGE: Does the defense wish to cross-examine?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Yes, Your Honor.

(Looking at witness) What do you prefer that I call you?

GUAPO: Whatever you like.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Well, I'll call you what your friends call you: Guapo. But don't think it's because I think you're a hunk!

GUAPO: *(Smiles)* Don't worry....You're not so hot yourself.

JUDGE: Please, both of you. Be respectful in this court.

GUAPO: *(Sincerely)* My apologies.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: *(Contrite)* Mine too.

Did you ever see Cinderita being mistreated or bullied?

GUAPO: Yes.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: *(Incredulous)* You did? When?

GUAPO: Last year.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: What did you see?

GUAPO: As I said, I saw her cleaning an enormous driveway with a toothbrush as her stepsisters laughed viciously.

I saw her dressed shabbily when her stepsisters and stepmother were dressed to the nines.

And I saw what she called her little corner of the world—where she slept on the floor, on the cenizas (*Pronounced in Spanish, sehn-ee-sahs*) by the laundry room fire.

The day I found her, I asked if she had eaten. She told me she ate once a day at 3 p.m., so it wasn't time yet.

When I asked her to pack her things, she had nothing to pack.

When I asked her to come with me, she said she had to finish the yard, clean the house, cook lunch, wash and iron everybody's clothes, wash the cars....

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: (*Interrupting*) You have a team of household helpers who do those very things at your palace, do you not?

GUAPO: Yes—but she did all that alone, while her stepsisters and stepmother did nothing. And she did it for free.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did you ever see Cinderita being cyberbullied?

GUAPO: Yes.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: What did you see?

GUAPO: I went online and checked Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and more. I saw for myself the photos and videos in which they bullied her horrifically without her ever lifting a finger in defense. She acted, indeed, meek as a mouse—and terrified. I even saw a video of them making “saliva sandwiches” and mixing them in with the other leftover sandwiches they left for her. Lonches de babas! (*Pronounced in Spanish, lohn-ches, deh, bah-bahs*) Gross! At least it wasn't vomit.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did you ever see any evidence of her mental anguish?

GUAPO: Yes. When she came to the palace she couldn't sleep, she couldn't eat regularly, and she wouldn't let anyone do anything for her. She wanted nothing more

than to help clean, cook, wash, and tend the gardens—for a salary, of course. She slept on the floor, and only recently did she learn to sleep on a bed.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Do you pay your household help, or do you simply let them live at your palace, rent-free, in exchange for their work?

GUAPO: We pay them fairly, according to their ability, experience, and years on our staff. And we pay men and women equally for equal work. And we pay those who speak two languages, like Cinderita and I do, more than those who speak only one.

Cinderita herself evaluates their workload and ensures everyone is treated respectfully and paid on a salary system similar to the Condrey Plan, the wage-scale policy adopted by the Webb County Commissioners Court.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: But you don't pay Cinderita for her work, do you?

GUAPO: She doesn't work for me. We signed a pre-nuptial agreement, and we're business partners. What's mine is hers, and what's hers is mine. We own everything jointly, and we both deposit our earnings into a joint account. Actually, she's studied more than I have, and, at the rate she's going, and with her investments in South Texas oil and gas, she soon will be richer than I am. Eventually, we fell in love and got married.

(Looking at Cinderita, lovingly as they blow kisses to each other) ¡Mi amor, preciosa!
(Pronounced in Spanish, mee, ah-mohr, preh-see-owh-sah) My precious love!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: So now are you known as Prince Guapo and Princess Cintia? *(Pronounced in Spanish, seen-tee-ah)*

GUAPO: ¡Nombre! *(Pronounced in Spanish, nohm-breh)* We never call ourselves “prince” or “princess.” I call her “Cinderita” because we never want to forget how cruelly she was treated, and so we can always remember how blessed we are to be so in love and so happy.

Besides, this is America. We are a democracy, where all men and women are equal, not a monarchy with royalty.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Thanks for another fun fact.

GUAPO: Yeah, man! (*Fist-pumping in downward circle*) Equal rights for all!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: No more questions for this witness.

JUDGE: You may step down, Prince Guapo.

(*Witness returns to designated seat.*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: The plaintiff rests, Your Honor.

JUDGE: The defense may call its first witness.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: The defense calls Ciruela and Amuela Malboca.

(*Witnesses take the witness stand.*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Objection, Your Honor! The rules call for one witness at a time.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Your Honor, these sisters are being sued together, and they're practically joined at the hip. To avoid repetition and not waste time, I beg for an exception to allow them to testify together.

JUDGE: I'll allow it. Objection overruled. (*Bangs gavel*)

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Please state your names.

CIRUELA: (*Raising her right hand*) Ciruela Malboca.

AMUELA: (*Raising her right hand*) Amuela Malboca.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Where do you two sisters live?

CIRUELA: We usually live in our 30-room mansion by the Laredo Country Club,

AMUELA: but now we live temporarily with our mother in an entire floor of suites at La Posada Hotel/Suites.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: How did Cinderita's departure affect your family?

CIRUELA: We are miserable! She may be *sucia*, (*Pronounced in Spanish, soo-see-ah*) but that nasty girl did her chores passably well.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: And what chores were those?

AMUELA: Typical household chores that boys and girls do:

CIRUELA: She picked-up our clothes, polished our shoes,

AMUELA: cleaned our rooms, made our beds,

CIRUELA: gave us massages, ran our baths,

AMUELA: scrubbed our backs,

CIRUELA: did our nails and make-up,

AMUELA: combed our hair—

CIRUELA: *(Both pat their hair)* You think we can create these masterpieces ourselves?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Why were you miserable after Cinderita left?

CIRUELA: She slandered us, showing no appreciation for our letting her be part of our wonderful family in our magnificent mansion without paying any rent.

AMUELA: She ruined our reputations, so now no one will work for us. That's why we're at the hotel.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did either of you ever bully or cyberbully her or cause her mental anguish?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: *(Shaking their heads, talking over each other)* Nope. ¡Nombre! *(Pronounced in Spanish, nohm-breh)* No way! Uh-uh. ¡Nunca! *(Pronounced in Spanish, noon-kah)* Never!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: And if she says that you did, she would be lying?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: *(Shaking their heads, talking over each other; Ciruela hisses.)* Absolutely! ¡Mentiras! *(Pronounced in Spanish, mehn-tee-rahs)* Lies! ¡Mentirosa! *(Pronounced in Spanish, mehn-tee-roh-sah)* Liar! For sure!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: One more question, did she ever complain about your treatment of her?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: Never!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Pass the witness.

JUDGE: Does the plaintiff wish to cross-examine?

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Yes, Your Honor.

Your last name is Malboca?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: Yes.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And in English, “Mal boca” means “Bad Mouth”?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! Counsel is badgering the witnesses!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: I asked a simple “yes or no” question, Your Honor, asking for a simple translation.

JUDGE: I’ll allow it. Objection overruled. (*Bangs gavel*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Does “Malboca” in English mean “Bad Mouth”?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: (*Sheepishly*) Yes.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And you two “Bad Mouth” sisters sit there accused of bullying, cyberbullying, and causing mental anguish to your stepsister, mostly by badmouthing her?

CIRUELA: You heard her testimony. She loves working and doesn’t even call herself a princess. She doesn’t deserve the title. My mother wanted that for me.

AMUELA: And I was next in line.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Were you jealous of your stepsister when she lived with you?

CIRUELA: (*Ciruela and Amuela gasp audibly; shocked*) Are you serious? She was always totally covered in cenizas and dressed in puras garras, (*Pronounced in Spanish, poo-rahs, gah-rahs*) rags,

AMUELA: while we wore high-end designer fashions—from head to toe.

(*Acting conceited; making “cool” gestures*) We were cool!

CIRUELA: (*Acting conceited; bopping from side to side*) We were hot-hot-hot!

AMUELA: And she slept on the floor in the laundry room, (*Magnificently*) while we each enjoyed our private suite of four rooms.

CIRUELA: (*Incredulous*) Jealous of her?

CIRUELA AND AMUELA: Never!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why didn't Cinderita have her own room?

AMUELA: She didn't need it!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Where did you sleep?

AMUELA: We each slept in our own bedroom, next to our own bathrooms, dressing rooms, and playrooms. (*Insincerely*) Cinderita had the warmest place in the house—the laundry room!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Do you admit you bullied Cinderita by calling her names?

CIRUELA: We only called her cute names that described her perfectly.

AMUELA: That's why she didn't sue us for slander—because the truth is the ultimate defense.

CIRUELA: In case you didn't know that fun fact.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Give us some examples of those “cute names” you called her.

AMUELA: (*Cutely*) Strictly cutesy-tootsy names like lonely loser; poor, pitiful peasant;

CIRUELA: sucia-apestosa— (*Pronounced in Spanish, soo-see-ah, ah-pehs-toh-sah*) or dirty stinky-poo; cara de rana-- (*Pronounced in Spanish, kah-rah, deh, rrah-nah*) or frog face;

AMUELA: raggedy rat; cola de changa-- (*Pronounced in Spanish, koh-lah, deh, rah-nah*) monkey tail;

CIRUELA: moneyless moocher—

AMUELA: and maybe some others.

CIRUELA: (*Exaggerating innocence*) We were just teasing her.

AMUELA: (*Laughing*) You have to agree those are cute, funny names!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Excuse me, but what dark part of your brain did those names come from?

CIRUELA: (*Giggling*) Actually, we rely on “The Mean Girls Dictionary”!

AMUELA: (*Giggling*) We recommend it highly.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What chores did Cinderita do for you that other people won’t since she left?

CIRUELA: Just typical chores and anything our little hearts or our mama’s heart desired.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Like what?

CIRUELA: Like popping our pimples and cleaning our mirrors if our popped pimples squirt pus on them.

AMUELA: and placing grapes or our favorite butterscotch or strawberry candies directly into our mouths, so we don’t have to reach for them.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Do you admit posting embarrassing pictures of her on the Internet, including one of you lying on your velvet lounge by the pool as she put grapes and candies from a silver basket in your mouths because you didn’t want to feed yourselves?

CIRUELA: (*Shocked*) What's wrong with that?

AMUELA: We were tired!

CIRUELA: Don't knock it 'til you've tried it.

AMUELA: You'd love it!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: (*Sarcastically*) Did she chew your food for you too?

AMUELA: (*Answering quickly before attorney can object*) No, but she did brush our teeth and scrub our tongues for us.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! That is irrelevant and immaterial.

JUDGE: Too late, Counselor. She already answered.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: I can't help but think you treated Cinderita more like a slave than as a stepsister or servant. Am I correct?

CIRUELA: No, bozo. We never beat her or mistreated her. Remember: She got everything free.

AMUELA: Besides, our gorgeous mother said she was our chattel and we could do whatever we wanted with her.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Will you tell the jury what "chattel" means?

CIRUELA: That's a piece of property that moves—

AMUELA: like a car, a boat, a bicycle—or Cinderita!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: I'll bet "chattel" is a new word for many people in this courtroom, so thanks for that fun fact.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Didn't your mother ever tell you that mean-spirited teasing can lead to dangerous bullying that hurts innocent victims?

CIRUELA: Are you kidding? She did it too!

AMUELA: We didn't do anything to Cinderita that our mother didn't do. In fact, we learned from watching her.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Do you admit to playing cruel jokes on Cinderita like putting a dead rat on her chest and mixing worms and saliva sandwiches in her only plate of food for the day?

CIRUELA: (*Nodding, sarcastically*) Girls just want to have fun (*Preferably singing it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIb6AZdTr-A>*). She didn't eat much anyway.

AMUELA: (*Nodding, sarcastically*) She never complained about our little jokes. I'm sure she enjoyed them.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What other supposedly innocent, cute little pranks did you play on Cinderita over the Internet or her phone?

AMUELA: Sometimes we'd send her pictures of us eating fabulous food or at beautiful places and write messages such as, "Wish you were here—NOT!" She said we made her feel left out. Well, of course, she was! (Laughing)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why did Cinderita go without eating for 48 hours?

CIRUELA: Well, to be exact, after we ate at noon and had our merienda (*Pronounced in Spanish, meh-ree-ehn-dah*) or snack at 2 p.m., she got a plate of our scrumptious leftovers every day at 3 p.m. That week, she had eaten on Monday. Then on Tuesday she refused her plate.

AMUELA: So she didn't eat again until Wednesday. Nobody stopped her from eating on Tuesday. It was her own fault she didn't eat for 48 hours.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: But why didn't she eat on Tuesday?

AMUELA: She got squeamish—just because we played a little joke of putting used kitty litter in her food.

(Both hold their noses)

CIRUELA: Pee-uuuuu!

AMUELA: Poo-chee!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Do you realize the mental anguish you caused your stepsister?

CIRUELA: (*Angrily*) Do you realize the mental anguish she caused us by abandoning us without anybody to care for us or for our home?

AMUELA: You'd think she'd invite us to live at the palace!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: (*Imitating John McEnroe.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0hK1wyrrAU>) You cannot be serious.

No more questions, Your Honor.

JUDGE: You may step down.

The defense may call its next witness.

(*Witnesses return to the defense table.*)

ATTY FOR THE DEFENSE: The defense calls Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca.

(*Witness takes the stand.*)

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: State your name, please.

STEPMOTHER: (Haughty, but likable throughout) Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca. You may call me Madam. (*Pronounced Mah-dahm*)

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Please tell the jury how Cinderita came to live at your mansion and why she stayed there.

STEPMOTHER: I married her father after her mother died. He loved my two daughters as his own. When he died and left me alone—a lonely, grieving widow with my two daughters and his, we took Cinderita in. We let her live in our enormous mansion rent-free and only asked her to work for her room and board.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: You never charged her anything, and she never paid you anything?

STEPMOTHER: Never.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: How did you treat Cinderita?

STEPMOTHER: *(Looking at Cinderita lovingly as Cinderita looks incredulous)*
Lovingly, the way I would any abandoned child. I treated her like one of my own.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Did you ever see your daughters bully or cyberbully her or cause her mental anguish?

STEPMOTHER: Never.

As you can see for yourself, they are both sweet, well mannered, impeccably dressed, beautiful, and charming young ladies with fabulous hair.

(Stepsisters pat their hair) Either one is fit for a prince.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: No more questions for this witness.

JUDGE: Does the plaintiff wish to cross-examine?

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Yes, Your Honor.

Madam Malboca, do you disagree with anything your daughters said today?

STEPMOTHER: Certainly not. They were perfect in every way—as usual. Aren't they the best?

¡Hermosísimas, mis babies! *(Pronounced in Spanish, ehr-moh-see-see-mahs, mees, bay-bees)* *(Blows kisses at them, and they blow kisses back.)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: You heard your daughters describe the chores that Cinderita did for them. What did she do for you?

STEPMOTHER: Whatever I wanted. Everything she did for them—and more. After all, I am the boss of the household.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: You said you never saw your daughters bully, cyberbully, or cause Cinderita mental anguish. Did you?

STEPMOTHER: Certainly not.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why did you make Cinderita work so hard at home without ever asking your daughters to at least help a tiny bit?

STEPMOTHER: My daughters are my flesh and blood. She isn't.

What's mine will be theirs. She has nothing and will get nothing. Zip! Zero! ¡Nada!
(Pronounced in Spanish, *nah-dah*)

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Why did Cinderita have to sleep on the floor of the laundry room, instead of having her own room?

STEPMOTHER: All the other rooms were taken. (*Magnanimously*) But we let her have the laundry room all to herself.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Could you describe your mansion?

STEPMOTHER: (*Proudly*) Certainly. We have 30 rooms—including 3 living rooms, 3 family rooms, 2 playrooms, 3 media rooms, 6 bedrooms, 2 kitchens, and 10 bathrooms.

Oh, and a cabaña and two swimming pools, a tennis court, and an outdoor kitchen. It's gorgeous.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: What is the source of your income?

STEPMOTHER: Interest earned on my inheritance.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Your inheritance from your parents?

STEPMOTHER: (*Unsure how to answer*) Uh, uh, este. (*Pronounced in Spanish, ehs-teh*) It's a family inheritance.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And do you work to supplement your inheritance?

STEPMOTHER: (*Smiling grandly*) No need to, my dear man/lady. My inheritance will last my lifetime, the lifetime of my two daughters, and the lifetimes of their children and grandchildren. Billions and billions of dollars!

That's billions with a "b."

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Then why wasn't that money enough to take care of Cinderita too?

STEPMOTHER: It most certainly was. We gave her free room and board and made sure she had everything she needed.

You heard her: She had her own little corner of the world, and she was happy.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: So what family member left you such a rich inheritance?

STEPMOTHER: *(Stammering)* Uh, uh, uh. Young man/lady, it's not polite to talk about money.

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor! That is irrelevant.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: It certainly is relevant, Your Honor. Cinderita was working for her room and board and was considered penniless. Her stepsisters were living a life of leisure and considered wealthy. Madam Malboca has no income other than her inheritance. We deserve to know its source.

JUDGE: You are correct. It is relevant. I'll allow it. Objection overruled. *(Bangs gavel)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: To repeat: What family member left you such a rich inheritance?

STEPMOTHER: *(Nervously)* Uh, uh, uh. *(Clears her throat)*

(Suddenly getting haughty) Listen, Junior/Missy, I refuse to answer on the grounds that I don't want to!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Your Honor! There is no legal authority for a witness not answering on the grounds that she doesn't want to!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Your Honor, the plaintiff's attorney is badgering the witness and being emotionally invasive. Madam Malboca is not a litigant. She should not have to answer.

JUDGE: Please stop, both of you. The witness is directed to answer. *(Bangs gavel)*

(Looking at plaintiff's attorney) Repeat the question, please, Counselor.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: I shall, Your Honor—for the third time: Listen carefully, please, Madam Malboca.

(Slowly) What family member left you such a rich inheritance?

STEPMOTHER: *(Stalling)* My...late...husband. *(Everyone reacts—shocked!)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Your late husband? And who bought the Malboca mansion in which Cinderita slaved day and night for you and her two stepsisters?

STEPMOTHER: *(Stalling again)* My...late...husband. *(Everyone reacts—shocked!)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: How many late husbands do you have?

STEPMOTHER: One.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And his full name was?

STEPMOTHER: Fernando Francisco Forbes Rockefeller Malboca Longoria.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Forbes Rockefeller Malboca Longoria?

STEPMOTHER: *(Meekly, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief)* Yes.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: The same Forbes and Rockefeller from the United States and Longorias from México who are billionaires—that’s billionaires with a “b”—and among the richest families of the world?

STEPMOTHER: Yes. *(Everyone reacts—shocked!)*

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And how was he related to Cinderita?

STEPMOTHER: *(Hanging her head down. Mortified)* He was her father.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: He was her father! *(Everyone reacts—shocked!)*

Was he also the biological father of Ciruela and Amuela?

STEPMOTHER: *(Quietly)* No.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: To whom did Cinderita’s father leave his money?

STEPMOTHER: *(Wringing her hands. Dismayed)* To his daughter and to his unknown and unborn heirs.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Not to you and your daughters?

STEPMOTHER: No.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: And who was his biological daughter to whom he left his money?

STEPMOTHER: *(Acting guilty; obviously trapped)* Cinderita.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Cinderita! *(Turning to the jury)* Cinderita!

(Addressing stepmother) And did Cinderita's father ask you to take care of her money?

STEPMOTHER: No, but somebody had to do it. She was five when he died. I volunteered. And did it free, I might add! She owes me!

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: So you and your daughters have been living off the money Cinderita's father left for her, her children, and grandchildren, and the whole time you made her work day and night, treating her like an unloved, abandoned child—and subjecting her to bullying, cyberbullying, and mental anguish?

STEPMOTHER: I never thought of it that way. I meant to do her a favor, to take her in, to treat her like my own....

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: That's exactly the problem. You didn't treat her like your own, and now we discover you took what was rightfully hers.

That issue, I assure you, Madam, will be addressed in court another day!

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Objection, Your Honor!

JUDGE: Sustained. *(Bangs gavel)*

Let's move on.

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: *(Angry)* No more questions for this "witness."

JUDGE: You may step down.

(Witness rushes back to designated seat, mortified.)

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: We have no more witnesses, Your Honor. The defense rests.

JUDGE: Very well. We will now hear closing arguments. Is the plaintiff ready?

ATTY FOR PLAINTIFF: Yes, Your Honor. Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, what can I say? Surely you are as shocked as I am with these late developments. This truly is a fractured fairy tale—an unlikely side of the story.

We have presented evidence that Ciruela and Amuela caused Cinderita mental anguish through their bullying and cyberbullying.

Her stepsisters bullied her relentlessly, calling her names like cara de rana—frog face—and poor pitiful peasant. They were cruel to her, putting dead animals in her food and on her chest while she slept; forcing her to sleep on warm ashes on the floor of the laundry room, while they slept in luxury personal suites that were bigger than most homes; and harassing and humiliating her online.

They testified that their mother never stopped them. In fact, they said they didn't do anything to Cinderita their mother didn't do. That they learned from her. Parents should stop their children from bullying, not show them how. How very, very sad. And how very, very wrong. ¡Muy triste!

Ciruela and Amuela admitted they treated Cinderita like “chattel,” like their own moving property—like a car or a bike. They made her feel poor and unloved—when only in the last few minutes did we discover that Cinderita's stepmother and stepsisters have been spending her money that her father left to her. Shocking. Truly shocking. As promised, believe me, that theft will be addressed in this court another day.

Today, however, in the name of justice, I ask you to send a message to these bullies and to bullies everywhere: They will be stopped, they will be held accountable, and they will be punished.

Send another message to their victims: You feel their pain and will protect and defend them.

And send a special message to parents: Stop your children from bullying, and don't be bullies like this Madam. We'll also deal with that another day.

I had planned to ask for \$100,000 in damages for Cinderita. Based on what we learned just a few minutes ago, I ask that you award damages of \$100 million. That's just a very small fraction of what these multi-billionaires have in the bank. And when we take them to court on new charges, it's all going to be Cinderita's anyway. But whatever you award to her will go to her anti-bullying effort now.

Please consider the evidence and find the Bad Mouth sisters, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, guilty of bullying, guilty of cyberbullying, and guilty of mental anguish. We'll deal with their mother another day.

Thank you.

JUDGE: Counsel for the defense?

ATTY FOR DEFENSE: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, don't be fooled by the trickery of the plaintiff. His/her trick questions at the end and his/her discovery of the money left to Cinderita really are a fractured or twisted fairy tale.

Besides, Ciruela and Amuela had no clue they were spending Cinderita's inheritance. Don't blame these two preciosas (*Pronounced in Spanish, preh-see-owh-sahs*) for what their mother did.

Remember: Madam Wannah B. Ritzy Malboca is not on trial today. Her loving, lovable daughters are. If Cinderita wants revenge, let her sue her stepmother another day. If you punish these girlie-girls for what their mother did, you will be (*Pointing at stepsisters*) victimizing them—not (*Pointing at Cinderita*) punishing her.

You heard Ciruela and Amuela and their mother testify they treated Cinderita as their own, allowing her to live in their beautiful mansion, rent-free. She roamed the rooms freely, never being restricted to one part of the house. All they asked in return was that she perform some household chores, as most children do. As you probably do. If they bullied her, why didn't she ever complain or strike back? ¡No es nada sonsa! (*Pronounced in Spanish, noh, ehs, nah-dah, sohn-sah*) Clearly, she's not stupid.

These two lovely ladies simply teased her a little. That's no big deal! You've heard the words: "Sticks and stones may break my bones. But words will never hurt me." Does Cinderita look like she's hurting? I don't think so!

Regardless of her history, Cinderita is now a princess. She doesn't need any more money. Instead of being grateful to those who took her in when her father died, she is seeking revenge. Why? Because she wasn't as pretty or as popular as her two stepsisters. Now she is flaunting that she is a princess and they are not, and she is using her newfound wealth to bully them in this court and cause them mental anguish.

Ciruela and Amuela deny, deny, deny all allegations against them. You should too. Please find these lovely sisters did not bully, did not cyberbully, and did not cause Cinderita mental anguish. If their mother did, deal with her another day.

Thank you.

JUDGE: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the evidence in this case. Now it is up to you to decide if Ciruela and Amuela are liable for the plaintiff's claims. Please use your 10 minutes to consider all the evidence you heard.

Bailiff, please escort the jury to the jury room to consider the verdict.

(Bailiff and deputy bailiff lead the jury to the jury room to vote on the verdict. An attorney should be with jurors in the jury room to answer any questions. Upon arriving at a consensus, they return to the courtroom to announce the verdict.)

(During the 10 minutes allowed for the jury to deliberate, the judge convenes other students in the Court of Public Opinion, asking them the same questions the jury will answer. If there is time afterward, he invites students to ask him questions.)

Please be seated.

After we hear the verdict and the trial is adjourned, our elected officials and honor guests will be invited to join the groups of students who will be photographed with the cast at the bench.

First, however, it is my pleasure to convene the students as a Court of Public Opinion.
(Bangs gavel)

The purpose of our Court of Public Opinion is to ask how you, the public, represented by students here today, feel about whether Ciruela and Amuela bullied, cyberbullied, and caused Cinderita mental anguish.

So I will ask you the same questions that the jury will answer. We will have a voice vote. If I can't tell how the majority feels, then we will have a standing vote.

Are you ready?

First, remember that “bullying” means deliberately hurting, threatening, or scaring someone with words or actions.

If you agree that the stepsisters did bully Cinderita, say, “Yes!” *(Pause)*

If you disagree, say, “No!” *(Pause)*

The (Yeses) (Nos) prevail. *(Bangs gavel)*

(If outcome isn't clear from voice vote, ask for the “yes” voters to stand, have staffers ready to count them, and ask them to be seated. Then ask the “no” voters to stand, have staffers count them, and ask them to be seated. Announce results.)

Second, “cyberbullying” means bullying through the Internet.

If you agree that Ciruela and Amuela did cyberbully Cinderita, say, “Yes!” *(Pause)*

If you disagree, say, “No!” *(Pause)*

The (Yeses) (Nos) prevail. *(Bangs gavel)*

(If outcome isn't clear from voice vote, ask for the “yes” voters to stand, have staffers ready to count them, and ask them to be seated. Then ask the “no” voters to stand, have staffers count them, and ask them to be seated. Announce results.)

Third, “mental anguish” means making someone feel really bad, nervous, or depressed. If you agree that Ciruela and Amuela did, cause Cinderita mental anguish, say, “Yes!” *(Pause)*

If you disagree, say, “No!” *(Pause)*

The (Yeses) (Nos) prevail. *(Bangs gavel)*

(If outcome isn't clear from voice vote, ask for the “yes” voters to stand, have staffers ready to count them, and ask them to be seated. Then ask the “no” voters to stand, have staffers count them, and ask them to be seated. Announce results.)

Finally, if you agree that Ciruela and Amuela should pay monetary damages to Cinderita, say, “Yes!” *(Pause)*

If you disagree, say, “No!” *(Pause)*

The (Yeses) (Nos) prevail. *(Bangs gavel)*

(If outcome isn't clear from voice vote, ask for the “yes” voters to stand, have staffers ready to count them, and ask them to be seated. Then ask the “no” voters to stand, have staffers count them, and ask them to be seated. Announce results.)

So this Court of Public Opinion finds that Ciruela and Amuela are liable for _____ claims, namely, _____; and are not liable for _____ claims, namely, _____.

The Court also finds that Ciruela and Amuela should _____ should not _____ pay monetary damages to Cinderita.

Now let's see what the 12 jurors find.

(If jurors haven't returned, engage in Q&A, as follows.)

While we wait for them, we have time for a question or two. Who has a question?

(Q&A with students. Be sure to repeat each student's question before answering it. Keep answers short to allow more students to ask questions.)

(A staff member should hand the judge a note that the jury is ready.)

(Bailiff and deputy bailiff enter. If necessary, they interrupt proceedings.)

BAILIFF OR DEPUTY BAILIFF: Your Honor, the jury has reached a verdict.

(Jurors enter and return to the jury box.)

JUDGE: Ms./Mr. Foreperson, have you reached a verdict?

FOREPERSON: Yes, Your Honor, we have. We find the defendants, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, did _____ or did not _____ bully Cinderita, did _____ or did not _____ cyberbully Cinderita, and did _____ or did not _____ cause Cinderita mental anguish.

We also award \$ _____ in damages, payable to Cinderita.

(IF NOT LIABLE)

JUDGE: The jury has spoken, and the defendants have been found not liable for the claims against them.

The defendants and their attorney may be seated.

Thank you, boys and girls, for listening carefully and making this important decision.

(IF LIABLE)

JUDGE: The jury has spoken, and the defendants have been found liable for the claims against them.

Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, I sentence you to _____ hours of community service, working in Cinderita's Bullying Prevention Program. You shall visit schools such as (INSERT THE SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING THAT DAY) and talk to bullies and to their parents and victims. Your goal will be to show bullies of all ages the errors of their ways and show victims of bullying there is hope for them, just as there was for Cinderita. You also will show parents of bullies how to stop such bad behavior, not make it worse.

Cinderita will supervise your work and authenticate your hours. If you don't meet her standards, we will see you back in court and consider sending you to the Webb County Youth Village.

You also are ordered to pay \$ _____ in monetary damages, payable to Cinderita. She may use it as she wishes, and may, but is not required to, invest it in her Bullying Prevention Program.

(Plaintiff and defendants react appropriately, based on the jury's verdict. Judge may make an appropriate statement to the defendants, especially if they are found liable for the claims. If they are found liable for one claim, but not for another, the judge must respond accordingly.)

The defendants and their attorney may be seated.

JUDGE: Boys and girls, thank you and your teachers for being with us today. We hope you have enjoyed this mock trial as much as you have learned from it.

(Judge introduces director, cast members, and author, and they stand to be recognized.)

We are especially grateful to the director of this mock trial, Tony Bondoc, and the assistant director, Javier Sanchez.

I know you enjoyed the outstanding performances of (INSERT CHARACTERS AND THE NAMES OF ACTORS WHO PORTRAYED THEM.).

And we are grateful to the author of the mock trial script and of your handbook, Senator Judith Zaffirini.

JUDGE: Cinderita and her prince, the stepsisters and their mother, and the attorneys will be available to take pictures with you. The elected officials and honor guests who are here also are invited to join us.

Boys and girls, we hope you enjoyed seeing justice in action in today's Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom. You saw for yourselves the importance of obeying the law and what can happen when you do not obey the law. You also witnessed the dangers and consequences of bullying and cyberbullying

Please come back to visit your Webb County Court-at-Law II, and tell your friends and family members they are welcomed too.

This court is adjourned. *(Bangs gavel)*

(Judge rises and joins cast, students, and elected officials for photos.)

CAUSE NUMBER 2018-0427-L2

Cinderita	§	IN COUNTY COURT-AT-LAW
	§	II
VERSUS	§	
	§	
the Stepsisters	§	WEBB COUNTY, TEXAS

Definitions

Bullying means deliberately hurting, threatening, or scaring someone with words or actions

Cyberbullying means bullying someone through the Internet

Mental Anguish means making someone feel really bad, nervous, or depressed

VERDICT

We, the jury, find the defendants, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, did _____ or did not _____ **bully** Cinderita.

We, the jury, find the defendants, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, did _____ or did not _____ **cyberbully** Cinderita.

We, the jury, find the defendants, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, did _____ or did not _____ cause Cinderita **mental anguish**.

We, the jury, find the defendants, Ciruela and Amuela Malboca, should pay Cinderita \$ _____ in monetary damages.

SIGNED on the _____ day of _____, 2018.

FOREPERSON