To find the happy ending, go back to the beginning.
That’s the path Tony-nominated playwright Douglas Carter Beane followed while giving “Cinderella” a makeover: from TV tunefest to full-fledged Broadway musical.
That musical makeover, now on tour, checks into The Smith Center’s Reynolds Hall on Tuesday for an eight-performance run, showcasing a score by the legendary “Oklahoma” and “Sound of Music” team of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II.

Not bad for a show that, at first, Beane didn’t even want to do.
After reading different versions and pondering all three “Cinderella” TV productions — 1957’s live broadcast, which starred Julie Andrews; 1965’s, which introduced Lesley Ann Warren; and 1997’s, with Brandy in the title role and Whitney Houston as her fairy godmother — Beane’s “initial impression was not a pretty one,” he acknowledges.
Not only was Cinderella “so passive,” the playwright notes during a telephone interview, but her fairy-tale existence set “unrealistic goals for people,” he adds.
“If you’re pretty, you’re going to get everything you want. And if you just cry, a fairy godmother will come along to make sure you do.”

Beane was reminded of his trouble with “Cinderella” while perusing a storybook with his daughter, who responded to illustrations of Prince Charming — depictions that didn’t even show his face — by telling her father, “He’s so handsome — he loves her so much.”

Yet when producer Robyn Goodman and Ted Chapin, who’s president of the Rodgers and Hammerstein organization, asked him to rework the script, Beane said “maybe” — provided Cinderella — or, to use her real name, Ella — “could be an active female lead.”
He then went back to the beginning — all the way back to the 17th-century version of the tale, Charles Perrault’s “Cendrillon, ou la Petite Pantoufle de Verre,” the original inspiration for Continued on Page 27