

Rodgers + Hammerstein's

CINDERELLA

Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
New Book by Douglas Carter Beane
Original Book by Oscar Hammerstein II

APPLAUSE
THEATRE & CINEMA BOOKS

AN IMPRINT OF HAL LEONARD CORPORATION

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 In association with Center Theatre Group and Charles Salameno

Produced by Arrangement with Rodgers & Hammerstein: An
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SCENES

ACT ONE

Prologue: A Forest
 Scene 1: A Rocky Glen
 Scene 2: Outside Madame's Cottage
 Scene 3: The Throne Room of the Royal Palace
 Scene 4: The Town Square
 Scene 5: Inside Madame's Cottage
 Scene 6: Outside Madame's Cottage
 Scene 7: Flight to the Castle
 Scene 8: The Castle Ballroom
 Scene 9: The Palace Steps

ACT TWO

Scene 1: The Palace Steps
 Scene 2: The Forest
 Scene 3: Outside, then Inside, Madame's Cottage
 Scene 4: Another Part of the Forest
 Scene 5: Inside Madame's Cottage
 Scene 6: The Palace Steps
 Scene 7: The Palace
 Scene 8: The Royal Gardens

ACT ONE

Prologue

SCENE: *A Forest*

(*ELLA, a young, beautiful girl, in provincial clothes, enters with a cart, looking for firewood. We hear an unseen CHORUS sing.*)

CHORUS

The fields are aglow in autumn yellow,
And the sky is a robin's egg blue.
It makes you wish,
When you fall asleep,
You will dream about the view.
Bizarre and improbable and pretty
As a page from the fairy-tale books,
It makes you wish
That the world could be
As lovely as it looks.

ELLA

It makes you wish
That the world could be

ELLA & CHORUS

As lovely as it looks.

MADAME

(*Offstage*)

Cinderella!

(*ELLA runs off into the woods.*)

Scene One

SCENE: *A Rocky Glen*

(KNIGHTS of the Royal Court stalk through the forest. Suddenly, a GIANT appears. The KNIGHTS and GIANT do battle. The towering GIANT quickly takes the upper hand, throwing KNIGHTS left and right. TOPHER, the Prince of the kingdom, appears in full battle splendor. TOPHER quickly outwits the GIANT, causing it to fall slowly to the ground. TOPHER takes a triumphant pose atop the GIANT.)

TOPHER

I just wish I was doing something more important with my life.
(A general groan of dismay from the soldiers—not this again.
SEBASTIAN, the Lord Protector, an overly elegantly dressed man of the court, steps forward. LORD PINKLETON follows him.)

SEBASTIAN

Worrying about that self-worth again, Prince Topher?

TOPHER

It all just comes too easily.

SEBASTIAN

The fact remains, sire—You will be king and very soon. When your sainted mother and father passed away and left you in my charge, I promised them when you came of age you would be prepared for your reign.

(A PAGE BOY brings out the PRINCE's horse.)

TOPHER

I know, Sebastian, I know. And I guess I am ready to be a king.

The thing of it is: I just don't even know who I am yet.

SEBASTIAN

I'm sure it will come to you. Until then, might I suggest faking it?

TOPHER

Really?

SEBASTIAN

You wouldn't be the first and you wouldn't be the last.

LORD PINKLETON

To the castle?

TOPHER

To the castle.

(TOPHER mounts the horse. SEBASTIAN walks along as TOPHER rides on horseback. PAGE BOYS with banners and the KNIGHTS march with them. The scenery changes behind them.)

TOPHER

Still. These questions. Nag me. Nag. Nag.

(The horse whinnies. TOPHER pats the horse's neck as he rides)

No, not you, Buttercup. I just wonder.

(Sings)

Me, who am I?

A far-from-perfect guy—

A bum who wants to do what's right

But often does what's wrong,

A kid whose voice is way off-key

But loves to sing a song,

A guy who dreams like a lion |

But wakes up like a lamb—
 Me, who am I
 But the guy
 I am?
 That's
 Who'm I.

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON

His Royal Highness
 Christopher Rupert—
 Slayer of dragons—
 Pitiless to ogres—
 Destroyer of griffins and giants—
 No friend to gargoyles!
(The dragon flies overhead.)

LORD PINKLETON

Dragon!

TOPHER

No, n-n-no, I got it! I got it! C'mon!

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON

Nice to the needy—
 Sportsman and poet—
 A guy who dreams like a lion
 But wakes up like a lamb—
*(The dragon shoots a giant fireball. TOPHER fires his slingshot.
 We hear the dragon fall and land with a massive "THUMP."
 TOPHER and the KNIGHTS react to the aftershock.)*

TOPHER

Me, who am I
 But the guy I am?

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, LORD PINKLETON

He's our hero!

TOPHER

Oh, stop.

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, LORD PINKLETON

Such perfection!

TOPHER

That's very kind of you.

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON

He's the kind of guy who we'd all like to be.

TOPHER

I appreciate it.

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON

What's the use of
 Self reflection?

TOPHER

Too much.

KNIGHTS, SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON

Church bells will ring
 When you are king.

People will sing
There is no one quite like—

TOPHER
Me,
Who am I?
A far-from-perfect
Guy—
A jerk who wants to do what's
right
But often does what's wrong,
A drip whose voice is way
off-key
But loves to sing a song,
A guy who dreams like a lion
But wakes up like a lamb—

Me, who am I

But the guy I am?
That's who'm
I.
That's
Who'm
I.

Ha!

KNIGHTS
His Royal Highness
Christopher Rupert—
Slayer of dragons—
Pitiless to ogres—
Destroyer of griffins and
giants—
No friend to gargoyles!
Nice to the needy—

Sportsman and poet—
Swordsman—Statesman—
Nifty dancer, sailor of the
oceans
Surveyor of the mountains
and valleys
He's a prince
What a guy! What a guy!
What a guy! What a guy!
He's a plain and simple
Complicated, fascinating
Guy!
What a guy!
Guy!

(The march ends outside MADAME'S cottage. The KNIGHTS march off.)

Scene Two

SCENE: *Outside Madame's Cottage*
(A provincial cottage, with a wishing well nearby. As TOPHER and his MEN stop, a pumpkin rolls onstage, followed by ELLA. SEBASTIAN stops the pumpkin with his foot.)

SEBASTIAN
You there! Impoverished person! Fetch us some water!

ELLA
Yes, sir.

TOPHER
Don't talk to her that way. How do you know she's poor?

SEBASTIAN
Look at her. She's filthy.
(ELLA draws water from the well into a gourd, which she then gives to TOPHER.)

ELLA
Here you are, sire.

TOPHER
Thank you, young lady. *(Seeing her and smiling)* That's very kind of you.
(TOPHER takes a sip of water and looks at ELLA.)

ELLA
(Blushing)
It's just water.

SEBASTIAN

Give her some money.

TOPHER

Really?

(ELLA exits with the pumpkin.)

SEBASTIAN

Yes! It's charity! You have things and she doesn't. You're going to give her some of your things, so she doesn't have a revolution and take all of your things.

(MARIE, a woman in rags, enters. ELLA reenters with her cart.)

MARIE

Spare change, any spare change?

SEBASTIAN

The moment charity is mentioned, out comes every lay-about!

TOPHER

(Handing MARIE a coin)

Here you are, old woman.

MARIE

Thank you. Bless you, kind sir.

(MARIE reaches out to TOPHER. SEBASTIAN and LORD PINKLETON draw their swords.)

SEBASTIAN

Be careful, my Lord, many of the very poor have weapons.

LORD PINKLETON

Be gone with you.

ELLA

No! Good sirs, that is merely Crazy Marie. She lives in the woods and comes to town only to gather what others throw away. She is gentle in every way. Sweet and delicate, but nuts.

TOPHER

She is harmless, I can tell. Sebastian, Lord Pinkleton, sheathe your swords. *(To ELLA)* You are a good friend to Marie. How lucky she is to have a true friend such as you. I wish I had a true friend.

SEBASTIAN

I'm standing right here.

LORD PINKLETON

Shall we journey on?

TOPHER

Very well, Pinkleton. *(Giving ELLA a coin)* Be well, young lady.

ELLA

I don't want charity.

TOPHER

Take the coin then as a present, in admiration for a true friend in this world. Buttercup! *(TOPHER begins to ride off, with his FOLLOWERS. He remembers he has the drinking gourd)* Oh, here, sorry. *(Gives it back to ELLA)* Lot on my mind. *(Exits.)*

MARIE

Thank you for saving my life, dear Ella. I shall return the favor.

ELLA

I didn't do it to have a favor returned.

(ELLA looks off in TOPHER's direction.)

MARIE

I have a shawl here that only has a few holes and smells of cabbage. You can wear it.

ELLA

Not necessary. What a handsome man that was, and so kind and generous.

MARIE

That is but not a man, that is Prince Topher, the slayer of giants and dragons. He has just returned to us from university. He is to be crowned king.

ELLA

That man? A world leader? But he appears to have a heart, mind, and soul, it can't be. Marie, you're crazy.

MARIE

Yes, I am. But that does not change the fact that he is our own Prince Topher and he has returned to be our ruler—look at your coin, dear.

ELLA

(Looking at the coin)

Why, it is him. From the left. Such silly ears. And the crown doesn't help things, he should wear a floppy hat. (They laugh

warmly) Here Marie, please take this coin. Buy yourself something warm to eat.

(As she hands the coin to MARIE, JEAN-MICHEL, a wild-haired, bespectacled revolutionary, enters.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Why is it always the very poorest who are the most generous? It breaks my heart.

MARIE

Here is our Jean-Michel. He will spout gibberish now and bore us.

ELLA

(To MARIE)

Be nice. (To JEAN-MICHEL) Good day, Jean-Michel.

JEAN-MICHEL

And do you know why the poor are the kindest, Ella and Crazy Marie?

MARIE

No, but I have a feeling you are about to be most forthcoming.

JEAN-MICHEL

Because it is a corrupt system, with a smashed moral compass.

MARIE

You will forgive me if I just stagger about and mutter. (She does so.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Today I will be going alone to the castle to protest the corruption that riddles our government! You must come with me!

MADAME
(*Offstage*)

Cinderella!

MARIE
That is Madame, Ella's stepmother!

JEAN-MICHEL
I shall shout to the prince! He will have no choice but to listen!

MADAME
(*Offstage*)

Cinderella!

MARIE
You are in harm's way!

JEAN-MICHEL
I have a vision for what this kingdom could be.

MADAME
(*Entering*)

Cinderella! Help me with my parcels this instant! Cinderella, lazy step-daughter, help me with my package! (*ELLA scrambles to do so*) Careful! Careful!! No one knows the extreme torture I am subjected to. (*Notices MARIE and JEAN-MICHEL*) I'm ignoring that. Charlotte, Gabrielle, come daughters, come!

(*GABRIELLE and CHARLOTTE enter, beautifully dressed.*)

GABRIELLE
We are here, Mama!

CHARLOTTE
We are exhausted being as beautiful as we look.

MADAME
Cinderella, idle girl, come help your stepsisters with their shrewd purchases. Into the house, daughters—the real ones.
(*MADAME enters the house with CHARLOTTE.*)

GABRIELLE
(*Helping ELLA collect her packages*)
Madame isn't always terrible. Sometimes she sleeps.

JEAN-MICHEL
Gabrielle. I have brought from university a book for you, with pictures of how people in other lands live. And how they govern. Norway, Italy, Japan . . .

GABRIELLE
I have mentioned my interest in these places only in passing. And you have brought a whole book. (*Blushing*) Quit it, you.

JEAN-MICHEL
And four days from now I would like to take you on a date. I'm organizing a soup kitchen. We need someone to stir. And ladle.

MADAME
(*Re-entering*)
Gabrielle! Do not talk to that man. We are teetering precariously between upper-middle class and lower-upper class. We cannot be seen talking with a revolutionary. Into this house at once.
(*GABRIELLE gives the book back to JEAN-MICHEL and runs into the house. MADAME follows her into the house.*)

JEAN-MICHEL

Why do I care? Why do I try? I'll never be good enough for her.
I will take this book and burn it!

MARIE

Why not give the book to dear Ella?

ELLA

If it's quite all right, Jean-Michel, I would love to look at your
book of how other countries live.

JEAN-MICHEL

(Hands ELLA the book)

Then here, Ella. Take it. I shall go my way alone and live my own
life. I'm a loner! *(To MARIE)* You're coming with me, right?

MARIE

Of course.

JEAN-MICHEL

Good.

(MARIE and JEAN-MICHEL exit. ELLA looks at the book.)

ELLA

A book. It's been so long since I owned something, just me.
(MADAME enters from the cottage. ELLA quickly hides the book.)

MADAME

Cinderella? Get in there and clean the kitchen.

ELLA

(Sweetly)

I've just finished it.

MADAME

Then prepare the dinner.

ELLA

(With a bit of pride)

It's on the stove.

MADAME

Then the bed must—

ELLA

Beds are turned down and your bed clothing is all laid out.

MADAME

Well. Where'd you get that book?

ELLA

Jean-Michel just gave it to me.

MADAME

So nice that people just give you gifts. Still Daddy's little girl.
(Notices a coat hanging by the door) And what's this doing here?

ELLA

That's my father's coat.

MADAME

It's rags.

ELLA

It's all I have to remember him by.

MADAME

(Rips the coat)

It's rags now. Clean the porch with these rags.

(MADAME throws the coat on the ground and exits. ELLA picks it up and hugs it. She then sits on a stool with her book.)

ELLA

I'm as mild and as meek as a mouse;
 When I hear a command I obey.
 But I know of a spot in my house
 Where no one can stand in my way.
 In my own little corner,
 In my own little chair,
 I can be whatever I want to be.
 On the wing of my fancy
 I can fly anywhere
 And the world will open its arms to me.
 I'm a young Norwegian princess or a milkmaid,
 I'm the greatest prima donna in Milan,
 I'm an heiress who has always had her silk made
 By her own flock of silkworms in Japan!
 I'm a girl men go mad for,
 Love's a game I can play
 With a cool and confident kind of air,
 Just as long as I stay
 In my own little corner,
 All alone
 In my own
 Little chair.

(A FOX emerges from the wood box)

I can be whatever I want to be.

I'm a thief in Calcutta,

I'm a queen in Peru,

I'm a mermaid dancing upon the sea.

(A RACCOON emerges from within a nearby tree)

I'm a huntress on an African safari—

(It's a dang'rous type of sport and yet it's fun.)

In the night I sally forth to seek my quarry,

And I find I forgot to bring my gun!

I am lost in the jungle

All alone and unarmed

When I meet a lioness in her lair!

Then I'm glad to be back

In my own little corner,

All alone

In my own

Little chair.

(The song proper ends. ELLA sings as she wanders into the woods.)

ELLA

I can be whatever I want to be,

(TOPHER appears on his throne.)

TOPHER

Just as long as I stay

In my own little corner,

ELLA

All alone

TOPHER

All alone

ELLA

In my own

TOPHER

In my own

ELLA & TOPHER

Little chair.
(ELLA *exits into the woods.*)

Scene Three

SCENE: *The Throne Room of the Royal Palace*
(SEBASTIAN, PINKLETON, and other POLITICAL FIGURES join
TOPHER in his throne room.)

LORD PINKLETON

Your Majesty,
Your Majesty,
A list of the lords entreating thee.

TOPHER

A list of the lords entreating me with what?

LORD PINKLETON

A hundred and five requests.

TOPHER

That seems a lot.

SEBASTIAN

I'll take this. (*To TOPHER*) Your Majestic Highness, in honor of your upcoming coronation we proudly proclaim your kingdom a land of plenty and bounty. May I have the imprimatur of your ring on this other announcement?

TOPHER

Oh right, sorry. What's it for?
(TOPHER *stamps the papers with his ring.*)

SEBASTIAN

It's complicated. Do you really want me to go into it?

JEAN-MICHEL

(Offstage, as if outside the palace)

Prince Topher, listen!

TOPHER

What was that?

JEAN-MICHEL

You must take responsibility for your actions!

TOPHER

Who's that yelling from the other side of the moat?

JEAN-MICHEL

The people are being treated unfairly by your government!

TOPHER

He seems upset.

SEBASTIAN

Rabble-rouser! Ignore him. I have this new law which forbids any—actually if you let me have the ring, it would save the trip.

(TOPHER tosses the ring. SEBASTIAN stamps away. TOPHER looks out the window.)

TOPHER

Shouldn't we listen to what he has to say? People were never upset with Mom and Dad. Were they?

SEBASTIAN

Your parents had the good fortune to be royalty in a time of plenty. But since their unfortunate demise, I have done my best to run

this country. I've done my best to raise you in the finest schools.

JEAN-MICHEL

Hello, I'm talking here!

TOPHER

We should invite him up for a talk.

SEBASTIAN

Ignore him.

JEAN-MICHEL

I will not give up! If you won't listen, I'll shout this to the town square.

SEBASTIAN

Shout this to the town square—perhaps it's time for a distraction.

TOPHER

What kind of distraction?

SEBASTIAN

A royal wedding.

TOPHER

Wow. And does that work?

SEBASTIAN

Like a dream every time.

TOPHER

But, who will get married?

SEBASTIAN

Well . . . you.

TOPHER

That's just silly. I don't know any girls. I went to an all-boys school off in the woods. And then attended an all-male university, on an island. Why did you do that to me?

SEBASTIAN

For this happy day—I am going to find you a bride—oh, happy the day!

TOPHER

This is nonsense. How will you find me a bride?

SEBASTIAN

We shall have a magnificent ball. Dancing.

TOPHER

What?

SEBASTIAN

Every eligible young woman who can afford a gown will attend. That is a wonderful selection process right there. If you can't afford a nice dress, you don't have any business marrying a prince. Now. All the guests will be in masks. You will dance with every girl. At the stroke of midnight, everyone will remove their masks and you will have found your bride.

TOPHER

That's fast.

SEBASTIAN

King and queen on the throne. I am there to guide you through all your decisions. It's really a win-win.

TOPHER

How would any woman fall in love with me so quickly?

SEBASTIAN

A valid question, which we will answer sometime soon. Now, Lord Pinkleton. I want you to tell this to all—a pronouncement—an announcement.

(LORD PINKLETON *copies down what SEBASTIAN speaks.*)

SEBASTIAN

His Royal Highness
Christopher Rupert

TOPHER

Please, don't say my whole name!

SEBASTIAN

Windemere Vladimir

TOPHER

So embarrassing.

SEBASTIAN

Karl Alexander
François Reginald
Launcelot Herman—

LORD PINKLETON & LORDS

Herman?

TOPHER

Herman!

SEBASTIAN

—Gregory James
Is giving a ball!

TOPHER

Sebastian, dancing? Can we talk about this, please?

Scene Four

SCENE: *The Town Square*

(The TOWNSPEOPLE watch as JEAN-MICHEL overturns a soap-box and jumps on top of it. He is one voice among many—grunting pigs, screaming CHILDREN, arguing MERCHANTS.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Now is the time,
The time to act,
No other time will do.
Live and play your part
Don't give away your heart
Don't take what the world gives you.
Now is the time,
The time to live,
No other time is real.
Yesterday has gone,
Tomorrow is a guess,
Today you can see and feel.

(Spoken)

No, no, no, listen. Tradespeople, tinkers, and fishmongers! I shout to the prince but he ignores me! If he and Sebastian can take the land of the very poor, it is only a matter of time before they take from all of us!

(Concerned shouts from the TOWNSPEOPLE.)

JEAN-MICHEL

For you can't just wait to be served by fate
On a silver plate or a tray.

JEAN-MICHEL & TOWNSPEOPLE

Now is the time,
The time of your life,
The time of your life is today!

(LORD PINKLETON *enters and rings his bell: Ding! Ding!*)

LORD PINKLETON

The Prince is giving a ball!
The Prince is giving a ball!
Hear ye!
Hear ye!
A ball and that's not all!
The Prince is giving a ball!
The Prince is giving a ball!
Hear ye!
Hear ye!
His Royal Highness
Christopher Rupert James
Is giving a ball!

TOWNSPEOPLE

He's giving a ball?

LORD PINKLETON

The Prince is giving a ball!

TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a ball!

LORD PINKLETON & TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a ball!

JEAN-MICHEL

Hello, I'm talking here!

TOWNSPEOPLE

(*Realizing they've forgotten about JEAN-MICHEL.*)

Ohh . . .

JEAN-MICHEL

Now is the time,
The time to act—

TOWNSPEOPLE

(*Hushed*)

He's giving a ball.

JEAN-MICHEL

No other time will do.

TOWNSPEOPLE

(*Hushed*)

The Prince is giving a ball!

(*A WOMAN sticks her head out of a window.*)

WOMAN IN WINDOW

He's giving a what?

TOWNSPEOPLE

(*Shouted*)

A ball!!

(*JEAN-MICHEL slams the window shut.*)

JEAN-MICHEL

Now is the time,
The time to live,
No other time is real.

TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a—
(LORD PINKLETON *reveals the invitation*)
Oooh!

LORD PINKLETON

His Royal Highness
Christopher Rupert
Windemere Vladimir
Karl Alexander
François Reginald
Launcelot Herman—

TOWNSPEOPLE

Herman?

LORD PINKLETON

Herman!
Gregory James
Is giving a ball.
(MADAME *enters, with GABRIELLE, CHARLOTTE, and ELLA.*)

MADAME

The Prince is giving a what?

TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a ball!

The Prince is giving a ball!

LORD PINKLETON

His Majesty
Has this decree . . .

(Spoken)

To attend the ball, all one requires is an invitation and suitably fashionable attire! And, the Prince shall choose a woman from the ball to be his bride. That means anyone can be the queen!

(A CROWD *gathers around* LORD PINKLETON *as he hands out invitations. Various WOMEN come forward.*)

TALL WOMAN

So will he want a taller girl?

STRONG WOMAN

Or will he want a stronger girl?

SMALL WOMAN

Or will he want a smaller girl?

TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a ball!

SHY WOMAN

I wish I were a bolder girl.

OLDER WOMAN

I wish I were a younger girl.

YOUNGER WOMAN

I wish I were an older girl.

TOWNSPEOPLE

The Prince is giving a ball!

(*ELLA comes forward. The WOMEN echo her wishes as she sings.*)

ELLA

I've wished a lot of things

I don't wish anymore,

But now I wish a lot of things

I've never wished before.

I wish I had—

I wish I could—

I wish I might—

I wish I would—

I wish I were invited

To the Prince's royal palace ball!

(*The TOWNSPEOPLE dance joyously.*)

TOWNSPEOPLE

He's giving a ball!

He's giving a ball!

The Prince is giving a ball!

(*The TOWNSPEOPLE continue their dance.*)

JEAN-MICHEL

Now is the time,

The time to act—

TOWNSPEOPLE

We hear ye,

We hear ye, but

The Prince is giving a ball!

JEAN-MICHEL

Now is the time,

The time to live—

TOWNSPEOPLE

We hear ye,

We hear ye, but

His Royal Highness

Christopher Rupert James

Is giving a ball!

—Is giving a ball!

—Is giving a ball!

(*As they sing, the TOWNSPEOPLE usher JEAN-MICHEL offstage.*)

LORD PINKLETON

His Royal Highness

Christopher Rupert

TOWNSPEOPLE

Christopher Rupert

Windemere Vladimir

LORD PINKLETON

Slayer of dragons!

TOWNSPEOPLE

Karl Alexander

LORD PINKLETON

Destroyer of gargoyles!

TOWNSPEOPLE

François Reginald

LORD PINKLETON

Sportsman and poet

TOWNSPEOPLE

Launcelot Herman—

LORD PINKLETON

Herman?

TOWNSPEOPLE

Herman!

TOWNSPEOPLE & LORD PINKLETON

Gregory James

Is giving a ball!

(Overlapping)

The Prince is giving a ball!

The Prince is giving a ball!

The Prince is giving a ball!

(All together)

The Prince is giving a ball!

The Prince is giving a ball!

TOWNSPEOPLE & LORD PINKLETON

The Prince is giving a ball!

A Royal ball!

He's giving a ball!

(The TOWNSPEOPLE dance off with LORD PINKLETON, as we transition to the next scene. MARIE waddles by.)

MARIE

Fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee,

Fiddledy faddledy foddle,

All the wishes in the world

Are poppycock and twaddle.

(The Town Square transforms itself into the interior of MADAME's cottage. MARIE is still there.)

Scene Five

SCENE: *Inside Madame's Cottage*

(MADAME works on GABRIELLE's hair. ELLA tightens CHARLOTTE's corset.)

MARIE

The Prince is giving a ball!
(*Exits.*)

MADAME

Cinderella! When you've finished tightening delicate Charlotte's corset—

CHARLOTTE

Uuhhh. I can taste my lunch.

MADAME

—we must move on to Gabrielle's hair. It is beginning to look, I fear, like a Bavarian pretzel. Cinderella! Cinderella— (*Stops and chuckles*) Cinderella, it is a most amusing name. I crack myself up. She sits by the cinders of the fire, and her name is Ella. So I call her Cinder-ella. (*Becomes overcome with laughter, then says in her sigh*) Why don't I have any friends?

CHARLOTTE

Face it, Mama, you are well-versed in the art of ridicule.

MADAME

I do have a flair for it, don't I, actual daughters? Watch and learn! (*ELLA reenters*) Cinderella, hurry, get dressed, get ready for the ball, you're going to find a husband!

CHARLOTTE

Am I?

MADAME

Ridicule—who caught it?

CHARLOTTE

I did.

GABRIELLE

That's terrible.
(*A knock on the door.*)

MADAME

Who can that be and at this hour? Everyone clear out of here while I get rid of this imbecile. Cinderella, get that dress on Charlotte! (*ELLA, GABRIELLE, and CHARLOTTE exit. MADAME approaches the door. Another knock.*)

MADAME

What brand of idiot would—
(*MADAME swings open the door, revealing SEBASTIAN. Her affect changes to warm.*)

MADAME

Why, Sebastian, what an unexpected delight.

SEBASTIAN

Madame, I have but a moment. I invite you to hang upon my every word.

MADAME

Invitation accepted.

SEBASTIAN

Tonight's ball shall be in masks. The Prince will be in the white mask. What color mask will your daughter Gabrielle be wearing?

MADAME

Why, pink.

SEBASTIAN

If the daughter is anything like the mother, I think the pink mask and the white mask should meet and fall in love.

MADAME

Are you implying what I am inferring?

SEBASTIAN

Your daughter is all part of my master plan.

MADAME

You are brilliant.

SEBASTIAN

You are perceptive. I shall see you at the ball. Together we shall make this so.

(Exits.)

MADAME

Come daughters, come!

(ELLA, CHARLOTTE, and GABRIELLE run on.)

Oh Gabrielle, my Gabrielle, just look at you. You too, Charlotte,

but really look at Gabrielle! Cinderella, fetch the orange box.

(ELLA quickly does so. MADAME opens the box. ALL gasp in amazement. MADAME pulls a tiny elegant piece of Venetian glass from the box.)

MADAME

From Venice—a piece of glass, spun to perfection. More valuable than diamonds. Each of us shall wear the tiniest bit of hand-blown Venetian glass. Allow me to place this tiny bauble around the neck of my courageous Charlotte.

(Placing glass around CHARLOTTE's neck)

Allow me to place this tiny bauble around the neck of my beautiful daughter Gabrielle.

(Placing glass around GABRIELLE's neck)

Cinderella, fetch the perfume! Come two daughters that count, finish getting ready!

(A knock at the door)

Who can that be? It must be good news!

(MADAME opens the door, revealing JEAN-MICHEL, with two small bouquets.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Good evening, Madame. Gabrielle? Please forgive me for interrupting your momentous evening. For the ball tonight, I thought you might desire to take these wild flowers. I've picked them myself.

(JEAN-MICHEL hands GABRIELLE the flowers.)

GABRIELLE

Thank you, Jean-Michel. They're so beautiful.

JEAN-MICHEL

(Hands second bouquet to MADAME)

For the mother of the most perfect girl in all God's creation. I have gathered these myself and—

MADAME

You are not welcome here! Out of my house!

JEAN-MICHEL

Would you perhaps consider—

*(MADAME takes GABRIELLE's flowers and throws them back to**JEAN-MICHEL.)*

MADAME

Leave!

(Slams door in his face, shouts through window)

And take your simple pleasures with you.

GABRIELLE

Madame, don't be mean. That was so nice.

MADAME

No, no. No, no, no. Plans. There are plans. Plans that do not include Mr. Soapbox.

GABRIELLE

But he means well and I think he likes me.

MADAME

Let me tell you about love, Miss Flowers-in-your-hand-and-dreams-in-your-head. I married your father for love. He died and I cried. Then I married Cinderella's father for money. He

died. I got a house.

(A cuckoo clock chimes)

Seven-thirty! Ball preparation, double time!

(A series of mad dashes, in final preparation for the ball, begins.)

MADAME

Cinderella, my shoes!

(ELLA polishes her shoes)

Charlotte, powder your sister's face!

(CHARLOTTE powders GABRIELLE's face and covers her glasses with powder.)

GABRIELLE

I can't see!

MADAME

Venetian glass!

(ELLA places the Venetian glass necklace on MADAME's neck.)

CHARLOTTE

I'm hungry.

MADAME

Gabrielle, feed the baby!

(GABRIELLE puts a large biscuit in CHARLOTTE's mouth)

Cinderella, my cloak.

ELLA

Coming Madame.

MADAME

Expensive bracelet, necklace, hair. Then the Prince we shall ensnare.

GABRIELLE & CHARLOTTE

Then the Prince we shall ensnare.

MADAME

Are we worthy?

GABRIELLE & CHARLOTTE

Yes. Yes!

MADAME

To battle! The crown is ours to lose! Posture. Posture.

(MADAME, GABRIELLE, and CHARLOTTE exit the house. CINDERELLA follows with the invitations. The scene continues as the location transitions.)

Scene Six

SCENE: *Outside Madame's Cottage*

GABRIELLE & CHARLOTTE

Expensive bracelet, necklace, hair. Then the Prince we shall ensnare.

GABRIELLE

(Realizing they've forgotten their invitations)

Invitations!

(MADAME, GABRIELLE, and CHARLOTTE circle back to ELLA, who already has the invitations ready.)

MADAME

Let us storm the castle, lovely daughters. This is the night everything changes! Now off to the ball!

(The mad dash ends, with MADAME, GABRIELLE, and CHARLOTTE fully dressed in the yard, with invitations in hand. They exit, leaving ELLA. JEAN-MICHEL enters from behind a tree, touching his bleeding lip.)

JEAN-MICHEL

One of the flowers in the bouquet was a wild rose. Its thorn has scratched my lip. Yes—I'm bleeding. I should walk up to the prince, scratch his lip.

ELLA

Oh now.

JEAN-MICHEL

Make him drink lemonade, oh it will sting!

ELLA

That's just cruel.

JEAN-MICHEL

Enough of taking things as they are, now is the time for us to march to the palace—the peasants, the tradespeople—and finally get the Prince to listen to us. Instead of having his fancy ball!

ELLA

You should do that, you should march up to him and talk to him!

JEAN-MICHEL

He won't listen to me, he uses his castle to hide from the truth. Him meeting me will never happen! The only thing funnier is you going to the ball. Ha! Why don't you just go to the ball and ask the Prince when he's going to start noticing? Noticing that the people are being evicted from their land. Ha! That's absurd. Ha!
(Exits.)

ELLA

Jean-Michel! I could go to the Prince and he might listen to me! And if I had a ball gown, I think I might look sort of nice.

I am in the royal palace, of all places!

When I meet the finest Prince you've ever seen,

And the color on my two stepsisters' faces

Is a queer sort of sour-apple green.

I am coy and flirtatious

When alone with the prince.

I'm the belle of the ball

In my own little corner

All alone

In my own

Little chair.

MARIE

(Entering from behind tree)

Fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee,

Fiddledy faddledy foddle,

All the wishes in the world

Are poppycock and twaddle!

ELLA

Oh Crazy Marie. Are you mocking me with your gibberish?

MARIE

Yes.

(Sings)

Fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee,

Fiddledy faddledy foodle,

All the dreamers in all the world

Are dizzy in the noodle.

ELLA

So what if I do have a dream to see the Prince again? And tell him what life in his kingdom is really like? And what it could be.

MARIE

Exactly. And then to have him fall in love with you.

ELLA

No one will fall in love with me. Why do you come to visit me tonight?

MARIE

I just knew I would find you
In the same little chair
In the pale pink mist of a foolish dream.

ELLA

I am being foolish.

MARIE

Then be foolish with me. What would you dream of?

ELLA

Why, an invitation to the ball, I guess.

MARIE

(Produces invitation)

Right here. There's an invitation.

ELLA

What? But it's torn.

MARIE

Don't wait for everything to be perfect, just go! Now, what else would you dream of?

ELLA

Oh, a white gown, I imagine. A beautiful white gown sewn up with pearls. And jewels. And a tiara of diamonds.

MARIE

And on your feet?

ELLA

Why, the most beautiful grosgrain pumps, I'd imagine.

MARIE

No. Better. The Venetian glass that your stepmother so loves in her trinkets and baubles. An entire pair of shoes made only of Venetian glass.

ELLA

Oh, how silly. I'd be the envy of all. But how would I get to the ball?

MARIE

Well, that pumpkin over there?

ELLA

Yes?

MARIE

I'll turn it into a golden carriage.

ELLA

And horses?

MARIE

Those mice? Trapped in the cage.

ELLA

And a fox as a footman, and a raccoon as a driver. Oh, you are crazy, Marie. Why, in order to do that, you would have to be a fairy godmother.

(MARIE rips off her rags and ragged cape. Underneath is the most beautiful gown. ELLA gasps.)

ELLA

Marie! But you're a crazy woman! What are you doing in that beautiful gown?

MARIE

You'd be surprised how many beautiful gowns have crazy women in them.

ELLA

Are you really my fairy godmother?

MARIE

But of course, my child. Actually, I'm everyone's fairy godmother. But you're the only one who's given me charity. Generosity. And kindness. And now, I must make all the dreams we joked about come true.

ELLA

But that's so improbable. Implausible.

MARIE

Impossible
For a plain yellow pumpkin
To become a golden carriage!
Impossible
For a plain country bumpkin
And a prince to join in marriage!
And four white mice will never be four white horses—
Such fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee of course is
Impossible!

But the world is full of zanies and fools
Who don't believe in sensible rules
And won't believe what sensible people say,
And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes
Keep building up impossible hopes,
Impossible things are happ'ning every day!

ELLA

Impossible!

MARIE

Impossible!

ELLA

Impossible!

MARIE

Impossible!

ELLA

Impossible!

MARIE

Impossible!

ELLA & MARIE

Impossible!

ELLA

But if you could be a beggar woman not five minutes ago and now are my fairy godmother, then anything is possible, right?

MARIE

I suppose so.

ELLA

You could change it all. You could make it all happen.

MARIE

No, but you could change it. You could make it all happen.

ELLA

Never. I couldn't.

MARIE

You're right. It's all so—

(Sings)

Impossible

For a plain yellow pumpkin

To become a golden carriage!

Impossible

For a plain country bumpkin

And a prince to join in marriage!

And four white mice will never be four white horses—

Such fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee of course is

Impossible!

ELLA

But the world is full of zanies and fools

Who don't believe in sensible rules

And won't believe what sensible people say,

ELLA & MARIE

And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes

Keep building up impossible hopes,
Impossible things are happ'ning every day!

(MARIE casts a spell on the pumpkin and the pumpkin blows up like a balloon. The "leaves" peel away. The pumpkin explodes and the carriage is revealed. MARIE scoops up the mice in the cage. She flings them into the air and a team of horses appears from the wings. MARIE crosses to the porch, playfully approaches the FOX, who has appeared in the woodbin. She points at the FOX, indicating "You're next." The FOX shakes his head. MARIE casts a spell on the FOX, who quickly ducks into the woodbin. The FOOTMAN tumbles out of the woodbin in a state of surprise. The FOOTMAN straightens his knees. The FOOTMAN shakes his head. MARIE casts a spell upon the RACCOON, who hides in the tree. The COACHMAN pops out from the tree. The COACHMAN scampers down from the tree and stands on two feet. The FOOTMAN and COACHMAN regard one another. The FOOTMAN and the COACHMAN shake their legs and walk upstage. MARIE casts a spell upon ELLA, who whirls about. As she whirls the dress changes from rags to a beautiful crown. ELLA's dress transformation is complete. She is now in a beautiful white gown and tiara.)

ELLA

It's the most beautiful gown in all the land!

MARIE

And as promised, in our laughter . . . glass slippers.

(MARIE holds up the glass shoes, places them on the ground, and ELLA eases into them)

But Cinderella—I must tell you—all of this magic is very powerful, but it will end at midnight tonight. Now go—to the ball. In the name of every girl who has ever wished to go to a ball in a

beautiful dress. In the name of every girl who has ever wanted to change the world she lived in. Go! With the promise of possibility!

Scene Seven

SCENE: *Flight to the Castle*

(ELLA climbs in the carriage. The carriage rides across the treetops.)

ELLA

It's possible!
It's possible!
It's possible!
It's possible!
It's possible!
It's possible!
It's possible!

For a plain yellow pumpkin
To become a golden carriage!
It's possible
For a plain country bumpkin
And a prince to join in marriage!
And four white mice are easily turned to horses—
Such fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee of course is
Quite possible!

MARIE

For the world is full of zanies and fools
Who don't believe in sensible rules

ELLA

And won't believe what sensible people say,
(MARIE appears, flying over ELLA.)

MARIE & ELLA

And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes
Keep building up impossible hopes,
Impossible things are happ'ning every day!

ELLA

It's possible!

MARIE

It's possible!

ELLA

It's possible!

MARIE

It's possible!

ELLA

It's possible!

MARIE

It's possible!

ELLA

It's possible!

(The carriage arrives at the palace. The DRIVER and FOOTMAN help ELLA out. MARIE flies off. ELLA enters the palace.)

Scene Eight

SCENE: *The Castle Ballroom*

(The LADIES dance on. TOPHER enters. SEBASTIAN and LORD PINKLETON enter.)

TOPHER

Sebastian, honestly!

SEBASTIAN

Only two hundred to go!

(The LORDS dance on. MADAME enters, with GABRIELLE and CHARLOTTE. The gavotte begins. TOPHER and CHARLOTTE dance.)

CHARLOTTE

So which one is it?

TOPHER

Which one is which?

CHARLOTTE

Duh. The Prince. Which is the Prince, I mean come on!?! What do you think I'm here for, the free food?

TOPHER

Well, a good time, a dance perhaps?

CHARLOTTE

Wrong answer! I got marrying royalty on my mind. So which one is he here?

TOPHER

Well, maybe it's me.

CHARLOTTE

(A moment of thought, then)

Not likely. You're no Prince, you're ordinary.

TOPHER

What makes you think I'm ordinary?

CHARLOTTE

We're doing a gavotte and you can't even keep the beat. When we get to the waltz, you're gonna trip over your two left feet and land on your flat little bottom. End of discussion.

TOPHER

Hope to talk to you later.

CHARLOTTE

I've moved on.

(CHARLOTTE crosses to PINKLETON, grabs the mallet, and bangs the gong, walking away in disgust. MADAME pushes TOPHER's next PARTNER away, placing GABRIELLE in her place.)

NEXT PARTNER

Hey!

TOPHER

How do you do?

GABRIELLE

How do you do?

TOPHER

A lovely dance isn't it? I hope my dancing is all right.

GABRIELLE

Oh, your dancing is absolutely princely—oops, I let that slip out.

TOPHER

Ahh, so you know.

GABRIELLE

I would know a wise and handsome Prince anywhere.

TOPHER

The last girl did not know.

(MADAME glides by CHARLOTTE and whispers in her ear.)

CHARLOTTE

You're kidding!! Well thanks for the heads up! Ugh!!!

GABRIELLE

I think she does now.

TOPHER

Well.

GABRIELLE

So.

TOPHER

What can you tell me about yourself?

GABRIELLE

What would it please you to know, Your Highness?

TOPHER

OK. Creepy.

CHARLOTTE

Your Majestic Highness, just because I was playing hard to get doesn't mean I'm hard to get!

TOPHER

Really creepy. Sebastian, I can't do this anymore, I'm sorry.

A DUCHESS

It's the Prince!

(The LADIES throw themselves at TOPHER, pushing and pulling him about the dance floor. Just as the gavotte ends, ELLA appears. EVERYONE in the ballroom freezes at the sight of her, struck by her tremendous beauty. TOPHER sees ELLA. The CROWD parts. TOPHER bows. ELLA curtsies. TOPHER offers his hand.)

SEBASTIAN

It's time to play Ridicule! Everyone! Take sides!

(ELLA is taken from TOPHER by a COURTIER and two circles form as the MEMBERS OF THE COURT dance to the Ridicule theme. SEBASTIAN grabs TOPHER and pulls him forward to talk to him.)

TOPHER

What happened to the nice girl?

SEBASTIAN

Ignore her. We're playing Ridicule, you get to be judge. Two circles spin and when the music stops two players out-ridicule one another. Let's find you a bride.

GUESTS

Bum ditty bum bum.

Bum ditty bum bum.

LORD PINKLETON

One and two and three!

(The music stops. An OLDER WOMAN is stopped in front of CHARLOTTE.)

OLDER WOMAN

Oh, but my dear. I love that dress. No matter how many times I see it.

(The room "oos" and applauds)

Why I remember when that dress was first in fashion, when I was a young girl—

CHARLOTTE

Please do not speak of your childhood, as I have not brought along a copy of the Old Testament to follow along.

(SEBASTIAN tells TOPHER to indicate that the victory goes to CHARLOTTE. TOPHER does so and the CROWD responds with "Brava," "Touché," etc. The CROWD begins to dance again. SEBASTIAN pulls TOPHER forward again.)

TOPHER

What do you even call that?

SEBASTIAN

Well, it's awfully sophisticated.

TOPHER

It just seems like cruelty.

SEBASTIAN

Sophisticated, cruelty. There's a slight difference there, I keep forgetting what it is.

TOPHER

I'm not quite sure I want to play this game.

SEBASTIAN

And here we have another round at the ready!

GUESTS

Bum ditty bum bum.
Bum ditty bum bum.

LORD PINKLETON

One and two and three!
(*Music stops. MADAME and ELLA must face off.*)

MADAME

Age before beauty. You first, dear.
(*"Ooohs" from the crowd.*)

ELLA

You have such a beautiful speaking voice. Have you ever considered reciting poetry?
(*Silence and muttering from the crowd.*)

MADAME

(*Cracking*)

Say it—what—do it—what?! The anticipation is killing me! Do the Ridicule! Why do you say that?

ELLA

No reason. I just really like your speaking voice and I just think you would sound really wonderful reciting a poem. And I also like the feather in your hair. It's a lovely color for you.

MADAME

Why. Are. You. Doing this. To. Meeeee!!!

SEBASTIAN

What is this bewitchery you practice?

ELLA

It's just kindness.

SEBASTIAN

Kind-ness?

ELLA

Oh yes. Kindness is practiced now in all the great courts. Ridicule isn't done anywhere anymore. It's all kindness now. Even in the French courts.

SEBASTIAN

Kind-ness.

ELLA

Yes. You know. Compassion.

SEBASTIAN

Who are you, you strange woman?

MADAME

I don't know who she is but she is very, very wealthy indeed. And did you see her feet? Shoes made of Venetian glass! My resentment is all-consuming.

ELLA

Kindness. You must all try it.

(A murmuring from the crowd. "No." "I don't think so." "Not I." "I won't be the first.")

TOPHER

I'll be the first. Kindness. Isn't it wonderful to have a pleasant young lady such as yourself in our court?

ELLA

Thank you. And it's an honor to be at this wonderful party you are throwing.

SEBASTIAN

It's like every time they speak a part of me dies.

(A LORD steps forward.)

A LORD

This room is filled with some of the loveliest women I have ever seen.

(A LADY steps forward.)

A LADY

I just saw they have vanilla cake on the buffet. I love vanilla cake!

Thank you to whoever made it!

A GUEST

This court is alive with laughter and warmth.

ANOTHER GUEST

It's like it was during the reign of Prince Topher's parents!

A DIGNITARY

May his reign be a continuation of theirs!

A DUCHESS

Those were glorious days.

ANOTHER GUEST

But so are these.

YET ANOTHER DUCHESS

Look at these magnificent guests! Ha ha!

GABRIELLE

(Steps forward and says to ELLA, grabbing her hand)

You are so kind—thank you. You make me wish I were a better person. There's something somewhat familiar about you. What could that be?

(ELLA turns to get away from GABRIELLE. There is TOPHER.)

TOPHER

I admire how you've changed everything around. And yet, I'm so comfortable with you. I feel as if I've met you before.

(Sings)

Ten minutes ago, I saw you.

I looked up when you came through the door.
 My head started reeling;
 You gave me the feeling
 The room had no ceiling or floor.

Ten minutes ago, I met you,
 And we murmured our how-do-you-do's.
 I wanted to ring out the bells
 And fling out my arms
 And to sing out the news:

I have found her!
 She's an angel,
 With the dust of the stars in her eyes!
 We are dancing!
 We are flying!
 And she's taking me back to the skies.

In the arms of my love I'm flying
 Over mountain and meadow and glen,
 And I like it so well
 That for all I can tell
 I may never come down again!
 I may never come down to earth again!
(Spoken)

I'm sorry to be so effusive, I've just met you. I'm not usually this way with someone I've just met. Events like this . . . I just feel like—what am I doing here?

ELLA

I feel the same.

Like such a phony. TOPHER

So do I! ELLA

You do? TOPHER

Yes! ELLA

Me too! My name is— TOPHER

Topher, short for Christopher. Yes, I know. ELLA

Have we met before? TOPHER

Yes, and we are seeing each other for the first time right now. ELLA

(Sings)

Ten minutes ago, I met you,
 And we murmured our how-do-you-do's.
 I wanted to ring out the bells
 And fling out my arms
 And to sing out the news:
 I have found him!
 I have found him!

(TOPHER and ELLA dance together)

In the arms of my love I'm flying
Over mountain and meadow and glen,
And I like it so well
That for all I can tell
I may never come down again!

TOPHER & ELLA

I may never come down to earth again!

TOPHER, ELLA & CHORUS

(Singing in beautiful counterpoint harmony)

Ten minutes ago, I met you,
And we murmured our how-do-you-do's.
I wanted to ring out the bells
And fling out my arms
And to sing out the news:
I have found her!
She's an angel,
With the dust of the stars in her eyes!
We are dancing!
We are flying!
And she's taking me back to the skies!
In the arms of my love I'm flying
Over mountain and meadow and glen,
And I like it so well
That for all I can tell
I may never come down again!
I may never come down to earth again!
(They kiss.)

ELLA

I have to go!

TOPHER

But I've just found you!

ELLA

I don't want to go, but I must!

TOPHER

Don't go!

ELLA

Prince Topher. There's something I must tell you. You need to open your eyes to what's happening in your kingdom. The poor are having their land taken. You must help them. You must.

TOPHER

I don't think that's kind. How can you say that's kindness?

ELLA

This is all so wonderful! You are so wonderful, but I have to go!
(ELLA runs away and is lost in the CROWD.)

TOPHER

Wait! Young Lady! Where are you going?! Wait! Stop!

SEBASTIAN

Your Highness! Your Highness!

MADAME

Charlotte! Gabrielle!
(The GUESTS dance off as the scene transitions.)

Scene Nine

SCENE: *The Palace Steps*

(*ELLA runs down the staircase. The PRINCE appears at the top of the stairs. ELLA trips and falls, losing one of her glass slippers. ELLA stands up. TOPHER and ELLA look at each other. ELLA runs back up, grabs her shoe, and runs into the carriage, which rides away. The PRINCE is left standing.*)

TOPHER

Wait! Wait! I don't even know your name?!

(*The curtain falls. End of Act One.*)

ACT TWO

Scene One

SCENE: *The Palace Steps*
(Immediately following the previous scene.)

TOPHER

Wait! Wait! I don't even know your name?!

(A CROWD, including SEBASTIAN, MADAME, GABRIELLE, and
CHARLOTTE, rushes on)

She has run off! The lady—we must find her, she left in a golden
carriage! After her!!

SEBASTIAN

Madame, we will take your carriage!

MADAME

We haven't the room!

SEBASTIAN

Leave one of your daughters behind then!

TOPHER

After her, she is my destiny!!!

(TOPHER and the KNIGHTS run off. SEBASTIAN leaves with
MADAME and GABRIELLE. CHARLOTTE and the other LADIES
of the court are left, on the steps of the palace.)

CHARLOTTE

But—But—

(Looks at the other LADIES)

No, seriously, what just happened? Seriously?

(The LADIES sit on the steps and take off their shoes.)

CHARLOTTE

Why would a fellow want a girl like her,
A frail and fluffy beauty?
Why can't a fellow ever once prefer
A solid girl like me?

She's a frothy little bubble
With a flimsy kind of charm
And with very little trouble
I could break her little arm!

(CHARLOTTE squeezes a LADY's arm.)

FIRST LADY

Ow! Ow!!

CHARLOTTE

Why would a fellow want a girl like her,
So obviously unusual?
Why can't a fellow ever once prefer
A usual girl like me?

SECOND LADY

Her cheeks are a pretty shade of pink,

CHARLOTTE

But not any pinker than a rose is.

THIRD LADY

Her skin may be delicate and soft,

CHARLOTTE

But not any softer than a doe's is.

FOURTH LADY

Her neck is no whiter than a swan's.

FIRST LADY

She's only as dainty as a daisy.

CHARLOTTE

She's only as graceful as a bird,
So why is the fellow going crazy?

CHARLOTTE & LADIES

Oh, why would a fellow want a girl like her,
A girl who's merely lovely?
Why can't a fellow ever once prefer
A girl who's merely me?
What's the matter with the man?
What's the matter with the man?
What's the matter with the man?

(CHARLOTTE throws her shoe offstage. SEBASTIAN and LORD
PINKLETON enter.)

SEBASTIAN

Footwear is now falling from the sky!

(TOPHER and the KNIGHTS reenter.)

TOPHER

It's gone—the golden carriage has taken a shortcut right through
the forest. Gentlemen, lanterns!! We must find her if it's the last
thing we do—she is my lady!!!

(TOPHER runs off with the KNIGHTS into the castle. CHARLOTTE
takes this all in.)

CHARLOTTE

Yes, he's witty,
 So disarming,
 And I really like the way he holds a room.
 Clever, cunning,
 Ever charming,
 How do I make him see I'm special?
 It's a pity,

LADIES

It's a pity,

CHARLOTTE

I'm as pretty,

LADIES

I'm as pretty,
 Plus I've got the patience
 Of a perfect saint.

CHARLOTTE & LADIES

So I'm waiting,
 Always waiting,
 Nevertheless,
 I'm in a mess.

CHARLOTTE

Loosen my dress
 Help me, I'm starting to faint!

LADIES

Why would a fellow want a girl like her,
 A girl who isn't dizzy?
 Why can't a fellow ever once prefer

CHARLOTTE

A high-strung girl like me?
 Her cheeks are a pretty shade of pink,

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

But not any pinker than a rose is.

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

Her skin may be delicate and soft,

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

But not any softer than a doe's is.
 Her neck is no whiter than a swan's.

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

She's only as dainty as a daisy.

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

She's only as graceful as a bird,

LADIES

What's the matter?

CHARLOTTE & LADIES

So why is the fellow going crazy?

Oh, oh,

Why would a fellow want a girl like her,

A girl who's merely lovely?

Why can't a fellow ever once prefer

A girl who's merely me?

LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

What's the matter with the man?

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

She's the matter—

Let me at her!



Opening night: March 3, 2013, Broadway Theater, Douglas Carter Beane and Mark Brokaw holding photo of Rodgers + Hammerstein, with Laura Osnes.



LADIES

What's the matter with the man?

What's the matter with the man?

What's the matter with the man?

CHARLOTTE

What's the matter with the man?

(CHARLOTTE *and the* LADIES *exit*.)

Scene Two

SCENE: *The Forest**(Outside the palace, a bugle sounds. The KNIGHTS enter with**LORD PINKLETON, bugle in hand.)*

LORD PINKLETON

Your Majesty, Your Majesty.

TOPHER

(Entering)

Lord Pinkleton, where is she?

LORD PINKLETON

There are reports along the eastern road of a golden carriage.

TOPHER

Ten minutes ago, I held her . . .

(LORD PINKLETON sounds his bugle again. Two DUKES enter.)

DUKE OF CAVENDISH

Your Majesty, we saw the carriage! And this I cannot explain—it simply flew into the mist!

DUKE OF CHESHIRE

Impossible I know—

TOPHER

Impossible! Then we shall do the impossible!

(The DUKES exit. TOPHER sings to himself)

Ten minutes ago . . .

(One by one, the other KNIGHTS enter with their lanterns)

We were dancing in the palace of all places,
 And her gown was like a cloud of snowy white.
 How the moonlight shone its beams upon our faces,
 'Til she vanished like a phantom in the night.
 I just know I will find you,
 You're the girl of my dreams
 And the thrill is more than my heart can bear . . .

LORD PINKLETON

Look, a carriage!

TOPHER

That's it! That's the one! After her!!

(TOPHER and the KNIGHTS venture into the woods, lanterns into hand. A flash of smoke, then the FOOTMAN and the DRIVER roll onstage along with the now untransformed pumpkin. ELLA enters and grabs the pumpkin. The TRIO are chased by TOPHER and the KNIGHTS. Hijinks ensue! The KNIGHTS grab the FOOTMAN. They struggle. The FOOTMAN jumps into a hollowed log. A KNIGHT reaches in to pull him out, but instead finds himself holding the untransformed FOX. The KNIGHT screams and throws the FOX offstage. More KNIGHTS enter, chasing the DRIVER. They chase him round a tree several times. The DRIVER climbs into the tree, and the untransformed RACCOON emerges. The KNIGHTS head off elsewhere.)

Scene Three

SCENE: *Outside, then Inside, Madame's Cottage*

(*ELLA runs on, out of breath, still clutching the pumpkin. She hears TOPHER and his KNIGHTS. ELLA hides behind a small wall. The KNIGHTS and TOPHER enter, looking for her, coming close to finding her. Then, they turn their attention elsewhere.*)

TOPHER

To the west!

(*TOPHER and the KNIGHTS exit. The magic wears off, and ELLA's dress disappears. She is back in her provincial outfit.*)

ELLA

He was tall, very tall,

And his eyes were clear and blue.

(*The sound of TOPHER and his KNIGHTS searching. ELLA hides*)

He was slim, very slim.

In his coat of snowy hue.

(*Louder noises from TOPHER and his KNIGHTS. ELLA sits on the stool*)

When he walked across the ballroom floor,

He was like a thing divine;

And all the ladies turned their heads,

And natur'lly I turned mine.

The chandeliers were shooting stars,

The drums and horns and soft guitars

Were sounding more like nightingales;

The window curtains blew like sails,

And I was floating just above the floor,

Feeling slightly taller than before.

(*During this verse, the exterior of the cottage has transformed into the interior. ELLA is now in the cottage*)

He was tall, very tall . . .

(*The door swings open. In strides MADAME.*)

MADAME

When I left this house in my carriage, I was quite convinced my daughter was going to be queen and I would never have to come back here to this. And now, well, I'm back here to this.

ELLA

Was the ball a disappointment, Madame?

MADAME

The Prince, despite his being well born, and raised with great care by our Lord Protector, showed the most appalling manners. Appalling! He spent the entire evening talking and dancing with some little nobody.

ELLA

How did Gabrielle and Charlotte take that?

(*The door swings open. CHARLOTTE enters, dejected. GABRIELLE follows.*)

CHARLOTTE

The Prince has fallen head over heels for someone else. If he keeps this up, I may not want to go out with him!

MADAME

What was going on in His Royal Highness's thick skull?

CHARLOTTE

The way he looked at her. With respect! I hope no man ever looks at me that way.

MADAME

If that woman had any morality or sense of what's right in this world, she would not have appeared at the ball at all.

GABRIELLE

But can you imagine how she must have felt tonight, arriving at the ball and meeting the man of her dreams?

MADAME

I cannot, for my mind has no place for the puerile or rank.

GABRIELLE

I can imagine it, I think.

ELLA

I can imagine it.

CHARLOTTE

I can imagine it, and I have no imagination.

ELLA

When you're driving through the moonlight on the highway,
When you're driving through the moonlight to the dance,
You are breathless with a wild anticipation
Of adventure and excitement and romance.
Then at last you see the towers of the palace
Silhouetted on the sky above the park,
And below them is a row of lighted windows,
Like a lovely diamond necklace in the dark!

CHARLOTTE

It looks that way—

GABRIELLE

The way you say.

MADAME

She talks as if she knows.

ELLA

I do not know
These things are so.
I only just suppose . . .
I suppose that when you come into the ballroom,
And the room itself is floating in the air,
If you're suddenly confronted by His Highness
You are frozen like a statue on the stair!
You're afraid he'll hear the way your heart is beating
And you know you mustn't make the first advance.
You are seriously thinking of retreating—
Then you seem to hear him asking you to dance!
You make a bow,
A timid bow,
And shyly answer "yes."

MADAME

How would you know
That this is so?

ELLA

I do no more than guess.

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

You can guess 'til you're blue in the face,
But you can't even picture such a man.

CHARLOTTE

He is more than a prince—

GABRIELLE

He's an ace!

ELLA

But sisters, I really think I can—

MADAME

(Spoken)

Can what?

ELLA

I think that I can picture such a man

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

He is tall—

ELLA

And straight as a lance!

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

And his hair—

ELLA

Is dark and wavy!

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

His eyes—

ELLA

Can melt you with a glance!

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

He can turn a girl to gravy!

ELLA

(Spoken)

And I can imagine it.

GABRIELLE

I imagine it too!

CHARLOTTE

This squinting isn't my sinus condition. It's me imagining it.

MADAME

I am throwing caution to the wind! I am imagining it as well!

ELLA

Imagine what that girl would be feeling when dancing with the Prince!

(Sings)

A lovely night,

A lovely night,

A finer night you know you'll never see.

You meet your prince,

A charming prince,

As charming as a prince will ever be!

The stars in a hazy heaven

Tremble above you

While he is whispering,

"Darling, I love you!"
 You say goodbye,
 Away you fly,
 But on your lips you keep a kiss,
 All your life you'll dream of this
 Lovely, lovely night.

MADAME

Charlotte, play the pianoforte.

CHARLOTTE

Okay, but it's not going to be good.
(ELLA pulls out the pianoforte, which CHARLOTTE plays.)

CHARLOTTE

A lovely night,
 A lovely night,
 A finer night you know you'll never see.

GABRIELLE

La, la, la

CHARLOTTE

La, la, la

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

La, la, la

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

You meet (you meet) your Prince, (your Prince)
 A charming (a charming) Prince,
 As charming as a Prince will ever be!

CHARLOTTE & GABRIELLE

La, la, la, la, la
 La, la, la, la

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

The stars in a hazy heaven
 Tremble above you
 While he is whispering,

MADAME

(As the PRINCE)

"Darling, I love you!"

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

You say goodbye,
 Away you fly,

GABRIELLE & ELLA

But on your lips you keep a kiss,

MADAME & CHARLOTTE

All your life you'll dream of this

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

Lovely, lovely night.
(CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, and ELLA dance.)

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

The stars in a hazy heaven
 Tremble above you,
 While he is whispering,

GABRIELLE

(As the PRINCE)

"Darling, I love you!"

CHARLOTTE, GABRIELLE, MADAME, ELLA

You say goodbye,

Away you fly,

But on your lips you keep a kiss,

All your life you'll dream of this,

Lovely, lovely, lovely,

Lovely night!

(All four WOMEN sigh audibly. MADAME kisses ELLA on the head, quickly recoiling realizing what she has done.)

MADAME

(To ELLA)

Isn't it wonderful how the needy just keep on going? Get up. Put away the—ah, whatever you call it.

(To her DAUGHTERS)

The only thing I have to comfort me after this disastrous evening is that the Prince seemed so completely devastated when his dream date ran away.

(ELLA puts away the pianoforte.)

CHARLOTTE

Oh, it was hilarious! The powder room was full of yammering when we were leaving. Why did the girl run away? My feeling is that up close the girl was physically unappealing.

MADAME

To bed, my lovely daughters. Cinderella, you stay here and clean up this pigsty of a parlor. Why is there a pumpkin on the table? It makes no design sense.

(MADAME and CHARLOTTE exit.)

GABRIELLE

Is there anything else you would like to know, Ella?

ELLA

No, it sounds like a really marvelous ball. I only wish I could have been there.

GABRIELLE

How did you know all that happened at the ball earlier this evening?

ELLA

I just . . . supposed it. Imagined it. Had a vision.

GABRIELLE

Interesting. *(Thrusts her right hand behind her own back)* Quick, how many fingers?

ELLA

Two?

GABRIELLE

Three. Fascinating. Where're your visions now?

ELLA

You're being silly. You're just picking on me just because I said the Prince was wearing a white jacket and—

GABRIELLE

You didn't say it and he was. Something's going on here.

ELLA

You're being absurd. More than usual. I need to finish up and . . .
(*ELLA takes a kettle from the fire.*)

GABRIELLE

Let me help you with that.

(*GABRIELLE grabs ELLA's hand*)

Your hand is so callused and rough from work. Just like the hand of the woman I shook this evening. Who danced with the prince.

(*ELLA pulls her hand back.*)

ELLA

I don't know what you're—

GABRIELLE

It was you tonight. Wasn't it?

ELLA

I—

GABRIELLE

It was you! How did you dance in glass shoes?

(*ELLA gasps, and runs out the door. GABRIELLE is right behind her. The interior of the cottage transforms back into the exterior yard.*)

ELLA

You won't tell the others, will you? Madame and Charlotte?

GABRIELLE

No. Never.

ELLA

Are you mad at me that I stole the Prince from you?

GABRIELLE

I will confess a secret to you. I never loved the Prince. Or even liked him. There's someone else that I want.

ELLA

How wonderful for you. Who is it?

GABRIELLE

Well, Madame hates him.

ELLA

Madame hating them doesn't narrow the field. Who is it?

GABRIELLE

If I promise to keep your secret of the Prince, can you keep my secret of my forbidden love?

ELLA

I can. And I will.

GABRIELLE

It's Jean-Michel. The firebrand.

ELLA

He is a good man. And seems angry for all the right reasons.

GABRIELLE

He wants to change the world and make it a better place. You gotta love a guy like that.

ELLA

You may one day win Jean-Michel. But I will never win Prince Topher. If he saw who I truly was, he would have no interest in me.

GABRIELLE

That's not true. He would love you for who you are.

ELLA

I don't see how.

GABRIELLE

Well, if Madame ever saw me with Jean-Michel, why I shudder to think what she might do! Are you sure you can keep my secret?

ELLA

I can. And you can keep mine. We shall have a secret. That will make us—

GABRIELLE

Co-conspirators.

ELLA

Friends.

GABRIELLE

Sisters.

(ELLA and GABRIELLE hug. They look at each other and smile. They have bonded.)

ELLA

May we both find our loves.

GABRIELLE

And our lives.

(Sings)

The stars in a hazy heaven
Trembling above me,

ELLA

Danced when he promised
Always to love me.

GABRIELLE

The day came through,

ELLA

Away I flew,
But on my lips he left a kiss—

GABRIELLE

All my life I'll dream of this

ELLA

Lovely—

Lovely—

GABRIELLE

Lovely night.

ELLA

(GABRIELLE goes into the house. ELLA wanders into the forest.
The scene transitions.)

Scene Four

SCENE: *Another Part of the Forest*
(Several days later. The full moon has become a crescent moon.
In another part of the forest, TOPHER enters, searching. He looks
at the moon in frustration.)

TOPHER

I wake in the loneliness of sunrise
When the deep purple heaven turns blue,
And start to pray,
As I pray each day,
That I'll hear some word from you.
I lie in the loneliness of evening,
Looking out on a silver-flaked sea,
And ask the moon:
Oh, how soon, how soon
Will my love come home to me?
(ELLA wanders forward. She and TOPHER don't see one another)
I have found her

ELLA

I have found my angel

TOPHER

She's my angel

TOPHER & ELLA

With the dust of the stars in your eyes
We are dancing, we are flying
And she's/he's taking me back to the skies—
(ELLA wanders offstage.)

TOPHER

I lie in the loneliness of evening,
Looking out on a silver-flaked sea,
And ask the moon:

Oh, how soon, how soon
Will my love come home to me?

Will my love come home to me?

(From the shadows comes SEBASTIAN, clutching a stack of papers.)

SEBASTIAN

Honestly, sire. Three nights in a row you search? And here it is four o'clock in the morning. It's as if you are testing my good nature. The second that woman in white ran off—which we all must admit seems to imply she has a police record. The second she is gone, you don't want to dance with any of the other girls.

TOPHER

Sebastian. Are there poor people in this kingdom who have had their land taken from them?

SEBASTIAN

If there were I would tell you.

TOPHER

Do they need our help?

SEBASTIAN

Everyone donated joyfully. Ignore this talk. Where did you hear it?

TOPHER

The girl.

SEBASTIAN

I don't know that she is to be trusted. Please come back to the palace; the work is piling up.

TOPHER

No, something isn't right.

SEBASTIAN

As you say—*(Puts his hand out)* The ring, sire.

TOPHER

Oh right, sorry. What are you stamping this time?

SEBASTIAN

Nothing, sire, hardly worth troubling your beautiful mind.

TOPHER

Let me read it.

SEBASTIAN

I should explain, before—

TOPHER

I read this—on my own.

SEBASTIAN

Your Future Majesty, let's go back to the palace and allow me to draw up some coverage you don't want to—

TOPHER

I'm reading this now. Thank you.

SEBASTIAN

But—

TOPHER

That will be all Sebastian. I'll ask you if I need anything explained.

(SEBASTIAN *hands over the papers*. TOPHER *reads a bit*. He sees something shocking)

Oh . . . no.

(*Reads more. Then stops*)

Sebastian!!

SEBASTIAN

Sire, I can explain—

TOPHER

How could you do this in my name?

SEBASTIAN

I am maintaining this life for you, without my watchful eye you should be a pauper, would you like that?

TOPHER

I want that girl, the one who talked to me. I want to talk to that girl.

SEBASTIAN

A troublemaker.

TOPHER

We're having another ball, a banquet. And she'll come to that!

SEBASTIAN

She won't show, this is lunacy!!

TOPHER

She will come! We're having a banquet tonight. And you are inviting everyone in the kingdom.

SEBASTIAN

Don't forget who you're talking to.

TOPHER

And don't you forget who you're talking to. Now we are having a banquet tonight and I am finding that girl!

SEBASTIAN

Very well, sire.

(*Storms off. Then stops and turns*)

She won't come. You don't even know her name! And if she really thought you were worthy of all her high ideals, she would have stayed, wouldn't she?!

TOPHER

A banquet!!!

SEBASTIAN

(*To LORD PINKLETON*)

The Prince is looking dreamy-eyed—

He has since giving the ball

And still he wants to find his bride,

The one he lost at the ball.

(*Spoken*)

So spread the word through the land. The Prince is throwing a banquet.

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

Hear ye!

Hear ye!

SEBASTIAN

It is his wish that the woman he met at the ball will attend. As for the rest of us, well, what can I say—there's gonna be a ham. Talk it back to me!

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

Hear ye!

Hear ye!

SEBASTIAN

And of course—I want to keep an eye on what women are there! I'm not giving up control this time! Spread the word!
(*Exits.*)

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

Hear ye!

Hear ye!

(MADAME enters among the HERALDS.)

LORD PINKLETON

(Ringing his bell)

His Royal Highness

Christopher Rupert James

Is giving a . . .

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

Banquet! . . . Tonight!! Invitation only!

MADAME

(Taking an invitation from LORD PINKLETON)

A banquet!!! Tonight!!! Cinderella, where are you? Cinderella—where can you be?

LORD PINKLETON

(Ringing his bell)

His Royal Highness

Christopher Rupert,

Dopey and dream-eyed,

Can't find his lady—

Hoping to see her—

Asking where is she—

MADAME

Cinderella!! Where is she?

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

—Gregory James

Is giving . . .

(The scene has transitioned to the interior of MADAME's cottage.)

Scene Five

SCENE: *Inside Madame's Cottage*

(GABRIELLE sits at the table with an invitation. MADAME enters through the door.)

MADAME

A banquet! Why does the Prince do this? It seems cruelty beyond measure! Two significant social events in one week. Now granted I have never looked lovelier. But my physical perfection comes at a price.

(Looks at her hands)

Gloves, that's what it was! Cinderella! Where are the gloves?

(MADAME runs off into the backroom, just as ELLA enters the house.)

GABRIELLE

Ella, over here. Don't tell her you have the gloves quite yet, yes I know, she'll be abusive later, but trust me, this shall be worth it! I am going to tell Madame that I am sick—

ELLA

Would you like some—

GABRIELLE

I'm not really sick, I'm pretending! It's just like when Charlotte was in school and pretended to be sick to get out of things she didn't like, like the third and fourth grades. I will be sick just as we are leaving for the carriage. Madame and Charlotte will leave without me. I will then change back into my regular clothes and meet my secret crush Jean-Michel—I'm taking him up on his offer to go help in a soup kitchen!

ELLA

A soup kitchen?

GABRIELLE

I get to ladle! You heard me. And guess what will happen to this beautiful dress and invitation? I shall loan them both to you—you shall go in my stead! And meet the Prince and fall in love and get married and exact revenge on Madame and try to keep Jean-Michel out of the stockade. Tra-la-tra-la, the way my mind works.

MADAME

(Offstage)

Cinderella! I can't find my gloves!

GABRIELLE

And don't worry about Madame, she never notices anything that isn't her.

ELLA

Your gloves are right here, Madame!

MADAME

(Entering)

Why did you not tell me you had the gloves, foolish child? Charlotte!! Make haste, child! And those shoes are delicate and dainty.

CHARLOTTE

(Hobbling)

My feet burn with the heat of a hundred suns!

MADAME

To the carriage, daughters.

GABRIELLE

(Grabbing her abdomen, and letting out a yelp)

Ooooooh! Madame—my stomach, I must have eaten something this morning that disagrees with me.

(Sits.)

MADAME

No, no—this can't prevent me from going to the banquet tonight.

GABRIELLE

Go—you go without me—let Charlotte meet the Prince and steal him from the homely girl from the ball—Go—let Charlotte become queen!

CHARLOTTE

I think I can make that work.

MADAME

I shall do this battle with only half my troops. Cinderella, fetch the physician. If Gabrielle is better, send her to the castle immediately. Gabrielle, get better. I insist on it. Keep your invitation.

GABRIELLE

Thank you, Mother. I'll come if I feel better—

(Makes a vomit sound.)

MADAME

Not on the dress! Charlotte, the carriage awaits.

(MADAME and CHARLOTTE sweep out. ELLA is about to say something.)

GABRIELLE

Sshhh.

(The sound of the carriage leaving. GABRIELLE runs into the back room)

Quickly, I'll change and you—you knock on the door.

(ELLA does so. It knocks back.)

ELLA

It knocked back.

GABRIELLE

(Offstage)

Then open it.

(ELLA opens the door. JEAN-MICHEL enters.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Hello, Ella!

ELLA

Well, hello, Jean-Michel.

JEAN-MICHEL

I am sick of hiding in the shadows like a fearful person.

ELLA

Would you rather see Madame?

JEAN-MICHEL

Hiding is nice.

ELLA

How are you this evening?

JEAN-MICHEL

I'm going out with Gabrielle and I'm wound up like a tick. Tonight, she and I will go to the green grocer and beg him for whatever scraps he might have, then we shall slave over a hot stove and serve a meal to the very poorest. I do hope she's not expecting that much fun every night.

GABRIELLE

(Entering in a simple dress)

Good evening, Jean-Michel.

JEAN-MICHEL

Good evening, Gabrielle. I much prefer you in this simple attire. You no longer look like a carnival attraction.

GABRIELLE

You speak such kind words to me, all the day long. And what of the soup kitchen this evening?

(ELLA exits.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Our first responsibility is with the poor. Then we shall march to the palace steps and I shall speak with the Prince. We only have one thing to worry about.

GABRIELLE

What's that?

JEAN-MICHEL

That he'll even speak to me.

GABRIELLE

Well, Ella might be a help, you know she's talked to the Prince.

JEAN-MICHEL

What?! Ella talked to the Prince?!

GABRIELLE

She went to the ball! They were talking about the kingdom and how to make things better. And tonight, she is going to the banquet!

JEAN-MICHEL

The world is upside down!! But don't you know what this means? If she really talked to the Prince, then I can talk to him and he'll be open to my suggestions. What do you call this feeling I have?

GABRIELLE

Optimism.

JEAN-MICHEL

Optimism. I have to do this more often.

GABRIELLE

(Grabbing a bottle of wine and two glasses)

You can march up to the Prince and talk to him.

JEAN-MICHEL

I can march up to the Prince and talk to him.

GABRIELLE

You can be a leader!

JEAN-MICHEL

I can be a leader!

GABRIELLE

You can be my boyfriend!

JEAN-MICHEL

I can be your boyfriend. Whoa, left turn! What are you doing?
This looks very counter-revolutionary.

GABRIELLE

I like the man who wants to change the world, but I also like the
man who brought me flowers.

JEAN-MICHEL

Who brought you flowers? Oh, I did. No, I couldn't.

GABRIELLE

You just said so. Optimism.

JEAN-MICHEL

Optimism?

GABRIELLE
(*Handing glass*)

Let yourself go.

JEAN-MICHEL
(*Drinks wine*)

I could be your boyfriend?

GABRIELLE

Yes!

JEAN-MICHEL

Yes! Yes! (*Kisses her*) Am I your boyfriend?

GABRIELLE

Yes!

JEAN-MICHEL

Yes!!!

(JEAN-MICHEL and GABRIELLE kiss passionately. MADAME walks
in.)

MADAME

So that's how it is?

(JEAN-MICHEL and GABRIELLE quickly pull apart and gasp at
the sight of MADAME.)

GABRIELLE

Mama!

MADAME

My own daughter—my flesh and blood deceiving me with some-
one so decidedly unsuitable. I had plans for you, Gabrielle, I had
created a life for you and this is how you show your gratitude—
(ELLA enters in GABRIELLE's dress, holding her invitation.)

ELLA

All dressed up and ready for court. How do I look?

MADAME

And you! Do you think you could go to court? I never loved your father. I just wanted his money. You've been nothing but a nuisance to me since the day he died. You think you can wear a beautiful gown? You think that is acceptable? You should be in rags.

(MADAME rips ELLA's dress.)

MADAME

Worn-out rags, that's all you deserve.

(MADAME shreds the dress.)

ELLA

No!

GABRIELLE

Mother, please stop!

MADAME

I am no longer your mother. You! Gabrielle, get out of my house, you are no longer welcome here—to the devil with you!

(MADAME throws the bits of torn dress at GABRIELLE and JEAN-MICHEL as they turn and run off. MADAME picks up the invitation and tears it up, turning to the now sobbing ELLA.)

MADAME

I'll decide what to do with you later. (*Begins to storm off, then stops*) Why did you have to make me doubt myself, I was doing so well?

(*Exits.*)

(ELLA cries. The sack of rags is there. Then some smoke begins to trail out from the china cabinet. And light comes from within. The smoke then grows and grows and opens, revealing MARIE, in her beautiful gown. She enters.)

ELLA

At last, a friendly face.

MARIE

Ella, sweet child, hurry, you shall be late for the banquet.

ELLA

No, look, everything is ruined.

MARIE

Hurry. The Prince needs you. He wants you.

ELLA

No, I can't—

MARIE

Why do you think he's having this second event tonight? To try to find you.

ELLA

Every time I take a step forward Madame pushes me back. The Prince would never love me if he saw me as I truly am. I can't keep fighting.

MARIE

If you have a dream, then very soon thereafter you're going to have to fight for it. Why, otherwise, how would you know the dream is yours?

ELLA

But my life—

MARIE

Exactly. It is your life.

MARIE

(Sings)

Beyond the voice that keeps insisting "no,"
There is something more than doubting
Breaking through the darkness.
Something that sets your heart aglow.

Someone wants you,
You know who.
Now you're living—
There's music in you.

Now you're hearing
Something new,
Someone playing
The music in you.

Now you're living,
You know why,
Now there's nothing
You won't try—

Move a mountain,
Light the sky,
Make a wish come true—
There is music in you.

ELLA

But I can't go to the banquet. My clothing is in tatters. It's all I have.

MARIE

Yes, perhaps we need even more tatters. More rags, rags, rags!

ELLA

But—

MARIE

Rags, rags, rags!!!

(Spoken rhythmically)

Tatters and shatters in bags
Make the new from old.
Tatters that matter and rags
Spin them into gold!

(ELLA throws the rags into the air. As they land, her torn gown has transformed into something golden and stunning. ELLA is amazed.)

MARIE

Now place these rags in your bag. Now remember the magic is gone at midnight!

(ELLA gathers up the rags on the floor.)

ELLA

Yes, the magic is gone at midnight. Is there anything else?

MARIE

Well, the glass slippers are already upon your feet and—oh yes! This book, that Jean-Michel gave you about the world. Now you only have the entire world to help you!

(The cottage transforms into exterior woods.)

MARIE

Now you can go
Wherever you want to go.
Now you can do
Whatever you want to do.

Now you can be
Whatever you want to be,
And love is the song
You will sing your whole life through.

Move a mountain,
Light the sky,
Make a wish come true—
There is music in you.
(MARIE and ELLA exit.)

Scene Six

SCENE: *The Palace Steps*

(*The banquet GUESTS, including CHARLOTTE and MADAME, arrive and greet LORD PINKLETON and SEBASTIAN. They make a fuss over TOPHER, who examines every WOMAN's face and then seems distracted.*)

LORD PINKLETON

Dinner is served!

(*The GUESTS run up the stairs excitedly. CHARLOTTE is the last. Stopping halfway up the stairs, she turns to TOPHER.*)

CHARLOTTE

(Pointing to self)

This is still an option.

(TOPHER and SEBASTIAN alone.)

SEBASTIAN

You Majestic Highness, I believe all the guests have arrived. It's time for the banquet.

TOPHER

I'm waiting for her. She has to come.

SEBASTIAN

Very well, sire, but be warned this party is a pack of gossips. I'd hurry it along if I were you.

(SEBASTIAN goes into the palace. A moment, then TOPHER turns to go up the stairs. ELLA runs on in her gold dress, holding the book.)

ELLA

Prince Topher!

TOPHER

You're here!

ELLA

I'm sorry I'm late, I'm so glad—

TOPHER

I knew if I had a banquet you would come!

ELLA

And I'm sorry I ran away before—

TOPHER

And you're even more beautiful than I remembered.

ELLA

Did you really have this banquet just for me?

TOPHER

I would have a hundred banquets to find you.

ELLA

Really? And the thing about me being more beautiful than you remember, that's real, too?

TOPHER

Yes, yes, of course.

ELLA

Wow. What do you know about that?

TOPHER

I've been thinking about you. And I've been thinking of what you were saying about the people having their homes taken away. The court tells me I should just ignore such talk but—

ELLA

But, you know that if you're going to be king, you have to pay attention to things that people tell you to ignore.

TOPHER

Yes, yes. I want to meet all of my people, not only the ones that Sebastian lets me see. I just don't know how, it's impossible.

ELLA

Oh, that's going to be more possible than you can even imagine. My friend Jean-Michel and my sister Gabrielle are headed here right now with some of your people.

TOPHER

Talk to me? But—if things are as bad as you say they are then they'll be angry with me.

ELLA

I think if you can do battle with a giant or a dragon, you can handle a person who just wants to talk to you.

TOPHER

Okay, you're good.

ELLA

Just be yourself. They'll see the man that I see—
(The sound of the GROUP approaching.)

TOPHER

Wait, what's your name?

ELLA

Just trust me, because I am your one true friend.
(The CROWD, led by JEAN-MICHEL and GABRIELLE, enters.)

ELLA

Friends, come meet Prince Topher. *(To GABRIELLE and JEAN-MICHEL)* Just don't say my name.

GABRIELLE

I won't say your name. I won't even ask about the gold dress.

JEAN-MICHEL

Are you all right?

ELLA

Yes. Yes. *(To TOPHER)* Jean-Michel is a wonderful man with a lot of great ideas.

JEAN-MICHEL

(Beginning to bow)

I—

TOPHER

No, no. It's nice to meet you.
(TOPHER and JEAN-MICHEL shake hands.)

ELLA

And Gabrielle, my sister.

(TOPHER and GABRIELLE shake hands. ELLA approaches YVONNE with a baby and SAM.)

ELLA

And this is Yvonne and her baby.

TOPHER

I see the resemblance.

ELLA

This is Sam.

SAM

It is an honor to meet you.

TOPHER

(Shaking SAM's hand)

It is an honor to meet you.

(The PEASANTS surround TOPHER.)

SAM

Hey, this prince is all right.

(YVONNE puts her baby in TOPHER's arms.)

TOPHER

Okay, I'm holding a baby.

SAM

You can talk to him like a person!
(YVONNE takes the baby from TOPHER.)

ELLA

Prince Topher, Jean-Michel has something he'd like to say to you.

JEAN-MICHEL

I—uh—we—these people have had their homes and property taken from them. I've said this before, but now I know what it is to have someone you love lose their home. We need your help. We need to have our voices heard.

(Sings)

For you can't just wait to be served by fate
On a silver plate or a tray.

JEAN-MICHEL & GABRIELLE

Now is the time,
The time of your life,
The time of your life is today.

TOPHER

Yes, yes, I see and true me, I too know what it's like to be overlooked. I want to help you but how?

MARIE

(Offstage)

Fol-de-rol and fiddledly dee,
Fiddledly faddley fumble,
All the dreams in all the world
Go "oops" and out they tumble!
(The book falls from ELLA's hands.)

ELLA

Of course. It's here.

TOPHER

What's here?

ELLA

(Shows book to TOPHER)

Do you know it?

TOPHER

I read it at university.

ELLA

(Opening the book)

Look, chapter two.

TOPHER

(Looking over ELLA's shoulder)

Of course, chapter two!

JEAN-MICHEL

(Looking over ELLA's shoulder)

Chapter two! I didn't get that far.

TOPHER

(Taking the book)

Yes, yes. Chapter two. I should have known! People, I think I have a plan.

ELLA

I knew you would.

SAM

Long live Prince Topher.

(A cheer from the CROWD.)

CLAUD

Our future king!

(A loud cheer from the CROWD. SEBASTIAN, LORD PINKLETON, MADAME, CHARLOTTE, and the other MEMBERS OF THE COURT, rush on. ELLA quickly hides under the stairs.)

SEBASTIAN

Prince Topher, what are you doing surrounded by these ragamuffins?

TOPHER

Sebastian, you said no one needed my help—what do you call these people?

SEBASTIAN

From their attire, I assume artists.

JEAN-MICHEL

We demand to have our voices heard.

(A cheer from the CROWD.)

SEBASTIAN

A beheading would not be out of place here.

TOPHER

Yes, all the people must be heard. That's a very good idea.

SEBASTIAN

What is going on?

TOPHER

Now there is a way for all to be seen and heard. It's in this book. In one month, let's all vote for a new job I shall create, the post

of . . . Prime Minister. Someone who will counsel me. I nominate our current Lord Protector, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

I am unworthy, sire.

TOPHER

And I also nominate this man, Jean-Michel.

SEBASTIAN & MADAME

(Almost overlapping)

What?!

TOPHER

Let the people decide. The way things are or the way things could be. And everyone, rich or poor, only gets one vote.

SEBASTIAN

One person, one vote? Where's the fun in that?

TOPHER

People, in one month, I give you—an election!!!

CROWD

What a guy! What a guy!

He's a plain and simple,

Complicated, fascinating—

(TOPHER is about to turn and leave, when he sees ELLA, from the back of the CROWD. She mimes eating, trying to give TOPHER a clue.)

TOPHER

Oh, right. Good idea. And now everyone, rich and poor, into the castle for a free banquet!

(Cheers from the PEASANTS—and terror from the COURT—as ALL run into the castle. Only ELLA and TOPHER are left.)

ELLA

You did it!! I knew you could!

TOPHER

I did do it! And I think I know who I am now!

ELLA

You're smiling. I've seen you smile before, but never like that.

TOPHER

I know the king that I can be. Just, fair. Kind-hearted. I've found myself and you showed me the way.

ELLA

You seem so sure of yourself. So sure of everything.

TOPHER

I feel like I can answer any question that gets thrown at me!

ELLA

You can!

TOPHER

With you I can. There's only one question I don't have an answer for.

Do I love you

Because you're beautiful?
Or are you beautiful
Because I love you?
Am I making believe I see in you
A girl too lovely to
Be really true?
Do I want you
Because you're wonderful?
Or are you wonderful
Because I want you?
Are you the sweet invention of a lover's dream,
Or are you really as beautiful as you seem?

ELLA

Am I making believe I see in you
A man too perfect to
Be really true?
Do I want you
Because you're wonderful?
Or are you wonderful
Because I want you?

ELLA & TOPHER

Are you the sweet invention of a lover's dream,
Or are you really as beautiful as you seem?
(ELLA and TOPHER kiss.)

TOPHER

And now I feel we can really change the world. You and I.

ELLA

To the banquet?

TOPHER

To the banquet!

ELLA

What time is it?

TOPHER

Only midnight, why?

ELLA

Midnight! I have to go!

TOPHER

Again? Why?

ELLA

I— (*The clock continues to strike midnight*) I must go

TOPHER

How can you leave me? Why do you leave?

ELLA

If you knew who I really was, you'd never want me.

TOPHER

Don't leave me!

ELLA

I don't want to, but I have to.

TOPHER

Wait! Guards, anyone, help! (*She runs off. He chases her*) Stop!!

Someone stop her!!

(*ELLA runs down the stairway, then stops and looks up at TOPHER. ELLA takes off her glass slipper and places it on the staircase. TOPHER picks up the slipper and looks at it*)

Ha!

Scene Seven

SCENE: *The Palace*

(LORD PINKLETON rings his bell, and makes his announcement.)

LORD PINKLETON

Hear ye!

(Rings bell)

Hear ye!

(Rings bell)

Eight o'clock and all is well. A great day in the kingdom. In one month will be our first free election for Prime Minister of the land. The candidates are Jean-Michel and our current Lord Protector, Sebastian. But tomorrow, all women, come to the palace and try on the glass slipper. Whosoever fits it shall be married to the Prince! This is the biggest news cycle I have ever shouted. I'll be back at eleven with local weather and sports.

(Sings)

Hear ye!

(Rings bell)

Hear ye!

(Rings bell)

The prince intends

To search until

He finds the girl

Who fits the bill.

Well, not "the bill,"

The shoe I mean,

A shoe to fit a queen!

(As LORD PINKLETON sings, a line of WOMEN forms, waiting to try on the slipper. TOPHER kneels by a chair, holding the

slipper. An OFFICIAL looks on. LORD PINKLETON presides over the shoe-fitting, giving the official decree.)

LORD PINKLETON

(TOPHER tries the slipper on a WOMAN)

The shoe does not fit!

(TOPHER tries the slipper on another WOMAN)

The shoe does not fit!

TOPHER

We're going to find that girl. If the shoe is made of glass it could only fit one person. I mean that's why she left it, right?

LORD PINKLETON

It doesn't look good.

(TOPHER tries the slipper on yet another WOMAN. The other WOMEN push against her, attempting to get her foot into the shoe.)

SEBASTIAN

(Entering)

How goes it?

OFFICIAL

So far, no luck.

(TOPHER tries the slipper on two more WOMEN. MADAME and CHARLOTTE enter.)

MADAME

Now, when you try on the shoe, make eye contact with His Highness. For our family, you shall try the shoe on first.

CHARLOTTE

Don't you mean only? No one has seen Cinderella since you yelled at her two nights ago. You got rid of Gabrielle because she likes that guy who might be our new Prime Minister—wow—good call there!

MADAME

I don't know what is going on in this world. Everything I felt was holy and true is trash. That which meant nothing to me now appears to mean everything.

CHARLOTTE

Here goes nothin'. (To TOPHER) Me again. Hey. (Tries on the slipper)

(GABRIELLE and JEAN-MICHEL enter from opposite sides of the stage.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Gabrielle, there you are! I've just decided, if I become Prime Minister, I'm gonna marry you!

GABRIELLE

Wow, the stakes are really piling up!

LORD PINKLETON

(The slipper does not fit CHARLOTTE's foot)

It does not fit.

CHARLOTTE

Of course it doesn't fit. I'm not the girl the Prince has fallen in love with. None of us are that girl.

TOPHER

Is that the last eligible lady in the kingdom?

LORD PINKLETON

She appears to be, yes.

TOPHER

She can't be!

SEBASTIAN

I told you the girl wouldn't come. Can we end this charade?

TOPHER

Everyone truly tried on the slipper?

(The CROWD shouts and mumbles. ELLA has entered behind them.)

ELLA

I haven't tried on the slipper.

(The CROWD parts, revealing ELLA, in her provincial garb, just as it did earlier at the ball. MARIE, in her rags, is with her.)

MARIE

Everything has led you to this moment. Now you have something to believe in: yourself.

(Sings)

All the dreamers in the world

Are dizzy in the noodle.

(MARIE disappears into the CROWD. ELLA approaches the chair.)

MADAME

By all means, make yourself ridiculous, try on the slipper.

SEBASTIAN

It's too, too rich!

JEAN-MICHEL

You can do it.

GABRIELLE

That's my sister!

(ELLA reaches TOPHER at the chair.)

TOPHER

Have we met before?

ELLA

Yes, and we are seeing each other for the first time right now.
(TOPHER tries the slipper on ELLA. It fits. EVERYONE gasps.)

LORD PINKLETON

(Amazed)

The shoe fits!

TOPHER

It is you. You who danced with me, you who showed me my own kingdom . . . and offered me water that day I was thirsty. Please don't run away again, I don't think I could bear it.

(ELLA nods. EVERYONE bows.)

MADAME

It was . . . you? We both know how horribly I have treated you since your father's death. I know it is beyond reason to expect some of your famous kindness. I am not worthy.

ELLA

Madame, you have treated me very poorly indeed. And I say to you now the three kindest words I know. I forgive you.

MADAME

(Bows in gratitude)

Thank you.

CHARLOTTE

Do you think that includes me?

MADAME

For you it probably involves several hours of community service.

TOPHER

You're amazing, could . . . I maybe learn your name now?

ELLA

Cinderella.

TOPHER

Cinderella, it's beautiful.

ELLA

It's a name I once hated, but starting today, I'll keep. So that from now on, when anyone thinks something is impossible, they'll just say my name. And know better.

TOPHER

Cinderella, I love you so much, I don't know what to do.

ELLA

Oh. Well. Is marriage still on the table?

TOPHER

Yes. Yes. Oh, my—yes!! You have to marry me. I mean, will you marry me? Oh, wait. (*Gets down on one knee*) Cinderella, will you marry me?

ELLA

Yes, my handsome Prince. I will marry you.
(*TOPHER rises.*)

TOPHER & ELLA

(*In counterpoint harmony*)

In the arms of my love I'm flying
Over mountain and meadow and glen,

TOPHER

And I like it so well

ELLA

And I like it so well

TOPHER

That for all I can tell

ELLA

. . . I like it so well

TOPHER & ELLA

And I like it so well
That for all I can tell
I may never come down again!
I may never come down to earth again!

Scene Eight

SCENE: *The Royal Gardens*

(*The wedding ceremony of ELLA and TOPHER. ALL are dressed in white. TRUMPETERS enter. LORD PINKLETON enters, followed by GUARDS holding flower bouquets.*)

LORD PINKLETON & CHORUS

The fields are aglow in autumn yellow,
And the sky is a robin's egg blue.
It makes you wish,
When you fall asleep,
You will dream about the view.

(*The WOMEN of the CHORUS enter, throwing rose petals.*)

Bizarre and improbable and pretty
As a page from the fairy-tale books,
It makes you wish
That the world could be
As lovely as it looks.

(*MADAME and SEBASTIAN enter from one side of the stage, with CHARLOTTE behind them. JEAN-MICHEL, now dressed in the attire of a prime minister, enters with GABRIELLE by his side. ALL bow to JEAN-MICHEL. SEBASTIAN offers his hand to JEAN-MICHEL. They shake and ascend the steps of the palace. MADAME and GABRIELLE embrace in a hug. CHARLOTTE joins them. They follow up the steps.*)

CHORUS

All around you the same sweet sound
You can hear in the earth and down from the sky,
What a lucky girl,
What a lucky guy,

What a girl!
 What a guy!
 (MARIE *flies in.*)

MARIE & CHORUS

Someone wants you,
 You know who.
 Now you're living—
 There's music in you.

(*ELLA enters in her wedding gown. The RACCOON and FOX are in a tree, holding a bouquet of flowers. ELLA takes the bouquet, and the THREE bow to one another. TOPHER descends the steps. He bows. ELLA curtsies. They ascend the steps.*)

MARIE & CHORUS

Now you can go
 Wherever you want to go.
 Now you can do
 Whatever you want to do.

Now you can be
 Whatever you want to be,
 And love is the song
 You will sing your whole life through.

FULL COMPANY

Move a mountain,
 Light the sky,
 Make a wish come true—
 There is music—

(*The clock starts to chime midnight. ALL look to ELLA.*)

ELLA

I'm good.
 (TOPHER *and* ELLA *kiss.*)

FULL COMPANY

—In you!
 (TOPHER *and* ELLA *wave to their SUBJECTS. Curtain calls.*)

FULL COMPANY

But the world is full of zanies and fools
 Who don't believe in sensible rules
 And won't believe what sensible people say,
 And because these daft and dewy-eyed dopes
 Keep building up impossible hopes,
 Impossible things are happ'ning every day!

(*The curtain falls. End of Act Two.*)