Produced by Robyn Goodman, Jill Furman, Stephen Kocis
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Choreographed by Josh Rhodes
Musical Adaptation, Supervision, and Arrangements by David Chase
Orchestrations by Danny Troob
Scenic Design by Anna Louizos
Costume Design by William Ivey Long
Lighting Design by Kenneth Posner
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Production Stage Manager: Ira Mont
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Associate Choreographer: Lee Wilkins
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General Management: Richards/Climan, Inc.

Additional producer credits:
Edward Walson, Venetian Glass Productions, The Araca Group,
Luigi Caiola & Rose Caiola, Roy Furman, Walt Grossman,
Peter May/Sanford Robertson, Glass Slipper Productions
LLC/Eric Schmidt, Ted Liebowitz/James Spry, Blanket Fort Productions
In association with Center Theatre Group and Charles Salameno

Produced by Arrangement with Rodgers & Hammerstein: An Imagem Company

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


(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.

KINDEST, 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!

KINDEST, 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 aftermath.)

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'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.
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.

TOPER
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.

TOPER
Thank you, young lady. (Seeing her and smiling) That's very kind of you.

(TOOPER 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
giver her some of your things, so she doesn’t have a revolution
and take all of your things.
(MARIE, a woman in rags, enters. ELLE 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 PINKLEYTON
draw their swords.)

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

LORD PINKLEYTON
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 ELLE) 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 PINKLEYTON
Shall we journey on?

TOPHER
Very well, Pinkleton. (Giving ELLE 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 fol-
lowers. He remembers he has the drinking gourd) Oh, here, sorry.
(Gives it back to ELLE) 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  
(Enter)

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
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
(Rip: 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
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 entreat thee.

TOPHER
A list of the lords entreat any 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.

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.
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 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
Windenmere 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 fiddledy fiddle,
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!
(Exit.)

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

MARIE

(Entering from behind tree)

Fol-de-rol and fiddley dee,
Fiddledy faddledy fuddle,
All the wishes in the world
Are poppycock and twaddle!

ELLA

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

MARIE

Yes.

(Sings)

Fol-de-rol and fiddley 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.
(MARIÉ rips off her rags and ragged cape. Underneath is the most beautiful gown. ELLÀ gasps.)

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

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

ELLÀ
Are you really my fairy godmother?

MARIÉ
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.

ELLÀ
But that's so improbable. Implausible.

MARIÉ
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!

ELLÀ
Impossible!

MARIÉ
Impossible!

ELLÀ
Impossible!

MARIÉ
Impossible!

ELLÀ
Impossible!

MARIÉ
Impossible!

ELLÀ
Impossible!

ELLÀ & MARIÉ
Impossible!

ELLÀ
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 happening 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 ELIA.)
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?
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 curtseys. 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 "ooh" 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," "Touche," 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
(Crackling)
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

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

TOPOHER
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 TOPOHER.)

TOPOHER
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?

ELLNA

I feel the same.

TOpher

Like such a phony.

ELLNA

So do I!

TOpher

You do?

ELLNA

Yes!

TOpher

Me too! My name is—

ELLNA

Topher, short for Christopher. Yes, I know.

TOpher

Have we met before?

ELLNA

Yes, and we are seeing each other for the first time right now.
(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 ELLNA 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 stair. 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.)
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 doc'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 pincher 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!
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. Elia 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!
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—
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
castle, 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'll 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!

(Exeunt.)

LORD PINKLETON & HERALDS

Hear ye!
Hear ye!

(MADAME enters among the HERALDS.)

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.)

Banquet! . . . Tonight!! Invitation only!
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)
Ooooh! 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 someone 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, hold-
ing 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)

TOPHER
No, no. It's nice to meet you.
(Topper 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 fiddledy dee,
Fiddledy faddely 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.)
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.)

ELL A
You did it!! I knew you could!

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

ELL A
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.

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

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

ELL A
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?

ELL A
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?

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

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

ELL A
To the banquet?
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!!
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 high-
ness. 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.

TOPER

Is that the last eligible lady in the kingdom?

LORD PINKLETON

She appears to be, yes.

TOPER

She can’t be!

SEBASTIAN

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

TOPER

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?
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.)