

CINDERELLA

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Scene Two
Outside Madame's Cottage**[MUSIC NO. 02A "CINDERELLA ENTERS"]**

(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.)

START



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 has drawn water from the well into a gourd, which she then gives to TOPHER.)

ELLA. *(Bowing.)* Here you are, sire.

TOPHER. Thank you, young lady.

(Seeing her and smiling.)

That's very kind of you.

(He 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 re-enters 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 for 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.

[MUSIC NO. 02B "TOPHER RIDES OFF"]

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.

(ELLA accepts the coin.)

Buttercup!

(He 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.

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(He exits. The KNIGHTS pull out their swords and point them "onward" as they exit.)

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.

(She 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.

(Both 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.  **STOP**

JEAN-MICHEL. And do you know why the poor are the kindest, Ella and Crazy Marie?

START

(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.

(Noticing the book.)

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. ← **STOP**

[MUSIC NO. 04 "IN MY OWN LITTLE CORNER"]

(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.)

MADAME. *(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.)

START



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...

(She takes a kettle from the fire.)

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GABRIELLE. Let me help you with that.

(She 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.)

[MUSIC NO. 18A "IT WAS YOU TONIGHT, WASN'T IT?"]

(ELLA 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?

[MUSIC NO. 19 "A LOVELY NIGHT (REPRISE)"]

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

GABRIELLE. Co-conspirators.

ELLA. Friends.

GABRIELLE. Sisters.  **STOP**

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Scene Six
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. Your 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.

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

START

→ 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 CROWD approaching.)

[MUSIC NO. 23A "NOW IS THE TIME (UNDERScore)"

They're coming!

TOPHER. Wait, what's your name?

ELLA. Just trust me, because I am your one true friend.  **STOP**

(The CROWD, led by JEAN-MICHEL and GABRIELLE, enters.)

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?