

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.)

CINDERELLA

65

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**

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

(*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.

START



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!  **STOP**