

Scene 1: Group Reading

CINDERELLA

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(Music stops. MADAME and ELLA must face off.)

MADAME. Age before beauty. You first, dear.

(“Ooohs” from the CROWD.)

ELLA. You have such a beautiful speaking voice. Have you ever considered reciting poetry?

(Silence and muttering from the CROWD.)

MADAME. *(Cracking.)* Say it – what – do it – what?! The anticipation is killing me! Do the Ridicule! Why do you say that?

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

MADAME. Why. Are. You. Doing this. To. Meeee?!

SEBASTIAN. What is this bewitchery you practice?

ELLA. It’s just kindness.

[MUSIC NO. 10A “KINDNESS”]

SEBASTIAN. Kind-ness?

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

SEBASTIAN. Kind-ness.

ELLA. Yes. You know. Compassion.

SEBASTIAN. Who are you, you strange woman?

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

ELLA. Kindness. You must all try it.

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

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

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

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

A LORD. *(Stepping forward.)* This room is filled with some of the loveliest women I have ever seen.

A LADY. *(Stepping forward.)* 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 DUCHESS. 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?

Scene 2: Ella, Marie

CINDERELLA

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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 (speak these lines)
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, this pumpkin over here?

ELLA. Yes?

MARIE. I'll turn it into a golden carriage.

ELLA. And horses?

MARIE. Those mice? Trapped in this cage.

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

*(MARIE turns and rips off her rags and ragged
cape. Underneath is the most beautiful gown.*

ELLA gasps.)

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

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

ELLA. Are you really my fairy godmother?

[MUSIC NO. 08 "IMPOSSIBLE"]

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

ELLA. But that's so improbable. Implausible.

Scene 3: Ella, Madame, and Stepsisters

CINDERELLA

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(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.

Scene 4: Ella, Gabrielle

CINDERELLA

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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.

(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.

Scene 5: Sebastian, Topher

CINDERELLA

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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!!

(He exits.)

[MUSIC NO. 21 "THE PRINCE IS GIVING A BALL (REPRISE)"]

Scene 6: Jean-Michel, Gabrielle

CINDERELLA

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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!

Am I your boyfriend?

GABRIELLE. Yes!

JEAN-MICHEL. Yes!!

Scene 7: Topher, Ella

CINDERELLA

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Scene Six The Palace Steps

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.