

(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.

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!

**[MUSIC NO. 03 "PARADE OF PURCHASES
(CINDERELLA MARCH)"]**

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 enters, holding a small package. She is followed by a COURTIER carrying many packages.)

MADAME. Cinderella! Help me with my parcels this instant!

(ELLA goes to help the COURTIER.)

Cinderella, lazy stepdaughter, help me with MY package!

(ELLA scrambles to do so.)

Careful! Careful!! No one knows the extreme torture I am subjected to.

(Noticing MARIE and JEAN-MICHEL.)

I'm ignoring that. Charlotte, Gabrielle, come daughters, come!

(GABRIELLE and CHARLOTTE enter, beautifully dressed.)

GABRIELLE. We are here, Mama!