

she carries, including a salmon wrapped in butcher's paper.

STEPMOTHER. Wait here while we finish our shopping.
CINDERELLA. Yes, Stepmother.

(The STEPMOTHER exits into the shop.)

GRACE. Have you ever seen a slower girl in your life?
JOY. Who are you callin' slow?

GRACE. Not you, stupid -

(Indicating CINDERELLA.)

- her!

(GRACE exits.)

JOY. Oh.

(Then, realizing.)

Hey! Who are you callin' stupid?

(JOY exits. CINDERELLA sets the packages down and takes in the village scene with the delighted wonder of a girl who doesn't get out much. Music out. A LITTLE GIRL nearby winds a music box, then opens it to release the tinkling music.)

[MUSIC NO. 02 "THE SWEETEST SOUNDS"]

CINDERELLA.

THE SWEETEST SOUNDS I'LL EVER HEAR
ARE STILL INSIDE MY HEAD.

THE KINDEST WORDS I'LL EVER KNOW
ARE WAITING TO BE SAID.

THE MOST ENTRANSCING SIGHT OF ALL
IS YET FOR ME TO SEE,

AND THE DEAREST LOVE IN ALL THE WORLD
IS WAITING SOMEWHERE FOR ME -

IS WAITING SOMEWHERE,
SOMEWHERE FOR ME.

(CHRISTOPHER enters across the square - the handsome young prince of the kingdom in

ACT I

Scene One

The Village Square

(The VILLAGERS go merrily about their business in the bustling marketplace, where the merchants include a BUTCHER, CLOTH MERCHANT, CHEESE MERCHANT, BAKER, FLOWER GIRL, and FRUIT SELLER. The music segues into:)

[MUSIC NO. 01A "THE VILLAGE (CINDERELLA MARCH)"]

(To the tempo of a haughty march, the STEPMOTHER enters from the butcher shop, followed by her daughters, GRACE and JOY.)

STEPMOTHER. Come along, girls. So Grace, the butcher certainly was chatty with you today.

GRACE. He had pork on sale.

JOY. Pork isn't all he was pitchin'.

STEPMOTHER. "The butcher's wife never goes hungry."

GRACE. I'd rather starve.

JOY. That'll be the day.

STEPMOTHER. *(Spotting a hat outside the millinery shop.)*
Aaahhh! Will you just look at that hat! I simply must try it on.

(Looking toward the butcher shop impatiently.)

Oh...where is that girl? How long can it take to wrap a salmon? Cinderella...!

(CINDERELLA enters from the butcher shop, nearly obscured by the stack of packages

CHRISTOPHER. Mother, what is the meaning of this?
KING. (*Putting on a dressing gown.*) Doesn't anybody in this house knock?

QUEEN. Darling, we were just talking about you.

KING. Your mother was talking, I was listening.

QUEEN. And where have you been, in that costume?

CHRISTOPHER. Why wasn't I consulted about this ball that I'm supposedly giving?

QUEEN. Oh, darn - you found out. It was supposed to be a surprise birthday party. Well, surprise!

CHRISTOPHER. It's three months until my birthday. And since when does a birthday party require the attendance of "every eligible young maiden in the kingdom"?

QUEEN. (*Feigning shock and disbelief.*) What...? Let me...

(*She snatches the fier and gives it a glance.*)

Well, you know those royal printers - they never get anything right.

CHRISTOPHER. Mom, I want this ball called off immediately.
QUEEN. But, darling, it's impossible to cancel once you've got the ball rolling.

(*She realizes she has made a joke and howls, but she's the only one.*)

CHRISTOPHER. Well, you can just count me out!

(*He turns on his heels and starts off.*)

KING. Your Highness!

(*This in a father's tone of voice that pulls CHRISTOPHER up short.*)

Look, Chris - we don't want to pressure you, but you do have certain obligations.

QUEEN. What your father is trying to say is that it's time to choose a bride and produce an heir. After all, someday soon this kingdom will be yours.

KING. Not that soon.

QUEEN. I long to hear the pitter-patter of little feet on the marble again.

CHRISTOPHER. All I'm asking is to find a bride for myself, in my own time. I guess I have this old-fashioned idea that I want to fall in love before I get married. Like you did.

KING. That's what we want for you too, son.

QUEEN. Of course it is, darling. Well, thank goodness we have that all settled. Now, I have prepared a short guest list for your approval.

(*As she unfurls a scroll which stretches not quite across the room.*)

[MUSIC NO. 04B "ROYAL SCROLL"]

(CHRISTOPHER and the KING wince.)

CHRISTOPHER. You haven't heard a word I've said!

QUEEN. Family and close friends, darling - terribly intimate.

(LIONEL enters.)

LIONEL. Your Majesties, Your Highness - if you please. I couldn't help overhearing and I probably shouldn't interfere...

KING, QUEEN & CHRISTOPHER. Probably.

LIONEL. But perhaps we can reach a royal compromise.

QUEEN. Compromise?

KING. What do you think this is - a democracy?

CHRISTOPHER. What sort of a compromise, Lionel?

LIONEL. Let's say you suck it up and go along with the ball.

QUEEN. I'm loving this idea so far.

LIONEL. And if you find the girl of your dreams, great.

(*To the QUEEN.*)

But if he doesn't...

CHRISTOPHER. Lionel, you're brilliant! Okay, I'll do it. But if I don't meet the right girl at the ball, you'll let me fall in love in my own time, no matter how long it takes...

Scene Three A
A Palace Corridor

*(Immediately following. CHRISTOPHER enters,
followed by LIONEL.)*

LIONEL. So tell me, why did you disappear again this morning after I've begged you...

CHRISTOPHER. I had a remarkable day! No one treated me like a prince. I was just a normal person.

LIONEL. You know what? Normal people? Not all they're cracked up to be. *I'm* a normal person. Doesn't that tell you anything? They're all out there wishing they could be *you*.

CHRISTOPHER. Because they don't know what it's really like.

LIONEL. Look - you're rich, you live in a gorgeous palace, you've got every woman in the kingdom throwing herself at you. Is there something I'm not getting?

CHRISTOPHER. I have no life of my own. Everything gets decided for me. You should know that better than anyone, always hanging over me like a cloud, everywhere I go, everything I do. I mean - get a life.

LIONEL. I got a life and it's you! I'm your royal steward and I'm telling you - this disappearing act has got to stop. It's too dangerous.

CHRISTOPHER. I was careful.

LIONEL. Not you - me! I can't keep lying to your mother about where you are. They got laws against that. Now what say we slip into something less comfortable.

(He helps CHRISTOPHER into a robe.)

[MUSIC NO. 06 "THE SWEETEST SOUNDS
(REPRISE)"]

(The scene begins to shift.)

CHRISTOPHER.

THE MOST ENTRANCING SIGHT OF ALL
IS YET FOR ME TO SEE,

#4
CINDERELLA. You don't really believe that, do you? That wishes are poppycock?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Why shouldn't I?

CINDERELLA. Well, whenever I dream of having a fairy godmother...

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Dreams?

FOL-DE-ROL AND FIDDLEY DEE,

FIDDELDY FADDELDY FODDLE,

ALL THE DREAMERS IN THE WORLD

ARE DIZZY IN THE NOODLE.

CINDERELLA. So, my wishes are poppycock and I'm crazy for dreaming.

(Aside, to the ANIMALS.)

With a fairy godmother like that, who needs a stepmother?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. You know what her problem is? She can't handle how fabulous you are.

CINDERELLA. Fabulous? *Me?*

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Those girls of hers can't hold a candle to you and they all know it. Jealousy! That's why they treat you as they do.

CINDERELLA. But they're my family. They're all I've got.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Believe me, honey - when your daddy remarried, this is not what he had in mind for you.

CINDERELLA. You talk like you knew him.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. I did know him.

CINDERELLA. And Mother?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Very well.

CINDERELLA. Was she...my mother, I mean - was she beautiful?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Well, people did seem to think so. But your mama never put much stock in beauty. The way you look isn't really something you can take credit or blame for, is it?

CINDERELLA. I wish I'd known her.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. So does she, honey.

CINDERELLA. I've wished so hard...

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Wishes again! Look - it is true that everything *starts* with a wish. But it is what you *do* with a wish that counts.

[MUSIC NO. 09 "IMPOSSIBLE"]

CINDERELLA. So my wish to go to the ball?

FAIRY GODMOTHER. Fol-de-rol and fiddledy dee. How would you get there? I suppose one of those pumpkins is going to magically transform into a golden carriage.

CINDERELLA. Well, no...

FAIRY GODMOTHER. And that those mice will somehow become horses to pull your magic carriage.

CINDERELLA. Of course not. That's impossible.

FAIRY GODMOTHER. If you say so.

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 FIDDELDY 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 HAPPENING EVERY DAY!

IMPOSSIBLE.

CINDERELLA.

IMPOSSIBLE?

FAIRY GODMOTHER.

IMPOSSIBLE.

Stop

Scene Two
The Royal Gardens

[MUSIC NO. 15A "PLAYOFF POLKA AND
UNDERSCORE"]

(Immediately following. As the COUPLES polka offstage to another part of the palace, CHRISTOPHER strolls downstage with CINDERELLA as the scene begins to shift. A full moon illuminates a beautiful garden, which includes statuary, a bench, and upstage topiary.)

CHRISTOPHER. May I ask you something?

CINDERELLA. Within reason.

CHRISTOPHER. What brought you here tonight?

CINDERELLA. Well, it's kind of a long story. My family didn't want me to come. In fact, they don't even know I'm here.

CHRISTOPHER. I'm glad you are.

(The others are gradually fading upstage and off.)

The truth is I almost didn't come myself.

CINDERELLA. How could a prince not show up for his own ball?

CHRISTOPHER. Don't you think it's all a little...medieval? I guess it's no secret that my folks are anxious to marry me off. You know - being heir to the throne and all. But this whole thing makes me feel like some kind of a...a prized bull or something.

CINDERELLA. *(Teasing him, playing the femme fatale.)* Every eligible young maiden vying to be your devoted servant, forever and forever?

CHRISTOPHER. Servants I got. What I need is...someone I can really talk to.

(They share a look of understanding.)

(Music has concluded.)

CINDERELLA. It's beautiful out here.

CHRISTOPHER. *(Never taking his eyes off her.)* Yes, it is.

(He tries drawing close to her, but she turns away nervously.)

You're not like most girls, are you?

CINDERELLA. Not like the girls you meet, I suppose.

CHRISTOPHER. Actually, I don't meet that many girls. I lead a pretty sheltered life.

CINDERELLA. So do I.

CHRISTOPHER. Really? Every day, same old - same old?

CINDERELLA. Having no life of your own...

CHRISTOPHER. ...The same silly arguments...

CINDERELLA. ...Until you just want to run away...

CINDERELLA & CHRISTOPHER. ...And never come back!

(They laugh at having completed each other's thought.)

CHRISTOPHER. It seems like we have a lot in common.

CINDERELLA. Oh... I'm not so sure about that. After all, you don't really know me.

CHRISTOPHER. But I'd like to. And I want you to know me.

(Taking her hands.)

Look, I know we've just met and it's crazy and everything but...

(He looks deep into her eyes...then chickens out.)

Would you like to see the rest of the gardens?

CINDERELLA. I'd love to.

[MUSIC NO. 16 "STEPSISTERS' LAMENT"] *Spk*

(An orchestral sting, and JOY peeks out from behind a topiary, unseen by CHRISTOPHER and

CINDERELLA, as they stroll off romantically.)

JOY. Did you get a good look at her?