

JEAN-MICHEL - Scene A

I-2-9

CHARLOTTE

We are exhausted being as beautiful as we look.

MADAME

Cinderella, idle girl, come help your stepsisters with their shrewd purchases. Into the house, daughters—the real ones.

(MADAME enters the house with CHARLOTTE.)

GABRIELLE

(Helping ELLA collect her packages)

Madame isn't always terrible. Sometimes she sleeps.

JEAN-MICHEL

Gabrielle. I have brought from University a book for you, with pictures of how people in other lands live. And how they govern. Norway, Italy, Japan...

GABRIELLE

I have mentioned my interest in these places only in passing. And you have brought a whole book.

(Blushing)

Quit it, you.

JEAN-MICHEL

And four days from now I would like to take you on a date. I'm organizing a soup kitchen. We need someone to stir. And ladle.

MADAME

(Re-entering)

Gabrielle! Do not talk to that man. We are teetering precariously between upper-middle class and lower-upper class. We cannot be seen talking with a revolutionary. Into this house at once.

(GABRIELLE gives the book back to JEAN-MICHEL and runs into the house. MADAME follows her into the house.)

JEAN-MICHEL

Why do I care? Why do I try? I'll never be good enough for her. I will take this book and burn it!

MARIE

Why not give the book to dear Ella?

ELLA

If it's quite all right, Jean-Michel, I would love to look at your book of how other countries live.

JEAN-MICHEL

(Hands ELLA the book)

Then here, Ella, take it. I shall go my way alone and live my own life. I'm a loner!

(to MARIE)

You're coming with me, right?

MARIE

Of course.

START ↓

JEAN-MICHEL

Good.

(MARIE and JEAN-MICHEL exit. ELLA looks at the book.)

END

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.