

JEAN-MICHEL - Scene B

II - 5 - 64

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.

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!

START

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!

MADAME

My own daughter—my flesh and blood deceiving me with someone so decidedly unsuitable. I had plans for you, Gabrielle, I had created a life for you and this is how you show your gratitude—

(MADAME has found her glove. ELLA enters in GABRIELLE's dress, holding her invitation.)

ELLA

All dressed up and ready for court. How do I look?

MADAME

And you! Do you think you could go to court? I never loved your father. I just wanted his money. You've been nothing but a nuisance to me since the day he died. You think you can wear a beautiful gown? You think that is acceptable? You should be in rags.

MUSIC 21A: MADAME RIPS THE DRESS

(MADAME rips ELLA's dress.)

MADAME

Worn-out rags, that's all you deserve.

(MADAME shreds the dress.)

ELLA

No!

GABRIELLE

Mother, please stop!

