

# CHARMING PRINCES

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## Excerpt

### SCENE FIVE

*(Lights up on CHARMING, GAWAIN and the retinue in the audience. CHARMING lounges in front of some unfortunate audience member. There can absolutely be an element of improvisation here!)*

**CHARMING.** Lucky, lucky you! You know who I am, of course. Charming. Prince Charming. Because it's always charming to meet me. *(He chuckles at his own joke.)* We met last night. You dropped your shoe. *(He snaps and GAWAIN give CHARMING the shoe.)* Is this it?

*(At this point, CHARMING should improvise, either putting the shoe on the audience member or not. Finally, he is cut off or rescued by GAWAIN, who has been staring at the stage at CINDERELLA.)*

**GAWAIN.** Majesty!

**CHARMING.** Yes? What is it? Have you spotted a fairer and more beautiful maid? *(To audience member.)* No offense. *(To GAWAIN.)* Have your keen senses smelled the scintillating scent of satin? Or have you in fact found the fabulous fashionista after whom my fainting feelings flounder? O! Say that you have, Gawain! And say where my love may be!

**GAWAIN.** Yes, your majesty!

**CHARMING.** And where may be she be, Gawain?

**GAWAIN.** *(Pointing to the stage.)* Yes, your majesty! *Yes yes yes!*

**CHARMING.** "Yes" is not actually a direction, Gawain. It's a statement. Sometimes I worry about you. Were you hugged enough as a child?

**GAWAIN.** *(Urgently pointing.)* Yes, your majesty! Yes. Yes. YES! *(Making an hourglass shape with his hands to indicate CINDERELLA'S presence.)* Yeeeeeeees... *(Pointing to the stage.)* YES!

**CHARMING.** *(Slapping him on the back.)* Well, that's good! I'm glad you're so enthusiastic about it. Did I ever tell you about my childhood?

**GAWAIN.** *(Slumping.)* Yes, your majesty.

**CHARMING.** Well, let me tell you again. I was raised by a herd of feral chickens, on an island off the coast of Kansas....

**GAWAIN.** *(Overlapping.)* Yeeeeeeeeeeeeees....

*(They exit.)*

### SCENE SIX

*(Lights up on CINDERELLA and LILYNIMBLE. CINDERELLA is slumped over the table, while LILYNIMBLE continues to regale her with stories.)*

**LILYNIMBLE.** ...and I told her: "If you make your walls out of gingerbread, some little kid will eat you out of house and home." And did she listen to me? No. Story of my life.

*(A slight commotion from off-stage. CINDERELLA raises her head abruptly.)*

**CINDERELLA.** Shhhhh! Be quiet! Do you hear that?

**LILYNIMBLE.** Hear wh –

*(CINDERELLA claps her hand over LILYNIMBLE'S mouth, as from outside a HERALD announces:)*

**HERALD.** Hear ye! Hear ye! Prince Charming is searching for his bride!

*(General cheers from the wings.)*

**HERALD.** The woman who fits this slipper will get his kiss!

*(More cheers from the wings.)*

**HERALD.** And the woman who has the other slipper...will be his Queen!

*(Raucous cheers. The HERALD exits. CINDERELLA rushes to the shoe, still on the hearth, and starts banging it against the floor. It doesn't break. She hits it with the shovel. No effect. She drops the coal bucket on it. No luck. In desperation, she calls out to LILYNIMBLE:)*

**CINDERELLA.** You've got to help me!

**LILYNIMBLE.** Help you, dear? With what?

**CINDERELLA.** I can't keep this shoe! I *won't* keep this shoe. I *won't* marry that horrible, self-centered prince!

**LILYNIMBLE.** Horrible? Self-centered? Who said he was horrible? I think he has excellent taste!

**CINDERELLA.** Fairy Godmother, listen to me, for just a moment – really *listen*. Do you know what last night was like? It was – it was everything you said it was. It was beautiful and perfect, and the music played and the chandeliers shone. And Prince Charming whirled me in his arms and I felt as light as feather. And his kiss – well, that was kind of wet and swamp-like – but still! It was a real kiss, from a real prince, and it was kind of wonderful.

And he told me how beautiful I was as I stood there in the moonlight. And I thought I would die of happiness. But I didn't die of happiness – because it suddenly occurred to me that I wasn't happy. Oh, he was everything I'd hoped for – handsome, debonair – but that's *all* he was: handsome. Charming. And that was all I would ever be to him: beautiful, with moonlight in my hair. But what would happen when midnight struck? When the spell faded?

So I tried to tell him what I was thinking, and he told me not to speak. And I tried to tell him that he was under a spell, that it was all just fairy dust and moonlight and champagne and that if he *really* saw me, *really* saw me as I am – here, in the ashes, in my daily life, that he wouldn't love me at all. That I'd be no more desirable than...than a frog. But he just kissed me a second time, and told me not to *think*. So I threw my shoe at his head and ran away.

**LILYNIMBLE.** You threw the shoe? You *threw* the shoe? My beautiful SHOE!?!?

**CINDERELLA.** (*Dropping the coal scuttle on the shoe again.*) Didn't seem to hurt it much.

**LILYNIMBLE.** Well, of course not. They're indestructable. They also come in ruby.

(*Play continues.*)