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ACT II

[MUSIC NO. 11 "ENTR'ACTE"]

(The music segues into:)

[MUSIC NO. 12 "GAVOTTE"]

Scene One The Royal Ballroom

(The curtain rises on a stately gavotte, the mood stiff and deadly dull. The KING and QUEEN sit to one side on their thrones as LIONEL attends to a line of MAIDENS. The STEPMOTHER, GRACE, and JOY enter grandly. In a seemingly endless succession, CHRISTOPHER dances with each MAIDEN in turn.)

QUEEN. Have you ever seen so many lovely girls?

KING. It looks like Chris is having a worse time than I am.

QUEEN. Oh, darling, he'll find the one he's looking for tonight.

KING. And if he doesn't?

QUEEN. It's going to be a long night.

(The STEPMOTHER approaches LIONEL.)

STEMMOTHER. Pardon me, Your Stewardship, but I'm sure you've noticed my two beautiful daughters.

(GRACE and JOY bat their eyelashes and give LIONEL a little wave as the STEPMOTHER pulls a monetary note from her bosom and presses it into LIONEL's palm.)

LIONEL. *(Refusing the money.)* Please, madam – His Highness will dance with all the young ladies in due course.

STEPMOTHER. *(Flirtatiously.)* Naturally, every mother is eager that her daughter should dance with the prince. But what I want to know is, who has the honor of dancing with his steward?

LIONEL. Stewards don't dance.

STEPMOTHER. Now, there's no need to be coy.

(All over him.)

There's a look in your eye that says...

LIONEL. Please don't touch.

STEPMOTHER. Let's not pretend, Lionel. I can sense a certain something between us.

LIONEL. I wish there was something between us. A continent.

(CHRISTOPHER signals surreptitiously to LIONEL that he's had enough of his MAIDEN partner. LIONEL, in an effort to rid himself of the STEPMOTHER, escorts JOY over to CHRISTOPHER. CHRISTOPHER bows to the MAIDEN and turns to dance with JOY, who immediately begins to giggle.)

CHRISTOPHER. Have I missed something?

(JOY rings forth peals of nervous laughter and snorts.)

What's so funny?

JOY. Your Highness is so witty!

CHRISTOPHER. How would you know? I haven't said anything yet.

(Again the STEPMOTHER corners LIONEL.)

STEPMOTHER. So tell me, Lionel, when a girl marries a prince, she becomes a royal princess?

LIONEL. Yep.

STEPMOTHER. Which would make her mother a royal...

LIONEL. Pain in the neck.