

Scene Three The Royal Parlor

(Immediately following. The QUEEN sits, sewing a button on the king's trousers. The KING, clad in his undergarments, is trying to squeeze into a suit jacket that is too small for him. After a sharp orchestra chord, the QUEEN speaks:)

QUEEN. A fine father you are! You never worry about him.

(A sharp orchestra chord.)

KING. What's wrong with him?

(A sharp orchestra chord.)

QUEEN. He isn't happy.

(She bites off the thread and thrusts the pants at the KING on two orchestra chords. Music out.)

KING. Of course he is.

(He struggles to get the pants on.)

QUEEN. If he's happy, why doesn't he get married?

KING. If he's happy, why should he get married?

(Trying in vain to button the pants.)

Oh, it's no use trying to get these buttoned. They'll just have to do as-is.

QUEEN. Don't be ridiculous. You look like five pounds of flour in a two-pound sack.

(The KING takes the pants off.)

The royal tailor will just have to make you a new suit.

KING. But this suit is in perfect shape!

QUEEN. No one is questioning the shape the suit is in, darling.

(CHRISTOPHER comes storming into the room, brandishing the flier.)

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 flier 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...

QUEEN. But...

CHRISTOPHER. And with no interference. Dad?

KING. Well...it does have a certain logic to it.

QUEEN. Of course, darling. If that's the way you want it, that's the way it shall be.

CHRISTOPHER. Thank you. Both.

KING. You know, son, there's only one way to find the girl of your dreams.

CHRISTOPHER. What's that?

KING. Dumb luck. Let's just hope it runs in the family.

CHRISTOPHER. Love you guys.

(He exits.)

LIONEL. Don't worry, Your Majesties. He'll meet the right girl at the ball. I can just feel it in my bones.

QUEEN. You'll feel it in your bones if he doesn't.

LIONEL. I hear that.

(LIONEL exits.)

QUEEN. Max, suppose he *doesn't* meet the right girl at the ball? What then?

[MUSIC NO. 05 "BOYS AND GIRLS LIKE YOU AND ME"]

(Music begins as the KING gently touches the QUEEN's hand.)

KING. Then he'll meet her somewhere else. Isn't that the way it always happens?

BOYS AND GIRLS LIKE YOU AND ME
WALK BENEATH THE SKIES.
THEY LOVE JUST AS WE LOVE,
WITH THE SAME DREAM IN THEIR EYES.
SONGS AND KINGS AND MANY THINGS
HAVE THEIR DAY AND ARE GONE,
BUT BOYS AND GIRLS LIKE YOU AND ME,
WE GO ON AND ON.