

LAURIE. (Off.) Cinderella, your carriage away—
He stops short, almost backs out.

oh.

JO. (Surveying the scene, with disgust.) ...oh.

As they transition, Mrs. Mingott comes through, hauling
along a truly horrifying man:

MRS. MINGOTT. Miss Josephine! Miss Josephine! I've dug some-
body up!

Scene 7

Jo dresses as the mustachioed villain Rodrigo again; they re-
hearse her play. Meg is dressed in lavish costume jewelry—and
in some level of scandalous disarray. She's bound, struggling, to
a conveniently repurposed piece of furniture, as Jo casts a spell.

JO.

O my fair Lucella
You shall yet be my bride
My spells will hold and bind you
Captive at my side!

MEG.

O sad, my heart! O mad, my part! O, what end of a maiden's art!
Jo, I have some questions about this rhyme scheme.

JO. Keep going!

MEG.

I loved you once, Rodrigo
But those days are no more—
I can't go back to being
Who I was before!
All things change, Rodrigo
Whatever spell you say!
You can't turn me to stone
And you can't make me stay—

4 girls
- Jo, Meg, Laurie, Mrs. M.

JO.

I can make whatever thing
That I wish come true!

I am ALL-POWERFUL!

I'll show the world—show you!

I'll just take you back in time

I'll turn back that clock!

Back to those better days

Time itself I mock!

I won't accept this change

Not now, and not ever—

I'll make you stay the same

And I'll make it last forever!

MWA ha HA HA HA HA! MwA ha Ha ha Ha!

Someone's missing a cue.

BETH. Meg:

She holds up the cue book for Meg to read.

"Lucella screams thrillingly."

Jo makes the "go, go" sign. Meg screams thrillingly.

AMY. —O SWEET RUBELLA!

Amy enters with a big flourish, dressed as a knight—complete
with bad beard. She waves a gilt sword. It's the Amy show.

THE OTHERS. LUCELLA!

AMY. This beard keeps falling off.

JO. Back!

Amy stomps off.

BETH. "Lucella screams thrillingly."

Meg screams thrillingly.

AMY. O SWEET LUCELLA!

Pause.

Line!

BETH. "It is I—"

AMY. It is I, brave Valentino, a Wandering Knight of Some Renown!
Sword, to her dalliance—

THE OTHERS. (Various.) DELIVERANCE!

AMY. ...Line!

BETH. Sword to her—

AMY. (Drops the sword, screams girlishly.) Eek! (Picking it up.) Deliverance—

JO. Stop, stop—

AMY. Speed to the breast of my manly foe—!

She moves stylistically to stab Jo in the heart.

JO. STOP! This isn't working.

AMY. Of course it's not working, you won't let me get my lines out!

JO. The problem here is that Amy is not a convincing gentleman—

Amy reacts badly.

And if it's not realistic, why should we care?

MEG. This is a play about a wizard.

JO. But without any truth, it's dry and stakeless.

MEG. Perhaps I could play the gentleman, and Amy Lucella!

AMY. (Excited.) Ooh—

JO. Amy's too little.

AMY. (Pure rage.) OOH!

JO. I regret to inform you, Amy, that you are dismissed.

AMY. "Dismissed"?!

JO. You can't help who you are, dear. But I shall give you a nonspeaking role: a fairy, or a servant / or—

AMY. Servant!

JO. (Snaps.) —a woodland creature!

AMY. You cannot dismiss me—because I QUIT! This role is STUPID and this play is STUPIDER—it's for CHRISTMAS but it doesn't have anything to DO with that, no angels or nativity or Saint Nick or ANY-THING—

JO. Seasonal pageants are BORING, Amy, I am TRYING to do something ORIGINAL—

AMY. and YOU, stupid old Josephine, are absolutely—AUTOMATIC!

They all take a second trying to figure that out—

MEG. ...autocratic.

AMY. RRRRAARRNNNGGGH!

Amy throws down the sword and storms off.

~~JO. There are no small roles; Amy, only small actors!~~

MEG. Jo, this is supposed to be fun.

BETH. Maybe—maybe it's hard for Amy because, she, she's pretending to be someone who's so different from herself. Maybe if this play were about—real stories, about girls like us—

JO. —those stories are even more boring than seasonal pageants. No, no, the play is perfect—

MEG. Ahrm—

JO. I just need to rethink casting.

MEG. You don't mean to put Beth in?

BETH. (Terrified.) No—!

JO. I don't want anybody in the wrong role. I shall just SPIRIT UP an errant knight, a wand'ring gentleman—somewhere, SOMEHOW...

She wanders up to the playing space, seems to be thinking, then gets possessed, chants a "spell."

hmm hummena—humleena, HUMMEENA HUMMENA SHALAKA-ZAM!

During Jo's spell—a chest has begun rocking as if possessed, scaring the wits out of Beth—and out pops Laurie, brandishing a prop sword.

MEG. Mr. Laurence!

JO. The Brave Valentino! EN GARDE!

LAURIE. EN GARDE!

Laurie and Jo duel boisterously—it may devolve into wrestling—with much En Gardeing and ha-HAing. Very Errol Flynn. Beth hides from the stranger.

MEG. JO! May I speak to you for a moment?

JO. Hold, Valentino—the diva wishes an aside!

Meg pulls Jo aside forcibly.