

WITCH

(Tender but intense)

DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT'S OUT THERE IN THE WORLD?
SOMEONE HAS TO SHIELD YOU FROM THE WORLD.
STAY WITH ME.

PRINCES WAIT THERE IN THE WORLD, IT'S TRUE.
PRINCES, YES, BUT WOLVES AND HUMANS, TOO.
STAY AT HOME.
I AM HOME.

WHO OUT THERE COULD LOVE YOU MORE THAN I?
WHAT OUT THERE THAT I CANNOT SUPPLY?
STAY WITH ME.

STAY WITH ME,
THE WORLD IS DARK AND WILD.
STAY A CHILD WHILE YOU CAN BE A CHILD.
WITH ME.

(RAPUNZEL, just whimpers.

MUSIC continues under)

(Stroking RAPUNZEL'S HAIR)

I gave you protection and yet you disobeyed me.

RAPUNZEL

But did you think I would stay in that tower forever?

WITCH

You lied, why didn't you tell me you had a visitor?

(RAPUNZEL, keeps whimpering.

MUSIC crescendos)

I will not share you, but I will show you a world you've never seen.

(Cuts RAPUNZEL'S HAIR)

RAPUNZEL

No! NO!

(WITCH drags RAPUNZEL OFFSTAGE. BAKER ENTERS, followed by MYSTERIOUS MAN)

MYSTERIOUS MAN

When is a white cow not a white cow?

BAKER

I don't know! Leave me alone!

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Haven't I left you alone long enough?

BAKER

Your questions make no sense, old man! Go away!

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(jingling sack of gold)

In need of another cow?

#32 – Underscore

(Drops sack of gold; BAKER turns around at the sound of the falling coins; MYSTERIOUS MAN EXITS as BAKER picks up money.)

BAKER EXITS.

JACK, carrying the HEN and a golden egg, comes upon LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD, who wears a cape made of wolfskins. SHE walks with a certain confidence and bravado)

JACK

What a beautiful cape!

(LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD swooses around with a knife)

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

Stay away from my cape or I'll slice you into a thousand bits!

JACK

(Stepping back)

I don't want it! I was just admiring it!

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

(Proud)

My granny made it for me from a wolf that attacked us. And I got to skin the animal – and best of all, she gave me this beautiful knife for protection.

JACK

(Competitive)

Well, look what I have. A hen that lays golden eggs.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

(Suspicious)

I don't believe that egg came from that hen. Where did you get that egg?

JACK

I stole this from the kingdom of the Giant — up there. And if you think this is something, you should see the golden harp the Giant has. It plays the most beautiful tunes without your even having to touch it.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

(Laughing at JACK)

Of course it does. Why don't you go up to the kingdom right now and bring it back and show me?

JACK

I could.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

You could not!

I could!

JACK

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD

You could not, Mr. Liar!

(Makes a hasty EXIT)

JACK

I am not a liar! I'll get that harp. You'll see!

(EXITS.)

NARRATOR ENTERS)

NARRATOR

After having cast out Rapunzel to a remote desert, the Witch returned to take the Prince by surprise. And as he leapt from the tower — the thorns into which he fell pierced his eyes and blinded him.

(RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE ENTERS and stumbles about the forest, helpless. HE EXITS)

#33 — On the Steps of the Palace

As for Cinderella, she returned from her final visit to the Festival.

(NARRATOR EXITS. LIGHTS dim. CINDERELLA hobbles ONSTAGE, wearing but one shoe)

CINDERELLA

HE'S A VERY SMART PRINCE,
HE'S A PRINCE WHO PREPARES.
KNOWING THIS TIME I'D RUN FROM HIM,
HE SPREAD PITCH ON THE STAIRS.
I WAS CAUGHT UNAWARES.

AND I THOUGHT: WELL, HE CARES —
THIS IS MORE THAN JUST MALICE.
BETTER STOP AND TAKE STOCK
WHILE YOU'RE STANDING HERE STUCK
ON THE STEPS OF THE PALACE.

YOU THINK, WHAT DO YOU WANT?
YOU THINK, MAKE A DECISION.
WHY NOT STAY AND BE CAUGHT?
YOU THINK, WELL, IT'S A THOUGHT,
WHAT WOULD BE HIS RESPONSE?
BUT THEN WHAT IF HE KNEW
WHO YOU WERE WHEN YOU KNOW
THAT YOU'RE NOT WHAT HE THINKS
THAT HE WANTS?

AND THEN WHAT IF YOU ARE
WHAT A PRINCE WOULD ENVISION?
ALTHOUGH HOW CAN YOU KNOW
WHO YOU ARE TILL YOU KNOW
WHAT YOU WANT, WHICH YOU DON'T?
SO THEN WHICH DO YOU PICK:
WHERE YOU'RE SAFE, OUT OF SIGHT,
AND YOURSELF, BUT WHERE EVERYTHING'S WRONG?
OR WHERE EVERYTHING'S RIGHT
AND YOU KNOW THAT YOU'LL NEVER BELONG?

AND WHICHEVER YOU PICK,
DO IT QUICK,
'CAUSE YOU'RE STARTING TO STICK
TO THE STEPS OF THE PALACE.
IT'S YOUR FIRST BIG DECISION,
THE CHOICE ISN'T EASY TO MAKE.
TO ARRIVE AT A BALL.

(CINDERELLA)

IS EXCITING AND ALL —
ONCE YOU'RE THERE, THOUGH, IT'S SCARY.
AND IT'S FUN TO DECEIVE
WHEN YOU KNOW YOU CAN LEAVE,
BUT YOU HAVE TO BE WARY.
THERE'S A LOT THAT'S AT STAKE,
BUT YOU'VE STALLED LONG ENOUGH
'CAUSE YOU'RE STILL STANDING STUCK
IN THE STUFF ON THE STEPS...

BETTER RUN ALONG HOME
AND AVOID THE COLLISION.
EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T CARE,
YOU'LL BE BETTER OFF THERE
WHERE THERE'S NOTHING TO CHOOSE,
SO THERE'S NOTHING TO LOSE.

SO YOU PRY UP YOUR SHOES.

THEN FROM OUT OF THE BLUE,
AND WITHOUT ANY GUIDE,
YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR DECISION IS,
WHICH IS NOT TO DECIDE.

YOU'LL JUST LEAVE HIM A CLUE:
FOR EXAMPLE, A SHOE.
AND THEN SEE WHAT HE'LL DO.

NOW IT'S HE AND NOT YOU
WHO IS STUCK WITH A SHOE,

*If you are performing #33a – Alternate Ending, "On the Steps of the Palace,"
turn to page 197 in the Appendix*

IN A STEW,
IN THE GOO,
AND YOU'VE LEARNED SOMETHING, TOO,
SOMETHING YOU NEVER KNEW —
ON THE STEPS OF THE PALACE —

Continue here following #33a – Alternate Ending, “On the Steps of the Palace”

(CINDERELLA)

(BAKER’S WIFE races ONSTAGE)

Don’t come any closer to me!

BAKER’S WIFE

(Breathless)

Please, just hear me out!

CINDERELLA

We have nothing to discuss. You have attacked me once before –

BAKER’S WIFE

I did not attack *you*! I attacked your shoe. I need it.

(Reaches into her pocket)

Here. Here is a magic bean in exchange for it.

(Hands CINDERELLA the bean)

#34 – Underscore

CINDERELLA

Magic bean?

(Takes bean)

Nonsense!

(Throws the bean away)

BAKER’S WIFE

Don’t do that!

(Drops to the ground and searches for bean)

CINDERELLA

I’ve already given up one shoe this evening. My feet cannot bear to give up another.

(Begins to leave)

BAKER’S WIFE

(Rising, desperate)

I need that shoe to have a child!

CINDERELLA

That makes no sense!

(We hear RUMBLINGS from the distance)

BAKER'S WIFE

Does it make sense that you're running from a Prince?

STEWARD

(OFFSTAGE)

Stop!

BAKER'S WIFE

Here. Take my shoes. You'll run faster.

(Gives CINDERELLA her shoes and takes the golden slipper. CINDERELLA puts on the shoes and EXITS quickly. STEWARD bounds ONSTAGE; looks about)

STEWARD

Who was that woman?

BAKER'S WIFE

I do not know, sir.

STEWARD

Lying will cost you your life!

(BAKER ENTERS with another COW)

BAKER'S WIFE

I've done nothing...

BAKER

I've the cow.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Sees the COW; excited, to BAKER)

The slipper!

(Holds up slipper)

We've all four!

(Runs to the BAKER; STEWARD takes slipper as she passes)

STEWARD

I will give this to the Prince and we will search the kingdom tomorrow for the maiden who will fit this shoe.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Grabs the slipper)

It's mine.

(BAKER'S WIFE and STEWARD begin to struggle. MYSTERIOUS MAN comes from around a tree.

Struggling)

I don't care if this costs me my life --

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(Simultaneously)

Give her the slipper and all will --

(Suddenly there is the SOUND of crackling wood, followed by an enormous THUD. This noise should be frighteningly loud: very bass, with the kind of reverberation that will shake the audience. Possibly, LEAVES FALL from trees.

ACTION STOPS. There is a moment of stunned SILENCE. The COW lets out a MOAN, and sits. The other characters just stare at each other, then look in the direction of the noise.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE races ONSTAGE)

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

'What was that noise?

STEWARD

Sir. Just a bolt of lightning in a far-off kingdom.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

(To STEWARD)

How dare you take off in search without me!

STEWARD

My apologies, sir. I thought that I might --

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

Enough of what you thought! I employed a ruse and had the entire staircase smeared with pitch. And there, when she ran down, remained the maiden's slipper.

(Produces the slipper)

STEWARD

Brilliant!

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

I thought so. It did create quite a mess when the other guests left.

STEWARD

And sir, I have succeeded in obtaining the other slipper!

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(To STEWARD)

Give them the slipper, and all will come to a happy end.

STEWARD

Who are you, old man?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

When first I appear, I seem deleterious —

STEWARD

Shut up!

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

Do as he says. He's obviously a spirit of some sort, and we only need one.

STEWARD

Yes.

(Hands slipper back to BAKER'S WIFE, who takes it and curtsseys. Loud SCREAM. JACK'S MOTHER comes running ONSTAGE, hysterical. MYSTERIOUS MAN takes one look at her and slips behind a tree. CINDERELLA'S PRINCE draws his sword)

JACK'S MOTHER

(Hysterical; BOWS)

There's a dead Giant in my backyard!

(CINDERELLA'S PRINCE shoots STEWARD a look. HE puts his sword away. JACK'S MOTHER, more hysterical)

I heard Jack coming down the beanstalk, calling for his axe. And when he reached the bottom he took it and began hacking down the stalk. Suddenly, with a crash, the beanstalk fell, but there was no Jack. For all I know, he's been crushed by the ogre.

(Cries)

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

Worrying will do you no good. If he's safe, then he's safe. If he's been crushed, well, then, there's nothing any of us can do about that, now is there?

(To STEWARD)

We must be off. I need my rest before tomorrow's search is to commence.

JACK'S MOTHER
CINDERELLA'S PRINCE

Doesn't anyone care a Giant has fallen from the sky?

(Stops)

He is dead, is he not?

JACK'S MOTHER

With such a thud, I would suppose.

(CINDERELLA'S PRINCE and STEWARD Exit. WITCH APPEARS frantic, looks up to the sky.)

WITCH

(Unpleasant)

The third midnight is here.

You've all the objects?

Yes. Slipper - Hair

BAKER'S WIFE

BAKER

Cape - Cow

(Brings the COW forth)

WITCH

That cow doesn't look as white as milk to me.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Moving towards COW)

Oh, she is.

(Petting COW)

She is!

(White powder flies about as BAKER'S WIFE pats the COW. BAKER pulls her away as WITCH approaches)

WITCH

This cow has been covered with flour!

BAKER

Well, we did have a cow as white as milk. Honestly we did.

WITCH

Then where is she?

She's dead.

BAKER'S WIFE

BAKER

We thought you'd prefer a live cow.

WITCH

Of course I'd prefer a live cow! So bring me the dead cow and I'll bring her back to life!

BAKER

You could do that?

WITCH

Now!

(WITCH hits BAKER with SPELL; BAKER'S WIFE and BAKER scamper LIPSTAGE towards MILKY-WHITE'S grave and we see dirt flying into the air as they dig into the grave; JACK comes running ONSTAGE with a golden HARP that SINGS)

JACK'S MOTHER

(Lipset)

There you are! I've been worried sick.

JACK

Mother, look. The most beautiful harp.

JACK'S MOTHER

You've stolen too much! You could have been killed coming down that plant.

BAKER

(OFFSTAGE)

She's too heavy.

(Perturbed, the WITCH goes over towards the grave)

JACK

What's happening?

(WITCH waves her hand, causing a puff of SMOKE. MILKY-WHITE suddenly stands and is restored to life. BAKER and BAKER'S WIFE bring MILKY-WHITE forward)

Milky-White! Now I have two friends. A cow and a harp.

WITCH

Quiet! Feed the objects to the cow!

BAKER'S WIFE, BAKER, JACK

What?

WITCH

You heard me. Feed them to the cow.

#35 - The Potion

(The BAKER begins to feed MILKY-WHITE the objects. With great effort, MILKY-WHITE chews them and, with greater effort, swallows.)

We hear the first CHIME of midnight. The remaining eleven sound through the rest of the scene.

ALL stare intently at MILKY-WHITE. The WITCH pulls a silver goblet from her cloak and gives it to the BAKER)

Fill this!

JACK

(Going to MILKY-WHITE)

I'll do it. She'll only milk for me. Squeeze, pal.

(JACK milks her feverishly. Nothing. WITCH goes and takes the goblet back; SHE turns it upside down)

WITCH

Wrong ingredients. Forget about a child.

BAKER'S WIFE

No, no - you wait one moment! We followed your instructions. One, that cow is as white as milk, correct?

WITCH

Yes.

BAKER'S WIFE

And two, the cape was certainly as red as blood.

WITCH

Yes.

BAKER'S WIFE

And three, the slipper -

WITCH

Yes.

BAKER

And four, I compared the hair with this ear of corn.

BAKER'S WIFE

I pulled it from a maiden in a tower and —

WITCH

YOU WIAT?! What were *you* doing there?

BAKER'S WIFE

Well, I happened to be passing by —

WITCH

I touched that hair! Don't you understand? I cannot have touched the ingredients!

BAKER, BAKER'S WIFE

(Moaning)

Nooooo...

(MYSTERIOUS MAN comes from around a tree)

MYSTERIOUS MAN

The corn! The corn!

BAKER

What?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

The silky hair of the corn. Pull it from the ear and feed it to the cow. Quickly!

(BAKER does so, hurriedly)

WITCH

This had better work, old man, before the last stroke of midnight, or your son will be the last of your flesh and blood.

BAKER

Son?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(To WITCH)

Please. Not now.

WITCH

Yes. Meet your father.

(Moves to MILKY-WHITE)

BAKER

FATHER? Could that be you? I thought you died in a baking accident.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

I didn't want to run away from you, son, but -
(*MILKY-WHITE lets out a bloodcurdling MOAN and begins to shake feverishly*)

BAKER'S WIFE

It's working!
(*MILKY-WHITE SQUEALS*)

JACK

She's milking!

BAKER

(*To MYSTERIOUS MAN*)

I don't understand.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Not now!

(*To BAKER'S WIFE*)

Into the cup!

(*BAKER'S WIFE hands the filled goblet to the WITCH; BAKER and BAKER'S WIFE dance with joy as WITCH drinks the potion. THEY go to HER.*)

BAKER

We've given you what you wish.

BAKER'S WIFE

Now when can we expect a child?

(*WITCH begins to shake and move away*)

BAKER

What's wrong?

BAKER'S WIFE

What's happening?

BAKER

Where are you going?
(*The last STROKE of midnight*)

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(*Falling to the ground*)

Son! Son!

BAKER

(Going to MYSTERIOUS MAN'S side)

Father, Father —

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(Lets out a groan)

All is repaired.

(Dies)

BAKER

He's dead!

(The WITCH suddenly turns around and has been transformed into a beautiful woman.)

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE FOUR

SCENE FOUR

(As the LIGHTS come up, we see the BAKER'S WIFE and the BAKER, bedraggled and exhausted)

NARRATOR

Two midnights gone. And the exhausted Baker and his wife buried the dead Milky-White.

BAKER

You must go to the village in search of another cow.

BAKER'S WIFE

And what do you propose I use to purchase this cow?

BAKER

(Takes remaining bean from pocket)

Here. Tell them it's magic.

BAKER'S WIFE

No person with a brain larger than this is going to exchange a cow for a bean.

BAKER

(Losing patience)

Then steal it.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Angry)

Steal it? Just two days ago you were accusing *me* of exercising deceit in securing the cow.

BAKER

Then don't steal it and resign yourself to a childless life.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Calm, but cold)

I feel it best you go for the cow, as I have met a maiden with a golden slipper these previous eyes, and I think I might succeed in winning one of her shoes.

BAKER

Fine.

BAKER'S WIFE

Fine.

BAKER

That is simply —

BAKER'S WIFE

Fine!

(BAKER'S WIFE gathers her things and EXITS; BAKER EXITS in opposite direction. We hear RAPUNZEL scream)

#31 – Stay With Me

NARRATOR

Unfortunately for Rapunzel –

RAPUNZEL

(OFFSTAGE)

No!

NARRATOR

– the Witch discovered her affections for the Prince before he could spirit her away.

(EXITS. WITCH drags RAPUNZEL ONSTAGE and throws her to the ground)

WITCH

WHAT DID I CLEARLY SAY?
CHILDREN MUST LISTEN.

(Grabs RAPUNZEL 'S HAIR, takes out scissors)

RAPUNZEL

(Spoken)

NO, NO, PLEASE!

WITCH

(Sung)

WHAT WERE YOU NOT TO DO?
CHILDREN MUST SEE –

RAPUNZEL

(Spoken)

NO!

WITCH

(Sung)

AND LEARN.

(RAPUNZEL screams in protest!)

(WITCH)

WHY COULD YOU NOT OBEY?
CHILDREN SHOULD LISTEN.
WHAT HAVE I BEEN TO YOU?
WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME BE?
HANDSOME LIKE A PRINCE?

(RAPUNZEL whimpers)

AH, BUT I AM OLD.
I AM UGLY.
I EMBARRASS YOU.

RAPUNZEL

(Spoken)

NO!

WITCH

(Spoken)

YES!

(Sung)

YOU ARE ASHAMED OF ME.

RAPUNZEL

(Spoken)

NO!

WITCH

(Sung)

YOU ARE ASHAMED.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

(MUSIC continues under)

RAPUNZEL

It was lonely atop that tower.

WITCH

I was not company enough?

RAPUNZEL

I am no longer a child. I wish to see the world.