

INTO THE WOODS

Sondheim & Lapine

She listens.

What of the Prince?

She listens with resolve.

I don't care! What's important now is that we find a way to fell the giant. How can you help?

She listens.

You could do that?

She listens.

How can I ever thank you?

Birds fly off.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: You can talk to birds?

CINDERELLA: The birds will help.

JACK: How?

CINDERELLA: When the giant returns, they'll attack her and peck out her eyes till she's blind.

BAKER: What good will that do?

CINDERELLA: Then you can surprise her. Strike her, or whatever you do to kill a giant.

BAKER: Once she's blinded, she'll stagger about.

JACK: She'll get angry.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: And she'll crush us all.

Beat.

BAKER: Smear the ground with pitch.

CINDERELLA: Yes!

BAKER: We'll lure her to an area smeared with pitch.

CINDERELLA: Her shoes will stick, and she won't be able to move.

JACK: And I will climb a tree and strike her from behind.

BAKER: I will climb the tree, too. It may take two mighty blows.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: I'm excited!

JACK: I'm going to kill another giant!

BAKER: Quick! It will be dark soon. We must find the pitch.

They begin to exit; Baker stops and hands the baby to Cinderella.

The baby will be safest here with you. This will take no time.

Baker, Little Red Ridinghood and Jack exit. Baby begins to cry.

CINDERELLA: Oh, no. Now, now. Don't cry, little one. I know. You want your mother.

*Baby begins to calm down; Cinderella's Prince bounds onstage; he doesn't recognize Cinderella.*CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: Hello. *(He begins to cross the stage)*

CINDERELLA: The giant went in that direction.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE *(Realizing it is Cinderella)*: My darling. I did not recognize you. What are you doing in those old clothes? And with a child? You must go back to the castle at once. There's a giant on the loose.

CINDERELLA: The giant has been to the castle.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: No! Are you all right?

He moves to her; she nods and walks away.

My love. Why are you being so cold?

CINDERELLA: Maybe because I'm not your only love. Am I?

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE *(Beat)*: I love you. Truly I do. *(Pause)* But yes, it's true.

CINDERELLA: Why, if you love me, would you have strayed?

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: I thought if you were mine, that I would never wish for more. And part of me is content and as happy as I've ever been. But there remains a part of me that continually needs more.

CINDERELLA: I have, on occasion, wanted more. But that doesn't mean I went in search of it. If this is how you behave as a Prince, what kind of King will you be?

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: I was raised to be charming, not sincere. I didn't ask to be born a King, and I am not perfect. I am only human.

CINDERELLA: I think you should go.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: Leave? But I do love you.

CINDERELLA: Consider that I have been lost. A victim of the giant.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: Is that what you really wish?

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CINDERELLA: My father's house was a nightmare. Your house was a dream. Now I want something in-between. Please go.

He begins to exit.

CINDERELLA'S PRINCE: I shall always love the maiden who ran away.

CINDERELLA: And I the faraway Prince.

He exits. Another moment for Cinderella with the baby. Little Red Ridinghood enters.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: They're almost finished. You see over there between those two trees? When the giant comes, we are to send her over there.

CINDERELLA: Good.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: I wanted to climb the tree, too.

CINDERELLA: I'm glad you're here to help me.

Little Red Ridinghood begins to cry; music.

What's wrong?

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: My granny's gone.

CINDERELLA (*Moves to comfort her*): Oh, no. I'm so sorry.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: I think my granny and my mother would be upset with me.

CINDERELLA: Why?

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: They said to always make them proud.

And here I am about to kill somebody.

CINDERELLA: Not somebody. A giant who has been doing harm.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: But the giant's a person. Aren't we to show forgiveness? Mother would be very unhappy with these circumstances.

CINDERELLA:

Mother cannot guide you.

Now you're on your own.

Only me beside you.

Still, you're not alone.

No one is alone, truly.

No one is alone.

Sometimes people leave you,
Halfway through the wood.

Others may deceive you.
You decide what's good.
You decide alone.
But no one is alone.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD:
I wish . . .

CINDERELLA:
I know . . .

Little Red Ridinghood moves close to Cinderella, who comforts her; Jack and the Baker, atop nearby trees.

JACK: Wait until my mother hears I've slain the giant.

BAKER: Jack. Your mother is dead.

JACK (*Stunned*): Dead? Was she killed by the giant?

BAKER: She was arguing with the giant—trying to protect you—and she was struck a deadly blow by the Prince's steward.

JACK: Oh no. Why would he do that?

BAKER: He was afraid she was provoking the giant.

JACK (*Upset*): Can no one bring her back?

BAKER: No one.

JACK: The steward will pay for this. After we slay the giant, I will slay him.

BAKER: You'll do nothing of the kind!

JACK: But he shouldn't have killed my mother. Right?

BAKER: I guess not.

JACK (*Cold*): Then he must die.

BAKER: Well, no.

JACK (*Getting worked up*): Why not?

BAKER: Because that would be wrong.

JACK: What he did was wrong. He should be punished.

BAKER: He will be, somehow.

JACK: How?

BAKER: I don't know! (*Angry*) Stop asking me questions I can't answer.

JACK (*Cold*): I'm going to kill him!

BAKER: Then kill him! (*Beaf*) No, don't kill him.

Music.