

INTO THE WOODS

Sondheim & Lapine

*Witch appears.*

WITCH (*To Baker*): And I warned *you* that you can't count on a royal family to solve your problems.

WIFE: I think it best we go back to the village.

WITCH (*Bitter*): I wouldn't be in such a rush if I were you. Guess which path the giant took to the castle.

WIFE: Oh, no...

BAKER: What?

WITCH (*Displaying a small sack*): All that's left of my garden is a sack of beans—and there's not much left of your house either.

BAKER: But I heard giants never strike the same house twice.

WITCH: You heard wrong.

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: Well, maybe we should go back to—

*Suddenly the ground begins to shake. A frightening and increasingly loud crunching noise approaches. The huge shadow of a giant envelops the stage. The earth stops shaking as everyone looks up, astonished.*

WITCH (*Total amazement*): The giant's a woman!

BAKER: That size!

*We do not see the giant, but when she speaks, the sound is loud and comes downward, from the direction of the shadow.*

GIANT: Where is the lad who killed my husband?

STEWARD: There is no lad here!

BAKER: We haven't seen him.

GIANT: I want the lad who climbed the beanstalk.

WITCH: We'll get him for you right away. Don't move!

*Little Red Ridinghood pulls a knife from beneath her cape and runs towards the giant; Baker restrains her, but she threatens the giant anyway.*

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: It was you who destroyed our house—not a great wind! It's because of you I've no mother!

GIANT: And who destroyed *my* house? That boy asked for shelter, and then he stole our gold, our hen, and our

harp. Then he killed my husband. I must avenge the wrongdoings.

WIFE: We are not responsible for him.

WITCH: You're wasting your breath.

STEWARD: She's right. You can't reason with a dumb giant!

*The ground gives a mighty shake; leaves and twigs fall from above.*

GIANT: Not all giants are dumb. Give me the boy!

LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD: We told you, he's not here!

CINDERELLA'S FATHER: The girl is telling the truth!

GIANT: I know he's there. And I'm going to wait right here until he's delivered to me.

*Music.*

NARRATOR: The giant, who was nearsighted, remained convinced that she had found the lad. There was no consensus among them as to which course of action to take.

WIFE: Put a spell on her.

WITCH: I no longer have my powers. If I did, you think I'd be standing here with all of you? (*Getting down to business*) Now, we'll have to give her someone.

OTHERS: Who?

WITCH: The steward. (*She grabs him and begins pulling him toward the giant*) It's in his line of duty to sacrifice his life—

STEWARD (*Struggling*): Don't be ridiculous! I'm not giving up my life for anyone!

*He breaks loose; music stops.*

GIANT: I'm waiting.

*Music.*

NARRATOR: You must understand, these were not people familiar with making choices—their past experiences in the woods had in no way prepared them to deal with a force *this* great.

WITCH (*Approaches the giant; confidential*): Excuse me. Would you like a blind girl, instead?