

Scene 2

*The woods. Late afternoon.*

*The stage is filled by trees of all varieties, many twisted and gnarled, others going straight forward to the sky without a branch. Bright sunlight streams through, creating a wonderful light-maze. As the scene progresses, the sunlight is gradually replaced by moonlight. The foliage rustles in the breeze, with an occasional gust blowing about low-lying fog.*

*Cinderella enters and kneels before a tree filled with birds.*

NARRATOR: Cinderella had planted a branch at the grave of her mother and she visited there so often, and wept so much, that her tears watered it until it had become a handsome tree.

CINDERELLA:

I've been good and I've been kind, Mother,  
Doing only what I learned from you.  
Why then am I left behind, Mother,  
Is there something more that I should do?  
What is wrong with me, Mother?  
Something must be wrong.  
I wish—

*Suddenly, the ghost of Cinderella's Mother appears within the tree.*

CINDERELLA'S MOTHER: What, child? Specify. Opportunity is not a lengthy visitor and good fortune, like bad, can befall when least expected.

CINDERELLA:

I wish . . .

CINDERELLA'S MOTHER:

Do you know what you wish?  
Are you certain what you wish  
Is what you want?  
If you know what you want,  
Then make a wish.

Ask the tree,  
And you shall have your wish.

CINDERELLA:

Shiver and quiver, little tree.  
Silver and gold throw down on me.

*A gold-and-silver dress and fancy slippers drop from the tree.*

I'm off to get my wish.

*Cinderella picks up the clothes and dashes off. Jack is walking through the woods. He leads Milky-White. He stops.*

JACK: Quiet. Silence everywhere, Milky-White. Not to my liking . . .

*Pause. Music fades out.*

MYSTERIOUS MAN (*Steps from behind a tree*): Hello, Jack.

JACK: How did you know my name?!

MYSTERIOUS MAN: When first I appear I seem mysterious. But when explained, I am nothing serious.

JACK: Say that again.

MYSTERIOUS MAN: On your way to market? You might have been there long ago. Taking your time, Jack?

JACK: No, sir.

MYSTERIOUS MAN: Is that the truth?

JACK: Well, you see, now I'm resting—

MYSTERIOUS MAN: How much are you asking for the animal?

JACK: No less than five pounds, sir.

MYSTERIOUS MAN: Oh now, Jack. Why such a sum?

JACK: My mother told me—

MYSTERIOUS MAN: Your mother? A boy your age? Why you'd be lucky to exchange her for a sack of beans.

JACK: Well, I—

*Before Jack can respond, the Mysterious Man has disappeared.*

Come along, Milky-White. There are spirits here . . .  
(*He exits*)