

INTO THE WOODS

Baker, Wife, Jack

She puts her hand across his mouth; we see Jack at the other side of the stage.

A cow as white as—

She takes her hand away; music stops.

BAKER, WIFE: —milk.

Wife pushes Baker in Jack's direction; she follows.

BAKER: Hello there, young man.

JACK: Hello, sir.

BAKER: What might you be doing with a cow in the middle of the forest?

JACK (Nervous): I was heading toward market—but I seem to have lost my way.

WIFE (Coaching Baker): What are you planning to do there—?

BAKER: And what are you planning to do there?

JACK: Sell my cow, sir. No less than five pounds.

BAKER: Five pounds! (To Wife) Where am I to get five pounds!

WIFE (Taking over): She must be generous of milk to fetch five pounds?

JACK (Hesitant): Yes, ma'am.

WIFE: And if you can't fetch that sum? Then what are you to do?

JACK: I hadn't thought of that . . . I suppose my mother and I will have no food to eat.

Baker has emptied his pocket; he has a few coins and the beans in hand.

BAKER (To Wife): This is the sum total . . .

WIFE (Loudly): Beans—we mustn't give up our beans! Well . . . if you feel we must.

BAKER: Huh?

WIFE (To Jack): Beans will bring you food, son.

JACK: Beans in exchange for my cow?

WIFE: Oh, these are no ordinary beans, son. These beans carry magic.

JACK: Magic? What kind of magic?

WIFE (To Baker): Tell him.

Mysterious Man enters behind a tree.

Sondheim & Lapine

BAKER (Nervous): Magic that defies description.

JACK: My mother would—

MYSTERIOUS MAN: You'd be lucky to exchange her for a sack of beans. (He exits before anyone sees him)

JACK: How many beans?

BAKER: SIX.

WIFE: Five! We can't part with all of them. We must leave one for ourselves. Besides, I'd say they're worth a pound each, at the very least.

JACK: Could I buy my cow back someday?

BAKER (Uneasy): Well . . . possibly.

He hands Jack the beans, counting out five and keeping one for his pocket; Wife then takes the cow; music.

Good luck there, young lad.

JACK (Tearful; to the cow):

I guess this is goodbye, old pal.

You've been a perfect friend.

I hate to see us part, old pal,

Someday I'll buy you back.

I'll see you soon again.

I hope that when I do,

It won't be on a plate.

Overcome with emotion, Jack leaves; music continues under.

BAKER (Angry): Take the cow and go home!

WIFE: I was trying to be helpful.

BAKER: Magic beans! We've no reason to believe they're magic! Are we to dispel this curse through deceit?

WIFE: No one would have given him more for that creature. We did him a favor. At least they'll have some food.

BAKER: Five beans!

WIFE:

If you know  
What you want,  
Then you go  
And you find it  
And you get it—

Finis