Rapunzel's Prince: So far...

Stepmother: You can never love somebody else's child.--

Florinda, Lucinda: Two midnights gone!

Stepmother: --The way you love--

Cinderella's Prince: So near...

Stepmother: --Your own.

Cinderella: The Prince...

Cinderella's Prince: So far...

Granny: The greatest prize can often lie
At the end of the thorniest path...

Cinderella's Prince, Rapunzel's Prince: Two midnights gone!
Two midnights gone!

Stepmother, Florinda, Lucinda: (overlapping) Two midnights,
Two midnights gone!

Granny: (overlapping) Two midnights gone!

END OF SCENE THREE

Act One, Scene 4

(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, believing that when the witch said a cow as white as milk, she was referring to a live one.

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

Baker's Wife: And what do you propose I use to buy 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 eves, and I think I might succeed in winning one of her shoes.

Baker: Fine. That is simply fine.

(BAKER'S WIFE gathers her things and begins to exit in one direction, the BAKER in the other; we hear RAPUNZEL scream; they run off in fear)

Narrator: Unfortunately for Rapunzel--
Rapunzel: (offstage) No!

Narrator: --the witch discovered her affections for the Prince before he could spirit her away.

(WITCH drags RAPUNZEL on. music)

Witch: WHAT DID I CLEARLY SAY?
   CHILDREN MUST LISTEN.
(grabs RAPUNZEL's hair, takes out scissors)

Rapunzel: No, no, please!

Witch: WHAT WERE YOU NOT TO DO?
   CHILDREN MUST SEE--

Rapunzel: No!

Witch: AND LEARN.
   (RAPUNZEL screams in protest)
   WHY COULD YOU NOT OBAY?
   CHILDREN SHOULD LISTEN.
   WHAT HAVE I BEEN TO YOU?
   WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME BE?
   HANDSOME LIKE A PRINCE?
(RAPUNZEL whimper)
   AH, BUT I AM OLD.
   I AM UGLY.
   I EMBARRASS YOU.

Rapunzel: No!

Witch: YOU ARE ASHAMED OF ME.

Rapunzel: No!

Witch: 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.

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)
I gave you protection and yet you disobeyed me.

Rapunzel: No!

Witch: 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.
(she cuts RAPUNZEL'S hair)

Rapunzel: No! NO!

(WITCH drags RAPUNZEL off. 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: In need of another cow?

(he drops sack of gold; BAKER turns around at the sound of the falling coins. MYSTERIOUS MAN exits as BAKER picks up the money and exits. JACK comes upon LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD, who wears a cape made of wolf skins. She walks with a certain bravado)

Jack: What a beautiful cape!

(LITTLE RED RIDINGHOOD swerves around, brandishing 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 you even having to touch it.

Little Red Ridinghood: (smirking) 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!
Jack: I could!

Little Red Ridinghood: You could not, Mr. Liar!
(she makes a hasty exit)

Jack: I am not a liar. I'll get that harp. You'll see!
(he exits)

Narrator: After having cast out Rapunzel to a remote desert, the witch returned to take the Prince by surprise.

(Rapunzel's tower. RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE climbs Rapunzel's hair, when suddenly the WITCH pops out from the tower)

Witch: You would fetch your dearest, but the bird no longer sits in her cage.

(the WITCH pushes RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE from the tower. He falls and screams, grabbing his eyes. The WITCH laughs with delight)

Narrator: And unfortunately, the Prince fell into a patch of thorns which pierced his eyes and blinded him.

(RAPUNZEL'S PRINCE stumbles helplessly offstage)
As for Cinderella, she returned from her final visit to the Festival.

(lights dim. CINDERELLA hobbles onstage, wearing but one shoe)

Cinderella: HE'S A VERY NICE PRINCE,
HE'S A PRINCE WHO PREFARES.
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
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,
IN A STEW,
IN THE GOOD, AND YOU'VE LEARNED SOMETHING, TOO,
something YOU NEVER KNEW,
ON THE STEPS OF THE PALACE.

(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.

(CINDERELLA begins to run away. BAKER'S WIFE reaches into her pocket)

Here. Here is a magic bean in exchange for it.
(CINDERELLA stops, BAKER'S WIFE hands her the bean)

Cinderella: Magic bean?
(takes bean, looks at it)
Nonsense!
(throws the bean away)

Baker's Wife: Don't do that!
(drops to the ground and searches for the 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 in the distance)

Baker's Wife: Does it make sense that you're running from a prince?

Steward: (offstage) Stop!


(BAKER'S WIFE gives CINDERELLA her shoes, and takes the golden slipper. CINDERELLA exits. 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: (excitedly, to BAKER) The slipper! We've all four!
(she runs to the BAKER)

Steward: (Goes to BAKER'S WIFE and takes the shoe) 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: (tries to grab slipper back) It's mine!
(they begin to struggle; MYSTERIOUS MAN comes from around a tree) 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 cracking wood, followed by an enormous thud. This noise is frightenngly loud: very bass, with the kind of reverberation that will shake the audience. All action on stage stops. There is a moment of stunned silence. CINDERELLA'S PRINCE races onstage)

Cinderella's Prince: What was that noise?

Steward: Just a bolt of lightning in a far-off kingdom.

Cinderella's Prince: (to STEWARD) How dare you go 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.

(he 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: Oh...

(he hands slipper to BAKER'S WIFE. loud scream. JACK'S MOTHER comes running onstage, still screaming)

Jack's Mother: (hysterical; she bows) There's a dead giant in my backyard!

(CINDERELLA'S PRINCE shoots STEWARD a look)

(more hysterical) I heard Jack coming down the beanstalk, calling for his axe. And when he raced to 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.

(she cries; long pause; CINDERELLA'S PRINCE goes to her)

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.

(CINDERELLA'S PRINCE and STEWARD begin to exit)

Jack's Mother: Doesn't anyone care a giant has fallen from the sky?

Cinderella's Prince: (stops) He is dead, isn't he?

Jack's Mother: With such a thud, I would suppose.

(CINDERELLA'S PRINCE nods, and exits with STEWARD. WITCH appears, frantic; looks up to the sky)

Witch: (unpleasant) The third midnight is near. I see a cow. I see a slipper.

Baker: (pulling items from his bag) And the cape as red as blood.

Baker's Wife: And the hair as yellow as corn.

Witch: (amazed) You've all the objects?

Baker's Wife: Yes. (she 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. (patting cow) She is!
Steward: My apologies, sir. I thought that I might--

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Witch: (amazed) You've all the objects?

Baker's Wife: Yes. (she 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. (patting cow) She is!
**Witch:** This cow has been covered with flour!

**Baker:** We had a cow as white as milk. Honestly we did.

**Witch:** Then where is she?

**Baker's Wife:** She's dead.

**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 zaps BAKER with lightning; WITCH, BAKER'S WIFE and BAKER scamper upstage 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:** (relieved) There you are! (she hits him) I've been worried sick.

**Jack:** Mother, look. The most beautiful harp. (he hands harp to her)

**Jack's Mother:** You've stolen too much! You could have been killed coming down that plant.

**Baker:** (offstage) She's too heavy.

**Jack:** What's happening?

**Jack's Mother:** Milky-White is dead, but don't worry. They're going to bring her back to life!

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

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

**Witch:** Quiet! Feed the objects to the cow!

**Jack, Baker's Wife, Baker:** What?

**Witch:** You heard me. Feed them to the cow.

(music; the BAKER begins to feed MILKY-WHITE the objects. With great effort, the cow 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 the cow. 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 milk only 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:** Wait! We followed your instructions. One, the 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 WHAT?! 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 any of 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. (she moves to cow)


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!

(COW 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 holds goblet under MILKY-WHITE’s udder as JACK milks; all eyes are on the cow. BAKER’S WIFE hands the filled goblet to the WITCH; BAKER and BAKER’S WIFE dance with joy as WITCH drinks 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? What's happening?

Baker's Wife: Wait. Where are you going?

(then stroke of midnight)

Mysterious Man: (falling to the ground) Son! Son!

Baker: (going to Mysterious Man's side) Father!

(Mysterious Man lets out a groan)

Mysterious Man: All is repaired. He dies)

Baker: He's dead!

(Witch with a flourish turns around. She has been transformed into a beautiful woman. Blackout)

END OF SCENE FOUR

Act One, Scene 5

Narrator: (entering) And so the Mysterious Man died, having helped end the curse on his house. For the Baker, there would be no reunion with his father, and he and his wife, bewildered, returned home.

(Baker and Baker's Wife exit)

The Witch, who had been punished with age and ugliness that night when her beans had been stolen and the lightning flashed, was now returned to her former state of youth and beauty.

(Witch strikes pose, then exits)

And Milky-White, after a night of severe indigestion, was reunited with the now wealthy Jack.

(Jack and Jack's Mother exit with Milky-White and harp)

As for the Prince...

(fanfare)

...he began his search for the foot to fit the golden slipper.

(Cinderella's Prince and Steward enter on horseback)

When he came to Cinderella's house, Cinderella's stepmother took the slipper into Florinda's room.

(FLORINDA tries on shoe; STEPMOTHER struggles to help her; LUCINDA watches)

Florinda: CAREFUL, MY TOE--!

Stepmother: DARLING, I KNOW--

Florinda: WHAT'LL WE DO?

Stepmother: IT'LL HAVE TO GO--

(FLORINDA reacts as STEPMOTHER suddenly brandishes a knife)

BUT WHEN YOU'RE HIS BRIDE
YOU CAN SIT OR RIDE.
YOU'LL NEVER NEED TO WALK!

(looks at her encouragingly, then cuts off Florinda's toe as Florinda reacts in pain. Florinda limps to Cinderella's Prince, and is seated on horse)

Narrator: The girl obeyed, swallowing the pain, and joined the Prince on his horse, riding off to become his bride.

(Cinderella's Prince, with Florinda on horseback, arrives at the grace of Cinderella's Mother; birds cry from the tree)

Cinderella's Mother: LOOK AT THE BLOOD WITHIN THE SHOE;
THIS ONE IS NOT THE BRIDE THAT'S TRUE.
SEARCH FOR THE FOOT THAT FITS.