

(BAKER stirs; JACK bounds over to him)

Good fortune! Good fortune, sir! Look what I have! Here's five gold pieces.

BAKER

(Astounded)

Five gold pieces!

(Examines the gold)

JACK

I had more, but my mother made me surrender them. She allowed me these five to do with as I pleased.

BAKER

Oh, my...

JACK

(Looking around)

Where is Milky-White?

BAKER

Milky-White is back home with my wife.

JACK

Let's go find them!

(Grabs BAKER and starts to pull him away)

BAKER

Wait!

(Returns money to JACK)

I don't know that I wish to sell.

JACK

But you said I might buy her back.

BAKER

I know, but I'm not certain that five gold pieces would –

JACK

Are you saying that you wish more money?

BAKER

More money is always –

JACK

(Hands BAKER gold)

Keep this. I will go fetch more.

BAKER

Wait. I didn't say –

(JACK EXITS; BAKER looks at money)

Five gold pieces! With this money I could buy baking supplies for a year. I could buy a new thatched roof and a new chimney.

(MYSTERIOUS MAN APPEARS from nowhere)

MYSTERIOUS MAN

But could you buy yourself a child?

BAKER

(Startled)

Who are you?

MYSTERIOUS MAN

When first I appear, I seem delirious. But when explained, I am nothing serious. Could you buy yourself a child?

BAKER

I don't understand.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

How badly do you wish a child? Five gold pieces? Ten? Twenty?

BAKER

I've not thought to put a price on it.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Exactly.

(Walks over and takes the gold away)

You've not thought about many things, have you, son?

BAKER

Give me back the money! It is not yours –

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Nor is it Jack's. The money is not what's important. What's important is that your wish be honored.

(Goes around a tree and DISAPPEARS; BAKER begins darting around trees looking for him)

BAKER

Come back here! Damn! Give me back –

(Sees BAKER'S WIFE, who ENTERS from around another tree)

What are you doing here now?

BAKER'S WIFE

(Quickly switching gears)

I see you've the red cape.

BAKER

Yes. I've the cape. Only two items left to locate.

BAKER'S WIFE

Three.

BAKER

Two. I've the cape and the cow.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Faking enthusiasm)

You've the cape!

BAKER

What have you done with the cow?!

BAKER'S WIFE

(Crying)

She ran away. I never reached home. I've been looking for her all night.

BAKER

I should have known better than to have entrusted her to you.

BAKER'S WIFE

She might just as easily have run from you!

BAKER

But she didn't!

BAKER'S WIFE

But she might have!

BAKER

But she didn't!!!

(WITCH DROPS from tree)

WITCH

WHO CARES! THE COW IS GONE! GET IT BACK! GET IT BACK!!

(All three settle down)

BAKER

(Walks over to WITCH)

We were just going to do that.

(Offers cape)

Here. I can give you this –

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WITCH

Don't give me that, fool!! I don't want to touch that! Have you no sense?

(Suddenly, RAPUNZEL is heard SINGING in the background)

Listen to her beautiful music.

BAKER'S WIFE

Lovely.

BAKER

She's very gifted.

WITCH

(Tough)

By tomorrow's midnight – deliver the items or you'll wish you never thought to have a child!

(WITCH puts a SPELL on them. THEY double over in pain as WITCH leaves)

BAKER

I don't like that woman.

BAKER'S WIFE

(Contrite)

I'm sorry I lost the cow.

BAKER

I shouldn't have yelled.

(Beat)

Now, please, go back to the village.

(BAKER'S WIFE, annoyed, turns her back and begins to walk away)

I will make things right! And then we can just go about our life. No more hunting about in the Woods for strange objects. No more Witches and dim-witted boys and hungry little girls.