

Adapted from the musical  
*Into the Woods*

Music and Lyrics by  
Stephen Sondheim

Book by James Lapine

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# INTO THE WOODS

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, a performance guide published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. Performances of *Into the Woods, Jr.* are part of the Kennedy Center's festival honoring the work of American lyricist and composer Stephen Sondheim. This *Cuesheet* is designed to help you enjoy the performance of *Into the Woods, Jr.*

 The spooky tree marks questions to discuss, or activities you may want to do with other students, friends, or family.

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Students from the following District of Columbia Public Schools partnered with the Kennedy Center to create this production of *Into the Woods, Jr.*:

- Charles H. Houston Elementary School
- Friendship-Edison Public Charter School—Chamberlain Campus
- Edwin L. Stanton Elementary School
- J.C. Nalle Community Elementary School
- Marie H. Reed Learning Center
- Paul Junior High Public Charter School
- Seaton Elementary School

  
The Kennedy Center



# Understanding Into the Woods, Jr.

**musical**—stage entertainment that tells a story using dialog and songs

## Ingredients for the Witch's Potion

- A **COW** as white as milk.
- A **CAPE** as red as blood.
- **HAIR** as yellow as corn.
- A **SLIPPER** as pure as gold.

Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (pages 3-5), copyright © by Ritling Music, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MUSICAL?

*Into the Woods, Jr.* is a **musical** that combines the stories of Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk, Little Red Riding Hood, and Rapunzel with new characters to create an original story...

A witch visits a baker and his wife to explain that they are childless because of a curse. The witch explains that the baker and his wife can lift their curse if they get four ingredients for a magic potion.

During their search for the ingredients, the baker and his wife meet Cinderella, Red Riding Hood, Jack, and Rapunzel and get involved with the fairy tale characters' adventures.

After overcoming many obstacles, the baker and his wife present the witch with the needed ingredients for the potion. The curse on the baker is lifted and his wife becomes pregnant. The stories of Cinderella, Jack, Red Riding Hood, and Rapunzel each end according to the Brothers Grimm fairy tale endings.



## THE BROTHERS GRIMM VERSION — MENACING FAIRY TALES

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were two 18th-century German writers with an interest in folk tales. The brothers wrote down stories they heard from storytellers. They later revised the stories to make them less brutal and more appropriate for children. Even with revisions, fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm are more menacing than recent animated film versions of the same fairy tales.



Stephen Sondheim wrote the music and songs for *Into the Woods*. Here, 1993 Kennedy Center Honors award-winner Sondheim (left) is congratulated by then Kennedy Center Chairman James D. Wolfensohn. The Kennedy Center Honors are awarded for lifetime contribution to the performing arts.

## INTO THE WOODS

The setting for this musical is a forest.  
In the woods...

- 🎧 the Baker and his Wife search for the ingredients for the potion.
- 🎧 Little Red Riding Hood visits her sick grandmother.
- 🎧 Jack sells his cow.
- 🎧 Cinderella attends the king's festival.
- 🎧 Rapunzel is kept in a tower with no doors.

The phrase “into the woods” also suggests a challenging situation where determination and courage are needed. The characters want their wishes granted, but they are afraid to go into the woods. To give themselves courage, the characters sing,

“The woods are just trees,  
The trees are just wood.”

Woods are dense, dark, and scary. However, wood is an ordinary material used for making homey things like tables and chairs. In these lines, the characters move from the frightening to the familiar to reassure themselves.

### Think about...

Each character learns something during the musical. Before the performance, pick a character and, during the performance, observe what he or she learns. Discuss your ideas.

### Think about...

At the end of the musical, the characters again sing about going into the woods:

“If you want your wish,  
You can have your wish  
But you can't just wish—  
No, to get your wish,  
You go into the woods,  
Where nothing's clear,  
Where witches, ghosts  
And wolves appear.  
Into the woods  
And through the fear,  
You have to take the journey.”

After the performance, think about how the characters' feelings about going into the woods have changed since they sang “The woods are just trees, The trees are just wood” earlier in the musical.



# Telling a Story Through Song

## MELODY AND MEANING

*Into the Woods, Jr.* includes a variety of musical styles to connect each song's melody with its purpose and the meaning of the **lyrics**. For example, **lyrics—the words of a song** Sondheim wrote a rap song for the witch to explain why the Baker and his Wife are childless. In a rap song, Sondheim was able to supply a lot of information quickly and to show the witch's spirited personality.



## Shared Lyrics—Shared Feelings

Sondheim wants the audience to understand that many characters share a feeling of **longing** so he wrote a song in which different characters repeat the same lyrics or sing the same lyrics together. **longing—to want something very much**

Working in groups of five, choose a part from among the characters listed below. Take turns reading your complete part aloud, skipping over lines assigned to another character. Re-read the song, with each person reading his or her part, as written below.

Narrator: **Once upon a time—**

**Cinderella:** I wish...

Narrator: **in a far off kingdom—**

**Cinderella:** More than anything...

Narrator: **lived a young maiden—**

**Cinderella:** More than life...

Narrator: **a sad young lad—**

**Jack:** I wish...

Narrator: **and a childless baker—**

**Jack:** More than life

**Cinderella and Baker:** I wish...

Narrator: **with his wife.**

**Jack:** More than anything

**Cinderella, Jack, and Baker:** More than the moon

**Baker's Wife:** I wish...

**Baker and Baker's Wife:** More than life...

**Cinderella:** I wish to go to the festival

**Jack:** I wish my cow would give us some milk

**Baker:** I wish we had a child

**Baker's Wife:** I want a child

**Cinderella, Jack, Baker and Baker's Wife:** I wish

*Into the Woods, Jr.* is adapted from *Into the Woods*, a longer version of the musical for adults. The songs in *Into the Woods Jr.* were changed to match the singing range of student voices. Here, students enjoy learning the songs.

## RHYMING SURPRISES

The songs in *Into the Woods, Jr.* are filled with rhyming surprises. The most predictable thing about Sondheim's rhyme patterns is that they are unpredictable! Consider a section of Jack's song about his adventures in the sky:

Jack:

A big tall terrible giant at the door,  
 A big tall terrible giant with a terrible roar.  
 So you steal some gold and away you go,  
 And you scramble down to the world below,  
 And you're back again,  
 Only different than before,  
 After the sky.

The first and second lines form a rhymed pair, as do the third and fourth lines. We expect lines five and six to be a rhymed pair, too. Instead, the end of line five doesn't rhyme with any other line, and the end of line six rhymes with "door/roar." Finally, the last line of the section ends with the word "sky" which doesn't rhyme with any other line.

Sometimes Sondheim startles us by including a single word that does not rhyme after a long series of rhymes. Describing her experience at the king's festival, Cinderella sings the following lines. What word at the end of a line is unexpected?

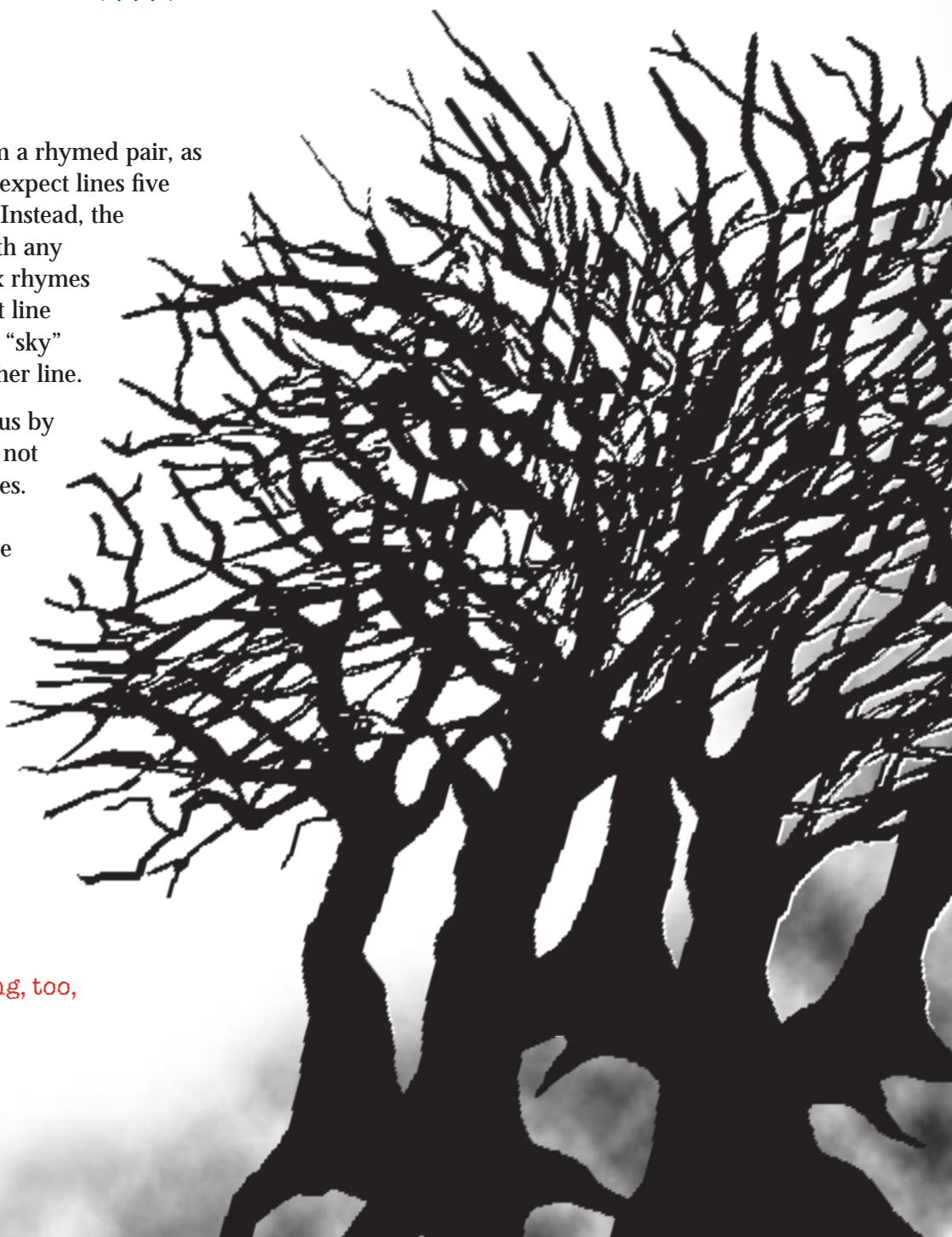
Cinderella:

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 goo,  
 And you've learned something, too,  
 Something you never knew,  
 On the steps of the palace.



### Alert Listening!

During the performance, carefully listen to the lyrics to spot more examples of Sondheim's surprising use of rhyme. Share your discoveries.



# Beyond Story and Song



Students worked with a set designer to plan and build the scenery and props for the musical. Above left: A student creates a flower—one of many needed to create the setting of the woods. Above center: The Witch uses her walking stick each time she casts a spell. Here, a student draws his design for this prop. Above right: Students coat balloons with papier-mâché to create the vines that hang from the trees.

**chord**—three or more notes sounded at the same time



**K**nowing the story and characteristics of the music is only the beginning of appreciating *Into the Woods, Jr.* During the performance, also pay attention to the costumes, scenery, sound effects, and the way the actors reveal their characters through movement.

## Watch how...

- the actors are frozen in position at the beginning of the musical and only move when they begin to sing.

## Listen for...

- the **chord** that sounds each time the witch casts a spell.

*What happens to the sound of the chord when the witch tries unsuccessfully to put a spell on Rapunzel and her prince?*

- the sound of the clock striking midnight.



## PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

The students presenting this musical have had to be creative problem solvers. They had to figure out how to show parts of the story that could not be depicted realistically. Before the performance, decide how you would solve the following problems. You may use lights, music, sound effects, costumes, scenery, props, and voices.

**Problem One:** How would you show Little Red Riding Hood and Grandma coming out from the Wolf's stomach after the Baker "stabs" the Wolf?

**Problem Two:** How would you design the tower wall, and what materials would you use for Rapunzel's hair so that the Witch can "climb" Rapunzel's hair?

**Problem Three:** How would you have the actor playing the Witch change instantaneously from a hideous, old person to a beautiful, young lady? Remember, the Witch must stay on stage while the change is taking place.



**After the performance...**

Discuss how the students presenting *Into the Woods, Jr.* solved these problems.

# Happily Ever After

## FAIRY TALES— WONDER TALES

Fairy tales were originally called wonder tales. In a wonder tale, the main character...

- ☞ is forbidden from doing something, but does the forbidden thing anyway.
- ☞ is then either **banished** or assigned a difficult task.
- ☞ meets with all sorts of characters. These characters often supply magical gifts that improve the main character's situation.
- ☞ has a sudden set-back.
- ☞ achieves his or her goal because of a "wonder" or miracle.
- ☞ ends up happy.

## OH, THE CHARACTERS THEY MEET

Each of the fairy tale characters has one of the items needed for the Witch's potion. Unfortunately, none of the characters is willing to give up his or her item. To help the Baker and his Wife succeed, the Witch and a Mysterious Man appear throughout the musical to offer advice, encouragement, or information.

During the performance, watch how...

- ☞ the Mysterious Man gets Jack used to the idea of accepting beans instead of money for his cow.
- ☞ the Witch helps the Baker deal with the uncooperative Red Riding Hood.
- ☞ the Mysterious Man reminds the Baker that his wish for a child is more important than money.
- ☞ the Mysterious Man helps the Baker's Wife get Cinderella's slipper.



### A Wonder Tale?

After seeing the musical, discuss whether or not the story of the Baker and his Wife has enough of the characteristics of a wonder tale to be considered one.

**banished—to be sent away from a place and ordered never to return**

## RESOURCES

To learn more about *Into the Woods, Jr.* or putting on a performance...

**You may want to read:**

Novak, Elaine. *Performing in Musicals*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1988.

Powers, Bill. *Behind the Scenes of a Broadway Musical*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1982.

**You may want to go online:**

Audition Central. *Into the Woods, Jr.* [www.broadwayjr.com/AuditionCentral/IntoTheWoods](http://www.broadwayjr.com/AuditionCentral/IntoTheWoods)

*Into the Woods, Jr.* [www.kennedy-center.org/intothewoodsjr](http://www.kennedy-center.org/intothewoodsjr)

**You may want to listen to:**

*Into the Woods*. Original Cast Recording. BMG/RCA B000002WAB. January 19, 1988. (Note: *Into the Woods, Jr.* is an adaptation of the full-length, adult-version of *Into the Woods*. *Into the Woods, Jr.* consists of the first act only. In addition, some lines/songs are deleted and the sequence of some of the scenes is changed.)

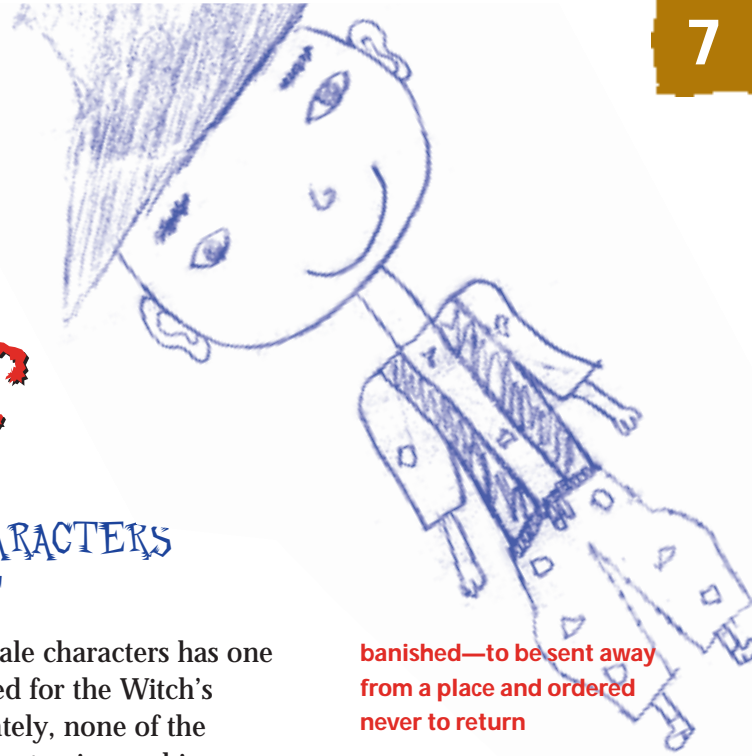
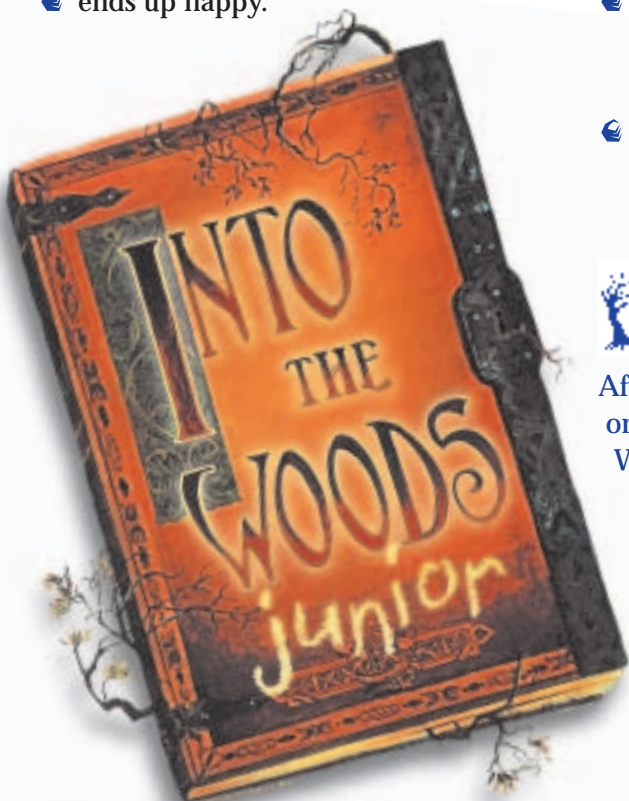
To learn more about the fairy/folk/wonder tales...

**You may want to read:**

*The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Translated by Jack Zipes. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

The following books by Shirley Climo: *The Egyptian Cinderella*. *The Korean Cinderella*. *The Persian Cinderella*. New York: Harper Collins.

The following books by Jewel Coburn: *Domitilla: A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition*. *Jouanah: A Hmong Cinderella*. Auburn, California: Shen's Books.



## BY STUDENTS— FOR STUDENTS

The performances of *Into the Woods, Jr.* are the result of Kennedy Center's year-long project partnering seven District of Columbia Public Schools with theater professionals. From October to December, approximately 175 students, ages 9-15, studied *Into the Woods, Jr.* along with the purpose and format of fairy tales. They also studied musical theater topics including costuming, make-up, sets, props, and acting. In January, students in the program applied for behind-the-scenes jobs. Those selected attended workshops in lighting, special effects, sound,

**promotion—activities involved in selling a product, especially advertising** choreography, and **promotion.** Also in January, students from the partnership

schools auditioned for roles in the musical. Students who were cast in roles then began learning their lines and songs. In late March, the student-actors began rehearsing with sets.



Here, students audition for roles in the musical. There are two separate casts for the performances. This double casting allows more students to participate.

## YOU HELP, TOO

The performers in *Into the Woods, Jr.* need help from you, the audience. You are an important part of the musical. Being a member of an audience in a theater is different from watching a movie or television. The performers are in the same room with you and are affected by what you do. To do their best, the performers need you to watch and listen closely. Other audience members also depend on your quiet attention during the performance so they can watch and listen, too.

WATCH. LISTEN. THINK.  
IMAGINE. ENJOY  
INTO THE WOODS, JR.!



## VISITING THE KENNEDY CENTER

The Kennedy Center has seven theaters. *Into the Woods, Jr.* is performed in the American Film Institute (AFI) Theater. The entrance to the theater is located in the Hall of States where you will see the flags of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. Territories. Approximately 200 people can watch a performance together in the AFI Theater.

INTO THE WOODS JUNIOR  
A part of  
THE BROADWAY JUNIOR  
COLLECTION™

Music and Lyrics by  
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Book by  
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Originally directed on Broadway  
by James Lapine

Originally produced by the Old  
Globe Theatre, San Diego, CA

Original Broadway production  
produced by  
Heidi Landesman, M. Anthony  
Fisher, Rocco Landesman  
Frederick H. Mayerson,  
Rick Steiner, Jujumcyn Theaters

The Broadway Junior Collection at Music Theatre International provides schools with abridged editions of Broadway musicals. Materials include scripts, a fully orchestrated accompaniment CD, a choreographic video, curriculum guides, and a producer/director guide for teachers on casting, rehearsals and performance techniques. For more information log on to <http://www.BROADWAYjr.com>



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