

BAKER'S WIFE: (coming forward, takes a scarf and tries to put it around his neck) You forgot your scarf—
BAKER: (taking scarf off) You have no business being alone in the Wood. Now go home immediately!
BAKER'S WIFE: I wish to help.
BAKER: No! The spell is on my h—
 (JACK enters, leading MILKY-WHITE by a rope on her neck.
BAKER'S WIFE, seeing JACK at the other side of the stage, puts her hand across BAKER's mouth.)

17 **BAKER'S WIFE:** //
sotto voce A cow as white as milk...
 (BAKER sees JACK and takes BAKER'S WIFE's hand away.)
BAKER: //
 milk...

BAKER
 Hello there, young man.

JACK
 (looks at BAKER, scared)
 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.

BAKER'S 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!

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

JACK
 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'S WIFE
 (loudly)
 Beans – we mustn't give up our beans! Well... if you feel we must.

BAKER
 Huh?

BAKER'S WIFE
 (to JACK)
 Beans will bring you food, son.

JACK
 Beans in exchange for my cow?

BAKER'S WIFE
 Oh, these are no ordinary beans, son. These beans carry magic.

JACK
 Magic? What kind of magic?

BAKER'S WIFE
 (to BAKER)
 Tell him.
 (MYSTERIOUS MAN enters behind a tree.)

BAKER
 (nervous)
 Magic that defies description.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
 ... You'd be lucky to exchange her for a sack of beans.

(BAKER'S WIFE and BAKER hug, frightened by MYSTERIOUS MAN's voice. MYSTERIOUS MAN exits before anyone sees him.)

JACK
 How many beans?

BAKER
 Six.