

BAKER

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

JACK

Are you saying that you wish more money?

(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

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.

(MYSTERIOUS MAN walks over and takes the gold away.)

The money is not what's important. What's important is that your wish be honored.

(MYSTERIOUS MAN goes around a tree and disappears; BAKER begins darting around trees looking for him.)

BAKER

Come back here! Give me back—

(BAKER 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

(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.