



Photo of Jade Jones and Christopher Mueller by Carol Rosegg.

Going to see *Into the Woods*

Ford's Theatre: Sensory-Friendly Performance

Pre-Visit Story

Into the Woods



Photo of the cast by Carol Rosegg.

The musical *Into the Woods* is based on different traditional fairy tales: Cinderella, Rapunzel, Jack and the Beanstalk and Little Red Ridinghood. Traditional fairy tales, like those by the Brothers Grimm, are often darker than those in Disney movies and have strong themes about love and death.

In this musical, actors tell a story by talking, dancing and singing on stage. Humor is used throughout.

The people are acting out a story about what happens after most fairy tales end with “happily ever after.”

During the performance, actors may walk through the theatre near me.

Stage and the Woods



Photo of the cast by Carol Rosegg.

The things on stage for *Into the Woods* will change many times during the show.

I will see different homes, the woods, a house where Little Red Ridinghood's grandmother lives and Rapunzel's tower.

The woods appear many times throughout the show and are the main setting of the story.

The trees move across the stage at times to show different parts of the woods.

Sights and Sounds



Scenic Design by Milagros Ponce de León. Photo by Lauren Beyea.

While I am waiting for the show to begin, I will hear birds chirping.

The bird sounds are pretend. They help me imagine I am in the woods with the characters in the musical.

During the show I will hear many sounds of characters and creatures in the woods.

Music



Photo by Gary Erskine.

There is a band sitting just below the stage that plays music throughout the performance.

The band members sit in what is called an orchestra pit.

The music can be both loud and soft at times.

The actors on stage will sing songs with the music.

Special Effects



Photo of Rachel Zampelli by Carol Rosegg.

The show has many colorful lights.

When the **Witch disappears**, there is smoke and fog. When the Witch casts spells, lights will flicker.

When **Cinderella's Mother appears**, her face is projected on a tree.

When Little Red Ridinghood **visits her Grandmother's house**, the story is told through animation on a video screen.

When the **Giant appears** as a shadow, she makes a lot of noise with her footsteps and voice. You might feel her move.

Fairy Tales



Photo of Karen Vincent, Samy Nour Younes and Jade Jones by Carol Rosegg.

Fairy tales are stories that teach us about how to be kind, how to be a good friend or how to interact with other people.

In general, fairy-tale characters who are mean or hurt others are punished in their stories. Characters who are good are rewarded.

Into the Woods includes lots of familiar fairy-tale characters. Fairy tales typically end with the good characters living “happily ever after.”

The Idea of the Woods



Scenic Design by Milagros Ponce de León. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

The woods in this story represent different things to different characters.

The woods can mean adventure and possibility, or they can mean darkness and fearfulness.

The woods are both a place where people work together in community and turn away from others to fend for themselves.

Many Stories



Photo of the cast by Carol Rosegg.

Often many things are happening at the same time on stage to indicate that the stories of these characters overlap. It is okay to focus on one character or story during these moments.

Wishes



Photo of Awa Sal Secka, Evan Casey, Samy Nour Younes and Tiziano D'Affuso by Carol Rosegg.

The main characters in the story have wishes. Their wish is what they want most in the world.

**The Baker and the Baker's Wife wish to have a baby.
Cinderella wishes she could go to the royal festival.
Jack wishes he could keep his cow, Milky White.
The Witch wishes to be young and beautiful.**

Each character goes into the woods to make their wish come true.

The Curse



Photo of Erin Driscoll and Awa Sal Secka by Carol Rosegg.

The Baker and the Baker's Wife must get four things to break a curse placed on them by the Witch:

- 1. The cow as white as milk**
- 2. The hair as yellow as corn**
- 3. The cape as red as blood**
- 4. The slipper as pure as gold**

The Baker and the Baker's Wife must bring all four things to the Witch by the third midnight.

If they succeed, the Witch will lift the curse.

Death and Violence



Photo of Jade Jones, Karen Vincent and Evan Casey by Carol Rosegg.

Throughout *Into the Woods*, there are many moments that are either violent or where a character dies.

Death and violence are represented with different theatrical approaches in the musical. Sometimes an actor might move a certain way or make sounds; sometimes technical effects like lighting and projections are used.

It's important to remember that all of the actors on stage are only pretending in these situations. **No one is actually getting hurt.**

Sometimes when a character dies in the story, we might feel sad or scared for a short time. It is okay to feel this way.

Children Will Listen



Photo of Samy Nour Younes, Jade Jones, Evan Casey and Erin Driscoll by Carol Rosegg.

At the end of the story, the Baker, Cinderella, Little Red Ridinghood and Jack decide to live together.

The Witch returns, singing a reminder that children will listen to what adults say and watch how adults act. She also warns us all to be careful what we wish for, because wishes may not turn out exactly how we want.

GOING TO SEE *INTO THE WOODS* – CREDITS

All stage photos are from the Ford's Theatre production of *Into the Woods*.

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