

Film Review: Four Fairy Tales Charminglly Unite in Hollywood, Broadway Merger of ‘Into the Woods’

Submitted by [HollywoodChicago.com](http://www.hollywoodchicago.com) [1] on December 24, 2014 - 5:55pm

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CHICAGO – Neither Hollywood nor purely Broadway, Disney’s big-screen adaptation of the Stephen Sondheim musical “Into the Woods” finds a charming home on *Hollyway*. Even if you’re not a “musical kind of person,” I challenge you not to want to sing along to the catchy tunes or laugh at the intentionally overdramatic comedy.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Meryl Streep delivers yet another memorably kooky performance as the Witch while Johnny Depp is in his wheelhouse once again as Little Red Riding Hood’s Wolf on the way to grandma’s treehouse. Anna Kendrick also plays someone you’d expect: a runaway almost bride known as Cinderella who evolves from rags to riches and wants the prince but fears the royalty.

But the standouts are the 13-year-old Lilla Crawford – who has played “Annie” and “Billy Elliot” on Broadway – and a surprising Chris Pine. Pine is the only non-safe casting decision – where it feels like the filmmakers took a true risk – amid an “A”-list roster of otherwise safe casting bets.



[Read Adam Fendelman’s full review of “Into the Woods”.](#)

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Recently playing the very non-musical role of Captain Kirk in 2013’s “Star Trek Into Darkness,” Pine transforms the *pinning* role of Cinderella’s Prince into a hilariously campy dramedy who’s clearly making fun of himself.

A scene in the woods with Billy Magnussen – who’s also pining for a fair lady as Rapunzel’s Prince – is my favorite in the film. In singing the hilariously overdramatic song “Agony,” both rich boys compete with each other for their chosen lady’s affections solely to earn the audience’s laugh.

But the story centers on the Baker (James Corden) and the Baker’s Wife (Emily Blunt). An unexpected and modest couple, Corden’s character knows he has traded up to snag a catch such as Blunt. You can tell they have a past of love and adoration, but it’s evolved into a troubled present and future because of not being able to bear a child. It turns out the inability isn’t natural, though, and is the supernatural doing of a scorned Witch.

She’s got an agenda of her own – desiring Dorian Gray-like beauty – and a plan for how to get it. In order to release the no-baby curse she’s placed on the Corden/Blunt duo, they must trek *into the woods* and retrieve four items from beloved Brothers Grimm fairy tales for her beautifying witch’s brew: Rapunzel’s golden hair, Cinderella’s silver slipper, Jack and the Beanstalk’s white cow and Little Red Riding Hood’s red cape.

“Into the Woods” stars Meryl Streep, Chris Pine, Anna Kendrick, Johnny Depp, Daniel Huttleston, James Corden, Emily Blunt, Lilla Crawford, Billy Magnussen and Mackenzie Mauzy from director Rob Marshall and writer James Lapine with music and lyrics by Stephen

Sondheim. The film, which opens on Dec. 25, 2014, has a running time of 124 minutes. It is rated “PG” for thematic elements, fantasy action and peril and some suggestive material.

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James Corden (left), Emily Blunt (center) and Meryl Streep in “Into the Woods”.
Image credit: Walt Disney Pictures

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