

Theater 150
Breadcrumbs
by Jen Haley
directed by Jessica Kubzansky

SIDE 4 - ALIDA

*BETH becomes MOTHER. ALIDA becomes herself as a child.
MOTHER brushes ALIDA'S hair. They stare forward into a mirror.*

ALIDA

Once upon a time there was a girl named Gretel, who lived with her mother at the edge of a deep, dark woods. The woods were so deep and dark, Gretel only ever ventured far enough in to grab kindling. But one day Prince Charming came to call, so the mother sent her even farther in to gather nuts and berries. She gave her a loaf of bread, instructing her to drop crumbs along the path to mark her way home.

MOTHER

What about Hansel?

ALIDA

Who?

MOTHER

Hansel and Gretel. And the woodcutter.

ALIDA

That's not how I tell the story.

MOTHER

Keep your head up, Alida.

ALIDA

Ow! Mom! That's not how I tell the story.

MOTHER

Well I beg your pardon. Please continue.

ALIDA

Gretel pushed deep into the woods, gathering goose berries and hazelnuts in her voluminous skirts, dropping breadcrumbs one by one along the path. So intent on her work was she that only the cawing of an evening crow drew her attention to shadows rising up the trunks. She turned homeward, but there in the middle of the path was a squirrel, and clutched in its tiny claws, a breadcrumb. The squirrel's eyes glittered, its tail twitched, and it was gone. All the breadcrumbs were gone. Gretel found herself surrounded by an infinite, indifferent darkness.

MOTHER

An infinite, indifferent darkness - ? Where do you get this stuff?

ALIDA

I made it up.

MOTHER

But that phrase. You must have read it somewhere. And I thought it was birds who stole the breadcrumbs. Not squirrels.

ALIDA

That's not how I tell the story.

MOTHER

What happens to Gretel?

ALIDA shrugs. MOTHER stares at her in the mirror.

Well don't tell Tom that "story." He'll be here any minute. You look adorable.

ALIDA

He's your date. Why do I have to look adorable?

MOTHER

Every little bit helps.

ALIDA

Is he going to stay over?

MOTHER

If he does, it will be like a slumber party.

ALIDA makes a face.

Don't make that face - it'll freeze that way. And please. Do not say anything to Tom about an infinite, indifferent darkness.