

the village

VOICE

CAMEOS

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A grisly female nightmare told in the incantatory rhythms of the Brothers Grimm, Margo Lee Sherman and Kate Mennone's *A Curious Tale* (Theater for the New City) takes a French fairy tale about a monster prince who devours his brides and makes it resonate with themes primal, political, and feminist. Under Mennone's intense, brooding direction, Sherman gives a tour-de-force solo performance as the servant woman tormented by her silent complicity, the ogre prince demanding his brides, and the naive, terrified victims of his appetite. Most remarkable are the scenes where Sherman is attacker and victim at once, shooting hands everywhere, spewing both horrified screams and sated growls. Katy Orrick's mottled, dappled, eerie lighting gives weight and shading to the stark drama. As the servant, Sherman is a gaunt figure in a shapeless dress and haunted eyes, whose frenzy of repetitive motions and mad babbling betray her guilt and disguise the wisdom she struggles to impart. The denouement is unconvincing but sets minds to work. For this is no chiller about an idiosyncratic monster like Hannibal Lecter who must be locked up to save the lambs. It's a parable about staying whole in our most intimate relationships, where for many, let's face it, there always lurks the fear of being eaten alive.

—Francine Russo