

# Project Fairy Tale

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Screenplay by Gary Young

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FADE IN:

Billowing thick white clouds serenely drift in a bright blue sky. We coast down towards earth and reveal an 18th century town with a port and harbour.

Travelling away, we get a bird's eye view of a beautiful castle that stands surrounded by a huge, idyllic forest.

1 EXT. CASTLE BATTLEMENTS - DAY. CONTINUED. 1

We swoop down and rest on the battlements, where a handsome PRINCE stands surveying his land.

The NARRATOR'S voice is spoken by, who we later learn is the Owl/BUTLER.

NARRATOR  
(Voice Over)  
There once was a handsome prince,  
a kind and benevolent soul, who  
was loved by everyone.

Down below in the courtyard, we see that the castle is full of life. Servants go about their daily chores with a smile.

2 EXT. FOREST - DAY. 2

The prince, accompanied by his loyal BUTLER are riding through the forest. At the side of the road they find AZALEA, a wizened, old gypsy lady whose cart is stuck in the mud. Wearing old rags, her face is lined and weather beaten and her hunched body is decrepit with age. She has with her a mangy old black CAT, that is as old and as ugly as its owner.

As she tries desperately to pull her nag of a horse out, the old woman slips and falls face down in the sludge. In an instant, the Prince jumps down from his horse and tenderly lifts her to her feet.

The Prince's kindness takes Azalea's breath away as he wipes the dirt from her face with a handkerchief. The old woman's fingers grasps around his hands.

PRINCE  
May we be of assistance?

Azalea's eyes twinkle and we see an expression of absolute love in her tired face.

NARRATOR  
(Voice Over)  
They say love is a bolt of  
lightening, an all consuming  
passion.

As the Prince turns away, Azalea's hands grasp at the  
handkerchief which threads from his fingers into hers.

The Prince and his Butler pull the cart out of the mud.

AZALEA  
Thank you, thank you, kind sir.

PRINCE  
(Smiling benevolently)  
You take care, madam.

The Prince leaps onto his horse and without looking back,  
gallops off with his Butler.

Standing bereft, the old woman cradles her cat and looks  
down at the Prince's handkerchief still in her wizened  
hand.

NARRATOR  
(Voice Over)  
From that moment on, Azalea's  
heart was lost to this handsome  
young prince.

3 EXT. FOREST - DAY.

3

We see Azalea peering longingly through the forest,  
watching the Prince intently. The cat sits perched on her  
shoulder.

Her hand strokes the handkerchief as if it were a lovers  
token.

NARRATOR  
(Voice Over)  
Soon love turned to obsession.

4 EXT. BARREN LAND - DAY.

4

Azalea is seen moving across a barren landscape. Her only  
companion is the mangy old CAT.

Far off in the distance a dark tower stands.

5 EXT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT. 5

The huge dark tower stands against a storm lashed sky, in a world of permanent night time.

Cradling the cat, Azalea hammers on the door of the tower. It creaks open and they step inside.

6 INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT. 6

The great hall is cast in deep shadows as the old woman and the cat tentatively enter.

An old WIZARD stands in a great cloak made from peacock feathers. Within the pattern, hundreds of eyes seem to peer out and blink like a living thing.

The surrounding walls are lined with magic and spell books, as well as thousands of glass jars containing potions and unearthly creatures, preserved inside their glass prisons.

The cat explores the room and stops at one jar that seems to contain some odd sea creature. The animal hisses and begins to claw and scratch, trying to get inside. Suddenly the creature reveals huge shark teeth and snarls at the glass. The terrified cat scuttles off and hides behind its mistress's legs.

In the centre of the sorcerer's den stands a huge crystal globe.

The Wizard's source of magic and power, an all seeing eye, that affords him a view of the world, of anyone, of anything and at any time.

AZALEA

It is said that you are a great and powerful Wizard, who can grant wishes.

WIZARD

What do you wish for, old woman?

AZALEA

To be young, beautiful and have the power so a man will love me and no other.

WIZARD

Such wishes are not for the faithless. Be warned, if you're not pure of heart then magic will only bring tragedy. Let me look into your heart. Come.

The Wizard places Azalea at one side of the crystal ball and he stands at the other. They both peer in and while we do not see, what the Wizard can, he does not like.

WIZARD

You have such blackness in your heart. I cannot grant you these wishes.

AZALEA

(Begging)

Please, please, I will do anything...!

WIZARD

I am sorry, but you are not worthy. You will have to leave now.

Azalea's desperation turns to rage.

AZALEA

(Screaming)

If you will not give, then I will take for myself!

She snatches at one of the huge glass jars and with all her strength, brings it crashing down onto the sorcerer's head.

The force of the blow knocks the Wizard to the ground.

WIZARD

(Dying)

Your wickedness will defeat you in the end. Your magic is no good against a pure heart, bound in love.

With that, the old Wizard's eyes close and he dies. His body evaporates into smoke, leaving just an empty cloak. The cat gives a startled hiss, while Azalea stands startled. She then begins to clamour through the book of spells, searching through the pages until she finds what she is looking for, as the cat sniffs at the cloak that lies on the floor.

7

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - NIGHT.

7

In a snowbound landscape, a poor fawn cries over its dead mother. Through the beating snow the figure of Azalea appears stalking the animal.

8

INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT.

8

Using the book of spells, Azalea stands over a five pointed star, candles at each point. The fawn lies helpless, tied in the centre. The mangy old black cat sits watching. Azalea looks at the animal and it gives an uneasy cry as if warning her.

Outside a storm rages and lightening flashes.

NARRATOR

(Voice over)

Azalea learnt the art of magic  
from the Wizard's book of spells,  
but in her hands such arts became  
very dark indeed.

As Azalea raises a dagger above her head, we see the obsession on her face.

As she mutters the incantations she has learnt from the Wizard's book of spells, she plunges the knife downwards into the unseen poor animal as a crash of thunder and lightening sounds.

9

INT. CASTLE. BALLROOM - NIGHT.

9

A swirl of gowns waltz by as a magnificent masked ball takes place. Clockwork musicians, each with a large key in their back, stand around a beautiful grand piano. Fully wound up, the figures play a waltzing tune and move perfectly like living mannequins.

We see the Prince dancing with a beautiful woman who wears an ornate mask and dressed in the finest silk.

The butler, content to see his master happy, stands looking on.

PRINCE

I thought I was familiar with  
every beautiful woman in society  
and yet, I do not know you.

MASKED WOMAN

(Flirtatious and  
coquettish)

It is a masked ball, sir.  
Anonymity is the point, is it  
not?

PRINCE

(Amused)

Of course.

They dance together gliding beautifully across the floor.

PRINCE  
You dance beautifully.

MASKED WOMAN  
So do you.

PRINCE  
But I am curious about one thing.

MASKED WOMAN  
And what is that?

PRINCE  
What you look like behind the mask.

MASKED WOMAN  
What I look like, is that so important? That I'm beautiful?

PRINCE  
(A little taken aback)  
No. Of course not.  
(Gives a smile)  
All the same, I would like to know.

Clearly intrigued, the Prince leads her out onto the balcony and away from the crowd.

10 EXT. CASTLE. BALCONY - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

10

The Prince and the woman, still wearing her mask, stand together in the moonlight.

MASKED WOMAN  
It is tradition that we wait until midnight before we take off our masks.

The Prince puts his arms around her.

PRINCE  
Do not tease me anymore.

The masked woman turns away to look out at the moonlight. We hear a catch in her voice

MASKED WOMAN  
Suppose when you look upon me, you find me ugly?

The Prince kisses at her neck.

PRINCE  
 (Whispers)  
 I cannot and will not believe  
 that.

The masked woman slips off her disguise and we see that it is Azalea, now a beautiful young woman. She and the Prince kiss. Behind her back, we see that she clings onto the Prince's handkerchief.

As they are framed in a beautiful rising moon, Azalea's cat appears. Like its mistress, it is no longer a mangy moggy, but a beautiful, sleek creature that moves with stealth and grace and green eyes that shine in the dark.

11 EXT. FOREST - DAY. 11

The Prince and Azalea ride together through the woodland.

NARRATOR  
 (Voice Over)  
 The Prince lost his heart to this  
 new woman. It was as if he had  
 been befallen by a great spell.

The Prince leaps from his horse, lifts Azalea from hers and they find a kiss. He then takes out an enchanted locket and places it around Azalea's neck.

PRINCE  
 The locket reflects what is in  
 your heart.

Azalea opens it and sees the Prince's face in the magic glass.

AZALEA  
 All I see is you.

Smiling, they fall into another kiss.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. CASTLE BATTLEMENTS - DAY. CONTINUED. 12

The Butler stands on the battlements looking down at the Prince and Azalea in the forest below. The Prince falls on one knee, holds out a ring proposing marriage and she flings her arms around him.

Also looking down is Azalea's cat. It gives the Butler a sideways glance and a satisfied purr of victory.

13 INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

13

A huge banquet is taking place in the great hall for dignitaries from far off lands. Among them, a VISITING LORD and his beautiful daughter. As always the Butler fusses around, attending to the guests.

VISITING LORD

Sir, I cannot thank you enough for the generosity you have befallen me and my family. But may I ask one thing?

PRINCE

If it is within my power, I shall grant it, sir.

VISITING LORD

(With a smile)

My daughter wishes to have the first dance with you.

The beautiful girl gives a bashful look, clearly smitten by the handsome prince.

PRINCE

(With a smile)

But only with my fiance's permission.

He looks over at Azalea.

AZALEA

Of course.

Azalea gives a pleasant smile, but her eyes say something else. Her black cat snakes between the legs of the chairs and gives a vicious hiss at the young girl.

The Butler gives a nod of his head and the clockwork musicians start up. Everyone, except Azalea begins to applaud as the Prince and the young girl dance. The Butler sees pure hatred and jealously burning in her eyes as her fingers dig into the arm of her chair. Again the cat gives a cruel hiss.

14 EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT.

14

The Prince and Azalea stand at the castle gates waving goodbye to their guests. As the Lord and his daughter's carriage is lead out, Azalea mutters an incantation under her breath.

A great fork of lightening lashes out from the sky, striking the Lord's carriage. The horses rear up wildly and out of control, they turn and crash.

As the Prince rushes forward, we hear a howl of dismay from the visiting Lord inside the smashed wreckage. A look of shock and horror passes over the Prince and those around him as the man stumbles out with his dead daughter in his arms. Only the Butler notices the monovalent evil in Azalea's eyes.

15 EXT. FOREST - DAY.

15

The GAMEKEEPER and the Butler are stood over a cut up dead fawn.

GAMEKEEPER

I know every animal that walks  
and crawls in this forest, but I  
don't know of any creature that  
would do this.

BUTLER

I do not wish to bother the  
Prince with this on the eve of  
his wedding, but keep me informed  
should you find another.

The Gamekeeper nods.

The Butler looks up to the castle, to find Azalea stood at one of the windows looking down at him, the beautiful sleek cat in her arms.

16 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - DAY.

16

The Butler enters Azalea's bed chamber and we see her wedding dress lain out on the bed. Thinking he is alone, he searches the room and comes across the book of spells. What he doesn't realise is that the black cat is watching him. Turning the pages, he finds the Prince's Handkerchief.

17 EXT. CASTLE GARDENS - DAY.

17

Azalea is walking in the castle gardens when the cat appears and gives her a warning cry.

AZALEA

What is it?

Again the animal gives an angry hiss.

18 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - DAY.

18

Aware of a presence in the room, the Butler who is still reading the book of spells, turns to find an angry Azalea at the door.

AZALEA

What are you doing in here?

The cat at her feet, again gives a lethal hiss.

BUTLER

Nothing, miss I was just...

AZALEA

(Full of benevolent  
spite)

You think you're some wise, old owl, don't you? Well let me tell you something, you cross me and come between me and my Prince, I will make you regret it for the rest of your life. Now get out!

The Butler hustles out with her hateful gaze burning into him.

NARRATOR

(Voice over)

Even if the servant told his master, the young man was so blinded by love he would not believe him.

19 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

19

It is the night before the wedding and Azalea sits before a huge mirror brushing her hair. The magnificent cat also preens itself. As it does, clumps of fur begin to come out on its tongue. Its sleek coat does not look so sleek anymore.

Azalea also notices that her hair too is coming out in handfuls. Horrified, she also sees that her face seems to be aging before her very eyes.

AZALEA

(Turning away in  
disgust)

No, no, no!

20 EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT.

20

The Butler watches unobserved as a cloaked figure, leaves the castle by a side entrance and sprints into the woodland.

As the figure disappears, the hood of the cloak falls and we see that it is Azalea, now looking like a middle-aged version of herself, hair grey and features lined.

21 INT. HIGHEST TOWER IN THE CASTLE - NIGHT.

21

Once again a five pointed star, candles at each point and surrounded by images of black magic and the devil, have been drawn on the floor. Azalea is about to sacrifice a small fawn in another witchcraft incantation.

Mumbling a spell, she holds a knife above her, about to plunge it into the deer to reclaim her youth. Also looking on is the cat, no longer looking sleek and beautiful, but the mangy moggy it once was with its fur falling out.

At the sound of the curtain being drawn back, Azalea turns and we see now that she is the wizened old hag she once was.

Shocked, Azalea finds the Prince and his Butler standing before her.

BUTLER

Sir, I'm sorry. It was the only way...

Horrified, the Prince's look of pain turns to rage as he snatches back the locket from around Azalea's neck.

22 EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT.

22

Tears roll down Azalea's old and wizened face, as she hammers pathetically at the door of the castle to be let back in. The cat at her feet, now just a scraggy old moggy, also meows desperately.

AZALEA

(Begging)

Please let me back in! I love you, I love you!

23 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT. 23

The Prince sits alone, holding the locket in his fist. His eyes too are filled with tears, as Azalea's begging is wrenching at his heart. He opens the locket, but does not see Azalea's face, instead nothing is reflecting back. He snaps it shut.

The kindly butler appears.

BUTLER  
Sir, what shall we do?

PRINCE  
(Torn apart)  
Nothing. I have banished her.  
That is her punishment. And my  
punishment is to sit here and  
listen to her cries.

24 EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT. 24

Still pounding on the door, Azalea's tears now turn to rage. She growls like a panther, almost panting.

AZALEA  
I will see to it that no one will  
love you. You will know so much  
pain, your heart will break and  
then you will beg me to love you!

She screams and her face almost seems to split apart as black magic pours out of her. Spewing evil like a great wave, she throws back her head and flings out her hands, reciting an incantation.

From her finger tips, to her eyes and mouth, the evil magic lightening spreads out, up into the air and covers the castle like magic rain clouds.

25 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT. 25

Azalea's tidal wave of black magic covers the great castle. The Prince and his Butler look up as a profound rumbling, that seems to be coming from somewhere deep underground, starts up. The entire castle begins to shake with a violent tremor.

26 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 26

Azalea stands at the edge of the forest, a scarlet magic dome completely covering the castle.

As red streaks of lightening fires from her fingers, she lets forth a banshee- like scream and the black magic rays shoot into the Prince's castle.

27 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

27

The curse shoots through the windows and roof, hitting the Prince and Butler with tremendous force.

The Butler flies through the air and as he hits the stone wall, he changes. The butler's uniform drops to the ground and from the clothes, a huge white Owl flutters free.

The Prince bellows in pain as the scarlet rays begin to shoot through his body and tidal wave of wickedness absorb into him.

But as quickly as the magic came, it disappears. The Prince drops hard to the floor, his body covered in the great cloak. Dense smoke rises from his form that lies still.

The Butler, now an Owl with smoking feathers, flits and sits up. His head spins around. He gulps, does it again so that his head is facing the other way.

OWL

Oh my goodness!

He flaps his wings and flies into the air.

OWL

I can fly! I can fly?

He half laughs, elated.

The Owl flies over to the mirror above the hearth and is horrified to see that he now a bird.

OWL

Oh no!

Swivelling this way and that, his head bobs up and down. He raises up his wings as if looking for his hands.

OWL

(Examining his claws)

Feathers! A beak! Sir, what has happened to me?

His big eyes blink and his head spins round back the prince.

OWL

Sir, are you alright?

The Prince is sprawled out in a crumpled heap, tangled in his cloak and lying face down. Smoke rises from him as if he has been burnt.

With the cloak covering his body and the cowl over his head, he struggles to his feet and lumbers along with a monstrous gait. He cries a deep, guttural growl as his form sways before the huge mirror. When he puts a hand out onto the mantelpiece, instead of a man's hand, we see a huge claw with talons - as sharp as daggers, which grip onto the wood of the mantelpiece, leaving a deep gash. The Owl's eyes widen, even more if that is possible.

Slowly the hulking form uncurls itself and as the Prince looks up into his reflection, what he sees is the most horrific sight - a gigantic, savage animal. Horror turns to a snarling growl as he throws his head back and lets forth, with what sounds like a lion's roar filled with dismay.

28 EXT. FOREST - DAWN.

28

The sun rises as great howls echo over the huge acres of woodland. Stood in the forest and swirling around, Azalea laughs at his suffering, revelling in her evil revenge. The cat looks up to where the howls are coming from and we see the castle above the tree tops in the distance.

29 EXT. CASTLE - DAY.

29

All of the servants are walking across the drawbridge carrying their belongings. No longer smiling, they now look defeated and frightened with their heads down.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. CASTLE BATTLEMENTS - DAY. CONTINUED.

30

Stood watching on the battlements, now just a figure hidden behind a cloak, is the Prince. When the last of the servants leave, the great drawbridge shuts with a clang. He is left alone with his only friend, the Owl.

NARRATOR

(Voice over)

And as many a winter and summer followed, the Beast shut himself away, alone, locked in his misery. No one dared to return to the castle, for fear they would have to look upon the Beast's terrifying face. The people soon forgot about the Prince.

Time passes. Summers and winters come and go and the forest grows, enveloping the castle in the blink of an eye.

As we pull up and away, it no longer looks a monument to joy, life or colour. The once great, magnificent building is empty and the silence that lingers feels tragic and lost. The great turrets now stand mournfully against the sky and an air of desolate abandonment hangs from the walls.

We travel up through the clouds and across the land, until we see in the distance, a thriving port. We descend down from the heavens to the seaside town.

31

EXT. QUAYSIDE. DOCKS - DAY

31

*Caption across the screen reads "MANY YEARS LATER".*

The docks are filled with business and noisy activity.

A large four mast cargo ship is stood moored at the quayside and an army of sailors load its hull with barrels. Each are marked with the same merchants seal.

A rich merchant, Belle's FATHER, stands on the dockside watching the cargo being loaded, we see that he wears a ring that bears the same insignia stamped on the barrels.

The CAPTAIN of the ship steps up.

CAPTAIN

The cargo bay is full. I dare  
not take on any more load, sir.

FATHER

(With a reassuring  
smile)

Don't worry, that's the last of  
it.

CAPTAIN

We could do with another ship.

FATHER

How about two other ships?

The Captain's face flushes with anticipation.

FATHER

Speculate to accumulate. We're  
going to expand. Not double our  
efforts but triple them.

CAPTAIN

You have no argument from me.

FATHER

Trade is good. Soon we will be  
very rich men.

The Captain climbs aboard.

Through the crowds we hear a shout.

BELLE

(Off)

Father?

Belle's father turns to see his daughter waving at him over the heads of the crowd. Beautiful and spirited, she comes running along the quayside through the throngs of people - her face flushed with excitement.

Belle slips on the wet flag stones but her father catches her and stops her from falling into the sea.

FATHER

Belle, calm down girl. What is  
it? What's wrong?

BELLE

(Excited)

Nothing is wrong, father.  
Everything is so right! He asked  
me. Look!

She presents her finger and on it is an exquisite diamond engagement ring.

BELLE

I am to be Mrs Philippe, George,  
William, Augustus, Worsley the  
third.

Stepping through the crowd, her betrothed appears. Dashing, handsome and elegant, PHILIPPE is from one of Europe's most oldest and aristocratic families.

FATHER

Is this true?

PHILIPPE

Yes, sir.

(Bowing)

With your permission of course.

Father looks from Philippe to Belle and breaks into a big smile.

FATHER

Yes of course. This is a great  
day, a great day!

Belle embraces her father.

Stood on the quayside, Belle, her father and Philippe talk animatedly about the future. We reveal the headline of a newspaper pasted on a wall. It reads, '*Mysterious beast terrifies countryside*'. An artist's impression of a great half-man, half-wolf creature, looms out from under the headlined banner.

32

INT. MANOR HOUSE. BEDROOM - DAY.

32

The manor house where Belle grew up is modest and tasteful, and we feel this is a happy home full of warmth. A portrait of Belle's mother hangs on the wall and we see the startling resemblance between her and Belle.

With the help of her maid, MARIE, Belle proceeds to dress. Clothes, shoes, jewellery and make up is scattered everywhere but there is something rather sweet and endearing about the clutter.

Belle puts on a pair of glasses, turns to Marie, then takes them off again, imagining she is greeting her prospective in-laws.

BELLE

Please to meet you. Philippe has told me so much about you.

Giggling, Marie goes along with the play acting and puts on a mock posh voice

MARIE

Enchanted I'm sure.

Belle pulls expressions, imitating different personas making Marie laugh even more. A haughty lady, femme fatale, etc, while repeating the greeting. The two roar with laughter before collapsing on the dresses in fits of giggles.

Belle, catching sight of her mother's portrait in the mirror.

BELLE

Marie, am I doing the right thing, marrying Philippe?

MARIE

He's handsome, he's rich...

BELLE

Is that a reason to marry a man?

MARIE

I was brought up to marry for  
love.

BELLE

I wonder what mother would think?

Belle gets up, goes to the dresser and opens a beautiful ornate jewellery box. It plays a sweet tune as she lifts the lid. The music is full of memories of her mother. She looks at her reflection and then back to her mother's portrait.

Belle picks up a set of pearls from the box, that her mother wears in the picture and holds them up to her throat.

BELLE

I want to look nice for  
Philippe's parents. Do you think  
his mama would like the pearls  
better? I don't know why, but I  
get the feeling she may notice  
things like that! Pearls?

She takes them away from her neck.

BELLE

Not pearls?  
(Holds pearls back to  
her throat)  
Pearls?  
(Takes them away)  
Not pearls?

MARIE

Oh pearls definitely, miss.

There is a tap on her bedroom door and Belle's father steps inside.

FATHER

Belle?

Belle turns, showing off her dress. Her innate charm and very presence lights up her room.

MARIE

Tell her she looks exquisite,  
sir!

FATHER

You look beautiful.

BELLE

Really?

FATHER

You look more and more like your mother every day.

MARIE

She does indeed, sir.

Belle turns, looks at herself in the mirror and pulls a face. Realising that she is still wearing her glasses, she takes them off.

BELLE

If you love someone and they love you, it shouldn't matter what you look like, should it?

Belle's father steps up and takes her hand.

FATHER

When your mother and I first met, I was such the scruffy urchin.

(He smiles at the memory)

Ink stains on my shirt front and yet somehow she saw past that.

BELLE

But once you were married she always made sure you had a clean collar and your hair was brushed.

FATHER

That may be true, but Philippe would still be the luckiest man on earth whether you wore the finest dress from Paris or just a dirty old sack cloth.

We see the warmth between them as Belle steps up and dusts off her father's coat.

BELLE

If I have to make the effort, then so do you. Father, you still haven't changed. You cannot meet your future in-laws looking like a scarecrow! I put out a clean shirt this morning! What's this? Ink stains or breakfast?

FATHER

(Smiles)

A bit of both.

BELLE

Who is going to look after you  
when I'm gone?

They both smile and Belle kisses him on the cheek tenderly.

FATHER

What was that for?

BELLE

That was because I love you. Ink  
stain and all.

33 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 33

It is a beautiful day as the horse and carriage ride through the idyllic countryside. Belle leans out of the window and tilts her head upwards towards the sun and enjoys the exhilaration of the warmth on her face.

34 EXT. WORSLEY HALL - DAY. 34

As the carriage rounds the bend we see a huge, magnificent house with a grand architecture, stood in its own grounds.

Putting on her glasses, Belle leans out to take in the view, at the same time she nervously plays with her mother's pearls around her neck.

As the carriage sweeps up the driveway Belle and her father are presented by the most amazing garden party. Men and women dressed in their white summer finest are being served the best champagne and canapes by a team of servants, while gorgeous peacocks stroll amongst the guests.

Belle and her father step from their carriage. Both feel out of place in this stupendous grandeur. Belle's father, sensing she is nervous, squeezes his daughter's hand reassuringly.

Belle smiles back. She takes off her glasses, places them in a silk purse that hangs around her wrist and composes herself.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 35

A hunting party, led by Philippe and his companion, ANTON, chase a single fox at full speed across the green fields. The poor animal looks terrified as it runs desperately to escape.

36

EXT. WORSLEY HALL - DAY. CONTINUED.

36

The guests, still on the lawn all turn at the blast of a hunting horn and horses hooves.

Philippe leaps over a wall in pursuit of the fox and rides into the grounds of his house, followed closely by the rest of the hunting party.

The poor animal darts across the lawn before the guests. In panicked fright, it zig zags between the women's dresses and men's feet. It knocks one waiter off balance and his tray of drinks smashes to the ground with a loud crash.

Amidst screams and chaos, a few of the men try to stab at it with their walking canes, but the fox is too quick.

Belle has a look of abject horror on her face as one of the servants attempts to trap the poor animal. She discreetly puts out her foot, tripping up the footman, who falls face first onto the lawn, allowing the fox to dart under a huge table. Having managed to allude capture, it runs out of the other side, where it disappears into the near by trees.

There is a great commotion as Philippe comes riding across the lawn, angrily jumps from his stallion at having lost the fox.

PHILIPPE

Damn and blast the creature!

ANTON

You're losing your touch. I've never known a prey yet that you couldn't bring down!

PHILIPPE

I'll get him next time!

Philippe is instantly met by man servants, who take off his hunting jacket and dress him in a beautifully tailored frock coat.

Philippe, now joined by Anton meet Belle and her father.

PHILIPPE

Belle, you look absolutely enchanting.

They embrace. Philippe turns and he and Belle's father acknowledge each other with respect.

PHILIPPE

(Referring to Anton)

You know my good friend, Anton?

Anton gives a gentlemanly bow.

BELLE

Oh that poor fox. It wasn't  
doing anyone any harm.

PHILIPPE

Poor fox be hanged! Ask the  
local farmer after they've had  
their chickens and livestock  
stolen! You'll find that hunting  
is one of my passions.

(Takes Belle's arm)

Come and meet mama.

37 EXT. WORSLEY HALL - DAY.

37

Under a magnificent white marquee set out on the lawn, the  
guests are served a sumptuous lunch by an army of servants.  
Despite the opulent grandeur there is something cold and  
austere in the atmosphere.

Philippe's MAMA and PAPA reflect the chilly surroundings.  
Philippe's father says nothing, while his mother peers at  
Belle with cold eyes.

Belle is doing her best not to look out of place.

BELLE

You have a beautiful house.

Silence.

BELLE

This is delicious.

Silence.

BELLE

(Wondering what to say  
next)

Do you have the recipe?

Bigger frosty silence. All heads turn to Belle.

MAMA

(with a very thin smile)

Recipe? My dear child you are  
trying to be amusing - are you  
not?

BELLE

No...I...

Belle gives her father a look, who in turn discreetly rolls  
his eyes as if to say I can't help you.

Philippe comes in with a rescue.

PHILIPPE

(Light hearted)

I think what Mama is trying to say, is that she'd have some difficulty actually finding the kitchen.

(Gives a polite laugh)

In fact, if she were to make such an adventure, I do believe she'd have to use a trail of bread crumbs to find her way there and back. I see Mama perhaps acting as a culinary Hansel and Gretel.

The table gives a murmuring laugh at Philippe's witticism.

BELLE

(Trying to think of something else to say)

My mother was a good cook.

Again silence. Belle ploughs on.

BELLE

(Gives a smile)

I try my best but I'm afraid I don't think I have inherited her talent in the kitchen.

There is a slight murmur of laughter around the table. Belle is unsure whether she is being laughed at or laughed along with.

PHILIPPE

Belle, my darling once we are married you will not have to worry about cooking, we will engage a proper chief.

Belle knocks over her wine.

BELLE

Oh no, your beautiful table cloth, I'm sorry!

Philippe's mama fixes Belle with a look that could peel wallpaper.

Belle dabs at the stain but makes it worse. The servants descend and instantly take care of everything with blinding efficiency. Belle tries to help, but only succeeds in getting in their way.

Philippe puts a steadying hand on Belle.

PHILIPPE  
 (Reassuring)  
 Belle, let the servants take care  
 of it.

Belle nods.

38 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BILLIARD ROOM - DAY.

38

The men have retired to the billiard room, where they smoke cigars and drink Brandy. Philippe and Anton play billiards, while some of the other male guests amuse themselves with games of 'chance'.

Belle's father in particular seems rather taken with this new life, playing up the well-to-do businessman, while puffing on a thick cigar and talking with Philippe's father.

FATHER  
 Vision and expansion. That's the  
 key to success in business.

Taking a sip of Brandy, he is a little drunk but sweet with it.

FATHER  
 I'm going to purchase two new  
 ships! And then one day, who  
 knows, a whole fleet.

PHILIPPE'S FATHER  
 I understand from my son, you own  
 the exclusive shipping rights?

At the billiard table, Anton and Philippe give each other a side ways smile.

FATHER  
 Oh yes, that's right. I built  
 this business up with my own two  
 hands. Times were hard but we  
 knuckled down and got on with it.  
 I'm hoping I will have a business  
 that one day will make my  
 grandchildren proud.

He gives a winking swagger at his prospective son-in-law. Philippe returns the smile, but behind the old man's back, Anton roll his eyes. It seems good humoured but laced with an underlying snobbery. Nevertheless, Belle's father is oblivious, the Brandy having gone a little to his head.

39

INT. WORSLEY HALL. DRAWING ROOM - DAY.

39

In stark contrast to the men who are having an enjoyable time, Belle and the female guests sit in silence. Philippe's mama and some of the older ladies play Bridge. Belle's eyes take in the grand but cold opulence. She fidgets and lets out a loud breath. Realising she is making a noise, she stops and sits in the silence.

Belle gets up and walks around the room. As she passes the card table, she leans in and glances at the ladies' cards. Again, she receives nothing but cold stares, which Belle does her best to smile through.

MAMA

Belle do you play Bridge, my dear?

BELLE

No.

MAMA

Didn't your mother teach you?

BELLE

No.

MAMA

(Loaded)

I always feel a knowledge of Bridge is the mark of proper lady.

(Loaded)

Amongst other things of course. Perhaps your mother was too busy in the kitchen.

The rest of the ladies snigger politely. Belle touches her pearls not quite sure whether to laugh or be angry.

BELLE

(Defiant)

My mother died when I was ten years old. She didn't have time for cards or bright fancies, she was too busy being a good wife and mother, making a home for myself and my father.

The lady card players look down and politely ignore the barb.

Feeling awkward, Belle turns but without her glasses she accidentally catches an expensive vase with her elbow, knocking it off the mantelpiece.

She just manages to catch it before it shatters, but receives stony looks from Philippe's Mama and the other ladies.

BELLE

Sorry...I'm so sorry...

Belle places the vase back on the mantelpiece looking genuinely mortified at her clumsiness.

MAMA

Philippe tells me you are rather an accomplished pianist?

BELLE

He is too kind. I play a little.

MAMA

(Indicating the piano)

Then please do.

Belle rather nervously goes over to the grand piano.

MAMA

(Her voice low so Belle won't overhear)

With her hands occupied, she might not break anything else.

There is a murmur of laughter.

Feeling the pressure, Belle sits at the piano. As she begins to play, we recognise the tune from her mother's jewellery box. Looking a little nervous she makes a few mistakes. The lady card players give each other a look and roll their eyes.

Belle finishes to silence. A few give a polite but patronising hand claps.

BELLE

(Deflated)

I'm really out of practice.

MAMA

(Imperious)

Why don't you ask Philippe to show you the gardens. They are considered the finest in Europe.

40

EXT. WORSLEY HALL. GARDENS - LATE AFTERNOON.

40

Philippe and Belle walk through the huge grounds of the exquisitely manicured gardens.

BELLE

(Upset)

Wonderful. Perfect first impressions. Well done, Belle. I'm a clod, I'm an oaf and if your mother told you not to marry me, I would not be surprised.

PHILIPPE

Mother thinks you are enchanting.

BELLE

Really?

PHILIPPE

Yes and she cannot wait for our wedding day.

BELLE

Philippe, can we not be married in a simple country church? Just us, some old clergyman and a few flowers. Wouldn't that be more romantic?

PHILIPPE

(Gives a laugh)

Belle, you are so sweet. There is nothing I'd like more but you have to understand, my family has certain traditions that I am expected to uphold. I couldn't disappoint them, it would be just heartbreaking for them. Please, I know you understand.

BELLE

Of course. I wouldn't want you to do anything...

PHILIPPE

Good. I knew you would.

(With a smile)

We will honeymoon in Italy and it will be just you and I.

Philippe strokes her face with absolute tenderness. He lifts her chin so their eyes meet and they kiss.

41

INT. WORSLEY HALL - NIGHT.

41

Philippe and Anton sit beside a roaring fire, a pair of hunting hounds at their feet, while a servant pours them a glass of Claret.

PHILIPPE

She is beautiful, is she not?

ANTON

Ravishing. She has the face of an angel.

PHILIPPE

And the body of a goddess.

ANTON

(Ribbing his friend in good humour)

But the table manners of a monkey!

PHILIPPE

Do you not think Belle and I make a good match?

ANTON

My friend, I've always thought you held your knife and fork like a baboon.

They both laugh.

PHILIPPE

Family and tradition are important.

ANTON

And her father owns a most promising business which makes Belle the perfect bride. And old money becomes old very fast?

PHILIPPE

Talking of money, I find vulgar.

ANTON

It's only vulgar when you don't have it.

(Gives a wink)

PHILIPPE

Let's just say my future father-in-law will keep me in the style I was born into for a very long time.

The two exchange a look.

42 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT. 42

The carriage containing Belle and her father leaves through the gate and heads off into the night.

Two tough, scar faced HIGHWAYMEN, with flint locked pistols in their belts, watch from the trees as the carriage trundles off down the road.

43 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT. 43

A glaring bright full moon illuminates a stretch of dense forest and a single dirt road that cuts through the thick trees.

The nocturnal silence is broken by the approach of the horse and carriage.

44 INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 44

In the back of the coach, Belle stares out of the window, turning everything over in her mind.

FATHER

I'm very proud of you and your mother would be too.

BELLE

Would she? Philippe is handsome, rich and charming and would turn any girl's head....?

(Her voice tails off)

Belle's father looks her in the eye.

FATHER

But?

BELLE

It's all happening so fast and I look at Philippe's parents and wonder, is that going to be us?

FATHER

Belle, I would never want you to do anything that you didn't want to.

BELLE

Maybe I just need time...

A shout and the sound of galloping hooves breaks the moment.

Belle and her father glance out of the window of the carriage. Suddenly, riding along side, are the highwaymen.

45 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

45

As the horses race flat out, the highwaymen ride level with the carriage. One of the men pulls his pistol and points it at the coachman.

HIGHWAYMAN

Stand ho!

The driver glances once but shows no sign of stopping. Without pity, the highwayman shoots and kills him. The coachman's lifeless body falls and hits the road.

46 INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

46

Belle and her father sit startled as the team of frightened horses thunders on down the road without direction. They look terrified as the carriage begins to swing this way and that.

47 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

47

The highwaymen gallop in hard pursuit as the coach steers out of control.

The thief who shot the driver, seeing that the reigns are lost, jumps onto one of the horses and then another, until he eventually reaches the lead horse. He slows the animals down and brings them to a stop on a deserted stretch of road.

The second highwayman brings up his horse and the pair wrench open the door of the carriage. At gunpoint, Belle and her father are pulled down.

The old man stands between his daughter and the point of a pistol.

HIGHWAYMAN

(Cocking his weapon)

Your money and valuables or I'll  
put buckshot between your eyes!

The second thief leaps down from the carriage. He stands close to Belle, eyes her beauty and licks his lips like a dog over a juicy bone.

SECOND HIGHWAYMAN

(With a sniff)

She's a pretty one.

Father stands protective, while Belle flashes a defiant look that says she is not afraid.

FATHER

Take what you want just don't hurt my daughter.

The first highwayman notices Father's gold ring with the family seal.

HIGHWAYMAN

Let's start with that solid gold ring.

Father struggles to pull the ring off but can't, his hands are shaking with fright.

FATHER

I can't get it off!

HIGHWAYMAN

Give it to me or I'll hack off your finger.

He pulls a knife, about to chop off father's finger.

BELLE

No, don't. You can have my pearls.

Belle loosens the pearls from around her neck.

BELLE

(Steps up)

Here. Take them. They are worth far more than the ring.

As Belle holds out her jewellery, one of the highwayman goes to take it, but Belle lets her mother's pearls drop onto the muddy roadside.

With a sour, angry look, the thief fits one of the pistols into his belt and kneels down to retrieve the necklace.

In an instant, Belle gathers up her skirt and flings out a kick, where the toe of her shoe connects hard to the man's jaw. Knocked back, he crashes against his partner and the two robbers smash into a muddy puddle.

Seizing the moment, Belle snatches at her father and the two race to the tree line.

With an angry roar, the two highwaymen leap to their feet and let fly with a barrage of gunfire from their pistols, just as Belle and her father take cover behind a line of oak trees.

As the buckshot pellets crack off the bark, Belle and her father run as hard as they can through the trees and into the forest.

The thieves reload their guns and race off in pursuit.

48

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

48

Belle and her father weave this way and that, moving deeper into the forest.

Breathless and lost, they stop. Belle realises that the little silk purse where she keeps her glasses has disappeared. She begins to look desperately for it.

FATHER

What is it?

BELLE

I've lost my glasses. Help me look for them.

FATHER

Belle, we haven't time.  
(Pulls her away)  
This way.

49

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

49

From deep in the black forest, something moves with stealth through the foliage. We follow as the unseen thing stalks through the blackness of the trees.

A pair of wild animal eyes watch Belle and her father and we catch a brief glimpse of snarling razor white teeth and a black sable coat.

Above Belle and her father's heads, a branch explodes, as another shot is taken.

Belle's father grasps at his daughter's hand and the two tear off into the trees, disappearing further and further into the dense darkness.

Reloading their guns, the two highwaymen appear looking this way and that. Belle and her father have vanished.

SECOND HIGHWAYMAN  
 (Looking about and  
 ramming a fresh round  
 into the barrel of his  
 gun)

Which way did they go?

The other man just shakes his head as he scans the shadows.

SECOND HIGHWAYMAN  
 (Suddenly feeling  
 uneasy)  
 Come on, let's go back to the  
 road. We've got the necklace.  
 (He brandishes the  
 pearls)

HIGHWAYMAN  
 (Rage and greed seething  
 in his eyes)  
 Not yet. I want that blasted  
 gold ring.

He heads off. The second highwayman, unnerved, is a little way behind.

50 EXT. TREES - NIGHT.

50

They do not notice, crouched down, Belle and her father hiding in the foliage, as the two thieves walk by in single file.

Father and daughter hold their breaths as they hear the approaching crunch of boots.

51 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

51

Something akin to a gigantic Beast, pounces out of nowhere and leaps with amazing speed, flying at the second highwayman. Its movements are a blur as the thief is hit with the full force. In the blink of an eye, he is snatched up and taken off.

His accomplice turns quickly, spinning on his heels, ready to fire. Presented with only darkness, he finds that his partner has disappeared completely.

Confused, he takes a step forward, his guns still at the ready.

HIGHWAYMAN  
 (Trying to keep the fear  
 out of his voice)  
 Show yourself!

His foot kicks at something. When he looks down he sees the other man's flint locked pistol lying in the undergrowth. His staring and petrified features look around, baffled.

Again, the black and powerful Beast, moving quicker than the eye can fathom, comes tearing out of the undergrowth and lands on the highwayman and he too is suddenly pulled away into the black night.

52

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF FOREST - NIGHT.

52

Belle and her father break from their hiding place and run blindly through the trees. They can hear, what sounds like the terrible growling of some huge Beast, as it rips and tears at flesh.

Father and daughter run as fast as they can until the sound of the animal's snorts, disappears.

Stopping at a clearing in the trees, breathless and terrified they look back into the night.

BELLE

Father, what was that?

FATHER

(Holding her hand,  
trying to be a comfort)

I don't know. Probably a  
wolf...or a bear.

(He pulls at her)

Come on, let's find the road.

Belle hesitates for a moment, her eyes staring into the night. The silence is infinite and deep and yet there is something hypnotic in the air.

Belle takes his hand and the two carry on through the trees.

BELLE

Father, we're lost!

The old man peers through the woods.

FATHER

(Trying to sound  
reassuring)

No, no, I'm sure it's this way.

He is about to lead her deeper and deeper into the forest which is surrounded by endless woodland, when something catches Belle's eye.

BELLE

Look!

He turns, following her gaze and in the distance is a breathtaking castle, that seems to rise up from the very earth.

Great vines cling to its walls and turrets. The portcullis is up, the drawbridge down.

Belle and her father look at one another.

53

INT. CASTLE KEEP - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

53

Belle and her father walk across the drawbridge and through the great entrance to find themselves inside an empty courtyard.

BELLE

(Calling out)

Hello?

The sound of beating wings fills the air. The huge white Owl swoops across their heads and alights on a post. Its great head turns and its large eyes fix Belle and her father with an inviting stare. Yet there is something friendly about the wise old bird. It clearly means them no harm.

The Owl's voice sounds like a genial butler.

OWL

Good evening, sir and madam and welcome.

Belle and her father both look startled.

FATHER

Did that Owl...?

Father's voice slips away as he puts his hands to his head and slumps to the ground in a comic faint.

The Owl flutters about.

OWL

Sir, are you alright?

BELLE

Father!

Belle gently taps his cheek and rubs his hand to bring him round. The Owl looks on concerned.

Father's eyes open. He sees Belle and gives a smile.

BELLE  
Are you alright?

FATHER  
I just got a little weak at the  
knees. Must be the excitement.  
I thought I heard that Owl talk!

OWL  
I didn't mean to startle you,  
sir.

FATHER  
There, it did it again! Belle,  
tell me this is a dream and I'm  
not going mad?

BELLE  
Then we're both having the same  
dream. I hear him too!

Belle and her father look at one another.

OWL  
I know it is a lot to take in and  
before you ask, it is a very long  
story.

Father gets to his feet and steps up to touch the Owl.

OWL  
Please sir, don't touch the  
feathers!

Father naturally pulls back.

FATHER  
I'm so sorry.

He does a double take when he realises that he is  
apologising to an Owl.

OWL  
If you could both contain your  
stupor for a little longer and  
follow me please?

The bird, with its wings outstretched, almost the size of  
an eagle's, takes flight and leads the way.

As it flies down the courtyard, passing a line of unlit  
torches, each torch ignites. Their flames flicker in the  
night breeze, illuminating the way ahead.

Belle and her father look at one another with a questioning  
expression. Belle considers for a moment and then gives a  
shrug.

BELLE  
Follow the owl.

She marches off. Belle's father stands stupefied for a moment.

Realising that he has been left behind and more than a little spooked, Belle's father quickens his pace and catches up with his daughter.

54

EXT. CASTLE. ROSE GARDEN - NIGHT.

54

Belle and her father walk into what was once an exquisite garden lined with rose bushes, only now it is now just a mass of overgrown weeds. Like the rest of the castle it is dilapidated and in need of care

However, one single rose stands out amongst the weeds, unlike any rose either have seen before. Its petals are priceless coloured stones made of gold and thorns of precious jewels.

The rose, which resembles a priceless trinket, glitters and sparkles in the darkness, illuminating the pathway with magnificent splendour.

FATHER  
Never in all my life...! Look at  
this! It's made of gold...feel  
the weight!

Father is overawed by the wealth before him. The gold twinkles and shines proudly.

FATHER  
This rose must be worth a  
fortune. Incredible!  
(To the Owl)  
The rose, does it talk?

OWL  
(As if talking to a  
child)  
Of course not sir. Whoever heard  
of a talking rose! Now if you  
follow me.

Once again, the Owl flies off, indicating for them to follow.

Father stands lost and gives a little laugh.

Eventually Father tears his eyes away from the splendour before him and follows his daughter.

The Owl leads them through another doorway and into a hall.

55 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

55

The vast hall has a beautiful but sedate grandeur. A line of candelabres ring the huge room, giving it a sumptuous glow. A fire flickers in the massive grate.

A beautiful ornate mirror, which stands above the fireplace, has a rich cloth hanging over its surface, to hide any reflection.

A long banquet table stands in the centre of the room and at the head, a mouth watering, piping hot meal for two, waits on gold platters.

The white Owl flutters across the cavernous space and lands with a hoot on its perch.

Belle and her father look at one another, neither quite sure what to do.

Belle goes to the mantel and lifts the cloth that hides the mirror. She sees that there are huge claw marks embedded in the mantelpiece.

Belle and her father examine the deep grooves. They both look at one another and then to the Owl for an answer.

OWL

Woodworm.

FATHER

(Tries to give a  
reassuring smile)

Woodworm?

BELLE

Who does this place belongs to?

A voice sounds somewhere deep behind the bank of candles. A rich purr, with an animalistic growl.

BEAST

To me.

The Beast steps out in a long cloak that stretches down to the ground, so that it covers his massive frame. The hood is pulled up, to make sure his face is hidden.

Moving forward, the Beast is just a silhouette and like a living shadow, he keeps to the half light.

Belle and her father are both taken aback by his presence but Belle steps up and puts on her best smile.

BELLE

We wish to cause you no  
imposition but we're lost.

FATHER

We were attacked by  
highwaymen....

BEAST

There is no imposition. You may  
stay one night and one night  
only. But I ask you this, please  
do not abuse my hospitality.

56

INT. CASTLE. DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

56

Belle and her father are stood in a magnificent dining room  
preparing to eat a delicious meal. Acting like a butler,  
the Owl flies over to the table, pulls out two chairs and  
invites them both to sit.

He carries a pair of napkins in his claws and gently lies  
it in their laps before picking up the wine. As he hovers  
in the air, he expertly pours out wine for them both.

OWL

Bon appetit.

Belle and her father begin to eat and drink.

The Owl swoops off.

The Beast keeps himself hidden in the gloom.

FATHER

(To the Beast)

Excuse me, sir. Is there  
anything else here that talks,  
that normally doesn't?

BEAST

Not that I'm aware of.

BELLE

Please, won't you join us?

BEAST

(His voice richly deep)

I always dine alone. When you  
have finished, the Owl will show  
you to your rooms.

Without another word, their host sweeps out and becomes  
lost behind the flickering candles, leaving Belle and her  
father alone.

57 INT. CASTLE. HALL - NIGHT. 57

The white Owl swoops down one of the long corridors in the castle. He rests, swivels his head and hoots, indicating for father and daughter to follow.

Father holds a candle and the light illuminates the dark surroundings.

OWL

Your rooms are this way. Sir,  
here. Madam, there. If you  
require anything, please don't  
hesitate to ring. Now if you  
excuse me.

With that, the bird flutters off.

BELLE

(Still troubled about  
their host)  
Who do you think our host is?

FATHER

Lets just be thankful for his  
help. It is none of our  
business. You will be alright?

BELLE

(With a smile)  
Fine. Good night.

They go their separate ways.

58 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 58

A full moon rises above the trees as a herd of deer graze quietly. Suddenly we see an alertness on their faces, as one by one senses danger is close by.

59 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 59

Belle is asleep. The window is open and a gentle night wind blows through and the moonlight spills in. The great white curtains move and shift and we can hear the sound of the forest that drifts in on the breeze.

60 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 60

Instantly the herd of deer break into a galloping run and tear through the trees in a mass stampede, while being chased by an unseen predator.

61 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 61

Belle is still asleep but it is a fitful slumber. It is as if, the nocturnal sounds of the woodland are invading her sleep.

Twisting and turning, Belle seems to be having a bad dream. Her breath comes in shallow pants as her nightmare escalates

62 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 62

One deer falls behind. From out of the blackness and leaping on all fours, the Beast, with teeth barred and eyes flashing with the burning intensity of a hunter, comes bounding out of the trees and lands on his prey with a snarling intent.

63 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 63

The sound of the animal's cry and the Beast's snarling growls tearing into flesh, wrenches Belle from her nightmare and she sits up in bed with a start. As she does, a silence falls. Only the gentle breeze and the billowing of the white curtains fill the quiet room now.

64 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - MORNING. 64

Stood in the hall, Belle and her father are preparing to leave. The Beast, as always, keeps to the shadows. His hood pulled up, his features invisible.

Belle steps forward but the hooded figure moves ever so slightly back at her presence.

BELLE

Sir, if there is any way of  
thanking you for your kindness?

BEAST

Your safe journey home will be  
thanks enough.

Belle's father gently guides her away.

FATHER

Goodbye and thank you.

Hesitating for a moment, Belle watches the great figure of the Beast, stood with his back to her. Nothing more than an outline, she somehow senses his pain.

Her father gently turns her away and together they walk out of the great hall.

65 EXT. CASTLE - MORNING

65

Belle and her father pass through the archway, guided by the white Owl. As they walk through the once precious rose garden, now just a tangle of weeds, the gold and silver jewelled flower, glints and glistens at the side of the path.

Father glances over his shoulder and we see something in his eyes.

66 INT. CASTLE. BATTLEMENTS - MORNING.

66

From the battlements looking down, the Beast, his face hidden under the great cloak, watches as Belle and her father disappear down the path. As his dark eyes scan the dilapidated garden, something suddenly catches his attention.

With a roar, he turns and with his cloak flying, tears down the flight of steps in running pursuit.

67 EXT. CASTLE. COURTYARD - MORNING.

67

Father and daughter are almost at the portcullis when Belle's father glances back again and we see there is something nervous in his manner.

Just before they can step over the threshold, there is the clattering noise of a massive chain, as the portcullis drops. The great spikes hit the earth with a thud and the two find themselves locked inside the castle.

From the doorway, the Beast appears. He stands towering, terrifying and with a voice sounding like a roar, points at Father.

BEAST

You have abused my hospitality.  
You have taken what does not  
belong to you!

Belle looks deeply shocked.

BELLE

Sir, I have no idea what you are  
talking about. We only have what  
we came with. I swear to you, we  
have nothing. Isn't that right,  
Father...?

To her dismay, Belle sees a look of shame in her father's eyes.

BELLE

Father?

Father opens his coat, takes out the gold, jewel encrusted rose and with deep regret he holds it out. Belle looks genuinely shocked.

The Beast snatches the rose from Father's hand.

FATHER

(With eyes moist with tears)

Please, sir, you have to believe me. I would have paid you back...

(His voice trails away)

Belle's father looks into his daughter's eyes and he sees for the first time, a deep disappointment.

BELLE

Father, why?

FATHER

(Broken)

I went to the bank to expand the business but....I'm already over extended and with you and Philippe and the up and coming wedding...

(To the Beast)

Sir...it was a moment of weakness...

As he looks into the impregnable darkness of the hooded shape, we see that Belle's father is shamed by his actions and that his deed was that of a desperate man.

BEAST

Once you have plucked the rose, it will take a year to grow another.

FATHER

I will pay you back double what it is worth.

BEAST

I shall need something as collateral to ensure the repayment.

FATHER  
Of course. Anything.

BEAST  
What is the most precious thing  
you have?

FATHER  
My business. You wish to become  
a partner? Very well. Shall we  
say 50/50?

There is silence from the Beast.

FATHER  
60/40?

Again silence.

FATHER  
Then how much?

BEAST  
I said the most precious thing  
you have?

Slowly Father realises what the Beast is referring to.

FATHER  
(Horrificed)  
No, sir, not that. Anything but  
that! Sir, I can give you  
anything you want but not...not  
my daughter!

BEAST  
She stays until you pay back what  
the rose is worth, or until  
another grows in its place.

FATHER  
She had no part of what I did.  
This will be my debt not hers!

Belle steps up and looks into the darkness of the hood.  
There is something business-like in her manner now, as she  
takes control.

BELLE  
If these are your terms, then I  
agree.

Belle stays him with a look.

BEAST  
Done.

FATHER  
(Crying out as if in  
pain)  
No!

BELLE  
(To her father)  
I have just given my word to our  
host. You taught me above all  
things, that one's word is  
sacred.

The old man falls silent.

Belle looks to the Beast and after the smallest of  
gestures, the portcullis magically rises.

We see the road ahead is illuminated by the sunlight,  
picking out the path that leads away from the forest.

Father and daughter embrace.

FATHER  
You will be alright?

BELLE  
I'll be fine, besides, it will  
give me time to think. Give my  
love to Philippe.

Belle's father nods and turns to the Beast.

FATHER  
Promise me sir, that no harm  
shall come to my daughter?

BEAST  
As long as there is breath in my  
body, I swear to that.

Father turns to his daughter.

FATHER  
I promise you Belle, I will do  
everything I can to pay off this  
debt. I will work night and day!

They hold on to each other tightly. Father gives Belle one  
last hug before walking out across the drawbridge.

He turns back to his daughter.

FATHER  
I will have you home by  
Christmas, you just see.

The drawbridge closes with a heavy forbidding.

68 INT. DARK TOWER. 68

With a crash of lightening, Azalea appears, wearing the Wizard's peacock cloak. Now an evil witch of great power that rivals her striking beauty, she has a heart as black as coal.

Her cat too now looks equally as sleek and sensual as its mistress.

In the magic crystal, Azalea sees Belle now at the Beast's castle. The image incenses the evil sorceress.

AZALEA

So my Prince, you have tricked  
this child into staying with you,  
hoping that her beauty will give  
a little light to your  
loneliness. How wrong you are.

She gives a cruel chuckle and the cat follows suit with an evil meow.

69 INT. CASTLE - DAY. 69

We follow Belle as she explores the castle alone. As she walks, looking lonely and sad, she occasionally stumbles, a little clumsy without her glasses. The Beast stands on the battlements and observes her.

70 INT. CASTLE - DAY. 70

We sense time passing as Belle wanders through the labyrinth of hallways.

71 INT. CASTLE. KITCHEN - DAY. 71

Belle opens one door and finds a huge kitchen.

72 INT. CASTLE. LIBRARY - DAY. 72

We see Belle wandering down shelves and shelves of dusty old books. She takes one down and opens it.

73 INT. CASTLE. KITCHEN - DAY. 73

Belle opens the draws and finds huge cooking utensils.

74 EXT. CASTLE. GARDEN - DAY. 74

Belle explores the overgrown, weed filled garden. She stares at the spot where her father took the rose.

75 INT. CASTLE - DAY. 75

Belle does her best to decorate the halls and her room with wild flowers in an attempt to make it more habitable.

76 INT. CASTLE. KITCHEN - DAY. 76

From the great oven Belle takes out a freshly baked cake. She sets it on a sideboard where we see she has made other cakes in an attempt to practice her cooking skills.

The Owl stands watching.

OWL  
Very nice, Miss.

77 INT. CASTLE. LIBRARY - DAY. 77

Belle is reading an old book all about Italy. She does not notice that she is being watched from a distance, by the Beast who keeps to the shadows. As she turns the page, she notices the sleeve of her dress is looking a little torn and shabby.

78 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 78

Belle lies asleep on a grand four poster bed.

The stillness is broken by a figure that appears at the bottom of the bed. We are aware it is the shape of the Beast, stood motionless, watching Belle sleep.

He notices the handle of a knife hidden under her pillow that Belle keeps for her safety.

79 INT. CASTLE - DAY. 79

Belle sits at a writing desk writing letters. We see the words '*Dear Father*, on one and the other is addressed to Philippe. Before folding them up and placing them inside the envelopes, she holds the parchment close to her eyes and squints.

The Owl stands dutifully waiting. Belle hands the two envelopes to the bird.

BELLE  
Would you deliver these please?

The bird takes the two letters in his beak and with a great flapping of wings, soars out of the window and into the bright blue sky.

Belle stands with a look of loss in her eyes and watches as the Owl disappears. The Beast stands, as always in the shadows observing Belle.

80 INT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY. 80

Marie the servant girl comes running into Belle's father's study.

MARIE  
Sir, sir, it is a letter from  
Miss Belle!

Belle's father rips open the envelope and reads. Through the window the Owl watches.

81 INT. WORSLEY HALL - MORNING. 81

Philippe and his parents, sit eating breakfast in the morning room. Philippe picks up the letter from Belle, opens it with his butter knife and reads.

PHILIPPE  
Oh it seems Belle has been called  
away to tend to a sick relative.  
She sends her love and apologies.

MAMA  
The child does have a naive sense  
of duty, I will give her that.

PHILIPPE  
Quite.

82 EXT. QUAYSIDE - DAY. 82

Father and the Captain are admiring the two new ships Father purchased with the rose, but it has come at a high price for the old man. Despite his success, there a deep sadness in his eyes.

CAPTAIN  
(Impressed)  
Ah, they are magnificent. But I  
thought the banks turned you  
down, sir.

FATHER  
 (Patting the old sea  
 captain on the back)  
 I'll take care of business and  
 you sail the ships.

As he turns away, Philippe and Anton come walking towards him along the jetty.

PHILIPPE  
 Good day, sir. I heard good  
 fortune smiled on you and I  
 wanted to see for myself.

FATHER  
 (Putting on a front to  
 hide his guilt and  
 sadness)  
 Business is certainly booming,  
 Philippe. At this rate I shall  
 have to buy a forth ship and a  
 fifth!

Philippe and Anton exchange a look behind the old man's back.

PHILIPPE  
 How is Belle's sick aunt?

FATHER  
 (A little flustered)  
 Oh, yes, very sad. She is  
 getting better.

PHILIPPE  
 (With a smile)  
 Give Belle my love.

The old man nods and watches as Philippe and Anton walk away. He looks back at the ship, he is clearly conflicted.

83 EXT. CASTLE. GARDEN - DAY.

83

Belle is picking wild flowers and placing them in her basket. She stops and stares at the spot where her father took the rose. A few more shoots have appeared, as a new rose is beginning to grow slowly but surely.

84 INT. CASTLE - DAY.

84

Belle enters the castle with the basket of wild flowers and catches a glimpse of the Beast as he exits the door leading to the highest tower in the castle.

She watches as he locks the door with a key that has a distinctive ribbon and drops it into his pocket. He walks off without noticing Belle.

Once he has gone, Belle goes to the door, tries the handle but finds it is locked.

85 INT. CASTLE - DAY.

85

Belle comes across another door. She taps gently. Turning the handle, it opens with a creek. She peeps her head round.

BELLE  
(Tentatively)  
Hello?

Belle's voice echoes. She allows the door to swing open before stepping inside.

86 INT. CASTLE. BALLROOM - DAY

86

Belle enters the magnificent but obviously forgotten ballroom.

Despite the thin layer of dust, the room is still quite spectacular. Footsteps echo off the dance floor as Belle walks through the huge cavernous room, eyes wide, looking this way and that.

BELLE  
Hello?

Her voice echoes and falls quiet.

Belle then notices the grand piano and what appears to be figures concealed beneath a sheet. Curious, she pulls back the cover to reveal the clockwork musicians, holding instruments and each with the large key in their backs, waiting to be wound up.

Standing forlornly, their clothes now look faded, their mechanical faces rather sad and forgotten, covered in dust and cobwebs.

Belle goes up to each figure, turns the keys and carefully lifts the lid.

As her hands move across the keys, the rich sound fills the room. We recognise the tune as the same one from her mother's jewellery box. It is as if Belle's mother's very presence is around to give her comfort.

Magically, the clockwork figures spring to life and play along.

They follow Belle perfectly so that the quiet castle is alive with the waltzing tune. The lonely walls have not heard such a sound in many years, as Belle plays beautifully and unselfconscious with great feeling

87 EXT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - DAY. 87

The Beast sits playing chess with the Owl. The bird picks up a piece with his claws, flies across the board and places it down, before fluttering back to his perch.

Suddenly in the distance the sound of enchanting music fills the castle.

88 INT. CASTLE. BALLROOM - DAY. 88

Smiling and enjoying her own company, the music breaks Belle's loneliness.

89 INT. CASTLE. CORRIDOR - DAY. CONTINUED. 89

The Beast stands in the shadows listening. The music seems to stir up deep memories for him. Although he is invisible in the gloom, his dark animal eyes shine out and we feel an intense pain, as if the beautiful music has reached deep down inside him. It is as if he is fighting with something at the very core of his soul.

90 INT. CASTLE. BALLROOM - DAY. 90

The Beast's voice cuts through the darkness as he appears at the door, as always, a huge black shadow and with the Owl fluttering around like an obedient butler.

Belle, who can only see a pair of eyes peering out at her, is still unnerved at his presence.

BEAST  
You play beautifully.

BELLE  
Thank you. Although I always  
play better when I'm alone.  
Whenever I have an audience I get  
nervous and seem to make a  
mistake.

BEAST  
It's very pretty tune.

BELLE  
My mother taught it to me before  
she died.

Belle smiles at him perhaps for the first time and seems more beautiful than ever.

BEAST

How old were you?

BELLE

I was ten when she first got sick.

BEAST

That's very young for a girl to lose her mother. That must have been hard on you and your father.

BELLE

That last year, she and I did everything together. She taught me so many things...it was like every moment she had, she wanted it filled with happiness. I don't think I really understood. She was just trying to...

(Her voice trails off)

She died not long after.

BEAST

I'm sorry.

Belle looks sad for a moment.

BELLE

I have an idea. How about I teach you how to play this tune?

BEAST

No, I'm rather clumsy at such things.

BELLE

Nonsense. It's not that hard, really. You'll pick it up in no time. Come. Sit here.

She pats the seat next to her but the Beast hesitates.

BELLE

Come on, don't be silly, I won't bite.

Almost trembling, the Beast slides his huge form next to her on the piano stool. It is the closest they have ever been and we feel the Beast's unease at the closeness of Belle's beauty.

BELLE  
Put your hands on the keys like  
this.

The Beast follows, his huge hands almost dwarfing hers. He registers the horrific moment, as it reminds him what a monster he is. Drawing back, he quickly pulls away and jumps out of his seat.

BELLE  
(Confused)  
What's wrong?

BEAST  
It is growing late. I will bid  
you goodnight.

The Beast turns and swishes off. What he doesn't notice is that a key drops from his pocket.

The Owl bows politely to Belle.

OWL  
Goodnight, miss.

He flutters off in search of his master.

It is then that Belle notices the key.

BELLE  
(Calling)  
Wait! You've dropped...

She goes to run after them but the Owl and the Beast have gone.

Belle stands thinking for a moment holding the key. Curiosity then gets the better of her.

91 INT. CASTLE. CORRIDOR - NIGHT. 91

Holding a lit candle, Belle slides the key into the lock. The door opens with a creek and she steps inside.

92 INT. CASTLE. STAIRCASE - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 92

Belle finds herself faced with a spiralling staircase and begins to climb the steep steps that lead to the top room of the tower.

93 INT. HIGHEST TOWER IN THE CASTLE - NIGHT. 93

Belle enters and we recognise the room as the one where Azalea sacrificed the deer.

The walls are now full of portraits. It is as if every picture in the castle has been moved there.

Belle examines them, scrutinizing the paintings one by one, squinting to make out the faces.

Clearly there is a family resemblance that goes back generations. At the end of the long picture gallery, the last family portrait shows the handsome Prince, standing alone. Belle notices on the floor in front of it, is the faded outline of the five pointed star and what looks like dried blood.

Belle looks again to the picture and stands transfixed, when the Beast's roar sounds. Startled she turns to find his huge shadow towering over her.

Terrified, Belle drops the candle she was holding, but its flame does not extinguish, instead it throws lurid shadows everywhere.

Pressing herself against the wall, all Belle can see are penetrating eyes glaring out from the black shape.

BEAST  
(Bellowing)  
What are you doing in here?

BELLE  
I'm...sorry...

Her breath comes with a terrified quiver and the look of stark fear in her face is reflected back in the Beast's intense gaze.

He somehow gets control of his panting rage.

BEAST  
This place is private!

His tense forms relaxes and almost ashamed, he turns and looks at the portrait of the Prince.

BELLE  
Who is this a picture of?

BEAST  
I...he...used to live in this castle.

BELLE  
(Her voice low and gentle)  
What happened to him?

BEAST  
He loved unwisely. This room is not for you!

The Beast turns and walks away. We hear the flutter of wings as the Owl appears.

OWL

Miss, there is something you should know.

94

INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

94

The Beast, his features hidden beneath the great cloak, is sat in a half light. A gold and silver chess set is lain out before him. He stares at the pieces, contemplating.

Belle enters and stands before him.

BELLE

The Owl told me what happened.

BEAST

He had no right to.

BELLE

I think he did, but I have only one more question. Why is it that I am here?

There is a brooding silence.

BEAST

I am lonely.

Belle's expression breaks. We see she feels sorry for this strange, hooded figure, who keeps to the shadows.

BELLE

(Smiles with warmth for the first time)

It's best we are honest, if we're to become friends.

She takes a seat opposite him.

BELLE

Shall we play?

BEAST

Do you know how?

BELLE

You can teach me?

BEAST

Very well.

The Beast begins to teach Belle how to play chess. The Owl, sat on its perch, looks on.

We pan over to the window and as we do, we sense time passing. Outside, night and day flit by and snowflakes begin to descend.

95 EXT. FOREST.

95

We pull out of one of the tall windows of the hall to see that the forest, in all of its splendour, is now covered in a beautiful snow. Christmas is almost upon us.

96 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - TWILIGHT.

96

A fire roars in the grate filling the room with warmth and a comforting orange glow.

Belle and the Beast are still playing chess, only now, the student is beating the master. Their relationship has thawed and we sense them growing closer as the days go by. However, it is clear that Belle has still not seen the Beast without his hood.

Belle contemplates the board and picks up a chess piece about to make a move.

BEAST

Are you sure you want to do that?

BELLE

(With a smile)

I'm not afraid of you.

BEAST

You should be.

Belle moves her piece, not to where the Beast was expecting, but into the checkmate position.

BELLE

Checkmate!

The Beast scrutinises the board.

OWL

I think Miss can become a grand master!

The Beast sits back into the semi-darkness of the shadows.

BELLE

Now I've beaten you, we'll have to think of a new game to play in time for Christmas.

BEAST  
Christmas?

BELLE  
You know when you're surrounded  
by friends and family and it's  
customary to give each other  
gifts and play silly games!  
Although Father promised that I  
will be home by then and he  
always keeps his word.

BEAST  
Have you heard word from your  
Father?

BELLE  
No, not yet, but I'm sure I will  
any day now. I know, why don't  
you and Mr Owl come and spend  
Christmas with us? You can meet  
Philippe.

BEAST  
Philippe?

BELLE  
My fiance. I'm sure you two will  
get along. Yes, that's a great  
idea!

BEAST  
It's growing late.

We suddenly sense a change in the Beast's mood at the  
mention of her leaving.

He looks out of the window to see twilight drawing in and  
rises.

BEAST  
I will bid you a good evening.

Belle nods as the Beast swishes out, leaving her alone.

97

INT. CASTLE. PORTRAIT GALLERY - TWILIGHT.

97

The Beast enters the portrait gallery alone and looks at  
the paintings and pictures. He takes in his own portrait  
and we feel the loss of his humanity as he stares at the  
image of his once handsome self.

Another picture shows a family in the huge ballroom.  
Mother, father and the prince as a child, are sat posing  
before a magnificent Christmas tree. A single, sad tear  
forms in the Beast's eye that is full of pain and shame.

It drops and we follow its progress, but before it hits the ground, the tear slowly forms into a single, beautiful snowflake.

CROSS FADE:

98 EXT. CASTLE - TWILIGHT.

98

The tear, now a snowflake, is joined by others and they drift down from a darkening sky, as the last of the daylight twinkles.

Belle is stood at the gates of the castle watching the road. The Owl appears and sits on a perch next to her. He has a letter from Belle's father in his beak. Belle looks up expectantly.

OWL

You have a letter from your  
father, miss.

Belle takes her Father's letter, rips it open and reads it eagerly.

OWL

Is everything as it should be?

BELLE

(Squinting as she reads  
the letter)

Yes.

We see a look of disappointment in Belle's face, but she keeps her emotions in check.

BELLE

(Reading)

Maybe after Christmas....

(Her voice trails off)

Belle has a homesick look in her eyes. She glances once at the road, almost expecting to see her Father. She folds the letter up and goes back inside the castle.

The Beast appears from the shadows.

BEAST

She's homesick.

OWL

As always, sir you have a firm  
grasp of the obvious.

99 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

99

Belle sits at the table looking forlorn and homesick. Before her is an uneaten meal. As always the Beast keeps to the shadows watching. The Owl on his perch, looks concerned.

OWL

Miss, you've hardly touched your food.

Belle pushes her plate away.

BELLE

I'm just not hungry, thank you.

The Owl tries to make light of a tense situation.

OWL

You're hardly eating enough to keep a bird alive.

Aware of the awkwardness the bird babbles on.

OWL

Although I've never quite understood that saying, because most birds I know could eat a horse. In fact I knew this sparrow once, who did just that. Ate a whole horse. Not all at once - he had to keep going back but...

His head swivels this way and that, from Belle to the Beast.

OWL

I'll just stop talking, shall I?

There is a sad silence.

BELLE

(She stands)

Can I be excused please?

BEAST

Yes of course.

Belle walks out. The Owl and the Beast watch as Belle leaves.

BEAST

Don't think I don't know what you're trying to do. It won't work.

OWL

But sir, she could be the one.  
The one to lift the curse.

BEAST

And once she sees what is beneath  
this hood...what then?

OWL

If you told her what happened I'm  
sure she would understand.

BEAST

I am still a Beast. Pity and  
understanding are not the same as  
pure love.

OWL

Sir, if you didn't think there  
was a chance, why did you have  
this girl stay?

BEAST

Because like you, I sometimes  
look for hope when there isn't  
any.

100 INT. DARK TOWER.

100

Azalea, her cat by her side, watches events through her  
huge crystal globe and gloats at the awkwardness.

AZALEA

Well, well, well. It seems your  
little house guest is not at all  
happy with the arrangements.  
Fools! Her being there will only  
make your loneliness deeper.

A mouse scuttles across the floor and the cat immediately  
leaps down to chase it. It hunts the poor rodent, who  
reaches its mouse hole just in time. The cat's paws slide  
across the floor, but it can't stop and cracks its head  
just as the mouse disappears into the hole. The animal  
hisses with pain and annoyance.

101 INT. CASTLE - NIGHT.

101

Rather solemnly, Belle walks back to her room. She notices  
the door to the bedroom is ajar. She pushes it open.

102

INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

102

Belle steps inside. The most magnificent dresses and gowns are everywhere. It is a breath taking sight. Belle stands, both confused and elated. A mixture of emotions. The Owl flutters in and circles the room.

OWL

What do you think, miss?

BELLE

I don't understand.

OWL

You have been wearing the same dress since you got here.

BELLE

They are magnificent but how?  
Where did they come from?

The Owl lands on the edge of the bed.

OWL

Oh I have my little ways?

BELLE

You have a dressmaker hidden away somewhere?

OWL

No miss. These gowns were made for a former lady of the house, who never got round to wearing them.

BELLE

I don't know what to say.

OWL

Why don't you try on one of the dresses.

BELLE

(Taken aback and little  
overwhelmed)

Yes...

She picks one up and goes behind a screen. She changes quickly and emerges wearing the magnificent gown. She looks truly beautiful in it.

Looking in the mirror, she can see that the colour and fit are perfect, as if made for her. She takes a breath, overwhelmed.

BELLE  
It's beautiful. Thank you.

As she continues to admire herself in the mirror she hums the tune her mother taught her.

103 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

103

Somewhere in the distance we can hear Belle singing the sweet tune.

The beast is sat alone in the great hall when the Owl appears.

OWL  
You hear that? She's singing.

OWL  
I think it's the first time I've seen her smile.

The Beast gives a non-committal grunt. Just then Belle appears wearing one of the dresses. She look ravishing, but the Beast recognises the gown as one of Azalea's.

BELLE  
What do you think?  
(She twirls around)  
Do you think it suits me? I have to admit, my old dress was to getting a little shabby. I kept washing it but it was beginning to fall apart.

BEAST  
(His anger rising)  
Take it off!

OWL  
Sir...

BEAST  
Is this your doing?

OWL  
Sir, I just thought...

BEAST  
(To Belle, angry)  
Take it off. Take it off, now!

Belle storms out, her face a picture of hurt and rage.

OWL  
I thought that...I was just trying...

The Beast's growl silences the Owl.

104 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 104

Belle stamps into her bedroom and angrily begins to unbutton the dress. Muttering to herself, she curses the Beast for his rudeness.

105 INT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED. 105

Azalea and the cat watch events unfold in the crystal globe. She cackles and laughs at Belle's hurt feelings.

AZALEA  
(Claps her hands)  
Priceless, absolutely priceless!

She peers into the crystal globe at Belle and the Beast. She strokes the glass tenderly, as if stroking the Prince.

AZALEA  
Can't you bear to see that brat  
in my clothes? I knew you still  
had feeling for me, my Prince. I  
knew you'd come round.

The cat begins to paw at the spell book, flipping it open until it lands on a particular page.

The cat meows fiendishly and Azalea turns.

AZALEA  
You are a cheeky cat. Do you  
think we should?

The cat meows.

AZALEA  
Very well. The brat has become  
very tiresome.

We see on the page a spell and the drawing of a huge snake. Azalea begins to mutter an incantation.

106 EXT. CASTLE WALL - NIGHT. 106

A tiny grass snake slithers through the foliage along the castle wall. High up on one of the turrets, Belle's window is ajar.

CUT TO:

107 INT. TOWER. CONTINUED. 107

In the crystal globe, the tiny snake is seen slithering through the grass. Azalea casts a spell.

CUT BACK TO:

108 INT. CASTLE WALL - NIGHT. 108

A fork of red lightening flashes and strikes out at the snake. It begins to grow larger and larger until it is transformed into a huge serpent. Under Azalea's control, the now gigantic snake slithers up the high castle wall towards Belle's window.

CUT TO:

109 INT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED. 109

Guiding it with her powers, Azalea watches as the giant snake slithers up the castle wall.

CUT BACK TO:

110 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 110

Still raging, Belle pulls off the gown. After slipping it off, she pulls her old dress over head. As she does, she does not notice that the huge snake is reflected in the mirror as it slithers through the bedroom window.

BELLE

(Angrily)

I will wear this dress until it's  
just a rag!

As Belle turns back to the full length mirror, the snake unseen, twists and turns behind her. It rises up, huge jaws gaping, massive fangs razor sharp.

CUT TO:

111 INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 111

The Beast sits alone in the great hall. The Owl flits and lands on its perch.

OWL

Please sir, I am sorry. I was  
only trying to help.

CUT BACK TO:

112 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 112

Belle sees the snake as it appears in the glass and her eyes widen with fright. Suddenly it darts forward with lightening speed. Belle flings herself to one side just the snake strikes. Missing her, it crashes against the mirror, which demolishes and shards of glass fly in all directions.

Trying to scramble to safety, Belle screams and runs to the door.

CUT TO:

113 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 113

The sound of Belle's cry cuts through the castle. The Beast and the Owl both react to the sound of her scream.

CUT BACK TO:

114 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 114

The snake's large tail lassoes around Belle's ankle, causing her fall hard. It proceeds to pull her away from the door and drag her across the floor.

Belle tries to call out and fight to free herself but in a matter of seconds the immense serpent begins to curl itself around her, crushing her with great strength.

We see the knife Belle keeps under her pillow. Belle stretches out towards it, but it is not quite within reach. As the snake pulls her away from the bed, she desperately feels around for a weapon until her fingers snag on a huge shard of broken mirror.

As the snake's head rises up, Belle and the creature are face to face. With a terrifying hiss, it opens its jaws and two huge fangs hover over her, about to take a bite.

Belle snatches at the shard of glass and jams it between the reptile's jaws, wedging it wide open. As it shakes its head violently trying to rid itself of the implement between its teeth, its huge body starts to curl tighter around Belle, causing her to gasp in pain. The creature eventually bites down hard and the mirror shatters.

At that moment, the bedroom door bursts open and the Beast's cloaked figure leaps forth. The snake, now turning his attention to the Beast, flies forward and coils around him. The Beast clamps his powerful hands around the serpent's jaws and as they grapple a great tug of war takes place.

The Beast's muscles bulge, but he manages to tear the serpent's jaws apart. He flings the lifeless creature out of the window as the Owl flutters in.

OWL

Miss, miss are you alright?

BELLE

Yes...what was that?

BEAST

There are all manner of creatures  
in the forest.

OWL

I think from now on, you should  
sleep with your window closed.

BELLE

(To the Beast, still in  
shock)

You saved my life!

She reaches out to the Beast's gloved hand and for a moment they connect. There seems to be a spark between them, but it is over in a second as the Beast draws back at her touch.

Belle looks confused as he keeps his distance.

BEAST

You're safe now.

(Pauses for a moment)

I'm sorry about before. It's  
just that dress. You deserve  
better.

She smiles into the dark hood. Although we cannot see his face, we feel the Beast's emotions stirring somewhere inside.

115 INT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED.

115

Azalea screams with rage and digs her nails into the crystal globe as she watches the tender moment between Belle and the Beast.

AZALEA

(Screams)

No! No! No! It's not how it's  
supposed to be! You love me.  
Me! Me! Me!

An eerie wind suddenly fills the tower. We hear for a moment, what sounds like the Wizard's voice almost in an inaudible whisper. *"If you're not pure of heart then magic will only bring tragedy".*

AZALEA

Who's there? Show yourself you  
old wizard. You don't frighten  
me! I have more power than you  
ever did. You hear me?

As the cat scuttles off to a hiding place, a huge gust of  
wind sweeps through the tower. It passes through Azalea,  
causing the door to fly open and slam shut. Azalea screams

116 INT. CASTLE. BALLROOM - DAY.

116

We have a close up of Belle wearing the silk blindfold over  
her eyes. She stands, her face flushed with the  
excitement.

BELLE

(With a smile)

How long do I have to keep this  
on for?

OWL

Just a few more minutes, miss.

Eventually the Beast comes round and stands behind her.

BEAST

(His voice a soft  
rumbling purr)

Are you ready?

BELLE

(Excited)

Yes!

BEAST

OK, you can look now.

Belle does as she is told and is presented with the most  
wondrous sight.

A massive Christmas tree, freshly cut from the forest,  
stands in the huge ballroom. Beside it are boxes of toys  
and bauble decorations.

BEAST

It's the biggest tree in the  
forest.

OWL

It took all of his strength to  
cut it down.

BEAST

Perhaps not all.

OWL

But enough.

Belle turns to the Beast.

BELLE

You did this for me? Thank you.  
And thank you, Mr Owl.

OWL

But it needs decorating.

Belle smiles. We follow as Belle and the Owl begin to decorate the tree together. At first the Beast stands looking on silently.

Belle turns and smiles.

BELLE

Are you going to stand there like  
a stale Christmas pudding, or are  
you going to help?

BEAST

I'm not very good at things like  
that...

OWL

I can testify to that, Miss.  
He's all fingers and thumbs.

BELLE

Nonsense.

Belle holds out a bauble for the Beast.

BELLE

Here, go on.

After hesitating for a moment, he takes the bauble awkwardly in his thick gloves and tentatively hangs it from one of the branches.

BELLE

There, that didn't hurt did it?

All three decorate the tree until eventually the Owl flies up with the crowning star and places it on top.

They stand back to admire their handiwork.

The branches are now laden with brightly coloured baubles and toys, and almost a hundred candles. The entire room now seems to shine and shimmer.

Belle gasps. It is exactly what she asked for, even more so.

BELLE  
It is beautiful!

BEAST  
One last thing. It is Christmas  
after all.  
(He holds out a gift  
wrapped box)  
For you.

Belle opens the box and in it is the enchanted locket.  
Reflected back is the image of her father.

BELLE  
(Full of wonderment and  
excitement)  
It's my father. How?

BEAST  
The locket reflects whoever is in  
your heart.

Belle looks back at the locket again, clearly moved.

CROSS FADE:

117 INT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY.

117

Belle's father and Marie are decorating the tree.

FATHER  
(His voice full of  
sadness)  
Belle liked to decorate the tree.  
We always did it together.

His eyes glisten.

MARIE  
Don't upset yourself, sir.  
That's not what Miss Belle would  
want.  
(Gives a smile)  
Not at Christmas.

FATHER  
(Finds a smile)  
She'll be home soon. I'll see to  
it, no matter what.

He looks to the picture of his wife. The resemblance is  
even more poignant than ever before. He and Marie continue  
to hang the decorations.

118 INT. CASTLE. KITCHEN - DAY. 118

Belle is dashing about the kitchen preparing a sumptuous Christmas turkey. She has to squint to read the recipe book. As pots and pans bubble on the stove, she and the Owl rush about. There is a sense of good humoured activity and we feel their excitement.

Belle holds out a spoon for the Owl to taste. Smacking his beak like a master chef, he gives a nod. Belle smiles at his approval.

119 INT. CASTLE. DINING ROOM - DAY. 119

The Beast sits at a long table that has been lain out with the finest china.

120 INT. CASTLE. KITCHEN - DAY. 120

Belle and the Owl are still frantically dashing about the kitchen as they prepare the Christmas lunch. Suddenly they see something burning on the stove. Both rush in and save it just in time.

121 INT. CASTLE. DINING ROOM - DAY. 121

Belle and the Owl enter carrying the turkey on a huge tray and place it proudly in the centre of the dinning table.

BEAST  
Smells delicious.

BELLE  
Would you like to carve, sir?

BEAST  
Perhaps you should.

BELLE  
Breast or a wing?

OWL  
Don't say wing, miss. It upsets me.

The Beast and Belle both laugh.

BEAST  
(To Belle)  
Why don't you chose.

Smiling, Belle goes to cut the bird, but because of her poor eyesight, she misjudges and the meat goes flying, knocking over a wine glass.

BELLE  
Oh, I am sorry.

She looks at the Beast. There is a pause and then for the first time, the Beast breaks into a roaring laugh. Belle joins in and soon all three are helpless with giggles.

BELLE  
Merry Christmas.

BEAST  
Merry Christmas.

122 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

122

The Beast walks Belle to her bedroom door. They stand on the threshold together.

BEAST  
Thank you for a wonderful  
Christmas.

BELLE  
I was going to say the same thing  
myself.

She smiles into his face and there is a moment between them. The Beast reaches into his coat and pulls out Belle's glasses. They have now been repaired and look almost as good as new.

BEAST  
I found these in the forest. I  
think they're yours.

BELLE  
I thought I'd lost them. Thank  
you.

Belle puts on the glasses and looks up at the Beast. For the first time his silhouette comes into clear focus. She then peers into the shadow of the hood trying to make out his features, but all she can see is blackness.

The Beast stiffens, uncomfortable that she can see him.

BELLE  
Why do you keep your face hidden  
under that hood? Do you think  
I'd be afraid of you? Because I  
won't be, I promise

She puts out her hand but he instinctively draws back.

BEAST  
Goodnight.

He walks off and Belle watches his figure walk away before closing her bedroom door.

123 EXT. QUAYSIDE - NIGHT.

123

Belle's father is stood on the quayside watching the sailors load his ships. There is almost three times as much cargo than his previous trips. The Captain calls out.

FATHER  
Set sail now, Captain.

CAPTAIN  
(Hesitant)  
It's Christmas, sir.

FATHER  
I'll pay you and your men double!

CAPTAIN  
We're dangerously overloaded as it is.

Belle's father is clearly anxious to make his money.

FATHER  
I'll buy a goose for every sailor.

Despite the generosity, we see reluctance on the Captain's face.

FATHER  
If we deliver this cargo, both of us will be rich men, Captain.  
(The emotion cracks in his voice)  
Please? I have to get my daughter back.

The Captain hesitates before he gives a nod, turns and then calls out to his men.

CAPTAIN  
Cast off!

Belle's father stands on the icy dock, willing the safe return of his three ships.

A group of merchants pass by on their way to a near by tavern. One of them steps up to Father and clamps a friendly hand on his shoulder.

MERCHANT

You're not still working, are you? Come on, join us for a drink. It's Christmas after all.

The Merchant gives Father a beaming smile. Father thinks for a moment and glances out to sea where the three ships sail off towards the horizon. He contemplates, then seems to make a decision.

FATHER

Yes, yes, why not.

MERCHANT

That's the spirit.

FATHER

Yes, Merry Christmas.

With the mood lightened, Father joins the merchants as they head towards the tavern full of good humoured Christmas cheer.

124 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

124

Belle lies asleep on a grand four poster bed, the enchanted locket around her neck.

The stillness is broken by a figure that appears at the bottom of the bed. We are aware it is the shape of the Beast, stood motionless, watching Belle sleep.

He notices the handle of a knife hidden under her pillow that Belle keeps for her safety.

125 INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT.

125

We see the image of Belle asleep and the Beast stood over her in the huge crystal globe. Azalea's cat begins to hiss and stalk around the globe at the very sight of Belle.

Azalea stands and gloats as the Beast hovers over the sleeping young girl, turns and then disappears into the shadows, leaving Belle to her slumber.

126 INT. HIGHEST TOWER IN THE CASTLE. - NIGHT.

126

The Beast is stood with a heavy candelabra before the portrait of the Prince. His once human features stare back at him.

An animalistic rage takes over as the Beast flings the candelabra at the portrait. Scorched, the painting clatters onto the marble floor.

127 INT/EXT. CASTLE - NIGHT. 127

The lonely figure of the Beast walks through the castle and out into the night.

128 INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT. 128

The Beast's distress is clearly seen in Azalea's magic globe.

AZALEA

Now you know how I feel.. now you  
will suffer as I do. As for your  
little Sleeping Beauty...

The image changes to that of the sleeping Belle. Azalea's cat hisses and claws at the glass as if trying to get at her.

As Azalea mutters magic incantations across the surface of the huge magical sphere, we suddenly see an image appear of a tiny fawn stood over the dead body of its mother.

Created by Azalea's black magic, the small creature is placed under Belle's window. It looks lost and helpless as it whimpers over its mother, who has been shot by a hunter's bullet.

Azalea watches, her eyes glistening with evil intent as the fawn's mewing cries echo up until it wakes Belle.

129 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. 129

Belle wakes to the sound of the little fawn calling out desperately, outside her window.

Peering out of the frosted glass, she sees the animal in the pelting snow, just below her window. Looking lost and alone, it shivers in the deep snow.

Belle opens the window, leans out and is distressed to see the fawn stood over its mother's body.

At Belle's presence the little animal looks up crying for her help. The creature cries even louder and trembles.

Belle, not able to bear it any longer, quickly dresses and takes with her the knife from under her pillow for protection and hides it in her gown.

130 INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT. 130

Azalea casts a spell and the drawbridge of the Beast's castle magically opens.

131 EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASTLE - NIGHT. 131

Belle finds the drawbridge down and the portcullis open. Still hearing the fawn's cries, she hesitates for a moment and despite the Beast's warning, sets out through the snow storm to save the little creature.

132 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 132

Following the sound of the young deer, Belle finds herself under her bedroom window. To her surprise, mother and fawn have disappeared completely. In the deep snowdrift, she can see tiny animal footprints leading off towards the dense forest.

As she searches in the dark night, somewhere deep in the woodland, she can hear its cries.

133 INT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT. 133

Belle is seen from Azalea's crystal globe.

AZALEA  
(With a mutter)  
Go on, my dear. Follow your  
heart. This is all too  
predictable.

Again the cat begins to stalk around the glass excited at the prospect of some fate befalling Belle.

In the globe we see Belle, struggling through the snow storm following the sound, much to Azalea's wicked delight.

134 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. 134

As Azalea's magic is working its spell, Belle moves through the trees, further away from the castle and into the dense woodland. The sound of the fawn, drawing her deeper into the forest.

Just as the animal is in sight and Belle gets closer, the creature then appears to be even further off.

As the snow whips around her and the wind whistles through the trees, Belle hears another noise but this time it sounds like a deep, sour grunt.

Belle emerges through the forest to find a clearing and the most horrific sight. There on all fours, feeding on the remains of a deer, is the Beast.

With his hood pulled back, Belle can see his features for the first time. His claw-like hands and terrifying face are devouring the carcass with the ferocity of a lion.

The white snow is dripped in scarlet from the fresh kill and as steam rises from the Beast's snorts, he tears and worries at a chunk of meat.

With the snarling savagery of a vicious predator, his fangs, jaws and black sable fur are dappled in blood. It is an ugly sight.

Belle gasps. The Beast's animal eyes suddenly look up from its prey and the two find themselves in each others gaze.

Belle's mouth goes dry but she does not scream, for what she sees in the creature's face is pure shame.

135 INT. TOWER - NIGHT.

135

Seen through Azalea's globe the Beast gives a roar of dismay.

Azalea twirls and laughs with pure villainy, savouring the Beast's agony, while the cat meows with delight.

136 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

136

The Beast steps forward, his arms outstretched towards Belle. He tries to sound comforting but his features are terrifying.

BEAST

Please, don't be frightened!

Belle, startled, confused and horrified, pulls the knife from her gown and jabs it into the Beast's arm. He gives a roar of pain as the blade digs deep.

Belle turns and flees, leaving the knife stuck in the Beast's flesh. Painfully he draws it out.

Belle stumbles through the snow and runs blindly as fast as she can, away from the horrific sight.

Breathless, she comes to the edge of a great ravine. Looking down, she can see a fast flowing river with a great ice flow passing along.

Hearing a noise, she turns. The Beast, his face covered again, emerges through the trees.

BEAST

Belle!

The whipping snow storm around them, picks up vigour.

137 INT. TOWER - NIGHT. 137

Azalea sniggers at the Beast's pain. The cat snakes through her legs and purrs with pleasure.

AZALEA

You have grown so boring.  
Goodbye pretty one.

Azalea fires a zing of powerful magic that envelopes the earth.

138 EXT. CLIFF TOP - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 138

The witches spell flashes from the sky. Like scarlet lightening, it strikes the earth at Belle's feet, causing the ground to suddenly give way. With a scream, she tumbles backwards. The Beast tries to grab her but Belle is already dropping like a stone, plummeting into the icy river, where she disappears into the black flowing water.

139 INT. TOWER - NIGHT. 139

The witch, using her magic, begins to stir up the current, affecting water everywhere.

140 EXT. SEA - NIGHT. 140

The ocean begins to boil and bubble. Waves start to crash. The sea become possessed until huge mountainous tidal waves and a great storm blows up as if from nowhere.

141 INT. TAVERN - NIGHT. 141

The tavern is full of townsfolk celebrating with a Christmas drink. Amongst them is Belle's father talking to the merchants. As they raise their mugs in a toast to Christmas and their prosperity, the beer inside begins to froth and foam until the glass in their hands breaks, showering them all with ale.

142 INT. TOWER - NIGHT. 142

Even the milk in the cat's bowl is affected. As the cat tries to lap it up, the milk explodes with a magic current, drenching the animal.

Beside herself with joy, Azalea fires another magic incantation.

143 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 143

Suddenly the river ices over, locking Belle beneath the black water. She tries to fight and hammer at the roof of the ice but she cannot escape. Instead, she is being dragged along by the current - her hair flowing behind her.

144 EXT. CLIFF TOP - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 144

From high on the cliff top, the Beast can see Belle's silhouette being pulled along under the ice. Flinging off his cloak, he leaps from the ravine and executes a perfect dive. Hitting the hard ice like a cannonball, it smashes at his power.

145 EXT. RIVER - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 145

As the Beast swims, his powerful arms fight against the current of black water. Looking this way and that, he eventually discovers, Belle's floating body. Her face is white, eyes are closed and her dress billows gracefully.

146 EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT. CONTINUED. 146

The Owl comes swooping down from the castle, desperately calling out.

OWL  
Sir? Miss?

With eyes of despair, he sweeps above the ice pack.

There is a great crack in the ice and the Beast, using all his strength, smashes through and emerges from the frozen water. Holding Belle in his arms, he rises out of the icy river and onto the bank.

Clutching her tightly, her eyes are closed, skin white and lips blue.

BEAST  
Belle, answer me...please...!

The Beast rubs at her limbs trying to revive her.

BEAST  
Belle, please wake up!

Belle gives a choking cough, spits out water and her eyes flicker open for a moment and then close.

BEAST  
 (To the Owl)  
 We need to get her inside, she is  
 almost frozen!

The Owl flits above them.

OWL  
 This way sir, quickly!

The Beast lifts Belle in his great arms and holding her against his fur for warmth, follows the Owl back to the castle.

147 INT. CASTLE. GREAT HALL - NIGHT.

147

A log is thrown onto the great fire. Belle is lain out next to the hearth and the Beast covers her with a bear skin.

Gently the Beast holds a goblet of warm wine to her lips. Drinking, she gives a cough. The wine seems to have revived her and with her eyes open fully, she is confronted by the Beast's face without his hood. Alarmed, Belle kicks back and scrambles away. She snatches at a chair and holds it out as if keeping a lion at bay.

BELLE  
 (Screaming in fright and  
 rage)  
 Stay away from me!

The Beast retreats back into the shadows as the Owl comes fluttering in.

OWL  
 Miss, miss, what are you doing?  
 It's alright, you are safe now!

Belle looks first at the Owl and then at the Beast. A look of recognition passes over her when she realises who this creature is. Despite everything we see repulsion on her face as Belle backs away.

BELLE  
 No...no...!

She turns and flees from the room leaving the Beast wretched and bereft.

148 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

148

Disturbed and shaken up, Belle enters the bedroom, locks the door and backs away, confused at what is going on.

Time passes and Belle, still dressed, has fallen asleep on top of the covers.

She is awakened by the pitiful sound of an animal in pain. She unlocks the door and listens as the wail fills the castle.

149 INT. HIGHEST TOWER IN THE CASTLE.

149

The Beast is hunched before the portrait of himself as the Prince, sounding like an animal caught in a trap. Tears fall down his animal features and his whole body heaves with despair.

The Beast's desperation is heartbreaking. He takes out the knife Belle stabbed him with and presses the blade to his chest, preparing to plunge it into his heart.

Belle enters, having followed the sound of crying. She sees what he is about to do and runs forward to stop him.

BELLE

No! No!

She grabs his hand and pulls at the knife. They tussle. He shoves her off like a rag doll, but she clings on.

BELLE

(Begging)

Don't do this, I beg of you!

Belle steps up, puts out her hand but the Beast shrinks away.

BEAST

Look at me! I am cursed to live like an animal, a beast, who has to hunt on all fours! I cannot live like this anymore!

BELLE

I'm sorry. There has to be another way. I promise you I will look for a cure for this curse and we will do it together.

Belle turns his face to hers - to reveal his terrifying appearance. Black eyes look into hers, but to his startled surprise, he does not see fear or horror anymore, but kindness as she smiles. Gently she disengages the knife from his grasp.

150 EXT. ROAD TOWARDS TOWN - NIGHT. 150

A young BOY sprints as fast as he can towards the lights of the town.

151 INT. TAVERN - NIGHT. 151

The young boy bursts in.

Stood at the door is a huge ships bell with a thick rope tied to the clapper. No one takes much notice of the small boy, for the room is full of clamour smoke and noise

Grabbing the rope, the boy begins to ring the bell and its deafening clang soon begins to resonate around the tavern.

Everyone falls silent. The sound of the bell means only one thing. A ship has gone down.

We focus on Belle's father's face. Already he has a look of dread in his eyes.

152 EXT. SHORELINE - NIGHT. 152

Debris is washed up onto the beach and we see the broken barrels that bear Belle's father's seal.

A line of torches emerge from the darkness, as the townsfolk make their way to the shoreline. Amongst them is Belle's father, his face anxious and lined with concern.

As the crowd descend onto the sand, a few half drowned and frozen sailors, lead by the Captain, struggle out of the surf.

The recriminating eyes of the Captain find Belle's father's devastating gaze as the men are helped ashore.

The Captain just shakes his head. Belle's father has lost everything.

153 INT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY. 153

Belle's father is sat at his desk, looking like a broken man. An uneaten meal is sat on a tray next to him.

MARIE  
(Fussing around)  
Please, sir, you must keep your  
strength up.

FATHER  
 (Shakes his head)  
 I've lost everything. It's all  
 gone.

There is a knock at the door.

MARIE  
 There. I'm sure it's good news.

She hustles out.

FATHER  
 (Calling after her)  
 I'm not receiving visitors!

It is too late, Marie has already answered the door.  
 Belle's father listens and can hear voices. It is  
 Philippe.

He quickly tries to straighten the office, tidy up the  
 papers and make himself look presentable.

Philippe enters full of concern.

PHILIPPE  
 Good day, sir. I came as soon as  
 I heard the dreadful news.

He produces a bottle of Cognac and pours them both a drink.  
 He hands one to Belle's father.

FATHER  
 It is too early for me.

PHILIPPE  
 It's for the shock.

They both drink.

PHILIPPE  
 I hear most of the men survived.

FATHER  
 I am so thankful for that.

PHILIPPE  
 Now, I want to invite you the New  
 Year Eve ball.

Philippe gives a most charming smile and places a tender  
 arm over the old man.

FATHER  
 That's very kind of you, Philippe  
 but I don't...

PHILIPPE  
 (Full of forceful charm)  
 Now please, sitting here  
 wallowing is not going to help.  
 I will not take no for an answer.

All Belle's father can do is nod in agreement. Philippe gives a beaming smile and fills up their glasses again.

154 EXT. WORSLEY HALL - NIGHT.

154

A procession of fine carriages sweep up the torch lit driveway. Men and women in their finest alight to attend a masked New Year's Eve Ball. Amongst the guests, is Belle's father, broken and devastated by what has happened. He now seems lost and out of place amongst the spectacular gowns.

Philippe and Anton greet him with affection.

PHILIPPE  
 Good to see you, sir.

FATHER  
 It was very kind of you to send a carriage for me.

PHILIPPE  
 I couldn't have my future father-in-law alone on New Years Eve.  
 That wouldn't be done.

Philippe guides the man inside.

155 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BALLROOM - NIGHT.

155

A magnificent New Years Eve ball is taking place in the ballroom. Music and champagne flow amongst the splendour of the evening.

A full orchestra plays, as young men and women, decked out in their finest, dance and swirl. It is a breath taking sight.

A fleet of waiters constantly top up glasses with wine and champagne.

Belle's father watches from the sidelines, broken and devastated by what has happened.

Anton fills up the old man's glass and Philippe plays the charming host.

PHILIPPE  
 It is sad that Belle will miss this. How is her aunt?

FATHER  
Not well I'm afraid.

PHILIPPE  
I'm so sorry to hear that.

Philippe puts an arm around him.

ANTON  
To a prosperous new year.

As the old man drinks, behind his back, we see a look pass between Philippe and Anton, as they fill up his glass.

A beautiful waltzing overture builds and builds.

156 INT. WORSLEY HALL. LIBRARY - NIGHT.

156

The doors to the library crash open. Philippe and Anton almost half carry Belle's father into the deserted library. In the distance we can still hear the music playing.

The two young men have got the old man so drunk he can barley stand

FATHER  
Philippe, I've lost everything.  
If I cant pay my debts they're  
going to throw me into debtors  
prison. What am I to do?

Philippe and Anton slump him into a seat.

PHILIPPE  
(Pulls out a document)  
All you need to do is sign here.

Philippe holds out a pen with a benevolent smile. Drunk and confused, Belle's father takes it but his eyes begin to focus. Even in his inebriated state, he is not that drunk or foolish to put his name to the document.

FATHER  
I can't sign this! If I do, I  
give away all my shipping rights.

With a snap of his fingers, two burly men appear in the doorway. PROVOST MARSHALS. One carries a club, the other a pair of manacles. Belle's father looks frightened.

PHILIPPE  
These men are provost marshals  
and they've come here to take you  
to debtor's prison, unless I pay  
off your creditors.  
(MORE)

PHILIPPE(cont'd)

If you don't sign that document,  
you will spend every New Year  
until you draw your last breath  
eating gruel in that dire place.

(Barking)

Now sign!

Philippe holds the parchment.

Through his pained eyes, Belle's father looks up with a  
defiant glare.

FATHER

They are not mine to give over  
sir. They are Belle's. The  
rights are in her name alone.

Philippe's expression falls. The rage in his eyes is like  
a burning furnace.

PHILIPPE

Where is she?

FATHER

(Full of fury)

Do you think I would tell you!  
Knowing your true intentions?  
You are a snake, sir, nothing but  
a common leach!

PHILIPPE

(Hissing into Belle's  
father's face)

And you are a foolish old man.

(To the marshals)

Take him away!

Belle's father is hauled to his feet, manacled and dragged  
away.

157 EXT. WORSLEY HALL - NIGHT.

157

Belle's father is manhandled through the servants entrance  
and away from the prying eyes of the guests. He is hauled  
into the back of the marshals wagon and a door is slammed  
in his face. His sad, drunken expression peers through the  
bars, as the wagon tears off down the drive.

Anton and Philippe stand on the steps watching, a glass of  
champagne in their hands.

PHILIPPE

A few days in prison will loosen  
his tongue.

ANTON

It is almost midnight.

PHILIPPE

Then let us go and enjoy the rest  
of the evening.

They both take a sip of champagne, turn and walk back  
inside to the ball.

158 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BALLROOM - NIGHT. 158

As the clock chimes, everyone, with glasses of champagne in  
their hands, move towards to the windows to watch a  
spectacular fireworks display that ignites the sky.

159 EXT. GYPSY CAMP - NIGHT. 159

As a band of gypsies play music and dance by a fireside,  
we hear the gallop of horses hooves.

Philippe, Anton and his cronies come riding up. They are  
all drunk and looking for sport.

Philippe's men begin to dance with the beautiful gypsy  
girls and throw money at the musicians.

PHILIPPE

Play music!

The girls begin to dance for the drunken men.

Stood in one ornate caravan, Philippe notices Azalea,  
dressed as a beautiful gypsy woman. With her cat in her  
arms, she wears a veil across her face and only her dark  
eyes peer out.

AZALEA

And which one of you handsome men  
would like their fortune told?

Philippe's men give mocking jeers.

PHILIPPE

That's all gypsy nonsense.

AZALEA

Then you have nothing to fear.

She invitingly pulls back the curtain of her caravan.

AZALEA

Why not step inside and see for  
yourself. It will only cost you  
a single gold coin.

Anton and Philippe exchange a look and a drunken laugh.

PHILIPPE

Why not?

Philippe steps up close, clearly intrigued by this gypsy woman.

160 INT. GYPSY'S CARAVAN - NIGHT.

160

Azalea, still with the gypsy veil across her face, now has her cat in her lap, that purrs seductively.

She produces a pack of tarot cards and turns one over before Philippe.

AZALEA

You are a rich man.

Philippe gives a derisory snort.

AZALEA

And have just made plans to become even richer.

She turns over another card.

AZALEA

I see ships, many ships. More money and more wealth. I see a old man in prison.

Philippe leans forward, intrigued.

PHILIPPE

What else do you see?

AZALEA

I see a beautiful girl. Belle is her name. I see a marriage. A marriage that leads to great prosperity.

Philippe is now enthralled.

AZALEA

But without this union there will be no money. With it, there are more riches than you dreamed of. But something stands in your way. For you are a deceived man.

PHILIPPE

Deceived? How am I deceived? What do you see in the cards?

AZALEA

Your fiance is with another.

PHILIPPE

Who?

She turns over another card.

AZALEA

She is with a beast. This creature has bewitched her and stands between you and everything you wish for.

PHILIPPE

Gypsy lies!

The veil slides away to reveal Azalea. Her eyes play with his.

AZALEA

You do not believe me? Then go into the forest and see for yourself where the creature hunts. And in his castle, you will find your beloved.

Azalea slides a glass vial from her dress and slips it into his hand. Inside seems to be some kind of red potion. It moves somewhere between a liquid and a living gas.

AZALEA

And if you wish to overpower this monster, I have the potion to do so.

161 EXT. FOREST - NIGHT.

161

The Beast, on all fours, runs through the trees and bounds like a lion, as he chases a deer.

The pursuit takes the Beast further and further away from the castle, for the animal is proving faster than any prey he has ever encountered.

The hunter and hunted are moving with considerable speed, but as the deer takes a great flying leap through the air, the ground below gives way with a devastating crash, as the Beast drops into a huge man made pit.

Instantly, from the trees, Philippe, Anton and a band of gentleman hunters, appear, wearing their finest boots and breeches. Each man has a hunting rifle and a torch as they surround the edge of the pit. Trapped inside, the Beast snarls and howls.

The line of men, with their torches held aloft, stare down, gloating.

Just then the Beast leaps up, flies out of the hole and lands at the edge of the pit. He swings his great arm and knocks the hunters away as though they were dolls. Men go flying in all directions.

Anton shoulders his rifle and sights down at the mountainous Beast about to shoot, but as he pulls the trigger, Philippe knocks the barrel away.

PHILIPPE  
(Shouting)

No!

The bullet misses its target and thunders into a tree just above the Beast's head.

PHILIPPE  
Not yet. Leave the creature to me.

The Beast's ferocious glare turns and locks onto Philippe.

With the most fearsome growl, the Beast bounds forward and charges towards Philippe, who stands his ground and pulls the vial that Azalea gave him and flings it into the path of the charging Beast. The glass shatters and instantly a cloud of thick red, scarlet smoke envelopes the Beast.

In seconds he is surrounded by a mist that seems to be tangling him like a living web. As the deep red smoke abates his charge, the Beast struggles as if strangled by a twisting red serpent of smoke. In seconds his strength leaves him. Inhaling the vapours, his body goes limp and he falls back into the pit.

With a triumphant glare, Philippe looks down at the now helpless Beast.

PHILIPPE  
It is the most freakish thing,  
but I think we should have some  
sport with this Beast first.

From the trees, the Owl watches as his master is hauled out by the band of hunters. The bird turns and flies back to the castle.

The deer the Beast was chasing, also watches from a distance. The deer's expressionless eyes slowly morph into that of Azalea. Her wicked smile savours the Beast's howls of agony as he is hauled away.

The Owl soars through the trees, its great wings flapping desperately, in a effort to return to the castle.

It sails high and flies through one of the windows.

163 INT. CASTLE. BEDROOM - NIGHT. CONTINUED.

163

Belle is sat alone in her bedroom, wearing her glasses, turning everything over in her mind. The Owl appears at the window and gives the most desperate hoot.

Belle looks up startled.

BELLE  
What's wrong?

OWL  
Miss, come quickly!

164 INT. CASTLE - NIGHT.

164

Belle, still wearing her glasses, comes running out of the castle. The Owl flies high above her as she makes her way to the forest. As she crosses the drawbridge, Philippe and Anton come riding up.

Belle is startled to see Philippe, who leaps down from his horse. He gathers her up in his arms.

PHILIPPE  
Belle my love, you are safe.  
Thank goodness.

BELLE  
Philippe, what are you doing  
here?

PHILIPPE  
(Gives a smile)  
It is alright. We have caught  
the beast!

BELLE  
No...no...! you don't  
understand. He is not a  
monster...you must take me to  
him!

She fights off his embrace and breaks into a desperate run.

PHILIPPE  
Wait Belle! Where are you going?

But Belle has already ran off.

165 EXT. ROAD - NIGHT.

165

The Beast is locked inside a huge cage that is mounted on a cart, his powerful arms and legs manacled together.

The victory procession take their prize back into town. Farmers and villagers, believing the Beast responsible for the slaughter of their livestock, follow behind the angry mob.

They are joined by their womenfolk and children, who run alongside the great cage, where the Beast is laughed at and made sport of. A BOY brandishes one of the newspaper posters that we saw on the wall of the tavern. He calls out like a paper vendor, for everyone to hear.

BOY

They've caught the beast!  
They've caught the beast!

Lit torches are put through the bars of the cage and as the Beast howls with pain and agony, he is jeered at and spat upon. They want his blood.

Philippe and Anton, on their horses, come riding up. Belle, on the horse with Philippe, jumps down and runs up to the cage, screaming, pushing people out of the way.

BELLE

Stop! What are you doing to him?  
Don't hurt him!

She grips onto the bars, running, trying to keep up with the cart.

BELLE

(Tearful)  
It's alright, I'm going to get  
you out!

She clings onto the cage. The Beast inside looks beaten and worn. Having been burnt by the torches, he is battered and bruised, with blood running down his face.

The Beast's dark eyes look into hers and Belle sees the pain in his expression, she however looks at him with immense kindness.

She puts out her hand and for a moment they touch, but as the wagon keeps on moving, their momentary grasp is broken.

BEAST

(His voice wrapped in  
distress)  
Get away. You cannot help. You  
should have let me die.

The wagon drives on and Belle is left at the side of the road bereft.

Belle looks at the enchanted locket. To her shock, instead of her father's face, or even Philippe's, the Beast's suddenly appears. The thought almost catches her breath and she snaps it closed, confused at her feelings.

Philippe and Anton, leaps down from their horses.

Hysterical, Belle tries to run after the wagon.

BELLE

Philippe, stop them!

Philippe grabs her and pulls her away from the cart.

BELLE

He is not an animal! Please,  
Philippe, I am begging you, don't  
hurt him!

PHILIPPE

Anton, take her back to the  
house.

Anton grabs at Belle, who struggles to free herself from his grasp, but she cannot. In the tussle, the enchanted locket that the Beast gave her falls from her neck and lands in the mud. As the wheels of the cart roll over the necklace, it is buried into the soil.

Up above the Owl circles, helplessly looking on.

166 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

166

Still wearing her glasses, Belle sits locked in the highest bedroom of the great house. Eventually a key turns in the lock and Philippe enters warm and smiling.

Belle instantly stands, her face lined with concern.

PHILIPPE

Darling, I am so glad you are  
warm and safe.  
(Embracing her)

BELLE

Philippe you do not understand...

PHILIPPE

(Kindly)  
Hush now. We are to be married  
and once you're my wife you will  
forget all about this creature.

(MORE)

PHILIPPE(cont'd)

It has bewitched you, cast some kind of spell.

BELLE

Please Philippe, I beg you...!

PHILIPPE

Dry your eyes. We shall not speak of this any more.

BELLE

Let him go! He's not a creature. He has a heart and soul, like you and I.

PHILIPPE

I said enough!

BELLE

But Philippe...!

PHILIPPE

(Becoming angry)

You think I was going to become a cuckold to that thing? I dispatched of that monstrosity with my own hand and sent him to hell with my sword!

Belle screams with agonizing pain and her eyes sting with tears. Her despair turns to rage, she slaps him across the face, he goes to hit her back but Belle snatches a razor sharp letter opener from a dresser and brandishes it before him.

BELLE

Don't you come near me!

Philippe rubs his jaw. Instead of being angry, he wears an unnerving smile.

PHILIPPE

Now you will forget about this beast, we will marry, you will obey me and that is all.

BELLE

I could never marry a man like you!

PHILIPPE

If you do then your father dies in debtors prison!

Belle looks shocked.

PHILIPPE

Why don't you come and see for yourself? And by the way, take off those hideous glasses. They make you look ugly!

167 EXT. DEBTORS PRISON - DAY.

167

Belle's father sits with the rest of the unfortunates. The surrounds are dank and filthy. Many of the inmates, their clothes nothing more than rags, sit shivering in the cold.

Belle's father looks up. At the heavy iron gate, Philippe and Anton stand gloating. Next to them, her face lined with concern and without her glasses, is Belle. The old man half rises and his tired eyes begin to sparkle at the sight of his daughter.

The jailer opens the gate. Belle runs to her father and they cling on in a tearful reunion.

FATHER

Belle, I swear I thought I'd never see you again! I've made such a mess of things.

BELLE

(Through her tears)  
It's alright, father. I'm going to get you out.

FATHER

How?

PHILIPPE

I will pay your debts and you'll be free to go. And Belle and I are to be married. She will obey my every word, otherwise I will see to it, that you die penniless.

Belle's father looks from Belle to Philippe and angrily steps up.

FATHER

I'll rot in hell before I consent to that!

(Desperate)  
I forbid it!

PHILIPPE

Why don't we ask your daughter and see what she wants?

Belle's father looks to Belle and sees she already has defeat in her eyes.

BELLE  
I will marry you, Philippe. Now  
please keep your word and pay my  
father's debts.

Philippe gives a smile of triumph.

PHILIPPE  
Very well.

FATHER  
(With a cry of pain)  
Belle!

BELLE  
(Broken and resolute)  
I have given my word.

168 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BARN - DAY.

168

The Beast is not dead, instead he sits caged, his arms and feet manacled, so that he is unable to move. His clothes have been torn and his body bears the scars of where he has been beaten and set upon.

Stood high in the barn, the Owl hoots his dismay at seeing his master shackled and wounded.

OWL  
Sir, do not give up. We will get  
you out of here, I promise.

BEAST  
Is Belle safe?

OWL  
For the moment.

Azalea appears in a puff of magic with her cat in her arms.

AZALEA  
She does not love you, you fool.  
She pities you, that is all!

The Beast leaps forward but the great chains keep him in place. He fights with his binds but is held fast.

Azalea laughs at his pathetic attempts to escape.

AZALEA  
Those chains suit you well, my  
prince.

(MORE)

AZALEA(cont'd)

I suggest you grow accustomed to them, for I hear they are going to sell you to a circus, where you will be kept locked in this cage and paraded as a freak of nature.

OWL

Not if I have anything to do with it! You screaming, harpie seagull!

Azalea flashes him an angry scowl. The cat with a great hiss, bounds after the Owl, its claws and fangs ready and chases him around the barn.

The bird almost escapes when Azalea flings out a zing of magic.

AZALEA

You filthy bag of feathers!

Azalea's magic beam instantly incarcerates the bird in a cage and the poor Owl is trapped like his master. It cowers as the cat paws through the bars trying to strike at the bird who can only shrink back from it's deadly claws.

As the Beast's eyes stare at Azalea from his cage, he gives a deep, guttural growl.

AZALEA

Tell me you love me and I will make your binds disappear and release you from your curse.

BEAST

Never!

Angrily, Azalea grabs at the cage and hisses at the Beast.

AZALEA

Then you will live out the rest of yours days as an animal in a cage.

BEAST

I don't care what happens to me. I only care what happens to Belle.

AZALEA

Don't you hear? The bells are already chiming for Belle.

(Laughs at her own joke)

For she is to be married this morning. Your pretty little friend has a life of cruelty and servitude ahead of her.

In a swirling rage of magic, Azalea is gone and the Beast is left alone. The poor Owl trapped in his cage, can only look on.

169 INT. ABBEY - DAY.

169

The magnificent abbey is full of gentry in their finest. The bouquets of flowers are a breathtaking sight as the quartet plays quietly across the hub of expectant wedding guests.

Sat at the front, are Philippe's mother and father, regal, imperious, stony faced and cold.

Stood at the alter, is Philippe and his best man, Anton, in their finest groomsman attire. Despite his villainry, Philippe looks regal and handsome.

170 INT. WORSLEY HALL. DRESSING ROOM - DAY.

170

Belle, beautiful in an exquisite wedding dress, sits at her dressing table. With eyes filled with sadness, she stares back at her own reflection.

There is a gentle knock at the door and a FOOTMAN appears.

FOOTMAN

The carriage is here, miss.

171 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BARN - DAY.

171

The Beast is still locked in his cage, his hands and feet, manacled in great chains.

A cruel, tall and powerful looking GROOMSMAN enters and looks the Beast up and down.

GROOMSMAN

Good day, Mr Beast. How are you  
this fair morning?

From behind the bars, the Beast gives a warning growl which only seems to amuse the groomsman.

He goes over to the wall and takes down a large, thick horsewhip from a hook.

GROOMSMAN

That's not a very nice way to  
treat a friend! Because you and  
I, Mr Beast, are going to be  
great friends.

He unlocks the cage with the key, he has dangling from his belt and steps inside. Again, the Beast snarls and growls like a lion, but despite his great power, the thick leg irons and manacles keep him in place.

The cruel groomsman steps up him and with the whip, tilts the Beast's chin so that their eyes lock.

GROOMSMAN

You are going to do as I say, Mr Beast. When I say jump, you're going to say, how high? Otherwise, you'll get the whip!

The groomsman looks him in the eye and it's like staring into the face of the most ferocious creature there is.

GROOMSMAN

You take that look off your face!

He flogs the Beast hard across the back with the whip, causing the Beast to howl in pain.

GROOMSMAN

I thought you would have more fight in you, Mr Beast.

The groomsman whips the Beast again and again.

From his cage, the Owl looks horrified as his friend is beaten. All the time he has been desperately trying to unpick the lock with one of his claws, muttering to himself in despair. Finally, he tries one last time as the Beast is beaten and flogged, until eventually, there is a click and the cage door swings open.

The Owl flutters out of the barn, with his friend's cries ringing in the air.

172 EXT. SKY - DAY. CONTINUED. 172

The Owl soars into the sky.

173 INT. ABBEY - DAY. 173

Philippe is still stood at the alter and we feel a murmur of impatience ripple through the huge congregation.

An expectant glance passes between Philippe and his best man, Anton. Just then, the organ begins to play, announcing the bride's arrival.

Belle appears and all eyes turn. With a wedding veil masking her sorrow, she is lead down the aisle by her father.

174 EXT. SKY - DAY. 174

The Owl flies over the forest. His sharp eyes desperately scan the earth below. Something glints at him in the muddy path.

We follow him as he swoops down.

175 INT. ABBEY - DAY. 175

Despite the gloriousness of her dress, Belle walks towards Philippe, as if walking to the gallows.

176 EXT. FOREST - DAY. CONTINUED. 176

The Owl comes into land on the muddy track. He digs deep in the earth and uncovers the half buried locket in the dried mud. Scooping it up in his claws, he soars off.

177 INT. ABBEY - DAY. 177

Arriving at the alter, Belle lifts her veil, looks into her father's eyes.

FATHER

(In a whisper)

Belle, please, you do not have to go through with this.

178 EXT. SKY - DAY. 178

With the locket still in his claws, the Owl flies as fast as he can, breathless and panting back to the abbey.

179 INT. ABBEY - DAY. 179

Belle steps up and the PRIEST begins the ceremony.

PRIEST

We are gathered here together,  
to share with Philippe and Belle  
this beautiful day, as they  
exchange vows of their  
everlasting love.

180 EXT. ABBEY - DAY. 180

As the Owl comes swooping back down to the abbey, a pair of groomsmen are closing the doors slowly.

181 INT. ABBEY - DAY.

181

PRIEST  
(Addressing the  
congregation)  
Therefore if any man can show any  
just cause, why this man and this  
woman may not lawfully be joined  
in holy matrimony, let him now  
speak, or else hereafter for ever  
hold his peace.

182 EXT. ABBEY - DAY.

182

The Owl soars down and looks as if he is not going to make  
it before the huge double doors of the abbey close.

Plummeting like a jet, he just manages to shoot inside  
before the doors slam shut with a deep rumble.

183 INT. ABBEY - DAY. CONTINUED.

183

As Belle and Philippe are stood at the alter, the Owl comes  
whizzing across the heads of the guests, knocking off a few  
of the ostentatious ladies' hats in the process.

OWL  
(Calling out)  
I object to these proceedings!

Amazed, all heads turn at the sound of a talking Owl.

Belle throws off Philippe's hand and steps up. The Owl  
flies above her and drops the enchanted locket into Belle's  
hand.

Clearly reflected is the Beast in the cage, looking sick  
and beaten. It is clear the creature is dying of a broken  
heart.

BELLE  
(Almost in a whisper)  
He's alive!

We see the Beast's dying face once again reflected in the  
locket.

The locket slips from her hand and drops slowly, the image  
of the Beast still reflected. As it hits the stone floor  
with an ear splitting crash, it shatters into a thousand  
pieces.

There is an involuntary gasp from the congregation as all  
eyes focus on Belle.

Philippe steps up.

PHILIPPE  
(To Belle, in a hissed  
whisper)  
If you make a fool of me, I will  
finish your father!

She turns to her father.

FATHER  
Belle. Go now!

Pulling up her dress, Belle runs down the aisle. Heads  
turn to watch her flee.

Flashing with rage, Philippe makes to follow, but the old  
man gets in his way.

FATHER  
(His voice low and mean)  
You ever dare lay one finger on  
my daughter again!

Belle's father throws a punch to Philippe's jaw, knocking  
the young man against the alter. Belle's father turns and  
runs down the isle.

Recovering, Philippe bellows his orders at his men.

PHILIPPE  
Get them!

184 EXT. ABBEY - DAY.

184

Belle comes running out of the abbey with the Owl flying  
above her head. Outside is the wedding carriage, with the  
driver sitting waiting.

Behind her, Belle's father comes running out of the church,  
followed by Philippe, Anton and his men, who are charging  
in pursuit.

Belle's father shuts the huge doors in their faces and  
leans on hard, trying to hold them in place.

FATHER  
(Shouting)  
Go!

Flashing each other a smile, Belle leaps onto the carriage.

Fishing into the silk purse around her wrist, Belle puts on  
her glasses. Snatching at the reigns, she lashes at the  
horses and tears off at high speed

Belle's father struggles to keep the doors shut as Philippe, Anton and his men, pound to be set free. Inch by inch, they begin to open.

185 EXT. WEDDING CARRIAGE - DAY. 185

The wedding carriage races down the winding roads towards Worsley Hall. The Owl leads the way.

OWL

Miss, this way, quickly.

186 EXT. WORSLEY HALL. STABLES - DAY. 186

The wedding carriage comes to a stop at the stables. Belle jumps down and pulling up her dress, runs to the barn where the Beast is being kept.

The groomsman locks her path. She notices the key to the Beast's chains dangling from his belt and the horsewhip in his hand.

Belle gives him her best, sweet smile.

BELLE

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm a little lost. Isn't this the way to the stables?

GROOMSMAN

Stables are closed.

He plays with the key on his belt.

The Owl flutters overhead.

OWL

Hey ugly!

The groom whips his head around to see where the voice is coming from.

Belle snatches at a hoe and cracks it across the groomsman's head with such force, it breaks in two. The big man crashes onto the cobbles.

As he lies stunned, Belle unhooks the key from his belt. The groomsman's hands clamp tightly around her ankle and she falls hard. The key slips from her grasp.

Belle fights and kicks but the groomsman's grip holds her in place. Her hand grasps towards the key as she is pulled backwards.

The Owl comes swooping down, claws out. It's talons embed into the man's face and scratch at his eyes.

With a scream he releases Belle.

Belle scoops up the key and darts into the barn, followed by the Owl, leaving the groomsman dazed.

187 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BARN - DAY. CONTINUED.

187

Belle comes running into the barn to find the Beast still locked in his cage, bloody marks are across his back from the flogging.

BELLE

What have they done to you!

Hearing the Beast's shallow breath, as his heart slows, Belle unlocks the cage door and frees him from his manacles. The Beast collapses.

Tears run down Belle's face as she plants a kiss on the Beast's lips.

The Beast's terrifying features melt away. The animal's snout and fangs retreat. Fur and claws sink through the skin, as slowly but surely, Azalea's curse is lifted and the Prince miraculously returns to life.

The Owl too begins to change. Fluttering high in the air, the bird begins to lose its feathers, its wings turn to arms and claws to legs. Half man, half Owl, it drops into bails of hay with a startled cry.

188 INT. DARK TOWER.

188

In Azalea's crystal globe we see the image of Belle and the Prince kissing.

The witch is almost incandescent with rage.

AZALEA

(Screeching)

No...!

189 INT. WORSLEY HALL. BARN - DAY.

189

The Prince and Belle embrace. From behind the bails of hay, we hear a cry.

BUTLER

Hello? Sir?

The Owl, who has now reverted back to the Butler, rather comically appears from the haystack. He is naked and uses a bail of hay to hide his modesty.

BUTLER  
Sir, do you think I could trouble  
you for a cloak?

Belle and the Prince both smile as he throws off his cloak and wraps it around the naked Butler.

BUTLER  
(Smiling)  
I got rather used to feathers.

The big groomsman appears at the doorway with the horsewhip in his hand, his bloody face now a raging snarl. The Prince steps up to him and the two men face each other.

190 EXT. WORSLEY HALL. BARN - DAY. CONTINUED. 190

The Groomsman comes flying out of the barn and lands hard into a pile of horse manure.

Belle, the Prince and the Butler run out of the yard just in time to see Belle's father come racing up on horseback, leading three horses with him.

FATHER  
We haven't got much time!

191 EXT. ABBEY - DAY. 191

Belle's father has jammed a piece of wood through the handles of the abbey doors.

Eventually the wood smashes and the great abbey doors fly open.

Philippe and the congregation spill out. Philippe's eyes are now filled with rage.

In the distance he can see Worsley Hall, as well as four figures riding away on horseback.

PHILIPPE  
Get the hounds!

192 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 192

The Prince, the Butler, Belle and her father are riding through the forest towards the Prince's castle.

The silence is broken by the call of a hunting horn and the baying yap of hounds.

Philippe leads the hunting party through the countryside.

193

EXT. FOREST - DAY.

193

The Prince, Butler, Belle and her father ride on, but the terrifying sound of the hunting horn and the bay of the hounds grows louder and louder.

A huntsman mounted on his steed, leaps over a fallen tree. With a sabre in his hand, he swishes the blade but the Prince ducks down on his horse, catches his attacker's arm and flings him from his saddle.

They ride on but the hunt is closing on them fast.

FATHER

They're gaining on us.

BUTLER

I have an idea, sir.

The Butler puts his fingers into his mouth and gives a loud, shrill whistle.

His whistle, which echoes far and wide, is taken up.

Slowly but surely, thousands of Owls fly on mass above the tree tops, swooping like a great cloud.

BUTLER

(Addressing the birds  
like a sergeant major)

Squad attention!

The Owls assemble in a formation, like fighter planes in the Battle of Britain.

BUTLER

(Talking to them like  
world war 2 pilots)

Squadron, attack formation,  
Dive!

The hunting party are almost upon them, when the Butler directs the Owls, towards the huntsmen.

The great wave whooshes through the trees and dive bombs Philippe and his men. With their claws and beaks outstretched, the horsemen are hit by a terrifying onslaught of talons and feathers.

The huge cluster of birds rip at skin and eyes, knocking the hunting party off their horses. Philippe's horse rears up and he is swiped to the ground.

Terrified, hounds and horses turn and flee from the woods, as the great parliament of birds chase them.

Philippe swishes his sword this way and that, trying to strike, but he is overpowered. Scratched and pecked, he too turns and runs, breathless and frightened.

194 EXT. WORSLEY HALL - DAY. 194

Dishevelled, scratched and looking pathetically forlorn, Philippe limps up the steps of Worsley Hall as his mama and papa look on. Their disappointing and withering looks shrinks Philippe down to size.

His parents promptly shut the door on their son's face.

195 EXT. CASTLE - DAY. 195

At the castle drawbridge, Belle, her father, the Prince and his Butler, watch as the army of birds flit up across sky and disperse.

BUTLER  
(With a smile)  
I wasn't a bird all those years  
without learning something, sir.

Belle and the Prince fall into a kiss.

196 INT. DARK TOWER. 196

Tortured by the image of the Prince and Belle in a loving embrace, Azalea's once beautiful features are now an ugly snarl. She grips on tight to the crystal globe, so much so, the thick surface begins to crack.

Suddenly the face in the globe changes and Azalea finds herself face to face with the Wizard staring back at her. His voice ghostly as if from another world.

WIZARD  
If you're not pure of heart then  
magic will only bring tragedy.

His face disappears from the globe and he reappears like a ghostly apparition behind her.

Enraged, Azalea fires lightening bolts of magic, but the image of the Wizard keep on disappearing from view, while he endlessly repeats his words full of mocking.

One lightening bolts inadvertently hits the cat, who flies in the air, its tail on fire.

197 EXT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED. 197

The cat leaps out through the window, its sleek fur ablaze and lands in the snow, putting out its scorched tail.

198 INT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED. 198

Azalea pulls out the great book of spells and tears through the pages with rage until she finds what she is looking for.

The book opens at a spell and an illustration of what looks like a huge red dragon. As Azalea begins to mutter the incantations, the magic begins to work and her dark eyes change into lizard's pupils. Her skin begins to twist, her body swells and transforms into a snake's hide.

As two huge wings sprout from her back, she throws up her head and bellows a deafening roar, as she metamorphoses into a gigantic red dragon.

199 EXT. DARK TOWER. CONTINUED. 199

The tower explodes as the serpent, with massive bat-like wings, soars off. The cat, crouched in the snow looks on.

200 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY. 200

The huge winged serpent swoops across the countryside, demolishing farms and houses in its wake.

201 EXT. CASTLE - DAY. 201

The Prince, Butler, Belle and her father are still stood in the grounds of the castle, when the beating of great wings fills the air.

The huge great dragon screams and bellows as it swoops over the forest towards them.

PRINCE  
It's Azalea. Run!

The four run through the courtyard, as the creature swoops down and demolishes the drawbridge. The Prince snatches at a broad sword that has been mounted on the wall of the castle and holds it out as Azalea comes screeching down, great claws out, ready to attack.

The Prince swings, hacking at the screeching dragon as it attacks again and again. Having escaped the blade, it takes off, flexes its claws, ready for another onslaught.

The Butler and Belle's father just manage to dive for safety behind a tower.

202 EXT. FOREST - DAY. CONTINUED

202

Belle and the Prince run for cover in the forest. The winged serpent circles overhead, trying to find its prey.

Spying the couple running between the woods, it plummets with a hellish cry, smashing through the tree tops.

The dragon almost has them but the Prince drives his sword through the creature's heart. The dragon lands with a crash.

The Prince steps up as the serpent struggles for life. Drawing his sword from its chest, he wheels it above his head and decapitates it. As its head is sliced from its torso, its body melts into ash.

FADE OUT.

203 EXT. QUAYSIDE - DAY.

203

A beautiful new ship is being fitted and the Captain and his men are preparing to set sail.

As the Captain steps up onto the docks, he is met by Belle's father, his old business partner. The two warmly shake hands.

FATHER

Good day Captain. Everything ship shape?

CAPTAIN

Yes sir.

The two men smile at one another as the sailors load the cargo.

Belle's father turns.

FATHER

Captain, I'd like to introduce you to my new business partner.

The old sea dog follows Belle's father gaze and the Butler steps up holding out his hand

BUTLER

Good to meet you, captain.

All three shake hands.

204 INT. CASTLE - DAY.

204

As we drift through the room in the castle, it no longer has a dark gloomy air but is magnificent, full of light and life. Belle's familiar tune drifts in the air.

We move from room to room following its sound until we enter the glorious ballroom. Sunlight streams in on Belle's mother's portrait which hangs on the wall.

Sat at the piano, Belle, wearing her glasses and the Prince play in harmony together. As their hands glide across the keys we see that they both wear matching wedding rings. The Prince misses a note and they both look at one another and laugh. Finding each others eyes, they slide into a kiss.

We pull out through the window and see the garden below. The precious rose is now in full bloom. Next to it, small buds appear and glisten in the sun.

TITLES

POST TITLE  
SCENE

205 EXT. DARK TOWER - NIGHT

205

Azalea's broken tower stands in the barren snowbound landscape. A figure, features hidden by a great hood, emerges out of the darkness and stumbles into the ruins.

We hear a cat's cry. No longer a beautiful sleek animal, Azalea cat looks a scraggy and decrepit old moggy as it sits on the fallen masonry.

The animal's cries draws the figure to it and we see that the cat is sat upon the Wizard's torn and battered book of spells.

As the figure reaches down to pick up the book, the wind whips through the tower and the pages of the book flies open, revealing a list of incantations. The cowl falls back from the hooded figure to reveal Philippe. The cat gives a meow.

**THE END**