

TIM BURTON'S CORPSE BRIDE

Screenplay by

Caroline Thompson and Pamela Pettler and John August

February 18, 2004

© 2004

FADE IN:

INT. VICTOR'S ROOM - EXTREME CLOSEUP - DAY

We GLIDE OVER beautiful, shimmering lakes of color.

PULLING OUT, we find the colors make up the patterns on a butterfly's wing, drawn in miraculous detail on a large sketch pad.

VICTOR, a handsome 19-year-old with a gentle, slightly dreaming quality, adds tiny finishing touches to the sketch. His Victorian-style room is filled with drawings and paintings of all sizes, mostly of butterflies. There is one prominent painting of Victor with a friendly-looking dog.

The drawing done, Victor lifts a glass bell jar. A butterfly escapes, flits around the room and out of the open window.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

We FOLLOW the butterfly on its flight around the town.

The streets are cobblestone. The architecture is cold and severe. Hues are muted and grim: the butterfly is the only really colorful thing in view. Stiff-looking TOWNSPEOPLE walk along -- nodding very formally, and without warmth, when they pass each other.

A church BELL CHIMES the first of four strokes. The TOWN CRIER strides into the square and rings his big HAND BELL.

TOWN CRIER

Four o'clock and all's well!

MUSIC begins to grow -- a methodical MARCH. As the butterfly floats along a line of shops, we see:

The GREEN GROCER... arranging fastidious little piles of withered onions. The gentle RUSTLE adds a rhythm to the song.

The WATCHMAKER... checking and re-checking the large clock that hangs in front of his shop, resetting the second hand until it's just so. The clocks TICK like metronomes.

The BAKER... wearily adding another plain brown loaf to the pyramid that stands in his window. Each loaf as dry and flavorless as the next.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The BUTCHER... whose arm rises and falls mechanically, filling the air with a constant CHOPPING sound on the downbeat.

WIDOW MUNCH, the seamstress, sits among bolts of cloth, all shades of gray. Her SEWING MACHINE CHUGS along in rhythm to the MUSIC.

As the butterfly floats off, we STAY ON the entrance of a large stately house. We are back at the home of Victor's family, the Van Dorts.

The front door opens, and out steps WILLIAM VAN DORT. He's a slouch-shouldered gentleman who speaks from behind his drooping mustache.

WILLIAM

Where is Victor? We might be late!

Victor leans out of an upstairs window. With zero enthusiasm...

VICTOR

Coming, Father.

WILLIAM

Right, right. Very good.

Victor's mother, NELL VAN DORT, is a plump, pushy Victorian matron. She gazes across the town at the Everglot Mansion with its two imposing gables.

She begins to sing, "According to Plan." Nell has the voice of an opera diva. William, who talk-sings most of his lines, is the gentle voice of reason.

NELL/WILLIAM

A beautiful day!
A very nice day.
For a wedding!
A wedding rehearsal.
A practice run...
... of a sort...
Of what's to come.
Assuming nothing goes wrong.
That is why everything,
Every last little overlooked
thing,
Must... Go...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELL/WILLIAM (CONT'D)

(chorus)

*According to plan!
Our son will be married,
According to plan!
We will be carried
According to plan!
Into the halls
Of high society!
Have tea with the Queen!
At parties to be seen,
Dressed in pale aubergine,
We'll forgot who we've beeeeen.*

They look into each other's eyes, agreeing...

NELL/WILLIAM

*This is a fortunate day,
For those of recent fortune.*

Victor arrives beside them. With his gangly legs and stiff collars, he always seems miserably uncomfortable.

WILLIAM

Where is Mayhew? We might be late!

On cue, the Van Dort carriage pulls up, announced by the HACKING COUGH of MAYHEW, the driver.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CARRIAGE - DAY

Victor sits across from his parents, who are squeezed together uncomfortably as the carriage CLATTERS across the cobblestones. MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER...

WILLIAM

Victoria Everglot is quite a catch. Isn't she, Victor?

VICTOR

I wouldn't know, Father. I've never had a word alone with the girl.

Nell and William share a look.

NELL/WILLIAM

*Well, first you say...
How do you do?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELL/WILLIAM (CONT'D)

*Then comment on her beauty.
Saying such things --
Even if lies --
Are just a husband's duty.
Don't try to be funny,
Don't try to be quick,
You're not very clever;
You'll never be slick.*

VICTOR

So I should be myself?

NELL

(annoyed)

You haven't been hearing at all!

WILLIAM

Victor, this is our one chance to
buy what money can't --
respectability!

NELL

Remember, the Everglots are the
oldest, noblest family around,
descendants of the Grand Duke of
Everglot...

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT DRAWING ROOM - CLOSEUP OF AN IMPOSING
PORTRAIT - DAY

of the DUKE OF EVERGLOT. We PULL OUT, REVEALING an
enormous room furnished with high wing-backed chairs, an
elaborate gray sofa, curlicue side tables and heavy
drapes.

MAUDELINE EVERGLOT, an imperious Victorian matron with
extremely high hair and an imposing bosom, stands by the
window, watching the Van Dort carriage approach from
across the square.

She sings to her round, importantly-frowning husband,
FINIS EVERGLOT.

MAUDELINE/FINIS

*A terrible day!
Now, dear...
A terrible family!
I won't hear it!
(MORE)*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE/FINIS (CONT'D)

So common, so coarse,
 Nouveau riche...
 Oh, it couldn't be worse.
 Yes it could.

(she sighs)

They could be bankrupt landed
 gentry.
 Penniless like us.

FINIS

Whoever thought putting fish into
 cans could be so profitable?

MAUDELINE

This... is... why...

MAUDELINE/FINIS

According to plan!
Our daughter will wed,
According to plan!
And we will be led,
According to plan!
Out of the depths
Of deepest pov'rtty!
Who would have guessed our
daughter,
Ugly as an otter,
Would be the only valuable thing
We have to offer.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

VICTORIA EVERGLOT. Despite what her mother thinks, she's a pretty, sweet young girl. At the moment, she is being laced into tight corsets by her elderly maid, Hildegarde.

VICTORIA

Oh, Hildegarde, do loosen it a
 tiny bit.

Hildegarde hesitates, then quickly loosens the corset. She helps Victoria put on a gray, high-collared dress.

VICTORIA

(confiding)

Hilde, I'm nervous. What if
 Victor and I don't like each
 other?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a shocked, severe LAUGH from the doorway. Victoria and Hildegarde whirl to see the imposing figure of Maudeline. Finis is at her side.

MAUDELINE

For heaven's sake, Victoria!
'Like' each other? As if that has
anything to do with marriage? Do
you suppose your father and I
'like' each other?

VICTORIA

But surely you must, a little?

FINIS & MAUDELINE

(in unison)
Of course not!

VICTORIA

But, you had me, didn't you?

FINIS

You were conceived in a fit of...
(what's the word?)
... responsibility!

The cathedral-like DOORBELL ECHOES through the mansion. Maudeline turns on her heel. Without looking back --

MAUDELINE

Get those corsets laced properly!
I can hear you speak without
gasping!

EXT. EVERGLOT MANSION - DAY

The Van Dorts stand before the massive front doors.

NELL

(to Victor)
*You really should be grateful,
For everything we've done.
Who else would sacrifice so much
For the good of their son?*

INT. EVERGLOT ENTRY HALL - DAY

Finis and Maudeline step down the grand stairway. It's cold and imposing, feeling more like a financial institution than a home. They are the very image of old world high society.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELL

*Marriage is a partnership,
A little tit for tat.
You'd think a lifetime watching us
Might have taught her that.*

INTERCUT VAN DORTS.

ALL FOUR PARENTS

*Everything will be perfect,
Once everything is perfect.
Assuming everything goes...*

(big finish)

According to plan!

The Everglot's BUTLER opens the door, regarding the Van Dorts with barely concealed disdain.

The two mothers offer each other false smiles.

MAUDELINE

(to Finis, under
her breath)

Smile, darling, smile...

With tremendous effort Finis' mouth twists into a forced smile.

FINIS

(to Maudeline,
under his breath)

Let's get this over with, shall
we?

(loudly)

Well Hello! What a pleasure.
Welcome to our home.

The parents come together in an awkward ritual of handshakes, bows and air-kisses.

William Van Dort shakes Maudeline's hand.

WILLIAM

Why, you must be Miss Victoria.
You don't look a day over twenty!

He winks to Finis as Nell cringes with embarrassment.

Maudeline turns toward the Butler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE

We will be taking tea in the west
drawing room. We still await
Pastor Galswells.

(an afterthought)

Tell Victoria that the Van Dorts
have arrived.

The parents turn as a group and head for the drawing
room, leaving Victor standing in the hallway, forgotten.

Victor stands in the sudden silence, unsure of what to
do. Looking around nervously, his glance falls on a
nearby room across the hallway. The door is ajar,
revealing a tantalizing glimpse of a PIANO.

He hesitates, then slips into the room.

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT MUSIC ROOM - DAY

A large dreary room with drab, formal paintings dominated
by an enormous piano, the size of a small boat.

Victor is irresistibly drawn to it. He sits and touches
the keys caressingly. On the piano he notices a small
vase holding a single stem of winter jasmine. He begins
to PLAY, at first haltingly, then losing himself in the
music.

His song is sad but dreamy.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Victoria is nervously adjusting her dress when the MUSIC
suddenly floats up to her.

CUT TO:

INT. TOP OF THE STAIRS DAY

Victoria stops, transfixed, then continues down the
steps, following the sound of the PIANO.

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT ENTRY HALL - DAY

She peers into the doorway of the drawing room, where the parents have gathered. William Van Dort relates a boring tale, gesturing ever so slightly as he speaks.

WILLIAM

I never understood why men needed
black shoes and brown shoes, when
a quick coat of paint can turn one
into the other!

Nell cringes, mortified. The Everglots sit with stern scowls frozen on their faces.

Crossing to the other side of the entryway, Victoria comes to the music room. She quietly enters.

INT. EVERGLOT MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Victor is seated at the piano, his back toward the door. He plays, lost in his MUSIC.

VICTORIA

How lovely.

Startled, Victor jumps in his seat, BANGING his knees on the piano, causing the lid to drop with a loud, reverberating thud.

He turns to see Victoria, looking pretty as a picture, standing behind him.

VICTOR

(flustered)

Oh... I... do forgive me. I...

VICTORIA

You play beautifully.

VICTOR

I... I do apologize, Miss
Everglot. How rude of me to...

Victoria comes over to him impetuously.

VICTORIA

The song. What is it called?

VICTOR

Oh, it was... just something I
came across.

VICTORIA

Came across where?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Well... It was inside me, I guess.

VICTORIA

How nice you found a way to let it out.

(beat)

Mother won't allow me near the piano. Music is improper for a young lady. Too passionate, she says.

Victor nervously rubs his aching knees.

VICTOR

If I may ask, M-Miss Everglot...

VICTORIA

Perhaps, in view of the circumstances, you could call me, 'Victoria.'

VICTOR

Yes, yes, of course. Well, Victoria...

VICTORIA

Yes, Victor?

VICTOR

Tomorrow we are to be...
(can't say it)
Mm... Mm...

VICTORIA

(smiles)
Married.

VICTOR

Yes. M-Married.

She sits down beside him on the piano bench.

VICTORIA

Since I was a child, I've dreamt of my wedding day. I always hoped to find someone I was deeply in love with. Someone to spend the rest of my life with.

(a beat)

Silly, isn't it?

VICTOR

Yes. Silly! Ha!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat. He looks at her.

VICTOR

N-no. Not at all.

They both LAUGH nervously, moving a tad closer. Victor accidentally knocks over the small vase. He grabs the scarf from his pocket just as Victoria takes out her handkerchief. As they both hastily clean up the spill, their hands touch. They look at each other.

Suddenly in the doorway is PASTOR GALSWELLS, who fixes them with a stern, forbidding glare. The parents are clustered behind him.

Victor hastily stuffs the flower in his pocket.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

(thundering)

What impropriety is this? You shouldn't be alone together! Here it is one minute before five, and you are not at the rehearsal. You might be late!

VICTOR

Oh dear... we... we...

MAUDELINE

(coldly)

Come at once.

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT DRAWING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

The group has gathered in the drawing room to rehearse the wedding ceremony. Seated are Finis and Maudeline, William and Nell.

The front of the room has been set up as a makeshift altar. An elaborately-carved table holds a pair of candles and a chalice.

Pressure is high. It's the social event of the decade, and Maudeline Everglot has left nothing to chance. She's like a 19th Century Martha Stewart, obsessively planning to the tiniest detail.

Pastor Galswells presides, holding a book and an ornamental holy scepter. Victor trembles in nervous agony as Pastor Galswells glares at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASTOR GALSWELLS
Let's try it again. Shall we,
Master Van Dort?

Victor lifts his left hand and takes three steps back.

VICTOR
Y-Yes, sir. Certainly.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
(hisses)
Right.

VICTOR
(agreeing)
Right.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
RIGHT!!!

Victor hastily lifts the correct hand.

VICTOR
Oh, right! With this... this...

PASTOR GALSWELLS
(annoyed,
prompting)
Hand...

VICTOR
Hand, yes...with this hand, I
will...

He takes Victoria's elbow, but gets flustered at touching her.

VICTOR
Oh, forgive me, I, er...

PASTOR GALSWELLS
Continue!

Victoria takes three steps forward. Victor accidentally takes four.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
Three steps! Three! Can you not
count!

Victor quickly backs up, stepping on Victoria's toe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR
 (mortified)
 Oh dear! P-pardon me. Uhm.
 three steps...

Nell fans herself in distress as Maudeline and Finis look on with utter disgust.

FASTOR GALSWELLS
 Never mind. Let's just pick it up
 at the candle bit.

VICTOR
 The candle bit?

PASTOR GALSWELLS
 The candle! The candle! Can you
 remember nothing?

VICTOR
 (horrified)
 N-no, no, of course not... I mean
yes!

Victor takes a lit candle.

VICTOR
 With this candle...

BARKIS BITTERN, the Everglot's lawyer, enters and hands Finis some papers to sign.

BARKIS
 I beg your pardon, sir. These are
 most important...

FINIS
 (waving him off)
 Not now, Barkis.

BARKIS
 The pre-nuptials.

Finis quickly signs the papers and hands them back, all the while scowling at Victor. Barkis TUT-TUTS in sympathetic disapproval. (We sense a private scheming thought.)

VICTOR
 With this candle... this candle...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Victor tries to light the other candle. He's having a hard time. For several long seconds he fiddles with the wick as the others watch. Finally, leaning close, he gets the candle to light.

Victor sighs with relief, accidentally blowing the candle out.

From her chair, Nell groans.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
(exploding)
Do you not wish to be married,
Master Van Dort?

VICTOR
No! No!

Victoria looks up in surprise.

VICTORIA
You do not?

VICTOR
No! I meant no, I do no, er, *not*
wish to be married, that is, I
very much want --

Pastor Galswells HITS him with the holy scepter.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
Pay attention! Have you even
remembered to bring the ring?

VICTOR
The ring... yes! Of course...

He pulls the ring out of his pocket, and fumbling, drops it. Everyone GASPS at this sacrilege.

PASTOR GALSWELLS
(thundering)
Dropping the ring! This boy
doesn't want to be married!

Even Victoria is starting to get worried now.

VICTOR
I'll get it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Victor scrambles on his hands and knees, desperately grasping for the ring as it rolls under Maudeline's chair. He reaches, fumbling blindly under the hem of her long dress as she stares at him with barely-contained outrage.

Victor scrambles to his feet, holding up the ring triumphantly.

VICTOR

Got it!

As he does this, Victor accidentally KNOCKS OVER the other lit candle and Maudeline's dress starts to CATCH FIRE. Everyone tries to put it out.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

(furiously)

Enough! This wedding cannot take place until he has properly prepared!

Pastor Galswells POINTS wrathfully towards the door.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Young man, learn your vows!

Humiliated, Victor STUMBLES out. All this being too much, Victoria faints, then almost in unison Nell, Maudeline and finally William FAINT dead away.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF VILLAGE - EARLY EVENING

The Town Crier watches a distraught Victor as he crosses the old stone bridge, passing the Village Church, and heads toward the dark woods beyond.

Victor plunges into the woods. Spindly birches give way to dark foreboding trees. Victor mutters desperately to himself.

VICTOR

With this hand, I will... I will...

He tries it again.

VICTOR

With this hand, I empty your cup.
No. That's not it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Your cup will never empty, for I
will light your way. No. With
this candle, I lift your sorrow...
no, no. Oh, it's no use.

CROWS flap from tree to tree, following him as he wanders through the darkening forest. There is a haunted feel to the forest as if someone else is watching him.

DISSOLVE TO:

A DESOLATE CLEARING

where, long ago, an ancient tree had toppled over. Moonlight streams in through the gap in the forest canopy. CROWS roost in the surrounding trees, CAWING noisily.

Victor sits, mumbling the vows. The CAWING of the CROWS becomes more insistent. Victor looks up, and realizing that he now has an audience, decides to really go for it. He stands with a theatrical flourish.

VICTOR

With this hand, I lift your
sorrows. Your cup will never
empty, I will be your wine...

The SQUAWKING GROWS LOUDER from the branches overhead.

VICTOR

(looks up to the
crows)

Thank you.

(continuing)

With this candle, I will light
your way in darkness...

Victor begins to get his confidence back.

He takes the ring out of his pocket. Tangled with it is the jasmine from the music room. Victor stares at it for a moment, and gathers strength for the grand finale. With a dramatic flourish, he kneels.

VICTOR

With this ring...

He slips the ring on a small twisted root that extends from the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR
(triumphantly)
I ask you to be mine!

Suddenly the crows fall silent. A faint WIND RUSTLES through the trees.

Victor looks up into the branches, where the crows silently stare down at him. The root TWITCHES, unnoticed. Still watching the crows, Victor reaches for his ring...

The root suddenly encircles his wrist.

Horrified, Victor tries pull free as the CROWS SCATTER with a cacophonous CAWING, wings FLAPPING.

Victor desperately PULLS, ripping a MASS OF ROOTS AND DIRT from the ground.

Sprawling backwards, he sees a skeletal arm clamped around his wrist.

Victor SCREAMS and flings it away as the ground splits open in front of him.

A ROOT-COVERED FIGURE, wearing a tattered wedding gown, SPRINGS from the frozen earth to reveal the CORPSE BRIDE. The ring sparkles in the moonlight.

CORPSE BRIDE
You may kiss the bride!

Victor scrambles backwards, turns and RUNS frantically, stumbling through thickets and branches.

He falls and, getting up, realizes that he's tripped on a GRAVESTONE in an old abandoned graveyard.

The Corpse Bride moves towards him.

Victor runs for his life, dodging between the crooked tombstones. He CRASHES blindly through the branches of the bare, brittle trees that seem to block his escape. He stumbles across a small creek as the Corpse Bride pursues him.

As Victor dashes blindly through the trees, the crows fly in his path. He reaches the edge of the woods and sprints towards the footbridge.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE FOOTBRIDGE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Victor reaches the footbridge and stops to catch his breath. He turns back, peering at the dark forest. It is oddly silent.

Suddenly, the crows BURST from the trees, flying straight at him. He turns to run, and freezes in horror...

The strangely-alluring figure approaches him from the other side of the bridge.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - SAME TIME

The Town Crier peers towards the footbridge, holding his lantern. He can just barely see Victor, and what seems, from this distance, to be a woman in a long gown embracing him. The Town Crier frowns disapprovingly.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE FOOTBRIDGE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The Corpse Bride moves towards Victor as the crows gather, swirling around them. Overcome by fear, Victor stands motionless. She slowly lifts her veil. On her skeletal hand the wedding ring glistens in the moonlight.

Huge eyes dominate her pale face.

She leans towards him, her bony hand touches his chest as the crows encircle them, forming a solid field of black...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LAND OF THE DEAD - PERPETUAL TWILIGHT

The crows EXPLODE away in a gust. Victor and the Corpse Bride are standing in another land entirely, with misshapen buildings in the b.g.

The Corpse Bride is gabbling, giddy and elated.

CORPSE BRIDE

You were wonderful. So
passionate. It was everything I
dreamed of.

As the Corpse Bride talks, a BLACK WIDOW SPIDER descends from her veil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Victor takes a couple of steps back, looking fearfully at the Corpse Bride's face.

The Black Widow fires a strand of web at Victor's chest. The sticky strand is incredibly strong. The tiny spider is able to reel him back in.

BLACK WIDOW

Now, dear, where do you think
you're going?

The Bride's eye pops out, and a MAGGOT peers out of the socket. The Maggot looks and sounds like Peter Lorre.

MAGGOT

I don't like him. He's creepy.

The Corpse Bride pops her eye back in. Maggot rides on her ear.

CORPSE BRIDE

Oh Victor! I can't wait for you
to meet everyone.

VICTOR

How... How do you know my name?

CORPSE BRIDE

You think I'd marry a stranger?
Come on!

The Corpse Bride leads Victor away, running.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN SQUARE (LAND OF THE DEAD) - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The Corpse Bride pulls Victor into the square -- a lurid echo of the town square up above. Victor spies some shadowy PASSERS-BY.

VICTOR

Help! you have to help me, I've
been kidnapped by...

The Passers-by turn round. Victor sees that they, too, are corpses and skeletons. He stops in his tracks.

VICTOR

... the dead!

From every direction, CORPSES IN EVERY IMAGINABLE STATE OF DECAY come running, or hobbling, or oozing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Victor recoils in horror. The crowd moves in closer.

SCISSORHEAD

Now he's a fresh one.

DEAD LADY WITH FLOWERS

Very fresh.

A precocious SKELETON BOY curiously pokes Victor with a stick.

SKELETON BOY

He's still soft!

The VARIOUS HORRORS gather round Victor, fascinated.

CORPSE BRIDE

He's my husband. He gave me this ring!

The Corpse Bride, beaming, extends her arm to show her ring to the gathered crowd.

CROWD

("how touching")

Aaaaahhhhhh.

VICTOR

("blind terror")

AAAAAAHHHHHHH!

A BEHEMOTH shakes Victor's hand vigorously.

BEHEMOTH

Pleased to meet you. Oh! His arm stayed on!

BEEHIVE WOMAN prods and pokes at Victor.

BEEHIVE WOMAN

He's still breathing!

Everyone listens very closely to Victor's panting chest.

MOSS MAN

He is! My word, living flesh! Is his heart beating too?

BEHEMOTH

I'll take it out and have a look!

Behemoth crams his hand into Victor's mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

Please, leave him alone. He's
only just arrived.

Behemoth pulls his hand out.

As she turns back to Victor, her left eyeball pops out,
revealing Maggot again, who addresses the townsfolk.

MAGGOT

We saw the whole wedding. It was
romantic!

Black Widow emerges behind the Maggot.

BLACK WIDOW

He reminds me of my 3rd, 7th, 24th
and 63rd husbands.

MAGGOT

Before you ate them?

MAGGOT

There was one thing missing,
though. He forgot to kiss the
bride.

Gradually, the entire crowd begins to CHANT:

CROWD

Kiss her! Kiss her!

Corpse Bride giggles, slightly embarrassed.

Victor can take no more. His spindly legs buckle as he
FAINTS.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP:

INT. PUB (THE LAND OF THE DEAD) - LATER

Victor's eyes slowly open.

FROM HIS POV

a huge, blurry SKULL floats in front of him, filling his
field of vision. As it slowly comes INTO FOCUS, he sees
it's not a huge skull after all. It's the forms of a
crowd leaning over him, silhouetted against the light.
Corpse Bride leans over him.

CORPSE BRIDE

Are you alright?

BACK TO SCENE

Several skeletons help Victor into a chair as he looks around in wide-eyed horror. He sees that he's in...

A PUB of some kind. Green flames flicker in the fireplace, casting shadows along the crazily tilting walls. Rib-like beams rise toward the ceiling.

Dark figures move through the crowded room and gypsy-like music fills the smoky air. Coffin-shaped shelves behind the bar are filled with odd and ancient-looking bottles.

PAUL, THE HEAD WAITER, pokes his head INTO FRAME.

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER
(to Victor)
Have a drink, dear boy. It'll
calm your nerves.

A glass slides toward Victor. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Paul the Head Waiter is in fact, only a head. A swarm of BEETLES have emerged from the stump of his neck and scurry across the bar, pushing the glass towards Victor.

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER
(to Corpse Bride)
Ma cherie, where have you been
hiding yourself? It's been ages.

The beetles quickly return, carrying Paul off to serve his next customer.

As the Corpse Bride chats merrily away, Victor scans the room. A group of SKELETONS and CORPSES play billiards in a far corner. Nearby, a DEAD GENTLEMAN sits puffing his pipe, as double smoke rings blow from his eye holes.

WELLINGTON, a tall, ragged skeleton, dressed in the remains of a military uniform, has a CANNONBALL HOLE in his chest.

He plays chess with a DEAD DWARF, also clad in the tattered remains of a uniform, with a large sword thrust through his breastbone. A HANGED MAN, noose still around his neck, plays darts with a few other CORPSES. *

Another ROTTING CORPSE sits near the dartboard, reading the newspaper, oblivious to the occasional dart landing in his head. *

At one end of the room is a small stage, where a band of SKELETONS are playing on bizarre instruments made from salvaged scraps and bits of bone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. PLUM, the cook, is a rotting, blue-skinned old lady surrounded by a cloud of flies. She pushes a cart between the tables, serving soup from a large tureen. As she ladles it out, her jawbone drops into the bowl. *

It's all a bit much for Victor. He takes a gulp of his drink. *

Victor sees his chance. He grabs the sword in the Dead Dwarf's back, and waves it around, clearing a space in the shocked crowd. The sword still has the Dead Dwarf general attached. The BAND stops playing. *

Victor's trying to act tough, but his terror is evident to everyone. His hand shakes. *

VICTOR

Keep away! I've got a... Dwarf.
And I'm not afraid to use him! I
want some answers! Now! *

WELLINGTON

Answers. I think you mean
answers. *

VICTOR

Thank you, yes, answers! I need
answers. Why am I here? Who is
she? What is she? *

The houselights dim, leaving a single spotlight hitting the stage, where BONEJANGLES, front-man for THE SKELETONS, steps forward.

BONEJANGLES

Since you're askin'...
(snaps his fingers)
Hit it, boys! *

The Skeletons launch into a lively number, a "Minnie the Moocher"-type ballad where the crowd sings along, pounding their glasses on the bar to keep time. *

BONEJANGLES

GIVE A LISTEN --
YOU CORPSES WHO STILL HAVE AN EAR,
TO THE SONG OF THE DAMSEL WE ALL
HOLD SO DEAR.
A MAIDEN WHOSE BEAUTY WAS KNOWN
FAR AND WIDE,
WHO'D SOON BECOME KNOWN AS OUR
LOVELY
CORPSE BRIDE. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALL
 (lustily)
 DIE, DIE, WE ALL PASS AWAY,
 OUR BEAUTIFUL BRIDE'S THE REMAINS
 OF THE DAY.

BONEJANGLES
 SHE SAT IN HER COACH
 WITH HER FINE DIAMOND BROOCH
 AND RODE THROUGH THE WOODS WHERE
 THE ROBBERS WOULD HIDE.
 TO GET AT THE BANGLE
 THE POOR GAL WAS STRANGLER!
 SAD WAS THE DAY SHE BECAME THE
 CORPSE BRIDE.

ALL
 (robustly)
 BREATH, BREATH, THEY CHOKED OUT
 HER BREATH
 THE BRIDE'S WEDDING DAY WAS THE
 DAY OF HER DEATH!

Wellington takes a verse.

*

WELLINGTON
 SHE FELL IN THAT SPOT AND
 IN NO TIME SHE WENT ROTTEN.
 THE LOAM WAS HER HOME AND SHE
 CRIED --
 HOW SHE CRIED!
 FOR WHAT MAN WOULD HAVE HER
 THIS LONELY CADAVER?
 NEVER A BRIDESMAID BUT ALWAYS A
 BRIDE!

ALL
 DIE, DIE, WE ALL HAVE TO DIE,
 A TOAST TO THE GIRL WHO'S GOT MUD
 IN HER EYE!

*
*

DEAD DWARF
 SHE SWORE ON HER GRAVE
 THAT SHE'D SOMEDAY FIND LOVE.
 WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED
 IT WOULD COME FROM ABOVE?
 AFTER MANY LONG YEARS
 WITH WORMS IN THE SOIL,
 TODAY'S WHEN THE VICTOR IS GETTING
 THE SPOILS!

*
*
*
*
*

ALL
 (lustily)
 VIC, VIC, LET'S HEAR IT FOR VIC!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Pardon me, fellows, I'm going to
be sick.

The Hanged Man takes a verse. *

HANGED MAN

*AS A WIFE SHE'LL BE PERFECT,
NO WORRIES 'BOUT THAT!
SHE'LL NEVER GET OLDER,
SHE'LL NEVER GET FAT!
SHE CAN'T GET MUCH COLDER --
WHO WOULDN'T LIKE THAT?* *

MRS. PLUM *

*WOULD YOU MIND FOR A MOMENT
REMOVING YOUR HAT?*

Mrs. Plum SMACKS the Hanged Man with the soup ladle. *

Maggot pops out of the Corpse Bride's eye socket.

MAGGOT

(chanting)

*FIRST COMES LOVE, THEN COMES
BURIED!
RIGOR. MORTIS, THEN YOU'RE
MARRIED!* *

BLACK WIDOW

*HAPPY HUSBAND HUNTING GROUNDS
IN THE EARTH WHERE LOVE ABOUNDS!*

BONEJANGLES

*TODAY THERE IS LAUGHTER
THROUGHOUT THE HEREAFTER
IN HER TOMB IN THE GLOOM
THERE'S A GROOM BY HER SIDE!* *

ALL

*AND SO THEN IN CLOSING
AS WE KEEP DECOMPOSING
THINGS TURNED OUT QUITE WELL FOR
THE LOVELY
CORPSE BRIDE!*

The pub is swirling with activity as the Dead dance and
laugh.

The song ends. The Corpse Bride plants a big kiss on
Victor's cheek. He is absolutely stunned. *

CUT TO:

EXT. EVERGLOT MANSION (LAND OF THE LIVING) - NIGHT *

The village square is dark, except for a few lights coming from Everglot Mansion. *

All is silent, but for the HACKING COUGH coming from Mayhew, who sits shivering on the Van Dorts' carriage parked in the drive. *

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT *

Victoria is sewing together several patches of material to make the corner of the quilt. So far, it's only as big as her lap. Hildegarde attends her, clearly concerned for the girl. *

VICTORIA

Perhaps the Pastor was right. And Victor doesn't want to marry me. *

She casts her patchwork aside.

VICTORIA

I'm being silly. He's bound to have turned up by now. Right? *

Victoria gets up and walks to the door, followed by Hildegarde. *

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT *

The Van Dorts and the Everglots are gathered in the drawing room. Victoria enters, staying close to the doorway. *

NELL

I'm sure he'll be back shortly. He's terrified of the dark. In fact, when he was a boy he used to... *

The Butler announces a new visitor: *

BUTLER

Master Barkis! *

Barkis enters the room and walks over to Finis.

BARKIS

May I have a word with you, sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINIS
(without moving)

Yes. Go on. *

Barkis beckons the Town Crier into the room. *

BARKIS
Tell them what you told me.

The Town Crier RINGS his BELL, as loud as he ever does in the square. He speaks in the same deafening tones. *

Everyone else flinches from the volume. OBJECTS RATTLE and fall off shelves. *

TOWN CRIER
HEAR YE, HEAR YE! VICTOR VAN DORT
SEEN THIS NIGHT ON THE BRIDGE IN
THE ARMS OF A MYSTERY WOMAN. THE
DARK-HAIRED TEMPTRESS AND MASTER
VAN DORT, 19, SLIPPED AWAY INTO
THE NIGHT! AND NOW THE WEATHER -- *

BARKIS
Enough. *

The Town Crier leaves the room. *

Everyone is stunned -- especially Victoria. *

NELL
Mystery woman? He doesn't even
know any women! *

BARKIS
Or so you thought. But alas, he
has gone. *

VICTORIA
Victor...

BARKIS
Do call for me if you need any
assistance -- in any way. *

Barkis eyes Victoria, the same way a cat looks at a pet parakeet. He then takes his leave. *

MAUDELINE
Oh, the humiliation! Who else
knows about this? Good heavens,
Finis, what shall we do? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINIS

Fetch my musket!

NELL

(frantically)

William, do something!

WILLIAM

(clears his throat)

Look, the Town Crier probably just
had a slow news day. You know how
it is. You need something to cry
about --

*
*

FINIS

(cuts him off)

Regardless, we are one groom short
for the wedding tomorrow!

(under his breath)

Not to mention the financial
implications.

*
*
*
*
*

MAUDELINE

A most scandalous embarrassment
for us all! And with my relatives
due to arrive. This is most
dreadful.

*
*
*

NELL

Give us a chance to find him.

*
*

WILLIAM

We beg of you. Just give us until
dawn.

*
*
*

In the b.g., Finis is hopping up and down. Grabbing for
the musket that hangs on the wall, a bit too high for him
to reach.

*
*
*

MAUDELINE

Very well. 'Til dawn.

*
*

She RINGS for the Butler. The Van Dorts hastily get up
and back out, bowing.

*
*

NELL

Thank you! Thank you! I am sure
there must be some explanation.

We will find him.

(sotto)

And when we do, he'll wish he
were...

*
*
*
*
*
*

CUT TO:

*

INT. PUB (LAND OF THE DEAD) - PERPETUAL TWILIGHT *

VICTOR *

Dead! Demised... expired... *

Victor and the Corpse Bride sit at a secluded table, romantically lit with candles. The mood is much more relaxed than before. The BAND plays romantic DINNER MUSIC. *

Paul the Head Waiter hops up. He speaks with a French accent. *

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER *

My name ees Paul, I am ze head waiter. I will be creating your wedding feast. Now, are zer any special dietary requirements? *

VICTOR *

I'm allergic to artichokes. Not that it matters anymore. Being that I've kicked the bucket. Shuffled off this mortal coil... *

Corpse Bride and Paul exchange a glance. *

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER *

The young man is confused. You are not dead. You are just married! *

VICTOR *

Very funny. *

CORPSE BRIDE *

No, really. It's true. *

Corpse Bride holds Victor's hand over the candle on the table. *

VICTOR *

Ouch! *

CORPSE BRIDE *

Feel better? *

VICTOR *

(rubs his hand) *

That hurt. But wait, that must mean... I'm not dead? I'm still alive? I'm alive! *

BIG CORPSE *

Don't rub it in, pal. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Corpse Bride smiles, happy to see Victor happy. *

VICTOR

But how can a living person marry
a dead person? *

CORPSE BRIDE

By making a vow! Which you did! *

VICTOR

But I'm already supposed to marry
Victoria. *

CORPSE BRIDE

I'm sure she'll get over it.
There are lots of living people up
there. *

Sensing Victor is unconvinced, the Bride takes a more
sympathetic approach. *

CORPSE BRIDE

This Victoria. Did you love her? *

VICTOR

(a little wistful)

I never had a chance to find out.
Truth is, we hardly know anything
about each other. *

CORPSE BRIDE

The thing is, Victor. I know a
lot about you. I've watched you
wandering through the woods,
sketching... *

VICTOR

You have? When? *

CORPSE BRIDE

Haven't you ever felt like you
weren't alone, even when you were?
Or saw something out of the corner
of your eye and turned and it
wasn't there? *

VICTOR

Yes.

CORPSE BRIDE

It was me.

Victor is strangely touched. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

We live in these two different
worlds, but they overlap
sometimes. I think we were meant
to find each other.

VICTOR

I don't even know your name.

CORPSE BRIDE

I can't believe... in all the
excitement. It's Emily.

(beat)

I also have a little wedding gift
for you.

The Corpse Bride WHISTLES. Out comes a little skeleton
dog, wagging its tail, very happy to see Victor.

VICTOR

Scraps! My dog Scraps!

SCRAPS JUMPS UP and starts LICKING Victor.

CORPSE BRIDE

I knew you'd be happy to see him.

With manic energy, the little dog tears around the bar,
knocking over glasses before leaping back into Victor's
lap.

Hearing the RUCKUS, Mrs. Plum emerges from the kitchen,
waving her soup ladle.

MRS. PLUM

Who let that horrid beast in here?

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

(looking at Victor)

He came in with the dog.

VICTOR

(to Mrs. Plum)

I'm afraid he's mine. Well,
was... Scraps was my dog when I
was a boy.

MRS. PLUM

Keep him out of my kitchen! Who
knows where he's been.

She turns back through the kitchen door, maggots and
flies swarm over her bluish-grey flesh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The little DOG jumps around in Victor's lap, wagging his tail and BARKING cheerfully. *

CORPSE BRIDE

What a cutie.

VICTOR

You should have seen him with fur.

Victor pets the skeleton dog fondly.

VICTOR

Mother never approved of Scraps jumping up like this. *

(sotto)

But, then again, she never approved of anything.

CORPSE BRIDE *

Do you think she would have approved of me?

VICTOR

You're lucky you'll never have to meet her. *

Victor suddenly has an INSPIRATION.

VICTOR

(false brightness)

Well, actually... now that you mention it... I think she would. *
 Yes. I do believe she would. In *
 fact, since we're, you know, m... *
 married... you should definitely *
 meet her. And my father too. You *
 should meet both my parents! *

Victor waits nervously for her reaction. *

Slowly, a big smile comes over Corpse Bride's face.

CORPSE BRIDE

What a fantastic idea! Let's go find them. Where are they buried? *

VICTOR

Oh, there is one slight problem... *

CORPSE BRIDE

What is it?

VICTOR

They're not from around here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

Where are they?

Victor points toward the ceiling.

CORPSE BRIDE

They're still alive?

VICTOR

I'm afraid so.

CORPSE BRIDE

(crushed)

That is a problem. *

CUT TO: *

EXT. VAN DORT HOUSE (LAND OF THE LIVING) - NIGHT *

Mayhew sits on the carriage, SNEEZING, COUGHING in the
pouring rain. *

CUT TO: *

INT. VAN DORT DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT *

RAIN HAMMERS on the WINDOW. Nell WHIMPERS into a big
handkerchief. *

NELL *

They're the best family for miles
and we were going to marry into
them. Their manners and
breeding -- were going to be our
manners and breeding! They're
related to a Duke. *

(her voice breaks) *

A Duke! *

WILLIAM *

And we've lost a son, of course. *

NELL *

(dismissive) *

Oh yes. That too. *

WILLIAM *

But we haven't lost all hope. *

NELL *

How so? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM *
 The Everglots agreed to have their *
 daughter marry our son. *

NELL *
 Yes, I recall! *

WILLIAM *
 But we never specified which son. *

Nell looks at him, perplexed. Has he lost his mind? *

NELL *
 We only have one son! *

WILLIAM *
 Or do we? *

NELL *
 We do! *

With a wait-one-moment finger, William leaves the room. *

He returns a beat later, holding a broom dressed in a dinner jacket, complete with a top hat perched on the straw. *

WILLIAM *
 May I introduce Reginald Van Dort! *

NELL *
 He's a broom! *

WILLIAM *
 He's tidy! *

NELL *
 He's flammable! *

WILLIAM *
 And Victor isn't? Dear wife, with *
 the proper flame, we all burn to *
 cinders. *

NELL *
 And we will burn to cinders if we *
 don't find Victor! Ooooh! *

She storms out of the room. *

WILLIAM *
 (to the broom) *
 Your mother's very fragile. *

CUT TO: *

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victoria is alone. She is sewing her quilt -- it now covers an entire armchair and is looking slightly more unhinged. She seems sadder and lonelier than ever.

Finally, she stands up and throws on a heavy shawl. With great effort, she pushes up the window and leans on the sill, looking out into the rainy night.

CUT TO:

INT. ELDER'S STUDY (LAND OF THE DEAD) - LATER

The study is stacked ceiling to floor with crumbling books, scrolls, charts and strange, medieval, scientific instruments. Rickety shelves bend under the weight of mysterious jars and boxes. Crows perch in the rafters. The whole place is frosted with bird droppings, and the dust of untold centuries. It's Leonardo Da Vinci meets Sanford and Son.

ELDER GUTKNECHT is an ANCIENT, GNARLED SKELETON, as bent and twisted as a tree root. He wears a scholarly cap and wire-rimmed glasses.

Victor and Corpse Bride plead with him as he wanders between the stacks, removing something from one pile and carefully placing it on another.

CORPSE BRIDE

... please, Elder Gutknecht,
surely there must be something you
can do?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Why go up when you can stay down
here? People are dying to get in.

Victor and Corpse Bride exchange a look.

VICTOR

It's very important she meet my
family. Just a quick hello and
we'll be right back.

CORPSE BRIDE

(to Victor)
I'm so glad you thought of this.

A twinge of guilt comes across Victor's face.

Elder Gutknecht rubs his head in thought, causing a shower of dust to drift off him. Suddenly, inspiration!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELDER GUTKNECHT
I have it! A Ukranian haunting
spell!

*
*
*

VICTOR
A what?

*
*

CORPSE BRIDE
Of course!

*
*

Elder Gutknecht shuffles to a stepladder affixed to his
bookshelf.

*

Corpse Bride and Victor watch as he hoists himself up
each step, knocking books off the shelf as he goes.

At the top of the ladder he struggles to reach for a
particularly large book.

VICTOR
(hastily)
Allow me, sir.

Victor retrieves the book and drops it on Elder
Gutknecht's desk.

ELDER GUTKNECHT
(climbing down from
ladder)
It's just the thing for these
quick trips. None of the fuss of
corporeal travel.

*
*
*

VICTOR
Such a thing is possible?

*
*

ELDER GUTKNECHT
Certainly. But not needed here.
Now, let's see...

*
*
*

He flips through the pages. Corpse Bride and Victor lean
closer, slightly touching one another. They are so
intent on the book they don't notice.

*
*
*

ELDER GUTKNECHT
It certainly is dusty.

*
*

What Gutknecht doesn't realize is that most of the dust
comes from him.

*
*

ELDER GUTKNECHT
Ahh! Here. And we have
everything we need.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes a strange speckled egg from a bowl on his desk.
He begins MUMBLING a spell, then suddenly looks up.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Ready?

VICTOR

No! I don't understand how...

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Just remember, when you want to
come back, just say 'hopscotch.'

VICTOR

Hopscotch?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

That's it.

Elder Gutknecht suddenly CRACKS the egg above their
heads. Instead of a yolk, a strange, sparkling powder
falls out.

The moment it touches Victor and Corpse Bride, they
instantly collapse.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. ABANDONED CEMETERY (LAND OF THE LIVING) - NIGHT

Victor blinks, bewildered. As the sparkling dust clears,
he finds himself standing in the middle of a graveyard,
Corpse Bride at his side.

CORPSE BRIDE

I had forgotten how beautiful the
moonlight is...

She leans over to a tree, trying to gather a branch in
her hand. But her fingers pass right through it.

Confused, Victor reaches out. His fingers pass through
it too.

VICTOR

Is this a dream?

CORPSE BRIDE

No, it's real. Everything's real
except us. You and I are just
phantoms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laughing, she glides around the trunk. She dances around the clearing, disappearing behind the black columns and reappearing again. *

Victor is transfixed by the vision of her dancing, her dress flowing around her like smoke in the cold light of the moon. *

She comes back to him. *

CORPSE BRIDE *

Which house is yours? *

Victor looks around. To the left, he sees his own house, with one gable. To the right, he sees the Everglots' two-gabled mansion. *

After a beat of hesitation, he points to the Everglots. *

VICTOR *

It's right up there. *

(quickly
improvising)

Why don't I sort of go first, and... prepare them. You wait here. *

CORPSE BRIDE *

Perfect! *

Victor runs toward the house atop the hill. *

We STAY BEHIND with the Bride as she dances on gravestones. After a few beats, Black Widow and Maggot crawl out. *

BLACK WIDOW *

You are a very trusting bride. *

MAGGOT *

She is warmhearted. *

BLACK WIDOW *

But we're all cold-blooded now. *

CORPSE BRIDE *

Not Victor. *

BLACK WIDOW *

No. Not Victor. He's back in the Land of the Living. And I'm sure he has a lot to catch up on. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGOT
What are you implying?

BLACK WIDOW
Out of sight, out of mind. Out of
mind... out of the picture.

Corpse Bride looks over at the two-gabled house in the
distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EVERGLOT MANSION - NIGHT

Victor approaches the house cautiously, not sure what to
expect. Then he spies two silhouettes in one of the
downstairs windows.

He carefully approaches.

FINIS (O.S.)
(silhouette)
If I ever get my hands on that Van
Dort boy, I'll strangle him with
my bare hands.

INT. EVERGLOT DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

MAUDELINE
Your hands are too fat, and his
neck is too thin. You'll have to
use a rope!

FINIS
Hmmmff.

BACK TO VICTOR

Startled, he creeps back away. He nearly gives up
altogether, when he notices a --

ANGLE - LIGHT

In an upstairs window.

BACK TO SCENE

With the courage of the damned, he reaches for a rickety
trellis, hoping to climb it. But his hands pass right
through it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Drat! There must be a way.
Think, Victor, think!

As he wracks his brain, we notice his shoes have floated
up off the ground.

VICTOR

The skeleton called it a haunting
spell. That would make me a...
ghost.

Only now does he realize that he's floated up to the
second level. He can look in the window.

CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victoria sits in her armchair, frantically stitching away
at her quilt.

She hears a WHISTLE. She turns to see Victor on her
balcony -- muddy, disheveled, his jacket torn, his hair
wild. She rushes over and opens the French doors.
Victor enters.

VICTOR

Victoria --

VICTORIA

Victor! Oh, it is such joy to see
you. What's happened to you!
(beat)
Your coat --

VICTOR

(desperate)

Victoria, you have to help me.

VICTORIA

You cannot know what they have
been saying...

Suddenly Victor freezes with horror. He is facing the
window, and he alone sees...

Corpse Bride's SKELETAL ARM appearing over the railing of
the balcony.

Victor lets out a panicked gasp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He quickly steps in front of the window, so Victoria won't see the bride. *

VICTORIA
Victor, what's wrong? *

VICTOR
(hastily)
I seem to find myself married.
And you should know it's
unexpected. *

Corpse Bride heaves the rest of herself over the edge of the balcony, losing a leg in the process. She grabs the leg to reattach it. *

Corpse Bride, distracted with fixing her leg back on, doesn't notice Victoria. *

CORPSE BRIDE
(merrily)
Oh dear, and I did so want to make
a good impression! I couldn't
wait, darling. I wanted to
meet... *

Now she sees Victoria, and freezes. *

Both women stare at each other. Corpse Bride, puzzled, goes up to Victor, putting a possessive hand on his arm. *

CORPSE BRIDE
Darling? Who is this? *

As her hand rests on his arm, Victoria sees the RING. *

VICTORIA
(stunned)
Victor! Who... What is this? *

VICTOR
Victoria, wait, you don't
understand --
(desperately)
I can assure you it's not what you
think. She's dead! Look! *

He grabs the Corpse Bride's bony arm, flapping it for emphasis. *

Victoria SCREAMS. *

CORPSE BRIDE
Who is she? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR

Victoria Everglot. The girl I'm
supposed to marry.

*
*

Suddenly there's a POUNDING on the bedroom door.

MAUDELINE

(behind the door)
Victoria! What's going on in
there! Open this door at once!
Finis, get the key!

*
*

CORPSE BRIDE

(to Victor)
You tricked me!

*
*
*

She grabs him tightly around the chest.

CORPSE BRIDE

Hopscotch!

*
*

VICTOR

What?
(realizing)
Wait! No!

*
*
*
*

Suddenly, Corpse Bride and Victor begin to fade.

VICTOR

Victoria, you have to help me!

*
*

He reaches out to her. Their fingers nearly touch,
before Victor completely disappears.

*
*

CUT TO:

INT. ELDER'S STUDY (LAND OF THE DEAD) - PERPETUAL
TWILIGHT

*
*

Elder Gutknecht sits at his desk when suddenly Corpse
Bride and Victor awaken on the floor. She pushes herself
up.

*
*

CORPSE BRIDE

You lied to me! Just to get back
to that other woman.

*

Victor stands there, guilty as charged.

VICTOR

(miserably)
Don't you understand? You are the
other woman.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

(more hurt than
furious now)No! You're married to me! She's
the other woman. *Corpse Bride bursts into tears. Unsure of what to do,
Victor turns to the Elder for support. *

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(shrugging his
shoulders)

She's got a point. *

CORPSE BRIDE

(sobbing)

Oh, and I thought... I thought
this was all going so well... *Her eye plops out with the force of her weeping. Victor
picks it up and hands it back to her. *

VICTOR

Look, I'm sorry but... this just
can't work. *

CORPSE BRIDE

(putting her eye
back in)

Why not? *

(self-consciously)
It's my eye, isn't it? *

VICTOR

No... your eye is fine. *

CORPSE BRIDE

(blinking)

Really? *

VICTOR

Yes. Listen, under different
circumstances, well, who knows.
But, we're just too different. I
mean, you're dead. *

CORPSE BRIDE

You should have thought about that
before you asked me to marry you. *

VICTOR

Why can't you understand? It was
a mistake! I would never marry
you! *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The words sting. Corpse Bride dejectedly lowers her head. She turns and walks out of the Elder's study, leaving Victor standing there, feeling like a heel.

*
*

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WAY (LAND OF THE DEAD) - LATER

*

Corpse Bride walks down the alley. She reaches into a hidden pocket of her gown, and pulls out a dried, crumbling wedding bouquet. Petals drift off it.

*
*

CORPSE BRIDE

Roses for eternal love... lilies
for sweetness... baby's breath...

*
*

She drops the bouquet on the ground and walks off.

*

Victor stands in the shadows, watching the Corpse Bride walk away. He follows, but keeps a good distance back.

*

Black Widow and Maggot are perched on the bride's shoulders. As the bride wipes off a tear, we see that the moisture floats away like feather down.

*
*
*

BLACK WIDOW

Forget him. He's not worth the
tears, darling.

*
*
*

MAGGOT

But what tears they are! Strong
and wispy!

*
*
*

CORPSE BRIDE

(ignoring)
I can't compete with that woman.
She has everything he wants.
Including a pulse.

*
*
*
*
*

BLACK WIDOW

Nonsense!

*
*

MUSIC RISES for a song, "Break My Heart."

*

BLACK WIDOW

*All she has is life,
You have everything after!
All she has is blood and hair,
You have glorious laughter!*

*
*
*
*
*

As Black Widow and Maggot get into it, they start swinging around the bride, flying on spider web lines.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGOT

*All she has is colour,
Which fades with every day.
The best in you is black and
white,
And shades of blue-ish grey!*

Corpse Bride smiles, despite herself.

BLACK WIDOW

*Famine, death and pestilence,
Haven't troubled you in years,
The best part of being dead,
Is burying your fears.*

MAGGOT

*Everyone, eventually,
Dies and rots and stinks,
Victor, he will too, one day.
No matter what he thinks.*

CORPSE BRIDE

He thinks I'm a monster.

MAGGOT

You are a monster. A beautiful
monster.

BLACK WIDOW

So start acting like one.

A little inspired, Corpse Bride takes on a verse:

CORPSE BRIDE

*Cut me with a knife,
I feel nothing.*

MAGGOT

Exactly!

CORPSE BRIDE

*Burn me with a flame,
I'll keep smiling just the same.*

BLACK WIDOW

As well you should!

CORPSE BRIDE

*Cupid shot his arrow
At my only living part.
So if you want to hurt me,
Break my heart.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGOT

Wait, what? No! It got sad
again!

Black Widow and Maggot try to salvage the can-do spirit
of the song, but Corpse Bride keeps shooting it down.

WIDOW/MAGGOT/BRIDE

*Remember...
All she has is life,
You have everything after!
What good is an afterlife
When love is a disaster?
All she has is colour,
Which fades with every day.
Like an ink-stain soaked and
scrubbed,
I'll gladly fade away.
The best part of being dead...
Is feeling not a thing.
But everyone, eventually...
Feels love's cruellest sting.*

Black Widow and Maggot are at a loss. As the Bride
continues her sad lament, they retreat inside her rib
cage.

CORPSE BRIDE

*Cut me with a knife,
I feel nothing!
Burn me with a flame,
I'll keep smiling just the same.
Cupid shot his arrow
At my only living part.
So if you want to hurt me,
Break my heart.*

As Corpse Bride walks off, we COME UPON Victor, who's
heard the whole song. He feels terrible.

TRANSITION TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victoria, wide-eyed and disheveled, paces the room.
Hildegarde tries desperately to calm her. Maudeline
watches her with unamused disdain.

VICTORIA

It's true, Mother! Victor's
married to a dead woman! I saw
her! A corpse! Standing right
here, with Victor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE

(gasping)

Victor was in your room!? The scandal!

*
*

HILDEGARDE

Miss Victoria, dear, let Hilde fix you a nice cuppa tea. Come sit in your chair...

*

VICTORIA

I can't sit! I have to help him! He came here to ask for my help!

*
*

HILDEGARDE

Come sit by the fire, dearie, you're shakin' like a leaf. Let Hilde fetch you a blanket.

*

MAUDELINE

Fetch her a straightjacket. She's completely mad!

*
*
*

Annoyed, Maudeline turns on her heel and exits.

*

Hildegarde leads Victoria to a chair and drapes a blanket across her shoulders.

VICTORIA

A corpse in a wedding gown, with my ring on her finger. It was awful!

*
*

HILDEGARDE

Truly awful, Miss Victoria. A corpse in a wedding gown! I've heard tell of such things. Don't worry, dearie, we'll save Master Van Dort from the clutches of darkness.

*
*
*
*

Hildegarde exits the room, closing the door firmly behind her.

CUT TO:

*

EXT. VICTORIA'S BALCONY - LATER

*

Victoria, with the blanket wrapped over her like a hood, stands out on the balcony. The rain is falling hard. She hesitates, then climbs over the railing and down the trellis.

*
*

Hildegarde is waiting for her at the bottom, with an umbrella at the ready.

*
*

EXT. EVERGLOT MANSION - CONTINUOUS ACTION - RAIN *

Victoria and Hildegarde hurry across the village square
in the POURING RAIN. *

EXT. PASTOR GALSWELLS' HOME - NIGHT (RAIN) *

Pastor Galswells, his towering Pope-hat, now flopped
forward like a night cap, answers a KNOCK on his door to
discover Victoria and Hildegarde. *

PASTOR GALSWELLS

(appalled)

Miss Everglot! What are you doing
here! You should be at home
prostrate with grief! *

HILDEGARDE *

We sought the advice of a man of
the cloth. *

VICTORIA *

Pastor Galswells, I have to ask
you something. *

PASTOR GALSWELLS *

This is most irregular! *

VICTORIA *

Please, I beg of you! Tell me,
can the living marry the dead? *

PASTOR GALSWELLS *

What on earth are you speaking
about? *

VICTORIA *

Please, Pastor Galswells! It's
Victor! He needs our help! He's
married to a corpse! He has a
Corpse Bride! *

Pastor Galswells looks at her piercingly.

VICTORIA *

There must be some way to undo
what's been done. You're the only
one who would know how! *

Seeing the Pastor's distrust... *

HILDEGARDE *

I've known this girl her whole
life, ain't never once lied. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASTOR GALSWELLS

I believe I know the thing to do.
Come with me.

*
*

Victoria and Hildegarde gratefully follow him.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE HOME - NIGHT (RAIN)

*

CLOSE ON a large imposing door and Pastor Galswells' fist
BANGING on it.

We PULL BACK to reveal it's Victoria's own front door.
She squirms desperately to escape as Pastor Galswells
holds her firmly.

*

VICTORIA

No! Please. You must believe me!

*

The Butler answers, with Maudeline and Finis right behind
him.

MAUDELINE

(horrified)

Good Lord. What on earth is this
about! Victoria! Where are your
corsets?!

*
*

Victoria struggles wildly. She's muddy and disheveled,
looking more and more, in fact, crazy.

*
*

PASTOR GALSWELLS

She is speaking in tongues! Of
unholy alliances! Her mind has
come undone, I fear, led perhaps
by this strange woman.

*
*
*
*

He's referring to...

*

MAUDELINE

Hildegarde!

*
*

... who stands sheepishly behind them.

*

FINIS

Good heavens.

*
*

She and Finis drag Victoria in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE

Thank, you, Pastor Galswells. *
 Thank you so much. Hildegarde, *
 you may get started on breakfast! *

Maudeline and Finis close the door as Pastor Galswells bows with a judgmental scowl.

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT ENTRYWAY - NIGHT *

Maudeline bolts the door and hands Victoria over to the Butler.

VICTORIA *

Mother, Father, please... *
 listen... *

The Butler escorts a weeping Victoria up the stairs. *
 Maudeline leans against the wall, clutching her heart. *

MAUDELINE

Will the mortification never *
 cease? *

She looks in agony, toward the portrait of the Duke.

MAUDELINE

What would the Duke have said? *
 (slowly, in growing *
 horror) *
 And the relatives en route as we *
 speak! They've R.S.V.P.'d. It's *
 too late! Oh, won't the villagers *
 just gloat! It will be years *
 before we can show ourselves in *
 public again! What shall we do? *

FINIS

We shall continue as planned, with *
 or without Vincent. *

MAUDELINE

Victor.

FINIS

Whatever. *

CUT TO: *

INT. THE VAN DORTS' CARRIAGE - DAY

The Van Dort CARRIAGE CLATTERS along the cobblestone streets through the POURING RAIN. Mayhew sits, wet and miserable, his hacking cough reverberating.

Seated within, Nell and William continue their search for Victor. William peers out the window on one side as Nell looks out the other, scanning the vicinity with a pair of opera glasses. From outside, in the driver's seat, comes the sound of Mayhew's RASPING COUGH.

NELL

Did you hear the latest gossip?
Our son, married to a corpse,
she's saying.

WILLIAM

Stark raving mad. Frankly, my
dear, perhaps we're better off out
of it.

A pause.

WILLIAM

Of course, we're the ones with the
son married to the corpse.

NELL

William, don't be ridiculous.
What corpse would marry him?

WILLIAM

At least we have one dependable
son.

He gestures to the suit-wearing broom, who is sitting
across from them. Nell rolls her eyes.

NELL

(banging ceiling)
Faster, Mayhew! And silence that
blasted coughing!

Mayhew suddenly stops coughing.

WILLIAM

(looking through
the opera glasses)
Oh, where can the ninny have gone
to?

CUT TO:

EXT. PUB (LAND OF THE DEAD)- PERPETUAL TWILIGHT *

Victor walks toward the pub entrance, holding the dried bouquet. Two skeletons push past him, carrying a table. *

INT. PUB - CONTINUOUS ACTION *

Victor enters. Most of the tables have been moved outside for the wedding feast. It's quiet and still, a "closing time" vibe. *

The place is empty except for a skeleton who sweeps the floor, and Mrs. Plum, who pushes a cart of dirty dishes into the kitchen. Up on the stage, Corpse Bride sits, PLINKING sadly on the old piano. *

VICTOR

(walks up to her)

I... I think you dropped this. *

Without looking up she takes the flowers.

VICTOR

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I lied to you about wanting to see my parents. Truth is, I'm happier not to see them. *

Corpse Bride doesn't respond. The Maggot pops out of her ear. *

MAGGOT

Oh, save it for the living girls, Vic. I think you've said quiet enough already. *

The Black Widow emerges. They perch on her shoulders, one on either side. *

VICTOR

I never meant to... *

BLACK WIDOW

I've had dozens of husbands, and none of them as heartless as you. You should be ashamed. *

VICTOR

But, I...

MAGGOT

You're married now and there's nothing that anyone can do about it. You might as well get used to it. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

Don't bother. You can't force him
to like me.

*

VICTOR

But I do like you. Truly. It's
just this whole evening hasn't
gone quite, well, according to
plan.

*

*

*

*

After a beat, Victor sits down on the bench next to her.
He starts playing along. Corpse Bride looks up at him,
surprised, but keeps playing, as he improvises.

*

*

It's nothing fancy, just simple fun like "chopsticks."
Something Victor would never have played in the company
of others before.

The music picks up as they play. It's almost like a
"Dueling Banjos" thing: Corpse Bride plays a riff, and
Victor echoes it back with an unexpected spin.

*

*

*

They're starting to truly enjoy themselves.

*

Corpse Bride takes a solo, her skeletal hand breaking
free from her wrist and running on its fingers down the
length of the keyboard. It dances there, doing a little
"soft shoe" melody before the Corpse Bride, laughing,
picks up her hand and snaps it back into place.

*

CORPSE BRIDE

(giggling)

Pardon my enthusiasm.

VICTOR

(shyly)

I like your enthusiasm.

An awkward beat. Victor and Corpse Bride look at each
other.

*

Suddenly a LOUD CRASH is heard from the kitchen. Scraps
comes running out through the door with Mrs. Plum in
pursuit.

*

*

*

MRS. PLUM

Who let that filthy beast in my
kitchen!

*

*

We FOLLOW Scraps and Mrs. Plum out into the village
square.

*

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - SAME TIME *

The place is bustling as the Dead prepare for the upcoming party. *

Bonejangles and the Skeletones, who have been warming up, break into SONG to inspire the hard-working crowd. *

This leads to a "spontaneous" musical number in which skeletons stagger back and forth arranging heavy tables as steaming platters are laid out with tightly choreographed precision, like a Busby Berkeley musical.

Mrs. Plum leads the singing, (think "Everybody Eats When They Come to My House" by Cab Calloway) as the trays of odd, gnarled "food" hit the table. The whole village gets into the act, arranging dead flowers and hanging decorations. *

Paul the Head Waiter scurries between people's feet, darting from place to place, supervising the activities.

As the MUSIC continues, Corpse Bride, feeling her old cheerful self again, gazes at the party preparations swirling around her. Her eyes settle on Victor, in his filthy, tattered jacket. *

She studies him carefully, shaking her head. *

Black Widow emerges from Corpse Bride's ear and WHISTLES. Suddenly, dozens of fellow spiders descend from above and land on Victor. Victor closes his eyes in horror. *

Without missing a beat, the spiders swarm over him. They repair his tattered suit in Land of the Dead style. The plain, austere fabric is now interwoven with glistening spider webs, and glows with a sinister elegance. *

Victor opens his eyes and looks down in astonishment. *

Corpse Bride beams as party preparation, and the MUSIC, reach fever pitch. *

A group of skeletons stagger under the weight of a grotesque, towering wedding cake, decorated with tangled roots and spider webs.

It tilts and sways precariously from side to side. It's so massive that skeletons dance on the first three layers. Mrs. Plum, on top of the cake, puts the finishing touches on as the MUSIC ENDS, giving way to excited chatter and applause. *

The excitement is interrupted by the clamor of -- *

A BELL RINGING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER (O.S.)

Coming through, coming through!
New arrival!

*

He ushers in the new arrival, a confused-looking elderly man. It is Mayhew, the Van Dorts' coachman.

*

VICTOR

Mayhew!

MAYHEW

Young Victor!

VICTOR

How nice to see you!

(realizing what
this means)

Er, I mean, I'm so sorry...

*

MAYHEW

(looking around,
wonderingly)

So... so peaceful! No one barkin'
orders at me night and day. Oh,
pardon me, Master Van Dort.

*

*

VICTOR

No, no, I understand. How is
everyone?

MAYHEW

All right, I suppose. They're
still wonderin' where you slipped
off to. Oh, and Miss Victoria --

*

*

*

VICTOR

(instantly)

Yes?

MAYHEW

She's getting married this
evening.

*

*

VICTOR

What? Married to whom?

*

MAYHEW

Barkis Bittern.

VICTOR

(shocked)

B-Barkis Bittern!? The Everglots'
lawyer?

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAYHEW

Aye, with you gone and all. They didn't want to waste the cake.

VICTOR

Barkis Bittern? But... But, how could she?

MAYHEW

Time to pick up the pieces and move on, I suppose.

SKELETON (O.S.)

Hey, mate! Speakin' of pickin' up the pieces... come give us a hand with this table!

*
*
*

MAYHEW

So much for 'eternal rest.'

He walks off to help as Victor digests this new information. The Corpse Bride watches Victor with growing concern -- his thoughts have already returned to Victoria.

*
*
*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM (LAND OF THE LIVING) - SAME TIME

*
*

Finis and Maudeline speak to a pale, trembling Victoria.

MAUDELINE

That's enough, Victoria. The wedding has been planned for months. All my relatives, direct descendants of the Duke, are probably in their carriages right this moment!

*
*
*

(dismissive)

This is just a small change. It won't make any difference.

*

VICTORIA

(faintly)

But, mother...

FINIS

(interrupting)

Barkis will make a fine husband.

VICTORIA

I don't love Barkis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE

And I remind you, that is
irrelevant! The wedding is on,
according to plan.

*
*
*

They close the door, sealing her in the room.

*

CUT TO:

INT. EVERGLOT DRAWING ROOM - DAY

*

Barkis stands proudly in front of the mirror, lips curled into an arrogant sneer, as Hildegarde hovers around him, pins in her mouth, making adjustments to the high-collared wedding suit.

Barkis' sneer quickly transforms into an obsequious smile as Finis enters the room.

*

BARKIS

I must thank you again, sir, for
the unexpected honor of...

FINIS

(straightening
his own tie
in the mirror)

Cut the small talk. You're an
Everglot now, and Everglots do not
mince words. I expect this
wedding to come off without a
hitch. Do I make myself clear?

*
*
*

BARKIS

Absolutely, sir. Without a hitch.
Crystal clear, sir.

*

FINIS

Excellent.

*

BARKIS

(piously)

I shall not disappoint you, sir.

(pointedly)

Most certainly not in remembering
my vows.

He jumps as Hildegarde has, apparently by accident, poked him with a pin. He glares at her. She looks back at him, the soul of innocence. Barkis returns his gaze to the mirror, and smiles approvingly at his own reflection.

*
*

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE (LAND OF THE DEAD) - PERPETUAL
TWILIGHT

The party is about to begin. Corpse Bride is putting on the finishing touches, when Elder Gutknecht approaches her.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Very good indeed. I've always thought people worried too much about the ceremony and not enough about the celebration.

CORPSE BRIDE

Well, it was a very quick ceremony.

She tucks a dead flower in his lapel.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

As it should be. In my day, we didn't bother with cups and candles. Rubbish, all of it. How does anyone keep it straight when they say their vows?

CORPSE BRIDE

(playfully)

Lucky for me, I didn't have to. I was rather silent!

Elder Gutknecht stops. Dust drifts off him.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Excuse me?

CORPSE BRIDE

(a little more
hesitantly)

I was rather silent?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

You didn't say your vows?

CORPSE BRIDE

(frightened now)

No...?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

But, my child, you must both say the vows for the marriage to be binding.

They stare at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

(slowly)

What are you saying?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

My dear, you're not really
married. He's free to go.

*

Corpse Bride looks around wildly at all the wedding feast preparations, the crowds of the Dead, already beginning to congregate, and at Victor, now wild and handsome, with Boots trotting alongside. She looks back at Elder Gutknecht, distraught.

*

*

ELDER GUTKNECHT

The moment he realizes he's not
really married, he'll simply drift
back.

*

*

*

*

CORPSE BRIDE

But surely... surely there's some
way to fix this? Please help me!

*

*

ELDER GUTKNECHT

You'll have to complete the
ceremony by saying your vows.

*

*

CORPSE BRIDE

I'll say them right now!

Elder Gutknecht shakes his head.

*

CORPSE BRIDE

(distressed)

What?

*

ELDER GUTKNECHT

His vows were spoken in the land
above. You too, must say your
vows among the living.

*

Corpse Bride stares at him. Her knees wobble.

*

CORPSE BRIDE

We'll never get up there without
him knowing. If he finds out...
He'll leave! How can I explain
it?

*

*

*

The Elder scratches his skull, wafting a faint cloud of dust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Perhaps, my dear, it is time to
accept that some things are not
meant to be.

*

CORPSE BRIDE

I've been waiting my whole life,
and my whole after-life for this!
I'm not giving up now. We're
going up there. And we're going
up now.

*

*

*

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Wait. Please be reasonable...
Even if I could allow it, you said
yourself he'd be suspicious.

*

*

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE (LAND OF THE DEAD) - MOMENTS LATER

*

The Dead have gathered around the statue. Corpse Bride
is on top of the horse as she addresses the crowd.

*

CORPSE BRIDE

Listen up, people! Listen up!
There's been a change of venue!
Grab what you can and follow me.
We're moving this party.

*

*

*

SCISSORHEAD

Where?

CORPSE BRIDE

Upstairs!

The crowd reacts with surprised GASPS and confused
MURMURING...

*

*

FRESHLY-DEAD WOMAN

Upstairs? I didn't know we had an
upstairs here.

*

VICTOR

(surprised)

Why?

*

CORPSE BRIDE

(talking fast)

For the moonlight! I was thinking
we could... repeat our vows up
there... like the first time we
met. It would be so romantic...

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He listens to her rapid-fire, used-car salesman pitch.

CORPSE BRIDE

And you could say good-bye to everyone properly...

VICTOR

(resigned)

If it means that much to you. *

He smiles to Corpse Bride and extends his arm to her.

Corpse Bride beams, giddy with relief.

HANGED MAN

Back among the living? Is it possible? *

SKELETON GIRL

Sounds creepy. Let's go. *

The crowd CHEERS, and excitedly rush to gather up their stuff. Elder Gutknecht looks very concerned. *

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Oh, dear...

The Dead Tinsmith straightens his tie, and combs the single strand of hair on his head, trying to make himself presentable for the journey. *

CUT TO:

NEW ANGLE *

Bonejangles and the Skeletons gather their instruments. *

CUT TO: *

ANOTHER ANGLE *

Black Widow and Maggot crawl out of Corpse Bride's ear, pulling with them a gossamer sheet of fabric. *

BLACK WIDOW *

We thought you needed a proper wedding veil. *

CORPSE BRIDE *

(genuinely touched) *

Thank you. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGOT

It's woven from your tears. They
are so strong and wispy.

CORPSE BRIDE

It's beautiful.

She starts to cry happy tears.

BLACK WIDOW

So now she wants a gown.

As the bugs put the veil on, we...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. VICTORIA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Another wedding veil, carried by Hildegarde. She enters,
finding Victoria slumped on the edge of her bed.

HILDEGARDE

(gently)

Miss Victoria, we must leave for
the church...

Victoria looks up. She's been crying.

VICTORIA

Yesterday, I thought my wedding
would be happy. Now I feel like
I'm caught in the tide, pulled out
to sea.

HILDEGARDE

The sea leads to many places,
dearie. Maybe you'll land
somewhere better.

BARKIS (O.S.)

(pre-lap)

With this hand I will lift your
sorrows. Your cup will never
empty, for I will be your wine.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE CHURCH - EVENING

A somber, ponderous bleakness pervades, accentuated by
the sound of LUGUBRIOUS ORGAN MUSIC.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Victoria stands dully at the altar, wearing her austere ivory wedding gown. *

The portrait of the Duke has been brought to the church and placed in a seat of honor, as if to witness the ceremony. *

Finis and Barkis wear formal wedding suits and towering top hats. *

BARKIS *

With this candle, I will light
your way in darkness. With this
ring, I ask you to be mine. *

He slides an ornate ring onto her finger. *

The silent CROWD sits, stiff and starched in their grey suits and dresses. Among them, we FIND Hildegarde. *

Pastor Galswells nods at Victoria. With a deep breath, she takes a candle from the table. *

VICTORIA *

(almost a whisper)
With this hand I will lift your
sorrows. Your cup will never
empty, for I will be your wine.
With this candle, I will light
your way in darkness. With this
ring, I ask you to be mine. *

She slides a gold ring onto Barkis' chubby finger. He offers a saccharine smile, as much for the crowd as anyone. *

PASTOR GALSWELLS *

I now pronounce you, man and wife. *

Barkis leans in for a kiss. Victoria turns her cheek at the last moment, lest he kiss her lips. *

TRANSITION TO: *

INT. EVERGLOT DINING ROOM - NIGHT *

The dinner party is being held with all the formality of a funeral. Multiple salad forks. Finger bowls. Everything placed just so. *

The only sound is the occasional TINKLE of GLASS and SILVERWARE. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maudeline is in her element, and works the crowd, who sit chewing the bland meal like wax statues. *

Barkis tries to take Victoria's hand, but she pulls away. *

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE (LAND OF THE LIVING) - NIGHT *

The village is still and quiet. The Town Crier is out lighting the street lamps. *

Then, the CLATTER of HOOVES on cobblestones. The Town Crier looks up to see Van Dort's carriage coming over the bridge, racing towards the village at breakneck speed. It barrels through the gates and circles the square on two wheels. *

Shocked villagers peer from their windows.

The CARRIAGE SMASHES into the statue. *

Resorting to his default behavior, the Town Crier pulls out his BELL and starts RINGING. *

TOWN CRIER
VAN DORT FAMILY CARRIAGE CRASHES
IN VILLAGE SQUARE! NO SURVIVORS! *

A beat later, the very shaken Van Dort parents emerge from the cabin. *

TOWN CRIER
TWO SURVIVORS! *

WILLIAM
(explaining)
Our driver, Mayhew, expired while
at the reins. *

NELL
Quite rude! *

The Crier RINGS his BELL again. *

TOWN CRIER
UNGRATEFUL SURVIVORS BLAME VICTIM! *

WILLIAM
(to no one in
particular)
So much for impartiality. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOWN CRIER
IN OTHER NEWS, THE DEAD WALK THE
EARTH!

WHIP PAN BACK DOWN the street, where a NOISY, JUBILANT CARNIVAL is marching this way. It's the dead wedding party, just arrived.

INT. EVERGLOT DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Barkis Bittern stands, holding up his wine glass for a toast. Normally, he'd have to wait for the room to grow silent, but it's already library-quiet.

BARKIS

As many of you know, it was a quick courtship for Victoria and I. But love is like that -- spontaneous and unexpected. Unbridled! Serendipity may have brought us together, but no force on Earth could ever tear us apart.

Just then, some of The Dead SMASH through the WINDOWS. Amid the SCREAMS, the Hanged Man tries to restore calm.

HANGED MAN

Sorry to bust in, but we need some tables. We've got a celebration of our own.

Skeletons and ghouls lift several tables, carrying them right out the door, along with the plates and silver.

Amid the commotion, Victoria and Hildegarde run from the room.

Maudeline strives gamely to maintain her composure, until the Hanged Man lurches up to her and rips his head through the painted portrait.

HANGED MAN

We haven't been properly introduced, have we? It's me! The Duke!

He strikes the same heroic pose as his portrait, the frame hanging around his neck. There is a shocked and horrified silence.

Maudeline SCREAMS -- more from the horror of the revelation than anything else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAUDELINE

You... the Duke? *

HANGED MAN

Darling, how do you think you got
this very grand house, and all
your lovely 'family heirlooms'? *

Noticing Victoria's absence, Barkis goes looking for her. *

HANGED MAN

Come on, you stuffy buggers! The
real party's happening down the
hill! *

CUT TO: *

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - NIGHT *

It's been transformed beyond recognition into a brightly-
colored, pulsating party zone. The Green Grocer's racks
of lettuce heads are now skulls, while the skeleton
children run with bolts of fabric from the Widow Munch's
seamstress shop. *

To the consternation of the watchmaker, Wellington is re-
setting all the CLOCKS to RING at once. Down the street,
Paul the Head Waiter leads a crew of ghouls through the
baker's shop, spraying frosting everywhere. *

Amid this tumult, we FIND Corpse Bride and Victor. He
looks around, smiling. *

VICTOR

I like this place better already. *

Realizing the undead mean them no harm, The Living are
gradually warming up to the situation. Nell is swept
into the revelry, caught up dancing with the Dead Dwarf
General. *

Pulling mother away, Victor introduces them to Corpse
Bride. *

VICTOR

Mother, Father. This is Emily. *

WILLIAM

(going with it)
Pleased to meet you. *

NELL

What's your last name, Emily? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORPSE BRIDE

Merrimack.

NELL

Why, the Merrimacks are a very
good family. Their grandfather
was an Earl!

WILLIAM

Well done, Victor!

CORPSE BRIDE

We're just about to get married...
(quickly)
... again.

Up near the statue -- and the crashed carriage -- Elder
Gutknecht stands at a makeshift altar. Corpse Bride and
Victor join him.

Elder Gutknecht flips through his book.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Let's skip the boilerplate and get
straight to the vows. Living
first.

Corpse Bride slips off her ring, and hands it to Victor.

VICTOR

With this hand I will lift your
sorrows. Your cup will never
empty, for I will be your wine.
With this candle, I will light
your way in darkness. With this
ring, I ask you to be mine.

He slides it back on her finger. She smiles, but there's
a trace of guilt there.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Now, you.

CORPSE BRIDE

With this hand I will lift your
sorrows. Your cup will never
empty, for I will be your wine...

As Corpse Bride speaks, she sees Victoria off to the
side, watching with quiet horror.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Go on, my dear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shaken, Corpse Bride continues with her vows. *

CORPSE BRIDE

With... with this candle I will
light your way in darkness. *

She pauses, then...

CORPSE BRIDE

With this... *

She stops.

Victor looks puzzled, waiting for her to continue.

VICTOR

What's wrong?

The Corpse Bride looks up at Victor. She smiles as a
tear rolls down her tattered cheek. *

CORPSE BRIDE

This is wrong. *

She takes off the ring and hands it to him. In her eyes
we see a sad tenderness for the fleeting love that almost
was, and an acceptance that it never could be. *

CORPSE BRIDE

I love you, Victor, but you're not
mine. My dreams were taken from
me. Now I've stolen them from
someone else. *

Only now does Victor follow her gaze across to... *

VICTOR

Victoria! *

She slowly walks towards them. *

VICTORIA

I thought you were married. *

VICTOR

I heard you were too. *

She holds up her hand, revealing the ornate wedding ring.
Corpse Bride reacts with alarmed confusion. *

CORPSE BRIDE

Where did you get that ring!? *

Barkis comes up behind his wife... *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARKIS

Victoria, I...

CORPSE BRIDE

You! You were the highwayman who
strangled me. You took my ring!

Barkis looks over to the Everglots, and Pastor Galswells,
who have just arrived.

BARKIS

Nonsense. I'm a respected
attorney...

CORPSE BRIDE

The ring has my name on it. Check
the inscription.

Victoria pulls it off her finger, and reads the
inscription:

VICTORIA

'For Emily, with all my love.'

With a sudden rage that surprises him, Victor launches
himself at Barkis.

VICTOR

Murderer!

He lands a few blows before Barkis sloughs him off.

Barkis makes a break for it, but suddenly finds himself
caught by one of Black Widow's sticky threads. He falls
to the ground, where everyone pounces on him.

Victoria turns to Pastor Galswells.

VICTORIA

I want an annulment.

PASTOR GALSWELL

Done.

Victoria and Corpse Bride exchange their rings. Nothing
is said, but the real hand-off is clear. Corpse Bride
smiles at Victor.

Meanwhile, there's still a tussle over Barkis. Both the
living and the dead want a piece of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGOT

You disgusting piece of filth! I
would not crawl through your
entrails!

POLICEMEN pull Maggot off. They lift up Barkis, carrying
him away. This doesn't please the dead.

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

We should have him! He hurt our
friend!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

It's their world, their rules. He
is living.

MAGGOT

Not forever.

Black Widow CALLS AFTER Barkis...

BLACK WIDOW

We'll be seeing you.

Amid all the chaos, Corpse Bride simply walks away. We
settle on Victor and Victoria, watching her leave.

VICTORIA

I feel terrible for her. To lose
so much.

VICTOR

I think she's finally free.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE FOOTBRIDGE - DAWN

Corpse Bride crosses the bridge alone. Soon she is
obscured by the fog flowing around her.

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

As Corpse Bride moves through the trees, her veil catches
against the bark. She twists back on herself, slowly
spinning, caught up in the gossamer threads. Before
long, the veil has wrapped around her like a cocoon.

She's completely hidden inside. We see the cocoon
vibrate. A metamorphosis is clearly occurring.

Suddenly, the cocoon breaks open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One hundred brilliant butterflies emerge, rising in the wind. *

Much like the start of the movie, we FOLLOW them as they fly. Their journey takes them back to... *

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY *

... where a wedding is taking place.

Victoria slides a ring over Victor's finger. As they lean in for their kiss, they both notice the butterflies overhead. *

They watch them for a moment, somehow knowing. *

FADE OUT. *

THE END