La Belle et la Bête (Beauty and the Beast)

OPENING TITLE:

Children believe what we tell them. They have complete faith in us. They believe that a rose plucked from a garden can bring drama to a family. They believe that the hands of a human beast will smoke when he kills a victim, and that this beast will be shamed when confronted by a young girl. They believe in a thousand other simple things. I ask of you a little of this childlike simplicity, and to bring us luck let me speak four truly magic words, childhood's Open Sesame:

"Once upon a time..."

Beauty lives in the country with her father, a 17th-century merchant who has lost all his money; her brother, Ludovic, whose only interests are drinking and gambling; and her two sisters, Felicie and Adelaide, who are motivated entirely by spite, selfishness and vanity. Her brother's constant companion, Avenant, is a frequent visitor to the house.

Ludovic and Avenant are shooting arrows at a target fixed onto the wall of the house.

Felicie and Adelaide are inside.

FELICIE
(angrily)
Oh, that wretched girl!

ADELAIDE
You know she can't do anything right.

LUDOVIC
(taking aim and shooting)
A bad one.

He steps aside. Avenant aims.
LUDOVIC
Your foot.

AVENANT
What about my foot?

LUDOVIC
You're cheating, it's not on the mark.

Avenant shoots. The arrow flies straight through the upper window of the house and impales itself in the floor next to a silk cushion. A little dog leaps up from the cushion, barking furiously. Beauty is attending to her sisters who, in sharp, contrast to her simple attire, are dressed in rich silks and feathers.

FELICIE
What's going on?

ADELAIDE
They've just shot an arrow into the room!

FELICIE
Oh!

ADELAIDE
(going to the window and shouting)
You hooligans! You could have hit one of us in the eye!

Ludovic and Avenant rush up to the house.

AVENANT
Is Beauty all right?

ADELAIDE
(shouting out of the window)
Beauty! Always Beauty! Who cares about Beauty? You nearly killed Cabriole!

Ludovic and Avenant go into the house and wait at the foot of the stairs.

LUDOVIC
(ironically)
Here they come.

Felicie and Adelaide hurry down.

FELICIE
(shouting)
Beauty, you can wash the floor. We'll be late for the duchess.
ADELAIDE  
(to the two men)  
Murderers!  

LUDOVIC  
(to Avenant)  
My sisters are such bitches.  

FELICIE  
(to Adelaide)  
Drinking, chasing women and cheating at cards, that's all they ever think about. They couldn't give a damn about anything else.  

LUDOVIC  
(to Avenant)  
When one is poor, one stays at home to do the laundry and polish the pots and pans. Just look at these two sluts -- they think they're princesses. They don't even realize that they're the laughing stock of society.  

ADELAIDE  
(to Felicie)  
Say something!  

FELICIE  
He'd be only too pleased.  

They flounce out of the house.  

LUDOVIC  
Oh, such beauties! So ravishing!  

ADELAIDE  
(to Felicie)  
Come on, we'll be late for the concert.  

LUDOVIC  
(following them out of the house)  
Enchantresses! Goddesses! Shining lights!  

FELICIE  
(shouting)  
Hey there! Boys! Boys!  

LUDOVIC  
(imitating her)  
Boys! Boys!  

Felicie and Adelaide walk across the yard toward a servant who is dozing in a
The boy leaps out of the chair. Felicie sits down.

FELICIE
(angrily)
This is unbelievable!

Adelaide walks over to another servant who is lolling against a pile of straw.

ADELAIDE
I suppose you think we pay you to sleep!

She walks over to a second sedan chair.

ADELAIDE
(angrily)
I've never seen anything like it!

She opens the door to the chair. Three or four hens cackle and flap, their wings as she shoos them out of the chair.

ADELAIDE
Oh, the chairs.
(She sits down.)
Look at them, they're filthy! Boys! Boys!

Two more servant boys come running out of the stable.

ONE OF THE BOYS
(yawning)
Come on, let's go.

FELICIE
Stop dawdling, wake up now... You've been drinking!

The four boys pick up the two sedan chairs and stumble their way across the yard. They pass in front of Ludovic, who is leaning against the wall, watching in amusement.

ADELAIDE
(to Felice)
Just look at this drunkard. He doesn't even know his proper role in society.

FELICIE
A barefoot guttersnipe!
The boy carrying her sedan chair kicks open the gate, jolting the chair as he maneuvers it through.

**FELICIE**
Yes, they're drunk, drunk!

**ADELAIDE**
Come along, come along now! Oh, boys, careful!

Ludovic comes up behind them and watches them leave.

**LUDOVIC**
May the devil splash you with mud and cover you in dung!

Back at the house, Beauty is polishing the floor in her sisters' room. Avenant comes up to her and plucks the arrow from the floor.

**AVENANT**
(kneeling down beside her)
Beauty, you were not made to be a servant.
(He points to the shining floor boards.)
Even the floor would like to mirror you.
(He pulls her to her feet.)
You can't go on working from morning to night for your sisters.

**BEAUTY**
If our father's ship hadn't got lost in the storm, then perhaps I'd be able to enjoy myself as they do. But we're ruined, Avenant, so I must work.

**AVENANT**
I wonder why your sisters never do any work.

**BEAUTY**
My sisters are too beautiful, their hands are too white.

**AVENANT**
Beauty, you are the most beautiful of them all.
(He takes her hands.)
Look at your hands.

**BEAUTY**
(trying to free herself)
Let go of my hands, Avenant. Leave, so that I can finish my work.

**AVENANT**
I love you. Marry me.

BEAUTY
No, Avenant, don't talk to me of marriage; it's useless.

AVENANT
Well then?

BEAUTY
I must stay single and live with my father.

She turns away and walks toward the door. Avenant runs after her and takes hold of her.

AVENANT
Beauty, I shall snatch you away from this senseless existence!

BEAUTY
(struggling)
Leave me alone!

AVENANT
I displease you.

BEAUTY
No, you don't, Avenant.

LUDOVIC
(bursting into the room)
Take your hands off her, or I'll smash your face in!

BEAUTY
It's all right, Ludovic. Avenant was asking me to marry him.

LUDOVIC
And what was your reply?

AVENANT
Your sister has rejected me.

LUDOVIC
Well done, Beauty. I know I'm a scoundrel and even proud of it, but I won't have you marry one.

(He walks over to Avenant.)
And you can take that as final. Go on, you louse, get out of here!
Avenant strikes him. Ludovic staggers and falls over.

BEAUTY
(running over to him)
Avenant! You're crazy! Ludovic! Ludovic!

Downstairs, the merchant enters the house, ushering three men in before him.

THE MERCHANT
Come in, gentlemen, come in. I want you to feel part of the family when I announce the great news.
(He shows them to a table.)
Gentlemen.

They all sit down.

BEAUTY
(from the top of the stairs)
It's my father!
(She turns to the others.)
He must know nothing of this!

THE MERCHANT
(bringing refreshments to the table)
My daughters are out enjoying the flattery of society life. I shan't wait for them. I just can't hold my tongue any longer.

Beauty, Ludovic and Avenant come down the stairs into the room.

THE MERCHANT
Come here next to me, Beauty. Come closer, Ludovic. You too, Avenant, you're most welcome. These gentlemen are willing to forgive you for all your pranks. And the Public Prosecutor has very generously decided to drop the charges he was going to bring against me. We're going to be rich! One of my ships has come into port!

LUDOVIC
(angrily)
Avenant must have known!

AVENANT
(protesting)
Ludovic!

LUDOVIC
He knew! And he took advantage of it to ask Beauty to marry him!
BEAUTY
That wasn't the first time he's asked me to marry him since we lost all our money.

THE MERCHANT
(to Beauty)
So you want to leave me.

BEAUTY
No, father, I'll never leave you.

Felicie and Adelaide burst into the room.

FELICIE
We were told that the duchess was not receiving, though the court rang with laughter and music.

(angrily)
Let me congratulate you, father, we are gathering the fruits of your foolish deeds.

ADELAIDE
Yes, you can feel proud of yourself.

FELICIE
And here you are entertaining people with drinks, while your daughters are insulted and doors are slammed in their faces!

THE MERCHANT
Children! Children!

LUDOVIC
The duchess would appear to be a most admirable woman.

ADELAIDE
I nearly died of shame!

FELICIE
Come on, Adelaide, let them drink to our misfortunes.

They flounce out of the room.

BEAUTY
Oh father, father.

THE MERCHANT
They're real little devils, aren't they? Let them sulk; I'll soon console them. Tomorrow morning I'll go to the port to see to my
business. Then one can marry a duke and the other a prince!

(He raises his glass in a toast.)

Gentlemen!

The following morning.

The merchant is on his way out of the house.

FELICIE
Bring us back brocade dresses.

ADELAIDE
And jewels, fans and ostrich feathers.

FELICIE
I want the whole town to burst with envy! A monkey! I'd like a monkey!

ADELAIDE
A parrot!

The merchant laughs and mounts his horse.

THE MERCHANT
(turning to Beauty:)
What about you? Beauty, what shall I bring you?

BEAUTY
Father, bring me a rose, for they don't grow here.

Adelaide and Felicie burst out laughing.

Later.

Ludovic and Avenant are seated at the table drinking. They are waiting for the usurer.

LUDOVIC
If I don't pay off my debt tonight I shall be arrested and thrown in Jail.

AVENANT
The moneylender is very understanding. I explained the whole situation to him. Look confident, here he comes.
THE USURER
(entering the house)
You're asking for a very large sum, you know, very large...

AVENANT
You do know that one of the lost ships has come into port, don't you?

LUDOVIC
I'll pay you back as soon as my father returns.

THE USURER
You know the law, don't you? If you're insolvent, I can claim the sum of money from your father and if he's insolvent I can seize his furniture.

AVENANT
(to Ludovic)
Sign, you're not risking anything, are you?

The usurer gives him a document. Ludovic signs.

In town. A lawyer's office.

THE LAWYER
But my dear Sir, what can I do?

THE MERCHANT
(in despair)
As there's nothing left from this last ship, what's to become of me?

THE LAWYER
Your creditors at the port moved faster than the ones in town. Sue them.

THE MERCHANT
Sue them! I haven't even got enough to pay for a room tonight.

THE LAWYER
Well, go home then.

THE MERCHANT
But I'll have to go through the forest in the middle of the night. I'll get lost.
THE LAWYER
You came through it at night on your way here, didn't you?

THE MERCHANT
Yes, but there was a full moon then, and it's getting foggy now. I know I'll get lost.

THE LAWYER
(losing his patience)
Well then, get lost.

The lawyer shows him out.

THE MERCHANT
I don't understand you; I'm sure you'd feel the same if you were in my shoes. It's very frightening.

THE LAWYER
Good night!

The merchant fetches his horse, mounts and starts off.

THE LAWYER
Good luck!

The merchant rides deeper into the forest. It grows dark and a storm breaks. After a while he realizes that he has lost his way. He dismounts and leads his horse along the narrow forest paths, peering anxiously through the thickening mist. During a flash of lightning through the leaves he suddenly sees a magnificent castle. With a puzzled look on his face he walks slowly through the trees across a courtyard toward the castle gates. As he makes his way, the branches silently close in behind him. When he reaches the gates, they open before him. Surprised, he lets go of the horse's reins. The horse walks in ahead of him. The merchant follows, but the gates close in front of him. He runs back across the courtyard and looks up at the castle.

The castle.

THE MERCHANT
Is there anyone there?

In front of him is a wide stone staircase leading to a door in the castle wall.

THE MERCHANT
(running up the stairs)
Is there anyone there?
He goes through the door and is confronted by a row of human arms holding candelabras, showing him the way down a corridor to a large hall. He stops and stares in disbelief. Two of the human arms release the candelabras, which remain magically suspended, pointing toward the hall. Awed, the merchant backs into the room toward a huge fireplace. A clock on the mantelpiece strikes eleven. He turns around and looks from the fire to a dining table, which is sumptuously set with food and drink.

THE MERCHANT

Is there anyone there?

He puts his hat on the table, sits down and removes his gloves. A marble bust, which supports one end of the vast mantelpiece, slowly turns its head toward him. At the other side of the fireplace, its counterpart, breathing smoke through its nostrils, also moves its head around to look at him.

The merchant reaches for a silver goblet. A hand appears from the candelabra in the middle of the table. The merchant starts back. The hand takes hold of a wine decanter, fills the goblet, and returns to the candelabra. The merchant lifts up the edge of the tablecloth and peers underneath it. He stares at the candelabra on the table, stands up and turns to look once more at the row of candelabras leading out of the room.

He sits down again, picks up the goblet, sniffs at it suspiciously, and drinks. He falls into a deep sleep. The marble busts turn their heads again.

The merchant slowly wakes up. His hand is resting on the wooden arm of his chair, which is carved in the image of a lion's head. The lion's head comes to life under his hand and roars.

The merchant leaps to his feet and grabs his gloves. The marble bust breathes smoke. The candelabra on the dining table extinguishes itself.

The merchant takes a last look around the room, walks hurriedly down the corridor past the row of candelabras and leaves the castle. The door shuts silently behind him. He walks slowly down the stairs and along a balustrade decorated with stone statues of fierce-looking dogs. He stops and looks around him.

THE MERCHANT

Hey there!

ECHO

'Hey there!'

THE MERCHANT

(walking along the balustrade)

Hey there!

ECHO

'Hey there!'
THE MERCHANT
(coming to the end of the balustrade)
Hey there!

ECHO
'Hey there!'

He goes down some steps and finds himself in a beautiful rose garden. He looks around nervously and walks over toward the flowers. Suddenly he stumbles over the body of a dead deer.

THE MERCHANT
(starting back with a look of horror)
Hey there!

He looks down and sees a perfect rose, which changes color as he watches. Just as the merchant plucks the rose, the Beast appears through a curtain of leaves.

THE BEAST
Hey there!

The Beast walks over to the merchant. He has the appearance of a werewolf, with long fangs and grotesque features. His huge gnarled hands end in claws and, like the rest of him, are covered in thick matted fur. He is wearing a long jeweled cloak over a doublet with slashed sleeves and a broad lace collar, a pair of velvet breeches and high leather boots.

As he speaks, the wind blows and the leaves and branches rustle.

THE BEAST
So, my dear Sir, you steal my roses. My roses which are the most precious things in the whole world to me. You are most unfortunate since you could have taken anything but my roses. The penalty for such a simple theft is death.

THE MERCHANT
(flinging himself to his knees)
My Lord, I did not know. I did not think I would offend anyone by plucking a rose for my daughter. She asked for one.

THE BEAST
One does not call me "my Lord"; one calls me "Beast." I don't like compliments. No, don't try to understand. You have fifteen minutes in which to prepare yourself for your death.

THE MERCHANT
My Lord!
THE BEAST

(angrily)
Again! The Beast orders you to be silent. You stole my rose and you shall die. Unless ... unless one of your daughters .... How many do you have?

THE MERCHANT

Three.

THE BEAST

Unless one of your daughters agrees to pay the penalty and take your place.

THE MERCHANT

But...

THE BEAST

(angrily)
Don't argue! Go! Take advantage of the one chance I have given you. And if your daughters refuse to die instead of you, swear that you'll return in three day's time. Swear!

THE MERCHANT

I swear. But I don't know my way through the forest ...

THE BEAST

You'll find a white horse in my stables. His name is 'Magnificent One.' Just whisper in his ear, "Go where I am going, Magnificent One, go, go." He'll take you home and lead you back to the castle if your daughters are too cowardly to mount him. Now leave.

The Beast backs away into the curtain of leaves and disappears. The merchant runs off toward the stables. A beautiful white stallion awaits him there. He mounts him and sets off.

As the white horse carries the merchant through the forest, the Beast watches him through the leaves. The branches close in silently behind the merchant as he makes his way home.

Later.

The merchant is at home, surrounded by his family.

THE MERCHANT
I can't tell you anything about my journey home. The Magnificent One is in the stable. That's the end of my story. Beauty, take this rose, I'm paying a high price for it.

FELICIE
That's what happens when an idiotic girl asks for roses. This is the result of that silly creature's vanity.

ADELAIDE
And she pretends to be modest, and set us an example. She's not even crying.

BEAUTY
You won't die, father. It's my fault; it's only right that I go in your place.

AVENANT
Are you mad? We'll go with Ludovic and we'll kill this horrible beast.

THE MERCHANT
The Beast is so powerful that we have no hope of overcoming him. Don't worry Beauty, I'm growing old. I promised, so I shall go.

FELICIE
You mustn't go, father, you may yet win your case.

ADELAIDE
How will we live?

THE MERCHANT
You can sell the furniture.

LUDOVIC
Why don't you go, Felicie? You're too tough for anyone to eat!

FELICIE
It's a great pity that the Beast isn't demanding boys. He would devour you and die of poison!

THE MERCHANT
Children, keep calm...

BEAUTY
Father, I'd rather be devoured by the monster than die of the heartbreak of losing you.
AVENANT
You will not go to the monster.

FELICIE
(angrily)
What's it got to do with you?

AVENANT
It's none of your business!

FELICIE
Are you in love with that stupid girl? What a couple!

LUDOVIC
Avenant, hit her.

THE MERCHANT
Keep calm, please...

AVENANT
Go on, repeat what you just said!

FELICIE
A stupid girl and a stupid boy!

Avenant hits her.

FELICIE
He hit me!

LUDOVIC
(angrily)
You dared to strike my sister!

AVENANT
(to Ludovic)
There's more where that one came from...

ADELAIDE
You villain!

THE MERCHANT
(in a faltering voice)
Children ... children...

BEAUTY
He's unwell.

AVENANT
Let's carry him to his room.
Avenant and Ludovic help him out.

FELICIE
(angrily)
He hit me, Adelaide.

ADELAIDE
And we're penniless.

FELICIE
We mustn't give up.

ADELAIDE
The Beast will gobble them all up, and we'll marry princes.

Meanwhile, Beauty comes out of the side of the house, wearing a long dark cloak. Making sure that no one sees her, she goes to the stable and mounts the white horse.

BEAUTY
Go where I'm going, Magnificent One, go, go!

The horse trots out of the stable. The farm gates open before him. He carries Beauty through the forest to the castle. She dismounts and leads him through the foliage, which closes in behind her.

As though in a dream she enters the castle and floats past the rows of candelabras, through the large hall with the fireplace, and up a flight of stairs. She goes through a door which leads to a long gallery with billowing white curtains. Seemingly carried along by some magical force, she comes to a door flanked on each side by human arms carrying candelabras. The arms move toward the door, casting their light onto her.

VOICE
(whispering as the door opens)
Beauty, I am the door to your room.

Beauty enters the room hesitantly. The door closes silently behind her. She looks round the room which is spacious, elegantly furnished, and full of flowers and plants. A marble bust on one of the walls moves its head around toward her.

Beauty rushes over to the open window as though seeking her freedom. Realizing the futility of her action, she sits down at a dressing table and, in despair, puts her head in her hands.

VOICE FROM THE
DRESSING TABLE MIRROR

(whisperingly)

Beauty, I am your mirror; reflect in me; I will reflect for you.

Beauty puts her hands out toward the mirror and gazes into it. The glass is black. Then she sees her father lying on his sickbed. The mirror turns black again. She stands up and looks round the room. On the large bed, a luxurious fur cover is pulled back by invisible hands. Beauty runs out of the room, along the corridor, out of the castle, down the stone staircase into the courtyard.

Across the courtyard the doors open and the Beast makes his appearance. Beauty lets out a cry of fear and horror.

THE BEAST

Where are you going?

She falls to the ground in a faint. The Beast walks over to her, gathers her gently in his arms and carries her carefully up the stone staircase with a look of anguish mingled with tenderness.

He takes her back into the castle, past the row of candelabras, up the stairs into her room. As he crosses the threshold of the room, Beauty's clothes are transformed. She is dressed like a princess in a richly embroidered silk dress with sparkling jewels. The Beast puts her down gently onto the bed and stares at her intently. She awakens, opens her eyes, and turns her head toward the Beast. As she sees him she lets out a cry. He backs away across the room.

THE BEAST

Beauty, you mustn't look me in the eyes. Do not fear, you will never see me, except every evening at seven, when you dine. I shall come to the great hall.

(He backs out of the room.)

You mustn't look me in the eyes.

The door closes silently behind him.

In the great hall the clock strikes seven. On each side of the blazing fire the marble busts turn their heads. Beauty is sitting at the table, wearing a dark jeweled dress, with matching jewels round her neck and wound into her hair. The hand from the candelabra on the table picks up the silver wine decanter to serve her. She leans back in her chair with a sigh of despair and closes her eyes. The door opens behind her and the Beast crosses the room. He stands behind her, leaning on the back of the chair.

THE BEAST

Don't be afraid.
BEAUTY  
(summoning up all her courage)  
I ... I won't be afraid.

THE BEAST  
Beauty, do you mind if I watch you while you dine?

BEAUTY  
You are the master.

BEAST  
No, I'm not.  
(He pauses for a moment.)  
There is no master here but you.  
(He moves around to the side of the chair.)  
I revolt you; you must find me very ugly.

BEAUTY  
I cannot lie, Beast.

THE BEAST  
Is everything here to your liking?

BEAUTY  
I feel uneasy dressed in such finery, nor am I used to being waited upon. But I know you're doing your utmost to help me forget your ugliness.

THE BEAST  
(walking over to the fireplace)  
My heart is kind, but I am a monster.

BEAUTY  
Many men are more monstrous than you, but they hide it well.

THE BEAST  
Besides my ugliness, I am lacking in wit.

BEAUTY  
You have wit enough to realize it.

THE BEAST  
Everything in this castle is yours. Your every whim will be fulfilled.

THE BEAST  
(walking back to the dining table)
I shall appear every evening at seven. Before leaving I shall ask you a question; it will always be the same one.

BEAUTY
What is your question?

THE BEAST
Beauty, will you be my wife?

BEAUTY
No, Beast.

THE BEAST
Farewell then, Beauty. Until tomorrow.

He leaves the room.

Later.

Beauty walks fearfully across the hall. She is wearing a long white silk gown. She hears a sound like the roar of wild beasts followed by the screams of an animal in pain. She walks along the gallery, keeping close to the wall as though looking for protection. The white curtains billow in the breeze. She stops by a marble bust, aware of some presence. The Beast appears and walks past with a look of hideous despair. He doesn't see her hidden behind the statue. He stares at his huge grotesque hands, the sharp claws, and buries his head in his arms. Beauty watches him in horror. He turns, goes to the door of her room, leans against it for a moment with the same look of anguish. He enters the room, searching desperately for her. He sits down at the dressing table, picks up the mirror and stares into it.

THE BEAST
Where is Beauty?

(shouting)

Where is Beauty?

Smoke billows out of the mirror. He gazes into it and sees her edging her way slowly along the gallery to the door, listening carefully for any sound from within. The Beast puts down the mirror, stands up and looks at the door.

Beauty enters the room.

BEAUTY
(angrily)
What are you doing in my room?

THE BEAST
(meekly)
I wanted to ... I was ... I came to your room
to bring you a gift.

He holds out his hand. A pearl necklace magically appears in the palm of his hand.

BEAUTY
(shouting)
Leave!

She runs out of the room. Disconsolately, the Beast puts the necklace down on the dressing table.

BEAUTY
(in a softer voice)
Leave.

The Beast walks slowly out of the room.

Beauty walks across the room to the dressing table and picks up the pearl necklace. She looks at it pensively.

Later.

Beauty is walking through the castle grounds. She comes to a door. She pushes it open and looks through onto a pool of water surrounded by plants and trees. The Beast is on his knees by the edge of the pool, lapping up the water like an animal. Beauty closes the door and backs away with a concerned look on her face. She continues her walk through the grounds. She is wearing the pearl necklace that the Beast left in her room. The Beast appears among the stone statues of dogs.

THE BEAST
I thought you were dining, Beauty.

BEAUTY
I'm not hungry, Beast. I'd prefer to walk with you.

THE BEAST
(in a gentle voice)
Beauty, you're doing me a great honor …

They walk side by side along the stone balustrade.

THE BEAST
… a very great honor.

BEAUTY
Your voice seems gentler.
They stop.

THE BEAST
Beauty, I hope you don't find the days too tedious.

BEAUTY
(walking on)
I do find the days long. And this evening I admit I was almost looking forward to seven o'clock.

THE BEAST
You are so kind that I can hardly bring myself to ask you the question which torments me so.

BEAUTY
Ask, I shall always give the same reply. Let's be friends, Beast, don't ask any more of me.

They walk on through the grounds.

BEAUTY
Tell me, Beast, how do you pass the day?

A deer leaps through the bushes. The Beast stares at it greedily as it runs away into the woods.

BEAUTY
Did you hear me, Beast? I'm talking to you.

THE BEAST
(in a troubled voice)
For ... forgive me.

BEAUTY
(putting her hand on the Beast's arm)
Beast! What is it?

The Beast puts his head in his hands and turns away in shame.

THE BEAST
Forgive me, please forgive me, it's nothing.

Beauty hesitantly puts out her hand. He takes it, and leads her down the stone staircase. They come to a fountain. The Beast puts his head in his hand again.

BEAUTY
What's the matter, Beast?

THE BEAST
I'm thirsty, Beauty.

Beauty goes to the fountain and fills her hands with water.

BEAUTY
(holding out her hands)
Drink from my hands.

The Beast laps the water from her hands and stares at her intently.

THE BEAST
Doesn't it revolt you to give me drink?

BEAUTY
(looking him straight in the eyes)
No, Beast, it gives me pleasure. I would never wish to cause you any pain.

THE BEAST
And yet your dream is to be far away from me.

Beauty is in the great hall, walking up and down in front of the fire. She is wearing a dark velvet dress. The marble busts at each end of the mantelpiece turn their heads to watch her. The clock strikes half past seven. Beauty looks up at the clock and sees the Beast's reflection in the mirror above it. She turns round as he walks across the room.

BEAUTY
How late you are!

THE BEAST
Thank you, Beauty, for noticing.

BEAUTY
Yes, I was awaiting you with great impatience, Beast.

She throws herself to her knees and grabs his cloak.

BEAUTY
I must talk to you!

THE BEAST
(shocked)
Beauty! Beauty!

BEAUTY
(still on her knees, pleading)
I cannot live another day without seeing my father again. Please let me go, I beg you!
THE BEAST
Stand up, Beauty, stand up.

He pulls her to her feet and leads her to a chair. He sits down beside her.

THE BEAST
I should be on my knees taking orders from you.

BEAUTY
(almost in tears)
Let me go. I promise to return.

THE BEAST
And when you return, will you be my wife?

BEAUTY
(in despair)
You're torturing me.

THE BEAST
I know I'm repulsive. But I would die of heartbreak if I let you go and you took advantage of your freedom never to return.

BEAUTY
I'd come back in a week's time. I respect you too much to cause your death.

The Beast lowers his head. Beauty strokes it.

THE BEAST
(looking up at her)
You coax me as though I were an animal.

BEAUTY
(gently)
But you are an animal.

THE BEAST
Your request is a very serious matter. I must think about it.

(He stands up.)
Beauty, will you come into the garden with me?

He takes her hand and leads her out of the castle.

THE BEAST
Beauty, has someone already asked for your hand in marriage?

BEAUTY
Yes, Beast.

THE BEAST
Ah! ... And ... who asked for your hand? A young man?

BEAUTY
Yes, Beast.

THE BEAST
Is he handsome?

BEAUTY
Yes, Beast.

THE BEAST
Why did you not marry him?

BEAUTY
I didn't want to leave my father.

THE BEAST
And what is this handsome young man's name, Beauty?

BEAUTY
Avenant.

The Beast looks at her, turns away as though in pain and suddenly runs away through the trees.

BEAUTY
(shouting)
Beast! What's the matter? ... Beast! Beast!
What is it? ... Beast!

Later.

Beauty is lying in bed. Suddenly she hears a noise outside the door. She runs to the door which opens before her. The Beast is standing in the shadows.

BEAUTY
What are you doing at my door at such a late hour?

The Beast moves into the light.

BEAUTY
My God! You're covered in blood!
She starts back in horror.

THE BEAST
Forgive me ...

BEAUTY
For what?

THE BEAST
(almost groveling)
For being a beast, forgive me.

BEAUTY
(firmly)
It doesn't become you to talk in that way.
Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Go and clean yourself and go to sleep.

She stands there looking at him in all her innocence and purity. The Beast is overcome with shame and self-disgust.

THE BEAST
(in despair)
Close the door! Close the door!
(She doesn't move.)
Quick ... quick, close the door. Your look is burning me, I can't bear it.

He backs away. The door closes gently behind him. Beauty walks slowly toward the bed with a troubled look on her face.

Later.

At the merchant's house.

The bailiffs are removing the furniture on instructions from the usurer. Avenant and Ludovic are sitting at the table, watching.

AVENANT
They're taking every single thing.

LUDOVIC
I don't suppose they'll even leave the table.

AVENANT
Let's play cards.

He picks up a pack of cards. The usurer walks over to them with a disapproving look.
THE USURER
(to Ludovic)
Go up to your father. He doesn't understand what's going on, which is only natural. I can't very well explain the situation to him.

Ludovic looks doubtfully at Avenant.

AVENANT
(resigned)
Go on.

Later.

Upstairs the merchant is lying ill in bed. Ludovic stands beside him, looking sorry for himself.

THE MERCHANT
(in a weak voice)
Ludovic ... Ludovic ... is it true?

LUDOVIC
I'm afraid it is.

THE MERCHANT
Ludovic, how could you have done such a thing?

The usurer hurries into the room.

AVENANT
(following him)
Sir, he's a very sick man, you must leave the bed.

THE USURER
Yes, yes, we won't take the beds.

They go downstairs into the hall. Adelaide and Felicie run down the stairs and hurry out of the house.

LUDOVIC
I bet they've seen to it that no one touches their things!

THE USURER
No, no, they too owe me money.

THE BAILIFFS
(coming through the door with more furniture)
Come on, it's all got to go!

The usurer leaves the house. Avenant and Ludovic sit down at the table in the otherwise bare room. Ludovic brings out a purse and pours money on to the table with a smile. Avenant picks up the pack of cards and deals. Ludovic looks at his hand.

LUDOVIC
(piling up his stake)
A pair!

AVENANT
(throwing down a card)
Ace!

LUDOVIC
Oh, I nearly had you.

AVENANT
(laughing)
That's not good enough!

LUDOVIC
(picking up the cards and shuffling them)
My deal.

The usurer bursts into the house.

THE USURER
(angrily)
You cheats! Give me my money!

He tries to pick up the money from the table. Ludovic strikes him and knocks him out.

LUDOVIC
What shall we do?

AVENANT
Throw him out. The streets are empty at this time of night.

LUDOVIC
What time is it? Wait a minute.

He leans down and takes the watch and chain off the usurer's frock coat. He looks at it.

LUDOVIC
(grinning)
Ten o'clock.

He puts the watch inside his jacket.

At the castle.

Beauty is lying on the bed. The Beast walks over to the foot of the bed.

THE BEAST
Beauty, are you ill?

BEAUTY
Yes, Beast. I am.

THE BEAST
What ails you?

BEAUTY
I know my father's dying.

THE BEAST
I can't bear to see you waste away.

BEAUTY
Send me home to my father.

THE BEAST
If I agree, will you promise to return in a week's time, to the very day?

BEAUTY
(smiling at him)
I promise.

THE BEAST
(going to the edge of the bed and putting out his hand)
Come with me, Beauty.

He helps her down from the bed and leads her through the French windows out onto the balcony.

THE BEAST
Look over there, Beauty.

He points to an ornately decorated small pavilion.

THE BEAST
You see that pavilion? It's called the pavilion of Diana. It's the only part of my domain where no one may enter. Not even you or I. Everything
I possess, I possess by magic powers. But my true riches lie locked in that pavilion. A golden key opens the door. Here it is ... (He shows her the key.)

Beauty, I couldn't give you greater proof of my faith in you. If you don't return I shall die. After my death, you risk nothing more and all my riches will be yours. Take this key, Beauty. (He hands it to her.) I have faith in you. The key will be your pledge to return.

BEAUTY

(looking at him with an expression of joy)

You agree to send me home to my father?

THE BEAST

You'll be there this very morning. My night here is not the same as yours. It is night in my world, but it is morning in yours. (He leads her back into the room.)

Beauty, a rose that has already played its part, my mirror, my golden key, my horse and my glove are the five secrets of my power ... I surrender them to you. (He removes his glove and gives it to her.)

Just put the glove on your right hand, it will carry you wherever you wish.

He walks slowly to the door, turns round and looks at her intently.

THE BEAST

Remember your promise. (The door opens; he leaves the room.)

Farewell, Beauty.

The door closes silently behind him. Beauty paces up and down the room, staring at the glove. She puts it onto her right hand. In a flash she is transported to her father's bedroom.

The merchant is sleeping. Beauty throws the glove onto the bed and sits down. Gently, she puts her hand out toward him. He wakes up.

THE MERCHANT

I must be dreaming!

BEAUTY

No, father, you're not dreaming. It is I,
Beauty, talking to you.

THE MERCHANT
I thought you were dead, and it was killing me. But you managed to escape?

BEAUTY
No, father, the Beast set me free to visit you.

THE MERCHANT
So the monster has a heart.

BEAUTY
He suffers greatly, father. One half of him is in constant struggle with the other. I think he is more cruel to himself than he is to others.

THE MERCHANT
But Beauty, I've seen him, he's so hideous.

BEAUTY
Yes, at first he's very frightening, father. Yet now, he sometimes makes me want to burst out laughing. But then I see his eyes, and they're so sad that I turn away so as not to weep.

THE MERCHANT
Beauty, my little Beauty, don't tell me that you're willing to live with this monster!

BEAUTY
I must father. Certain powers obey him, but others control him. If I escaped I'd be committing a crime against him and against you.

THE MERCHANT
Does he threaten you?

BEAUTY
He only comes to me when his cruelty need not be feared. Sometimes his bearing is regal, but sometimes he almost limps, as though he were the victim of some terrible affliction.

THE MERCHANT
How can you feel sorry for him?

BEAUTY
I can bear his presence because I would be happy if I could make him forget his ugliness.
Beauty ... Beauty, you're paying a high price
for being so good.

BEAUTY
But father, the monster is good.

A tear falls from her eyes onto her hand. It is magically transformed into a
diamond.

THE MERCHANT
Good God! A diamond!

He picks it up, looks at her, and puts his hand to her cheek where another
tear glistens.

THE MERCHANT
Another one!

BEAUTY
It is proof that he is protected, for I wept
thinking of him.

THE MERCHANT
Maybe the devil sent these diamonds!

BEAUTY
Rest assured, father, keep them. They are a
gift from him. Now you'll be able to support
yourself. But if you tell my sisters of this
miracle, they'll take them from you and you'll
have nothing.

Later.

Outside in the yard, Felicie and Adelaide are hanging up the washing. They
are dressed in peasant clothes. Ludovic is feeding the chickens.

FELICIE
I'd rather lie on the sheets than have to hang
them up. My hands are in the most dreadful
state!

LUDOVIC
(ironically)
How appalling.

ADELAIDE
Look at mine! A kitchen maid! That's what I've
been reduced to!
LUDOVIC
Well, my lovely princesses, when one is penniless, one has to work!

FELICIE
You fool!

ADELAIDE
(to Ludovic)
Yes, you can talk, you good-for-nothing. If we hadn't lost all the furniture, we'd still have a maid.

Avenant is chopping wood across the yard.

AVENANT
(joining them)
It's all my fault. And you may have noticed that I'm paying for it now.

ADELAIDE
Yes, when you're not drinking or gambling.

AVENANT
Oh, you're so charming.
(He pauses.)
How was your father this morning?

LUDOVIC
As if they cared! I'm the only one that looks after him. He's still very weak. He can't get up.

Suddenly they hear the merchant shouting in a strong voice.

THE MERCHANT
Felicie! Adelaide! Ludovic!

Felicie climbs up onto a stool and peers out over the line of washing.

FELICIE
Well, I never! A lady from the court, walking with my father!

ADELAIDE
And here we are dressed in rags!

AVENANT
It's Beauty!

LUDOVIC
Beauty! It can't be!

ADELAIDE
It is!

The merchant and Beauty walk across the yard. Beauty looks like a princess. She is wearing a long white silk dress with full sleeves and a low-cut neckline. Her hair flows down her back in elaborate curls, and on her head she wears a jeweled coronet from which floats a translucent pearl-studded train. Her only piece of jewelry is a magnificent pearl necklace with a diamond clasp. The two sisters stare at her in disbelief. Avenant helps Felicie down off the stool.

FELICIE
Leave me alone, will you!

AVENANT
You become sweeter by the moment.

THE MERCHANT
Beauty came to my room and cured me.

LUDOVIC
Where have you come from?

FELICIE
(staring greedily at Beauty's necklace)
What a magnificent necklace!

BEAUTY
(removing it and offering it to her)
Take it, Felicie, it will look even better on you.

Felicie grabs it eagerly. It turns into a bunch of dirty twisted rags.

THE MERCHANT
My God!

ADELAIDE
Put it down!

FELICIE
How disgusting!

She drops it. As it touches the ground it turns back into pearls. The Merchant picks up the necklace and puts it on Beauty.

THE MERCHANT
What the Beast gave you is for you alone. You
can't give it away.

FELICIE
(angrily)
Come on Adelaide, let's go and get dressed. We must look simply ghastly.

LUDOVIC
Good-bye, you sweet young things!

The two sisters stalk out of the yard.

BEAUTY
(looking at the washing on the line)
Who did my washing?

AVENANT
We did!

BEAUTY
The sheets are badly hung, they're trailing on the ground.

LUDOVIC
So, this Beast wasn't savage?

BEAUTY
No, Ludovic, he's a good beast.

AVENANT
You're not going back to him, are you?

BEAUTY
I must, Avenant, I promised. The Beast set me free for one week, and if I don't return he'll die of heartbreak.

AVENANT
(angrily)
Do you love him?

BEAUTY
No, Avenant, I'm fond of him. It's not the same thing.

Inside the house, the two sisters are dressing.

ADELAIDE
The Church Committee would be most interested
in that little exhibition of witchcraft we've just witnessed.

In the yard.

THE MERCHANT
(kissing Beauty on the cheek)
I'll see you later.

He leaves.

LUDOVIC
Let's go to the stable. We can talk seriously there. My dear sisters won't be able to hear us.

They walk across the yard and go into the stable.

LUDOVIC
Tell us everything.

BEAUTY
(sitting down on a wooden bench)
He gave me the key to all his treasures. He trusts me implicitly. I'd be the monster if I didn't return to him.

LUDOVIC
What about your servants? Are there many?

BEAUTY
Invisible hands serve me, dress me, arrange my hair, open and close the doors. I never see anyone.

AVENANT
And this Beast speaks like a human being?

BEAUTY
Yes, Avenant, he speaks just like you and I do.

LUDOVIC
Does he crawl on all fours? What does he drink? What does he eat?

BEAUTY
Sometimes I help him drink -- and I know he'll never eat me.
Inside the house. The two sisters are dressed up in all their finery.

FELICIE
Well, I never!

ADELAIDE
It's incredible!

FELICIE
That little fool is happier than we are -- and she's rich. After all, so many husbands are no better than her Beast.

ADELAIDE
She's bursting with pride!

FELICIE
Don't worry, I've got a good head on my shoulders. We must be very friendly and let the boys worm out her secrets.

Later.

Downstairs. Avenant and Ludovic are sitting at the table. Ludovic empties his pockets.

AVENANT
Show me how much you've got.

LUDOVIC
(throwing a coin onto the table)
There you are. It's pretty bad.

AVENANT
We must do something. I've come to a decision.

LUDOVIC
There's nothing we can do.

AVENANT
Ludovic, the idea of Beauty returning to that Beast tomorrow is intolerable. We must slay the Beast.

LUDOVIC
And take his treasure! But do you appreciate the power of magic?
AVENANT
I don't believe in magic. I'm sure the monster hypnotizes Beauty and makes her believe anything he wants her to.

LUDOVIC
I'm scared.

AVENANT
When it comes to rescuing Beauty no magic power in the world could scare me. Anyway we have no choice. So don't be ridiculous. Butter up your sisters -- when they see what's in it for them, they'll stop Beauty from leaving. Tempt them with the promise of riches.

LUDOVIC
And by what miracle will you find the Beast?

AVENANT
I'll question Beauty and find out her secret.

Later.

In the kitchen.

FELICIE
We'll rub our eyes with onions and pretend to cry.

ADELAIDE
(holding up an onion)
She'll smell it. Ludovic's ideas are ludicrous.

FELICIE
She's too stupid to notice. Ludovic's idea isn't all that silly. Leave it to me.

She hands the onion to Adelaide who rubs it in Felicie's face.

FELICIE
Charming! ... Go on ... go on ...

They run into Beauty's room, holding handkerchiefs to their faces. Beauty is wearing her simple peasant clothes.

FELICIE
(dramatically)
Beauty, you can't leave us, you mustn't go!
ADELAIDE
(flinging herself to her knees at Beauty's feet)
Beauty, stay with us!

FELICIE
I know we have been unfair to you, but at the thought of losing you we realize just how much we love you!

BEAUTY
You're crying!

FELICIE
(pretending to sob)
If the Beast loves you, he won't mind if you stay a little longer.

ADELAIDE
Stay another week!

BEAUTY
It's not possible.

FELICIE
Do you want us to die of heartbreak? Your father? Your sisters? Stay ... Stay, Beauty ... Stay with us!

BEAUTY
(turning away)
I can't.

FELICIE
Don't be cruel. Stay!

Adelaidepretends to sob hysterically.

BEAUTY
(stroking her forehead)
Adelaide, Adelaide! My dear sister.

FELICIE
Adelaide said to me, "We have got our dear Beauty back. I shall die if she leaves!"

BEAUTY
Don't tempt me.

ADELAIDE
Beauty!
FELICIE
Don't abandon us tomorrow. Tell the Beast that it was your sisters' fault.

She turns away in false despair and walks over to the dressing table. She sees the golden key lying there and snatches it while no one is looking.

BEAUTY
(sighing)
I didn't realize that you were so fond of me.

FELICIE
(smiling falsely)
You're an angel.

She runs up to Beauty and embraces her.

ADELAIDE
(kissing her)
We're so happy! So happy!

Beauty throws herself onto the bed in despair. The sisters leave the room.

ADELAIDE
Oh, I'm so happy!

Felicie closes the door behind her and listens.

FELICIE
She's crying!

ADELAIDE
She'll stay behind, and we'll share all the treasure!

FELICIE
Let's wash our faces. You stink!

They go downstairs. Ludovic is waiting for them.

LUDOVIC
Well?

FELICIE
Well what?

LUDOVIC
Is she staying?

FELICIE
She's staying.
LUDOVIC
Did you get the key?

FELICIE
Look!

She opens her hand.

LUDOVIC
Give it to me.

FELICIE
(putting her hand behind her back)
What do you take me for?

ADELAIDE
(to Ludovic)
Who knows what you'd do with it; it's solid gold, you know.

LUDOVIC
You stupid fool.

FELICIE
Don't start fighting. I'll give it to Avenant -- if he decides to go.

LUDOVIC
Oh, women! You really are incredible! Typical. Go how? Go where?

FELICIE
(shrugging her shoulders)
Avenant will just have to find a way.

Later.

The family is dining.

THE MERCHANT
Beauty, you seem so sad.

BEAUTY
No, I'm not, father.

FELICIE
She misses her luxuries. Our wretched way of life upsets her.

THE MERCHANT
(angrily)
Felicie! Felicie!

ADELAIDE
The Beast must have certain attractions that we don't possess.

Beauty gets up to serve the wine.

THE MERCHANT
Oh!

FELICIE
Doubtless Madam feels that it's beneath her to wait on us.

Beauty runs out of the room.

THE MERCHANT
Beauty! Beauty!

She goes outside with her head in her hands, sobbing.

AVENANT
(coming up to her)
What have they done to you now? It's your sisters, isn't it? They didn't wait long! Damn it! Beauty, listen to me, don't cry. I must wake you from this nightmare. I must take you away. I know what you're thinking -- that I'm a good-for-nothing. But with you beside me, I'd work. We'd leave the town and its taverns behind us. Answer me.

(She is silent.)
What is it? I see, it's the Beast. Tell me how to get to him, I'll go and kill him.

(He pauses.)
You don't answer. I was sure of it; the Beast has bewitched you or at least you can't bring yourself to wish him harm.

(Beauty listens to him with tears in her eyes.)
Well, Beauty, let me tell you -- that monster can't be suffering as I do or he would fly to you and make you follow him. Rest assured, Beauty, he has forgotten you.

She shakes her head and leaves him.
Later. At the castle.

The Beast is pacing up and down in Beauty's room. He looks at his bare right hand in despair. He goes over to the dressing table and fingers the mirror. He walks slowly round the room and stares at the empty bed. He picks up the fur bedspread and strokes it, as he holds it to his cheek and clutches it to his breast with a look of anguish.

Later.

At the merchant's house. The stable.

Felicie opens the door to let in Avenant and Ludovic.

FELICIE
Come in, no one will find us here.

ADELAIDE
You're late, of course.

FELICIE
Well?

AVENANT
I have reached a decision. There's no looking back now!

LUDOVIC
That's all very well, but how can we get to the Beast?

FELICIE
Didn't you find out how Beauty got here?

AVENANT
Beauty only tells us what the Beast has allowed her to tell. We know every detail about the domain, but she won't say anymore.

FELICIE
To hell with her; if she won't tell, I'll torture her till she does!

AVENANT
If you do that, don't count on any more help from me!

(They hear a sound.)

What's that? I'll go and see.

He goes to the door. The Magnificent One trots into the yard.
A riderless white horse! It's the Magnificent One, I'm sure. He jumped over the gate and came into the yard.

Heaven sent him!

More likely Hell.

I'm scared!

Shut up, you fool. Avenant, open the door quietly and bring him in.

Don't move, I'll go.

He goes out into the yard and leads the horse into the stable.

The Beast has sent him for Beauty. What luck. Avenant, the horse can take you and Ludovic to the domain.

It's easy for you to talk!

Are you a man, or aren't you?

We mustn't waste a second. (He mounts the horse.) Come on, Ludovic, jump up behind me.

(getting up behind him) May God protect us.

(picking up their bows and arrows) Your bows!

She hands them to Avenant. He looks down. Something is hanging from the saddle.
What's that?

FELICIE
It's a bag. If it were gold, I'd only have to touch it and it would turn to straw.
(to Adelaide)
Open it.

ADELAIDE
(looking inside the bag)
A mirror!

She takes it out. It's the mirror from Beauty's room in the castle.

FELICIE
His message to her is clear: Look and you will see the ugly face of a girl who breaks her promises.

LUDOVIC
You see, the Beast's not all that stupid after all.

FELICIE
(giving Avenant the key)
Here's the key -- off you go, and good luck!

AVENANT
I've forgotten the magic words.

LUDOVIC
It's something like "Go, go."

FELICIE
If I depended on you we'd get nowhere! Go where I am going, Magnificent One, go, go.

AVENANT
Go where I am going, Magnificent One, go, go.

The horse neighs and gallops out of the yard.

ADELAIDE
(running after them)
Ludovic!

FELICIE
What's the matter?

ADELAIDE
Suppose we've sent them to their death ...
FELICIE
Don't be stupid.
(They go into the house.)
The mirror!

ADELAIDE
I don't feel happy about it.

FELICIE
(holding up the mirror)
Look at you, green with fear.

Adelaide lets out a cry of horror. The mirror reflects the cruel and ugly face of an old hag.

ADELAIDE
Look!

She holds the mirror up to Felicie. Felicie looks into it and sees an ape.

FELICIE
Oh!

ADELAIDE
What can you see?

FELICIE
Nothing. Let's take it to Beauty, it's her turn.

They go to Beauty's room. She is wearing the fabulous clothes and jewels that she had on when she arrived.

FELICIE
Ah! So Madam dolls herself up like a princess when she's alone in her room.

ADELAIDE
Yes, just who do you think you are?

FELICIE
Here, Beauty, here's a mirror that was mysteriously left at the door for you.
(She throws it on the bed.)
To show you how a Beauty must look to please a Beast.

They leave the room.

Beauty goes over to the bed and picks up the mirror. She holds it to her cheek and props it up on the dressing table. She lies down on the bed and stares into it. At first she sees her own reflection. Then the Beast appears
to her, with a look of intense suffering. The mirror goes black. Beauty lies back on the bed in despair. Suddenly she sits up. She looks at the mirror again, hurriedly picks up the Beast's glove which is lying next to it and puts it on her right hand.

She is transported to her bed in the castle. She removes the glove and sits up.

BEAUTY

Oh! the key!

She puts the glove on again. She is taken back to the house. She removes the glove and looks round the room for the key.

BEAUTY

The key!

(desperately)

Where is the key? My God!

She throws herself onto the bed and hurriedly puts on the glove again.

Back in her room in the castle, she rushes to the door which opens silently before her.

BEAUTY

Beast! My Beast!

She runs out of the castle, down the stone staircase. She stops and searches in vain for the Beast.

BEAUTY

Beast!

(in despair)

Beast!

She runs through the garden shouting for him. Suddenly she sees him lying on the ground by the edge of the pool.

BEAUTY

My Beast!

She runs to his side and kneels over him.

BEAUTY

My Beast, answer me, Beast! Oh, my Beast, forgive me!

(She tries to lift up his head.)

Answer me, Beast. Look at me. Your glove will revive you.
(She puts it on his right hand.)
Help me!
(She looks at him.)
I'm the monster, Beast. You shall live, you shall live!

THE BEAST
(whispering)
It's too late.

Meanwhile, Avenant and Ludovic have reached the pavilion.

LUDOVIC
We're here!

AVENANT
Yes, we're here. First we must kill the Beast.

LUDOVIC
We'll kill him later. Have you got the key?
Avenant brings out the key and is about to put it into the lock.

LUDOVIC
Wait! This key may release some evil trap. We must be very careful.

AVENANT
You're right. We won't go in through the door. Follow me.

They walk round the side of the pavilion. The walls are covered in plants. Avenant tests the branches.

AVENANT
Climb up after me.
(Ludovic hesitates.)
Come on, take heart. You're scared of course.

LUDOVIC
I'm not scared, I'm thinking.

AVENANT
It looks the same to me. Are you coming?

LUDOVIC
(following him up onto the roof)
Where are we?

AVENANT
We're on a skylight.
He pulls back the foliage and peers down into the pavilion.

    AVENANT

        Look!

They gaze down at innumerable jewels, gold and other treasures piled up around a statue in the middle of the pavilion.

    LUDOVIC

        It's fantastic!
        (He points to the statue.)
        What's that?

    AVENANT

        The goddess Diana.

Meanwhile, Beauty is still desperately trying to revive the Beast.

    BEAUTY

        You're no coward, I know the strength of your claws. Clutch at life with them, fight! Sit up, roar, frighten death away!

    THE BEAST

        Beauty, if I were a man ... doubtless I would ... do as you say ... but poor beasts who would prove their love ... only know ... how to lie on the ground ... and die.

He gives her a look full of tenderness and dies.

On the roof of the pavilion Avenant is spurred into action by the sight of the Beast's treasure.

    AVENANT

        I'm going to break the pane.
        (Ludovic tries to hold him back.)
        Leave me alone!
        (He breaks the glass with the heel of his boot.)
        After all, it's only glass. You hold me by the arms, and lower me down as far as possible, then I'll jump.

    LUDOVIC

        It's too high.

    AVENANT

        I'll jump.

    LUDOVIC
How will we get the treasure out?

AVENANT
We'll think of something. First we've got to get in there. Stand square on your feet.
(Ludovic takes hold of his arm.)
Get a good grip.

Ludovic lowers Avenant down through the skylight. The statue of Diana comes to life, puts an arrow in her bow and aims at Avenant.

AVENANT
Wait, wait Ludovic, don't let go yet. Wait until I tell you to.

Diana shoots the arrow. It hits Avenant between his shoulder blades. He lets out a cry. Ludovic stares at him in horror. Before his very eyes Avenant's features turn into those of the Beast. Ludovic lets go of him, he falls to the ground -- there is no sign of the treasure, only dead leaves and branches.

At the edge of the pool Beauty starts back with a cry.

BEAUTY
Where is the Beast?

A handsome young man stands in front of her.

THE PRINCE
The Beast is no more. It was I, Beauty. My parents wouldn't believe in fairy tales. The fairies punished them through me. I could only be saved by a look of love.

BEAUTY
(amazed)
Are such miracles possible?

THE PRINCE
We are the proof. Love can make a Beast of a man. It can also make an ugly man handsome.
(She looks away)
What is it Beauty? Do you regret my ugliness?

BEAUTY
No, my Lord. You resemble someone I once knew.

THE PRINCE
Who?
BEAUTY
My brother's friend.

THE PRINCE
You loved him?

BEAUTY
Yes.

THE PRINCE
Did he know?

BEAUTY
No.

THE PRINCE
But you loved the Beast?

BEAUTY
Yes, I did.

THE PRINCE
You are a strange girl, Beauty, a strange girl indeed.

BEAUTY
(kneeling at his feet)
I am at your service.

THE PRINCE
(lifting her to her feet)
Does my resemblance to your brother's friend displease you?

BEAUTY
(turning away)
Yes...
(She turns back to him and smiles.)
No.

THE PRINCE
(taking her in his arms)
The first time I carried you in my arms I was the Beast ...

In the pavilion the remains of the Beast lie smoking on the ground.

THE PRINCE
Are you happy?

BEAUTY
I shall have to get accustomed to you. Where
will you take me?

THE PRINCE
To my kingdom, where you will be Queen. There you'll find your father, and your sisters will carry your train.

BEAUTY
Is it far?

THE PRINCE
We'll fly through the air.
(He picks her up in his arms.)
You won't be afraid, will you?

BEAUTY
I don't mind being afraid ... with you.

He carries her out into the courtyard. In the pavilion dead leaves flutter onto the remains of the Beast. The Prince kisses Beauty's hand.

THE PRINCE
Beauty! I will take you! Come, away!

Hand in hand they are magically carried aloft through the clouds into the sky.

The End

Screenplay by Jean Cocteau