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Beauty and the Beast

"All that matters is what matters"

ACT ONE

1/ NEW YORK STREETS. The midday bustle and crunch of people cramming the sidewalks - rich with ethnic diversity. v.o.- Heated voices in a negotiated bidding. The price rising from \$4500 to \$5000. Protests. "The price is an insult." "But you will get gifts.."

2/ SOCIAL HALL. (back room of cafe). The hall is crowded with gypsies as the barter continues. At stake: the price of a beautiful young gypsy girl, SELENA, about 14, who is being sold into marriage. She is obviously unhappy, sullen. TOMAS, a strong powerful man, makes his final offer for Selena of \$5500 on behalf of his son, MICHAEL. Protests to the offer come from Selena's father, PAULI and TONY RAMOS, a young gypsy boy. They are shouted down. The agreement is made, congratulations abound as Selena fights back her tears. DEBBIE, a young girl obviously in love with Michael, turns away sadly. Michael, the bridegroom, smug with his newly won "possession," smiles victoriously at Tony, who runs from the hall. Tony's grandfather, MILO, follows.

3/ CAFE. Tony turns on Milo. How could Milo let this happen. Tony has loved Selena from the day he first met her. His gold medallion was to buy him his bride. Now it means nothing! Milo pleads that it's for the best. Selena must marry into Tomas' vitsa (extended family group) to make the peace. Tony insists they could fight them, but Milo knows Tomas' vitsa is too strong. Milo is too old now and Tony is still too young. Tony sees it only as cowardice as he runs into the streets. Tony walks the streets alone, despondent. DISSOLVE to: Cathy as she walks toward her building after work.

4/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. As she goes in, she sees a shadowy figure move on the balcony. She goes out expecting Vincent and finds Tony. A pleasant, very unexpected, surprise. (of course he got in with his 'gypsy passkey'). Tony, deeply troubled, needs her help. He's in love with a girl who's promised to another but Tony's convinced she really loves him. "A man just knows these things." He tells Cathy about the power struggle. He's not sure why he came to Cathy. Maybe hoping the gaje world would have some answers. Cathy, unable to be of much help, can only suggest Tony try talking to his grandfather again. Notwithstanding the fact that Cathy thinks Tony's much too young to think of marriage, she would love to meet Selena. Tony will arrange it.

5/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. Later that night. Cathy sits pensively on the balcony, so lost in thought she doesn't hear Vincent arrive. She was thinking of Tony's visit, his pain. The disturbing and seemingly impossible situation. How the pressure of the world dictates the course of love and the sacrifices that may be required. Unspoken textures that touch on their own love.

6/ SELENA'S ROOM. Day. From outside, Tony taps on her window. Selena opens it; she's been crying. Hushed, urgent talk. Tony begs her to leave with him, run away, not to marry someone she doesn't love. Selena refuses. Milo and her father have given their word. Tony objects. When he is king it will be different. Gypsies must change their ways. He confidently tells her that he has a friend, someone who can help.. a safe place. Selena wants to go, but she fears her father and Michael both. Hearing the voices, her father, Pauli, comes in and Tony runs as Pauli yells after him. Then he turns to Selena. Perhaps this wedding is a good thing for her after all. She's too wild and rebellious. A good husband will keep her in line.

7/ MILO'S APARTMENT. An angry confrontation as Tony questions their traditions. Everyone is afraid of Tomas and his threats...except Tony. Is he alone? Milo can't change things. For the good of all there are times for compromise. Tony doesn't accept this. What about his good, and Selena's. Milo is adamant. He must lead for the good of all his people, not just a few. Tony, hurt and betrayed, exclaims that he doesn't want to live with Milo anymore. It is his right as a gypsy child to live where he chooses. He leaves, ignoring Milo's pleas to know where he's going.

8/ TUNNELS. CATHY AND VINCENT. Night. Cathy's is worried. Tony said he was bring Selena to her house, put they didn't come. Vincent warns that gypsy traditions go back thousands of years. It is dangerous for gaje to interfere. Perhaps it is best they did not come. Cathy agrees, but as her concerns remain, Vincent promises to find out what happened through their helpers.

9/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. Later. Sleep evades Cathy. She hears a scraping at her front door. She discovers Tony trying to pick the lock. He's alone. Cathy's glad he's okay, adding that maybe she should just get him a key of his own. Tony shrugs. That might be a good idea because he has chosen to live with Cathy now.

## ACT TWO

1/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. (continuous). Cathy tries to digest Tony's announcement. She is of course, flattered to be 'chosen,' but it is no solution. Using all his charm, Tony convinces her that he has a few plans in mind and if Cathy would just help him now.....Cathy agrees he can stay for a while. She gets him a blanket. He knows where the couch is...

2/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. Later that night. Vincent is on the balcony. Cathy checks the sleeping Tony and goes out. Vincent talked to Maria, the gypsy helper. There is much bad blood between the two families. Tomas' family came and bought out many of the gypsy businesses. They are rich and powerful. They see Milo as old and vulnerable. There have been threats. Tony was seen talking to Selena. Maria fears it will be bad for all if Tony interferes with the wedding.

3/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. Morning. Cathy wakes to the alarm and finds that Tony has already gone.

4/ SELENA'S HOUSE. Tony hides outside Selena's window, waiting for her father to go to work. After he leaves, Tony talks to Selena.. This time the way is clear. Tony assures her not to be afraid. He has fixed everything. Fearful, yet hopeful, Selena crawls out the window and they run.

## ACT THREE

1/ PAULI'S STORE. Tomas, his son Michael and friends threaten Selena's father at his appliance repair store, demanding to know where Tony and Selena are. Selena comes back or there will be no peace. Pauli swears he doesn't know where they are, but Tomas rages, accusing Pauli of taking his money then hiding Selena to sell again to someone else. Michael knows it's Tony's doing and vows Tony will pay. Pauli tries to stand up to them. He's not afraid. Tomas smiles, cunningly. He won't hurt Pauli, but his store... so many code violations, faulty wiring, no ventilation... As he talks, Michael and pals pull electrical sockets from the walls and dump grease into the vents etc. One inspection and Pauli will lose his license and maybe go to jail...gaje jail, a great shame for a gypsy.

2/ CATHY'S APARTMENT. Cathy comes home from work to find Selena, furious, tied to a chair... and a very defensive Tony. He had to do this. She wouldn't stay. There was no other way. She doesn't know what's good for her. Furious with Tony, Cathy immediately releases Selena as Selena launches a blistering tirade at Tony. He lied to her, told her he had it all worked out, a safe place. But he has nothing, no plan and he brings her here to a gaje and won't let her go...won't listen to her. Tears of frustration well in her eyes. What does it matter. Now there is no hope. Cathy, having digested the shock of all this, lays down the law. First Selena: Cathy doesn't know much about gypsy custom but there must be some way Selena can protest this marriage. It will take some courage to stand up to her father, but the wedding isn't for two weeks. Enough time for Selena to at least appeal to her father. Perhaps find some other way to keep the peace. Tony interjects that was what he was trying to tell her. Cathy cuts him off, chastising his behavior. Forcing Selena to stay against her will is totally unacceptable. As a future leader, he must be strong, not impulsive. He must set an example. Running away is the world possible solution. They must both go back, now, before any more harm is done. Reluctantly Tony and Selena agree. They haven't been gone long. Selena can easily make excuses for where she's been. There is time. Maybe there is another way.

3/ VINCENT AND MARIA. Maria comes to Vincent to warn the feud has escalated. Businesses are being forced to close. It has begun. Tomas and Michael have sworn to kill Tony if he comes back. Vincent must tell him if he knows where Tony is...

4/ CATHY'S BALCONY. Vincent tells of Maria's warnings. That Tony must stay with her. He must not go back. It's too late. Tony and Selena have already gone. Vincent leaves to find them.

5/ DARK ALLEYS. As Tony and Selena try to sneak back to Selena's house, they are intercepted by Michael and two of his friends. (INTERCUT: Vincent through tunnels and alleys to reach them) One of the friends grabs Selena and takes her away as Michael challenges Tony to fight. When it seems Tony is winning, Michael's other friend jumps Tony and he is overpowered, beaten. Vincent arrives and slams the friend across the alley as Michael, terrified by Vincent who appears to be a cloaked apparition in the darkness, runs off. Vincent picks up the injured Tony and carries him away as police sirens wail in the distance.

## ACT FOUR

1/ TUNNBL CHAMBER. Tony and Vincent. Tony is recovering well, but is filled with self doubt and regret about how he's handled this. He doesn't know how everything could have turned out so wrong when he was so sure. Vincent points out that life is full of the unexpected, the unknown but that's where new visions and choices are born. They discuss Tony's plight with women. Tony reluctantly agrees that he might not know everything about women...yet, but he does know one thing.. that nothing's more important than love. He hasn't given up. He knows what he wants, but Selena won't do what he tells her to do. If only it weren't so complicated. He asks Vincent's advice. Vincent suggests something that Tony has completely overlooked...that he simply ask Selena what she wants, what she thinks.. instead of always-telling her what to do. He might be surprised. Tony contemplates this new idea....

2/ TUNNELS. Two days later. Cathy and Vincent are walking Tony out to the park entrance. Tony's going back. He thanks Vincent for helping him. He thinks he's safe from Michael now. He doesn't know how he's going to do it, but he's going above to try and make the peace, whatever comes. He will accept what the fates have decreed.....Cathy and Vincent watches as Tony leaves through the gates. All looks promising.

3/ CATHY'S OFFICE. Cathy is immersed in work when she gets a phone call from Tony. He's in jail.

4/ PRECINCT. Cathy learns that Michael filed assault charges against Tony and as soon as Tony came above he was arrested. In defense of Tony, and in an effort to free him, Tony's friends have come to the precinct, each claiming that he is the guilty one and each having a different version of what happened. The whole situation is chaotic. The Captain would like to walk away from the whole thing, but he can't. It'll probably be thrown out in court, but until bail is set, Tony stays in jail. On the weight of her D.A. credentials, Cathy gets Tony released into her custody.

5/ SOCIAL HALL. The families have gathered for wedding preparations. Selena, without Tony's support, seems resigned. Tony (with Cathy) walks in to the surprise of all, especially Michael, and announces that no gaje jail can hold him. Michael's ploy of having Tony arrested to discredit him has backfired as Tony is now viewed with enormous respect by everyone...as are all gypsies who walk away free from gaje courts. As Cathy watches from the doorway, he is surrounded with congratulations. Michael tries to force the wedding plans to proceed but, Selena, her confidence renewed, and with Tony's encouragement, speaks her mind. She doesn't want to marry Michael. If she is forced to she will not cook, she will not clean, she will not serve. If they beat her, she will run away and charge them with cruelty. The marriage will be over, Michael will be disgraced and her father will keep the money. Silence. All eyes on Michael who saves face by claiming he never wanted Selena for a bride. He chooses Debbie (the girl who has always adored him) to the delight of her family. And Selena? Tony looks to her expectantly, but the truth is Selena doesn't want to marry anyone... not even Tony. Tony is crestfallen. As the gypsies mill about Debbie and Michael, Tony slips out the back. Cathy follows...

6/ ALLEY. Cathy comforts Tony. He has proven himself to be strong and fair. He will be a good leader. And because he was strong, he gave Selena the strength to stand up for herself. Tony has some doubts about how that turned out, but "sometimes you get the bear, sometimes the bear gets you." It's fate. He must accept that. Although, he smiles, Selena didn't say she wanted to marry anyone else. . . .

7/ Cathy and Vincent.