

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Masques"

Written by

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FIRST DRAFT

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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Masques"

FADE IN:

1 INT. - CATHY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

1

The room is filled with steam. Through the frosted glass of the shower stall, we glimpse Cathy rinsing her hair. She turns off the spray, reaches out and takes a bath towel off the rack. She emerges, the towel wrapped discreetly around her as the doorbell RINGS.

CATHY

Coming...

The camera FOLLOWS as she pads barefoot through her apartment to the front door. As the bell RINGS AGAIN, she opens the door a crack.

2 CATHY'S POV

2

Three young children in Halloween costumes stand there with trick-or-treat bags open hungrily.

CHILDREN

(shout in unison)

Trick or treat!

3 CATHY

3

takes a couple of miniature candy bars from a bowl near the door, and drops them into the bags.

CATHY

Happy Halloween.

The two older kids run down the hall, but the smallest little girl lingers a moment.

LITTLE GIRL

Thank you.

As she scoots after the others, Cathy's father CHARLES CHANDLER arrives, dressed like Robert E. Lee in Confederate uniform, white beard, and sword. Cathy admits him.

CHARLES

Am I early, are you late, or is that your costume?

Cathy gives him a quick KISS, shuts the door.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

CATHY  
I'm late. I'm sorry, Dad. I lost track of time at the office.

CHARLES  
(teasing)  
You never lost track of time when you worked for me.

CATHY  
(teasing back)  
Course I did -- every morning.  
(beat)  
If you can hold the trick-or-treaters at bay while I get dressed, I think we'll be just in time to be fashionably late.

Cathy retreats towards her bedroom as Charles seats himself on her sofa to wait, the scabbard of his mock sword making the motion awkward.

CHARLES  
A likely story. I figure an hour and a half.

CATHY  
That was the old Cathy. I'll be ready in fifteen minutes.

Charles doesn't believe a word of it.

CUT TO:

4 INT. - FATHER'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

4

We PAN slowly across the floor, where a dozen children from the underground sit listening as Father tells them a story. They're of various ages, from three to sixteen, and a few are dressed in lovely, home-made costumes, but all of them are engrossed. It's a ghost story, so their eyes are wide, and sometimes one of them shivers.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

FATHER

... and from that day forward, John always kept a light burning in his window by night, so that Deirdre might find her way back to him. And in the deepest part of winter, when the snows lay thick against the walls of his cottage and the cold wind came shrieking from the north, he would take down his bow and walk through the forests, calling her name until his voice grew hoarse and his tears froze hard on his face. But she never answered, and till the end of his days, John never saw her again.

We MOVE IN on Father as he concludes the tale, and FIND Vincent standing behind him, listening as raptly as the children. Vincent is dressed more formally than usual (perhaps in something reminiscent of the Beast's costume in the Cocteau film). Four BOOKS are piled on the table beside him (contemporary hardcovers, not leather-bound). When the story ends, the children REACT with enthusiasm.

ELLIE

That was a good one.

KIPPER

Tell us another one, Father...  
The one about the Headless  
Horseman.

\*  
\*

DAVID

Yeah, tell us that one.

FATHER

You've had enough ghosts for one night. Go on, now. Mary told me she needs help to carve up some jack-o-lanterns...

That does it. The kids STAMPEDE out of the room, each of them eager to get there first.

VINCENT

Every year, they ask for the same stories. By now they must know them better than you do.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

FATHER

(chuckles)

Old stories are like old  
friends... every so often, we need  
to drop in on them again, just  
to see how they're doing.

(beat, fond smile)

And one little boy I remember  
would never have let a mere  
jack-o-lantern deny him a visit  
to Ichabod Crane.

They exchange a smile of shared memory, and then Vincent  
rises. Father's mood turns serious.

FATHER

You're determined to go, then?

(off Vincent's nod)

I wish you'd reconsider.

VINCENT

Father, surely on this night of  
all nights, I can walk among them  
in safety.

\*

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3)

4

FATHER

Vincent, Vincent... there is no  
safety up there. For you or  
anyone else.

Vincent NODS gravely, acknowledging the sad truth of  
Father's statement. His fingers absently brush against the  
books on the table beside him.

VINCENT

Sometimes we must leave our safe  
places, Father, and walk  
empty-handed among our enemies.

FATHER

Those are her words.

VINCENT

(nods)

Our lives have been so  
different... and yet, somehow,  
I feel as though we understand  
each other. I will not lose this  
opportunity. I must see her, talk  
to her...

Father frowns, shakes his head in helpless surrender.

FATHER

Go, then. If you're set on it,  
I can't very well stop you.

(Vincent starts for  
door)

Vincent...

(Vincent pauses)

Be careful.

Vincent nods and EXITS. Wearily, Father slumps back in his  
chair, and lays his hand upon the stack of books. We CLOSE  
IN and PAN SLOWLY down the stack, reading the titles on the  
spines. There are FOUR books, titled Too Many Heroes, Three  
Hundred Days, A Terrible Strength, and Fables and Fantasies,  
all written by BRIGIT O'DONNELL.

CUT TO:

5 INT. - CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

5 \*

Charles is waiting when Cathy comes out, beautiful in a Marie Antoinette/French Courtesan Costume.

\*

\*

CHARLES

Fifteen minutes... I don't believe it. My little girl has changed, hasn't she?

CATHY

I'm trying... very hard.

CHARLES

You don't know how pleased I am that you let me talk you into this. Since you quit the firm, I hardly ever get to see you.

CATHY

They keep me pretty busy... but I've missed you too, Dad.

CHARLES

Now, don't be shy about leaving me to fend for myself. I'm not so old that I don't remember how romantic these affairs can be. A lot of your old friends will be there tonight.

CATHY

I'm going to this party to be with you.

CHARLES

(playful)

You're going to this party to meet Brigit O'Donnell, just like everyone else.

CATHY

(smiles)

Well... that too.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

He reaches out and takes her hand, squeezes it.

CHARLES

(soft, sincere)

Have I told you how beautiful you look?

(beat)

Sometimes you remind me so much of your mother...

Deeply touched, Cathy leans over, kisses him.

CATHY

Happy Halloween.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. - COSTUME SHOP - NIGHT

7

A modest storefront, its window lettered to read MOE'S MASQUERADE CITY - COSTUME RENTALS. The sign in the door says OPEN, but as we watch a hand flips the sign to CLOSED just as MICHAEL -- a big, heavy-set man in his late fifties -- appears at the door. A folded NEWSPAPER sticks from a pocket of his rumbled raincoat.

MICHAEL pushes the door open and finds MOE, the short, balding proprietor, standing in his way.

MOE

Sorry, I'm closed.

MICHAEL

(Irish accent)

I must have a costume. If it's money you're wanting, I've got it.

He pulls a handful of crumpled fifties from the pocket of his coat. Moe looks at them, hesitates, and then admits him to the shop and locks the door behind him.

8 INT. - COSTUME SHOP - NIGHT

8

Very little but bare hangers remains on the racks up front; the shop has been picked clean. Moe gestures around at his depleted merchandise.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

MOE

Tomorrow, you come back, you could have your pick -- Jesse James, Darth Vader, King Arthur, whatever you want. Closing time on Halloween night... well, maybe I can find something in back. You can't mind a little frayed, maybe a missing button?

MICHAEL

That doesn't matter.

Moe shuffles through a curtain into the back in the shop. Michael takes the newspaper out of his pocket and is glancing down at it as Moe re-emerges carrying a rather tattered 19th century British army "red coat" uniform.

MOE

Here, this will maybe fit...

A look of absolute fury crosses Michael's face. He drops the paper on the counter, reaches across with a meaty fist, and seizes Moe by his shirtfront.

MICHAEL

Are you having a bit of fun with me, is that it?  
 (shakes him, furious)  
 Get that damnable rag out my sight and get me something decent.

He shoves him back contemptuously. Moe stumbles against the wall, and the costume falls to the floor. Scared, Moe hurries through the curtain again. We HEAR him fumbling around and he returns with a cheap clown costume -- oversized, covered with polka dots, the mask a plastic clown-face secured around the head by an elastic band.

MOE

Here... so, it's too big, there's nothing else... if this doesn't suit you, take your business elsewhere.

Michael takes the costume from him with a frown.

MICHAEL

It will do.

MOE

Changing booths over there --  
 (gestures)

## 9 INT. CHANGING ROOM

9

Michael nods; we FOLLOW him into one of the changing room. He hangs up the costume, strips off the raincoat and his suit jacket; we SEE the butt of a REVOLVER jammed into his belt as he begins to change.

## 10 ANGLE ON MOE

10

as Michael reemerges, dressed in the clown outfit.

MOE

That'll be twenty for the rental,  
and fifty for the deposit. You  
bring it back by six tomorrow or  
I got to charge you another day.

Michael tosses two crumpled fifties onto the counter.

MICHAEL

Keep the money. I'll be keeping  
the costume.

He EXITS the shop, the bell RINGING as he opens the door. Moe shakes his head in disgust, rings up the sale, and grabs the bills. The folded newspaper, forgotten, lies beside them on the counter. Moe picks it up.

## 11 INSERT - THE NEWSPAPER

11

The paper is open to a small item on the society page. The headline reads MASKED BALL TO FETE IRISH PEACE ACTIVIST.

## 12 BACK TO THE SCENE

12

Moe shrugs, drops the paper in the trash, and begins to count out his cash drawer for the night.

CUT TO:

## 13 EXT. - FASHIONABLE APARTMENT - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

13

A high-rise on Central Park West, obviously lavish and expensive, with a penthouse and roof garden atop it.

14 INT. - BRENNAN PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

14

A pair of elevator doors OPEN, and we FOLLOW Cathy and her father out into a cloakroom/ ANTECHAMBER (note -- it should be established here that TWO elevators travel to the penthouse level). A BUTLER (whose extremely proper face has been done up with green make-up and false antennae to transform him into an alien) bows to them, accepts the crisp white invitation offered by Charles and admits them through a set of ornate wooden doors. They enter a huge, high-ceilinged BALLROOM where the party is in progress.

This ball is a major function of a very high social set -- everything should be extremely upscale. The room is quite large and filled with people, the dance floor crowded with costumed socialites while others chat, flirt, eat, and drink on the peripheries. Ornate chandeliers hang from the high ceiling, but the lighting is dim, hazy, romantic. Across the width of the room, a series of French doors open onto a ROOF GARDEN.

A band is playing from a stage at one end of the room, while servants (wearing their customary uniforms, but with their faces MADE UP in various exotic ways) circulate with trays of champagne, hors d'oeuvres. The costumes tend toward the elaborate and fanciful. Everyone wears masks or make-up, ranging from simple dominoes to elaborate headpieces that completely hide the face.

We FOLLOW Cathy and Charles as they enter and make their way through the throng of partygoers. Charles snatches two glasses of champagne from a passing tray, hands one to Cathy. They CLINK their glasses together.

BRENNAN (O.S.)

Charles. Is that you... and...  
surely not Cathy!

Their host, BRENNAN, a man of Charles' age costumed as a KNIGHT, comes up and pumps Charles' hand, smiling. He's trailed by a group of Cathy's OLD FRIENDS, in various costumes, holding drinks. Cathy recognizes one woman, LAUGHS with delight. They HUG, begin to talk.

CUT TO:

15 INT. - ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

15

Vincent climbs on top of an elevator, gazes up the shaft, and braces himself as the car begins to ascend.

CUT TO:

16 INT. - BALLROOM - NIGHT

16

The party rages on. The camera TRACKS PAST Cathy and her friends as they discuss the guest of honor.

JEFF

Have you met Brigit yet? She's astonishing...

MARIE

Ravishing is what he really means.

CATHY

Last time I heard, it was still legal to be both.

GREG

You know she sold Three Hundred Days to Hollywood?

MARIE

Romeo and Juliet with Irish accents... I don't see what all the fuss is about.

JEFF

Oh, I thought it was a wonderful story. \*

GREG

She's got guts, you have to give her that. This peace thing has gotten her death threats from both sides. Her mother and her husband were both murdered, you know.

JEFF

Her father's IRA. Wanted for one of those bombings in London.

John Brennan, with Charles beside him, interrupts the animated conversation.

BRENNAN

Cathy, I was going to introduce your father to Brigit. Care to come along?

CATHY

I'd love to.

Brennan leads them across the crowded room. Ahead of them, the throng of costumed admirers surrounding the guest of honor suddenly LAUGH at some witticism. Muttering apologies, Brennan pushes through until CAVANAUGH, a big man costumed as a Viking, stops Charles.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

CAVANAUGH  
 (Irish accent, brusque)  
 Hold up there.  
 (when Charles stops)  
 Let's have a look here...

He reaches down, PULLS Charles' sword partly out of its scabbard, tries the edge with his thumb, nods.

BRENNAN  
 (apologetic)  
 I'm dreadfully sorry, Charles.  
 Mister Cavanaugh here is one of  
 Brigit's bodyguards.

CAVANAUGH  
 No edge to it. Very good.  
 (slides the sword back)  
 No offense, sir, but there's been  
 threats... Orangemen, Croppies,  
 what have you...

CHARLES  
 (confused)  
 Croppies, did you say? I'm afraid  
 I don't understand.

BRIGIT (O.S.)  
 (Irish accent)  
 No reason you should...

17 ANGLE ON BRIGIT

17

as the crowd parts for her. Brigit O'Donnell is around thirty, beautiful, sophisticated, with a playfulness to her eyes and her mouth, a hint of the tomboy and the rebel. This is a stubborn, free-spirited, passionate woman who has gone her own way all her life. Her costume, while different from Cathy's, is enough alike so that the same vague description might be applied to both, and the OWL MASK she wears is identical to Cathy's.

BRIGIT  
 It's from an old war... an Irish  
 Catholic rising against the  
 British and their Protestant  
 allies. The rebels had short-  
 cropped hair, you see.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

CATHY

That was... what, two hundred  
years ago?

(off her nod)

A long time to remember a  
haircut...

BRIGIT

(impressed)

We Irish have long memories. My  
father taught me all the songs  
about the brave Croppy boys when  
I was still in the cradle, and  
every year we'd hear the Orangemen  
march past, banging their Lambeg  
drum and singing how they put the  
Croppies down.

CHARLES

(gallantly)

I stand instructed... I'm afraid  
history was never my subject, and  
most of what I did learn I've  
managed to forget.

BRIGIT

Forgetting is a trick that Ulster  
could stand to learn.

(smiling, to Cathy)

I like your mask. I wrote a story  
about an owl-woman once... just  
a little fable, for children...

CATHY

... children of all ages. I found  
it just last year, and loved it.

BRIGIT

Did you now? It's not easy to  
find, that one...

CATHY

You have a real gift. I wish you  
wrote more children's stories.

BRIGIT

I wish I could... but there are  
darker things than ghosts in  
Ireland now, and you can't hear  
the fairy music for the gunfire.  
Which is another way of saying,  
I'm not the innocent I was then.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. - ROOF GARDEN - NIGHT

18

A chill October wind is blowing, and the roof garden is deserted, forlorn. Past the stone parapet overgrown with ivy, we SEE the city lights and the roof of a second building. Vincent APPEARS on the roof of the second building, and LEAPS, landing with cat-like grace atop the parapet. He steps down onto the roof garden. We FAINTLY HEAR the music from the party drifting across the roof. Vincent stands with the wind snapping at his cloak, tentative, knowing that he is about to cross over into another world. Then he strides through the garden to the penthouse and its French doors. He touches the doorknob, hesitates just a moment, then OPENS THE DOORS. The SOUNDS of music and conversation grow MUCH LOUDER.

CUT TO:

19 INT. - BALLROOM - NIGHT

19

Cathy and Brigit are still talking when both of them SHIVER in the the blast of cold air from outside. Cathy looks up.

20 CATHY'S POV

20

The width of the ballroom is between them, but for an instant she SEES Vincent clearly, standing framed in the doorway. Two costumed dancers move past her in f.g. blocking her view, and they're gone, the doors are closed again and Vincent is gone.

21 CATHY

21

can't believe what she's seen.

BRIGIT

Catherine? What's wrong?

CATHY

Nothing, I... I thought I saw  
someone I know. Please, excuse  
me...

Brigit smiles politely as Cathy starts across the dance floor. The party is dimly-lit and crowded, costumed dancers swirling all around her, waiters crisscrossing with trays. She fights her way through with increasing urgency as she's jostled and blocked, and strange costumed faces loom up at her out of the crowd, offering her drinks, canapes, dances. As she struggles across the floor, she glimpses here a SWIRL

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

OF CLOAK, there a FLASH OF LONG HAIR, and but each time the apparition is gone as swiftly as it appeared. A man in a HOODED CLOAK stands by one of the tables, and Cathy rushes up behind him, thinking he's Vincent... but when he turns, it's a stranger's face made up as DRACULA.

Finally she reaches the doors, looks around in confusion. There's no sign of Vincent. Cathy flings open the doors and steps out onto the roof garden.

22 EXT. - ROOF GARDEN - NIGHT

22

Cathy moves through the garden, calls out.

CATHY

(softly)

Vincent!

(more loudly)

Vincent!

She waits for a long beat, listening, looking around, but there's no answer but the wind.

23 INT. - BALLROOM - NIGHT

23

Vincent moves slowly around the periphery of the party. He's clearly ill-at-ease and discomfitted; he's never experienced anything remotely like this in his world below. Yet there's a certain fascination in his eyes as well. He's taking it all in with a wonder that's almost childlike in its innocence, and a wariness that's all too adult. A WAITER appears beside him with a tray, covered with a mound of caviar and an array of tiny pancakes.

WAITER

Caviar, sir?

VINCENT

Caviar...

(smiles)

WAITER

It's Beluga, sir.

VINCENT

(with awe)

... from Russia...

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

He makes no move to take any of the caviar, but looks at the silver tray with fascination, until Brigit dances past, waltzing in the arms of her bodyguard, Cavanaugh. Vincent NOTICES HER, and follows her with his eyes. We INTERCUT between his face and Brigit's, as she whirls around the floor. Near the end of the dance, her eyes meet Vincent's; he LOOKS AWAY at once. When the music stops, Brigit LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM as Cavanaugh leads her off the dance floor.

CAVANAUGH

What is it? Trouble?

(looking around)

Brigit spies Vincent again, and clearly she senses something extraordinary about him.

BRIGIT

No, Edward... it's all right.

(exasperated by his  
suspicion)

Oh, go on with you now. This is a party... not every man who looks at me is wanting to lay me in my grave.

She walks away from him, straight to where Vincent stands, half in shadows.

VINCENT

Brigit O'Donnell...

BRIGIT

Herself.

She SMILES and offers Vincent her hand. He hesitates for a LONG SOLID beat, very tentative, and then finally reaches out and takes it lightly.

CUT TO:

24 CATHY

24

as she re-enters the ballroom. For an instant she's certain that she chased an illusion. Then she SEES Vincent and Brigit at that precise instant when their hands meet. Off her REACTION, we

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

25 INT. - BALLROOM - NIGHT

25

ANGLE ON VINCENT AND BRIGIT

VINCENT

I did not mean to intrude... if  
I disturbed you, I'm sorry.

BRIGIT

No need. A little disturbance  
is good for the soul.

(studies his face)

What extraordinary make-up...  
you look as though you might have  
ridden with Cuchulainn, sailed  
with Theseus...

Self-conscious, Vincent turns slightly away, shadowing his  
features, and adjusts his hood.

VINCENT

Only in my dreams... and sometimes  
in books like yours.

(beat, awkward)

Your writing has... helped me  
through dark times... you've  
touched me, made me think...

(beat, awkward)

I just wanted... to tell you...  
to thank you.

Brigit is obviously moved by his sincerity.

BRIGIT

Come. Thank me outside, before  
I die from the smoke and noise  
in here.

She LINKS ARMS with Vincent, who is clearly discomfitted and  
unsettled by this easy acceptance. He begins to SHY AWAY,  
then catches himself, and lets Brigit draw him toward the  
doors. We PULL BACK from them, across the room, to reveal  
CATHY watching them exit together.

26 CLOSE ON CATHY

26

She's uncertain, worried, perhaps a little jealous. A  
man's gloved HAND enters frame and taps her on the shoulder.  
A tall, dark-haired stranger stands behind her. He's  
wearing a PIRATE's costume.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

A knotted bandanna serves as his mask, a ragged short cape hangs to his waist, and on his belt is a large curved KNIFE SHEATH, very piratical, studded with phoney costume gems.

DONALD

Masks make life so interesting.  
Under those feathers, you might  
be anyone -- a childhood friend,  
an old lover... help me now, am  
I getting warm?

CATHY

(smiles)  
I'm afraid not...

DONALD

A famous writer, then?

CATHY

(laughs)  
You're getting colder.

DONALD

Oh-oh. Have I just tripped over  
my sword again? The butler's the  
real pirate -- I slipped him a  
ten-spot to tell me what the guest  
of honor was wearing.

CATHY

(amused)  
I don't think you'll get a refund.  
Brigit's wearing an owl mask too.

DONALD

I'll consider it money well spent.  
I'm Donald Phillips.

CATHY

Cathy Chandler.

DONALD

Well, Cathy Chandler, can I run  
up a jolly roger and steal you  
away for this dance?

Cathy HESITATES, and glances back over her shoulder, but Vincent and Brigit are out of sight now. She turns back to Donald, confused, and forces an uncertain smile.

CATHY

Why not?

He sweeps her out onto the dance floor.

CUT TO:

