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Dramatic Publishing

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

**Dramatized
by
William Glennon**



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(BEAUTY AND THE BEAST)

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BEAUTY and the BEAST

A Play in Three Acts
For Four Women and Six Men

CHARACTERS

PAULETTE sister of Beauty
HENRIETTE another sister of Beauty
PAUL brother of Beauty
HENRI another brother of Beauty
TOOT SWEET an old family servant
POPPA Beauty's father
THE PAGE servant of the prince
THE PRINCE who becomes the Beast
THE SPIRIT
BEAUTY

TIME: Long ago.

PLACE: A forest, a cottage and a palace.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

A clearing in the forest. Afternoon.

ACT TWO

The cottage exterior. Six months later.

ACT THREE

Scene One: The interior of the palace. Night.

Scene Two: The interior of the palace. Later.

ACT ONE

AT RISE: *Only the figure of SPIRIT in a flowing gown can be seen somewhere behind a scrim, swaying and moving a bit to mysterious music; as she begins to speak, the music fades under. Her voice, if possible, is miked.*

SPIRIT (*intoning, musically*). A realm of air and trees and flowers...See where you are. A kingdom of space and beauty. Mine and yours and yours and yours. If you dream a dream, dreams come true...

(Music fades out and SPIRIT vanishes as lights come up on stage. It is a lovely forest, almost magical. Voices in the near distance.)

HENRIETTE (*off*). Slow down, Paulette! I can't keep up.

PAULETTE (*off*). No one asked you to keep up, ninny.

HENRIETTE (*off*). You'll be sorry if I get lost! Paulette!

(PAULETTE enters, rather grandly dressed for a country scene. She looks about.)

HENRIETTE (*off*). Better not hide from me, or I'll tell Poppa! Paulette! Answer me!

PAULETTE (*unconcerned*). What a ninny. Hopeless. (*Calls back*) I'm over here, Henriette. Try using your eyes. And your head.

(*HENRIETTE runs on, breathless. She's younger, a little naive but quite nice.*)

HENRIETTE. Paulette! Where are you? (*She takes PAULETTE's hand and stares at her.*) Oh, there you are.

PAULETTE. You're a ninny, Henriette. I mustn't forget to tell you.

HENRIETTE. I thought you'd left me alone.

PAULETTE. I did.

HENRIETTE. You did? Why?

PAULETTE. To go exploring. But now I'm bored.

HENRIETTE. I'm hungry. When do we have our picnic?

PAULETTE. Who cares? Go back and ask the others. I despise picnics.

HENRIETTE. Then why'd you agree to come along? Just to please Poppa, I'll bet. So he won't scold you for all those new dresses you ordered.

PAULETTE. Poppa doesn't know about them.

HENRIETTE. Not yet. But he might find out.

PAULETTE. If you dare open your big mouth, I'll stick a bon-bon in it. (*They laugh.*) Then I'll tell Poppa about all the sweets you've been sneaking.

(*PAUL and HENRI enter, carrying a wasps' nest on a branch. The young MEN are elegant, accustomed to a life of ease.*)

HENRI. Look what we've found!

PAUL. I found. It was just hanging on a tree.

PAULETTE. What is it, Paul?

PAUL. I haven't decided.

PAULETTE. Which means you don't know.

HENRIETTE. Let's see. Is it a pear?

HENRI. No, I think it's a kind of a seashell.

PAULETTE. In the forest?

HENRI. Well, listen. You can hear a noise inside like the ocean.

PAUL. Sort of a buzzing. *(ALL listen and make buzzing sounds in imitation.)*

HENRIETTE. Maybe it's a coconut.

PAUL. Coconuts don't buzz.

PAULETTE *(grabbing it)*. The buzzing gets louder when you shake it.

HENRI. We'll give it to Poppa, as a gift.

PAUL. Give it to me, I found it. *(Takes it.)*

HENRIETTE. What's this little hole here?

PAUL. Let me see. *(Steps away and puts his finger in the hole.)* I do believe I can feel something moving. *(Screams.)* I've been stung!

(ALL scream as they toss the nest back and forth. It finally goes to the old family servant, TOOT SWEET, on his entrance. He puts the picnic basket down, covers them with a tablecloth as they sit on a log, and gets rid of the nest off stage. They wait for him to uncover them.)

PAUL. Toot Sweet! Look! I've been stung!

TOOT SWEET. Well, who ever heard of playing ball with a wasps' nest?

HENRI. We thought it was a seashell.

HENRIETTE. Or a coconut.

TOOT SWEET (*ripping off a bit of tablecloth or using a hankie.*) Here, Paul, I'll put a bandage on it.

HENRIETTE. Me, too.

TOOT SWEET. Did you get stung?

HENRIETTE. No, but I want a bandage.

PAULETTE. What you really want, Henriette, is a brain.

HENRI. Let me help. (*Twists ends of bandage.*) There!

PAUL (*screams*). Stop it! If I weren't wounded, I'd box your ears.

PAULETTE. That might be amusing.

HENRIETTE. Is that our picnic, Toot Sweet?

TOOT SWEET. Yes, but we'll hold off 'til your sister and poppa join us.

PAULETTE. Where are they, anyway?

HENRI. Fetch them here. Be off with you.

PAUL. And while you're at it, fetch me a doctor.

TOOT SWEET. Pish tosh. (*Turns in time to see HENRIETTE approaching the basket.*) Hands off! (*HENRIETTE retreats.*) Now, wait here like good little children 'til I find Beauty and your father.

PAULETTE. We're not children.

TOOT SWEET. Well, wait anyhow. (*He goes. Pause.*)

HENRIETTE. Little meat pies, probably.

PAULETTE. No, I think it's cold chicken.

HENRI. And grapes.

PAUL. Seedless?

(They start toward the basket. TOOT SWEET is back in a flash.)

TOOT SWEET. I repeat: hands off! (*After a quick hard glare, he goes.*)

PAULETTE. I don't think he trusts us.

PAUL. He's acting awfully bossy these days.

HENRI. He always has. Bossiest servant we've got.

HENRIETTE. I'm still hungry. *(The lights have been dimming a little.)*

PAULETTE. We'd better get this stupid picnic over with before it rains. *(Little pause.)*

SPIRIT *(voice)*. See where you are. My special place. See where you are.

PAULETTE *(as they ALL look around mystified)*. I know where I am, Henriette. I'm out in the woods and I don't much like it.

HENRIETTE. That wasn't me.

SPIRIT *(voice)*. Open your eyes and see where you are.

HENRI *(as they look about)*. Maybe it's Beauty.

PAUL. Does anyone else feel a little funny?

PAULETTE. No. But you look a little funny. You always do.

PAUL. I'll thank you to hold your tongue.

HENRI. Or we'll snip it out.

PAULETTE. Listen to the peacocks.

HENRIETTE. Shh! Everyone listen!

SPIRIT *(voice)*. My realm is here, my kingdom of the spirits is all about...see where you are...

PAULETTE. For heaven's sake, what's Beauty trying to do? Scare us? *(Calling.)* Beauty!

HENRI. That wasn't Beauty.

PAUL. And I do feel funny.

HENRIETTE. Me, too. *(A pause. They are nervous and a little dazed.)*

(TOOT SWEET comes in.)

TOOT SWEET. They're coming. I found them way back by the stream. (*Calls back.*) We're here, Beauty!

HENRIETTE. Sec. It wasn't Beauty.

TOOT SWEET. What wasn't?

HENRIETTE. The voice, Toot Sweet. The voice we heard.

I knew it wasn't Beauty. Didn't fool me for a minute.

PAULETTE. Well, then, who was it?

PAUL. No one.

PAULETTE. How could it be no one? You heard it, too.

PAUL. I don't think I did. So there.

PAULETTE. You've got a small problem, Paul. You're mad.

HENRIETTE. The voice said it was her kingdom or it was a special place or something.

HENRI. It was very weird, very.

TOOT SWEET. Hearing voices, huh? Too much sun. Maybe you're all getting sick.

PAULETTE. And maybe you're getting too pushy.

TOOT SWEET. Fiddle-dee-dee.

(*BEAUTY enters, sees them, and the place.*)

BEAUTY. I don't believe it! Tell me, how did you find it?

I wasn't sure I'd be able to myself.

PAULETTE. Find what?

BEAUTY. The place! The special place I told you about.

HENRI. Aha! It was Beauty, see?

PAULETTE. Not if she was back by the stream. How could we hear from that distance? You're all crazy.

BEAUTY. What's the matter?

HENRIETTE. We heard a voice, Beauty.

HENRI. Obviously yours.

HENRIETTE. The voice told us to look out, or open our eyes, stuff like that. Are you sure it wasn't you, Beauty?

BEAUTY. It wasn't. But don't you remember last night, when we planned the picnic...

PAULETTE. *You* planned it, *I* didn't.

BEAUTY. I told you I'd find an extra special place.

PAUL. Which gives me the creeps.

PAULETTE. Which you already had. But that was last night, and we heard the voice just now.

TOOT SWEET. Or thought you did. They're playing one of their games, Beauty. Pay no attention.

PAUL. Games are for children, Toot Sweet.

TOOT SWEET. Like you, Paul.

PAULETTE. It's no game and no fun and I want to go home. Now!

(POPPA enters in time to hear the last.)

POPPA. But, Paulette, dear, we haven't had our picnic yet. And I for one am famished. It's this great country air, I expect.

BEAUTY. And, look Poppa, isn't this the perfect spot?

POPPA. As perfect as these. *(He carries some wild roses.)*
See? Wild roses. I found them near the stream.

PAULETTE. I prefer our gardens at home.

POPPA. Nothing there to match these. *(Gives one to BEAUTY.)*

BEAUTY. Thank you, kind sir.

POPPA. A pleasure, madam!

HENRIETTE. What about me?

POPPA. To match the bloom in your cheeks, fair mistress.
(HENRIETTE giggles and takes the rose. To PAUL-

ETTE.) The poor rose pales beside your elegance, great lady, but take it, please, to make me happy.

PAULETTE. Oh, Poppa, you do have a way.

HENRI. So I don't get a present. Do I care? No. Do you, Paul?

PAUL. I could care less.

PAULETTE. Poor babies. (*PAULETTE and HENRIETTE chase BOYS and put the roses in their lapels or hair or behind their ears.*)

TOOT SWEET (*getting at the picnic things*). If you'll stop acting like two-year-olds we'll have our lunch.

PAULETTE. No. For once in his life Paul's right.

PAUL. Mercy!

PAULETTE. This place is too creepy.

BEAUTY. Oh, it is not! It's lovely. Now, listen, I'll tell you something very interesting, if you stay.

PAULETTE. Tell us on the way back, Beauty. We can have luncheon at home.

PAUL. Besides, I need professional attention for my poor finger.

HENRI. I could snip it off at the elbow, if you like.

HENRIETTE. Come on, Beauty, let's go home.

TOOT SWEET (*pleasantly*). We're going to stay right here and have our lunch, whether you like it or not, so you may as well like it.

PAUL. I vote we go home.

HENRI. I second it.

BEAUTY. Not yet, please.

POPPA (*sitting on stump or log*). As a favor to your tired old poppa.

TOOT SWEET. It doesn't make any sense to beg them.

PAULETTE. He's right for once.

TOOT SWEET. They're children. You don't beg children to do something. You *tell* them. *And I tell you you're staying!*

(ALL react. During the next few lines the PAGE, a young boy, obviously very frightened, runs on silently, sees them and hides.)

PAULETTE. That's the last time he calls us children.

PAUL. You're getting way out of line, Toot Sweet.

HENRI. Poppa, let's go home and leave Toot Sweet here.

PAULETTE. Hopefully to starve.

POPPA. Now, now, now.

BEAUTY. Toot Sweet's right! You're acting like children!
(They react.) And I'm ashamed of you. Spoiling things for Poppa.

TOOT SWEET. When you hear the news, you'll sing a different tune.

POPPA. Not yet, Toot Sweet.

TOOT SWEET. Sorry. But they'll have to know some-time.

PAULETTE. Know what?

BEAUTY. Know that we've found the perfect spot for our picnic.

PAULETTE. That isn't it. Know what, Toot Sweet? Poppa, are you hiding something? *(Pause.)*

POPPA. What shall we do, Beauty?

BEAUTY. For now, Poppa, smile.

PAULETTE. You're talking in riddles.

PAUL. It's this place, that's part of it.

BEAUTY. Yes, you're right, Paul, this place *is* part of it. Part of what I have to tell you. I thought it would be easier here. *(A pause. They look at each other, wonder-*

ing. BEAUTY looks up, as though she senses something and before they can speak she stops them.) Shh! Listen! (Pause, the lights change, music is heard.)

SPIRIT (*voice*). A realm of air and trees and flowers...a kingdom of space and beauty...if you dream a dream, dreams come true...(*The feeling of a spell has been cast.*)

PAULETTE (*not breaking the spell*). That voice, Beauty. Who is it?

BEAUTY. A spirit, I think. A lady. A lady of dreams perhaps. (*Pause.*) Once long ago, when I was just a little girl I wandered off to gather flowers. I think there was a birthday or a party, and I was hoping to find the prettiest blossoms in the world. Well, I went further and further, and then I found them—here. So very beautiful, but I couldn't reach them. They were up too high.

HENRIETTE. What happened?

BEAUTY. I wished, Henriette. I closed my eyes and I wished. (*She closes her eyes.*) Please. Some blossoms for our little party. (*The music rises.*)

SPIRIT (*voice*). Dreams come true...(*And a few blossoms fall from atop the trees. Silence. Astonishment.*)

BEAUTY. Thank you. (*She picks up one, smiles at her FAMILY and they gather the other blossoms and give them to BEAUTY.*) See, Poppa. All is not lost. Dreams can come true.

PAULETTE. If you told me about this I wouldn't believe it.

PAUL. I still don't.

BEAUTY. It's ages since I've been here. Too busy at home. But it's still so dream-like.

HENRIETTE. You mean you didn't keep coming back here and asking for things?

BEAUTY. No.

HENRIETTE. Not even a handsome young prince?
(*BEAUTY smiles.*)

HENRI. Why didn't you tell us about it?

BEAUTY. I almost did. Poppa, remember when I gave you the blossoms?

POPPA. Yes. I said, "They're beautiful, Beauty. Where did you find them? In a very special place?"

BEAUTY. And I said, "Very special."

POPPA. "Will you take me there?"

BEAUTY. "Someday, perhaps. But for now it's a secret."

PAULETTE. Then why today?

TOOT SWEET. Because we have need of dreams, Paulette.

BEAUTY. I'll try to explain.

POPPA. It's my responsibility, Beauty, let me try.

PAULETTE. Well, *someone* try, for heaven's sake!

TOOT SWEET (*blurring it out*). Your poppa's poor, my young lovely. He's lost everything. That's what they're trying to tell you. Houses, gardens, jewels, stables, money, the lot—it's all gone. We're poor as church mice.

POPPA. We still have each other.

BEAUTY. And a little cottage nearby—we're far from poor. (*Pause.*)

PAULETTE. This is going too fast. What are you talking about?

PAUL. It's this creepy place, making them babble nonsense.

POPPA. Not long ago I invested in ships to the Orient.

HENRI. But you've done that before.

POPPA. I know. But these ships were lost in a storm, and I'd invested everything.

HENRIETTE. Everything?

PAULETTE. First we hear voices and now this. It's like a nightmare.

BEAUTY. Toot Sweet...

TOOT SWEET. I didn't mean to blurt it out. Sorry.

PAULETTE. So this is your big surprise.

BEAUTY. I brought you here hoping the spirit would make it easier for me to tell you, easier for you to accept.

PAULETTE. That's it, Beauty! Ask the spirit! No, I will. Listen, spirit, or lady, or whatever, we need more than blossoms, we need our fortune back! That's my dream, hear? *(Pause. Music.)*

SPIRIT *(voice)*. Take care...take care with your dreams...
(A great crash of thunder, music out.)

PAULETTE *(almost defeated)*. Oh, Beauty. *(She goes and holds her.)* It's terrible. It's just terrible. I don't think I can bear it.

TOOT SWEET *(gently)*. You'll survive.

BEAUTY. You'll do more than survive. You'll find out how strong you really are.

PAULETTE. I don't want to be strong. I want to be rich.

PAUL. Well, I should think so.

HENRI. Being poor just doesn't make sense.

HENRIETTE. I know. What'll I do about my sweet tooth?

POPPA. Children, children, try to forgive me. Please. Things will change before you know it. You'll see. And look, Toot Sweet has agreed to stay on and help us over the rough spots.

BEAUTY. And wait till you see the cottage. It's charming. Like a big dolls' house. *(They groan a little.)* We'll hang on to our dreams, and take care of them, the way the spirit said, and before you know it, there will be blossoms falling for all of us.