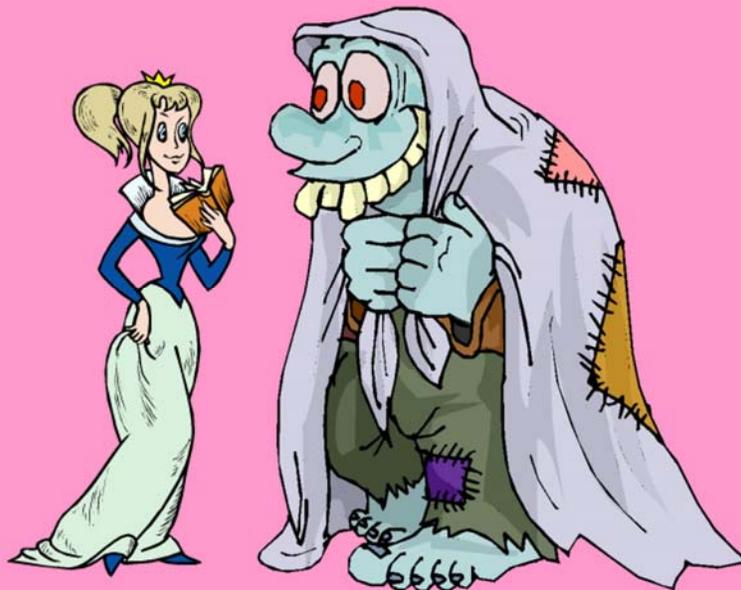


Beauty and the **BEASTIE**



MURRAY J. BIVETTE

A wacky adaptation of the children's classic

BIG DOG PUBLISHING

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*“And what more wonderful gifts
could you possibly bring to a child
than laughter and smiles?”*

—Beauty

Beauty & the Beastie

CHILDREN'S COMEDY. When Beauty's father gets laid off from his job at K-Mart, he ventures into a nearby forest to collect wood. But the forest is owned by a horrendously ugly guy named Beastie—and boy is he ugly! Beastie demands that Beauty's father send one of his three daughters to live with him so that he has someone to play cards, ping-pong, Monopoly, Boggle, pool, tennis, golf, croquet, and Parcheesi with. But when Beauty's two selfish older sisters, Blabbette and Ermatroid, refuse to go, Beauty eagerly volunteers. At first, Beastie is delighted to have Beauty join him at the castle, but his gaming dreams are soon dashed when he discovers that Beauty would rather read Harry Potter books than play games! Can Beastie be happy playing tag alone?

Performance Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

Characters

(3 m, 3 w, 6 flexible)

STAGE MANAGER: In charge of the production of “Beauty and the Beastie.”

HARRY: Assistant stage manager who can never get anything right.

BEAUTY: Youngest daughter, sweet and kind; wears a beautiful necklace.

FATHER: Beauty’s father.

ERMATROID: Eldest daughter, selfish.

BLABBETTE: Second eldest daughter, selfish.

BEASTIE: Wears a hideous mask and lives in a castle in the forest.

MIRROR: Lives with Beastie and hangs out with Clock.

CLOCK: Has never learned to tell time.

BOWE: Banker.

BARRY: Banker.

BURLEY: Banker.

Setting

Beauty's home has a small kitchen with a table, three chairs, and a telephone stand. The forest is made up of twigs and branches. Beastie's castle has a table and chairs.

Synopsis of Scenes

Scene 1: Beauty's home.

Scene 2: The forest.

Scene 3: Beastie's castle.

Scene 4: Beauty's home.

Scene 5: Beastie's castle.

Scene 6: Beauty's home.

Scene 7: Beastie's castle.

Scene 8: Beauty's home.

Scene 9: Castle garden.

Props

Telephone	Money satchel
Envelope	TV remote control
Twigs	Script
Branches	Book
Bowl of apples	Necklace, for Beauty
Hideous mask, for Beastie	

Special Effects

Knock at the door
Fun-house mirror or mirrored/Mylar costume

Scene 1

(AT RISE: *Beauty's House. Stage Manager enters, carrying a telephone with stand.*)

STAGE MANAGER: (*Calls offstage to Assistant*) Hey, Harry, let's get this stage set up for the show! (*Sees audience.*) Oh, hello! You're here already. Good. We'll be starting in just a minute. (*Calls offstage.*) Harry! Got to get set up! (*To audience.*) Just one more minute. (*Yells offstage.*) Harry!

(*Harry enters, bringing in three chairs and table.*)

HARRY: I'm setting, I'm setting.

STAGE MANAGER: Don't forget the refrigerator and the stove. (*To audience.*) This is the eat-in kitchen in Beauty's house.

HARRY: Hey, I'm not moving anything heavy like refrigerators and stoves.

STAGE MANAGER: Harry, they're not heavy. They're both made out of cardboard and Styrofoam. And besides, it's your job!

HARRY: I know, I know...but you see, there's a little problem.

STAGE MANAGER: A problem? (*Pause.*) Harry, you didn't Fed Ex the stuff like I told you to, did you?

HARRY: Well...

STAGE MANAGER: You used some other outfit, didn't you?

HARRY: Well...

STAGE MANAGER: Didn't you?

(*Pause.*)

HARRY: Yes...

STAGE MANAGER: Harry, why do I always tell you to use Fed Ex?

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HARRY: Because they always deliver on time?

STAGE MANAGER: Right. So, what do we do now?

HARRY: Listen, if it's okay with you, can we *please* just make this a...a small dinette?

STAGE MANAGER: (*Exasperated.*) Okay, okay, I suppose we'll have to. All right, here's the...*dinette* chairs and table, and here's the *dinette* telephone and stand, and here's the...hey, where's the...?

HARRY: (*Clears throat.*) Ahem, ahem...uh...

STAGE MANAGER: What?

HARRY: Nothing else got here either. Sorry.

STAGE MANAGER: Oh, for crying out loud! (*Pause. Irritated.*) Never mind, Harry. Let's get on with it anyway, shall we? (*To audience.*) Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, let me introduce the characters in our play. Here comes Beauty's father. We call him...Father. Here's Beauty's oldest sister, Ermatroid... (*Enters, sits at the table.*) ...and her middle sister, Blabbette. (*Enters, sits at the table.*) And here comes Beauty herself. (*Enters, sits at the table.*) On with the show. Come on, Harry.

(*Stage Manager exits, pulling Harry offstage as well.*)

FATHER: (*Pacing.*) Girls, I have some very bad news. I've been laid off at K-Mart [*or insert the name of another convenience store*]. It seems as though they're going with older greeters—senior citizens—and I'm too young. So we must cut down on all our expenses in running the household.

ERMATROID: Tsk. I hope I don't have to give up my subscription to "Cosmo" [*or insert the name of another magazine*].

BLABBETTE: And I certainly don't want to give up my book of the month club membership [*or insert the name of another club membership*], either.

ERMATROID: Darn! I wanted to get a tattoo.

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BLABBETTE: And I wanted a tattoo [*or piercing*], too.

FATHER: No, no, no! No magazine, no club memberships, and no tattoos [*or piercings*]!

(Beauty approaches her father and embraces him.)

BEAUTY: Oh, poor Father. I'll do anything I can to help.

FATHER: I knew I could count on you for help, Beauty...
(Looks at Ermatroid and Blabbette.) ...but this is something that we *all* must do...together. *(Ermatroid and Blabbette grumble.)* I received a phone call from the bank earlier, and they're sending over three bankers—Banker Barry, Banker Burley, and Banker Bowe. I don't know exactly what they want. Perhaps they are going to offer us a loan. *(Knock at the door.)* Oh, that must be the bankers now. *(Bankers enter like the Three Stooges and all sing "Hello! Hello! Hello!" in harmony.)* Come in, gentlemen, come in.

BOWE: *(To Father, sweetly.)* Thank you. *(Curt.)* Barry, give him the notice.

BARRY: I don't have the notice.

BOWE: What do you mean you don't have the notice? I *gave* you the notice.

BARRY: Yeah, but I was busy so I gave it to Burley.

BOWE: Why did you give it to that numbskull?

BURLEY: Hey, who you calling a numbskull?

BOWE: I'm calling you a numbskull, you numbskull.

BURLEY: Oh, okay, just making sure.

BOWE: So, why did you give it to that numbskull?

BARRY: I told you...because I was busy.

BOWE: Yeah, but you know he can't walk and chew gum at the same time!

BURLEY: Oh, yeah?

BOWE: Yeah!

BURLEY: Oh. Okay.

BOWE: So then where is it?

BURLEY: Where's what?

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BARRY: The notice, you dummy!

BURLEY: Oh, that. I mailed it.

BOWE: You did what?!

BURLEY: I mailed it.

BARRY: You're supposed to deliver this kind of notice in person, you numbskull.

BURLEY: Can't the mailman be the one to deliver it in person?

BOWE/BARRY: No!

BURLEY: Oh. My bad.

BOWE: Okay, Burley, if you mailed it, then why hasn't it arrived yet?

BURLEY: How should I know? I took it and put it in an envelope, put a stamp on it, and put it right here in my pocket so I wouldn't forget to mail it. See? *(Reaches into his pocket and produces the envelope.)* Oooops! How do you like that? I guess I *forgot* to mail it.

(Banker Bowe hits him on head.)

BOWE: *(To Burley.)* You numbskull! Give him the notice!

BURLEY: Hey, don't hit!

BOWE: I oughta knock your block off, you dummy!

BARRY: Hey, Bowe! You can't do that!

BOWE: I can't, huh?

BARRY: No.

BOWE: Then maybe I can do this? *(Bonks banker Barry.)*

BARRY: Owwww! Hey, that hurts!

BOWE: Or maybe I can do this? *(Pretends to poke Burley in eyes.)*

BURLEY: Ow, ow, ow!

BOWE: *(To Banker Barry.)* Anything else I *can't* do?

BARRY: No, no. You've proved your point.

BOWE: Good. *(To Burley.)* And what do you have to say for yourself?

BURLEY: I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

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BOWE: You certainly are! Now give him the notice already, you knucklehead!

BARRY: Yeah, give him the notice already!

BURLEY: All right, all right. Hey, can I have the stamp?

BOWE/BARRY: No!

BURLEY: All right, all right! Geez! Here. (*Hands Father the envelope.*)

FATHER: What kind of notice is it?

BOWE: It's your foreclosure notice on this house.

FATHER: Foreclosure notice? I've been paying the mortgage right along. Why are you foreclosing on my house?

BARRY: Because you haven't made the last six payments. That's why.

FATHER: But I gave the money... (*To Ermatroid and Blabbette.*) ...to both of you every month to pay the mortgage. Didn't you pay it?

ERMATROID: Well...not exactly.

BLABBETTE: No, not exactly.

FATHER: What do you mean, not exactly?

(*Ermatroid rises and crosses to Father.*)

ERMATROID: Daddy, you know how I've always wanted a stereo for my room...?

(*Blabbette rises and crosses to Father.*)

BLABBETTE: And if she was getting a stereo, I wanted a color TV...

ERMATROID: So we bought them for ourselves...

BLABBETTE: With the money you gave us.

BEAUTY: Sisters, how could you do such a thing?! (*Sits at the table.*)

ERMATROID: Oh, hush up, you little snip!

BLABBETTE: This isn't any of your business!

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FATHER: Stop it, girls! It's everyone's business. So just stop it. Oh, this is terrible! Perhaps we can return those things you bought and get the money back.

ERMATROID: They were on sale...

BLABBETTE: We bought them "as is"...

ERMATROID/BLABBETTE: No returns!

FATHER: Oh, dear, oh, dear...

BOWE: Look, you guys can have your little family squabble after we're gone.

BARRY: Yeah, you have one month to pay the mortgage or we foreclose.

BURLEY: Or 30 days, whichever comes first! Oh, boy, I love foreclosures! (*Laughs.*) Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk!

BOWE: We'll see you in 30 days.

BARRY: We'll be waiting!

BURLEY: Yeah, 30 days. Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk.

(Barry, Bowe, and Burley exit, bumping into doorway.)

FATHER: Well, now I not only lost my job, but we may not have a roof over our heads in one month.

ERMATROID: Maybe we could get a suite of rooms at the Holiday Inn?

BLABBETTE: Oh, that's ridiculous. I much prefer the Waldorf, thank you. I *love* the Waldorf!

BEAUTY: Sisters, you're not listening! We have no money for anything like that. We can't even afford a Motel 6! Right, Father?

FATHER: Yes, Beauty, I'm afraid so. There's no money for anything like that now. No extras of any kind.

ERMATROID: But I have an appointment to get my nails done tomorrow.

FATHER: You'll just have to cancel it.

ERMATROID: Aaaaaw! (*Stamps her foot in anger.*)

BLABBETTE: And I have to get my hair done.

FATHER: You'll have to cancel that, too.

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BLABBETTE: Darn! (*Stamps her foot in anger.*)

BEAUTY: Father, I'll help in any way. I have four dollars and 35 cents in my piggy bank.

FATHER: Thank you, Beauty. But we'll need a lot more than that. We'll just have to tighten our belts...starting right now. I'll go into the forest and gather some firewood so that we can cut down on the heating oil bills for the house. It'll be a start. Meanwhile, why don't you girls tidy up in here. If we have to give up the house, at least it will be clean for whoever buys it. Oh, woe...oh, woe is me! (*Exits.*)

BEAUTY: (*To Ermatroid and Blabbette.*) You two are so selfish!

ERMATROID: Listen, you goody-two-shoes, mind your own business! (*Exits.*)

BLABBETTE: Right! So just get off our backs! (*Exits.*)

BEAUTY: Oh, dear. Poor Father.

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 2

(AT RISE: *The forest. Stage Manager and Harry clear the kitchen set and enter with twigs and branches. Some twigs are already on stage.*)

STAGE MANAGER: *(To Tech Booth.)* Give me a light change, please. *(Holds up branches.)* This is the forest.

HARRY: *(Sarcastic.)* Some forest.

STAGE MANAGER: Excuse me?

HARRY: This is so chintzy for a forest. We should have big trees.

STAGE MANAGER: Big trees? Really?

HARRY: Right! Great big trees...oaks, elms, maples—

STAGE MANAGER: Harry, I don't mean to interrupt your reverie, but why, pray tell, don't we have big trees?

HARRY: I don't know. Why?

STAGE MANAGER: Do the words Fed Ex ring a bell?

(Pause.)

HARRY: Never mind. Sorry about the trees. *(He holds up the branches.)*

STAGE MANAGER: Fine. Now, hush up and just do your job! *(Stage Manager holds up branches.)*

HARRY: Yeah, yeah, whatever.

(Father enters, and picks up some twigs.)

FATHER: Oh, dear, there aren't a lot of twigs for firewood here in the forest. I thought there would be lots more. I may have to climb up a tree and cut some down.

(Beastie enters, wearing a frightful mask.)

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BEASTIE: (*Shouts.*) What do you think you are doing?!

(*Startled, Father throws his twigs in the air.*)

FATHER: Ahhhhhhhhh!

BEASTIE: I said, what do you think you are doing?

FATHER: Who are you?

BEASTIE: I am the Beastie of the Forest—the *king* of the Forest—and I repeat, what do you think you are *doing*?

FATHER: (*Chuckles. Fast, nervous delivery.*) Oh, that's easy.

You see, I'm not really doing anything. I was just gathering some branches for my wood stove to help cut down on our expenses with the heating oil. You see, I lost my job at [*K-Mart*] because of a silly problem with senior citizens, and my family and I have to try and cut down on expenses because these three bankers came to the house and handed me a foreclosure notice, which was a total surprise, because I had no idea that the mortgage hadn't been paid in over six months, so it was quite a shock, of course, and then I found out that my two older daughters had spent the money on foolishness instead of paying what we owed the bank—

BEASTIE: Enough!

FATHER: Oh, but there's more.

BEASTIE: No, there isn't!

FATHER: Oh, but there is!

BEASTIE: I said...no, there isn't! I've heard enough, thank you!

FATHER: Sorry!

BEASTIE: You do tend to run off at the mouth, don't you?

FATHER: Not always, but you see, I lost my job and found out that we owed all that money on the house, and now we are practically broke.

BEASTIE: Hey, Fred. Listen to me...talk to the hand. (*Extends his arm, palm up and facing Father.*)

FATHER: My name isn't Fred...

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BEASTIE: I don't care! This is my forest, this is my land, and you are stealing my twigs and branches! Do you think those things grow on trees?

FATHER: Uh...yes.

BEASTIE: Quiet! And you are trespassing! You've really stepped in it this time, fella!

(Father checks the bottom of his shoes.)

FATHER: I have?

BEASTIE: You bet you have! Come with me. *(Father hesitates.)*

Now!

FATHER: Where are we going?

BEASTIE: We're going to my castle, that's where.

FATHER: Oh, I'd love to see your castle, but maybe some other time. I really have to get home.

BEASTIE: *(Sarcastic, whiny.)* Aaaw! I wanna go home! Well...

(Shouts angrily.) ...you can't go home! Now come with me.

FATHER: But...but...but...why do I have to go with you?

BEASTIE: Because if you don't come with me... *(Menacingly.)*

...I'll rip off both your arms and both your legs, and tear off your nose and your ears, and then I'll hurt you really bad!

FATHER: Good answer. Let's go. *(All exit.)*

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(AT RISE: *Beastie's castle. Stage Manager and Harry enter, carrying the castle set/ props. There is a table with a bowl of apples on it.*)

STAGE MANAGER: *(To Tech Booth.)* Change the lights again, please. *(Hold for lights. To audience.)* We're in the Beast's castle now. He'll be here in a minute with poor old Father.

HARRY: Yeah. Poor old Fred.

STAGE MANAGER: Harry, his name isn't Fred!

HARRY: Then why did the beast call him Fred?

STAGE MANAGER: He was just being sarcastic!

HARRY: Aaah! *(Pause.)* Are you sure his name isn't Fred?

STAGE MANAGER: No, his name is *not* Fred. What's the matter with you? Sssh! Sssh! Here they are now.

(Stage Manager and Harry exit as Beastie and Father enter.)

BEASTIE: *(To Father.)* This is my castle, and this is where you will stay.

FATHER: Oh, sure, whatever you say.

(Mirror and Clock enter and stand off to one side.)

BEASTIE: Ah! My trusted mirror and clock!

MIRROR/CLOCK: Welcome back, sir, welcome back.

BEASTIE: I want you to look after this...person, while I go make out a list of things to be done around here.

MIRROR: Oh, yes, sir...we'll look after him.

CLOCK: We'll keep an eye on him.

BEASTIE: Good. *(Exits.)*

FATHER: *(To Mirror.)* So, what do you do around here?

MIRROR: Nothing much, really. I just kind of...hang around. *(Points.)* Usually on that wall over there.

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FATHER: Ah.

MIRROR: Yes. You see, Beastie is quite...let's say, "vain" about his looks...he looks into me every single day.

CLOCK: Beastie vain? Ha! We *should* say paranoid!

MIRROR: Quiet, please! Watch your manners! Speak only when spoken to!

CLOCK: Well, excuuuuse me, boss!

FATHER: *(To Clock.)* And what do you do?

CLOCK: *(To Mirror, sarcastically.)* Hey, I was spoken to, so now I can talk. All right?

MIRROR: Oh, all right!

CLOCK: Well, whenever Beastie asks me what time it is, I tell him.

FATHER: That's all you do? Tell time?

CLOCK: Humph! Well, let's see...I also mow the lawn, pull the weeds, clean the windows, scrub the floors, polish the silver, wash the dishes, cook the food, and set the table.

FATHER: Wow! You really do all that?

CLOCK: Of course not! I only have two hands! All I do is tell time!

FATHER: Ah! So what time is it now?

CLOCK: Time? Now?

FATHER: Yes, of course, right now...

CLOCK: I...I don't know.

FATHER: You're the clock and you don't know the time?

CLOCK: I'll run upstairs and check, if it's really important to you.

FATHER: It's not all that important. But why do you have to go upstairs?

CLOCK: *My* clock is on the nightstand in my bedroom.

FATHER: So?

CLOCK: So it's a digital clock, and it shows me the time with numbers. Confidentially, I never learned to tell time with these darn hands... *(Singsong.)* ...the little hand is on the 3 and the big hand is on the 7, so what time is it? It's Howdy Doody time for all I care! Ha! Which is the big hand? You

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mean the fat hand or the long hand? I could never figure it out, so I bought a digital clock for myself. It's very helpful.

FATHER: And what if Beastie wants to know what time it is?

CLOCK: I just make up a number.

FATHER: You make it up?

MIRROR: That's right. He can't tell time, so he just makes it up!

CLOCK: Yeah. *(To Mirror.)* Hey, he never goes anywhere anyway, so what's the big deal? He's not exactly the most popular kid on the block, you know!

MIRROR: I sometimes wonder about you.

(Sees a bowl of apples on the table and reaches for one.)

FATHER: Oh, goody! Apples!

MIRROR: Hey, put that back! You think those things grow on trees?

FATHER: Uh...yes.

MIRROR: Well, put it back anyway.

(Beastie enters with list.)

BEASTIE: I trust I haven't kept you waiting too long.

FATHER: No.

BEASTIE: Good. I have prepared a list of the duties you will be required to perform around here. I'll read them for you...there are quite a few things to be done. Number 1, you are to dust the entire castle, top to bottom. There's only 40 rooms, so it shouldn't be too bad. Number 2, you will vacuum the entire castle. Same 40 rooms applies here. Number 3, you will prepare all the meals. I have a lovely kitchen with a fully stocked pantry that has anything you may want to use for each meal. Number 4, set the table. Number 5, wash and dry the dirty dishes after each meal. Number 6, turn down the sheets on the beds and fluff up the pillows. *(Cutesy.)* You can put a little piece of chocolate on

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the pillow if you want. And the last item on the list is that you will play games with me whenever I feel like playing a game.

FATHER: When am I supposed to do all that? I have to be getting home soon.

BEASTIE: Home? Did you say..."home"? Ah...ha-ha-ha-ha-ha...that's rich! Home. Listen to me, you thief and trespasser, you are not going home. This castle...*my* castle...is your home from now on. Do I make myself clear? You will remain here with me—

FATHER: For how long?

BEASTIE: Never mind that—we'll see. Anyway, since we've all had our suppers—

FATHER: But I haven't had *my* sup—

BEASTIE: Silence! As I was saying, since we've *all* had our suppers, I want to play a game. Do you know how to play Go Fish or Canasta?

FATHER: No.

BEASTIE: Gin Rummy? Old Maid?

FATHER: No.

BEASTIE: Pictionary? (*Father shakes his head, "no."*) Boggle? (*Father shakes his head, "no."*) Monopoly? (*Father shakes his head, "no."*) Oh, for goodness sake! What games *do* you know how to play?

FATHER: Well, I enjoy playing Scrabble with my daughters, and Trivial Pursuit.

BEASTIE: Trivial what?

FATHER: Pursuit, pursuit!

BEASTIE: Gesundheit!

FATHER: No! That's the name of the game. Trivial Pursuit. Look, I don't want to play any games. I just want to go home to my daughters. Please let me go home.

BEASTIE: Never! You shall remain here...forever! (*Pause.*) Unless...

FATHER: Unless? Unless what?

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BEASTIE: Well, if you can get one of your daughters to come live here—of her own free will—and be my servant, you can go free. And you say that your house is being foreclosed on?

FATHER: (*Almost in tears.*) Yes.

BEASTIE: If one of your daughters comes here, then I will pay whatever you owe on your house so that you won't lose it, and I'll even throw in a couple extra bucks for spending money. How's that sound to you?

FATHER: I don't know. I just don't know. Any one of the girls would probably be very frightened of you, just as I am.

BEASTIE: Why are *you* frightened of me?

FATHER: Because you're big...and you always wear that awful mask...like the Phantom of the Opera.

BEASTIE: (*Melodramatic.*) I must wear the mask. It hides my true ugliness. I'm horrible looking.

FATHER: Oh, it can't be that bad. Come on, lay it on the line. Tell me how you really feel.

BEASTIE: I'm revolting.

FATHER: What are you trying to say?

BEASTIE: That I'm terrible looking.

FATHER: Look, why don't you tell it like it is.

BEASTIE: I am! I'm disgusting.

FATHER: Don't beat around the bush. Let it all out.

BEASTIE: I'm ugly, revolting, horrible, horrendous, despicable...

FATHER: Aha! So what you mean to say is that you don't think you're very good looking?

BEASTIE: Duh! (*Slaps Father on back of head.*) By George! I think he's got it!

FATHER: Well, that doesn't make you a bad person...or beast, Beastie.

BEASTIE: I know that! Look, do we have a deal or not?

FATHER: Oh, all right. But what would happen if I decided *not* to come back at all or to bring one of my daughters to you?

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BEASTIE: Oh. Well, then I would have to hunt you down like an animal and destroy you *and* your entire family!

FATHER: My *entire* family?

BEASTIE: Yes...and every single one of your relatives, too!

FATHER: Well, I *do* have this one aunt from Philadelphia who I'm not too very fond of...

BEASTIE: Oh, for goodness sake!

FATHER: Oh, what the heck! Okay, you got a deal. I'll have one of my kids come here and be your servant.

BEASTIE: Terrific! Now...go!

FATHER: (*Sheepishly.*) Listen, would it be all right if I took the branches and twigs I collected?

BEASTIE: No!

FATHER: Why not?

BEASTIE: Because I said so! Now, get out of here! (*Starts to exit.*)

FATHER: Okay, okay. I'm going. I'm going. (*Under his breath.*) What a grouch! (*Starts to exit.*)

BEASTIE: Hold it right there! What did you just say?

FATHER: I said... (*Pause.*) ...that I'm heading *south*. Yeah, south.

BEASTIE: Fine...now scram!

FATHER: I'm gone! (*Exits.*)

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 4

(AT RISE: *Beauty's House. Stage Manager enters carrying telephone and stand. Harry enters carrying branches and twigs.*)

STAGE MANAGER: (To Tech Booth.) Another lighting change, please. (Holds for light change. To audience.) We are now back in Beauty's house... (Sees Harry with branches.)

Harry, what are you doing with the branches?

HARRY: Aren't we in the forest now?

STAGE MANAGER: No, we're *not* in the forest! This is Beauty's house again.

HARRY: Oh.

STAGE MANAGER: Harry, didn't you read the scene sheet that's tacked up backstage?

HARRY: (Hesitates.) Uh...no...

STAGE MANAGER: Well, go read it now. We're in Beauty's house and her father is about to come in. Get the table and chairs for the *dinette*...and please hurry!

HARRY: (As he exits.) Boy, nobody ever tells me anything!

(Harry dumps the branches offstage and re-enters carrying a table and chairs.)

STAGE MANAGER: (To audience as Harry continues to carry on set pieces.) I must apologize for Harry. He's relatively new at this, so we have to bear with him.

(Pause.)

HARRY: (All set pieces are onstage. To Stage Manager.) There! You happy now?

STAGE MANAGER: Yes, Harry, I'm happy now. Oh, here comes Father. C'mon.

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(Stage Manager and Harry exit. Father enters. He is out of breath.)

FATHER: Girls, girls, come quick...hurry! Please!

(Ermatroid, Blabbette, and Beauty enter.)

ERMATROID: What is it? I was painting my toenails! *(Sits at the table.)*

BLABBETTE: Couldn't this wait? I was just about to put on a mud pack! *(Sits at the table.)*

BEAUTY: What is it, Father? What's wrong? *(Sits at the table.)*

FATHER: Well, it's a long story, my precious daughters, but let's just say that I was gathering twigs and branches in the forest, when all of a sudden, I was set upon by a...a huge, slobbering beast, a monstrous fire-breathing animal with fangs out to here... *(Demonstrates.)* ...and covered with hair and fur, and blood and guts, and it was horrible! Worse than Sasquatch!

(Beauty gasps loudly.)

ERMATROID/BLABBETTE: Oh, no!

FATHER: Ah, you care!

ERMATROID: *(To Father.)* What? Oh, no. I was just noticing that my toenail polish was drying in streaks. Darn!

BLABBETTE: And my mud pack will be all dried up if I don't use it soon! My pores will be like craters!

(Beauty rises and crosses to Father.)

BEAUTY: Poor Father! That must have been a terrible ordeal. Tell us what happened.

FATHER: Well, like I said, it's a long story, so I'll cut right to the chase. I have to convince one of you go back to his castle and be his servant for the rest of *your* life, or I have to go back and be his servant for the rest of *my* life. But if one of

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you goes, then he will provide us with enough money to pay off the entire mortgage on the house and some extra spending money, too. But if I don't keep my promise and none of us goes back to live with him, then he'll kill us all.

ERMATROID/BLABBETTE/BEAUTY: Oh, no!

FATHER: Oh, yes. So, I was thinking, Ermatroid, as the oldest...

ERMATROID: Father. My dear, dear father. Perhaps you've gotten a touch too much sun and you're babbling! I am *not* leaving my comfortable room in this very comfortable house.

FATHER: Oh, all right. I expected as much. Blabbette? How about you?

BLABBETTE: Father, excuse me, but I do not intend to be some awful beast's servant for the rest of my life. So you can just fuggedabout it!

FATHER: Why am I not surprised? Beauty...?

BEAUTY: Of course I'll do it, Father, dear. I'll do anything to help you in this time of need. I guess it's up to me to do the right thing.

ERMATROID/BLABBETTE: (*Singsong.*) Of course she'll do it!

FATHER: Oh, hush up, you two! Come on, Beauty, we'd better get started before it gets too dark.

BEAUTY: I'll just grab my toothbrush and some clean undies.
(*She exits.*)

FATHER: (*Calling after her.*) Thank you, sweetheart, for your kind gesture.

ERMATROID/BLABBETTE: (*Singsong.*) Yes, thank you, sweetheart!

FATHER: Girls, will you please do me a *big* favor?

ERMATROID: Of course, Father.

BLABBETTE: Certainly, Father. What is it?

FATHER: Put a sock in it!

(*Blackout.*)

Scene 5

(AT RISE: *Beastie's Castle. Stage Manager and Harry enter with set pieces.*)

STAGE MANAGER: (*To Tech Booth.*) Lights change for the Beast's castle, please. (*Hold for light change.*) Thank you. Okay, we're in the castle again.

(*Stage Manager and Harry exit. Father enters with Beauty, walking slowly.*)

FATHER: Hellooooo? (*Pause.*) Anybody home? (*No answer.*)
Hellooooo?

BEAUTY: Yoo-hoo, are you there, filthy beast?

BEASTIE: (*Offstage.*) I'm home. I'll be right there. Who have you brought with you, old man?

FATHER: I brought my youngest daughter, Beauty, with me.

(*Beast enters with money satchel.*)

BEASTIE: Ah, so you have. (*Beauty sees his mask and is startled. To Beauty.*) Oh, don't be frightened. It's only a mask...to hide my true ugliness.

BEAUTY: Oh. All right. I guess.

BEASTIE: (*To Father.*) Well, it seems as if you've kept your part of the bargain. And here is my part of the bargain. I called the bank and there is enough money in here to pay off your house completely. You won't owe another cent on it. And as I also promised you, there's a little something extra in there, too, in case you'd like to go to Las Vegas. Now go, and pay off your mortgage. And don't ever let me catch you in my forest again!

FATHER: Oh, no, you won't ever catch me there again. I'll be very careful for you *not* to catch me.

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BEASTIE: What?

FATHER: I mean that I'll never *go* into the forest again. I promise. *(Pause.)* Well, I guess I'll be leaving now.

BEAUTY: Please be careful going home through the forest, Father. There's all kinds of horrible things out there, and they come out after dark.

FATHER: Maybe I should take the bus? Or the Tri-Rail?

BEASTIE: Oh, for goodness sake. Just go!

FATHER: I'm going. I'm going... *(Starts to exit.)* ...and don't worry, Beauty. I should be back home by late morning.

BEAUTY: Just be careful out there, Father, dear. It's a jungle.

FATHER: Actually, it's a forest. But I will, dear. Goodbye, Beauty. Be good. Stay well and stay warm.

BEAUTY: Goodbye, Father. You too.

(Beauty and Father embrace. Father exits. Pause.)

BEASTIE: So. You're...Beauty.

BEAUTY: Yes. And you're...?

BEASTIE: The Beast. But you can call me Beastie, if you want.

BEAUTY: All right. I will...Beastie.

BEASTIE: Good.

BEAUTY: So. What is there to do around here? Besides the housework, that is?

BEASTIE: Oh, I've got lots of things to keep you occupied. I have a ping-pong table, a billiards table, a bowling alley, a tennis court, satellite TV with 500,000 channels, horseback riding, golf, and croquet. I also have a grand piano...if you know how to play.

BEAUTY: I don't.

BEASTIE: Ah, too bad.

BEAUTY: Do you play?

BEASTIE: Only Chopsticks.

BEAUTY: Chopsticks? I really don't care for Oriental music.

(Pause.)

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BEASTIE: I see. Yes. So...what *do* you like to do? Do you play cards, Monopoly, Parcheesi, Boggle...? Anything like that?

BEAUTY: No, I'm not really interested in any of those games.

BEASTIE: I see. Well, all right. Tell me, do you know how to play *any* games?

BEAUTY: I play Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit with my father and my sisters.

BEASTIE: I'm not a very good speller, and I never heard of the other game. You don't play any other games?

BEAUTY: I'm afraid not. I would much prefer to read. I'm just getting into the Harry Potter books.

BEASTIE: Who's Harry Potter?

BEAUTY: A young boy who wants to become a wizard.

BEASTIE: A wizard? Ha! You gotta be kidding. There's no such thing as wizards. They're only in storybooks and fairy tales.

BEAUTY: Duh! Look around you.

BEASTIE: Oh, yeah, silly me! Look, doesn't anyone in your family play games? Your Father didn't know how to play any games and you don't know how to play any games. It must be in your genes.

BEAUTY: Oh, I very seldom wear jeans. I mostly wear dresses.

BEASTIE: (*Exasperated.*) I'm not talking about the kind of jeans you wear. I'm talking about the *genes*... (*She is looking at him with a very puzzled expression.*) ...the kind of genes...?

BEAUTY: Yes?

BEASTIE: Never mind. It's a lost cause.

BEAUTY: Sorry.

BEASTIE: Hey! I've got it...let's play...tag! You're it! (*Runs around the room, trying to hide in nooks and crannies.*) Ha, ha, ha!

BEAUTY: That's such a silly game.

BEASTIE: No, it isn't. (*Runs to her and tags her again.*) Ha! Tag! You're it again! (*Runs around room again.*) Ha, ha, ha!

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BEAUTY: I told you, it's a silly game. And I get all sweaty when I run around like that, especially indoors.

BEASTIE: No, it isn't a silly game. *(Runs to her and tags her again.)* Ha! Tag! You're it! Gotcha again! *(Runs around room again.)* Ha, ha, ha!

BEAUTY: Would you please stop that? It's extremely annoying.

BEASTIE: Nope. I'm having fun! *(Runs to her and tags her again.)* Ha! Tag! You're it again! *(Runs around room again.)* Ha, ha, ha...

BEAUTY: Hey! You're making an absolute fool of yourself. Now stop it!

(Beastie stops running.)

BEASTIE: Boy, you are *no* fun!

BEAUTY: I didn't think I was brought here to have fun...only to work...to be your servant.

BEASTIE: Oh, pooh!

(Beast exits. Mirror enters with Clock.)

MIRROR: *(To Beauty.)* Well, hello.

CLOCK: *(To Beauty.)* Oh, hello.

MIRROR: We bid you welcome.

CLOCK: Yes, welcome to the castle.

BEAUTY: Thank you, and hello to you, too.

MIRROR: My goodness, you are the second stranger to visit here in a very short time. The other one was a filthy, disgusting, horrible old man.

CLOCK: Yeah, a smelly, obnoxious, horrendous human being.

BEAUTY: That was my father...

MIRROR: *(Sweetly.)* And what a lovely gentleman he was!

CLOCK: Oh, yes. A real sweetheart!

MIRROR: Of course, he had *certain* genteel qualities...that were lacking, shall we say?

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CLOCK: *(To Beauty.)* Lacking, shmacking. Pay no attention to him – he’s very snobbish.

MIRROR: Am not.

CLOCK: Am too.

MIRROR: I won’t argue with you – you’re so far beneath me!

CLOCK: *(To Beauty.)* See what I mean? He’s a devout snob!

MIRROR: Please! Let’s not bring religion into this argument.

(Beastie enters.)

BEASTIE: *(To Clock, Mirror, angrily.)* All right, all right, enough of this chit-chatting. *(To Beauty.)* You!

BEAUTY: Yes?

MIRROR/CLOCK: We’d better go. *(They exit.)*

BEASTIE: I’ve made up my mind, and starting tomorrow, you will take over all the household chores.

BEAUTY: All of them?

BEASTIE: You got a problem with that?

BEAUTY: No, I guess not.

BEASTIE: *(Sarcastically.)* Good. Then yes, *all* of them!

BEAUTY: Oh.

BEASTIE: Yeah, “oh,” is right! You’ll begin with the preparation of breakfast. I would like orange juice – be sure to strain the pulp – Eggs Benedict, whole wheat toast, and Chamomile herb tea. And you will serve it precisely at 8 o’clock, a.m.

BEAUTY: And what about me?

BEASTIE: What *about* you?

BEAUTY: What will I have?

BEASTIE: You may have whatever you wish, but be finished by 8:30.

BEAUTY: All right.

BEASTIE: You will then wash the dishes, dry them, and put them away in the cupboards.

BEAUTY: Fine.

BEASTIE: (*Pacing.*) Then you are to do the dusting—all 40 rooms—then the vacuuming—also all 40 rooms—and then you may make up the beds. I like hospital corners on my sheets, thank you. After that, you may begin to prepare the midday meal. I prefer a light lunch—a sandwich and perhaps some soup. Do *not* make cream soups; I do not *like* cream soups. I have *never* liked cream soups, so do not *make* creamed soups. Uhhh...except for New England clam chowder, which I really *adore*!

BEAUTY: Okay, no cream soups...

BEASTIE: (*Prompting her.*) Except for...?

BEAUTY: Oh, right. Except for New England clam chowder...
(*Pause. Mimics him.*) ...which you *really* adore.

BEASTIE: Which I *really* adore. Hey, are you making fun of me?

BEAUTY: Of course not. Why would I do a thing like that?

BEASTIE: Thank you.

BEAUTY: You're welcome. I'm sure.

BEASTIE: I am also very fond of chicken noodle soup, so you may make that at any time.

BEAUTY: I see.

BEASTIE: And you may make whatever you want for yourself for lunch...

BEAUTY: Thank you...

BEASTIE: ...and do the dishes afterward as well.

BEAUTY: (*Sarcastically.*) ...very much.

BEASTIE: You will prepare the evening meal according to the Richard Simmons Meal Planner, [*or insert the name of another popular diet*] and you will partake of the same meal that you make for me. Understood?

BEAUTY: Perfectly.

BEASTIE: Then one day each week, you will scrub and wax the floors. One day each week you will polish the silverware, and one day each week you will wash the windows. Every evening, you will fluff up the pillows and turn down the sheets and covers.

BEAUTY: Check the oil and water? Pump the gas? You want fries with that?

BEASTIE: What? What are you babbling on about?

BEAUTY: Oh, nothing. *(Sarcastically.)* Everything sounds simply wonderful.

BEASTIE: Oh, yeah, right. What's the matter? You don't sound happy.

BEAUTY: *(Sarcastically.)* Oh, I am just thrilled!

BEASTIE: Too bad.

BEAUTY: How can you expect me to be happy when you aren't treating me like a human being?

BEASTIE: Hey, how can *you* expect *me* to be happy when you won't play any fun games? This is my castle, these are my rules, and you are stuck with them! You're gonna just love it here!

BEAUTY: Whatever you say...warden.

BEASTIE: Oh...pooh!

BEAUTY: All of this was brought on because I don't want to play any silly games?

BEASTIE: *(Pouting.)* If you say so.

BEAUTY: Okay, let me have household drudges for 100 dollars, Alex.

BEASTIE: What?

BEAUTY: Oh, nothing. Just a little "Jeopardy!" joke.

BEASTIE: Don't get smart with me, missy!

BEAUTY: Tell me...boss...how did you get to be so nasty?

BEASTIE: Practice!

BEAUTY: Oh, I believe it!

BEASTIE: Well, la-de-dah to you!

BEAUTY: For shame!

BEASTIE: Shame, my Aunt Matilda. Tomorrow...you *work!*
(He exits.)

BEAUTY: *(Mimicking.)* "Tomorrow you work, tomorrow you work." Sheesh, what a miserable grouch! *(Blackout.)*

[End of Freeview]