

The Beast

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INT. ALTAR ROOM - FOREST CASTLE - NIGHT

MARGARET, 42, wears a worn, muddied cloak, furiously WRITING a letter on an altar with blazing desperation in her eyes.

A bowl of burned ROSE PETALS lays near her letter. She writes her signature --

-- "YOUR MOTHER, MARGARET." She folds the letter shut.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
I wish I could tell you to burn the  
contents of this letter.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

A dense fog HOVERS between the pine trees, split by --

-- SOLDIERS, dressed in linen regimental coats, treading with caution.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
To forget all you will see and what  
you will hear.

The LEAD OFFICER halts, haunted, staring ahead. All rifles aim upon --

-- A feral WILD BOY, 9, crouching over a dead squirrel. His hair droops over the thick WOLF PELT on his shoulders.

One soldier steps over a branch. CRACK!

MARGARET (V.O.)  
But the truth is, I've made a very  
tragic mistake.

Wild Boy flinches, glaring at the soldiers. A SCAR is ripped across his eyebrow.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
I write to you about a  
transformation...

INT. ROYAL CHAPEL - PALACE - AFTERNOON

Massive doors open for a stunning PRINCESS CATHERINE, 22, in a glistening silk wedding dress.

She shifts to the altar, flanked by GUESTS in powdered wigs.

AT THE ALTAR

is a towering PRINCE VICTOR, 22, in a velvet-embroidered suit. He has a HEALED SCAR across his eyebrow.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
...about a child, who underwent  
years of reconditioning.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Wild Boy rips past the trees, losing the guards, when a net is cast into the air --

-- The net falls, entrapping the boy --

-- The guards tackle him to the ground --

-- He swipes and claws at them, mercilessly.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
Relinquishing whom he once was...

EXT. COURTYARD - PALACE - AFTERNOON

Young Catherine, 14, flips LETTER CARDS. Young Victor sounds each letter out. Smiling. Focused.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
...to learn who he must become.

INT. PRISON - AFTERNOON

A GUARD tosses Wild Boy a bowl of burned beans in his cell. Wild Boy slings it back --

-- It splashes into a guard's uniform.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
Escaping a past ravaged by  
violence...

INT. CELL - MORNING

GUARDS storm in, shoving their boots into Wild Boy's guts.

INT. CELL - LATER

Wild Boy sits coiled in a corner, bloodied. A SHADOW looms.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
...to become something more...

He turns seeing Young Catherine, 9, holding a picnic basket.

Her father, KING PHILLIP, 39, stands next to her with guards. She extends raspberries between the iron bars.

Wild Boy draws near. Hesitant. He palms the berries into his mouth. Catherine smiles, encouraged.

Guards look anxious.

She hands him almonds next. Wild Boy CLASPS her hand.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
...a prince.

INT. ROYAL CHAPEL - PALACE - AFTERNOON

Victor, places a RING on Catherine's finger. They stand before the archbishop.

ARCHBISHOP  
By the power vested in me by the  
Lord, our God, I pronounce you,  
Victor and Catherine, man and wife.

Victor and Catherine seal their kiss.

Massive applause echoes. One nobleman, EMMANUEL, 35, does not applaud. His eyes burn in repulsion- Glaring at Victor.

His right arm is CONCEALED by a sleeve and glove.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Emmanuel and his noblemen unlock a closet finding --

-- DOZENS OF STASHED JOURNALS. They burst through the pages. Growing morbidly astonished.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
And here's where the transformation  
truly begins. Of one who reawakens  
a deeply buried past to becomes the  
manifestation...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victor and Catherine lay asleep when NOBLEMEN AND GUARDS burst in, jolting Victor awake.

The guards arrest Victor. Catherine freezes in shock.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
...of a most terrible imagination.

INT. COURT - DAY

Victor is escorted in chains to the accused bar.

MARGARET (V.O.)  
For this reason, I pray you well on  
your journey.

The same journals from the closet LAY OPEN on an evidence table. Hundreds in attendance gaze below.

Victor awaits sentencing. The JUDGE reads the verdict.

JUDGE  
...Under the charges of subversion  
of truth, treason, and attempt to  
murder against your wife, Her  
Majesty, Princess Catherine, the  
court finds you guilty upon all  
charges, to serve a life of  
imprisonment without parole. May  
God save your soul.

The crowd uproars- Half Angry. Others, thrilled. Guards shackle Victor's wrists. The judge slams his gavel. BANG!

INT. VICTOR'S CELL - PRISON - MORNING (SIX MONTHS LATER)

Victor pierces a SHARP NAIL into his finger nails. TRIMMING. His disheveled beard makes him look well beyond his years.

A BLUE JAY flocks to the barred window. Victor rises towards it. The blue jay sits a moment, then takes flight.

Victor's left gazing at the kingdom...THE PALACE...and beyond the kingdom walls, A FOREST. He stares, longingly.

FOOTSTEPS ECHO --

-- THREE GUARDS tread in with chains, led by Captain LAURENT, 29- Disciplined, but with reddened-tired eyes.

Victor's hands. are SHACKLED and LOCKED. So are his scarred ANKLES. His NECK.

VICTOR  
Are all these chains necessary,  
captain?

LAURENT  
(checking the locks)  
I suppose it has been six months.

He suddenly YANKS the neck chain, hard. Victor flinches.

LAURENT  
But you're a prisoner. *Prisoners*  
don't negotiate treatment in my  
prison walls.  
(to the guards)  
Locks are good.

The guards escort Victor out.

EXT. KINGDOM OF SAVOY - MORNING

A HOODED GUARD on horse rides down the streets of Savoy.  
Every house and alley is of Parisian influence. He sees-

A GUILLOTINE STAGE

with 2 teenage prisoners, holding hands. A GUARD hauls over  
the first prisoner. He places his head beneath the blade.  
*WHOOSH!* The blade roars down with wicked speed.

DOZENS OF BOOKS

piled on the ground are ignited in flames by guards.

The hooded guard rides further down, seeing up ahead --

-- THE PRISON TOWER.

INT./EXT. PRISON ARSENAL - MORNING

Victor and the PRISONERS carry crates of ammunition from a  
carriage to the storage.

One OLDER PRISONER carries a heavy crate. He collapses. The  
crate crushes his leg- ANGUISHING.

OLD PRISONER  
Ahh...oh God, help! Help!

Victor jolts to him. He lifts the crate slowly. An ASSISTING PRISONER helps haul the old prisoner upright.

The assisting prisoner SLIPS 4 bullets into Victor's pocket, unnoticed.

OLD PRISONER  
Thank you, Your Grace.

Victor nods but his eyes are downcast- ASHAMED.

The assisting prisoner reports to 2 GUARDS.

ASSISTING PRISONER  
(whispers to the guards)  
...I saw them in his pockets.

The 2 guards reward the assisting prisoner with GOLD COINS.

INT. VICTOR'S CELL - LATER

Victor is escorted in by guards. Laurent awaits with his lieutenant, OLIVIER, 25. Enraged- Eyes unforgiving.

LAURENT  
Check his pockets.

The guards search Victor's trouser pockets. Nothing. Then, they fumble out 4 bullets.

VICTOR  
(taken aback)  
Those aren't mine.

Olivier PUNCHES Victor's cheek.

OLIVIER  
Do you think you hold power here?

VICTOR  
(keeping it together)  
One of the prisoners...he put the bullets in my-

Olivier BASHES him again. Victor stumbles.

OLIVIER  
Is this a show of your strength?

Victor bleeds from his lip.

OLIVIER (CONT'D)  
I think he's turning the other  
cheek.

LAURENT  
I think he gets the point, Olivier.

OLIVIER  
One more. See if he really is more  
beast than human.

Olivier swings again. This time, Victor CLUTCHES it-  
GLARING- On the verge of UNLEASHING.

The guards swarm in like wolves, pummeling Victor down.

Olivier grapples Victor's hair, glaring in his eyes.

OLIVIER  
You'd have the galls to hit me? Go  
on then. Hit me.

Victor shakes with anger, but restrains himself- Defeated.

OLIVIER (CONT'D)  
Such a pity...to see who the  
princess succumbed to marry.

Laurent nods to Olivier. He smashes Victor's head with the  
bunt of his rifle. Victor BLACKS OUT. Unconscious.

INT. SOLITARY - NIGHT

Victor's eyes gradually open, hazy. Someone's next to him --  
-- The hooded guard rider. A SATCHEL'S strapped over him.

HOODED GUARD  
Are you so committed to proving  
yourself a civil prisoner that you  
allow oppression to take place at  
every corner of your kingdom?

VICTOR  
They don't put me in here for my  
*civility*, actually.

HOODED GUARD  
Only for holding back to defend  
yourself it would seem, Your Grace.



VICTOR  
(weary)  
Guards don't call me by my titles.

HOODED GUARD  
And I'm no guard, Prince Victor.

MARCEL, 33, drops his hood unveiling a vicious burn down his left cheek. Yet, he possesses soft, warm eyes.

MARCEL (CONT'D)  
And make no mistake, you were a prince. No matter how much you choose to bury your past.

VICTOR  
You're a spy?

MARCEL  
My name is Marcel. I'm a servant to another. Madame Margaret. A woman who can return this kingdom back to enlightenment. A woman who can save this kingdom from oppression and return you back as prince.

VICTOR  
(dismissive)  
I was found guilty.

MARCEL  
Are you? Did you really attempt to murder Princess Catherine?

Victor staggers, glancing at Marcel.

MARCEL (CONT'D)  
Or a conspiracy by the nobility?

VICTOR  
Don't presume you know my past.

MARCEL  
Very well. All that matters now, beyond your trial, is what I see before me...  
(locking eyes with Victor)  
...A man who no longer knows who he is. And what he could become.

VICTOR  
Danger.

MARCEL

Hope.

Marcel tosses Victor his satchel.

Victor pulls out a BURR PUZZLE, intricately interlocked by wooden pieces to form a COMPASS.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

That's how Catherine thought of you when she married you. Hope.

Victor gazes at his puzzle, entranced.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

Perhaps you can return it back to her.

VICTOR

How can I...after what I've done...

MARCEL

Because, sometimes, you have to release your restraints to save the lives of those you love. Sometimes, you have to fight back on what it means to be *civil* or *just*. And embrace your true nature. Therein will lie your true freedom. Sort of like...a *transformation*.

Marcel UNSHEATHES A BLADE and pierces his palm, dripping blood.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

(wincing; persistent)

Deep within the forest...mmhhh. there's...a cave...which leads to a sanctuary for outcasts like you and I. If you can find your way through the forest, you may return to save your kingdom yet.

Marcel PUTS DOWN the blade. He rises to the door.

VICTOR

No map?

MARCEL

(leaving)

Of course not. You have your instincts to follow. And *the wild boy* buried within you.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marcel spots a GUARD. He raises his BLOODIED HAND to him.

MARCEL

The prisoner attacked...

Guards burst for Victor's cell with bayonets raised --

INT. SOLITARY - CONTINUOUS

-- POUNDING FOOTSTEPS approach fast. Victor backs up.

The door breaks open. GUARDS storm in with Olivier.

VICTOR

Wait-

The guards hurl Victor to the ground, stomping at him savagely.

Olivier jerks Victor's hair.

OLIVIER

You're dead now.

Victor spots Marcel's bloodied blade- An arm's reach away.

INT. PRISON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Guards STOMP into Wild Boy's guts.

BACK TO SCENE

Victor's EYES FLARE. PRIMAL.

He snatches the blade, seizes Olivier's hand, and STABS it.

Olivier YELLS, anguishing.

Victor lunges at another guard, seizing his rifle, bunts him in the jaw and bursts out the cell.