

CINDERELLA: AFTER THE FAIRY TALE

Written by

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Loosely based on the Cinderella fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm
and Charles Perrault...
... and on historical figure Madame de Pompadour (Jeanne Poisson)

FADE IN:

EXT. PARIS MARKET - DAWN

SUPER: PARIS, FRANCE - 1745

A pervasive gray haze hangs in the air, dimming the well-trodden streets.

A RAVEN perches on roof, lording over the market.

The raven's black eye blinks --

Into a human's eye. We CLOSE IN on the eye.

RAVEN'S POV: The bird views the world in shades of gray.

PARISIANS fall in to their daily routines -- shopping, selling, begging. All of them gray, monotonous figures.

The raven takes to the skies.

SKIES OVER PARIS

The bird glides over the city. It peers down --

More gray shapes.

But then, a FAINT GOLDEN LIGHT gleams through the haze.

The raven CAWS and swoops down.

EXT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - BACKYARD GARDEN - DAY

An upper-middle class bourgeoisie home bursts at the seams to show off its opulence.

The garden's decorated with an obsidian bird bath and a vine-laden lattice garden arch.

The raven perches on the roof and surveys a GOLDEN FIGURE.

This is JEANNETTE (21). Burdened but not broken. She cleans a carpet, whipping it with a rug beater.

Jeannette pulls a muscle in her shoulder. She winces in pain.

JEANNETTE

Happy birthday, Jeannette.

The raven's eye blinks back to normal. The bird flies off.

INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - SITTING ROOM - DAY - LATER

Well-furnished for socializing, complete with a harpsichord.

Austere MADAME ELOISE POISSON (40s) drinks tea with her snide, identical twin daughters ADA and ABIGAIL (24).

Jeannette hems Ada's bright new dress. Jeannette's clothes are tattered beyond repair.

ADA

Can't you work any faster?

JEANNETTE

I'm sorry, Ada.

Abigail sorts the mail. There's an INVITATION decorated in gold leaf. She rips it open and SQUEALS.

MADAME POISSON

Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Oh, *maman*, listen!

(reading)

"In celebration of the dauphin's marriage, the King is hosting a public masquerade ball!"

Ada snatches the letter away from her sister.

ADA

We're going to Versailles?!

Ada drops the letter in excitement as she jumps up and down with her sister. Jeannette is almost kicked in the face.

MADAME POISSON

Louis has spent enough time grieving over his last mistress.

ADA

I could be next! Jeannette! Make me a new dress.

JEANNETTE

I'm almost finished with the one you have on.

ADA

It wouldn't catch the attention of a courtier much less a king.

ABIGAIL

I want another dress too! With ruffles, lots and lots of ruffles!

JEANNETTE

I'm not your slave.

Madame Poisson calmly sips tea from her cup.

MADAME POISSON

Jeannette, go to the shop and get enough fabric for two dresses.

JEANNETTE

But Madame--

MADAME POISSON

Make haste now.

Jeannette's resentment simmers. She gets it under control.

JEANNETTE

Yes, Madame.

Jeannette hastens out of the room.

EXT. PARIS MARKET - DAY

Jeannette navigates the crowded market. Vendors sell cheese and bread. Others scrape by hawking candles and firewood.

A STREET SINGER SINGS, voice raw and scratchy. Jeannette moves along, HUMMING the tune. She's better than the singer.

Next to the fabric shop is a JEWELRY SHOP. Jeannette gazes longingly at the display of necklaces and brooches.

SQUAWK! A RAVEN perches on the roof, gawking at her.

A HOODED WOMAN (Madeleine in disguise) taps Jeannette. She speaks in a low, elderly voice.

HOODED WOMAN / MADELEINE

Excuse me, dear. My eyes are failing. Can you read these directions for me?

She offers up an aged piece of paper with scribbled writing.

JEANNETTE

Of course.

Jeannette takes the paper and reads it aloud.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Turn 'round and go. On the left is
now below. Gone out past the shop's
window?

Jeannette re-reads the directions, confused.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

That is what's on the page, Madame--

The Hooded Figure is gone.

Jeannette looks around. She sees the jewelry display window --
It's EMPTY.

Jeannette wears the necklace and brooch!

The door to the jewelry shop opens.

Jeannette panics and speeds off in the other direction.

The oblivious JEWELRY SHOP OWNER sweeps the steps.

Jeannette hastily stashes the stolen jewelry in her basket.

INT. FABRIC SHOP - DAY

Jeannette enters the empty shop and meets an unfamiliar face
at the counter.

MADELEINE (40) smiles as if privy to a juicy rumor, eyes
crinkling with excitement. She's only forty, but appears much
older with wiry gray hair and splotchy skin.

Jeannette doesn't recognize she is the same Hooded Woman.

JEANNETTE

Bonjour. Where is Madame Toupin?

MADELEINE

Out sick. She sent me to look after
the shop.

Jeannette hands Madeleine a list of goods needed.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

No rest for the weary even on the
Sabbath, I see.

JEANNETTE

Nothing I can do about it.

MADELEINE

But if you could?

Madeleine's pointed question catches Jeannette off guard.

JEANNETTE

Dreams are for the rich. Did Madame mention the scraps?

MADELEINE

Yes, I have them.

Madeleine reaches down behind the counter. She grabs a sack that rests right next to a pair of prone FEET --

The feet of deceased fabric shop owner MADAME TOUPIN.

Madeleine hefts the items onto the counter. The sack spills out mounds of multi-colored fabric remnants.

Jeannette pays and gathers her bundles.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You need an extra pair of hands.

JEANNETTE

And several more hours in the day.
Au revoir!

MADELEINE

Wait. One more thing.

Madeleine deposits AGED PAPERS on the counter for Jeannette.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Madame Toupin had these on a shelf.
I think you might need them.

Written in a hurried scrawl on the pages are spells, talismans and potions. Jeannette pushes them away.

JEANNETTE

I can't use these. It's witchcraft!

MADELEINE

It's merely a suggestion. Why not give it a try?

JEANNETTE

Nothing good comes from magic. If it even exists at all.

MADELEINE

You think so?

Jeannette glances nervously at her basket containing the stolen jewelry.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
I can keep a secret if you can.

JEANNETTE
I have to get ready for the ball.

Madeleine stuffs the pages into the scrap sack.

MADELEINE
Keep them, dear. Help comes in many forms.

Jeannette takes the sack and hurries out.

INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

The attic where Jeannette sleeps doubles as a workshop.

Jeannette throws the materials onto her bed, barely missing the cat, CYRANO.

JEANNETTE
Oh, sorry, Cyrano!

Jeannette retrieves the royal invitation from her apron.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
(reading)
"Any may attend as long as they are dressed in an appropriate manner."

Jeannette retrieves a sack from her closet and dumps it onto her bed. It contains different hues of BLUE FABRIC SWATCHES.

Cyrano butts Jeannette's hand for a petting.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
Not much to work with, huh?

Cyrano MEOWS.

Jeannette culls blue remnants from the new sack. Her hands graze the spell papers. Curiosity overcomes her.

ADA (O.S.)
Jeannette, where are you?!

JEANNETTE
Coming!

Jeannette hastily stuffs the pages under her bed and leaves.

MONTAGE - JEANNETTE PREPARES FOR THE BALL

-- ATTIC -- Jeannette toils away on the stepsisters' dresses.

-- SITTING ROOM -- Ada shucks off her dress, displeased.

-- ATTIC -- Jeannette throws the twins' dresses to the floor. She gives in and retrieves the spells from under her bed.

-- Jeannette sews blue fabric scraps together while studying the spells. She perks up reading a particular spell.

-- SITTING ROOM -- Jeannette plucks loose hairs from Ada and Abigail's backs as she measures them.

-- ATTIC -- Jeannette sprinkles cut hair into a mixture of ingredients and references the spell page: "1 HAZEL LEAF - TO WARD OFF ENEMIES."

-- Jeannette fits the dresses over two dress forms.

-- Jeannette finishes reciting a spell and squeezes the HAZEL LEAF into a green perfume bottle filled with water. She adds the powder and the leaf DISSOLVES. The liquid GLOWS.

-- Jeannette fluffs out the blue swatches that now appear to be one whole cut of fabric. Sew, sew, sew.

-- Jeannette triumphantly SNIPS off the last bit of excess trim, finishing her dress.

END MONTAGE.

INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - STEPSISTERS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

SNIP. Abigail cuts out beauty patches to apply to her face. The twins primp in front of a vanity, ready for the ball.

Both wear outrageous WIGS. FAKE SPARROWS nest in Ada's curls and Abigail's wig harbors a SHIP in full sail.

ABIGAIL

Jeannette! You forgot to powder our wigs!

The door opens.

JEANNETTE (O.S.)

I didn't forget.

Jeannette glides in wearing her jaw-dropping PATCHWORK DRESS of shimmery blues. Ada HUMPHS, jealous.

ADA

Trash is still trash no matter how it's dressed.

JEANNETTE

Surely you don't mean that. I spent many hours to make myself presentable.

ABIGAIL

I will admit it is nice but why bother? No man at the ball will bother with courtship when he learns your rank.

Jeannette sets the GREEN PERFUME BOTTLE on the twins' vanity.

JEANNETTE

Not everyone could be so vain.

ADA

But just look at you! Even I could make a dress so plain. I think some alterations are in order --

Ada STABS at Jeannette's dress with Abigail's scissors.

JEANNETTE

Stop it!

Ada CLAWS at Jeannette's sleeve.

Jeannette SLAPS her. Ada springs into action.

She grapples with Jeannette and shoves her down. Abigail stands there, aghast. Ada bosses around her sister.

ADA

Hold on to her!

Abigail obeys and sits on Jeannette, pinning her.

Ada yanks off Jeannette's shoes. Scissors slice up the dress. The sound of RIPPING fabric mixes with Jeannette's SCREAMS.

Jeannette's knee connects with Ada, knocking her away.

Jeannette wrestles Abigail off of her but Ada comes back and sends Jeannette sprawling into the unlit fireplace.

Jeannette chokes on ASH. Her face smudges with soot.

ADA (CONT'D)
 No chance of going to the ball now,
 "Cinderella!"

Madame Poisson enters.

MADAME POISSON
 What's going on in here?
 (takes in the situation)
 Girls, hurry or we'll be late.

Madame Poisson steps out.

Ada reaches for the enchanted perfume and SPRITZES it over her wig. Abigail follows suit.

Jeannette waits for her spell to work.

ADA
 Oh!

Ada forgot her lipstick. She applies it.

Jeannette is disappointed. The stepsisters bustle out.

FOYER

Madame Poisson plucks dead petals off a flower arrangement. Her daughters join her.

Jeannette appears at the top of the staircase.

JEANNETTE
 Wait! Let me come with you.

MADAME POISSON
 In that outfit?

JEANNETTE
 I could wear one of Ada or
 Abigail's old dresses.

MADAME POISSON
 You'll have to ask them for
 permission.

Ada and Abigail leer up at Jeannette. Madame Poisson heads into the kitchen, trailed by her daughters.

KITCHEN

Madame Poisson trashes the petals. Jeannette catches up.

JEANNETTE

Madame, please.

ABIGAIL

How many do you think will be in attendance?

ADA

At least three hundred.

MADAME POISSON

The palace is lovely this time of year.

JEANNETTE

Listen to me!

Madame Poisson and the twins fall deathly silent.

MADAME POISSON

Do not raise your voice at me.

JEANNETTE

Why not? You're not mother.

MADAME POISSON

You're right. I'm still alive. And with your father gone, I'm the master of this house.

JEANNETTE

Father left because he couldn't stand you. You drove him away!

Madame Poisson **SHOVES** a jar full of **LENTILS** off the table.

The jar **SHATTERS**. Lentils scatter everywhere.

MADAME POISSON

Your father abandoned us to escape trial for unpaid debts. He was a coward and a criminal. He chose money over his own daughter.

Jeannette quakes with anger, but no words come.

MADAME POISSON (CONT'D)

I expect every single lentil picked up when we return. Each one I find is a day without supper.

Madame Poisson and her daughters stride out of the kitchen.

FOYER

The main doors shut, cutting Jeannette off from the world.

BLUE FABRIC SCRAPS rest on the floor. A sudden BREEZE drags them out through the open BACK DOOR of the townhouse.

Jeannette chases after them.

EXT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - BACKYARD GARDEN - NIGHT

Jeannette snags a swatch just as it's about to blow away.

But what's the use? Jeannette weeps.

Madeline slinks towards Jeannette, wearing a cloak.

MADELEINE

Why are you crying, child?

JEANNETTE

It's you.

MADELEINE

I've been searching for a woman like you, Jeannette.

JEANNETTE

Those spells you gave me, they were yours, not Madame Toupin's.

MADELEINE

Indeed. They're from my grimoire. A book of magic which I unfortunately lost. I wrote down everything I could remember onto those pages. The rest is...

Madeleine taps her forehead.

JEANNETTE

So you're a witch.

MADELEINE

(mocking)

No, I'm your fairy godmother.

(laughs)

Of course I'm a witch. And so are you, Jeannette. But I can help you all the same.

JEANNETTE

I tried a spell and it didn't work.

MADELEINE

Not yet it hasn't. But why don't you go to the ball and see for yourself?

JEANNETTE

Look at me.

MADELEINE

I can grant your every wish and you're worried about a dress?

JEANNETTE

I'm a servant in rags. I'll be ridiculed when all I want is to find someone at court who'll love me.

MADELEINE

You will. But I must ask for a little something in return.

Madeleine rubs her ring and it GLOWS.

JEANNETTE

What could you possibly want that I have?

MADELEINE

Nothing as of now. But a fair trade, I assure you.

JEANNETTE

No, it's a trick.

MADELEINE

I'm on your side, Jeannette. We've both been deprived of what we deserve. Ignored, down-trodden and forsaken. Is that our lot in life? Nothing would please me more than seeing you go to the ball. And if your wish falls through then you don't owe me a thing. The world is at your fingertips. All you have to do is take my hand.

Madeleine extends her hand. Jeannette wavers, uncertain.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Or does the fairy tale end here, Cinderella?

The name stings. Jeannette grasps Madeleine's hand.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Fantastique!

A nub on Madeleine's ring ELONGATES INTO A SHARPENED POINT. She uses it to SLICE Jeannette's palm.

Jeannette YELLS, wounded. She tries to stymie the blood.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Don't fret, *ma chérie*. It's all part of the fun.

Madeleine CUTS her own hand and grasps Jeannette's injured hand with her own, sealing the BLOOD PACT.

MAGIC PULSES from Madeleine's body into Jeannette's like an electric SHOCK. Jeannette breaks away, scared.

The torn fabric swatches spring to life! They SWIRL around Jeannette, reattaching themselves. Her dress is whole again.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

It's a beautiful dress but let me do you one better.

Madeleine flicks BLOOD onto Jeannette's dress.

Blood SPREADS across the entire outfit until it's SCARLET.

RAVENS circle the women. BLACK FEATHERS drop, melding to Jeannette's dress in just the right places.

The ravens rest on the obsidian bird bath.

JEANNETTE

It's perfect!

MADELEINE

Not quite.

Madeleine SNAPS her fingers. A section of the bird bath CRACKS into two chunks. Ravens scatter as water pours out.

Madeleine crouches on the ground, each hand gripping a chunk. She CHANTS under her breath.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

(repeating continuously)
*Obsidian vitrum, sulphur et ignem,
duo crepidatus, admiror.*

The words ECHO all around Jeannette.

The obsidian chunks turn red hot and MELT. The black liquid BURNS a trail towards Jeannette's feet.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Don't move.

Jeannette does all she can to stay in place. The liquid engulfs her feet. Much to her relief, she is unharmed.

The liquid HARDENS into two flawless OBSIDIAN GLASS SLIPPERS.

Madeleine violently COUGHS. Fresh blood glistens in her hand.

Madeleine's hand SHRIVELS with age.

JEANNETTE

Are you all right?

Madeleine hides her blood-stained hand from Jeannette.

MADELEINE

I'm fine.

Madeleine picks up obsidian glass EARRINGS and a NECKLACE and hands them to Jeannette, along with a BLACK FEATHER MASK.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Quickly, to the ball. You have until midnight before the magic wears off and the dress falls apart. Good luck, my dear.

JEANNETTE

Thank you!

Jeannette runs towards the alley that leads to the street.

MADELEINE

May all your dreams come true.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - NIGHT

Jeannette races through the streets, heels CLINKING.

An ELDERLY COUPLE climb into their carriage up ahead.

Jeannette hoists herself on top of the carriage, next to the baffled CARRIAGE DRIVER.

JEANNETTE

Let me take the reins for a while.

I./E. CARRIAGE

The Elderly Couple JOLT forward as their carriage SPEEDS ahead at a much quicker pace than they're used to.

Jeannette urges the horses to go faster.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Versailles. The pinnacle of French architecture and opulence.

GUESTS arrive wearing masks and expensive outfits.

The genteel KING'S VALET (40s) greets all who enter.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - HERCULES BALLROOM - NIGHT

The sweeping room boasts an elaborately painted ceiling and a roaring fireplace. Overflowing banquet tables at each end.

Guests dance to a MINUET performed by an orchestra. Madame Poisson dances with an older gentleman.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jeannette hurries up the palace steps.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - HERCULES BALLROOM

Jeannette's caught off guard by the ballroom's splendor. Some cease their chatter to stare at this mysterious woman.

Jeannette spots Ada and Abigail. She diverts to the buffet table and fills a plate before they notice her.

BEATRIX (22) scans the food. Disappointment cuts into her enjoyment of the party. Warm and friendly, she tries to engage Jeannette in conversation.

BEATRIX

Salmon's always the first to go at these type of events.

Jeannette sees she has the last piece of smoked salmon.

JEANNETTE

Here, you can have mine.

BEATRIX

Are you sure? Thank you!

Beatrix eats, keeping Jeannette company.

BEATRIX (CONT'D)
Look, there's the Queen.

Conservative QUEEN MARIE LESZCZYNSKA (mid 30s) enters with self-righteous CARDINAL DE FLEURY (70s), the King's chief minister.

The Queen prefers conversation with her LADIES over dancing.

BEATRIX (CONT'D)
They are trying to guess who their next rival will be.

JEANNETTE
Rival?

BEATRIX
The last mistress and Queen Marie were not on speaking terms. Cardinal de Fleury absolutely loathed her.

Ada and Abigail rudely jostle Beatrix to snack on the food.

ADA
When will the King make an appearance? We must see him.

ABIGAIL
None of the other men here meet our standards.

JEANNETTE
(under her breath)
Maybe you don't meet theirs.

Beatrix stifles a laugh.

ABIGAIL
Excuse me?

Ada squints at Jeannette, wary. Luckily, the DUKE D'CHATRES (20s, haughty) offers his hand to Jeannette.

DUKE D'CHATRES
Mademoiselle, will you dance?

Jeannette gladly takes his hand.

Out on the dance floor, Jeannette fumbles for the right steps. The Duke is surprised by her clumsiness.

DUKE D'CHATRES (CONT'D)
I haven't seen you at court.

JEANNETTE
I've been busy with other affairs.
Can you believe the number in
attendance?

DUKE D'CHATRES
Much bigger than the last ball.
(glancing to the side)
Look at what the Duchess of Landry
is wearing.

Jeannette follows his gaze, looking left. A WOMAN laughs with her friends. She wears a poofy pastel dress.

JEANNETTE
A lovely pastel color.

DUKE D'CHATRES
The Duchess is to your right.

The disgusted Duke deposits Jeannette outside dancing ring.

DUKE D'CHATRES (CONT'D)
Common bourgeois. Why His Majesty
extended the invitation is beyond
all comprehension.

He invites another girl to dance. Beatrix bustles up.

JEANNETTE
I think I need dancing lessons.

BEATRIX
Don't worry about him. Come with
me. If the King hasn't made an
appearance yet, then he must still
be in his chambers.

Abigail gets in Jeannette's way.

ADA
I was to dance with the Duke! Just
who do you think you are?

ABIGAIL
Why don't we take off that mask of
yours and find out?

Before Abigail gets a chance to rip off the mask --

BOOM! HER WIG COMES TO LIFE! The mini-battleship fires a CANNONBALL into Ada's wig, creating a HOLE.

ADA
Abigail!

ABIGAIL
It wasn't me! I--

Abigail is stunned into silence. ONE OF THE FAKE SPARROWS IN ADA'S WIG MOVES. It CHIRPS, examining the hole.

ADA
(oblivious)
What?

The rest of the SPARROWS COME ALIVE and furiously tug at Ada's hair! Ada SCREAMS and swats at the birds.

SMOKE rises from Abigail's wig from the cannon fire. It blooms into FLAMES.

ABIGAIL
My hair!

Servants escort the twins out as guests GAWK in alarm.

A servant takes a champagne bucket of ice water and DUMPS the water over Abigail's head, extinguishing the flames.

Jeannette prompts Beatrix and they leave the ballroom.

HALL OF MIRRORS

Mirrors on one side, windows on the other. Pure extravagance.

Beatrix and Jeannette join the large MASS OF YOUNG WOMEN in front of the door that leads to the King's Antechamber.

The KING'S GUARD keep order, keeping the women at bay.

TRUMPETS BLARE BEHIND the gilded doors.

The doors open and the King's Valet leads out the musicians. The trumpeters push back the crowd. The MUSIC STOPS.

KING'S VALET
Mesdames et Messieurs, I give you
the KING!

Out trundle EIGHT IDENTICAL YEW TREES, elaborate topiary costumes concealing the men inside.

The eight disguised men run away in different directions.

Ladies SQUEAL and pursue the topiaries.

Jeannette catches sight of Ada in the wall of mirrors. Ada's wig is one big tangled mess. She stalks towards Jeannette.

Jeannette flees, pushing through the crowd. Ada pushes harder. Almost in arm's reach --

Jeannette rounds a corner. The crowd shifts, blocking Ada.

CORRIDOR

Jeannette nearly runs into dedicated servant VICTOR (late 20s). Victor almost drops his pile of soup cups.

JEANNETTE

Sorry, monsieur!

Jeannette's slippers CLINK down the long corridor.

She hides behind a large marble statue. She takes off her obsidian glass shoes and waits.

A CLATTER of heels signals Ada's arrival. Ada trots up to Victor. Victor samples some of the soup.

ADA

You there. Did a woman run by?

VICTOR

Hmm, needs more garlic.

ADA

Are you hearing me, servant?!

VICTOR

Oui, mademoiselle. She ran back to the ballroom.

Ada huffs off.

Jeannette sighs in relief. She comes out of hiding.

JEANNETTE

Monsieur, thank--

But Victor's already gone.

Jeannette sees a door. As she exits though it, she's distracted by a PORTRAIT on the wall.

The portrait displays a beautiful woman bedecked in jewels. A casual smile paints her lips. Her eyes burn with pride.

Jeannette quits marveling at the painting and exits.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - ROYAL GARDEN - NIGHT

Well-groomed and tranquil. Artfully designed parterres add to the beauty of the gardens beyond what nature can provide.

Jeannette rests on a bench. She puts back on her slippers.

BEHIND HER --

A HUMAN TOPIARY sways from its camouflaged position. Silently, the Topiary creeps towards Jeannette.

HUMAN TOPIARY
Are you hiding, Mademoiselle?

Jeannette YELPS. The only thing human about the costume is a pair of EYES peering at her through the glued-on leaves.

JEANNETTE
You startled me.

HUMAN TOPIARY
Please, I only want to see the beauty beneath those feathers.

Jeannette's face is still hidden by her black-feathered mask.

HUMAN TOPIARY (CONT'D)
Or does it mask some sort of deformity. A rash perhaps. A scar? An overzealous birthmark?

Jeannette cautiously takes off her mask.

HUMAN TOPIARY (CONT'D)
That is a relief. What's your name?

JEANNETTE
Here I have no name.

HUMAN TOPIARY
No title? Hmm, that does make a difference.

JEANNETTE
Well, it shouldn't!

Jeannette plucks an ORANGE from a potted tree and peels it.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

How appalling! A bourgeois eating the King's fruit. Ha! What does an orange care? No matter who eats it, it still comes out the same!

Jeannette crams orange slices into her mouth.

HUMAN TOPIARY

I never fathomed an orange's point of view.

JEANNETTE

You should try it sometime.

HUMAN TOPIARY

Is there enough for two?

JEANNETTE

Only if you don't report me.

Human Topiary takes off his leaf-covered mask.

HUMAN TOPIARY / KING LOUIS XV

I report to no one, Mademoiselle.

Before Jeannette stands KING LOUIS XV (mid 30s)! A man who breaks convention for his own amusement and pleasure.

Jeannette drops the orange and bows low.

JEANNETTE

Your Majesty!

KING LOUIS XV

Get up. Your dress will get dirty.

JEANNETTE

I didn't know--

KING LOUIS XV

And if you had, I wouldn't have been privy to a passionate tirade against aristocracy. *Bravo!*

King Louis shirks off his costume. They hear ORCHESTRA MUSIC from the palace. Louis extends his hand to Jeannette.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

Shall we?

JEANNETTE

I don't know the steps.

KING LOUIS XV

Then dance to your own tune.

King Louis sweeps Jeannette up and twirls her around the garden, following the spiraling layout of the parterres.

The MUSIC SWELLS as Jeannette embraces the King's carefree charm and follows his lead with abandon.

Beatrix appears ON THE PALACE STEPS. She sees Jeannette with Louis. Beatrix's smile fades. She hides behind a pillar.

Louis surprises Jeannette with a kiss.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

I must confess. They call me "Louis the Beloved" but that couldn't be further from the truth. Would a benevolent king threaten his dance partner with public embarrassment if she didn't stay by his side the entire night? Would he take the best his country has to offer and keep it all for himself?

JEANNETTE

Does it have to be all about you?

Jeannette astonishes Louis with an even more passionate kiss.

KING LOUIS XV

Keep that up and you'll be my mistress in no time.

JEANNETTE

(disappointed)

Mistress? Oh, no, your Majesty.

KING LOUIS XV

Call me Louis.

JEANNETTE

I can't, my King. I came looking for a suitor, a husband. True love.

KING LOUIS XV

What is love but a warm bed and someone to share it with?

JEANNETTE

But the Queen--

KING LOUIS XV
 She is accustomed to it. What
 matters is your happiness.

JEANNETTE
 I know nothing of the rules in
 court.

KING LOUIS XV
 You'll just break them anyway.

JEANNETTE
 A woman of my class can't be with
 the King.

KING LOUIS XV
 Then why did you kiss me?

She can't come up with anything. She paces back and forth.

JEANNETTE
 Love is... Never having to
 struggle?

KING LOUIS XV
 If that is what my mistress
 desires.

Jeannette is torn --

DONG! THE ROYAL CHAPEL BELLS TOLL THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

JEANNETTE
 Midnight already?

KING LOUIS XV
 The night is still young.

JEANNETTE
 No, I'm sorry, I must go!

Jeannette flees the garden. Only then does Louis realize --

KING LOUIS XV
 Wait, you never gave me your name!

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - ROYAL FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

DONG! Jeannette TRIPS, causing one of her shoes to FALL OFF.

As she reaches for the shoe she notices the hem of her dress
 CRUMBLING, like bits of dried blood.

Jeannette abandons the shoe.

DONG! Jeannette's dress deteriorates, shedding feathers.

Madeleine sits unnoticed by the fountain, disguised behind an ornate, full-face masquerade mask of a young woman.

King Louis rounds the corner.

DONG! Jeannette has already fled and Madeleine's disappeared. Louis finds the obsidian slipper Jeannette's left behind.

His Valet rushes up to him.

KING'S VALET

Your majesty?

KING LOUIS XV

Find me the owner of this slipper.
Search all of Paris if you have to!

BEGIN MONTAGE - JEANNETTE'S FAIRY TALE TRANSITION

DONG! -- **INT. SHOE SHOP - DAY**

The baffled Shoemaker returns the glass slipper to the King's Valet. The Valet leaves and is besieged by HORDES OF WOMEN.

DONG! -- **INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY**

Madame Poisson threatens Abigail.

MADAME POISSON

Cut off your toes if you must! Make
the shoe fit!

Ada hurries out of the sitting room, clearly upset.

ADA

Mother!

Jeannette is in the sitting room, wearing both obsidian shoes for the King's Valet.

DONG! -- **INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY**

Queen Marie Leszcynska appeals to King Louis on his throne.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNKA

Please, my King, listen to reason--

KING LOUIS XV
I don't care what the Cardinal
thinks! I'm the King of France!

DONG! -- **EXT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - DAY**

Jeannette leaves with her few possessions (including the green perfume and spell pages). Ada and Abigail hound her.

ABIGAIL
You'll never be royalty!

ADA
Just poor and plain Cinderella!

Ada YANKS Jeannette's hair. The twins hear a raven's SQUAWK.

A menacing FLOCK perches on the roof. The local clock tolls --

DONG! Like one big black cloud, they all swoop down --

And PECK AT ADA AND ABIGAIL'S EYES! Jeannette flees into an awaiting carriage. Her stepsisters SCREAM in agony, blinded.

DONG! -- **INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - THRONE ROOM - DAY**

Dressed to perfection, Jeannette bows to the entire court.

Cardinal De Fleury scrutinizes her every movement.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
Introducing to the court, the
"Marquise de Pompadour."

King Louis grins, proud. Queen Marie ignores Jeannette.

DONG! -- **INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KING'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT**

King Louis and Jeannette are in bed in their nightclothes.

KING LOUIS XV
And they lived happily ever after.

They kiss. Louis slides off Jeannette's undergarment.

DONG! -- **INT. FABRIC SHOP - NIGHT**

Ravens and rats overrun the shop. Madeleine CACKLES.

END MONTAGE.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

DING! The gold, Passemant astronomical clock chimes one.

A raven perches outside the window. It peers inside at --
Jeannette.

She lounges in a chair, wearing a voluminous green dress. She tries to keep her face serious but keeps smiling.

A PAINTER paints a large painting of Jeannette.

PAINTER
Madame. Graceful, elegant. These
are words to describe the face.

Jeannette cracks up, laughing at Beatrix who contorts her face into weird expressions for Jeannette's entertainment.

PAINTER (CONT'D)
And you are not helping.

BEATRIX
I don't know what you're talking
about. I do my part.

Beatrix attends to Jeannette, armed with makeup powder.

BEATRIX (CONT'D)
Have to keep you porcelain, *mon*
ami. You flush too easily.

JEANNETTE
Thank you, Beatrix.

Jeannette smooths back a loose strand of her hair.

PAINTER
Madame Pompadour! Your hand! I
cannot paint in these conditions.

The Painter ends the session. He opens the door --

And immediately bows to let King Louis enter.

KING LOUIS XV
Monsieur artist, this is not the
masterpiece I'm paying you for.

PAINTER
Your Majesty finds fault in my
work?

KING LOUIS XV
It's missing something.

Louis CLAPS his hands. In scampers a Papillon PUPPY.

JEANNETTE
Oh, Louis, he's adorable!

The puppy jumps up and licks Jeannette's nose.

Painter opens his mouth to object but thinks better of it.

KING LOUIS XV
Leave the paint to dry, Monsieur.

The Painter bows and takes his leave.

Louis passionately kisses Jeannette. He nabs a cream puff from a cake stand and offers it to her.

JEANNETTE
Oh, I've already had one.

KING LOUIS XV
Nonsense, we share everything.

Louis enjoys feeding his mistress, disregarding Beatrix.

Cardinal de Fleury strides in, clutching his BIBLE. The book is leather-bound and affixed with a large gold cross.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
Your Majesty, the council is ready.

KING LOUIS XV
(to Jeannette)
Come with me. You know what a headache I get listening to these old men squabble.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
That's not really necessary, sire.

JEANNETTE
Beatrix and I must prepare for the show tonight.

King Louis gazes at Beatrix's emerald necklace.

KING LOUIS XV
Beatrix. What a lovely necklace.

BEATRIX
Thank you, your Majesty.

KING LOUIS XV

But when Jeannette wears green then
no other lady shall wear the color.
Or do you fancy yourself an
exception to the rule?

BEATRIX

No, your Grace.

KING LOUIS XV

Then take it off before I rip it
from your neck.

Beatrice hastily does as she's told.

JEANNETTE

Calm down, my love. It's all been a
careless mistake.

Jeannette gently kisses him. King Louis relents.

KING LOUIS XV

You will outshine them all, my
little Queen.

Louis kisses her adieu and leaves with Cardinal de Fleury.

HALLWAY

Jeannette and Beatrice walk side by side. Beatrice sniffles.

BEATRIX

I thought he might banish me from
court.

JEANNETTE

Louis can't touch you. I won't let
him.

Jeannette grabs Beatrice's hand and struts down the hall.

Two aristocratic women FIONA and NADEEN (20s) wave at
Jeannette. Overwhelmingly joyful and annoyingly sycophantic.

FIONA

Jeannette! We're so excited for
your performance!

NADEEN

Look for us in the front row!

Fiona and Nadeen giggle and sashay away.

BEATRIX

They're only being nice because
they want to be closer to the King.

JEANNETTE

Let them think it's working.

They pass a small table against a wall. On it rests an
ornate, full-face masquerade mask of a young woman.

The SAME MASK Madeleine wore to the ball.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - BACKSTAGE OF AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The home of Madame de Pompadour's Theatre des Petit Cabinets.
CAST MEMBERS softly SING vocal warm-ups.

Jeannette paces, HUMMING. She's dressed in sparkling fabric
as Pandora. She peeks through the curtains at the --

AUDIENCE

A small auditorium with a packed audience. The room is lit by
candles along the stage and up in the chandeliers.

Jeannette's gaze wanders to Cardinal de Fleury talking with
Queen Marie Leszcynska -- who glares directly at Jeannette!

BACKSTAGE

Jeannette dashes to the nearest prop -- a CORNUCOPIA -- and
VOMITS inside it.

The Duke D'Chatres, dressed as the character Nemesis rumples
his nose in disgust and distances himself from the stench.

DUKE D'CHATRES

So much for Demeter's bountiful
harvest.

Beatrix, also a performer (a nymph), kneels beside Jeannette.

BEATRIX

You can't show weakness, Jeannette.
It will only please them more.

JEANNETTE

(sotto to Beatrix)
I'm not afraid. I meant to tell the
King... I'm pregnant.

Beatrix hugs Jeannette, sharing in her joy.

A bell RINGS and Beatrix dashes off to her place.

Jeannette faces the rising curtains.

ON THE STAGE - LATER

The cast performs Voltaire's *Pandora*.

Beatrix dances with the nymphs. Jeannette SINGS like a bird.

Louis enjoys every minute of his mistress onstage.

LATER IN THE PLAY

Jeannette has Pandora's box. Duke D'Chatres (Nemesis) goads her on to open it.

Jeannette's singing FALTERS when she sees the Queen's Favorites gossiping to the Queen. Cardinal de Fleury smirks.

King Louis shushes the women.

Jeannette confidently finishes the song with gusto.

She opens Pandora's box. Black fabric streaks out, jerked upwards by wires.

MOMENT LATER

Jeannette and cast bow to a STANDING OVATION.

Beatrix bounces in front of Jeannette, excited.

BEATRIX

Jeannette has an announcement!

Beatrix coaxes Jeannette forward.

JEANNETTE

(reluctant, to audience)

Thank you all for coming. We've been rehearsing this play for almost three months and I appreciate everyone--

BEATRIX

Jeannette's pregnant!

This rouses the audience into a frenzy. Jeannette's detractors MURMUR in disapproval while others CHEER for her.

KING LOUIS XV
Is this true? Jeannette!

Joyful, King Louis leaps onto the stage. Jeannette nods. The Audience and Cast CLAP solely for Jeannette.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA
Yes, clap for Madame Whore!

Queen Marie stands defiant, flanked by her ladies-in-waiting.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA (CONT'D)
I cannot allow this charade to go
on any longer.

KING LOUIS XV
Hold your tongue!

Queen Marie is momentarily stunned into silence.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)
I've heard enough slander to fill
the pages of a book.
(beat)
I declare from this day onwards,
all children I sire with the
Marquise de Pompadour be
legitimized and treated like any
member of the royal family!

Shock ripples through the crowd.

Queen Marie tears out of the room, leading her entourage.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA
Not in my court!

Queen Marie SLAMS the door.

A mysterious GUST OF WIND seems to stem from the door slam,
even though all the windows are shut.

All of the candles EXTINGUISH SIMULTANEOUSLY. The entire room
is cast in darkness. Courtiers cry out in CONFUSION.

KING LOUIS XV (O.S.)
What happened? Relight the candles!

KING'S VALET (O.S.)
Right away, sire!

Then... Silence.

Jeannette's outline gradually comes into view as if tickled by moonlight. She discovers the source of the light --

The open Pandora's box.

Jeannette shields her eyes from the garish, unnatural light.

She shuts the box. A DISEMBODIED LAUGH echoes off the walls.

Candles IGNITE one by one on the chandelier above the stage.

Scared, Jeannette backs away --

Into King Louis. Still as a statue.

Same thing with Beatrix, the cast and the audience. Frozen.

Jeannette catches MOVEMENT behind the Duke D'Chatres.

Madeleine emerges, chuckling.

MADELEINE

Sorry to scare you, *ma chérie*.
Can't have anyone listening in.
Enjoying life at court?

JEANNETTE

It's beyond my wildest dreams.
Louis, he's so generous and
passionate!

MADELEINE

Yes, he is quite the catch.

Madeleine pinches the King's cheek.

JEANNETTE

We'll make the family I never had.

MADELEINE

Speaking of which, I'd like my wish
now.

JEANNETTE

Name it. It's yours.

MADELEINE

"It" sounds strange. I think "it"
is going to be a boy.

Jeannette's hand flies to her stomach. Unbelieving.

JEANNETTE

You can't have my baby. That's preposterous. I didn't agree that.

MADELEINE

But you did. You get to have all this for one little babe. It's not my fault when we made a pact you didn't ask for the specifics.

JEANNETTE

You could take anyone's child. Why mine?

MADELEINE

God appoints Kings with infinite power. Satan endows witches with secret knowledge only they can decipher. Combine the two and where does that leave their offspring? The answer grows inside your belly. And I want it.

JEANNETTE

You can't have my baby!

MADELEINE

And once he's born how will you stop me? You can't keep him in the womb forever.

Jeannette hyperventilates. Her vision BLURS. The room SPINS.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Thought I'd give you fair warning.

Madeleine SNAPS her fingers.

Stage curtains sweep in front of Madeleine. She disappears.

All the candles REIGNITE. Everyone unfreezes.

Jeannette sways, feverish. The room SPINS FASTER.

KING LOUIS XV

Jeannette?

Jeannette FAINTS, collapsing on the stage.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeannette wakes in her bed. The puppy jumps up and licks her face. Victor stands by her bedside.

JEANNETTE

Where is everyone?

VICTOR

The doctor said you were of good health. You just needed rest.

JEANNETTE

You're the servant who saved me from my stepsister.

VICTOR

I brought you some soup. It has a lot of vegetables in it, which is good for the baby.

JEANNETTE

My baby!

Jeannette jolts out of bed.

VICTOR

Madame?

JEANNETTE

I've done a terrible thing.

VICTOR

The King will pardon you.

JEANNETTE

No, no one could forgive me.

Jeanette throws on her robe.

VICTOR

You underestimate your influence, Madame Pompadour. Which is why I was hoping you could put in a good word for me. I'd like to be a chef.

Jeannette pushes back a paneled divider. She touches the wall, searching.

JEANNETTE

It will have to wait. I'm sorry.

Her hands glide over a stunning PAINTING of two men vying for the attention of a shepherdess. Continuing on --

Jeannette's hands wrench back a SECRET DOOR, camouflaged by the decorative wallpaper.

VICTOR

But, madame, the soup. One bite.

Jeannette leaves Victor and the soup behind.

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Jeannette dashes up the steps to the King's Bedchamber.

INT. KING'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeannette enters unannounced.

JEANNETTE

Louis, I need your help--

King Louis is with Beatrix, stroking her neck and the shiny new purple necklace she wears.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Beatrix.

KING LOUIS XV

Another night then, my sweet.

The King dismisses Beatrix with a curt nod.

JEANNETTE

I'm your mistress.

KING LOUIS XV

You're my favorite. And now that you are with my child we mustn't do anything to put it in harm's way. No one woman satisfies a King, Jeannette. Surely you knew this.

JEANNETTE

I thought I was different.

KING LOUIS XV

Then you were naive.

Louis playfully rubs and kisses Jeannette's belly.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

(to baby)

Hello, in there! Ça va?

(to Jeannette)

You should be happy. I've given you a place in history.

JEANNETTE

I'm scared, Louis. No one supports
the legitimization.

KING LOUIS XV

They can take their grievances up
with me. Whatever happens, I'll
always protect you.

He kisses Jeannette's hand. He pauses, an idea forming.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

There are other ways you could give
me pleasure.

The King directs Jeannette's hand to the laces of his pants.
She retracts her hand.

JEANNETTE

I feel a little dizzy. Maybe I
should have stayed in bed.

KING LOUIS XV

You rest, my love. We'll pick up
where we left off tomorrow.

King Louis kisses her on the cheek.

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Jeannette traipses down the stairs, mind reeling.

INT. JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beatrice sits at Jeannette's boudoir, waiting for her.

BEATRIX

Jeannette, please don't be mad. The
King ordered me to visit him.

JEANNETTE

And you so humbly acquiesced.

BEATRIX

No one turns away the King.

JEANNETTE

Then I'll be the first.

Beatrice takes off her new necklace and confesses --

BEATRIX

It's true I desired Louis. Cardinal Fleury groomed me to take the title of the King's official mistress. But the only title I seek now is that of your friend.

JEANNETTE

Liar.

BEATRIX

I cut ties with the Cardinal after I became your companion.

JEANNETTE

And you still managed to ruin everything. I had Louis. I had a place where I belonged.

BEATRIX

Nothing is permanent in Versailles.

JEANNETTE

Get out.

BEATRIX

But I am here for you, Jeannette--

JEANNETTE

Out! I banish you from court!

The door to Jeannette's room inexplicably FLINGS itself open. Jeannette quells her rage. Beatrix stands there in fear.

BEATRIX

You can't.

JEANNETTE

Then hurry back to our Beloved and finish what you started. We're through.

Beatrix's lip quivers but she obeys. She leaves, shunned.

SCRITCH. A raven's at the window, pecking at the glass.

Jeannette frantically digs through her chest of drawers. She finds the spell pages buried at the bottom --

When Madeleine steps out from the shadows, mere inches away from Jeannette. Frightened, Jeannette retreats.

MADELEINE

If that's how you treat your friends I'd love to see what you're going to try and do to me.

JEANNETTE

Beatrix was only pretending to be my friend.

MADELEINE

Was she?

Madeleine opens the window. The raven perches on Madeleine's shoulder. A small wrapped parcel is in its claws.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

I came back to make sure the bump to your head didn't erase our previous discussion.

Jeannette sets gifts from the King on a table in front of Madeleine. Even the earrings she has on go into the pile.

JEANNETTE

You can have all this and more.

MADELEINE

That's not what I'm asking.

JEANNETTE

You'll be rich!

MADELEINE

All the gold in the world can't buy me a future. And no spell can repair a woman's body.

JEANNETTE

There are plenty of greedy women in Paris.

MADELEINE

It's rare to find someone with such a talent for magic. Not everyone can read spells. I had to know for sure--

She hunches and talks like when she was the Hooded Woman.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

-- by pretending to be an old crone asking for directions.

JEANNETTE

Then I'll be your apprentice.

MADELEINE

The great thing about children is they're yours to mold. Get them young and the possibilities are endless.

Madeleine unwraps the parcel. It contains dried herbs.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Here, take this. What growing babe doesn't appreciate a little Devil's Claw in their milk?

Jeannette knocks the herbs out of Madeleine's hands.

JEANNETTE

It's not enough to take my baby but to turn it into a monster as well?

MADELEINE

Spare me. Where's a spindle when you need one? A sleeping beauty's much more favorable than a whiny Cinderella.

A SHARP KNOCK rattles the door.

KING'S VALET (O.S.)

Madame Pompadour, your lady Beatrix said you needed our assistance?

Jeannette pushes Madeleine against the wall. Madeleine doesn't fight back at all.

JEANNETTE

Help! She's trying to kill me!

MADELEINE

Make them believe it, girl.

Madeleine PUNCHES Jeannette in the face!

Jeannette stumbles back onto the bed.

The raven flies out the window.

The King's Valet busts open the door. A few members of the King's Guard are with him. They seize Madeleine.

JEANNETTE

This woman is a witch! She tried to
sell me spells!

The King's Valet crumbles the herbs between his fingers. He
sniffs, recognizing the Devil's Claw.

KING'S VALET

Sacre bleu.

Madeleine catches a glimpse of Beatrix out in the hallway
trying to peek through the guards.

Madeleine surprises everyone by holding her hands up to her
face, offering herself up.

MADELEINE

The honor is yours, Monsieur.

The guards quickly bind her hands and escort her out.

OUTSIDE JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM

The Guards lead Madeleine down the hall.

Beatrix can't get a good view of Madeleine due to the witch's
tangled mess of hair.

Beatrix retreats, feeling Jeannette's eyes on her.

Jeannette shudders, drained.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

King Louis and Jeannette drink tea. Cardinal de Fleury paces
the room, clenching the parcel of herbs.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

Why was a witch in your room?

JEANNETTE

I told you. She wanted to sell me
those demonic herbs but I refused.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

It's all very suspicious, Your
Majesty.

KING LOUIS XV

Nonsense. Jeannette's the victim.

JEANNETTE

I wouldn't know how to cast magic
if I tried.

KING LOUIS XV

(acting it out)

Do you wave your arms about, speak
in tongues?

JEANNETTE

(to Cardinal de Fleury)

How does the Bible describe these
devil worshippers?

She reaches for his Bible but he quickly withdraws it.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

It doesn't say. Join me at the
burning. Maybe you'll learn a thing
or two.

Cardinal Fleury bows and takes his leave. Louis stands.

KING LOUIS XV

The day's much better spent
hunting.

(to Jeannette, softly)

At least until the baby's born.

King Louis kisses Jeannette and hurries off to play.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - DAY

PARISIANS gather to watch Madeleine burn. Madeleine's tied to
a pyre, surrounded by ROYAL GUARDS with lit torches.

Cardinal de Fleury circles Madeleine, relishing the moment.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

Any last words, witch, before your
journey to Hell?

MADELEINE

I'll tell the Pope you send your
love.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

(addresses the crowd)

God curses this woman.

MADELEINE

Ah, progress. Last time we weren't
on speaking terms.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
 Today France purges yet another
 remorseless sinner.

Cardinal de Fleury holds up his Bible to the crowd. In his other hand is the parcel of herbs. Madeleine's eyes widen.

MADELEINE
 I believe you have something of
 mine, Cardinal.

Cardinal prays in LATIN, condemning Madeleine. Madeleine struggles against her bindings.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
*Jam tibi impero et praecipio
 maligne spiritus! Ut confestim--*

MADELEINE
*In nomine magni dei nostri
 Satanas... Ave Satanas!*

Madeleine spits out REVERSE LATIN, part of the Black Mass, an insult and mockery of Catholicism.

Cardinal de Fleury seizes a torch from the guard and throws it at Madeleine's feet. The Royal Guards light the pyre.

FIRE licks Madeleine's body. She SCREAMS --

Then LAUGHS. Hysterical.

Cardinal de Fleury throws the herbs into the fire.

Flames ERUPT as if Madeleine's body was kerosene. The crowd shield their eyes from the blazing inferno.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Jeannette breathes a sigh of relief. An intricate fruit tart is set down beside her.

JEANNETTE
 Thank you--

Jeannette looks up. Victor stands above her.

VICTOR
 Maybe Madame prefers something
 sweet instead?

JEANNETTE
 You don't give up, do you?

VICTOR

You know firsthand about triumph over adversity. Never easy, but worth the wait if you have something to prove.

JEANNETTE

We'll see about that.

Jeannette takes a bite. Victor waits with bated breath.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

You sneak into the kitchens?

VICTOR

Late at night, when everyone's asleep.

JEANNETTE

And you still manage your other chores?

VICTOR

Of course.

JEANNETTE

Well, that won't do at all.

Jeannette devours the tart.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

From now on I want you to focus explicitly on keeping my belly full. Are you up for the task?

VICTOR

Yes!

JEANNETTE

There's no limit to the amount of food I can stomach. I eat for two.

VICTOR

Whatever you wish, Madame Pompadour.

JEANNETTE

Jeannette.

Jeannette extends her hand to shake on the agreement.

Victor is caught off guard by her casual, friendly demeanor but he shakes her hand.

VICTOR

Victor.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - LATER

The crowd has long since dispersed.

Madeleine's charred black SKELETON stands erect on the pyre.

A RAT sniffs for scraps. It touches the corpse's feet --

And the entire skeleton DISINTEGRATES.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - DIANA ROOM - DAY

SUPER: ONE MONTH LATER

Billiard tables have been pushed to the sides to make room for the DANCE INSTRUCTOR (40s) to coach his two pupils.

Jeannette and King Louis learn the dance steps to an allemande. A lone VIOLINIST plays the piece for them.

DANCE INSTRUCTOR

Hands together and go into the rosette.

Jeannette and Louis twirl while staying connected.

KING LOUIS XV

You're leading again.

JEANNETTE

Our son has a mind of his own.

King Louis bends down, scolding his unborn son. Pulling her dress taut, Jeannette is just beginning to show a baby bump.

KING LOUIS XV

Listen here, you little imp. I'm still the King. I make the decisions around here.

Jeannette grimaces. King Louis rises, assured.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

We understand each other now.

DANCE INSTRUCTOR

Let's try again, shall we?

JEANNETTE

I must be going. I'm late for my other lesson.

KING LOUIS XV

But we haven't finished all the steps.

Louis spins Jeannette back to him, locking her in his arms.

JEANNETTE

Then why not find another partner while I'm gone?

Jeannette gives King Louis a peck on the cheek and trots off.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jeannette wears an apron. Her greasy hands fumble as she attempts to truss a turkey with twine.

VICTOR

You're doing it all wrong. Didn't your evil stepmother make you cook?

JEANNETTE

She gave up after I served nothing but blood pudding and pig colon for a week straight.

Victor laughs. He checks on a tart baking in the oven.

VICTOR

Remind me never to cross you.

JEANNETTE

I still want to learn. I'm of no use to my son if I grow too accustomed to the leisure of the court. And I enjoy our little chats about perfectly timed souffles and which wines to pair with beef bourguignon.

A wing slips out of her grip.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Merde!

Victor chuckles. Jeannette throws down the twine.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Can't you just stick it in the oven
as is?

VICTOR

Unacceptable. Presentation is key.

Victor stands behind Jeannette, guiding her hands as he helps her truss the turkey. The intimacy isn't lost on Jeannette.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Take the twine... Loop it around...
And you wrap it like so.

Victor tightly knots the twine.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Surgeon's knot. This bird isn't
going anywhere.

JEANNETTE

Well, it has had its neck cut off.

Victor picks up an already threaded trussing needle.

VICTOR

This is something you might be
familiar with.

JEANNETTE

All too well.

Jeannette takes it and sews up the tail end of the turkey.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Word is you might not have any more
time for our private lessons once
you begin work as one of the King's
own personal chefs.

VICTOR

It was supposed to be a surprise.

JEANNETTE

(insincere)
Congratulations.

VICTOR

Most women would rather spend time
gossiping then work in the kitchen.

JEANNETTE

I'm not like most women.

Jeannette looks into Victor's eyes. The tension mounts.
Nadeen opens the door. Victor moves away from Jeannette.

NADEEN
Jeannette, we've been waiting for
you.

JEANNETTE
Waiting to take my money more like
it.

NADEEN
Not our fault you're a poor
gambler!

Nadeen pulls Jeannette out of the kitchen, away from Victor.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jeannette gambles at cards with her newest ladies-in-waiting,
Fiona and Nadeen. The Papillon puppy sleeps on her bed.

FIONA
...the Duke D'Chatres was so drunk
he started arguing politics with
the bust of Julius Caesar!

NADEEN
No!

The girls burst out laughing. There's a KNOCK on the door.

JEANNETTE
Come in.

Victor enters carrying Jeannette's tart and a cup of soup.

VICTOR
The apple tart is a success.

JEANNETTE
Hurry and have a piece, girls,
before I devour the whole thing.
Who is the soup for?

VICTOR
Beatrice. She isn't feeling well.

NADEEN
Pleasing the King day and night has
its repercussions.

FIONA
Time for a replacement.

JEANNETTE
Enough.
(to Victor)
Tell Beatrix I'll be paying her a
visit. It has been way too long.

Victor smiles proudly at Jeannette. He bows and leaves.
Jeannette coldly regards Fiona and Nadeen.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
Get out. Both of you.

Fiona and Nadeen reluctantly obey.

Jeannette grips her stomach in discomfort.

She sips her tea to calm her nerves. She notices the dredges
swirling around the bottom.

Devil's Claw.

MADELEINE (O.S.)
Cinderella...

Jeannette SPITS out the tea and throws her cup to the floor.

The Papillon puppy awakens and BARKS.

Jeannette lunges for her dresser but it JOLTS across the room
towards the paneled room divider.

WICKED LAUGHTER rings out. The puppy hides under the bed.

Madeleine emerges from behind the paneled divider.

JEANNETTE
How are you still alive?

MADELEINE
I put on a good show for the
Cardinal. Too bad you didn't come.

Jeannette opens a nearby closet. It contains her black
feather mask and OBSIDIAN SLIPPERS she wore to the ball.

JEANNETTE
Take it back. All of it.

MADELEINE
But you've adapted so well to this
affluent lifestyle.

JEANNETTE

I don't need any of it anymore if
it means taking my child!

Jeannette hurls the shoes at Madeleine who easily dodges. The glass shoes hit the wall, SHATTERING into pieces.

Jeannette throws the feather mask into the roaring FIREPLACE.

MADELEINE

Interesting way to show your thanks
for all that I've done.

The fire SPARKS embers at Jeannette. She shields her face.

Jeannette grabs a poker by the fireplace.

JEANNETTE

Tell me your name. Who are you?

MADELEINE

I'm a witch, dear. That's all you
need to know. Name's irrelevant.
Like naming your child. I'll just
change it in the end.

Jeannette STABS Madeleine in the stomach with the poker!

Madeleine's face contorts in agony --

But then she CACKLES likes it's all been a big joke.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Did the fire prove nothing? I can't
die!

Madeleine yanks the poker out and skewers Jeannette's heart!

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

And neither can you.

She pulls the poker out of Jeannette and casts it aside.
Jeannette reels in shock, gasping.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Not until both our wishes come
true.

JEANNETTE

It's not a wish. It's a curse.

Madeleine shrugs. She strides over to Jeannette's bed.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

You charmed the King. You made
Louis fall in love with me.

MADELEINE

You give me too much credit, dear.
The only charms used were your own.
Louis has a weakness for virgins
with good teeth.

JEANNETTE

Then I can turn him against me.

Madeleine lifts the bed curtain, revealing the trembling dog.

MADELEINE

You're only hurting yourself,
Cinderella.

JEANNETTE

Don't call me that!

MADELEINE

No, I think I will. Anger fuels
that raw power inside you. Makes
the baby stronger. He'll need it,
for what I have in store.

Just as Madeleine's hand is about to close around the
whimpering puppy, she stops. Her eyes flit towards the door.

Madeleine stands and begins murmuring a spell in LATIN.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Liques cor et conteret anima...

JEANNETTE

I'll fight you every step of the
way, witch.

Madeleine's preoccupied with her chant, almost trance-like.

Jeannette inches to the dresser and gets what she was after --

The enchanted green perfume and the script pages.

She unscrews the perfume cap.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

I won't be ignored!

Jeannette grabs Madeleine and pours the green liquid on her!

The liquid burns like ACID on Madeleine's skin. Madeleine HOWLS in pain. With a jerk she HEAD BUTTS Jeannette.

Jeannette staggers back, stunned. The pages fly into the air.

The rest of the liquid SLOSHES against a painting before Jeannette drops the bottle. It breaks.

She scrambles for a spell page. She finds the right one.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

(reading)

Bane of morning, scourge of night.
Drive this woman from my sight!

Nothing seems to happen at first --

Until the PAINTING ON THE WALL MOVES.

The painting depicts two men vying for the attention of a shepherdess. The three figures COME ALIVE.

The two men STEP OUT OF THE PAINTING. They look as if they're still made of paint. Glossy and animated 2-D art.

MADELEINE

A banishment spell. Clever. I'll
take those spells back now if you
only plan on using them against me.

Madeleine lurches for Jeannette and the spell pages but the animated, 2-D men seize her.

Madeleine tries to fight off the silent figures but they're unbelievably powerful.

The Shepherdess remains in the painting, motioning the men to return with their prize.

Madeleine hits the back of the painting. From head to toe --

HER BODY FLATTENS AND SHINES LIKE OIL ON CANVAS.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You can't keep me out forever.

(chants in English)

Strain the heart and crush the
soul, play the organ's last death
toll!

JEANNETTE

What did you do?

MADELEINE

Nothing. To you.

A CRY arises from BEHIND THE BEDROOM DOOR.

Jeannette flings the door open and discovers --

BEATRIX. She splays out on the floor, clutching her chest.

JEANNETTE

Beatrix!

Jeannette rushes over to Beatrix on the floor.

MADELEINE

It's rude to eavesdrop.

Jeannette cradles Beatrix's head in her lap.

JEANNETTE

This is all my fault. I'm sorry.

BEATRIX

Victor said you'd visit me. I
couldn't wait, I--

Beatrix eyes alight on Madeleine.

BEATRIX (CONT'D)

It's you...

The two painted men drag Madeleine INTO the painting,
continuing on BEYOND the gold-leaf frame, out of sight.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD (O.S.)

It came from over here!

The CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD rounds the corner.

Cardinal de Fleury trails behind the ROYAL GUARDS. He sneers
down at Beatrix from over the cover of his Bible.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

Get her out of here.

JEANNETTE

No!

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

It is prohibited for anyone other
than a royal to die within the
palace.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD
 (to his Royal Guards)
 Take her outside.

Jeannette fends off the Royal Guards.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
 It's the law.

BEATRIX
 Jeannette...

JEANNETTE
 Beatrix!

Jeannette cups Beatrix's face in her hands.

BEATRIX
 (softly)
 Madame de Chateauroux--

The Royal Guards bear Beatrix's body away.

Beatrix's limp hand brushes the Cardinal's Bible. He hugs the book tightly to his chest, disgusted.

Jeannette's released. She pounds the floor, crushed.

Cardinal de Fleury smirks, relishing the moment.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Night envelops Versailles. The palace sleeps.

INT. JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM

Jeannette stuffs the spells and a bit of food into a pouch hidden in the folds of her skirt. She dons a cloak.

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Jeannette closes the door. Above her, Jeannette hears the MUTED CRIES of passion through the walls.

KING'S BEDCHAMBER

King Louis fucks Fiona under the sheets of his oversized bed.

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Jeannette hurries down the steps, heading in the opposite direction of King Louis and his conquest.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - ROYAL GARDEN - NIGHT

It's an all out escape. She breaks for the royal forest!

EXT. ROYAL FOREST

Jeannette staggers through the woods, refusing to rest.

MADELEINE'S VOICE (V.O.)
Where are you going?

Jeannette is spurred on by the voice. She alters her course.

A FLOCK of RAVENS fly through the trees. Jeannette avoids them at all costs. She runs blind through the forest.

MADELEINE'S VOICE (V.O.)
It's this way.

An ominous path lies ahead. On either side of her, the dense forest. Behind her, the VOICE.

MADELEINE'S VOICE (V.O.)
Cinderella...

Jeannette races down the path, picking up speed with each heart-pounding step.

The trees shift, CLOSING IN on her!

Jeannette runs as fast as she can.

MADELEINE'S LAUGHTER permeates the woods.

There's no chance of going back, the way is blocked. Up ahead, the path closes further, threatening to crush her.

Jeannette wedges herself out of the path, into the --

EXT. KING'S VEGETABLE GARDEN - NIGHT

Jeannette sprints across the wide expanse of cultivated land. She turns her head to see if anything's following her --

And runs right into Victor. Jeannette CRIES OUT in alarm.

VICTOR
Jeannette, relax, it's me!

Jeannette squeezes Victor tightly.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Come inside where it's warm.

Victor leads Jeannette inside a nearby greenhouse.

INT. GREENHOUSE

The glass building protects a year round stash of vegetables and fruit. Victor deposits some into a burlap sack.

VICTOR
What were you doing out there?

JEANNETTE
Running away.

VICTOR
I'd love to know what the woods offer that the palace cannot.

JEANNETTE
Beatrice is dead because of me! She never even knew that I was--

Jeannette bites her tongue.

VICTOR
What?

JEANNETTE
It doesn't matter. The witch has returned and she wants my baby!

VICTOR
I thought she wanted to sell you spells.

Jeannette's caught in her own lie.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
If you're in danger, Jeannette, you must let me try and help.

JEANNETTE
You mustn't tell a soul.

VICTOR
On my life, I swear.

Jeannette takes the spells out from her bag.

JEANNETTE

I know what you're thinking. But beyond using magic, the witch and I have nothing in common.

VICTOR

You're a witch just like that woman?

JEANNETTE

No, I'm a good witch. Although a lot of good I've done since being here. But I was able to use a spell against her before and I shall do it again. Give her a taste of her own-- Oh!

A RAT scurries out from underneath the vegetation and over Jeannette's foot. It darts for a hole in the glass wall.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Stop it! It could be a spy for the witch.

Jeannette lobs a rock at the rat but misses.

Victor acts fast. He grabs a nearby PUMPKIN --

-- and hurls it at the rat! THUMP.

VICTOR

All of this is a little hard to believe. There are fairytales and then there's being outright delusional, Jeannette. I'd never report you but don't you think you're going overreacting?

JEANNETTE

Believe what you may but if I can't get out of this palace then I must find a way to keep her and her dark magic from getting in.

Jeannette flips through the pages. She finds a spell with the key word "ENERGY."

Jeannette studies the spell then chooses a spot in the greenhouse where the MOONLIGHT shines brightest.

Jeannette stands in the center of the circle of light.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
 You might want to step back. I'm
 pretty new at this.

Victor stays in place. She performs the spell.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
*Orbis, luna, circulum sol, eiice
 magicae donec nemo.*

Nothing happens. She re-examines the spell.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
*Orbis, luna, circulum sol, eiice
 magicae donec nemo.*

The moon hangs in the sky the same as it did before.

VICTOR
 We'll have to think of another way.

Jeannette sighs. Just as she's stepping out of the circle --
 THE MOONLIGHT FLARES! Victor and Jeannette shield their eyes.
 Jeannette stands back in the center. She chants faster.

JEANNETTE
 (repeating continuously)
*Orbis, luna, circulum sol, eiice
 magicae donec nemo--*

The circle of light around Jeannette SHRINKS as she appears
 to ABSORB THE MOONLIGHT. Her body GLOWS.

Victor now definitively takes several steps back.

A WAVE OF SPARKLING ENERGY fans out from Jeannette's body.

It PASSES THROUGH VICTOR. He cowers but remains unscathed.

WE FOLLOW THE ENERGY -- BEYOND THE GREENHOUSE...

...ACROSS THE PALACE GROUNDS...

...AS IT FLOWS INTO THE PALACE...

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The energy pours out of the main entrance, chasing away
 scours of panicked VERMIN.

The rodents squeeze underneath the MAIN ENTRANCE GATES.

OUTSIDE THE PALACE

In a nearby tree, a RAVEN sees the vermin driven out. Instead of chasing a meal, the bird FLIES TOWARDS THE PALACE.

SPLAT. The raven crashes MID-AIR and that's when we see it --

Jeannette's created a defensive barrier around the palace. The sparkling energy forms a bubble over Versailles.

EDGE OF THE PALACES GROUNDS

The dead raven falls near a large OAK TREE.

Etched on the tree is the faint outline of Madeleine. She's imprisoned in the tree, blending in with the weathered wood.

Her eyes FLY OPEN and she struggles to break out.

Slowly a WOODEN ARM emerges from the trunk. Then a leg --

Until Madeleine is completely free.

She pants. Her face regains its normal color. Madeleine frowns at the dead raven crumpled at her feet.

She tests the barrier. A SPARK makes her draw her hand back in discomfort.

Madeleine CHANTS, palm outstretched towards the barrier.

MADELEINE
(in Latin; subtitled)
Break the chains--!

Madeleine's body seizes up. She bends over, HACKING. Furious, she retreats back into the shadows.

INSIDE THE GREENHOUSE

The last of the sparkling energy leaves Jeannette. Weakened, she drops in the dirt. Her face shines with sweat.

Suddenly, pain engulfs Jeannette.

VICTOR
Jeannette!

Jeannette's hands are WRINKLED like an old hag's --

But then they REVERT back to their youthful appearance.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Did it work?

JEANNETTE
For the time being.
(realizing)
The magic. It ages you. Come with
me!

Jeannette hurriedly pulls Victor out of the greenhouse.

EXT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Madeleine creeps towards the Poisson townhouse.

She pauses, out of breath. Her body shudders and Madeleine violently COUGHS. Blood splatters the back of her hand.

Another raven lands on the black gate. It CAWS to her.

MADELEINE
I appreciate your concern.

INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Curtains block out the world. Madame Poisson tries to sew by candlelight but fumbles due to inexperience.

MADELEINE (O.S.)
Poor Eloise.

Madeleine's by the harpsichord.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
My how the mighty have fallen.

She PLAYS a couple of minor-keyed notes on the harpsichord.

MADAME POISSON
Who are you? Get out of my house.

MADELEINE
It can't be easy to see your
servant girl sitting so high and
you so low.

Madame Poisson looks away, ashamed.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
I have a proposition for you and
your daughters. Meet me at the Hook
End Tavern in an hour's time.

MADAME POISSON

They refuse to go out in public.

MADELEINE

Then they'll remain blind for the rest of their lives.

Hope flits across Madame Poisson's face.

Madeleine disappears into the shadows.

Cyrano chases after her, GROWLING.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - CORRIDOR

Victor and Jeannette approach the statue that Jeannette hid behind to escape from Ada.

JEANNETTE

Beatrix was trying to tell me something before she died.

Across from the statue is Jeannette's newly painted portrait.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

There used to be a portrait of another woman here.

VICTOR

Maybe it got moved into storage.

INT. STORAGE ROOM

Filled with unwanted excess furniture and luxury items.

Victor whips back a sheet, revealing the portrait.

The title reads: "MADAME MADELEINE DE CHATEAUROUX."

Jeannette squints at the portrait. There's a stark difference between Jeannette's Madeleine and the painting's Madeleine.

But the woman's RING gives it away. Painted on her hand. The same size, shape and stone as the witch's.

JEANNETTE

The witch was King Louis' previous mistress. Madeleine de Chateauroux. The magic aged her. But why did she want to keep that a secret?

VICTOR
Stop. You'll worry yourself sick.

JEANNETTE
I'd go back and change it all if I
could.

VICTOR
And stay with your stepsisters?

Jeannette hangs her head.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Everyone makes mistakes.

Victor encircles his arms around Jeannette and her belly.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
This isn't one of them.

Jeannette sighs. They rest on a chaise lounge.

JEANNETTE
I used to believe in true love. But
it's nothing but folly. Fairytale
nonsense.

VICTOR
But it does exist. Only to some,
it's harder to find.

Victor kisses Jeannette. Little by little, Jeannette's
barriers crumble.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
We'll find a way.

Jeannette nestles her head on Victor's shoulder.

JEANNETTE
Can I stay here with you? Just a
little while longer.

Victor kisses the top of her head.

VICTOR
Certainly.

Victor plays with a piece of rope. He ties it into the
surgeon's knot. Jeannette watches.

INT. HOOK END TAVERN - NIGHT

It's a rowdy tavern. Most cheer on an arm-wrestling match.

A sullen man named ROBERT DAMIENS (30s) drinks alone.

Madame Poisson stumbles in with her daughters.

Both twins wear the same colored cloak and strip of cloth over their eyes -- or where their eyes used to be.

ABIGAIL

Maman, I can feel them staring!

Madeleine sits at a table in the corner. Madame Poisson guides the twins over.

MADAME POISSON

You're the witch they found in the palace. The one they burned.

Madeleine touches a finger to her empty wine glass. It instantly refills itself.

MADELEINE

What gave me away?

The three cautiously sit at the table with Madeleine.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

I need some outside help to get back inside the palace. We'll use words. Words that cut deep. And you girls have a talent for gossip.

ADA

Anything to get back at that little quim.

MADELEINE

I have a potion that attracts an audience. Talk about yesterday's dinner and they'll be dying to know whether it was fried, boiled or baked.

MADAME POISSON

So what do we do?

MADELEINE

Stay in Paris and fuel the fire. Rumors aren't enough on their own. It takes family to make them true.

MADAME POISSON

And in return?

Madeleine produces two jars each containing A PAIR OF EYES --

The Stepsisters' eyes.

Madame Poisson gasps in horror.

Madeleine opens both jars, scooping out an eye from each.

MADELEINE

I return your daughters' sight. But
I do half now and half later. To
keep an eye on both of you.

Madeleine cackles at her own joke.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Do we have an agreement?

MADAME POISSON

Yes.

Madeleine reaches to untie the cloth around Ada's face.

ADA

No.

MADAME POISSON

You'd rather Abigail see first?

Ada's selfishness wins over. The cloth is removed. SCARS mar her skin. Afraid, Ada keeps her eyelids closed.

MADELEINE

Don't be shy.

Madeleine exposes the gaping black EYE SOCKET.

She pops both eyes in and places a hand over Ada's face. She silently mouths the spell and removes her hand.

Ada blinks her eyes open, unaccustomed to the light.

ADA

(tearing up)
I can see!

MADELEINE

Then you best look away.

Madeleine dips a spoon into the jar with the remaining two eyeballs and offers the yellowish liquid to Ada.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Drink. All three of you.

Madame Poisson nods. Ada helps Abigail with her spoonful.
Down the hatch for all three.

Madame Poisson's tongue SPLITS in two.

Same with the twins. Two-pronged and pointed like a snake.

Madeleine samples the concoction, smacking her lips.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Needs more lemon. Forked tongues
only speak ill of their enemies.
I'll start.

Madeleine saunters over to the rowdy crowd around the arm-
wrestlers. An arm-wrestler SLAMS his opponent's arm down.

Madeleine's LIPS barely move, her voice just above a whisper.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Excusez-moi, s'il vous plaît.

The tavern dwindles to a hush. All eyes fix on Madeleine.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

I cannot help but notice the cost
of living in Paris is rising while
our wages stay the same.

Men MURMUR, disgruntled. Some raise drinks in agreement.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Hardly seems fair. We scrounge for
coins for our next glass of wine
while the court gulps it by the
bottle.

Madame Poisson joins in the slander, empowered.

MADAME POISSON

She's right. Our very own Jeannette
Poisson squandered her chance to
help her fellow bourgeoisie. She's
spent money on trinkets and trifles
while the rest of Paris starves.

ADA

And still you sit doing nothing?

Robert Damiens rises, most affected by the women's words.

ROBERT DAMIENS

No!

ABIGAIL

Madame de Pompadour has forgotten
her place.

Madame Poisson notices a Waitress bouncing her one-year-old
child on the bar counter. The child plays with a doll.

ADA

And it's up to us to remind the
King who matters most.

MADAME POISSON

I found this in her old room. Look!

She has holds up the child's doll in her hands.

MADAME POISSON (CONT'D)

A doll to practice her spells on.
To use them on His Majesty!

ROBERT DAMIENS

Witchcraft!

The crowd becomes more bold in showing their discontent.

ABIGAIL

Jeannette's bewitched the King,
gaining a false title and a false
sense of security.

ADA

She's as royal as a cinder girl and
she'll just as easily burn.

TAVERN CROWD

Yeah!

MADAME POISSON

Versailles will not rule its people
from behind its halls of gold and
glass. We deserve justice!

ADA

For France!

The Tavern Crowd ROARS in dissonant harmony.

Madeleine smiles with delicious satisfaction.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jeannette wakes in a cold sweat. Sheets tangle around her.

JEANNETTE'S SERVANT (30s) lights her fireplace.

JEANNETTE'S SERVANT
Is Madame feeling well?

JEANNETTE
Yes, I'm fine. Thank you. I can
light my own fire.

JEANNETTE'S SERVANT
But it's my duty.

JEANNETTE
It was once mine too.

HALLWAY

NOBLES flit about nervously. Jeannette catches snippets.

NOBLEMAN #1
Paris is in revolt.

NOBLEMAN #2
I don't believe it.

NOBLEWOMAN #1
Should we flee the palace? Head for
the country?

NOBLEWOMAN #2 narrows her eyes at Jeannette.

NOBLEWOMAN #2
They blame Jeannette.

JEANNETTE
(sotto)
Madeline.

Jeannette quickens her pace. Everywhere is a courtier
WHISPERING about her, hating her. The perfect scapegoat.

Jeannette breaks into a run, desperate to escape the voices.

EXT. PALACE STEPS - DAY

The Queen plays a game of tag with her SIX DAUGHTERS (ages 8-18). The youngest of them all is little LOUISE MARIE (8).

Jeannette avoids the group.

ROYAL GARDEN

The same garden where Jeannette first encountered the King.

Jeannette sits on a bench. She retrieves the pages of spells from the folds of her skirt.

Her thoughts are interrupted when Louise Marie runs in, giggling. Jeannette stashes the spells.

Queen Marie stumbles in after Louise Marie.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA

Got you!

Queen Marie scoops up Louise Marie, tickling her.

Jeannette immediately bows. Queen Marie's mood changes in a flash to a more somber tone.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA (CONT'D)

Louise, go play with your sisters.

Louise Marie dashes off.

JEANNETTE

You have a wonderful family, my Queen.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA

One of the few joys I have left.

JEANNETTE

(sputters)

No one has the right to the throne except your children. What can I do to make Louis change his mind?

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA

My husband's rule is absolute.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (O.S.)

Your Majesty.

The Cardinal stops upon seeing Jeannette. Queen Marie plucks an orange from a tree.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA

Yes, Cardinal?

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
 Apologies, my Queen. You're needed
 in the throne room.

Queen Marie heads back where she came. Jeannette pursues her.

JEANNETTE
 Madame Madeline du Chateauroux.
 She's no longer at court?

QUEEN MARIE LESZCZYNSKA
 Madeleine was dismissed when the
 King fell gravely ill.

JEANNETTE
 Dismissed? How?

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
 Your Majesty--

QUEEN MARIE LESZCZYNSKA
 So my husband could die absolved of
 his sins in the eyes of God.

Queen Marie tosses the orange at Jeannette. Jeannette catches it. Queen Marie leaves the garden.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
 (to Jeannette)
 And as for you, the King has
 requested your presence in the
 drawing room.

Jeannette leaves with the Cardinal watching her every move.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

King Louis presents Jeannette with a large BLACK HAIR PIN,
 the remnants of the obsidian glass slippers.

KING LOUIS XV
 What you wore on your feet you can
 now wear in your hair.

JEANNETTE
 It could have stayed broken.

KING LOUIS XV
 But I re-made it. Good as new.

JEANNETTE
 How much did it cost?

KING LOUIS XV
It's a gift.

The King jams the pin into Jeannette's coiffure.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)
Nice weather out.

JEANNETTE
Perfect for hunting a stag.

KING LOUIS XV
Or baking a cake.

Silence pervades the room.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)
I've heard a rumor about you and my
new cook.

JEANNETTE
It wouldn't be Versailles without
idle gossip.

KING LOUIS XV
This is one thing I don't like to
share. With anyone.

JEANNETTE
I don't know what you're talking
about--

King Louis knocks over the table. It CRASHES to the floor.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)
Then so be it. Banish me. Dismiss
me from court and you'll never see
me again.

KING LOUIS XV
You loved me once, you can do it
again.

King Louis storms out. Jeannette doggedly pursues him.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - COURTYARD - DAY

A small hunting party assembles.

Robert Damiens is there as a servant, holding a pack of
BARKING HOUNDS.

King Louis marches out to meet his party. He dons riding gloves. Jeannette trails him, not giving an inch.

JEANNETTE

Women, war, hunting, masquerades --
have you realized a revolution
builds outside your door?

KING LOUIS XV

"After us, the deluge. I care not
what happens when I am dead and
gone."

JEANNETTE

Coward!

The mixed crowd of servants and courtiers GASP.

King Louis SLAPS Jeannette with his glove.

Robert Damiens seizes his opportunity. He releases the dogs!

The hounds dart about, creating a distraction.

King Louis hops onto his horse. Jeannette glares up at him.

Robert speeds towards Jeannette, DAGGER drawn!

Jeannette catches sight of her assassin and dodges.

ROBERT STABS KING LOUIS IN THE LEG!

Louis' horse REARS UP. The King falls off.

Courtiers quickly apprehend Robert.

Jeannette rushes to King Louis.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Louis! Don't die, my love. I take
back everything I said.

Jeannette lifts up Louis' head and kisses him.

KING'S VALET

Get the King inside. Take the
traitor away!

Louis is carried inside the palace.

Jeannette looks down at her hand. In it are a couple of loose strands of hair -- King Louis' hair.

Jeannette takes off in the opposite direction of the crowd.

QUICK CUTS AROUND THE GARDEN --

Jeannette plucks various herbs and flowers.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

Jeannette HACKS at a pumpkin with a large butcher's knife. The PUMPKIN SPLITS in two. Jeannette prepares pumpkin soup.

Victor enters with some spices. Just the two of them.

JEANNETTE

Lock the door behind you.

VICTOR

What's with all the secrecy?

There's a spell page on the counter titled: DEADLY DISEASES.

VICTOR'S POV: Without any magic talent, the spell is a jumble of incoherent words, but Victor recognizes the ominous symbols drawn at the top of the page.

Victor examines the ingredients on the counter. Among them is the orange the Queen tossed to Jeannette.

Jeannette adds the King's hair to the soup stock.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

You plan on killing the King!

JEANNETTE

If we cut the spell in half, it should be enough just to make him sick. As long as I have my Prince Charming, I owe Madeleine and our contract still stands.

VICTOR

I've arranged for a ferry to take us down the length of the Seine. From there we cross into Germany and ride out this awful riot.

JEANNETTE

We can't escape. Not until the curse is broken. Louis must disavow me as his mistress.

VICTOR

We can't escape if you're locked up for treason! Let me do it. I don't need magic to make poison.

JEANNETTE

No, it has to be me. This time I'm
the one controlling my fate.

Jeannette mixes the spell ingredients together in a bowl.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

No one else gets hurt. When it's
served, get out as soon as you can.
I'll join you.

She pours some of the ingredients into the soup. She STIRS
her spoon in a particular PATTERN, following the spell.

Victor watches her, conflicted. Jeannette's hand slides
across her belly for reassurance as she stirs.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - MAIN GATES

A RIOTING MOB has formed outside the gates.

RIOTER #1

Let us in!

RIOTER #2

We want Jeannette!

RIOTER #3

We want to speak to the King!

Palace Guards affix their muskets with BAYONETS.

Madeleine prowls the outskirts of the mob, biding her time.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KING'S BEDCHAMBER

The King's Guard opens the door for Jeannette.

King Louis is propped up in bed, wound bandaged.

KING LOUIS XV

And how is my little song bird? In
better spirits I hope.

Jeannette sits beside the King.

JEANNETTE

What is Versailles without the
greatest treasure in the world?
Forgive me for acting so cold. I
forgot my place.

KING LOUIS XV

All will be back to normal after
the little dauphin is born.

JEANNETTE

Let's have fireworks to honor our
boy. The whole palace is invited.

KING LOUIS XV

Splendid! We'll spare no expense.

JEANNETTE

We'll dive right into planning just
as soon as you're well.

KING LOUIS XV

(re: wound)

What, this? I've had worse.

JEANNETTE

Hungry? I tried my hand at making
soup.

The King's Servant and a YOUNG HELPER (18) enter with food
trays. The soup is missing. The Young Helper leaves the room.

KING LOUIS XV

I don't see any soup.

Victor's allowed into the room, carrying the pumpkin soup.

VICTOR

Here it is, Your Grace. It was
missing that special something so I
added a few ingredients. I claim
sole responsibility for its taste.

KING LOUIS XV

Thank you, monsieur.

Jeannette's stunned. She tries to keep her composure.

King Louis fills a spoon full with the ominous liquid. It
travels towards his mouth.

JEANNETTE

Louis--

KING LOUIS XV

Zut alors! Where are my manners?

King Louis offers the first spoonful to Jeannette!

Victor's face PALES. Before he can say anything, the doors SHUT in front of him.

JEANNETTE

Oh, no, my King. The soup was made in your honor.

KING LOUIS XV

But we share everything, remember?

King Louis holds the spoon in line with Jeannette's mouth.

JEANNETTE

Yes, of course.

Jeannette eats the soup!

King Louis eagerly savors the soup for himself.

KING LOUIS XV

Mmm, a hint of orange. Goes quite well with the pumpkin. And it's a very good consistency too.

He spoons another bite to Jeannette. Nothing happens.

They both finish the soup. The spell didn't work.

Jeannette looks at the door where Victor last was. Realization dawns on her.

JEANNETTE

If you liked it so much I can go and fetch you a second helping.

KING LOUIS XV

No, that's all right.

King Louis moves on to a large pastry filled with orange marmalade. He shares it with Jeannette.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

Have you had any more cravings?

JEANNETTE

Not for a while.

KING LOUIS XV

How could you not crave this delicious pastry?

Jeannette stops eating the pastry.

JEANNETTE

It also tastes of oranges...

KING LOUIS XV

Yes, it does. *C'est merveilleux!*

Jeannette discreetly spits pastry into her napkin.

Her VISION BLURS. Jeannette stands, knocking over her chair.

KING LOUIS XV (CONT'D)

Jeannette?

JEANNETTE

I must go, I left something...

Jeannette feels along the wall. The King keeps eating.

KING LOUIS XV

Hurry back.

Jeannette finds the door and disappears inside.

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Jeannette unrolls the spell pages from her concealed pouch.

Her BLURRY vision can't make any sense of them. She teeters down the narrow stairs.

RED BOILS crop up all over her body.

INT. JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM

Jeannette staggers out, startling her servant.

JEANNETTE'S SERVANT

Madame-- My Lord, what's happened?!
Your skin!

JEANNETTE

(delirious)
I have to go, I have to--

Jeannette COLLAPSES. Her Servant SHRIEKS and runs out.

INT. KING'S BEDCHAMBER

King Louis VOMITS into a bucket. Red, measles-looking BUMPS plague his entire body.

Queen Marie Leszcynska bursts into the room.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCZYNSKA
Louis--!

She tries to help her husband but Louis pushes Marie away.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCZYNSKA (CONT'D)
(to the King's Guard)
Call the doctor!

INT. JEANNETTE'S BEDROOM

Jeannette lies helpless on the plush carpet. Her breathing's strangulated. In and out, in and out, in... And...

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (O.S.)
You forgot the calla lily.

Cardinal de Fleury slinks into her room, holding his Bible.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
It's an essential component for
that particular potion.

He snatches the spell pages from Jeannette's clenched fist. He examines the poison spell. Sees it torn at the bottom.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
The bottom of the page is missing.
Careless mistake on your part. Just
like the devil woman before you.

Cardinal Fleury opens his Bible --

Which is actually MADELEINE'S GRIMOIRE!

Pages have been ripped out of the grimoire. A fragment of a page has the calla lily ingredient listed at the bottom.

The Cardinal deposits Jeannette's spell pages back to their rightful place. The poison spell is now complete.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
I swore to defend God and country
at all costs. Your diluted spell
won't kill His Majesty but even so,
that potion was intended for an
adult male. I wonder the effect
it'll have on you...

JEANNETTE STOPS BREATHING.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
Farewell, Jeannette.

He hears CRYING in the hall. He flings the door open.

Jeannette's Servant stands off to the side, bawling.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
You there. Madame Pompadour has
died of the same illness that has
beset the King.

JEANNETTE'S SERVANT
The smallpox is spreading!

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
Dispose of her body before it gets
out of hand.

Victor runs into the room.

VICTOR
Jeannette!

Cardinal Fleury keeps Victor at bay. The Cardinal calls out
to PALACE GUARDS marching by in the hallway.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY
Guards!

The Captain of the Guard leads his men over to the commotion.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY (CONT'D)
Lock this man away in the Bastille.
To await trial for witchcraft and
poisoning the King of France.

The Guards roughly grab Victor.

Jeannette's Servant covers Jeannette with a white sheet.

VICTOR
She's not dead. She's not dead!

They drag Victor off.

A few Guards bear Jeannette's body away.

HALLWAY

The Young Helper who helped carry in the King's food sneaks a
pilfered orange pastry from his pocket and bites into it.

Cardinal de Fleury walks down, proud of his dirty handiwork.
 Young Helper quickly gobbles the stolen food.

KING'S VALET (O.S.)
 The mob is about to break through
 the main gates!

Jolted out of his reverie, the Cardinal hurries down the hall followed by the Young Helper and terrified nobility.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - ENTRANCE GATES - DAY

The mob has grown in number.

Palace Guards OPEN FIRE on the rioters.

With newfound fury, the survivors attack the gates --

FORCING THEM TO OPEN.

The mob kills the remaining soldiers guarding the gates.

The ENERGY from Jeannette's protection spell that surrounded the palace grounds FLICKERS AND DIES.

The mob storms towards the palace! Bringing up the rear --

Is Madeleine.

E./I. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE/CARRIAGE - DAY

Madame Poisson and the stepsisters climb into their carriage. A COACHMAN (50s) sits nervously on top.

Mere yards from the house, a mob gathers in the streets.

ABIGAIL
 What if that witch finds out?

MADAME POISSON
 It's too dangerous to stay.

Ada peeks out to look at the marching mob.

MADAME POISSON (CONT'D)
 Get away from the window!

A ROCK THUNKS against the side of the carriage, near Ada's face. She hastily ducks her head back in.

Madame Poisson beats the side of the carriage with her fist.

MADAME POISSON (CONT'D)

Drive!

The Coachman whips the horses onwards. The women leave the broken city of Paris behind.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - CHAPEL - DAY

The altar is decorated with candles, a stone figure of Christ and an arrangement of white calla lilies and willow twigs.

Cardinal Fleury holds his Bible close. The locked chapel doors RATTLE. Rioters try to break in.

RIOTER #1

They're upstairs! This way!

The RATTILING stops. The rioters move on.

Behind the Cardinal, a FIGURE slinks among the pews.

Cardinal Fleury twists around, knocking a candle to the floor. It whiffs out.

Not a soul lingers in the room. The Cardinal turns --

And encounters Madeleine.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

Madeleine!

MADELEINE

Not quite as you remembered me, I know. Here, allow me.

The Bible flies out of the Cardinal's hands and into hers.

Madeleine strokes her grimoire. She RIPS off the cross on the cover, exposing the inked SATANIC PENTAGRAM underneath.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You disobeyed the Ten Commandments, Cardinal. Thou shalt not steal.

Cardinal Fleury grabs the stone figure of Christ. He rushes Madeleine, ready to bash her head in.

CARDINAL DE FLEURY

And thou shalt not kill.

Madeleine dodges.

Suddenly, the Cardinal gasps in pain and drops his weapon.

Madeleine's skewered his shoulder with her RING BLADE (used to make the blood pact with Jeannette).

The Cardinal lies wounded on the floor. The nub of the ring RETRACTS to its normal shape.

MADELEINE

I gather it was you who drove me
prematurely from the palace. I had
many plans as the King's mistress.
Shame you won't see them come to
fruition.

The grimoire flips open on its own, stopping on a certain page. She rests the book on the altar.

Madeleine reads off a spell, also following instructions on how to move her hands a certain way in the air.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

*Marcescunt et decrementi...vita
refluit abstulit...*

The calla lilies WITHER. Their "youth" appears as SPECKS OF DUST in the air. The specks drift towards Madeleine.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

*... Desine tempus, immortalitas...
Meum est!*

Madeleine finishes her hand motions. Cardinal Fleury's head whips back. He SCREAMS --

AS HIS FACE SHRIVELS!

Cardinal Fleury collapses, dead. His face is wrinkled like a dried currant, mouth open in silent horror.

The last of the specks absorb into Madeleine. Madeleine throws off her cloak, revealing --

Her new and vibrant younger self at a ravishing 25 YEARS OLD.

She twirls around the chapel. Her hair's silky and colorful. Skin supple and glowing. Worthy of the King's mistress.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

How do I look, Cardinal? Regret
your celibacy?

Madeleine GIGGLES.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - DAY

The Palace Guards load Jeannette's body onto a rickety vegetable cart. Driver and work horse are ready to go.

A lifeless, measled arm slips out from the sheet wrapped around the Marquise de Pompadour's body.

Her fingers TWITCH.

One of the Palace Guards catches the movement but suddenly --

ANGRY SHOUTS. A small group of RIOTERS flood the courtyard.

PALACE GUARD

GO!

The Palace Guard hits the side of the cart and the driver whips his horse into action. The cart takes off.

Rioters knock down a Guard. The rest fight back.

RIOTER #2

Take us to the King!

The rest of the Guards do their best. One unsheathes his sword and drives the rioters back against the wall.

The Young Helper emerges from a door in the wall, GASPING for breath. His entire face and arms spot with red marks.

He falls into the arms of a Rioter, who quickly drops him.

RIOTER #3

The plague's returned!

Rioters lose their wits and panic.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - CHAPEL - DAY

Madeleine admires her reflection in a bowl filled with holy water.

A RAT SQUEAKS at her feet. She studies it intently, face scrunching up into a scowl.

MADELEINE

Jeannette's not here?

Madeleine hears the rush of rioters as they hastily exit.

RIOTER #1 (O.S.)
 There's an epidemic in the palace!
 Retreat!

MADELEINE
 (to the rat)
 Is she at the townhouse?
 (listening to the rat)
 What?!

Madeleine flips back the fold of her dress, revealing a bottle on a chain. It houses the twins' mismatched eyes.

She pours the eyes into her hands and peers through them.

MISMATCHED EYES' POV -- They connect to Ada's pair of eyes. Madeleine sees they are fleeing in a carriage along a path cut through the FOREST. The clouds are heavy with rain.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
 Confounded women. Was I not clear?

Madeleine strides over to the flower arrangement. She bats away the dead lilies and grabs a willow branch.

Her ring GLOWS and extends around her hand, enveloping it in the glow. She takes the willow branch and SNAPS off a twig.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING strikes a tree. The tree SNAPS off at the trunk, falling in front of the carriage's path.

The Coachman steers the horses around the fallen trunk.

Madame Poisson pokes her head out of the carriage.

MADAME POISSON
 We need to go faster!

COACHMAN
 It's too dangerous, Madame!

MADAME POISSON
 Not compared to the riots!

CRACK! Lightning fells another tree closer to the horses.

The horses rear up, frightened.

COACHMAN
 I'm sorry, Madame! The horses are not as brave as you.

The Coachman wheels the carriage around, bound back to Paris.

Madame Poisson glares up at the sky.

MISMATCHED EYES' POV -- Ada watches her mother stew in her seat. Abigail latches onto her sister's arm for comfort.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - CHAPEL - SAME

Pleased, Madeleine plops the eyes back into the vial. She blow a kiss at the dead Cardinal.

MADELEINE
Au revoir, Cardinal!

INT. BASTILLE - DAY

Victor sits, shackled to the wall, exhausted. His wrists and ankles ooze blood from fighting his chains.

The sounds of ALARMED BASTILLE GUARDS reach his ears.

BASTILLE GUARD (O.S.)
Halt! Who goes there? State your
business!

Victor stands alert, ready to fight if need be.

A SCUFFLE ensues outside Victor's cell. SHADOWS dance under his cell door.

MUSKETS FIRE. SWORDS CLASH and Bastille Guards SCREAM in their death throes.

Then all is QUIET.

BLOOD pools underneath the cell door.

The door unlocks, CREAKING open. Victor awaits his fate.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KING'S BEDROOM - DAY

The KING'S PHYSICIAN finishes bleeding King Louis.

KING'S PHYSICIAN
Beyond this, he's in God's hands.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA
 Do you hear that, Louis? Do you
 want to end life damned for all
 eternity? You would risk the
 dignity of your crown for a woman?

Queen Marie holds out the quill to her sickly king.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA (CONT'D)
 I pity you. In spite of your
 extravagance, your soul has nothing
 to offer God.

Louis wheezes, defeated. His trembling hands reach out.

Queen Marie thrusts the quill into his hand, helping the weak
 King apply the tip to the paper.

KING LOUIS SIGNS HIS NAME.

Queen Marie entrusts the document to the King's Valet.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA (CONT'D)
 Spread the word. The King has
 dismissed the Marquise de
 Pompadour. Her children have no
 claim to the throne. Prepare a
 carriage for our escape from the
 palace if need be.

KING LOUIS XV
 Marie...

King Louis' measles RECEDE and DISAPPEAR from his body.

Queen Marie gasps in surprise. She grasps the King's hand,
 presses the King's hand to her cheek, relieved.

QUEEN MARIE LESZCYNSKA
 A miracle. *C'est incroyable.*

EXT. PARIS CEMETERY - DUSK

Jeannette lies unconscious underneath the white sheet.

Her measles disappear from her face. Life returns to her dead
 eyes. Jeannette REAWAKENS.

JEANNETTE
 The curse. It's lifted.

She throws off the sheet --

And encounters a DEAD MAN.

She's stuck in a PIT OF CORPSES. All of them covered in small pox, a horrible, disfiguring disease.

The sheet entangles Jeannette's feet.

LIGHTNING and THUNDER ring out. The DELUGE darkens the sky.

Jeannette finally wrestles her feet free.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Help!

No one is near the 10 feet deep mass grave.

Jeannette clammers over the bodies as RAIN pours.

The pit FLOODS. Jeannette climbs, desperately trying to find purchase in the SLICK MUD.

Just as Jeannette makes it halfway, she SLIPS --

And TUMBLES back into the pool of bodies.

Her hair wraps around the rigid fingers of a FEMALE CORPSE.

Hysterical, Jeannette fights, freeing herself from the dead woman's grasp.

The WATER animates the dead, moving them against each other.

RATS bump corpses, lifting body parts as they swim away.

Jeannette CLAWS at the mud wall.

The slope of the pit becomes almost completely VERTICAL.

Embedded in the mud is a ROCK.

Pushing upwards, Jeannette gains a foothold on the rock.

The rock shifts under her weight. Jeannette freezes, not daring to move another inch.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Help! Please!

Jeannette's cries are answered with LIGHTNING and THUNDER.

The rock DISLODGES.

Jeannette's relying solely her on upper-body strength --

And she's losing her grip on the mud.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

No!

HANDS jut down from above. VICTOR is at the top of the pit!

Victor hauls Jeannette out of the death trap.

Jeannette lies on the wet but solid ground, panting. She touches her belly, relieved.

Victor kneels down and gently wipes the mud from her face.

VICTOR

You're alive.

JEANNETTE

We both are.

They embrace.

VICTOR

The mob stormed the Bastille. All the guards were killed. We missed the ferry. We'll wait at your old townhouse and catch the next one.

JEANNETTE

But all of Paris is in a riot! If I'm seen--!

VICTOR

It's the safest place.

JEANNETTE

My stepmother and the twins will be there.

VICTOR

Not if they were smart enough to get out. Trust me, Jeannette.

JEANNETTE

Even with the curse broken, my baby is still at risk.

VICTOR

Then we must hurry.

They kiss and flee together into the night.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - NIGHT

Jeannette hides her face with a shawl. Victor pulls a hat down low on his forehead.

They push through the throng of DISGRUNTLED PARISIANS.

Someone chucks a wine BOTTLE at a building. It SHATTERS.

Jeannette and Victor round the corner --

And face a MARCHING MOB.

Before the two can figure out which way to go, Jeannette and Victor are separated by the mob.

JEANNETTE

Victor!

The mob passes. Victor's gone. Jeannette wanders around.

She catches the attention of a pair of DRUNKS. They leer at her. Jeannette pulls her cloak tight and scampers away.

INT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Jeannette dashes inside the townhouse, relieved to find the door unlocked. She stands dripping in the foyer.

JEANNETTE

Victor?

A MEOW at Jeannette's feet breaks the silence, startling her.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Cyrano.

Jeannette pets the cat.

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jeannette gorges on leftover food. She feeds Cyrano scraps.

ATTIC

Jeannette opens her closet. Her old clothes still hang there.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MOMENT LATER

Jeannette wears a simple frock in place of her dirty and restrictive court dress.

As she nears the staircase, the front door OPENS.

Madame Poisson enters, making way for Ada and Abigail.

INT. MADAME POISSON'S BEDROOM - INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

Jeannette ducks inside, closing the door noiselessly behind her. She stands, eavesdropping.

Ada peels off her damp cloak. She lights a candelabra.

ADA

What more does the witch want from us? We started the riot. The bitch is as good as dead.

MADAME POISSON

Food's been left on the table.

ABIGAIL

The servants?

MADAME POISSON

Left long before we did.

Madame Poisson LOCKS the front door.

Jeannette retreats further inside the bedroom.

Ada races up the stairs, brandishing the candelabra. Blind Abigail climbs after her slowly, hugging the bannister.

Ada checks each room, starting with her and Abigail's bedroom. Madame Poisson's room is the farthest on the right.

Jeannette searches her stepmother's bedroom. She tries to stuff herself in a closet but notices her feet have left a MUDDY TRAIL across the carpet.

Ada throws open the door to her and Abigail's room. Nothing.

MADAME POISSON

Locks the back door. SOMETHING OUTSIDE catches her eye.

ADA

Abandons the empty bathroom. Madame Poisson's bedroom is the only room left on the second floor.

JEANNETTE

Wedges a chair under the door when --

BAM! Ada fights to force her way through.

ADA
She's here!

Jeannette's only means of escape is down the tiny DUMBWAITER.

BAM! BAM! BAM! The chair's slipping.

Jeannette slides open the dumbwaiter door. She squeezes onto the small dumbwaiter platform.

The pulley system isn't used to this much weight. Jeannette holds onto the pulley to keep herself from crashing down.

Ada BURSTS into the room just in time to see Jeannette disappear from sight.

DUMBWAITER CHUTE

Jeannette allows the pulley to take her down as quick as she dares. The pulley strains from the weight.

SNAP! One of the support strands breaks!

The remaining strands of rope SEAR Jeannette's hands.

Jeannette jerks her hands away. The pulley plummets down.

Jeannette uses her dress to re-grab the rope. It slows her descent somewhat but not enough.

CELLAR

CRASH! Jeannette hits the bottom.

WOOD SPLINTERS. Jeannette propels herself out of the dumbwaiter and up the cellar steps.

KITCHEN

Jeannette climbs out of the cellar, shutting the door behind her. She hides underneath the kitchen table.

The tablecloth is a scarce protector from danger. She rubs her belly to calm her and the baby inside her.

Madame Poisson rounds the corner. She throws open the cellar door and descends the stairs.

Jeannette can't stay. She dashes into the --

FOYER

Jeannette encounters no one as she darts into the --

SITTING ROOM

She shuts the door and makes for the window. It won't budge.

CREAK! The door opens. Jeannette hides behind the curtains.

Abigail appears, still in her cloak, the strip of cloth over her eyes.

Abigail fumbles around, bumping into furniture.

She heads in the direction where Jeannette is. A small table is in her path. She KNOCKS over the table, breaking a vase.

Jeannette uses the noisy opportunity to leap over to the fireplace. Straight ahead are the opened double doors --

But Abigail has backtracked and blocks Jeannette's escape.

Jeannette skirts the sitting room walls. She'll have to circle around the HARPSICHORD to make it to the door.

One of FLOORBOARDS SQUEAKS underneath her feet.

Abigail follows the sound, outstretched fingers grasping.

Jeannette passes by the harpsichord keys. She moves as stealthily as possible but Abigail fumbles closer.

A VOICE calls out from the foyer.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

Ada.

Before Jeannette can make sense of it, her stalker lunges --

Pinning her between the wall and the harpsichord!

Jeannette protects her unborn baby, blocking the harpsichord from pushing into her stomach.

The stepsister removes the strip of cloth exposing a perfect pair of eyes. Ada was masquerading as Abigail.

ADA

Trapped like a rat.

Jeannette wriggles underneath the harpsichord.

Ada seizes her feet and drags her out.

She sits on Jeannette, trapping her arms.

Ada grabs a fallen CANDLESTICK HOLDER. She trains the metal spike of the holder on Jeannette's eye.

ADA (CONT'D)

Now it's your turn.

Victor enters the room.

JEANNETTE

Victor!

He calmly guides in Abigail. She keeps her eyes closed, vulnerable without her cloak and strip of cloth.

VICTOR

Ada, enough. Madeleine wants Jeannette as undamaged as possible.

ADA

She won't care.

VICTOR

Risky game to bet against a witch.

Ada reluctantly lowers the candlestick.

JEANNETTE

Victor? What's going on?

VICTOR

I'm leading the blind.

Madame Poisson emerges from the kitchen.

JEANNETTE

We still have time. The ferry leaves in an hour.

VICTOR
What ferry?

The harsh truth sinks in. Victor squats next to Jeannette.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
It was easy to strike a deal with
Madeleine. All I needed was to give
up you.

Jeannette SPITS in Victor's face.

Ada brings the blunt edge of the candlestick down on
Jeannette's head.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. LUXURY TOWNHOUSE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Jeannette regains consciousness. She lies on wet grass. The
rain holds off for now.

Victor ties her hands behind her. She fights her restraints.

VICTOR
Don't struggle. Surgeon's knot,
remember? Just as I taught you.

JEANNETTE
Why?

VICTOR
Madeleine will be here any minute.
Not even a riot or fleeing to
another country would keep her
away.

Madame Poisson, Ada and Abigail linger near the tree.

A FLOCK OF RAVENS descend into the garden.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
There's no time to explain.

Victor ties off the rope and picks up his BUTCHER'S KNIFE.

Jeannette's wrists are bound, but the knot looks nothing like
a surgeon's knot. In fact, it appears very LOOSE.

Jeannette immediately goes to work on freeing herself.

Through the cloud of ravens, Young Madeleine emerges.

MADELEINE

Bravo, Victor. We work so well together.

Madeleine pats Victor's cheek. Abigail steps forward.

ABIGAIL

What about me? We did all that you asked. You said half now and half later.

MADELEINE

If you stayed in Paris.

ADA

The mob was too big.

ABIGAIL

We thought they might kill us.

MADELEINE

They won't.

The witch's ring ELONGATES into a sharp, thin point. Just like she did with the Cardinal.

Madeleine STABS Abigail in the heart. Abigail dies.

MADAME POISSON

No!

ADA

Abigail!

MADELEINE

Now you won't have to guess who's who.

Victor prevents Ada from attacking the witch.

Madame Poisson sobs over Abigail. Ada tries to soothe her.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Jeannette. I haven't forgotten about you.

Madeleine advances towards Jeannette. Her ring blade drips with Abigail's blood.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Bravo. You broke the curse. But you still have something I want.

(MORE)

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

And without our deal there's
nothing left to protect you. I can
take your baby any way I please.

Victor approaches Madeleine, offering his knife.

VICTOR

Would you like a fresh blade to do
the honors?

MADELEINE

No, I prefer my own.

VICTOR

I insist--!

Victor charges at Madeleine, knife raised to attack.

A Raven CALLS out a warning.

Madeleine spins around, using her cloak to deflect the blow
and disarm Victor. She kicks him to the ground.

Ada leads her mother to a tree, away from the action.

Jeannette fights with the rope that binds her. It loosens.

MADELEINE

We had an agreement, boy.

VICTOR

You freed me from the Bastille and
I brought you Jeannette. You never
said I couldn't try and kill you
once I did it. You're not the only
one who can be vague with words.
Next time make a better blood pact,
yeah?

With one hand, Madeleine lifts Victor by the throat.

MADELEINE

You want blood?

Jeannette tugs on the shoddy knots. She's almost free.

Madeleine's glowing ring blade points at Victor.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Or maybe I strangle you first?
Which do you prefer?

Victor's feet dangle helplessly. He claws at Madeleine's iron
grip. Victor WHEEZES, life ebbing.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

Speak up, I can't hear you.

She readies to stab --

Jeannette BARRELS into her.

Victor drops, SPUTTERING for air.

Jeannette, completely free of her bonds, scans the area.

The KNIFE glints a few yards away from her. She runs for it.

The ravens descend on Victor, pecking at his flesh.

Madeleine staggers to her feet, panting. Her ring extends...

Jeannette grabs the knife.

All at once the ravens fly away from Victor.

He sways, a bloody mess --

IMPALED IN THE ABDOMEN BY MADELEINE'S BLADE!

JEANNETTE

NO!

Young Madeleine leaves Victor to die.

MADELEINE

Poor, Jeannette. You'll have to
cook your own meals now.

Jeannette wildly attacks Madeleine.

Madeleine easily deflects Jeannette's blow. Jeannette will
have to control her fury if she's going to land a hit.

The women circle, periodically swiping at each other.
Jeannette shields her stomach with her other hand.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)

You're a piece of work. To stay
with Louis when you had the
handsome chef over there begging
for scraps.

JEANNETTE

And you? Too dim to get your master
plan right the first time?

MADELEINE

I never realized Cardinal Fleury
could use my own spells against me.
We live and learn, *ma chérie*.

JEANNETTE

But it's too late for you now.

Madeleine narrows her eyes.

A VINE from the nearby lattice garden arch winds its way
towards Jeannette's feet.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

No matter what you try, you're
still nothing but a barren old hag!

The vine ensnares Jeannette's ankle! Jeannette falters.

Madeleine seizes her opportunity to strike --

But Jeannette rights herself in time and lashes out --

Severing a few of Madeleine's fingers!

The finger wearing the ring hits the grass. The ring reverts
back to its normal state, losing all traces of magic.

Madeleine HOWLS in agony.

Jeannette means to give the witch a killing blow only to be
wrenched backwards, dragged by an enchanted vine.

Jeannette loses her knife.

The vine SLAMS her against the side of the lattice arch.

Other magic vines lift and lash Jeannette to the arch.
Jeannette's arms are tied above her head. She can't move.

The enchanted vines take their toll on the witch's power.

Young Madeleine RETURNS TO HER FORMER OLDER SELF --

But the degeneration continues, ageing her another 25 YEARS.

Her back adopts a permanent hunch. A violent COUGH wracks her
body. BLOOD gushes out of her mouth.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

This is the price of black magic.

MADELEINE

Age before beauty.

Madeleine stoops down and retrieves Jeannette's knife.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
 You could have had a fairytale
 ending, Jeannette. Your very own
 happy ever after. I gave you
 everything down to the glass
 slippers. And you threw it away.

Jeannette's eyes widen. Her hands fight through the vines.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
 Ah, well. *C'est la vie.*

Jeannette's fingers graze the black glass --

Of her obsidian hair pin. Crafted from the glass slippers.

Jeannette wraps her fingers around the pin and YANKS.

Hair cascades down around her shoulders.

Madeleine charges forward to perform the impromptu C-section
 before Jeannette can break free.

MADELEINE (CONT'D)
 Where's your fairy godmother now,
 Cinderella?!

Armed with the pin, Jeannette jabs at the vines --

SEVERING the hold on one of her wrists.

Madeleine swings her knife up!

Jeannette brings the glass pin down on Madeleine --

STRAIGHT INTO THE WITCH'S HEART!

Madeleine gapes at the black glass protruding from her chest.

The vines RECEDE, freeing the rest of Jeannette's limbs.

JEANNETTE
 She's gone. And now so are you.

Madeleine collapses.

The horde of ravens flies away.

Madame Poisson and Ada come out from under the tree.

ADA
 You killed her.

A strange thing happens. The witch's body SHRINKS. Smaller and smaller until nothing's left but her cloak and clothes.

Jeannette shifts the clothes around with her foot.

A RAT scurries out of the pile.

MADAME POISSON

A rat!

JEANNETTE

Don't let it get away!

Madeleine the rat darts away in the opposite direction.

The rat is about to escape down the alley to freedom!

POUNCE! CYRANO leaps down from the windowsill onto its prey.

A swift bite and it's over. Madeleine is dead.

Ada MOANS, mourning Abigail. She strokes her sister's face.

Victor lies across the garden. No movement whatsoever.

JEANNETTE (CONT'D)

Victor!

Jeannette rushes to him. Victor bleeds from his stab wound.

Jeannette rips off a shred of her dress and applies it. Victor GROANS. The wound is bad but not fatal.

VICTOR

Come back later. I'm sleeping.

JEANNETTE

Oh, I could kill you.

Jeannette kisses him.

VICTOR

It was the only way to get rid of Madeleine for good.

JEANNETTE

To use me as bait?

VICTOR

I had everything under control.

Victor winces from his stab wound.

JEANNETTE
 (re: grimoire)
 Maybe there's something in here
 that will help.

MADAME POISSON
 What gave him away?

JEANNETTE
 The rope. Those knots were nothing
 like what he taught me.

VICTOR
 I wouldn't even call it a knot.
 More like a tangled mess wrapped
 around your hands.

Jeannette locates a spell. She places her hands over Victor's
 wound and wordlessly mumbles.

She removes her hands. Victor's wound heals into a SCAR.

Jeannette cries out as her hands age from the magic use --
 and do not revert back to normal. She gazes sadly at Abigail.

JEANNETTE
 I'm not strong enough to save
 Abigail.

ADA
 Try! Even if it kills you!

MADAME POISSON
 This is the price I pay for
 consorting with a witch.

ADA
 She's the witch!

Madame Poisson weeps over Abigail. Ada attends to her.

VICTOR
 Come, Jeannette. Nothing more can
 be done.

JEANNETTE
 (to Ada)
 I'm sorry.

Victor gently leads Jeannette away.

Ada seethes in pain and misery.

Her eyes alight on Madeleine's RING.

Ada plucks it off the grass and clenches it in her fist.
Clouds thicken and RUMBLE. Rain pours down.

EXT. VERSAILLES PALACE - MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Palace Guards gain control over the rioting Parisians,
driving them out of the palace.

INT. VERSAILLES PALACE - KING'S BEDCHAMBER -- SAME

Alive and well, King Louis looks down at the fleeing mob.

EXT. PARIS MARKET - NIGHT

The Police Squad establishes order in the city.

EXT. SEINE RIVER - NIGHT

A skilled BOATSMAN navigates his boat through the Seine.

Jeannette and Victor huddle together underneath a tarp. They
watch as the rain dampens the fires raging over Paris.

Jeannette still has in her possession Madeleine's grimoire.

She casts the book into the river. It sinks to the depths.

Jeannette sighs. Finally free.

FADE OUT/IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE CHATEAU - DAY (ONE YEAR LATER)

Far removed from the city. Miles of open land. The chateau
glistens from a recent rain shower.

A well-to-do GOVERNESS (50s) opens the door. Victor and
Jeannette stand before her.

Jeannette's gloved hands hold a newborn BABY.

GOVERNESS
(to Victor)
Are you responding to the
advertisement?

VICTOR
Yes, Governess.

The Governess leans her head back inside.

GOVERNESS
 (calling out)
 Sophie, I'll take my tea outside.
 Another two cups!

The Governess hikes up her dress a couple of inches.

GOVERNESS (CONT'D)
 Mind the mud.

EXT. COUNTRY SIDE CHATEAU - PATIO - LATER

The Governess, Victor and Jeannette drink tea. The Governess makes notes on a piece of paper.

GOVERNESS
 (to Victor)
 You seem like the ideal candidate
 to cook for my dinner parties.
 (re: Jeannette)
 But we only need one chef.

JEANNETTE
 I'm very good at sewing. And
 Beatrix hardly ever makes a fuss.

Jeannette bounces Baby Beatrix on her lap. She COOS happily.

The tiny SHOE on Beatrix's foot dislodges and falls off.

GOVERNESS
 Will one room be enough for the
 three of you?

JEANNETTE
 Yes. It's more than enough.

Jeannette smiles at Victor.

She gently slips the shoe back on her baby's foot.

FADE OUT:

THE END.