

EPIC

"Pilot"

Story by

Edward Kitsis & Adam Horowitz & Brigitte Hales

Teleplay by

Brigitte Hales

Second Revised Network Draft
11/19/20

©2020, ABC Signature Studios, Inc. All rights reserved. This material is the exclusive property of ABC Signature Studios and is intended solely for the use of its personnel. Distribution to unauthorized persons or reproduction, in whole or in part, without the written consent of ABC Signature Studios is strictly prohibited.

EXT. FAIRY TALE LAND - DAY

We FADE UP ON THE ROLLING HILLS of a lush and beautiful fairy tale land. Green and in full bloom, it is the most breathtaking place we've ever seen. As its warm familiarity settles over us, a sonorous voice rings out:

VOICE (V.O.)
What... is a love story?

THE SPIRE OF A CASTLE comes into view, towering over a STORYBOOK VILLAGE, a scene ripped from the most beloved stories of our childhood.

VOICE (V.O.)
Where do they come from?... And why
are some so powerful they seem to
stand the test of time?

And now we dip into: A BLOOMING WOODS, where ICONIC FAIRY TALE COUPLES mill about in happiness.

VOICE (V.O.)
Is it that some love is more
impossible?

We see: the back of a CHARMING PRINCE'S head as he leans down to kiss a SNOW WHITE brunette, dozing in the sun.

VOICE (V.O.)
More magical?

We pass: A BLONDE WOMAN, hair shielding her face as a PRINCE, on one knee, slips a glass slipper on her foot.

VOICE (V.O.)
More true?

We spot: A BUSHY-HAIRED PRINCE playfully hand a rose to a WOMAN, her nose in a book. As she looks up, we wander on...

VOICE (V.O.)
Or is it simply that real love --
what we call *true love* -- is rare,
but big. So big it fills the
hearts of all who witness it, as
much as those lucky enough to be
caught in its spell.

AND NOW WE FINALLY REACH: A FAIRY TALE CHURCH draped in flowers, animals gathered around. WE CUT INSIDE TO:

INT. FAIRY TALE CHUCH - CONTINUOUS

A PACKED CHURCH. Standing room only. In the center is a PRINCE AND PRINCESS, hand in hand, in front of an OFFICIATOR.

VOICE/OFFICIATOR

Just as we are caught in your spell
today.

And now we realize what we've been listening to isn't
voiceover at all, but an OFFICIATOR at a fairy tale wedding.

OFFICIATOR

On behalf of everyone in this room,
I'd like to thank you for allowing
us to play a small part in your
great love story. May it change
each of our lives for the better.

As the GUESTS SNIFFLE, WE WANDER DOWN A ROW OF BRIDESMAIDS,
dabbing happy tears, all with a similar princess-y look,
until we reach:

ROSE, the most princess-y of all, glowing with life. She
steals a glance into the crowd at PHILIPPE, her prince. They
share a secret smile. Yeah, that great love he's talking
about? They've got it.

OFFICIATOR (CONT'D)

And so, it is with great honor and
a full heart that I now pronounce
you... husband and wife. You may
kiss and seal your happily-ever-
after, for all of time.

Never more in love than they will be right now, the two lean
in and kiss. As they do, a RING on the bride's finger begins
to glow. FWOOSH! MAGIC EXPLODES AND SWIRLS AROUND THE
COUPLE in a beautiful, golden cocoon of light.

The guests "awww" and clap. Rose, the happiest of all, grins
from ear to ear, when LUNA, the (previously unseen) last
bridesmaid in line, leans in.

LUNA

Please tell me we're drinking now.

Rose turns, gives her friend a long-suffering look as our
dreamy tone comes to an end.

ROSE

What are you made of stone, Luna?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. FAIRY TALE WEDDING RECEPTION - NIGHT

A RAUCOUS RECEPTION in full swing. GUESTS are eating, drinking, livin' it up in a tent dripping with romance.

On the dance floor, STORYBOOK COUPLES dance to a riotous jig, Rose and Philippe right in the middle. As the song crescendoes, FLOWER PETALS rain down on the crowd. Philippe pulls her close, kissing her joyfully, as:

AT A TABLE our Bridesmaids chat, bubbly, high on the night.

BRIDESMAID #1

(mid conversation)

Under a waterfall. Don't even have to think about it.

BRIDESMAID #2

LUNA

You want to get married under a waterfall?

They're so loud though.

BRIDESMAID #1

So I'll find a quiet one.

As the conversation continues, Philippe and Rose join the table, sipping water, tired from dancing.

BRIDESMAID #2

LUNA

Perfect timing, Rose.
(sing-song-y)

We're talking *weddings*.

(mocking her sing-song)
Aren't we *always*?

BRIDESMAID #2

And you two are next! So tell me, because I have yet to experience this joy -- when you finally lay eyes on your soulmate, what does it *feel* like?

Philippe and Rose glance at each other, smirk.

PHILIPPE

It felt... wet. Probably because she pushed me in a lake.

ROSE

You said my dress was stupid.

PHILIPPE

No, I said it was stupid to wear it to a lake. Also, I was seven.

They smile, remembering the moment.

ROSE

And somehow, even then, I knew he
was forever.

The whole table melts, except for Luna, who downs her drink.

BRIDESMAID #1

I don't care what anyone says,
there's never been a more epic love
story than the two of you.

Rose smiles, but Philippe glances down, a complicated look on
his face. We'll think back to that later.

PRINCESS BRIDE (O.S.)

My beautiful ladies!!

They all turn as the Bride walks up, aglow.

PRINCESS BRIDE (CONT'D)

We did it!! Can you believe it? I
got a little crazy at the end
there, huh?

Luna starts to respond honestly -- Rose nudges her quiet --

ROSE

Not at all.
(low to Luna)
Drink your wine.

PRINCESS BRIDE

Well, I wouldn't have gotten here
without all of you, and I know it,
so I had to find a great, big way
to thank you... And I did. Follow
me!

She giddily heads off as Rose and Luna exchange a glance.

LUNA

This should be good.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

AN ICE SCULPTURE OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM twinkles in the
moonlight. Underneath, is A WOMAN (seen only from behind)
with long, bohemian hair. She feels eerie and mystical. The
Bridesmaids approach, curious but wary.

PRINCESS BRIDE

Okay, so you know how I said the Prince and I *accidentally* met in the woods? That wasn't the full story. Truth is, I grew tired of waiting for my prince to come, so I decided to get some help.

LUNA

How do you get help with that?

PRINCESS BRIDE

Well, *Luna*, you find the world's greatest fortune teller to lead you to true love. And I've brought her here to do the same for all of you.

She gestures as THE SEER turns, and whoa. She's not at all what we were expecting from that introduction. She's young, mid-thirties, with a cool, punk vibe.

SEER

Actually I don't like "fortune teller." I prefer Seer. Or Maggie.

PRINCESS BRIDE

Have fun, ladies! She's the best.

She squeals, excited for them, then rushes off. The Bridesmaids stare at the Seer, anxious. Luna most of all. The Seer stares back, amused.

SEER

Ah, *princesses*. No matter how long I'm away from this place, you're still...

(gestures at them)

...this. Such a head trip.

(shakes her head)

Okay, since I know you all have one thing on the brain, because ya always do, let's get started on finding your "True Love."

She holds up a netted bag full of stones, a rich, silvery color that seem to glow in the moonlight.

LUNA

With a bag of rocks?

SEER

Stones. Bathed in very special moonlight.

(MORE)

SEER (CONT'D)

Put it under your pillow when the
full moon rises and it'll lead you
where you need to go.

The Seer steps up to the First Bridesmaid, bag open.

SEER (CONT'D)

Whichever one speaks to you.

The Bridesmaid carefully picks one. The Seer moves down the
line to the Second, Third, Fourth, and then to Luna, who is
looking a little queasy. She's about to reach in when --

The Seer pulls the bag back. She gives Luna a long,
searching look, then glances at Rose.

SEER (CONT'D)

(confused and intrigued)

Huh.

Luna and Rose exchange glances. Luna seems, maybe, *INSULTED*:

LUNA

Is something wrong?

SEER

It's just, there's only one stone
left, and I'm being told it's for
her.

She turns to Rose, and holds it out. Everyone is surprised.

ROSE

Me? No, that can't be. I already
found my love. We're getting
married next month. See?

Rose holds up her hand and now we notice, if we didn't
before, that Rose is wearing the same ring our Bride was
wearing. The one that exploded with magic. The Seer looks
at Rose's ring; isn't swayed. She shrugs.

SEER

I see what I see.

She holds the stone out again, but Rose doesn't take it.

ROSE

(nervous now)

And what is *that*, exactly?

SEER

(glances at the stone)

It's not... fully clear yet, but...

(MORE)

SEER (CONT'D)

(Seer mode descends)

...there's a journey. An important one, through great darkness at times. But that's not uncommon.

(glances at Luna)

These things are more complicated than people know.

LUNA

What are?

SEER

Love stories.

The Seer looks sadly back at Rose.

SEER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, but what you think is yours, is not. It *will* fall apart and when it does, I need you to keep this in your heart:

Sometimes the road to love is long and winding. Don't be afraid to take it.

Rose stares at her, stunned silent.

INT. RECEPTION - NIGHT

Rose and Luna sit in front of empty wine glasses, both reeling. Behind them, the happy reception rages on.

LUNA

Well, that was... something.

She glances at Rose, who is staring sadly at Philippe, chatting with GUESTS, obliviously happy.

LUNA (CONT'D)

(trying to buck her up)

You know fortune tellers are full of crap, right?

(remembering)

Sorry. Seers are full of crap. She probably found those "magic rocks" in the dirt outside. Gimme a break. As if we're all that desperate for love.

Suddenly Rose stands, gathering her things.

ROSE
I'm not feeling so well. I think
I'll have Philippe take me home.

LUNA
Rose, don't let her get to you.

ROSE
I'm not. It's fine. I'll see you
tomorrow, okay?

She heads off, clearly a mess. Luna sighs, about to pour more wine, when she sees THE SEER AT THE GUEST BOOK TABLE. Luna's eyes narrow.

INT. RECEPTION - DESSERT TABLE - CONTINUOUS

The Seer, glass blown pen in hand, signs the guest book, which has an interesting storybook quality to it. She closes it, see its title: *Our Love Story*. Shakes her head, bemused.

LUNA (O.S.)
Having a good time?

The Seer looks up and sees Luna, arms crossed.

SEER
Oh, yeah. I always enjoy coming to
this place. So quaint. I mean
look at this...

She flips to the front of the guest book, where the story of the Bride and her Prince has been written and illustrated.

SEER (CONT'D)
It literally starts with "Once upon
a time, a prince and a princess met
in the woods..."
(shakes her head)
It *never* goes like that. Probably
didn't even go like that for them.

LUNA
Or maybe it did, and you should
keep your opinions to yourself.

The Seer looks up, surprised at the tonal shift.

SEER
I'm sorry?

LUNA

What you said in the woods really upset my friend, and if you know her, that's extremely hard to do. She's like walking sunshine.

SEER

Well, I wasn't trying to upset anyone, but I have to say what I see.

LUNA

Oh, really?
(huffs)
Didn't seem like it to me.

The Seer puts the pen down, focuses now.

SEER

Ah, so this is about you. Wanna talk about it?

LUNA

What's there to talk about?
There's no stone for me, right?

SEER

Stones appear when you're ready,
and clearly you weren't. Can't say I blame you. I only caught a glimpse of what you've been through, but it looked awful. I'd say, it's gonna take a great, big love to open that heart again.

Luna stares back, rattled. Clearly there's truth here, but she brushes it off, not wanting to let on.

LUNA

Well, good, because those are pretty rare and I have no interest.

The Seer nods, considering, and then --

SEER

You know, Luna... I've traveled the world, and met more people than I can count, and in all that time, I've only found one thing that's the same for everyone...
(growing serious now)
We can't always choose what the world throws at us.

(MORE)

SEER (CONT'D)

But when the darkness comes -- and
it **always** comes -- it is only love
that will save you.

(heavy beat)

I'd think you, of all people, would
know that.

This lands, hard, and Luna looks at her, shaken. There's a knowing in the Seer's eyes. As if she's peered right into Luna's soul, and seen the truth. The Seer, seeing her point's been made, grabs her glass, and walks off.

EXT. CASTLE - MORNING

The warm rays of morning fall upon a pretty little castle. Bluebirds abound, as they do here.

INT. CASTLE - ROSE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

ROSE, asleep, feels the light on her face. Slowly, her eyes open. The night quickly rushes back. Ugh. She glances at --

THE RING on her finger, sees the tiny magical glow. It gives her strength. She gets up.

INT. CASTLE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rose comes down the stairs and sees -- Philippe sitting across from her PARENTS, a large book on his lap. He stands.

ROSE

Philippe? I didn't know you were here. You should have woken me.

PHILIPPE

I wanted you to sleep. I know you weren't well last night.

ROSE

Oh, I'm fine now. Probably just the wine. Is everything alright?

Rose glances at her parents. Their expressions are grim.

PHILIPPE

Actually, there's something we need to discuss.

INT. CASTLE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PHILIPPE'S BOOK hits the table and he opens it to AN ELABORATE FAMILY TREE. The page is worn, but the ink rich.

PHILIPPE

As you know, I went to the Great Hall to merge our family lines, and while I was there, I discovered something rather surprising. It seems, this castle's lineage died out some time ago. See?

Rose glances at the book. A beautifully drawn tree branches off, then stops in the middle.

ROSE

What does that mean?

Philippe hesitates, not sure what to say.

FATHER

Rose, many years ago, your mother and I discovered that this castle, and its titles, could be...
(this is so hard)
...purchased.

ROSE

Purchased?

MOTHER

We were lowly merchants, from a much darker place, and I knew if you were a Princess, here, with *that* ring, you'd be guaranteed happiness. It's a rare and special magic, Rose. No one else in the world gets that kind of life.

Rose stares at them, trying to process.

ROSE

So... I'm *not* actually a Princess?

MOTHER

You are, in all the ways that matter. Except for one.

Rose looks like she might faint.

ROSE

This is impossible.

PHILIPPE

Rose, I know it's a shock, and I wasn't even going to tell you because you know it doesn't matter to me, but... then, last night at the wedding I started thinking--
(takes her ring hand)
-- this magic will freeze us in our love, forever. Can you say for sure, if you hadn't thought you were a princess -- if we'd just been two *people* who met in some other place -- that our love would still feel *big*? Like that officiator said.

It's a devastating question. Rose is floored.

ROSE

Of course, it would. Philippe, we have the love everyone wants, and it found us.

PHILIPPE

When we were kids, Rose. But what if we were wrong? What if it was the *story* we loved?

ROSE

The story?! Philippe, please--

Philippe closes the book, stopping her.

PHILIPPE

I know it's sudden, but my brother is going on a short expedition to a village just to our west, and I've decided to go with him. To think.

ROSE

(numb)
... to *think*?

Philippe nods, a little sadly.

PHILIPPE

Maybe you should think on it, too.

Rose doesn't reply and a pall settles over the room. Realizing it's time to go, Philippe gives a gentle nod, and exits. There's a beat of deafening silence.

FATHER

ROSE

Rose--

Don't you dare.

Rose grabs her shawl and SLAM! She's gone.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A FIRE CRACKLES in a fireplace. Luna stares at it, still agitated from her conversation with the Seer. Urged on by some thought, she goes to a bookshelf, pulls out an old book and opens it. Inside WE SEE --

A LETTER, yellowed with age. She lifts it from its resting place and unfolds it. Written across the top in fine handwriting it reads: "*Dearest Luna...*" Clearly, this is a love letter.

KNOCK.KNOCK.KNOCK. A frantic knocking at the door. She looks up, disturbed by the timing. She wipes an errant tear, shoves the letter in her pocket, walks quickly over, and opens the door to find--

ROSE, upset.

LUNA

Rose? What happened?

Rose tries to answer, then throws her arms around Luna.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - LATER

Darkness has fallen. The fire is out. The room is coated in shadows. Rose lies on a cot, staring into night, flanked by several bottles of wine. Luna, is asleep in a chair, when --

TAPTAPTAP. Rose sees -- a branch tapping on the windowpane. An eerie light shines in from outside. She sits up.

EXT. LUNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens and Rose walks outside, sees --

MOONLIGHT ON THE ROAD. Something about it calls to her. She pulls her blanket tight, walks over and stands --

-- IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD. She looks out at the silvery path winding into the distance. She glances down, and spots --

A SILVER STONE, just like the Seer's. Is it the same? Can it possibly be? Rose picks it up, and a magic pathway shoots out from under her feet, beckoning her down the road.

ROSE
(the Seers words return)
"Sometimes the road to love... is
long and winding."

She smiles, a twinkle in her eye.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - LUNA'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Luna, asleep in her chair, stirs as a RUSTLING wakes her up.
It's Rose, furiously packing.

ROSE
I need to borrow some things.

LUNA
(sleepy)
'Kay. For what?

ROSE
(steeling herself)
I'm going after him.

Luna sits up, awake now.

LUNA
Um, over my dead body, you are.

ROSE
Luna, I think I'm *supposed* to do
this. It's like the Seer said.
'Things fall apart, and I take the
road.'

LUNA
Rose, that could mean *anything*,
which is exactly why she said it.
And frankly, I don't care if she
predicted every stupid word he
said, you cannot chase after a guy
who left because you aren't a
princess.

ROSE
That's *not* why he left, exactly,
and I am a princess, in all the
ways that matter.
(grabs her bag)
Philippe said they were going to a
village in the west. I'll find him
and prove that he's wrong about us.

Luna shakes her head, so frustrated.

LUNA

This is insane. You've never been a mile from this place. The rest of the world isn't like this, Rose. It's dark, and it's cruel--

ROSE

(snapping)

And I don't care if it's made of dragon fire, Luna. I've been waiting my entire *life* to marry this man, and I just let him walk out the door. That is not me. I don't give up on love, like--

She stops herself.

LUNA

Like *me*.

ROSE

T-that's not what I meant.

LUNA

Yeah, it is.

Rose looks at her friend, not wanting to hurt her.

ROSE

Luna, what you went through was awful. Way worse than this, but...
(glances around)
I can't live like you do. I have to believe in something. And it's always been this.

Luna looks at Rose, hearing all kinds of truth in there. She sighs, frustrated, but resigned, then goes over to a cabinet, grabs A COIN PURSE and a BEE PENDANT.

LUNA

(hands Rose the purse)
Emergency money.
(holds up a BEE PENDANT)
And my bee.

ROSE

No, I can't take that.

LUNA

I'm not sending you out there alone.
(pins it on her dress)
(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)
Save it for when you really need
it.

Rose nods, grateful, getting emotional now. Luna is, too.

LUNA (CONT'D)
I *do* believe in some things, you
know. I believe in you.

The tears come now, and they hug.

EXT. LUNA'S HOUSE - MORNING

Rose sets off down the road as Luna watches, so worried. She glances down at -- THE LETTER PEEKING FROM HER POCKET. She eyes it, a war raging inside, AS:

EXT. FAIRY TALE WORLD - DAY

Rose passes the idyllic sites from our opening. Rolling, green hills. Majestic castles. Everything in a storybook bloom. She takes it all in, holding it tight, as she reaches:

EXT. THE BORDER - DAY

-- THE BORDER where a sign simply reads:

MAY YOUR STORY LIVE ON

Rose gives it a long look, steeling herself, then steps across the border, as --

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

THE WARM SUNSHINE DIMS. THE BRIGHT GREENS FADE TO BROWN AND WE ENTER: A BUSTLING SQUARE in a timeworn village. It's grittier, more real. Think old London meets Germanic fairy tale. [Note: the story-worlds of Epic will be distinct from each other, with Rose's fairy tale land our most recognizably storybook. This new land is our Casablanca. A way station where people from all the other places meet.]

Rose, in her crisp, Princess attire, walks through the RAGTAG CROWD, sees: WOMEN blowing glass and hammering horseshoes. MEN in exotic outfits with strange weapons. SCRUFFY CHILDREN roaming free. Everyone glances at her, bemused. She's clearly very out of place. And then she spots --

ROSE

How did she do that?

JOHN

There's a network in this place. They can spot an easy mark in no time flat, which people from your neck of the woods usually are, no offense. It's not your fault. Can't help where you're born.

(smiles)

I'm John, by the way.

ROSE

Rose. And how do you know where I'm from?

JOHN

Pretty obvious. Princess, right?

Rose glances down, feeling the pain of the recent revelation all over again.

ROSE

Why do you assume that?

JOHN

Well, I've never been to your part of the woods, but I've heard about it. Bluebirds and castles, and all that. It's definitely your vibe. Speaking of, I'd get off the Square before nightfall. Much worse group comes out. I could show you to an inn, if you like, assuming those with royal blood require sleep.

Rose eyes him, then glances around. These aren't her people.

ROSE

Fine. You may lead the way.

JOHN

May I? How lucky for me.

He turns, heads through the Square.

INT. INN - DUSK

Rose and John enter A SMALL INN with a Victorian steampunk sort of vibe. A BARTENDER cleans glasses at a small bar as the PROPRIETOR looks up from her counter as they enter.

PROPRIETOR
Oh! A Princess!

John smiles at Rose. See? Obvious.

JOHN
And one in need of a room.

PROPRIETOR
Wonderful! I visited one of your castles once. Most magical day of my life. For a Royal Majesty only a *Royal Suite* will do.

She grabs a KEY, which is a sad attempt at a skeleton key.

ROSE
(kinda loving it)
"Royal Majesty," is usually reserved for Queens, but thank you.

JOHN
Well, I'd say my work here is done. Princess Rose, good luck to you.

ROSE
And to you... John.

He exits and yeah, there's a spark, but they're ignoring it.

INT. ROYAL SUITE - DUSK

THE DOOR OPENS revealing a tiny room, barely big enough for a bed and one rickety table. The only window looks onto a dank alleyway. Rose glances around, won't let it get to her.

SHE SITS ON THE CREAKY BED, looks at the ring on her hand. The magic still aglow inside.

ROSE
Tomorrow, I'll fix this.

It's a rallying cry to herself. Feeling the strength of it, she crawls under the flimsy sheet and closes her eyes.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. ROYAL SUITE - MORNING

MORNING. Loud and bright. BANG! A clamor from the alleyway awakens her with a start. She sees the shutter cracked open. Sleepy, she pushes it, and peers out onto --

THE ALLEYWAY, bustling with people. Yep, another day in a strange land. She pulls back in, determined to face it with the usual optimism, when she glances at her hand, and sees --

A STRING TIED AROUND HER RING FINGER.

ROSE

WHAT?!

Panicked, she looks over at --

-- HER COIN BAG. It's open. She flies out of bed, grabs it. EMPTY. Wheels turning, she glances back at THE OPEN SHUTTER, walks quickly over, peers farther out this time, and sees --

A ROPE HANGING DOWN TO THE STREET BELOW. Yep, she's been robbed. Off Rose, gut-punched, WE:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. INN - DAY

ROSE'S HAND SLAMS DOWN ON THE BELL, but it's dead. Frustrated, she bangs the entire bell. Finally, the Proprietor shuffles out in her robe. Sleepy. The Bartender follows from another door. These are not morning people.

ROSE

I've been robbed!

PROPRIETOR

(yawning)

Oh? By who?

ROSE

I don't know who. Someone climbed into my room using a rope of...

(embarrassed)

...underthings.

She plops a ROPE MADE OF UNDERWEAR on the counter. The Bartender snickers.

BARTENDER

So that's what Will was doin' here.

Rose turns and looks at the Bartender.

ROSE

Who's Will?

BARTENDER

The guy who brought you in. Saw
him make a rope outta socks once.
Sturdier than you'd think.

ROSE

You mean John?

BARTENDER

Is that what he said his name was?

He chuckles as Rose fumes, realizing she's been played.

ROSE

And where might I find this
...Will?

BARTENDER

Doesn't have a home so much as a
bunch of hideouts. Good luck
finding 'em though.

Rose glances back at the Proprietor, who shrugs.

EXT. SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Rose steps back into the Square. Her bright, princess style
still in stark contrast to the earthy colors of this place.
She glances around, then back at the Inn, trying to form a
plan, when she spots --

-- a HEART carved above the door. She pulls out the Talisman
from the old woman. It's the same, and now a picture forms.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Rose follows the windy street, spotting the inconspicuously
carved HEART over a shop, an inn, a bar. "Friendly"
establishments to the town's riff-raff. Finally --

-- she hits another small square and sees the Old Woman
hitting up a mark. Rose ducks into a doorway. Sure enough --

John appears, running the same script. Her eyes narrow.

EXT. TOWN - LATER

John makes his way along the streets, until he arrives at --

JOHN

Huh?

BZZ! Rose's BEE PENDANT suddenly comes to life, FLIES OVER, AND STINGS him on the leg.

JOHN (CONT'D)

OW! What the hell?

He grabs his leg as the bee losing magic, woozily returns to pendant form on her dress. He tries to take a step. Can't.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What did you do to me?!

ROSE

It's magic. Now, give me my ring or he'll sting you again, and I'm not sure what happens the second time. Total paralysis, maybe.

JOHN

Okay, okay, I'm not saying I had anything to do with it, but if your ring was stolen, I *might* know where it is. So de-magic me, or whatever, and I'll take you there.

ROSE

Great.

(takes a seat on his cot)

You should be able to walk in an hour or so.

John fumes as Rose grabs one of the tea cups, sips.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

John, limping a little, pride wounded, leads Rose over to A PAWN SHOP. A TROLL looks up, and smiles.

OWNER

Will! Back so soon?

Rose shoots him a knowing glance. He awkwardly ignores it.

JOHN

My, um, friend is looking for a ring, which *may* have been stolen. Big, chunky thing. Weird, little glow inside. I know sometimes goods like that make their way to you.

The Owner takes a beat, follows John's lead.

OWNER

It is possible I saw this ring.
Can't remember who sold it to me.

Rose shakes her head, sighs.

ROSE

Can I just have it back, please?

OWNER

Oh, sorry. I sold it.
(holds up glowy hair)
For pixie hair, can you believe it?
You could live to a hundred with
this stuff.

JOHN

How could you have sold it? You
just got it!
(glances at Rose)
Probably.

OWNER

Oh, *everyone* wants magic like that.
I mean, it's not my kinda magic,
but most people would kill for it.

John looks at him surprised.

JOHN

That ring was magic?

OWNER

Oh, yeah. Strong magic. The
strongest!

JOHN

Really? What does it do?

OWNER

It guarantees a happily-ever-after
to anyone who wears it. And that
magic only exists where she's from.
A thousand people would've bought
that thing.
(sly beat)
And for twenty coins I'll tell you
who did.

There's a beat as John considers. Rose slaps him on the
shoulder. He sighs and reaches into his pocket.

EXT. FOREST HOVEL - DAY

A VERY MODEST FOREST DWELLING covered in moss. One room, clearly not much here. John and Rose walk up.

JOHN
Poor people. Excellent.

He gives her the once over, then picks up a handful of dirt and throws it on her.

ROSE
What are you doing?!

JOHN
Just rub it in and follow my lead.

Rose, not pleased, does as he asks.

EXT. HOVEL - DOORWAY - DAY

KNOCK!KNOCK! John and Rose wait (for a long time) and then -- CREEEEAK. The DOOR slowly opens and BEA, a very old woman with a spritely look and freshly cut hair, answers.

John leans against the door, faking weariness.

JOHN
Might you have some water?

INT. HOVEL - DAY

John gulps water from a wooden cup. Rose sips daintily from hers as she eyes the surroundings. Dirt floor, a sad log on a dying fire, rickety furniture. It tugs at the heartstrings.

JOHN
Water has never tasted finer.
Wasn't sure we'd find some again,
right, *Ella*?

ROSE
Hm?
(realizing she's Ella)
Oh. Yes. Very tasty.

ARIADNE, an equally sprite-like old woman, shuffles up with a jug. Rose clocks THE RING on her hand. John does, too.

ARIADNE
You must have some bread. You're
skin and bones.

This is clearly a hardship, but John doesn't care.

JOHN

Such kind people. If only we had a way to repay you.

BEA

Oh no, we don't need payment for common decency. Happy to do it.

John (fake) smiles when suddenly he gets a (fake) idea.

JOHN

Wait! The Elixir of Nostradaminos.

He pulls out AN EXOTIC LOOKING VIAL.

ROSE

(off his look)

R-right. Nostra-mad-ima.

JOHN

Yes. Very hard to pronounce but so powerful. Ella and I were lucky enough to come upon some in our travels. If you can believe it.

BEA

Not sure we've heard of that.

JOHN

You haven't? Strange. Very famous healer where we're from. One drop of her elixir cures anything ya got, even if you didn't know you had it. Wanna see?

INT. HOVEL - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

PLIP! A tiny stone drops into the vial and it smokes. John dips a dropper inside.

JOHN

Right hand, please. If the skin turns red, we know it worked.

Aria holds out her right hand (not the ring hand) and he carefully drops a single drop on her wrist. He leans in. They all lean in. But no red dot appears.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Interesting...

He takes both of her hands, rubs them vigorously. Rose watches, as befuddled as the women are. Then he drops her left hand (with the ring), looks at the right again, and--

JOHN (CONT'D)
You're in very good health.

ARIADNE
Oh, my Bea makes sure of it.

They look at each other with such pure love. Rose is deeply moved. John, not so much.

JOHN
Well, I'll leave the vial, just in case. Drop a day keeps the doctor away. And now Ella and I must be off. Shall we, Ella?

By the look on his face, the con worked. Rose glances at the women, such good people. Nope, can't do it. She sighs.

ROSE
Give it back.

JOHN
What are you talking ab--

ROSE (CONT'D)
She sold her HAIR, John!!

BEA
(touches her hair)
How did you know that?

John, irritated, pulls out the ring. Ariadne gasps, looks down. There's a STRING AROUND HER FINGER. Yeah, he's good.

ROSE
I'm sorry. We're really not thieves. Well, he is --
(he huffs)
But I'm not. That ring actually belongs to me, and was *accidentally* sold this morning.

ARIADNE
We were wondering how it got here.

ROSE
You know of it?

BEA
Oh yes. I saw this magic at a wedding when I was a girl. Most beautiful thing I'd ever seen.
(looks at Aria)
(MORE)

BEA (CONT'D)

Until her. That's why I knew my
Aria had to have it. No matter
what the cost.

ARIADNE

But if it belongs to *your* love,
dear, we cannot keep it.

ROSE

I'm truly sorry.

BEA

Don't be. A hundred years in, we
haven't needed magic yet.

Rose smiles, warmly, as John rolls his eyes, heads for the door. She turns to follow, when Aria stops her.

ARIADNE

You should know... there are things
hungry for that magic. They'd do
anything to get it. It's best if
you head home now.

Bea nods, both of them serious. Rose takes it to heart.

ROSE

I will. As soon as I can.

EXT. HOVEL - CONTINUOUS

John heads toward the road, playfully tossing the ring, when A CROW LANDS NEARBY. It tracks him, ominously. He doesn't notice, but Rose catches up, clocking it, as she joins him. She shakes it off.

ROSE

See that? We got what we needed
and we can sleep at night.

JOHN

I sleep just fine.

ROSE

I'm sure. Now if you'll give me my
ring, I can be on my way and you
can be on yours. And hopefully
those ways will never cross again.

Rose holds out her hand. John stops, looks at the ring.

JOHN

The magic in this thing really
makes you fall in love?

ROSE

Of course not. No magic can do
that. It just makes sure you get a
happily-ever-after when you do.
Now, do you mind?

She holds out her hand again, but John starts walking.

JOHN

Ah, the famous happily-ever-after.
Love is such a crock of nonsense.

ROSE

You sound like my friend Luna.

JOHN

Well then, she must be very smart
because most people turn their
lives inside-out for love, when
it's here one day, and gone the
next. Not worth it.

ROSE

Clearly, you've never been in love.

JOHN

Oh, I've been in love.

ROSE

Or you think you've been in love,
but you haven't. And when you
finally are, you'll realize life is
better inside-out.

This lands on John, but he quickly dismisses it.

JOHN

Well, I prefer life as it is, thank
you very much, so feel free to keep
your happily-ever-after juju far away
from me. 'Kay?

He tosses her the ring and FWIT! An arrow shoots by out of
nowhere and PINS IT TO A TREE. Perfect shot!

ROSE

What was that?!

John reaches for a weapon, when -- there's a knife at his throat. Rose, shocked, steps back only to find there's one at hers, too. And now they clock--

A circle of hooded figures, arrows drawn.

A MASKED FIGURE walks through the group and PLUCK! Pulls the ring from the tree. She glances at John.

MASKED FIGURE
(husky voice)
Hey, Oliver.

John eyes the figure, annoyed, as they whistle. Everyone steps back, and as fast as the group arrived -- they're gone. Rose looks at John, pissed.

ROSE
Oliver?

Off John, fucking fuming, WE:

END ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. FAIRY TALE LAND - DAY

A CASTLE'S SPIRES shoot into a blue sky above the quaint village, letting us know we're back in fairy tale, as--

EXT. FAIRY TALE VILLAGE - DAY

Luna, basket in hand, walks down a cobble-stoned Main Street, passing VILLAGERS. Everyone looking very storybook. She turns into a bakery, about to go inside, when she sees --

A YOUNG FAIRY TALE COUPLE, standing on a corner. They kiss, oblivious to the crowds, so happy in love.

Luna, glances away, pain rising again. She takes a beat, steadying herself, then a thought occurs. She walks into the middle of the street, and looks out at --

A CASTLE'S SPIRES, different from the ones we've seen so far. A complicated look crosses her face.

EXT. CASTLE - DAY

AN ORNATE WOODEN DOOR OPENS and AN OLD BUTLER looks out, surprised. Luna smiles, but there's sadness in it.

LUNA
Hello, Robert.

INT. CASTLE - DAY

Robert leads Luna into a once grand foyer with a staircase spiraling off it. He takes her coat, as she glances around at the eerie remnants of another life--

--ghosts of covered furniture, and portraits, a giant chandelier, and above it all -- THE FAMILY CREST. Regal, with a latin inscription scrawled above two majestic shields. She can't help but smile a little, lost in reverie.

LUNA
The place has hardly changed.

BUTLER
I suppose, Ma'am.

It's a lie, and they both know it.

BUTLER (CONT'D)
Have you been well, Ma'am?

LUNA
Oh, you know. I do my best, Robert.

BUTLER
Yes. You always have, *Luna*.

It's an intimate response, and too much for her right now.

LUNA
Well, I think I'll head upstairs.

BUTLER
(bows his head)
Ring if you need me, Ma'am.

He heads off, his footsteps echoing in the empty space, as Luna turns towards the stairs, warily.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The door slowly creaks open, revealing -- an elegant bedroom. Luna steps carefully in, clocks --

A vanity covered with makeup and beautiful bottles of perfume. A sweater slung across a brocaded chair. A book half open on the bed. This is a room trapped in time.

She surveys it all with a painful glance, then walks over to a bureau, where --

-- A WEDDING DRESS hangs on the door. A pair of satin shoes sit below the hem, waiting to be worn.

Luna glances at the full length mirror next to it, covered in a thick layer of dust. She runs a finger across it, revealing her reflection, warped. Tears fill her eyes.

EXT. FOYER - DAY

Luna rushes down the stairs, rattled, as Robert walks over.

BUTLER
All done, Ma'am?

He holds up her coat. She slips it on, ready to get the hell out of here.

LUNA
Oh yeah, I'm done.

She stops as her eyes fall on -- THE FAMILY CREST again. But this time, she notes something, curious.

BUTLER
"Only love will save you."

Luna turns, shocked at hearing the Seer's words repeated.

LUNA
What did you say?

BUTLER
Your family's motto.
(gestures at crest)
"Nisi Amore Salvete... Tenebrae, cum venit." 'Only love will save you--

LUNA
(finishing, shaken)
-- when the darkness comes.'

Luna glances at the crest, heart pounding, as she remembers the Seer uttering the same words.

INT. JOHN'S HOVEL - DAY

THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN and John enters, starts pulling strange weapons from all over as Rose follows, feet hurting.

JOHN

We can't just steal the ring back.
They'll have it hidden. We're
gonna need a plan. A *good* plan.

(dumps weapons in her
hands)

So, what's your thing? Swords?
Bow and arrow? You don't seem like
the axe type, but you never know.

ROSE

Actually, I don't do weapons.

She drops the pile on his cot. He stares at her.

JOHN

You don't? I thought that was part
of the Princess thing now.

ROSE

For some, yes. But you can be a
strong woman and not enjoy
slaughter. So, I'll just wait
here, while you get my ring.

JOHN

Oh no no no. I can't do this
alone, and from what I've seen, the
only weapon you need is you. We'll
improvise, but first we have to do
something about...

(points at shoes)

... those.

She glances down at her princess shoes.

ROSE

My shoes?

JOHN

You can't even walk in those
things, and banditry requires
walking. So...

John goes over to his closet, pulls out a pair of worn
women's boots from a pile of stolen goods. She blinks.

ROSE

Are those... *stolen*?

John stares back, not denying it.

JOHN
She was very stylish.

EXT. BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

Mist settles over a mythic forest. Distinctive, thin-trunked trees crowd either side of the road. It's open, yet ominous.

Rose and John walk down the middle. She's in her new boots, which look weirdly right. The beginning of a new Rose. She CLOCKS -- A CROW LANDING ON A TREE. Again, it eyes her.

ROSE
How far do we have to go in here?

JOHN
Shouldn't be far. They have eyes everywhere in the Black Forest.

Rose glances nervously as the crow flies off. They walk for a moment in silence. She glances at him--

ROSE
So, this is your life? Thieving, then being the victim of thieves, who you also hope to thieve?

JOHN
There's also eating.
(off her annoyed look)
I know this might be difficult to wrap your little Princess head around, but not everyone is born with a "happy ending" guaranteed. You'd be surprised what people will do for a better life.

This lands on Rose, deeper than he knows, of course.

ROSE
(remembering parents)
Actually, I wouldn't.

He looks at her, intrigued, when -- FWIT! An arrow shoots by, barely missing them. Rose jumps, startled.

JOHN
Finally.
(to forest, hands up)
We just wanna talk!

FWIT! Another arrow shoots by, grazing Rose's arm this time.

ROSE
(grabbing her arm)
Owww!

JOHN
Didn't think that would work. You
remember the plan?

ROSE
You shoot. I run.

JOHN
Great. Try not to die.

FWIT! Another arrow flies through the forest as John draws his bow, and Rose TAKES OFF.

Despite the lankiness of the trees, the Bandits emerge from behind them. FWOOSH! Here one minute. FWOOSH! Gone the next. SHOOTING RAZOR THIN ARROWS with incredible accuracy.

Rose dodges them, scrambling between trunks as John, outnumbered and outgunned, tries to take them on. FWIT!FWIT!FWIT! Finally, Rose sees --

AN OVERTURNED TRUNK. Large enough to provide cover. She presses herself against it, seemingly out of the fray, when --

-- AN ARROW pushes against her head. She freezes as the LEADER walks over, removes her cloak, REVEALING --

A WOMAN, mid 30s, and playful.

WOMAN
(to others)
Tell him I've got her--

John steps behind the woman, arrow to her head now.

JOHN
Like my bait, Jane? Just like you
taught me.

She turns, surprised, sees a twinkle of victory in his eye.

JANE
Cute plan, Oliver. Can't remember
you ever getting the drop on me,
but we both know I'm not giving up
that ring, so go ahead and shoot.

Their eyes lock as John considers. We can tell he wants to shoot. REALLY WANTS TO. But then -- he lowers his bow.

ROSE
What are you doing?!

Jane smiles, knowingly.

JANE
You never did have follow through.
(ruffles his hair)
Didja, *little brother*?

She WHISTLES her team over as Rose looks at John.

ROSE
Did she say brother?

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A ROARING FIRE, where the bandits are drinking it up.

Nearby, Jane finishes tying the ropes on John's wrist. YANK!
He WINCES as Rose watches, already restrained, and pouting.

JANE
(to Rose)
Sorry about this. Unlike my brother here, who has zero ethics, we don't normally steal from women, but that ring was too good to pass up.

ROSE
(to John)
I don't understand. Why come up with this plan if you weren't going to go through with it, Oliver?!

John looks at her annoyed.

JOHN
Don't call me that.

JANE
(chuckles)
That was my pet-name for him when we were kids. I liked its sad, orphan feel.

JOHN
(not laughing)
And since we were already sad orphans, I really appreciated that.

Jane gives his ropes an extra tug, then stands as Rose glances at the bandits' ROARING FIRE. She shivers.

ROSE

Um, before you go, I know we're prisoners and all, but could I get a blanket? I didn't really dress for night woods.

JOHN

You didn't dress for anything a person actually does.

Jane glances at him, annoyed by his rudeness.

JANE

Ya know what? I have a better idea. Rose, why don't you join us? No one should have to endure his company all night.

She helps Rose up and leads her toward the fire.

JOHN

S'okay! I'll just freeze to death.

EXT. CAMP - CONTINUOUS

Jane plops Rose down by the fire. Her hands are still tied, but the warmth feels good. Jane hands her a shot.

ROSE

Oh no, thank you.

BRIGAND #2

Got something better to do?

Rose thinks on this, then takes the shot, and downs it in one clean gulp. The Brigands chuckle, enjoying this.

JANE

Princess has some life in her after all.

EXT. CAMP - LATER

EVERYONE IS DRUNK, enjoying the fire, all staring at Brigand #1, deep in thought. [It's an interesting counter-image to the Bridesmaids' table.]

BRIGAND #1

I got it. Never have I ever...
(dramatic)
...been rescued by a prince.

Rose hesitates, then takes a shot (hands still loosely tied in front of her). The Brigands grouse.

BRIGAND #2
Come on, really?

ROSE
It wasn't a big deal, but there was a dragon, and I did require rescue. Philippe was so good at that, but sometimes I played it up for fun.

She smiles, slyly.

BRIGAND #2
I'd rather catch dragon fire in the face, then have a guy rescue me.

ROSE
Okay, my turn. Never have I ever... known True Love.

Rose takes a drink. All the Brigands do, too.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Wait, really?

BRIGAND #3
Twice for me.
(smiles)
Pretty sure I saw my third one in the Square this morning.

ROSE
Okay, that's not True Love though.

JANE
Why not? Cuz we don't freeze ourselves in it for all of time?

ROSE
Well, yeah.

There's a defensiveness in her answer. Jane eyes her.

JANE
Alright, then. Teach us. What is True Love to a Princess?

ROSE
(thinking)
It's kind. And good. And it's...
(long beat)
...safe.

Jane smirks, and there's a general rumble of chuckles.

ROSE (CONT'D)

What?

JANE

I've just never heard love
described as *safe* before. It rocks
your whole world.

(jokingly)

Sure you've been in love?

It's a joke, but it lands on Rose. She looks down.

ROSE

I'm starting to wonder that myself.

(off their looks)

My fiancé, Philippe... left me.

From his corner, John looks over, listening.

BRIGAND #1

Ring Guy left you?!

ROSE

He said he needed time to think,
but we've been together forever.
He should know how he feels by now,
and even if he didn't... you can't
find that ring unless you're truly
in love. It's part of the magic.
Although... I guess he could've
lied about how he got it, and our
ring was never magic at all.

Jane considers for a beat, then takes out her knife. She
unscrews the handle and -- EMPTIES the ring into her hand.
She holds it up. THE LITTLE MAGIC SPECK GLOWS BRIGHT.

JANE

Looks like magic to me.

ROSE

(sighs, so lost)

So what does that mean?

JANE

I don't know. But whatever it
means... there's a great big world
out there, Rose, and it's full of
the craziest, strangest adventures
you can imagine.

(lets this sink in)

Maybe you should live a little.

Rose considers this.

ROSE
I'll think about that.
(beat; glances at ring)
Stun.

JANE
What?

The BEE PENDANT, still inconspicuously pinned to Rose's dress, comes alive and ZZT! Stings Jane.

JANE (CONT'D)
OW!

The other Bandits sit up as ZZT!ZZT!ZZT! It stings each one, then falls at Rose's feet, magicked-out. No one can move.

JANE (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?!

ROSE
Magic. It'll wear off. Sorry.

John calls out from his corner.

JOHN
Don't apologize. They kidnapped
us!!

Rose, wrists still tied, plucks the ring from Jane's hand and the knife from her belt, then rushes over to John.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Did you have to talk so much?

ROSE
Sorry, I had to pick my moment.
And the drinks were very good.

She cuts him loose, then he returns the favor, and they walk over to Jane. He smiles, savoring this.

JOHN
(re: earlier statement)
How ya like my follow through now?

And yeah, we realize this was their plan all along. Jane shakes her head, irritated, but also a little proud, as--

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

John and Rose hightail it across the countryside. But the road is full of thieves, and the shining ring makes it difficult to hide. He grabs her hand, makes a detour to --

INT. BARN - NIGHT

--an empty barn. They break in, panting, high on victory.

ROSE

That was AMAZING! I had no idea how I was going to do it. Then I did!

JOHN

You were fantastic. Like I said, the only weapon you need is you.

Smiling, their eyes meet. Like, REALLY MEET. And now that vibe, which has been there from the beginning, becomes real. John turns, trying to diffuse the moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I can uh, sleep over here. Straw's not so bad. Probably not what a princess is used to, but it's okay for us regular folk.

The word lands again. "Princess." But it hits Rose differently now. She thinks on this a moment, then looks at him, a decision made.

ROSE

Well then, it should be fine for me, too, because actually... I'm *not* a princess.

JOHN

(misunderstanding)

Oh, no? You a Duchess? Marquis de somethin'?

ROSE

No, I'm not any of those either. It's a long story, but basically I recently learned that I'm not what I thought I was. I'm just... Rose.

John looks at her, somehow getting it.

JOHN

From what I've seen, you're not just anything.

And yeah, that lands and the mood deepens. Neither steps away this time. They both know where this is going.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Okay-- there's something I should probably say here. The ring-

ROSE

You stole it, I know.

She takes a step, and his urgency grows.

JOHN

No. I mean, yes, I stole it. But it's not that. What Jane said, about *me*, it isn't true. I never would have taken that ring if I'd known what it meant.

Rose looks at him, serious.

ROSE

You heard what I said about Philippe?

(off his nod)

I don't think it meant anything, John.

Their eyes meet, but he waits for her to make the last move. She does, and they kiss. The first truly passionate kiss of her life. And maybe his, too.

EXT. SQUARE - MORNING

The sun rises in the Square. The morning bustle just beginning. A CROW WATCHES FROM THE ROOFTOP, but Rose doesn't notice as she and John walk in, awkward. It's been a night.

JOHN

So... drink?

ROSE

The sun just came up.

JOHN

Okay, bacon then. I don't know. Help me out here.

Rose smiles, enjoying his discomfort, when --

PIRATE (O.S.)

Aye! Iz Colin!

Rose and John turn and see -- A BAND OF PIRATES, looking slightly agitated to see him.

JOHN

This might take a second.

Rose shakes her head about turn away, when she sees --

ROSE

Philippe?

REVERSE TO SEE: PHILIPPE step forward, disheveled, between a Prince and a Pirate. He is **shocked**.

PHILIPPE

Rose? What are you doing here?

Rose glances at John, who instantly pales.

ROSE

I'll take that drink now.

Off Rose, fucking reeling, WE:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. LUNA'S HOUSE - MORNING

BUTTERFLIES ARE FLUTTERING ABOUT as the sun shines on Luna's modest, but quaint little home. Flowers are everywhere.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Luna lies on the floor in front of the fireplace, disheveled, staring at the letter. It's clearly been a night for her, too. Exhausted, she finally puts the it down, and looks up at -- THE WEDDING DRESS, hanging nearby. Looking as pristine, and unworn, as it did in the castle. Suddenly --

Tears fill her eyes. Angry tears. Rage tears. She stands, grabs the dress, stuffs it into a closet, then grabs the letter and TEARS IT up; TOSSING THE tiny bits into the fire.

THE FLAMES CRACKLE as the paper burns. Luna watches, tears streaming down her face as the last pieces turn to ash. She closes her eyes, takes a breath. It's done. FWOOSH! The fire goes out, as if a wind came through. The ashes scatter, and there in the remains sits -- a SILVERY STONE, just like the Seer's. Luna stares at it, shocked.

LUNA

What?

She grabs it out of the ashes, goes to the front door, and tosses it out. She turns, and SEES --

THE STONE sitting on the floor in front of her. Luna fumes.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Luna, rock in hand, marches through the perfect looking fairy tale woods, and over to a river. She glances around.

LUNA

I don't want it. Do you hear me?!

She tosses it into the river. PLUNK!

LUNA (CONT'D)

I DON'T WANT ANY OF IT.

She storms away, AS:

INT. INN - BAR - DAY

Rose and Philippe sit at the bar. He stares at his drink, still in shock. She glances out at John, leaning against a lamppost. Their eyes meet. So much turmoil.

PHILIPPE

I can't believe you came all this way. For us.

ROSE

I can't believe it either.
(awkward beat)
And you're a pirate now.

PHILIPPE

Um, not really. My brother and I got separated, so I went for a drink. A few rums later I woke up on their ship. Not what I planned, but it's been quite the adventure.

ROSE

Looks that way.

Neither knows how to proceed. He looks at her, so full of regret.

PHILIPPE
I was an idiot.

ROSE
Yes, you were.

PHILIPPE
I took it all for granted.

ROSE
Yes, you did.

PHILIPPE
And you were right. You were a
hundred percent right.

ROSE
(not so sure)
About what?

PHILIPPE
No one out gets the kind of
happiness we had. And they all
want it. Every single person I
meet out here, Rose--
(takes her hand, notices-)
Your ring?!

ROSE
(looks at her empty hand)
Oh, I uh, had a bit of an adventure
myself.

She pulls the ring from her pocket. He looks at her, seeming
to pick up on the subtext.

PHILIPPE
Perhaps... you needed it, too.

Rose doesn't answer, John on her mind, heart torn, but
Philippe sees an opening. He takes the ring.

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)
What I did was unforgivable, I know
that, but if you're here now, it
has to mean we have a chance. And I
promise, from this moment on, I
will give you *everything* we ever
dreamt of. You will be Princess
Rose, as you *should* be, and we will
never be unhappy again.

He sounds SINCERE because after all, the ring ensures it.
But Rose is torn. She glances at the door, but John is gone.

INT. JOHN'S HOVEL - DAY

John sits on the cot, very subdued, when there's a soft *knockknock*. He quickly stands, tries to look busy. Rose enters, looking more princess-y than before. He notices. She holds out a bag of coins.

ROSE

We wanted you to have this. For helping in the safe return of my ring. I may have left out some details.

John considers the bag. There's so much he wants to say. Instead, he takes it. Rose looks at him, shocked.

JOHN

(hurting)
Thanks.

ROSE

Can't believe you took that.

JOHN

If you didn't want me to take it, why did you offer it?

ROSE

I didn't offer it. Philippe did.

JOHN

Then *he* should have come here.

ROSE

(getting more irritated)
He wasn't going to come here.

JOHN

Why not?

ROSE

You know why not.

John turns, frustrated.

JOHN

What do you want from me?

ROSE

I want you to say something.

JOHN

Okay, are you going with him?

ROSE
I-I don't know.

JOHN
Then what is there to say? You
wanna run away to a castle and live
a fake life, be my guest.

ROSE
So what, I should live *your* life?
Take whatever I want like the world
owes me something? At least I'm
honest about who I am. Billy,
Oliver, Colin. Whatever your name
is.

JOHN
(he SANPS)
It's *John*. *My name is John*.
(off her shock)
I can count on one hand the number
of people I've given that name to
and for some reason, I gave it to
you. Clearly, I shouldn't have.

There's a beat as this lands. She scrambles for some way to
respond. Comes up with nothing. He grabs his bag.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Have a nice life, *Princess*.

And now the word sounds like an insult. He storms out as she
fights tears.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

Rose rushes through the Square, pissed and hurt. She walks
up to Philippe, preparing a horse. He smiles.

PHILIPPE
I got you something.

He pulls a HEART TRINKET from his pocket. The same one the
Old Woman gave Rose in act one. Rose sighs, looks over and
sees the Old Woman tottering away. She goes over and pulls --

A BAG OF COINS FROM HER POCKET. Shocked, Philippe feels his
pockets, notices they're empty.

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)
How did she do that?

ROSE
(tosses it back)
You have to be more careful out
here, Philippe.

PHILIPPE
(stuffs the bag away)
One of many reasons to leave.

He turns towards the horses as Rose fumes.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

John, also stewing, storms down a narrow street. He spots -- a HORSE TIED TO A NEARBY TREE. He glances around, then walks over, cuts it loose. Yeah, he's stealing it.

He mounts, about to trot off, when he sees -- A CROW ON THE ROOFTOP. RAWK! IT TAKES OFF and joins -- A MURDER OF CROWS IN THE SKY, flying towards the Square. Somehow, he knows.

JOHN
Rose...

He kicks the horse and gallops in their direction, as:

INT. SQUARE - DAY

Philippe steadies the saddle, offers his hand to help Rose mount, but she hesitates.

PHILIPPE
What's wrong?

She opens her mouth, about to reply, when -- A DARK RUMBLING echoes through the Square, like thunder.

ROSE
What's that?

They glance up as the CROWS fly in, descending into the Square, heading right for them.

PHILIPPE
GO!!

Rose mounts. He's about to join her, when THE CROWS ENCIRCLE HIM. She grabs his hand, but he's being pulled as the crows peck at his pocket, trying to get at --

ROSE
The ring! Give it to them!!!

Fingers fumbling, he tries to pull the ring from his pocket, but crows are encircling Rose now, too. He sees it.

ROSE (CONT'D)

HURRY!

He looks at her, genuine love in his eyes.

PHILIPPE

I'm sorry, Rose. I'm sorry for everything.

She sees what he's about to do.

ROSE

Philippe, don't--

He lets go. AND FWOOSH!! THE CROWS THROW HER FREE AND DRAG HIM DOWN THE ROAD. A truly selfless act of love. Rose watches, horrified, as:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

John gallops down a windy road, turns a corner into --

EXT. THE SQUARE - DAY

-- THE SQUARE. He pulls on the reins, drawing his horse to a stop, scans the crowd and sees -- ROSE on the other side.

JOHN

ROSE!

Not hearing him in the chaos, she gallops off after Philippe.

JOHN (CONT'D)

DAMNIT.

He kicks his horse and gallops after her, AS:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Rose gallops down a long and winding road after the CROWS, NOW A ROLLING CLOUD OF BLACK WINGS PITCHING THIS WAY AND THAT. It seems conscious, directed... as it rolls across the countryside, turning day into night. AND THEN --

WHOMP!! It makes a sharp right turn. Rose gallops after it, turning into --

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

THE IRON GATE OF A GARDEN, where -- THE CROWS DISAPPEAR.

Rose pulls her horse up fast, both panting in the cold night. Their breathing the only sound as Rose glances around at --

THE RUINS OF AN ELABORATE GARDEN. Broken statues, crumbling fountains, the knotty, dried remnants of once glorious rose bushes. She dismounts.

ROSE

Philippe?

There's no answer. And then -- A GLOW. THE DISTINCTIVE GLOW OF HER RING in the distance. She follows it, to --

EXT. LABYRINTH - NIGHT

THE MOUTH OF A LABYRINTH carved from twisted, thorny hedges. From the center, the light beckons. She hesitates at the entrance, knowing it's dangerous, but with no other choice, she enters, AS --

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

John gallops into the garden, sees the magical glow and Rose's horse. He dismounts before it has even come to a stop, and books toward the light, as --

EXT. LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

Rose follows the magical trail, passing ruined statues, until she rounds a corner and steps into --

EXT. CENTER OF THE LABYRINTH - NIGHT

-- THE CENTER OF THE LABYRINTH, where she sees --

A HORRIBLY DEFORMED CREATURE, crouched on a stone dais. Think early stage Voldemort. Hungry eyes in an emaciated, skeletal body. It seems imprisoned on this dais as crows circle round, doing its bidding. At its feet lies Philippe, pale and shivering. The ring clenched in his hand.

The Creature eyes him with genuine curiosity.

CREATURE

(mimicking opening)

What... is... love...

Rose is frozen in terror as FWOOSH! A DARK TENTACLE OF MAGIC SHOOTs OUT AND WRAPS AROUND HER LEG. SHE SCREAMS!

EXT. LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

John, at the mouth of the labyrinth hears it, rushes inside. He turns a corner, then another and another, but gets quickly lost. The labyrinth offering no guidance to him. Frustrated, he pulls out a large knife. SLASHES through the hedges AS--

EXT. CENTER OF THE LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

ROSE COLLAPSES on the ground, pale, her hand reaching out to Philippe. Both struggling for breath as the magic tentacles move up their bodies, covering their necks, their heads! Terrified, their eyes meet, and BLINK!

INT. DARK FAIRY TALE CHURCH - NIGHT

She and Philippe, now bride and groom, are standing in a dark version of the fairy tale church. FWOOSH! The OFFICIATOR forms out of the dark magic. Then FWOOSH! The guests! The bridesmaids! All holding dark bouquets made of smoke.

There's even a dark version of Luna, now maid-of-honor.

OFFICIATOR

(repeating opening with
distorted voice)

...Or is it that real love -- what
we call TRUE LOVE -- is rare, but
big. So big it fills the hearts of
all who witness it as much as those
lucky enough to be--

(threatening)

-- caught in its spell.

Rose looks at Philippe, who looks back, both enthralled and confused, AS--

EXT. LABYRINTH - NIGHT

John HACKS AT THE HEDGES, his knuckles bloody. He hits another DEAD END. He SCREAMS in frustration, AS--

INT. DARK FAIRY TALE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Philippe takes Rose's hand, slips the RING ON HER FINGER.

PHILIPPE

And you will never be unhappy
again.

Rose looks down at it. This is what she wanted, isn't it?
The Officiator smiles.

OFFICIATOR

And so, it is my great honor to now
pronounce you husband and wife.
You may *kiss... and seal your
happily-ever-after...*
(ominous)
... for all of time.

Rose and Philippe step toward each other, almost compelled,
and kiss. FWOOSH! The magic comes to life. The crowd
CHEERS. But instead of the warm light from the opening,
DARKNESS SWIRLS AROUND THEM, AND:

EXT. LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

-- the creature dips a spiny hand into the magic spinning
around them. Its body begins to fill out. A COARSE SKIN
forms. DARK HAIR replaces a patchy skull. LIPS covers broken
teeth. This thing is breaking free, returning to life, as:

It sucks the life from Rose and Philippe. Her face grows
gaunt. Her fingers, skeletal. Her breath slowing, as:

JOHN BURTS THROUGH THE HEDGE. He sees Rose, rushes forward.
But the CREATURE MAGICS HIM BACK. The knife flies away as:

INT. DARK FAIRY TALE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

-- the church goes dark. THE GUESTS NOW BEGIN TO
DISINTEGRATE INTO DUST. Then the bridesmaids disappear,
until -- all that's left is Luna.

As the darkness is about to consume her, too, it pauses.
Almost as if it's curious about what it's found. Luna turns,
and looks at Rose, so full of pain and fear.

LUNA

(desperate)

Lead the way, Rose.

Rose tries to break away from Philippe, but THE DARK MAGIC
SWIRLS FASTER NOW. The Officiator smiles, and we CUT TO:

EXT. LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

The CREATURE SMILING. Its EYES GROWING COLDER AS LIFE RETURNS. There's no good in the heart of this thing, dead or alive. Monster or not. This is pure evil.

John magicked to the ground, uses his last bit of strength to grab the knife, and WHOOSH! THROWS IT!

WHAM! IT SLICES THROUGH THE TENTACLE HOLDING ROSE'S NECK.

INT. DARK FAIRY TALE CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Rose and Philippe let go of each other as Rose looks up at Dark Luna, who with her last breath, says...

LUNA

Lead the way.

POOF! Luna and the dark wedding ceremony disappear as:

EXT. LABYRINTH - CONTINUOUS

ROSE GASPS TO LIFE. She quickly sits up. Sees Philippe on the ground, a few shallow breaths from death. She looks at the ring on her finger, fueling the magic. She--

YANKS IT OFF! THEN GRABS A ROCK AND WHAM! SMASHES THE STONE. THE CREATURE SCREAMS AND --

-- BURSTS INTO A CLOUD OF ASH, which slinks into the darkness as the crows roar back into the shadows.

Rose rushes over to Philippe, who is still struggling for breath. She holds him tight, so grateful, so scared.

ROSE

Why did you do that?!

PHILIPPE

I couldn't let... the darkness have you.

She absorbs this, too moved to respond. John watches and their eyes meet. It looks like she's found what she needs. He nods, accepting it, and heads off. Rose doesn't follow. She just holds tight to the Prince she once loved, here in the ruins of life, AS WE:

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Philippe is tightening a saddle bag, when Rose walks up. She's dressed more casually, hair looser. She looks like a new person, both inside and out. He doesn't notice.

He looks down at her ring, now devoid of its stone.

PHILIPPE

My first order of business will be to replace that. Not sure one Prince has ever procured two rings before, but surely it can be done.

Rose considers this.

ROSE

Actually, I don't think it can.

PHILIPPE

Why not?

She takes the ring off and holds it out. He doesn't take it.

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)

Rose, I know I deserve this, but--

ROSE

This isn't about revenge, Philippe. It's about the truth.

(heavy beat)

Your book of families was right. I don't belong in those pages.

PHILIPPE

Says who? You were *meant* to be a Princess. Everyone who's ever met you knows that.

ROSE

Yes, I *was* meant to be one. Now I'll be something I never imagined, and you will live a life more beautiful than anything we dreamt up at seven.

She holds out the ring again. He looks at it. There's truth here. A truth he already came to, and he knows it.

PHILIPPE

No, that ring belongs to you. Do
with it as you wish.

She nods, getting emotional now. He gets emotional, too.
After all, there is great love here, just not the Forever
kind. They hug, holding tight for a long beat, then --

-- he pulls back and mounts his horse.

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)

Whatever you find out there,
Rose... may your story live on.

ROSE

Yours, too.

He gives her one last look, then heads off. Rose watches,
her past going with him, AS WE FIND --

EXT. TOWN - DAY

John, grumpy, leans against a building with the Old Woman.
She spots AN OBVIOUS TOURIST. Heavy bags, confused look.

OLD WOMAN

The usual play?

JOHN

Nah. Not in the mood.

He turns, heads in the opposite direction.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

John walks into the Square, moody, when he sees --

ROSE standing under THE SIGNPOST OF ARROWS. He heads over.

EXT. SIGNPOST - CONTINUOUS

Rose contemplates the various directions as John steps up
next to her. There's a loaded silence, and then --

ROSE

JOHN

John--

I know.

Their eyes meet and she sees that he actually *does* know.

JOHN (CONT'D)

The world's waiting for you, Rose.
Go easy on it, okay?

He smiles, so in love, making this really hard.

ROSE

It's not what I want to want.

JOHN

I know. And maybe this is that
inside-out thing you were talking
about, but I just have this feeling
that somehow... Somewhere... We
will meet again.

She looks deep into his eyes, and feels it, too. A future.

ROSE

(emotional)

Yes. I believe we *will*.

They kiss, so in love, but not in time. We give them a
moment, and then, GO TO --

INT. HOVEL - DAY

-- THE RING SLIDES ONTO A DELICATE FINGER. REVEAL Aria. Bea
wraps an arm around her sweetly. Rose watches, happy.

ROSE

It's exactly where this ring should
be. Magic or not.

ARIADNE

Thank you, my dear.

BEA

So... what will you do now?

Rose smiles, full of brightness and hope.

ROSE

I'm gonna see the world.

EXT. HOVEL - DAY

Rose walks out of Bea and Aria's house, and finds -- Jane and
the Brigands, waiting for her. She smiles.

JANE

Can we go now?

ROSE
Yep, all done.

JANE
Well then, Rose, as the newest
member of our team... -- you lead
the way.

The words land as Rose remembers Dark Luna in the vision saying the exact same thing. Her smile fades.

BRIGAND #1
Ya alright?

Rose reaches into her pocket, and pulls out -- THE SEER'S STONE. The one she found outside Luna's house that started this whole thing. She thinks on this.

ROSE
Yeah. There's just one more thing
I have to do.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - DAWN

LUNA, lies in bed, passed out in her clothes, when --
knockknock a soft knock on the door. She sits up, groggy.

EXT. LUNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She opens the door, so tired, and sees -- THE POSTMAN, a happy little guy, smiling brightly.

POSTMAN
Package for ya!

He hands her A SMALL BOX AND A LETTER.

INT. LUNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Luna closes the door, and opens the letter. We see a light hearted script rushing hurriedly across the page.

ROSE (V.O.)
*Luna... you will never believe the
adventure I've had. The Seer was
right. Sometimes the road to love
is long and winding. Don't be
afraid to take it, Luna. I hope
this helps you do it, because I'll
always believe in you, too... Rose.*

Luna opens the small box. Inside sits -- THE SEER'S SILVER STONE. She gasps, gobsmacked, when --

RUUUUMBLE!! An ominous sound outside. One we recognize from the Square, but Luna doesn't. She rushes --

EXT. LUNA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- outside, into the street, and sees -- THE GREAT, DARK CLOUD OF CROWS rolling towards her.

Terrified, she glances down as THE STONE begins to glow. FWOOSH! A magical path shoots out from under her feet. Confused, Luna lifts the stone from inside the box, and --

EXT. SNOWY WOODS - DUSK

-- she's no longer outside her house. She's in an eerily quiet woods where a soft snow falls. On all sides are DOORS, each unique with a distinct patch of forest around them, as if they're from different parts of the world.

In the middle of it all stands -- THE SEER.

SEER

So it's begun.

Luna looks around, confused and terrified.

LUNA

Where the hell am I?

SEER

At the beginning of your journey. Like I said, the stone comes when you're ready. It appears you are.

Luna looks down at the stone.

LUNA

Did you tell her to send this?

SEER

Oh, no. You never would've taken that stone from me. You needed someone to remind you how to be brave. To lead the way. Only a best friend can do that.

Luna approaches, irritated.

LUNA

Okay, just stop with the riddles,
and tell me in real words what is
going on here.

SEER

I've already told you what I
know...

(repeating act one)

"There's a journey. An *important*
one, through great darkness at
times. But that's not uncommon--"

LUNA

(interrupting, finish)

--love stories are complicated
things." Yes, you said all that,
but it was for Rose.

SEER

No. This was never her love story.
It was always yours, and from what
I've seen -- it's a great, big one.

And now we hear the RUMBLE, and the forest grows darker.

LUNA

W-what are you talking about? I
don't have a love story.

SEER

Of course you do. *Everyone* does,
and more than one... Love travels,
Luna. It moves through people, and
places, across time, until it
arrives where it's meant to be.
It's coming for you now, and I'm
afraid it's not alone.

LUNA

What do you mean?

SEER

A darkness follows, as it has
before. I can't tell you what
happens, I've only seen snippets,
but a lot of people are in its
path, and they're going to need
your help. We must begin.

(Luna pales as the Seer
glances at the doors)

(MORE)

SEER (CONT'D)

Behind these doors are the stories that came before -- hidden in corners, and ruins, and strange places even I haven't seen. Some of them you'll see. Some you will only feel. But you'll need all of them to find your own, just as you needed Rose to begin.

The Seer takes Rose's Stone from Luna's hand as BRANCHES KNIT TOGETHER around a door. There's a sense of villainy here, and oddity, but the Seer isn't bothered. She puts the stone in a grove above the peephole, and CLICK! The door opens.

LUNA

Okay, wait. This is crazy. I can't just walk into that. I still don't understand any of this.

SEER

We often don't when journeys begin, but that's okay. All you need to face this is to hold on to what you already know... Love will save you when the darkness comes, Luna.

(beat)

But only if you let it.

Hearing the words again, a tear falls down Luna's cheek. Clearly, this is a fate she can't escape. The Seer closes her hand around the rock as she glances down, overwhelmed.

LUNA

H-how do I do that?

There's no reply, and she looks up to see -- THE SEER IS GONE. It's just Luna, the snowy woods, and the doorway, waiting for her to step across its threshold in silence.

She takes a step -- CRUNCH -- on to virgin snow, and walks up to the doorway. The RUMBLE sounds in the distance. Whatever is out there, it's closing in. The Seer was right, there's no time to waste.

And so, gathering her strength, Luna takes one last breath, she steps across the threshold, determined to fight the darkness outside, and maybe, just maybe...in herself.

WELCOME TO EPIC