**READING: Belle, Maurice, Beast**

**Scene 5b: Interior of Castle**

BELLE: Hello? Is anyone here? Please, I’m looking for my father.

*(The lights come up on Maurice, behind bars in a call.)*

MAURICE: Belle? Is that you?

BELLE: Papa!

*(Belle rushes to Maurice. She clings to him through the bars.)*

MAURICE How did you find me? *(He coughs from the chill.)*

BELLE: Your hands are like ice! We have to get you out of here!

MAURICE: Belle, you must leave this place.

BELLE: Who’s done this to you? *(The Beast appears, a shadowy form.)*

MAURICE: There’s no time to explain. You must go…now!

BELLE: I won’t leave you here. *(She feels his presence and whirls around.)*

Who’s there*? (She can hear him panting….animal-like.)*

I know someone’s there. Who are you?

BEAST: The master of this castle.

BELLE: Then, you’re the one who’s responsible for this! Release my father at once!

BEAST: *(He growls.*) I am the master of the castle! I do not take orders from anyone. Throw her out! *(The caryatid stands up, grabs Belle.)*

BELLE: No! Wait! Forgive me. Please, let him out. Can’t you see he’s not well?

BEAST: Then he should not have trespassed here.

BELLE: But he’s an old man. He could die!

BEAST: He came into my home uninvited and now he’ll suffer the consequences.

BELLE: Please…I’ll do anything.

MAURICE: Belle!

BEAST: There’s nothing you can do!

BELLE: Wait please!

BEAST: I said there is nothing you can do!

BELLE: Take me instead!

MAURICE: No!

BEAST: What did you say?

BELLE: Take me instead.

MAURICE: Belle, you don’t know what you’re doing.

BEAST: You would do that? You would take his place?

BELLE: If I did, would you let him go?

BEAST: Yes. But you must promise to stay here…forever.

MAURICE: NO!

BELLE: Forever?

BEAST: Forever! Or he dies in the dungeon!

BELLE: That’s not fair…Wait! Come into the light.

BEAST: Make your choice!

MAURICE: Belle, listen to me. I’m old…I’ve lived my life.

BELLE: You have my word.

BEAST: Done.

BELLE: Papa*!(Beast roars)*

MAURICE: No, no, I’m begging you! Please spare my daughter! *(The Beast drags Maurice out of the cell.)*

BEAST: Take him to the crossroads.

BELLE: WAIT! No, not yet!

MAURICE: Let her go! Let her go! Belle! Belle!

BELLE: Papa! *(Maurice is dragged away)*

LUMIERE: *(whispering)* Master*…(The Beast roars angrily, Lumiere slinks away.*

*There’s a beat…and Lumiere comes back.)*

Master, please! *(treading on eggshells) Since* the girl is going to be with us for quite some time…you might want to offer her a more comfortable room.

BELLE: You didn’t let me say good-bye!

BEAS: What?

BELLE: I’ll never see him again...and I didn’t even get to say good-bye.

*(The Beast studies her for a moment, confused by this outpouring of emotion.)*

BEAST: I’ll…show you to your room.

*(He turns to go, but she doesn’t follow.)*

BELLE: My room? But I thought… *(He turns back, confused, irritated.)*

BEAST: Do you want to stay in that dungeon?

BELLE: No.

BEAST:  Then follow – *(He reaches for her. She recoils from his hand in fear. He stops, then…)* You follow me!

*(During the following, the Beast leads Belle through the dark, dreary castle. The Beast explains the rules of the castle in a gruff tone.)*

BEAST: This is your home now. You’re free to go anywhere you like…except the West Wing.

BELLE: Why, what’s in the West…?

BEAST: IT’S FORBIDDEN! You are never to set foot in there…do you understand?

*(She doesn’t answer fast enough to suit him.)*

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!

BELLE: Yes!

*(He moves on. Belle watches him.)*

BEAST: This is your room. I hope you’ll be comfortable here. If you need anything, my servants will attend you.

*(He motions impatiently for her to go in. Belle steps inside.)*

And, one more thing. You will join me for dinner.

*(Belle turns away.)*

That is not a request*! The Beast turns and exits.)*