



*Hampstead Stage Company*  
a not for profit organization

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*Proudly Presents*  
***Beauty and the Beast***  
**A Study Guide**

For use with the Theatrical Production by The Hampstead Stage Company  
Created by Amanda Pawlik, Education Director  
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## ***Beauty and the Beast***

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### **Education Director's Welcome**

Thank you so much for bringing Hampstead Stage Company to your students!

The following study guide and workshop lesson plans are meant to supplement and enhance our performance. Please note, no formal preparation is required for seeing our shows, but we hope that these educational materials will inspire your students to continue learning about classic literature. We hope you enjoy them just as much as we enjoyed creating them for you!

Sincerely,

Amanda Pawlik

Education Director

Hampstead Stage Company

### **About Hampstead Stage Company**

We are a nationally touring educational theatre that brings high quality, professional theatre to schools, libraries, and communities all over the 48 contiguous states (everywhere but Hawaii and Alaska!). The Hampstead Stage Company's goal is to bring great books to life through live theatre; sparking an interest in reading, and creating a new way to use your imagination.

The Hampstead Stage Company got its name from our founders, who came to America from the Hampstead area of London, England to pursue their dreams. Since its inception, our company has grown into one of the largest educational touring companies in the nation. We have performed for over twenty million audience members!

Our interactive educational tours run year-round and are performed by two professional actors, each playing multiple roles. Our scripts are original adaptations, based directly on literary classics, and include children and adults from the audience. The plays last one hour, with a



question and answer session following the performance. We travel to your space, and bring our own realistic sets and costumes; designed using extensive historical research. Our productions are flexible enough to fit into any assembly/performance space.

Theatre performance helps us learn about ourselves and the world around us. But more than that, by using our imagination we can be proud of who we are, create goals for ourselves, and even help the way we think at home and in our communities!

The Hampstead Stage Company is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All HSC study guides and supporting lesson plans are available to download for free from our website!

Contact: Anna Robbins, Company Manager: [info@hampsteadstage.org](mailto:info@hampsteadstage.org)  
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### **All About Pantomime**

The Hampstead Stage Company specializes in a special form of theatre called pantomime. Don't be fooled, we are not silent mimes with painted faces!

Pantomime, also known as "panto", goes back much farther than that. Panto is a form of theatre traditionally found in the United Kingdom, Australia, Zimbabwe, India, and Ireland; and has been performed since the time of Ancient Greece! The word "pantomime" comes from the Greek words pantos, "every, all"; and mimos, "imitator, actor". Pantomime in Ancient Greece used to mean a group of actors and musicians imitating a story. Many famous poets used to write scripts for these actors, and were paid very well!

Pantomime was first performed in England as a show between the acts of an opera, so they could change the set backstage. It became such a popular performance, that it soon became a show of its own. It is said that pantomime had its first full performance in the early 19th century.



Actors travelled from town to town performing well-known stories that taught a lesson, or encouraged the audience to think about the characters, and how they solved the problems they were presented.

Now pantomime is a very well-known form of theatre in England. Shows are based on traditional children's stories, and call for a LOT of audience participation! In England, the audience often "boos" the villain character, "awws" for the damsel in distress, and yells comments to the characters such as: "he's right behind you!", "Oh, yes, he is!", or "Oh, no he isn't!". Volunteers are often called on stage by the Hampstead Stage Company to act as the Chorus. They become extras, playing many characters in multiple scenes, and are often on stage as much as the two other actors!

HSC actors follow traditional pantomime casting: girls play boys, boys play girls, and there are many, many costume changes. Actors rely on their voices and physicality (the way they move their bodies) to portray different characters. Just like all pantomime shows before; Hampstead actors travel all over the country, performing in many different types of spaces!



### **About the Author and Her Story**

**Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve** (1695-1755) is the author of the earliest known version of *Beauty and the Beast*. Little is known about her life, but what is known points to a visionary woman with a passion for storytelling. Widowed at the age of 26, Madame Villeneuve began writing to make ends meet, and authored over 12 books. *Beauty and the Beast* was one of these works and was inspired by fairy tales and folktales of the time. It was published in 1740, a full-length novel with over 100 pages. This version of the story went into detail about the history of many of the characters including the Beast as a prince and the fairy who cursed him. Like many of Villeneuve's works, *Beauty and the Beast*, focused on the position of women in society.

While Villeneuve created the story of *Beauty and the Beast*, the version we are most familiar with was an adaptation of Villeneuve's tale by **Jeanne-Marie le Prince de Beaumont**, which was published in 1756 (one year after Madame de Villeneuve's death). Like Villeneuve, Madame de Beaumont was forward thinking for her time. She had left an unhappy marriage and was working as a governess. Often inviting the collaboration of the young ladies she worked with, Madame de Beaumont was a passionate believer that young ladies could think for themselves. Her version of Villeneuve's story, was pared down to the basics and featured characters that were more like archetypes. In both versions of the story, we see commentary on arranged marriages, which were common at the time. We see both the moral that true love does not come from physical beauty alone and the view that young women are capable of making their own decisions.

Thanks to the work of both women, *Beauty and the Beast* has been the inspiration for several film and stage adaptations, including Disney's award winning 1991 animated movie and 2017 live action movie.



### **Plot Summary**

Our play opens in a small cottage in the French countryside with an argument between Gretchen, Beauty's older sister, and her father. A few months prior, the family had lived a different lifestyle. The father was a famous puppeteer in Paris, however, when a fire struck their apartment, the family lost everything, including the beautiful puppets that were the father's livelihood. Now the family, which includes the father and three sisters, Gretchen, Beverly and Beauty, must live in the family's country cottage to make ends meet until the father can rebuild his career.

We learn that Gretchen is not adjusting to this life. To try and cheer her up, Father uses makeshift sock puppets to tell her the story of a local prince who was turned into a beast. The story, however, does not cheer up Gretchen who still misses the city. She tells her father that, unlike their youngest sister Beauty, Gretchen and Beverly have higher tastes and greater needs. Father begins coughing uncontrollably (he has been sick for some time) but recovers himself. To cheer the sisters up, Father offers to bring back presents for the three daughters when he travels into the city the next day. Gretchen runs off to tell Beverly, while the father wonders to himself if he can really afford to spend money on presents and not his medicine.

Beauty enters, coming inside from tending the garden. Her father asks her about her suitors, but it soon becomes clear that none of them, in the father's opinion, are good enough for Beauty. Beauty worries that if she does not marry soon, she will lose her good looks and no one will want to marry her. Her father reminds her that she is more than her looks. The father changes the conversation and asks Beauty if there is anything she would like from town, but she insists she would rather her father spend the money on his medicine. The father insists, and Beauty asks for him to bring her back a rose. Roses remind Beauty of her mother because she used to bring bouquets of roses to her father after his performances. Both Beauty and her father share a moment where they acknowledge how much they miss Beauty's mother since she passed away.



The action changes to the father heading out on his journey. Winter has come on strong, and it is difficult for him to find his way, however, eventually he comes to a garden gate and finds a garden growing in the winter with a castle in the distance. As the father exits to explore the garden, the action changes and the Beast enters, disturbed that someone is trespassing on his land. He summons his pack of wolves to capture the father.

The action changes to Beauty who is worried about her father, as he has been gone for longer than expected. As she tries to find her way to town through the forest, suddenly, she runs into her father, chased by the wolves. She scares the wolves off and starts to talk to her father, who tells her that he has met an evil Beast. When the father told the Beast that he just wanted to pick a rose for one of his daughters, the Beast said he could return and give his daughter the rose, but the father must then return and be the Beast's prisoner forever, giving "a rose for a life". Beauty tries to think of a way they could escape, but Father is convinced that the Beast will find them. Beauty insists, against her father's wishes, that she will return in his place: the father is too weak to travel back to the castle.

That evening, we see Beauty's sisters, Beverly and Gretchen, discussing the events of the day, and planning how they will appear to be sad when Beauty leaves to live with the Beast, even though they are happy that she is going. The two exit to say goodbye, with Gretchen relying on an onion to make her cry while Beverly chooses to rely on her skill as a "talented actress."

The next day, Beauty leaves for the Beast's castle, when she arrives at the castle, no one is there to greet her, though a table has been set for dinner. The Beast enters, and when Beauty turns to see him, she is visibly frightened though she tries to hide it. The Beast demands that she tell him who she is and she explains that she has come in her



father's place. The Beast at first is furious about this, but then agrees to let Beauty stay. He points Beauty to her room.

The next day, Beauty explores the castle and finds the library. She takes out her glasses and begins exploring the books. The Beast enters, and Beauty hides her glasses. While their conversation is strained at first, eventually the two bond over their love of reading. The Beast suggests Beauty read *Artamène*, an extremely large novel by Madeline de Scudéry, who the Beast says is a smart woman just like Beauty. This is the first time anyone besides Beauty's father has called Beauty "smart." He then invites Beauty to join him for dinner. She accepts and exits with the large book.

Time passes and Beauty enters, now halfway through *Artamène*. She comments on how time has passed. She has been having dinner with the Beast every night, and the more she spends time with him, the calmer he appears and the more she realizes how much they have in common. Beauty is feeling on edge, however, because first, the Beast asked her to take a stroll with him in the gardens after dinner that night, and second, a beautiful dress appeared in her room. With each minute, the anticipation of what will happen that night is building and Beauty cannot imagine what it could be. Beauty exits to get ready for the evening.

We then see the Beast enter the garden, also thinking about the events of the evening, and pondering how complex Beauty is to him. One minute he thinks he knows everything about her and then the next, he feels like he is just meeting her. He picks a rose for Beauty and hides it. Beauty enters the garden in a beautiful dress. Beast shows Beauty around the garden, and the two bond over a shared love of gardening. When the Beast compliments Beauty's dress, she learns that it was the magic of the house that brought it to her. The Beast then asks Beauty to marry him and presents her with the rose. Because she cannot say "yes" at that moment, Beauty says "no." The Beast becomes upset. Beauty admits that she has feelings for the Beast. Beast states that if he was a



handsome prince things would be different. He then asks Beauty to leave him alone in the garden. She exits.

That night, Beauty has a dream that her father is dying. Determined to see him, Beauty tries to sneak out, but is stopped by Beast and the wolves. When Beauty explains that she just wants to go home to see her father and promises she will return, Beast gives her a locket to help her find her way home and back to him. He also gives her four magic chests that she can fill with gold and presents for her family. He tells her she must return in a week. When Beauty looks inside the locket, she notices there is a picture of a young man, one she had seen before while wandering the castle. The Beast states that it means nothing and asks her to close the locket.

Beauty returns home and with her care, her father recovers. He sells the gifts from the Beast to pay for more medicine. The treasure she brings back is a hit with her sisters, who notice that Beauty is acting even stranger than normal -wearing her glasses all the time. We learn that Beauty has stayed home longer than promised, wanting to make sure that her father has fully recovered. Her father urges her to go back and not break her promise to the Beast. He notices the locket around Beauty's neck. When Beauty shows it to him, she discovers the picture in the locket is faded. Beauty wonders if it means something is wrong with Beast. Her father notices how upset she has become and asks her to explain. Beauty talks about how the Beast sees her like no one else ever has, and how she does not want to hurt him. Father guesses that she loves him, and when Beauty really thinks about this, she realizes that she does and she must return immediately to the Beast.

We see the Beast back at his castle in the garden. He has grown very ill and is broken hearted that Beauty has not returned. Beauty enters to find him outside and ill. She tries to get him to go inside the palace but Beast tells her to leave him, that she is better off without him. Beauty then tells Beast that she loves him and asks him to marry her. All of a sudden, Beast is overcome and feels sick, he runs inside the palace.



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Beauty calls after him, but shortly after, a handsome prince enters. It is the Beast! We learn that he was under the same evil curse described in the father's stories and now, by loving the Beast of her own free will, Beauty has set him free! The prince tells Beauty that he will marry her and suddenly there are fireworks in the sky! Carriages arrive with Beauty's father and sisters so they may join Beauty and the Prince in celebration, and we know that all will live happily ever after



## Places

**Father's Country Cottage:** Where Beauty, her father and two sisters live after their Paris apartment burns down in a fire. They have a simpler way of life here than they did in the city.

**Beast's Palace:** A magical palace hidden away in the forest, the palace seems to have a life of its own.

**The Garden:** Cared for and designed by the Beast. Many flowers survive here during winter. It is a magical, beautiful place.

**The Forest:** The forest hides the Beast's palace and is where both Beauty and her father must travel. Home of the wolves.

## Main Characters

**Beauty:** A beautiful, smart young woman, the heroine of our story. She begins our tale valuing physical appearance above all else, but soon learns the value of inner beauty.

**Father:** Beauty's father. A kindly older man. He is a famous puppeteer who has lost his puppets in a fire. He is combating an illness and trying to help his daughters adjust to a new life in their country cottage.

**Gretchen:** Beauty's older sister, interested in the finer things in life.

**Beverly:** Beauty's older sister, also interested in the finer things in life. A talented actress.

**Beast:** A young prince who has been cursed to be a beast until a woman loves him of her own free will.

**The Wolves:** Played by members of the audience! They work for the Beast.



## Vocabulary

**Puppeteer:** Someone who performs with puppets

**Simile:** A type of metaphor, comparing two things with “like” or “as”, for instance, “a puppeteer with no puppets is **like** a farmer with no land”

**Metaphor:** A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it is not literally related to. For example, “apple of my eye” or “love is a garden”.

**Pedestrian:** common, dull

**Comme Moi:** French, “like me”

**Cognito ergo sum:** Latin, “I think, therefore, I exist.”

**Curse:** A spell intended to harm or punish

**Rouse:** To wake up, or to anger

**Ruse:** A trick

**Persnickety:** Fussy, placing too much emphasis on trivial details

**Peasants:** A person of low social status

**Protagonist:** The main character in a story, often the hero.

**Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*):** A hearty plant known for its brilliant orange and yellow flowers, which attract butterflies.

**Locket:** A small ornamental case, often worn as a necklace, that holds items of sentimental value, such as a photograph or picture.

**Carriage:** A wheeled vehicle use for transportation, drawn by horses.



### Preshow Discussion Questions

The following questions provide a guide for getting students excited about seeing the performance and to guide them in watching the show.

*Today we are going to see a performance by Hampstead Stage Company called Beauty and the Beast.*

- Has anyone read the book or seen a movie version of this story? If so, what do you remember most about it?
- Based on the name “Beast” -what do you predict this character will be like? What about “Beauty”
- Does anyone know where the story *Beauty and the Beast* comes from?

If possible, write up student ideas on the board or chart paper so the whole class can see all the answers.

- **Qualities/Traits** –Conversation can adjust as needed depending on students’ predictions -if they predict that Beast might be mean or nasty while Beauty might be sweet and kind based on appearances, this could be something to have students watch for during the show and further discuss after.
- **History of the Story:** *Beauty and the Beast* was first written almost 300 years ago (277 to be exact) by an author named Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. Her version of the story was over 100 pages long and had many details about the histories of the characters. She was inspired by fairytales and folktales that were popular during her time such as *Sleeping Beauty*. Another author, Madame le Prince de Beaumont, took Madame de Villeneuve’s story and shortened it, focusing on only the main points. This story has become the version we are most familiar with today.

### Post Show Discussion Questions

- Have students share general reactions to the performance
- Who was your favorite character? Why?



- Both Beauty and Beast are concerned with how they look, and to some extent, what others think about them at the beginning of the play. How did this change by the end of the play?
- At first, Beauty hides her love of reading and gardening because she thinks people will not like her. If Beauty was your best friend, what advice would you give her about this? Can anyone relate to Beauty in this way?
- Are there any other questions you have about the play or theatre that the actors did not get to answer?
  - Hampstead Stage loves to receive letters and emails! If students have questions or more comments they would like to share, they are encouraged to write to us! Our contact information may be found on our website.

### Activities

We have prepared the following activities for those who wish to expand upon seeing our performance. These activities may be done either before or after seeing the performance. Activity leaders are encouraged to modify as needed for the needs of their students. A summary of the activities is provided below. The full lesson plans may be downloaded for free from our website.

**The Real Me Workshop (ages 5+):** This interactive workshop guides students in writing their own “I AM” poem and illustrating it with their unique hand print. An optional extension activity is provided with suggestions for how to display handprints as a community art project, with tie-ins to the “Build a Better World” summer reading theme.

**Beauty and Beast’s Garden Architecture (ages 5+):** This interactive workshop guides students in designing and “building” their own garden, tying in with the “Build a Better World” summer reading theme. An optional extension activity is included to display students’ work as a community art project to brighten an outdoor or indoor space.