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The following is the opening sequence for a screenplay I wrote about the Sleeping Beauty myth. It is a what if story. What if the prince did not wake the princess? What if she slept on waiting for him? And, what if he were reincarnated as a bookstore clerk in modern New York?

Hoof beats. The staccato trampling of a horse tearing up a forest path.

FADE IN

WOODS - THE TENTH CENTURY - DUSK

A horse snorts plumes of steam.

A shield with a black swan crest bobs, clanking against the armor sheathed arm that grasps it.

PRINCE STEFAN (26,)- eager, handsome, and determined - drives his steed through the dark, tangled wood.

Ancient stone idols peer from the foliage. Shadows flow like ink through the trees, moving of their own volition.

A gnarled castle rises from the forest. It is surrounded by a thick barrier of thorns.

THIS IS CARABOSS'S CASTLE.

INSIDE THE CASTLE

She is more beautiful than you expected. And she's terrified. PRINCESS AURORA (21) runs through the wrongly-angled corridors of the castle.

Shadows hurtle after her, pouring across the ceilings, walls, and floors. They snatch at the folds of her gowns and whisper one word: "Aurora..."

WITH STEFAN AT THE BRAMBLE

KKRAACKKK!! A thunderclap, then darkness. The low gravel of unholy laughter rumbles from every direction.

Ahead, near the edge of the bramble, a bright, violet pinpoint of light appears. It flits like a firefly. This is THE LILAC FAIRY.

STEFAN  
You shouldn't have come. Caraboss  
will kill you.

LILAC FAIRY  
Only if I enter the castle. Hurry,  
there's no time.

Stefan dismounts.

The fairy floats into the bramble, lighting a path.

Stefan hacks through the thorns, his eyes ever forward.

#### INSIDE THE CASTLE

Aurora bursts into a room, slamming the door behind her. Aurora turns. She is not alone.

An old woman sits in a corner of the room tending a spinning wheel.

OLD WOMAN  
(gesturing to thread)  
Beautiful, is it not? Fitting for such  
a pretty, pretty girl. Perhaps a  
wedding gown?

She motions for Aurora to come forward to feel the length of thread. The princess does so, stretching a hand towards the spinning wheel.

#### IN THE BRAMBLE

A tattered Stefan reaches the castle. The gates open organically, mouth-like.

The Lilac Fairy places a hand on his head as a blessing, and withdraws into the bramble, her light fading.

Stefan enters the castle courtyard and the very darkness attacks him.

Shadows wrap around him. He slashes with his sword. The shadows shriek, form teeth and talons and rip into him.

#### INSIDE THE CASTLE

Aurora pricks her finger atop the spindle. A look of terror crosses her face - this can't be happening.

The old woman laughs and transforms into CARABOSS, the feminine embodiment of elegant evil.

CARABOSS  
Perhaps a shroud.

The laughter rings and grows deeper as Aurora's world slows to a crawl. She falls to the floor unconscious.

GRAND FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Caraboss leads a pack of shadows that bear the still form of Aurora upon their backs.

THE CASTLE'S HEAVY WOODEN DOORS

Fly open, and Stefan, bloodied and tattered, enters. He draws a crossbow and fires.

STEFAN  
Caraboss!!!!

The bolt strikes Caraboss in the throat. She shrieks in pain and stumbles backwards, clutching at the bolt.

The shadows continue on their way.

STEFAN

Sword in hand, rushes across the room.

Darkness streams from Caraboss's wound and removes the bolt.

Stefan vaults a table, swinging his sword high over head, bringing it down into Caraboss's back.

The demon-queen falls to the ground.

IN A CHAMBER

Aurora lies on a bed of marble placed in the middle of a barren stone room. Shadows seal the entrance, placing stones in the entrance way.

IN THE FOYER

Shadows race from Caraboss's body and gather in the center of the foyer, taking the shape of a great, taloned creature that fills the room, connected to the cracks in the ceiling, walls and floor.

HALLWAYS OF THE CASTLE

Stefan races through the weird corridors of the castle. He rounds a corner and sees Aurora's chamber. She's visible through the ever-dwindling opening.

STEFAN

Aurora!!

A lash-like appendage of the creature snares Stefan and drags him back. He struggles forward as the shadows spread upward enveloping his body.

The shadow-creature washes over Stefan, ripping him apart, but Stefan never averts his gaze from Aurora.

Lifting him to it's pitch-black "face", the creature sees that it's all over for the brave young man and tosses the fading prince into the chamber with Aurora just as the shadows put the last stone in place.

AURORA'S CHAMBER

The torn prince crawls forward leaving a trail of his blood in his wake.

STEFAN

I swear...if it takes...a thousand  
lifetimes...I will wake...you...

He dies, hand outstretched, reaching for Aurora.

IN THE FOYER

Caraboss reabsorbs the creature. The sorceress has been grievously injured and struggles to stand.

CARABOSS

I think not.

Thorny roots emerge from the floor. They coil about her, pulling her into the ground.

EXT. THE CASTLE AND FOREST

The earth rises up and swallows the castle, leaping and piling on the structure leaving nothing but a rolling hill. The forest marches forward and covers the hill in green. There is no trace of the castle.

CARABOSS

Dormant in a nest of root, thorn and briar.

STEFAN

Dead, reaching for Aurora.

AURORA

On the bed of marble. Sleeping Beauty.

THE LILAC FAIRY

Floats high above new hill, her face buried in her hands. She cries for the death of dreams and the burial of love.

It's too much to bear. She races up with us in tow - higher, higher. Her small violet light soaring into the field of stars.

The trail of violet disappears into the distance leaving only infinite space.

SILENCE

Then, quite unexpectedly,

A SATELLITE

Sails noiselessly into the picture.

AN APERTURE

On the satellite opens and closes rapidly, photographing the land below.

In time with the motion of the camera aperture, we hear the increasingly louder sound of an annoying ELECTRIC ALARM CLOCK. Deet!-Deet!-Deet!

STEVE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

STEVE SWANSON (26), sits up in bed, eyes still shut, grimacing at the noise from his alarm clock. He's handsome, disheveled, and, incidentally, Prince Stefan reborn.

He slaps his hand out blindly until he successfully connects with the clock.

Steve opens his eyes on the waking world. The clock reads: 8:45 AM.

STEVE

Shit!