

SNOW WHITE AND THE HUNTSMAN

Written by

Evan Daugherty

Inspired by the Brothers Grimm's
"Little Snow White"

Roth Films

THE HUNTSMAN

Once upon a time... there was a
wicked queen... who had a beautiful
stepdaughter... with hair as black
as ebony... skin white as snow...
and lips as red as blood...

FADE IN:

CREDITS ROLL over a wordless MONTAGE:

INT. ROYAL PALACE - BANQUET HALL - DAY

Unique APPLES -- each one HALF-RED and HALF-WHITE -- rest in
a black ebony bowl on a long, regal dining table.

A YOUNG SNOW WHITE [5], dressed in royal attire and a small
tiara, checks to make sure that no one is watching, then
precociously sneaks into the dining room.

But unbeknownst to Snow White, a little BOY enters the dining
hall from the opposite door and starts sneaking towards the
apples. This is YOUNG PRINCE CHARMANT [5].

Snow White and Prince Charmant each grab the same apple.
They have a small, playful tug-of-war, before eventually
agreeing to share... each taking a bite out of the apple.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - LATER THAT DAY

Prince Charmant digs a hole in the courtyard ground and drops
the APPLE CORE into it. Snow White covers it with dirt.

THE SEEDS GROW:

Into a SAPLING. Snow White and Prince Charmant, now 10,
playfully spar throughout the courtyard with wooden swords.

Prince Charmant stumbles. Snow White falls on top of him.
They share a cute but awkward smile...

THE TREE GROWS:

It now has a full crop of unique HALF-RED, HALF-WHITE APPLES.
Snow White and Prince Charmant, now 11, try to catch
snowflakes with their tongues.

Snow White catches a snowflake. She pulls out a MAGNIFYING
GLASS and gestures for Prince Charmant to look through the
glass with her. Together, they peer through the glass,
taking in the beauty and complexity of each snowflake.

THE TREE GROWS:

Snow White and Prince Charmant, now 12, sit beneath their fully grown apple tree, looking up at the bright night sky, marvelling at the occasional shooting star.

The Prince plucks a red and white apple, hands it to Snow White. Snow White returns the favor with an innocent kiss.

BUT THEN-- There's a COMMOTION from the other side of the courtyard. The King's armored KNIGHTS, including DUKE CHARMANT [35], Prince Charmant's father, rush through the courtyard. Something is wrong.

THE NEXT DAY:

A FUNERAL fills the courtyard. The DEAD QUEEN, Snow White's mother, lies in a coffin. Snow White stands beside her stoic father, THE KING [40s], trying to fight back tears.

Prince Charmant and Duke Charmant stand next to Snow White and the King. Prince Charmant places a hand on Snow White's shoulder, trying to comfort her.

WEEKS LATER:

The funeral BECOMES A WEDDING. Snow White walks down the aisle, scattering red roses down on the long white carpet. Prince Charmant walks beside her as the ringbearer. They don't seem very enthusiastic about their jobs...

That's because the King is marrying a young, almost incomprehensibly beautiful trophy bride named RAVENNA.

As soon as Ravenna kisses her new husband, she flashes a cold look at Duke Charmant and his knights. There are going to be some big changes around here.

DAYS LATER:

RAIN FALLS in the courtyard as Ravenna's new ROYAL GUARDS forcefully escort Duke Charmant and the other knights out of the palace. Duke Charmant brings Prince Charmant with him. Snow White watches it all from beneath their apple tree.

But then, Prince Charmant breaks away from his father, runs back to Snow White and embraces her. He leans in close and WHISPERS SOMETHING in her ear. Something we won't hear.

And then, he gives Snow White one of the red and white apples. After a moment, Duke Charmant pulls his son away.

The drawbridge slowly closes... blocking Snow White and Prince Charmant from each other's sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SNOW WHITE'S ROOM - DAWN - [FIVE YEARS LATER]

A beautiful YOUNG WOMAN sleeps peacefully on her bed. This is **SNOW WHITE**, now 18.

Although she's still asleep, we can see that her STAGGERING BEAUTY has come to match Ravenna's. And it somehow goes beyond the physical. This is the kind of beauty immortalized by great artists in sculpture and painting... and the kind of beauty that has driven good men to war.

She is AWAKENED by two large WET TONGUES licking her face. They belong to two massive IRISH WOLFHOUSES. The huge dogs frolic on the bed, trying to get Snow White's attention.

Snow White wipes the sleep from her eyes. She is met by a whole cacophony of other sounds -- BARKS, MEOWS, CHIRPS.

Her entire room is filled with PETS: dogs, cats, rabbits... and beautiful SONGBIRDS kept in cages hanging in the windows.

SNOW WHITE
Yes, yes, I'm up...

LATER, Snow White struggles to wash her enormous wolfhounds, almost as big as her, in a large tub. Every once in a while, the dogs shake out their coats, sending soapy water flying.

LATER, She dutifully cleans her pets' cages and feeds them. She clearly has an affinity for these animals. And they are obviously drawn to her. It's all very pleasant and charming--

Until we start to get a sense that they are her only friends.

Next, Snow White visits her birdcages in the window. She opens up a cage housing a beautiful RED AND WHITE FINCH and slips in some new seed.

Both Snow White and the finch look to the majestic horizon, where the sun is just rising over distant snow-capped peaks.

SNOW WHITE
(to the finch)
How far do you think we'd get?

But then, Snow White hears the sound of CLANKING CHAINS. She peeks out her window and sees the palace DRAWBRIDGE lowering. Waiting across the drawbridge is a-- HORSE-DRAWN CAGE WAGON

The cage is filled with BEAUTIFUL WOMEN. Frightened women. We won't know for sure, but we'll suspect that they're being delivered to the Queen for some sort of nefarious purpose.

The finch CHIRPS loudly.

SNOW WHITE
 (responding to the finch)
 Yes, I suppose it could be worse.

And then, Snow White spots a DOT OF WHITE out in the meadows outside the palace. She looks closer and sees that its--

A WHITE WOLF. Without a tail.

But the wolf quickly disappears back into the tall grass.

INT. ROYAL PALACE - RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - LATER

WE'LL SEE A SILHOUETTE through the glass of an extravagant showering chamber. The water dies down and RAVENNA, the Queen, steps out amidst clouds of steam. As gorgeous as Snow White, but where Snow White's beauty is natural and effortless, Ravenna's beauty seems maintained and preserved.

Her three overdressed and over-coiffed male BEAUTY EXPERTS -- THE TAILOR, THE HAIRDRESSER and THE COSMETOLOGIST -- quickly dry her body, comb her hair and slip on her silk robe.

Behind Ravenna's back and without her knowledge, they jostle with one another over access to the Queen. Slapping each other's hand, elbowing each other, flashing dirty looks.

With a harsh look from Ravenna, the three Beauty Experts finish up their work and scramble back out of the room...

And then, Ravenna glides towards a LARGE MIRROR with a beautifully carved frame and examines herself in it.

From a distance, Ravenna's body seems flawless... but up close, we might spot wrinkles, stretch marks and other subtle signs of aging. After a moment:

RAVENNA
 Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
 Who is fairest of them all?

Silence... until... the mirror RIPPLES LIKE WATER... a LIQUID HAND EMERGES from the mirror. The hand is followed quickly by the remaining parts of a flowing MIRRORED BODY.

MIRROR MAN fully emerges from his prison, his body like a billowing cloak made entirely of reflective mirror. It moves like silk, but it has the look and feel of a real mirror.

MIRROR MAN
 From barren heath to windswept
 strand...
Thou art fairest in the land.

Ravenna smiles upon hearing Mirror Man's expected response.

MIRROR MAN (CONT'D)

But...

Ravenna turns back to Mirror Man, concerned.

MIRROR MAN (CONT'D)

White of skin, red of lip, black of
hair...

Another soon will be more fair.

From the look on Ravenna's face, this is highly unusual. She takes a moment, letting it sink in...

RAVENNA

That day we've been talking about
for so long...

(a moment)

I think it's finally arrived.

EXT. THROUGHOUT THE PALACE - VARIOUS

The King's aging, graying OLD GUARDS are overwhelmed and disarmed by Ravenna's own younger ROYAL GUARDS.

Ravenna is finally cleaning house.

INT. KING'S BEDCHAMBER

The gray-haired KING [now 60] sleeps soundly in his elegant canopy bed, covered by thick furs.

But the Queen's ROYAL GUARDS creep inside, swords raised....

INT. SNOW WHITE'S ROOM

As Snow White feeds her animals... THE DOORS FLIES OPEN--
An AGING GUARD, loyal to the King, hobbles in, breathless.

AGING GUARD

Snow White! Your father is dead...
and they're coming for you!

LATER:

With tears streaming from her eyes, the delirious Snow White frantically packs a satchel with food and supplies.

SNOW WHITE

I don't understand! What's happen--

The Drunk Man shoots to his feet-- But immediately falls back to the ground, either extremely hung over or, as his name would suggest, still drunk.

But then, he hears a WOLF'S HOWL. And something about THAT HOWL brings out the fierce young lion in the man.

He grabs a VARIETY OF AXES AND HATCHETS, from small tomahawks to larger throwing axes, at least twenty in all, and slips them into a thick belt and several shoulder holsters.

To cap it off, the Drunk Man pulls a huge LOGGING AXE out of the stump and straps it across his back like a barbarian's broadsword or a samurai's katana. He charges off into--

EXT. THICK WOODS

Barrelling through the trees, bounding over boulders, ducking under branches. The Drunk Man knows these woods well.

This must be **THE HUNTSMAN**. His name is ERIC... and a WHITE WOLF'S TAIL hangs from his belt.

EXT. FOREST GLEN

The Redhead runs from the ravenous wolf. She looks back, sees the wolf gaining. But when she looks forward again--

She slams right into Eric and falls to the ground.

ERIC

Clear away.

Little Red nods and ducks behind a large tree.

The wolf stops in its tracks when it sees Eric. Eric and the brown wolf both stand their ground.

Eric stares deep into the wolf's narrow eyes, and for a SPLIT-SECOND, the brown wolf becomes--

--A WHITE WOLF!

But it's all in Eric's mind. Eric shakes his head, and the HALLUCINATION DISAPPEARS.

Eric pulls his logging axe, hurls it. The wolf dodges. He draws two smaller hatchets from his belt. The wolf lunges. Eric sidesteps, swipes at the wolf.

RRRIIIIPPPPPP!!! Wolf claws tear into Eric's shoulder, but he doesn't seem to mind. Eric turns, sizes the wolf up.

The wolf leaps. Eric ducks, slices its belly. The wounded beast lands and prepares for a final deadly attack--

But Eric tosses two hatchets at once--

LATER:

The Redhead stands over the DEAD WOLF'S CARCASS. Eric kneels behind her, washing his hands in a stream.

But when the Redhead looks back to the wolf... it's not a wolf anymore... it's a MAN.

ERIC

(explaining)

In the woods, those who seem to be
wolves may be men...

As the Redhead studies this bizarre sight, Eric slowly creeps up behind her.

ERIC

And those who seem to be friends...

Eric THROWS A HOOD over the girl's head.

EXT. FOREST PATH - NIGHT

A rickety CAGE WAGON waits in the path. The Redhead and a group of other BEAUTIFUL FEMALE PRISONERS fill the cage. This is the same type of cage wagon that Snow White saw arriving at Ravenna's palace.

A BROKER with rotting teeth drops a piece of GOLD into Eric's hand. Eric flashes a LOOK to the Broker. He wants more...

The Broker rolls his eyes, then painlessly plucks a GOLD TOOTH out of his mouth and drops it into Eric's waiting palm.

The Broker whips his horses, pulls the wagon away. Eric watches as the women are trucked off into the night. After a moment, he has to look away.

EXT. CABIN CLEARING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Eric drowns his sorrows with a stupidly large JAR OF GROG.

SARA (V.O.)

*You can't spend your whole life
hunting...*

Eric turns around--

EXT. CABIN CLEARING - DAY - [THE PAST]

--and sees SARA [35]. Smiling. She's worn. But beautiful. The kind of woman a man like Eric should grow old with.

The clearing looks much the same, but a light dusting of SNOW covers the ground. Eric, clean-shaven and more than a few years younger, slips two hatchets into his belt.

ERIC
(responding to Sara)
What's that?

SARA
I said, you cannot spend your whole
life hunting. Unless I'm the prey.

Eric grabs Sara's hips, brings her in close.

ERIC
But you'd like to eat something
tonight...?

SARA
I suppose that would be nice.

Eric leans in, shares a PASSIONATE KISS with Sara.

ERIC
I'll be back before nightfall.

But as Eric turns and runs out of the clearing--

WE'LL SEE the cold, focused eyes of a WHITE WOLF camouflaged against the snow. Its eyes are FIXED ON SARA.

And with a HOWL--

EXT. CABIN CLEARING - NIGHT - [BACK TO THE PRESENT]

--we're BACK WITH ERIC. Alone. Sitting on his stump.

Eric hears a HOWL, sees a GHOSTLY FLASH of a WHITE WOLF. He turns, sees another FLASH of the white wolf. And then, A WHOLE CHORUS OF GROWLS AND HOWLS!!! Everywhere Eric turns, he sees the white wolf.

He grabs his logging axe, tosses it into the darkness. FWACK!!!! The axe buries itself deep in a tree.

Eric takes a deep breath, calms himself. The clearing is empty and silent again. It was all in his head. He falls back onto his stump and takes a swig from his jug.

EXT. CABIN CLEARING - NEXT MORNING

Eric sleeps against his favorite stump, surrounded by empty jugs... as a horse quietly ambles into the clearing.

ERIC
Perfume...?

Eric opens his eyes, sees the ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN.

ERIC
A Royal Guard. That explains it.
(a moment)
The palace is that way.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
Queen Ravenna demands your
presence, Huntsman.

ERIC
And I demand your horses stand on
its hind legs and dance a jig, but
something tells me it's not going
to happen.

The Guard Captain tosses a small SACK OF GOLD at Eric's feet.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
More where that came from.

EXT. ROYAL VILLAGE - LATER THAT DAY

Eric and the Royal Guard Captain ride into a SMALL VILLAGE, which lies just outside the palace walls. Eric, sobered up, is outfitted with all the tools of his trade. He examines his surroundings. The town is too quiet. Too lifeless.

But then, a GLINT OF LIGHT flashes on Eric's face. The Guard Captain spots a MIRROR peeking out of an OLD WOMAN'S satchel.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
You there!

OLD WOMAN
Please, no! It was my mother's!

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
The Queen has forbidden it!

The Guard pulls the mirror away, knocking the Old Woman down.

ERIC
All that for a mirror?

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS - LATER THAT DAY

A long hall leading to Ravenna's throne room. The Guard Captain FINDS A SPOT for the stolen mirror on the wall amidst thousands of other mirrors of every shape and size.

That must be the purpose of the HALL OF MIRRORS -- to house all of the Ravenna's mirrors, stolen from her subjects.

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM

The Beauty Experts carefully work on Ravenna's appearance, manicuring fingernails and brushing hair. They jockey for a prime spot to do their beauty work. As usual, Ravenna doesn't see... or chooses to ignore their shenanigans.

RAVENNA
You look good, Eric.

Eric stands at the foot of Ravenna's throne.

ERIC
And you look the same.

Ravenna forces a smile.

ERIC
How old is this daughter of yours?

RAVENNA
She is not my daughter!
(calming down)
She was the King's daughter... from his second marriage... or was it his third? There were so many, I can never remember.

ERIC
And you want me to "take care" of the girl... like you "took care" of her father.

RAVENNA
The "King" snatched me out of my mother's arms when I was just a girl. I replaced an old wrinkled woman... and in time, I also would have been replaced.
(stepping off her throne)
Because men... they use women... they ruin us... and when they're finished... they toss what's left to the dogs like table scraps.

Ravenna comes nose to nose with Eric.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

But when a woman stays young and beautiful forever, the whole world is hers for the taking.

ERIC

What was it you used to say...?

RAVENNA

Beauty is power.

Eric and Ravenna share an electric glance... and while they may never have been in love... they were definitely in lust.

ERIC

(after a moment)

I'm a hunter... not a killer.

RAVENNA

Oh... I don't want you to kill the girl...

INT. RAVENNA'S DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

The prisoners wallow in anguish. But this is no ordinary dungeon. The captives are all YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

Among them is the Redhead, the young girl that Eric turned over to the Queen for a few pieces of gold.

A BULBOUS GUARD waddles right past the Redhead... and pulls a beautiful BLONDE WOMAN [17] from the adjacent cell.

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ravenna and Eric watch as... a STONE SARCOPHAGUS rises slowly out of the floor.

And then--

Royal Guards drag the Blonde Woman into the throne room, kicking and screaming. They toss her into the stone sarcophagus and slam the door. Her screams are silenced.

SPECK, Ravenna's jittery, bespectacled court alchemist climbs a small step ladder and pours assorted MAGICAL INGREDIENTS into a funnel on the sarcophagus.

Speck turns a STONE DIAL on the side of the sarcophagus. It starts to shake. Smoke shoots out the side.

Eric watches all of this, trying to mask his disgust.

ERIC

So... the women I bring you...?

RAVENNA

Oh yes, they all get their turn.

The sarcophagus goes silent. And then, a spigot on the sarcophagus drops a phosphorescent BLUE LIQUID into a VIAL.

Ravenna drinks the liquid. She's already beautiful. But as soon as she swallows the liquid, her skin becomes even SMOOTHER, her eyes even BRIGHTER, her lips even FULLER.

And then, the sarcophagus door pops open, and a WITHERED OLD WOMAN steps out. The device has aged her by at least sixty years. Her eyes look empty. Her mind seems blank.

The Royal Guards escort the AGED BLONDE WOMAN back into the Hall of Mirrors, where several other AGED SCULLERY MAIDS await. They hand the Aged Blonde a maid's apron and bonnet.

That's when we'll realize: Every AGED SCULLERY MAID in Ravenna's palace used to be one of the beautiful female prisoners from the dungeon.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

What do you say, Huntsman? Will you take the job?

Ravenna brings her perfect hand to Eric's cheek.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

Perhaps we can make some kind of special arrangement.

ERIC

There isn't enough gold in the world.

Ravenna nicks Eric's cheek with her fingernail.

RAVENNA

What about information...?

Eric is curious to hear more.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

I have eyes and ears throughout my kingdom. I can find men, women... white wolves...

Ravenna is making Eric an offer he can't refuse.

EXT. WILDFLOWER PATCH - LATER THAT DAY

Snow White has found an idyllic spot in the wilderness. She sits amidst a patch of wildflowers -- Snapdragons, Hollyhock, Red Zinnias, dotted with white Queen Anne's Lace. A pleasant brook babbles by. Bits of pollen catch the sunlight.

Snow White sits on thick velvet grass. She looks to a LOCKET hanging around her neck, bearing her father's ROYAL SEAL. She regards it for a moment, eyes misting a bit.

And then, she looks into the woods and sees a beautiful RED DEER with large antlers. Snow White and the deer hold each other's gaze for a moment.

But then, Eric crests a hill behind Snow White--

He creeps up towards her. Closer and closer.

The red deer is startled, scurries off.

And then, Snow White spins around and sees Eric towering over her. Too shocked to scream, she backs up against a boulder.

Eric reaches behind his back and pulls out--

A long PAIR OF SHACKLES. He snaps one shackle to his own wrist... and one shackle around Snow White's.

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Ravenna sits upon her throne.

RAVENNA
That was quick.

Eric stands at the foot of Ravenna's throne. His arm is CHAINED to Snow White's arm. Snow White is terrified.

ERIC
I am a professional.

Ravenna reads between the lines. She grabs a sack of gold and tosses it at Eric's feet.

ERIC (CONT'D)
And the rest?

RAVENNA
You'll find the white wolf in the Southern Wastes, at the far border of my kingdom.

Hearing about the "white wolf", Snow White silently reacts.

ERIC

I have already searched the
Southern Wastes... and beyond.

RAVENNA

Well, you'll just have to look
again, won't you?
(to her guards)
Take care of her.

Ravenna nods to her guards. They close in on Snow White.

SNOW WHITE

(to Eric)

Wait! You're looking for a white
wolf?! A white wolf with no tail?

Eric's eyes widen. That's exactly what he's looking for.

SNOW WHITE (CONT'D)

I've seen it! It slips in and out
of the palace. Day and night.
(desperately)
The white wolf serves the Queen!

ERIC

(turning to Ravenna)

You... sent the white wolf...?

Ravenna realizes she's been caught, decides to come clean.

RAVENNA

(flippant)

She was the fairest in the land.
What was I supposed to do?

Eric looks to the nearby STONE SARCOPHAGUS.

ERIC

Why didn't you just put her in that
thing? You could have spared her
life!

RAVENNA

Hadn't created it yet. Besides,
you expect me to believe you would
have still loved your wife... even
if she was a wrinkled old hag...

ERIC

I would have loved her no matter
what!

All bets are off now. In a flurry of motion, Eric draws a hatchet, flings it and hits Ravenna IN THE CHEST.

But then, something incredible happens--

Ravenna pulls the hatchet out of her own chest--

AND THE MASSIVE WOUND QUICKLY HEALS.

Eric and Snow White share a look. Ravenna's MAGICAL INVINCIBILITY is as surprising to them as it is to us.

SNOW WHITE
She's a witch...

ERIC
What a surprise.

The Queen's Royal Guards close in on Eric and Snow White. Eric pulls a hatchet and tries to fight them off.

And then, he looks to Ravenna's beauty-sucking SARCOPHAGUS. As he drags Snow White out of the room, he uses the chain connecting them to KNOCK OVER THE SARCOPHAGUS.

It tumbles to the ground. And SHATTERS.

RAVENNA
NO!!!!!!!
(to her guards)
Kill them! Kill them both! Rip
out their hearts!

Eric and Snow White, still chained together, escape into the--

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS

Eric looks to the other end of the hall, spots another ROYAL GUARD UNIT waiting there.

SNOW WHITE
You really think I'm worth a few
pieces of gold?!

ERIC
To be honest, you're probably worth
less! GET DOWN!!!

He throws up his hatchet, SHATTERING THE MIRRORED CEILING.

Eric and Snow White drop to their bellies, slide along the mirrored floor as MIRROR SHARDS rain down. They slip right through the feet of the Royal Guards, tripping them up.

INT. ROYAL STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Eric leaps onto his steed, pulls Snow White on with him.

SNOW WHITE

I suppose you enjoy leading damsels
into distress and then rescuing
them at the last possible moment!

ERIC

If I never saw another damsel in
distress, it would be too soon!

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Eric and Snow White round a corner, chased by a small army of
ROYAL CAVALRY, led by the same Royal Guard Captain who first
summoned Eric. Eric charges towards the LOWERED DRAWBRIDGE.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN

Raise the drawbridge!

The AGED GATEKEEPER pulls a lever. The drawbridge RISES.

SNOW WHITE

(re: the horse)

Can't he go any faster?!

ERIC

Shut up! Shut up!

(to his horse)

Faster, boy! FASTER!!!

Eric's horse SAILS OFF the edge of the drawbridge -- and
lands safely outside the palace walls.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN

Lower the drawbridge!

AGED GATEKEEPER

"Raise the drawbridge", "Lower the
drawbridge." Never a "please" or a
"thank you".

EXT. ENDLESS STEPPE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Eric spurs his horse. Snow White peeks over her shoulder,
sees several dozen ROYAL CAVALRYMEN still on their tail.
Eric and Snow White must have been at this for hours. They
won't be able to outrun the Royal Cavalry for much longer.

But then, their horse clears a small hill--

And the edge of THE DARK FOREST comes into view. It looks like a black, impenetrable wall. Truly terrifying.

SNOW WHITE
The Dark Forest...?

ERIC
(re: the Royal Cavalry)
You'd rather try your luck against them?

There are dozens of heavily armed Royal Cavalrymen behind them. Eric may be good... but he's not that good.

Eric spurs his horse, rides right to the edge of the Dark Forest. But the horse stops on a dime, almost knocking Eric and Snow White off its back.

ERIC
(to his horse)
Smart boy.
(to Snow White)
We walk from here.

Eric and Snow White leap off the horse and disappear into the murk of the Dark Forest--

--just as the Royal Guard Captain and his Cavalry approach. Their horses also stop right at the edge of the Dark Forest.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
(drawing his sword)
AFTER THEM!!!

But then--

All of the Cavalrymen RIDE AWAY FROM THE DARK FOREST. The Guard Captain sighs, sheathes his sword and retreats.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCE CHARMANT'S BALLROOM - DAY

A dour BUTLER's deadpan face fills the frame.

BUTLER
(announcing)
Lady Calliope of Freedonia.

PRINCE CHARMANT, 19, now quite handsome, and his aristocratic MOTHER are being walked down a line of POTENTIAL BRIDES. All of whom are trying way too hard to impress the young Prince. The dour Butler introduces the women, one by one.

PRINCE CHARMANT
(unenthusiastic)
Pleasure to meet you.

BUTLER
Princess Phrynia of Graustark.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Pleasure to meet you.

BUTLER
The Baroness of Fenwick.

PRINCE CHARMANT
(slurring his words)
Measure to pleat you.

Prince Charmant's Mother CLEARS HER THROAT LOUDLY, signalling for her son to snap out of it and get with the program.

BUTLER
Lady Rosalind of Vulgaria.

Prince Charmant stops in front of ROSALIND. She's actually pretty hot. But then, she smiles, revealing HORRIBLE TEETH.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Ah... pleasure... to meet you...

ROSALIND OF VULGARIA
Charmed, I'm sure.

But then, a VALET shuffles up to Prince Charmant and whispers in his ear. Something immediately changes in the young Prince's posture and expression.

He turns tail and runs out of the ballroom, leaving his Mother and a whole room full of eager young women hanging.

INT. DUKE CHARMANT'S WAR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

DUKE CHARMANT, 40s, once the King's favorite knight, now a stately, well-dressed noble with a graying beard, pours over maps with a dozen BURLY KNIGHTS.

Prince Charmant charges through the doors, on a mission.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Father!

Duke Charmant and his knights look up.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)
 Snow White... she's in trouble. I
 need men and horses.

Duke Charmant and his knights exchange a look before--

BURSTING INTO HEARTY LAUGHTER. It even looks like Duke Charmant, the Prince's own father, is stifling a laugh.

Prince Charmant just stands there, a bit embarrassed.

DUKE CHARMANT
 Your intentions are knightly...
 (a pause)
 But to go against the Queen -- it
 would be suicide.

WE HOLD on Prince Charmant's devastated reaction...

INT. DUKE CHARMANT'S STABLES - MOMENTS LATER

Prince Charmant BUSTS OPEN a locked door, clearly against his father's orders. He grabs armor, dagger and sword.

He walks down the line of horses, trying to find the swiftest. He stops at a beautiful WHITE STALLION.

And gallops out of the stables.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

It puts all other forests to shame. The trees are thick and gnarled, like giant old men, covered in thick hairy moss.

Eric and Snow White, still chained to one another, move along the forest floor. Slowly and silently.

As they creep, STRANGE SOUNDS filter out of the forest. One moment, they sound like the CALLS OF STRANGE ANIMALS. The next, like EVIL CACKLES. Or maybe it's just the wind...?

Snow White peers deep into the forest. Every now and again, she spots small POINTS OF GREEN AND YELLOW LIGHT, glinting for a moment, then disappearing again. Eyes...? Or just moonlight catching dewy branches...?

And then, Snow White looks up and sees WINGED CREATURES passing in front of the harvest moon. Large birds? Maybe bats? But it looks like they have heads, arms and legs...

Growing more and more uneasy, Snow White looks left, right, up, down, front, back. Time almost slows down. She starts to panic. Losing her grip on reality.

ERIC

Take a deep breath...

Snow White snaps out of her stupor, calms herself.

ERIC

In the Dark Forest, you must always keep your eyes fixed on where you're going... never where you've been.

Snow White nods, continues walking on.

SNOW WHITE

Why are you doing this?

ERIC

Doing what?

SNOW WHITE

Helping me.

ERIC

It's the Way of the Woods.

Despite his ongoing conversation with Snow White, Eric never takes his eyes off the trees. He's always looking, always listening for any possible threat.

SNOW WHITE

The Way of the Woods?

ERIC

Blood for blood. Flesh for flesh.

Life for life. Death for death.

(expounding)

It means I got you into this, now I have to get you out. But that's all I owe you. Nothing more. Nothing less.

SNOW WHITE

So, where are we going?

ERIC

You tell me. Name a destination, and I will help you reach it. But after that, we're through.

SNOW WHITE

The estate of Duke Charmant. And
his son... the Prince.

ERIC

And then, you're on your own.
Agreed?

Eric extends his hand. And Snow White shakes it.

EXT. DEEPER IN THE DARK FOREST - LATER THAT NIGHT

As Eric and Snow White descend further, the narrow path
almost seems to close in on them. The trees seem to move.
Bending down. Closer and closer to Snow White.

Crooked branches swaying in the trees look like skeletal
hands, preparing to pluck Snow White off the ground.

Snow White SHIVERS VIOLENTLY as she walks.

After a moment, Eric sighs, grudgingly removes a fur mantle
from his neck and places it over Snow White's shoulders.

SNOW WHITE

Th-- thank you.

ERIC

I don't want to waste my energy
digging a grave when you freeze to
death.

SNOW WHITE

(concerned)

H-- have we been this way before?

ERIC

It's very possible.

SNOW WHITE

What?!

ERIC

It plays tricks on you, this place.
The trees like to move when you're
not looking. Once the Forest has
you, it doesn't want to let you go.

Just then, a BLACK HAND grabs Snow White's shoulder and spins
her around. She SCREAMS.

Snow White takes a deep breath and sees that it's just a
BRANCH that she caught herself on.

EXT. EVEN DEEPER IN THE DARK FOREST - LATER THAT NIGHT

Snow White stays VERY CLOSE to Eric. She peers into thick trees. Every once in a while, the moonlight causes STRANGE SHADOWS, which look frighteningly FACE-LIKE.

SNOW WHITE

(whispering)

Do you want to play a game?

Eric sighs audibly, *is this girl for real?*

SNOW WHITE

Please, I can't keep holding my breath waiting for a troll to jump out and swallow me whole...

ERIC

(with a snicker)

A troll?

SNOW WHITE

Yes, a troll. Big, scary thing. Lives under bridges. Likes to eat little girls like me.

ERIC

No such thing. And if there were, they certainly wouldn't live under bridges.

SNOW WHITE

Limericks!

ERIC

What?

SNOW WHITE

The game. Let's play limericks.

ERIC

Let's not.

SNOW WHITE

I could whistle.

Snow White puckers her lips--

ERIC

Fine. Let's play.

SNOW WHITE

Good. You go first.

ERIC
Please, after you.

SNOW WHITE
Come on. Say anything. I'll
figure the rhyme.

ERIC
Just one...

Despite their situation, Snow White's face lights up a bit.

ERIC
(after a moment)
I've heard of a princess and
prince...

SNOW WHITE
Who lived at the top of Mount
Quince...

ERIC
The prince lost his breath and
tumbled to death...

SNOW WHITE
She's tumbled with twenty men
since.

Snow White snickers at her cleverness.

ERIC
So, that's how young ladies speak
these days?

SNOW WHITE
You sound like my father.

An awkward moment. Eric averts his gaze.

SNOW WHITE
My turn...
(a moment)
There once was a wicked old
queen...

Eric looks to Snow White, decides to loosen up a bit.

ERIC
Who had an abundance of spleen...

SNOW WHITE
Her skin seemed so fair, but peel
back a layer...

ERIC
And you'd find it was scaly and
green.

Snow White chuckles. And for the first time, Eric cracks the
slightest of smiles.

But then--

They come upon a STONE FOOTBRIDGE spanning a DARK RAVINE.

SNOW WHITE
What is that?

ERIC
It looks like... a bridge.

Eric stops. He doesn't want to cross this bridge, looks
around for other options. But there aren't any.

ERIC
Not a sound...

Snow White nods. Together, they start to tiptoe across the
footbridge, treading very lightly. But as they tiptoe, they
hear SOUNDS from under the bridge. Could be the wind...?

But then-- A HUGE WHIP swings out from the darkness beneath
the bridge, coiling around Snow White's waist.

The whip pulls Snow White down off the bridge, and because
Eric is chained to Snow White, it pulls him down as well.

EXT. DARK RAVINE

SMACK!!! Eric and Snow White land in the muck of a CREEK
BED. Only a thin stream of water trickles by.

And then, Snow White sees that the ground is covered with
BROKEN BONES. She looks to Eric, eyes filled with fear.

CREATURE (O.S.)
BLOOORRRRRGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

They turn back and see--

--a massive, grotesque CREATURE curled up under the bridge,

A TROLL!

It lumbers out from its hiding place. And when it stands,
it's nearly TWENTY FEET TALL. With skin so coarse that it
almost functions as armor.

SNOW WHITE
No such thing as trolls?!

The troll tugs his whip, reeling Eric and Snow White in like fish on a line. Eric draws his axe and tries to slice through the troll's whip -- but the whip is too strong.

He tosses an axe at the troll's forehead. It lodges into the skull, but doesn't seem to do any permanent damage.

SNOW WHITE
How is it not dead?!

ERIC
Trolls have very thick skulls...

The troll plucks the ax out of its skull... and pops it into its mouth, trying to chew and swallow it.

ERIC (CONT'D)
And very small brains.

But the troll keeps reeling Eric and Snow White in.

Eric has an idea. He starts frantically throwing smaller hatchets at the troll. They stick into various parts of its body: knees, thigh, chest. But none seem to slow him down.

SNOW WHITE
What do we do?!

ERIC
Run!

But they run in opposite directions -- Eric towards the troll and Snow White away from it. The chain linking them tightens and they fall to the ground.

ERIC
I said run!

SNOW WHITE
You didn't say which way!

ERIC
Just follow me!

Eric and Snow White run right towards the troll. Eric leaps and grabs onto one of the hatchets stuck in the troll's knee. He's using it as a hand hold. Together, Eric and Snow White climb the hatchets, all the way to the troll's shoulders.

ERIC
Jump!

Eric and Snow White leap down behind the troll's back. Their chain tightens around the troll's neck. STRANGLING HIM!

The earth quakes as the dead troll drops to the ground.

Eric brings Snow White to the troll's head. Snow White eyes the drool streaming out of the troll's mouth with disgust.

SNOW WHITE
(repulsed)
What are you doing?

ERIC
Troll teeth. Sharper than steel.

Eric clamps the troll's jaw shut, BREAKING THEIR SHACKLES.

And then, Eric and Snow White hear another DISTANT GROWL.

ERIC
If you thought the troll was bad,
you should see his mother.

Eric starts to sprint. Snow White struggles to keep up.

SNOW WHITE
Slow down...

ERIC
You run like a girl!

SNOW WHITE
I am a girl!

Snow White stops, catches her breath. Eric keeps running.

SNOW WHITE
Wait! Please!

Eric stops, turns back to Snow White.

SNOW WHITE
We won't make it out of the Dark
Forest alive, will we?

ERIC
We might.

SNOW WHITE
But even if we do... the Queen
won't stop hunting us.

Eric nods slightly. She's right.

SNOW WHITE
So, it's you and I. Together.

ERIC
I said I would lead you out of the
Dark Forest. But I'm not your
friend, and I'm not your father.

SNOW WHITE
Then teach me.

Eric's eyes widen.

SNOW WHITE (CONT'D)
Teach me how to live on my own in
the woods. Teach me how to defend
myself. Teach me to be like you.
(a moment)
That's what you owe me.

Snow White and Eric lock eyes.

ERIC
I'll sleep on it.

CUT TO:

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Ravenna again stands in front of her Magic Mirror, staring at
her reflection. But then, the mirror starts to CLOUD,
conjuring up a **MISTY IMAGE OF THE PAST**. And we travel into--

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DUSK - **[MIRROR VISION]**

A small collection of rickety wagons are circled in the
forest. It looks something like a GYPSY CARAVAN.

INT. RAVENNA'S WAGON - **[MIRROR VISION]**

A YOUNG RAVENNA, not more than 17 or 18, is pulled from bed
by her MOTHER [50s], a wrinkled woman with long hair and
exotic garb. Some sort of gypsy or witch.

YOUNG RAVENNA
Mother...?

RAVENNA'S MOTHER
Hurry, Ravenna. We've not much
time.

OUTSIDE, a sound of POUNDING OF HOOVES starts to crescendo.

Ravenna's Mother whips up a magical MILKY WHITE POTION using a variety of STRANGE INGREDIENTS.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER

(rushed, frantic)

The King is coming to take you away. He will make you his bride, allow you to live in the palace, give you pretty things. He will promise you the world, Ravenna. But when you start to look like me... he will cast you aside.

YOUNG RAVENNA

The King? I-- I don't understand.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER

And the catalyst...

She grabs Ravenna's hand.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Blood of the fairest.

She PRICKS RAVENNA'S FINGER. A single DROP OF RED BLOOD splashes into the MILKY WHITE potion.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER

Drink.

Ravenna's Mother forces her daughter to guzzle down the foul tasting potion.

And then, Ravenna's Mother grabs a curved dagger and gently CUTS A SCRATCH into her daughter's arm.

Ravenna recoils at first, but it soon becomes clear that she feels no pain. Seconds later, the blood is drawn back into her body. And Ravenna's wound miraculously closes up.

THAT'S WHEN WE'LL REVEAL that SOMEONE is watching this scene play out. An EYE peeks through a hole in the wooden siding of the wagon... but we won't know exactly who is watching.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER

(to Ravenna)

Now, your beauty -- and your life -- can never be taken from you.

(a long moment)

Except by one...

That's intriguing. But we won't hear anything else for now.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - [MIRROR VISION]

The KING [40s] rides into the circle of wagons along with a large retinue of knights, including Duke Charmant.

KING

I have come for the fairest woman
in the land! The one who is to be
my bride! Bring her to me!

The King looks to one of his SQUIRES, who holds the familiar MAGIC MIRROR in his hand. The Magic Mirror shows a cloudy image of RAVENNA. This was the mirror's original function: for the King to find the most beautiful women in the land.

KING (CONT'D)

Bring out Ravenna!

After a moment, a wagon door opens. Young Ravenna and her Mother step out. And here, we'll see just young Ravenna is. How frightened. She's just a girl.

The King extends a hand, but Ravenna runs back to her mother.

YOUNG RAVENNA

Please... mother...

But Ravenna's Mother TURNS HER BACK on her daughter. She's trying to make a clean break.

The King nods to Duke Charmant and his knights. They dismount and pull Young Ravenna away from her mother, screaming and crying.

YOUNG RAVENNA (CONT'D)

Mother, why...?

Ravenna falls down into the mud, trying to grab at her mother's feet. Tears well up in her eyes.

YOUNG RAVENNA (CONT'D)

Please! Turn around! Look at me!

Ravenna's Mother doesn't turn around. But she does stop for a moment and speak one last time as her eyes start to mist:

RAVENNA'S MOTHER

Beauty is power...

Duke Charmant and his knights manage to restrain and calm the distraught Ravenna, before pulling her onto a horse.

As Young Ravenna is carried off, she watches her mother disappear into the fog...

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - [BACK TO THE PRESENT]

The misty mirror vision fades. Ravenna's reflection returns. Only now, there's a hint of a tear forming in Ravenna's eye... but she quickly dries it.

After a moment:

RAVENNA
Mirror, Mirror, on the wall,
Who is fairest of them all?

Mirror Man steps out of the mirror and takes shape.

MIRROR MAN
My Queen thou are of beauty rare,
But young Snow White is now more
fair.

All the softness and vulnerability leaves Ravenna's face.
Something must be done about this.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS - LATER

Ravenna charges through the doors and into the still-damaged hallway, surveying a large group of UNSAVORY BOUNTY HUNTERS: short, tall, fat, lean, human and not-so-human.

The most bloodthirsty is FINN [30], a gaunt albino with a bushy moustache. If the stare of Finn's cold eyes doesn't kill you, he'll think of plenty of other ways to get the job done. He's joined by a pair of oddly-matched cronies:

Twin brothers, BILGE-RAT and BRUNO BOMFER. Strange thing is, Bilge-Rat and Bruno look absolutely nothing alike. Bruno is a tall, strapping man-god, ripped from the cover of a romance novel. Bilge-Rat, on the other hand, is short and fat, with heavy nose and ear hair. A toothpick is stuck in his mouth.

Ravenna steps up to Finn. She looks down at his arm and sees that he has a STUMP where his hand should be.

RAVENNA
Who's handy work...?

FINN
Who do you think?

And then, SPRANG!!! A long BARBED SPIKE pops out of Finn's arm stump. He cracks a smile.

Ravenna's eyes widen with pleasure. Then, she turns her gaze on Bilge-Rat and Bruno.

BILGE-RAT
 Bomfer Brothers, at your service,
 Your Beauty.

RAVENNA
 Brothers?

BRUNO
 Twins actually.

BILGE-RAT
 Identical.

RAVENNA
 How could I have missed it?
 (leaning into Finn)
 Good help is so hard to come by.

Finn raises his thick eyebrows in agreement. And Ravenna steps away, up to the front of the hall.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)
 (to the bounty hunters)
 Snow White and the Huntsman have
 made their way into the Dark
 Forest. My guards are not men
 enough to venture after them.
 That's where you lot come in.

As she speaks, WE'LL SPOT a CLOAKED FIGURE standing amongst the brigands and lowlifes. A careful look reveals him to be--

--PRINCE CHARMANT, Snow White's childhood sweetheart.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)
 I want their hearts!

EXT. SNOWY WOODS - DAY - [DREAM]

Eric runs through the trees, bounding over boulders, ducking under branches. Axe in hand. He's chasing after a WHITE WOLF with a BLOODSTAINED MOUTH.

But Snow White isn't with him, and the ground is covered with fresh snow. This must be a dream.

Eric stops, takes aim, hurls his axe... as the white wolf leaps over a fallen tree.

THWACK!!! But the axe only LOPS OFF the wolf's tail.

The wounded beast disappears into the woods.

EXT. DARK FOREST - CAMPSITE - DAWN

Eric WAKES FROM HIS DREAM with a start. He catches his breath, runs his fingers along the white wolf's tail.

He looks around the clearing... sees Snow White sleeping quietly... and then, he sees the dying fire.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER THAT MORNING

The sound of HACKING wakes Snow White up. She looks to Eric.

ERIC
You want to be like me? Here's
your first lesson...

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

Snow White swings the axe -- but misses the log completely. Eric chuckles quietly.

SNOW WHITE
I don't expect to get it right the
first time round.

ERIC
How about the second?

Snow White brings the axe down -- but misses again.

ERIC
Fire's dying.

She swings -- and misses.

ERIC
Don't worry. It's not as if we
need it to eat and keep warm.

Swings -- misses.

ERIC
(grabbing the axe)
Man's work, anyway.

SNOW WHITE
Let GO!!!

Snow White pushes Eric away, swings the axe and SPLITS THE LOG IN TWO. Eric looks to Snow White, almost impressed.

LATER:

Eric and Snow White sit quietly around the fire, munching on scraggly pieces of dried meat.

With pensive eyes, Snow White looks down at her father's GOLD LOCKET in her hand.

ERIC
(after a moment)
Your father... he was a good man.

Snow White manages a smile, realizes that Eric is just trying to be nice.

SNOW WHITE
No he wasn't.
(a pause)
He was a good king. But he was not
a good man.

ERIC
But he was your father...

Snow White nods slightly.

ERIC
(changing the subject)
Not quite so frightening in the
daylight, is it?

Snow White looks around. Now that the sun is up, the Dark Forest seems transformed. More mystical than macabre.

SNOW WHITE
Almost a different place.

ERIC
The creatures of darkness have
yielded to the creatures of light.

SNOW WHITE
(with a chuckle)
Creatures?

ERIC
Sprites, nymphs... fairies...

SNOW WHITE
I don't see any fairies.

ERIC
There's no seeing fairies. Unless
they want to be seen. You can only
feel them.

Snow White leans in a bit. This is interesting stuff...

ERIC (CONT'D)
Butterflies in the stomach. The
flush of warmth at your first kiss.
A shiver running down the spine.
All fairies.

Snow White holds Eric's gaze, almost mesmerized by his words... until she smiles and lets out a chuckle.

SNOW WHITE
You're just having a laugh.

Eric also manages a smile.

BUT THEN, A DEEP, GUTTURAL GROWL from off in the woods.

Eric knows that sound instantly. In a flash, he's pulled the logging axe from the stump.

A powerful BLACK WOLF ambles out of the trees and into the clearing. Bigger than any we've yet seen. He looks hungry.

Eric grips his axe tight. Prepares to toss it.

SNOW WHITE
(whispering, to Eric)
Wait...

The Black Wolf creeps closer and closer to Snow White. She remains perfectly still, steadies her breathing.

The wolf steps right up to Snow White. It's jaws just inches from her face. And then, Snow White reaches a hand out and places it gently on the wolf's chest.

Eric watches this whole scene in amazement.

Snow White gently feeds the wolf her piece of meat. The wolf quickly scarfs it down, then runs back off into the woods.

Eric breathes a huge sigh of relief, flashes Snow White a look, *are you insane?*

SNOW WHITE
It was just hungry.

Snow White looks to the white wolf's tail on Eric's belt.

SNOW WHITE
Not all wolves deserve to die.

AND WE'LL HOLD on Eric's reaction.

EXT. DARK FOREST - TROLL'S FOOTBRIDGE - DAY

Bilge-Rat walks along the bridge, munching on some sort of exotic Dark Forest fruit. Bruno walks beside him.

BILGE-RAT
(reacting to an odor)
Whew... what died...?

Bilge-Rat comes to the edge of the bridge and sees Finn standing over the ROTTING TROLL CARCASS.

BILGE-RAT (CONT'D)
Aye. That'll do it.

DOWN BELOW, Finn examines the scene. He sniffs the ground.

FINN
The Huntsman and the girl. They
make a good team.
(after a moment)
Bruno!

Bilge-Rat pops up behind Finn, impersonating Bruno.

BILGE-RAT
Bruno. At your service...

FINN
You're not Bruno.

BILGE-RAT
We're twins! How could you tell?

Finn sighs -- they look absolutely nothing alike.

And then, Bruno pops up behind Finn.

BRUNO
Used to fool our mum with that one
all the time.

BILGE-RAT
You're good boss, very good.

Bilge-Rat moves to take a bite of his exotic fruit... but Finn skewers the fruit before Bilge-Rat can take a bite.

FINN
(looking at the fruit)
We're gettin' close.

KERSPRANG!!! Finn's spike SPLITS INTO THREE PRONGS,
obliterating the fruit.

EXT. SPARRING GLEN - SUNRISE

Eric sleeps against a fallen tree as SOMEONE sneaks up behind him, DAGGER IN HAND.

It's Snow White. She stops, raises the dagger -- but Eric spins around, grabs Snow White, tosses her to the ground.

ERIC
We'll have to start with the
basics...

EXT. SPARRING GLEN - LATER

Snow White trains, attacking the air with her dagger.

ERIC
Chest, thigh, neck, again!
Chest, thigh, neck, again!

But Snow White drops the dagger, grabs her shoulder IN PAIN.

ERIC (CONT'D)
This won't hurt.

Eric grabs her arm and FORCES IT BACK INTO THE SOCKET. It does hurt. Snow White HOWLS in pain.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Life is hard. Try it again.

A MONTAGE BEGINS:

IN THE LOGGING GLEN

Snow White uses Eric's logging axe to chop away at a THICK TREE. She can barely lift the axe.

ERIC
You've been taught that man and
beast are entirely different
creatures. But in truth, they are
one and the same...

IN THE LONGBOW GLADE

Eric teaches Snow White how to fire a makeshift LONGBOW.

ERIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Take a few steps backwards... and
we become just as wild as the
creatures that fill this forest.*

HOT ON THEIR TRAIL

As Eric trains Snow White, Finn and his cronies track their every move, getting closer and closer.

IN THE LOGGING GLEN

Snow White sweats profusely as she hacks away at the tree. We can almost see her MUSCLES starting to grow.

AT THE RABBIT HUTCH

Snow White chases a small WHITE BUNNY through the trees.

ERIC

My stomach's rumbling!

ELSEWHERE IN THE DARK FOREST

Prince Charmant, riding alone, also tracks Eric and Snow White through the woods. But he's a long way behind them...

IN THE LOGGING GLEN

Snow White continues to chop at the tree, growing tired.

ERIC

In the woods, there are only two kinds of animals. Predator and prey. The hunter and the hunted. Which one are you?!

Snow White starts to ATTACK the tree, chopping EVEN HARDER.

The tree STARTS TO TIP OVER. Snow White starts PUSHING THE TREE. And the towering tree SMASHES to the forest floor.

IN THE DEER CLEARING - NIGHT

As Snow White sleeps, Eric tracks a buck deer through the trees. He lines up a shot... and tosses his axe.

AT THE RABBIT HUTCH

Snow White finally catches the white bunny. But then, she looks to Eric, uneasy about killing the cuddly creature.

ERIC
You slew a troll... and your afraid
of dispatching a silly old rabbit?

SNOW WHITE
But he's so adorable.

ERIC
We'll see how adorable he looks on
an empty stomach...

LATER:

Snow White hungrily tears into the cooked rabbit, savoring the much-needed protein.

And then, Eric drops a newly-made BUCKSKIN OUTFIT into Snow White's lap.

IN THE SPARRING AREA

Snow White, now wearing more forest-appropriate Robin Hood-style attire, spars energetically with Eric.

And amazingly, Snow White forces Eric to the ground.

Eric looks up to Snow White, smiles. Snow White extends her hand, helps Eric to his feet.

And then, Eric gives Snow White a pat on the back.

HOT ON THEIR TRAIL

Finn comes to a seemingly-extinguished campfire. He places his hands over the ashes. Still warm.

He smiles. They're not far off now.

MONTAGE ENDS:

EXT. DARK FOREST MARSH - DAY

The forest is thinner here, but a THICK FOG has settled in, limiting visibility to only a few yards. Eric and Snow White trudge through the SWAMP, murky water up to their waists.

ERIC
Stay at it! We're nearly out of
the forest.

But then, Eric looks through the fog and sees--

A ROWBOAT floating several yards away, obscured by fog. Three BURKA PEOPLE ride in the boat. They wear BURKA-LIKE ROBES, which completely cover their faces and bodies.

Eric and Snow White exchange a look, *who are these people?*

EXT. NARROW RIVER - LATER THAT DAY

The Burka People row their boat...

... as Eric and Snow White ride.

The trees clear, and the boat floats OUT OF THE DARK FOREST.

BURKA LEADER pulls the boat ashore at a RIVER VILLAGE, filled with cottages elevated on stilts to protect from flooding.

EXT. RIVER VILLAGE - MAIN ROAD

Burka Leader guides Eric and Snow White through the muddy streets, where several other BURKA PEOPLE stroll back and forth. A few PEASANT MEN are interspersed in the crowd.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE - LATER

Burka Leader ushers Eric and Snow White inside.

BURKA LEADER

Please sit.

Eric and Snow White sit at a small table. Burka Leader turns away, removes her robes. This is ANNA [50]. She carefully pulls a teapot from the fire.

ANNA

Something to warm you up?

Anna turns forward. She is strikingly beautiful--

--but a LONG, DEEP SCAR runs down the side of her cheek.

Snow White averts her eyes, looks to Eric.

ANNA

A beautiful girl...
(pouring tea)
... and a huntsman.

She pours herself a cup, sits at the table.

ANNA
Men have come looking for you.

Anna turns to Snow White, smiles. She gently runs her fingers down Snow White's face.

ANNA
(tenderly)
You are very beautiful.

Snow White tries to smile.

ERIC
These men, they were sent by the Queen?

ANNA
(nodding)
Our village is hidden. You will be safe... for a time.

Anna catches Snow White staring at her scar.

ANNA
It shouldn't frighten you.

SNOW WHITE
Did the Queen...?

ANNA
She would have locked us in her dungeon... or worse.

SNOW WHITE
You... did that... to yourself?

ANNA
We made a choice. It was the only way to live in peace.

A YOUNG GIRL calls out from a back room.

LILY (O.S.)
Mum, who's there?

ANNA
Friends, my love. Come say hello.

LILY [12] steps into the light. Like her mother, she's extraordinarily beautiful--

--with TWO SCARRED CHEEKS.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - SUNSET

Eric sits near the river's edge. He runs his fingers along a battered map, tracing a route.

SNOW WHITE (O.S.)
The foothills...?

Snow White stands behind Eric, pointing to a range of ROCKY HILLS in the distance. Eric nods.

ERIC
The Duke's realm lies on the other side.

SNOW WHITE
Or... we could just follow the river, see where it takes us...

Snow White plops herself down next to Eric. She seems TIPSY.

ERIC
If we did that, we would never get where we wanted to go.

SNOW WHITE
(slurring her words)
But how could we possibly know where we wanted to go until we had gotten there. Gotten to where we wanted to go, I mean.

Eric spots his FLASK in Snow White's hand.

ERIC
You're too young for this stuff.

Eric snatches his flask... and takes a LONG SWIG for himself.

Snow White looks back, sees Anna sweeping her cottage steps. Lily sits nearby, playing with a ragdoll.

SNOW WHITE
How could she do that to herself... to her own daughter?

ERIC
We do strange things when all hope seems lost.

Snow White looks to the WHITE WOLF'S TAIL on Eric's belt.

SNOW WHITE

The white wolf. Why didn't you
kill it?

ERIC

It was too fast. This was all I
could take.

SNOW WHITE

And you're still hunting it...?

ERIC

It's the Way of the Woods.

SNOW WHITE

But you're not an animal.

ERIC

It's justice--

SNOW WHITE

It's revenge.

(a moment)

You can't spend your whole life
hunting.

Eric looks to Snow White. They share a quiet moment. Then,
they both look back to the setting sun.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE - THAT NIGHT

Snow White sleeps on a tiny cot. Eric sits beside the bed, a
mug of ale in his hand, a bottle at his feet.

ERIC

(raw, tired)

Once upon a time... there was a
wicked Queen... who had a beautiful
stepdaughter... with lips as red as
blood and skin as white as snow...

With glazed eyes, he whispers a STORY to the sleeping Snow
White, knowing full well that she can't hear him.

ERIC (CONT'D)

This Queen, she desired above all
else to be the fairest woman in the
land... so she sent her finest
hunter to kill the girl. But the
hunter, he was a good man... he
saw how young and innocent the girl
was... and he couldn't bring
himself to kill her...

Eric glances back, sees Anna standing behind him.

ANNA (O.S.)
That is a good story... I wonder
how it ends.

EXT. RIVER VILLAGE - THE NEXT MORNING

In the predawn twilight, a BURKA WOMAN scatters seeds for a brood of chickens in front of her cottage.

Out of nowhere, a HAND snatches the burka away, revealing the woman's scarred face. She SCREAMS.

Finn, Bruno and Bilge-Rat have arrived.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE

Eric sleeps with his head on the table and a spilled mug of grog by his hand. A line of drool spills out of his mouth.

LILY
Huntsman! Strangers in the
village.

Eric struggles to open his eyes. He stumbles to a window and spots Finn and his cronies terrorizing the river village.

He takes particular note of the SPIKE on Finn's arm. Snow White pops out of bed, awakened by the noise.

ERIC
We need to go.

Snow White reaches for her dagger.

ERIC
No. Not here.

ANNA
He's coming!

Eric looks out the window, sees Finn ambling up to the door.

ERIC
(to Anna)
Try and get rid of him.

Snow White leads Lily into a back room.

Finn KNOCKS. Eric hides behind the door as Anna opens it.

FINN

Very sorry for the trouble, missus.
Lookin' for an old acquaintance.
Eric's his name, Eric the Huntsman.

Behind the door, Eric DRAWS A HATCHET from his belt.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE - BACK ROOM

Snow White picks a ragdoll up off the floor. The doll has a SCAR stitched across her face.

SNOW WHITE

(distracting Lily)

Is this yours? She's beautiful...
like you.

But Lily breaks away. Snow White can't catch her.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE

Lily runs up to the door, grabs her mother's hand.

FINN

Hello there, young one. Had any
visitors?

Finn squats, comes eyes to eye with Lily. He rubs her hair.

LILY

No...

FINN

You wouldn't lie to me, would ya?

Lily shakes her head, no.

FINN

That's a good little girl.
(to Anna)
How 'bout ya let me inside, missus?
I won't bite.

Finn tries to force his way in. Anna HOLDS THE DOOR SHUT.

ANNA

Please! Leave us be!

Behind the door, Eric GRIPS HIS HATCHET tightly.

BILGE-RAT (O.S.)

Oy, Finn! Have a look at this!

Finn turns, sees Bilge-Rat across the street. He gives Anna and Lily a final once-over before stepping away.

Anna shuts the door, catches her breath.

Eric peeks back out the window but--

SMASH!!! Finn's SPIKE breaks through the glass.

SPRANG!!! The three prongs snap out of the spike.

FINN

I knew you was in there, Huntsman!

Eric and Anna push a table against the door.

ANNA

(to Eric)

Out the back. I'll stay.

(to Lily)

Help them, my love.

ERIC

(to Anna)

Thank you.

Eric moves to leave, but Anna grabs his arm.

ANNA

How will your story end?

EXT. BACK OF COTTAGE

Lily leads Eric and Snow White out through a small back door. Snow White gives Lily a hug.

LILY

Here... take these.

And then, Lily hands Snow White TWO BURKAS.

INT. ANNA'S COTTAGE

Finn throws the door open, storms into the cottage. Anna leaps in front of him, but Finn easily knocks her aside.

EXT. BACK OF COTTAGE

Finn pops out, spots two BURKA-CLAD FIGURES in the distance, disappearing over a small hill. Finn quickly sees through the ruse -- it's obviously Eric and Snow White in disguise.

EXT. DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Eric throws off his burka, starts to untie a boat from the dock. The FULLY ROBED Snow White waits on the shore.

A BOATMAN pops his head out.

BOATMAN
Whatcha think yer doin', mate?

ERIC
Taking your boat.

BOATMAN
Says who?

Eric brandishes a GNARLY HATCHET, threatening the boatman.

BOATMAN
All yours, mate.

ERIC
Hurry, Snow White. Get on!
(no response)
Snow White...?

Eric turns back and sees Snow White, STILL HOODED, caught in Bruno's headlock. Bilge-Rat and Finn stand beside Bruno.

FINN
It's over, Huntsman.

ERIC
Let her go, Finn!

FINN
Only if you ask nicely.

Bruno tightens his grip around Snow White's neck.

FINN
The Queen ain't after you,
Huntsman. It's the girl she wants.
You come along peaceful-like maybe
we cut ya in on the deal.

ERIC
Last deal I made with you cost me
an arm and a leg.
(beat)
Only cost you a hand.

FINN
Very funny, Huntsman.

Despite his words, Finn isn't particularly amused... but realizes that he may have to bargain with Eric.

FINN
An even share.

ERIC
Double it.

FINN
Three against one. You ain't in no position to bargain.

And then-- Eric STOMPS his foot down on a LOOSE PLANK on the dock. The other end of the plank kicks up, sending Bilge-Rat flying into the rushing water.

BRUNO
Oy! That's my brother!

ERIC
Really? I don't see the resemblance.

BRUNO
Why does everyone keep sayin' that?!

ERIC
(to Finn)
Two against one. Minus your hand... and we'll call it even.

FINN
Aye... We got us a deal. For a minute there, I thought ya might've grown a soul.

ERIC
Not yet.

And then, Finn smiles, rips off Snow White's hood--

--but it's NOT Snow White. It's Lily. She BITES Bruno's arm, breaks free and runs off into the village.

EXT. KEELBOAT - FLOATING

Cruising down the river, the ACTUAL Snow White pulls the hood off her head, looks to the shore.

The boat's rotund SKIPPER turns to Snow White.

SKIPPER
What sorta trouble you in, miss?

SNOW WHITE
Shut up and steer!

EXT. DOCK

Finn looks to the river, sees Snow White floating away.

FINN
Mighty clever, Huntsman.

And then, Eric flings a hatchet -- Finn ducks. Eric leaps onto a nearby horse and rides off along the river bank.

EXT. KEELBOAT - FLOATING

The flimsy boat floats into a STRETCH OF RAPIDS. Snow White grabs onto the rigging.

EXT. DOCK

Finn and Bruno knock a few INNOCENT TOWNSPEOPLE off their horses. They mount up, chase after Eric and Snow White.

EXT. KEELBOAT - FLOATING

The Skipper looks ahead, spots a FORK IN THE RIVER. He hits the rudder HARD RIGHT.

SNOW WHITE
What are you doing?

SKIPPER
(pointing left)
We do NOT want to go that way!

SNOW WHITE
Why?!

SKIPPER
Trust me!

Snow White looks to the shore. She sees Bruno riding up behind Eric.

And then, Bruno PULLS A CROSSBOW from his back.

Bruno fires his crossbow at Eric -- misses.

Snow White fires her longbow at Bruno -- but narrowly misses.

Bruno loads another crossbow bolt.

Snow White nocks her final arrow and fires--

--and amazingly, the arrow SLICES RIGHT THROUGH the cinch of Bruno's saddle. The saddle slowly loosens... sending Bruno falling off the back of the horse.

Victorious, Snow White looks back to the Skipper.

But despite his best efforts, the boat FLOATS TO THE LEFT.

SKIPPER

Um... good luck, miss...

And then, the Skipper LEAPS OFF HIS OWN BOAT, swims to shore.

SNOW WHITE

Wait! I don't know how to--

But Snow White doesn't have much time to worry--

--because Finn leaps onto the boat from an overhanging tree.

FINN

Let's see if the little girl can
play with the big boys.

Finn brandishes his spiked hand, swipes at Snow White. She leaps out of the way, draws her dagger and attacks. Chest, thigh, neck. Just like Eric taught her. She forces Finn back, but then, he knocks her dagger away.

FINN

Did the Huntsman teach you that? I
wonder what's in it for him...

Finn puts Snow White in a CHOKE-HOLD.

FINN (CONT'D)

You don't think he's helping you
outta the kindness of his heart...?
He don't care about you, no matter
what he says. He's like me... he
don't care about nothin'.

For a moment, it looks like Snow White might believe him.

SNOW WHITE

That's not true!

Snow White ELBOWS FINN -- Finn falls to his knees.

FINN
(standing up)
Now, that wasn't very ladylike.

Snow White backs up against the rudder. Finn inches closer.
And SPRANG!!! The prongs snap out of his spike.

EXT. RIVER BANK

Still on horseback, Eric sees Finn towering over Snow White on the keelboat.

Eric spots a patch of thick vines hanging over the river.

He leaps out of the saddle, grabs a vine and swings out over the river--

EXT. KEELBOAT - FLOATING

Eric SLAMS INTO FINN. They crash to the deck, brawling.

Meanwhile, Snow White looks ahead and sees--

AN EPIC WATERFALL. Niagara Falls on steroids.

SNOW WHITE
Huntsman! Up ahead!

Eric and Finn look ahead, see the waterfall.

Snow White spots a LARGE BOULDER at the edge of the falls.
She hits the rudder, steering the boat towards the boulder.

The keelboat SLAMS into the boulder.

Snow White leaps off the boat onto the boulder, but the boulder is SLICK. She slides right OVER THE EDGE.

But grabs onto a WET ROOT. It won't hold for long. She dangles over the waterfall, hundreds of feet in the air.

Eric and Finn leap onto the boulder just as the keelboat tumbles over the edge of the waterfall.

They continue their scuffle. Rougher and messier. Their feet slip and slide on the wet boulder as they fight.

Finally, Eric gets the upper hand, forces Finn to his back.

Eric draws his hatchet, raises it above Finn's head.

FINN
 (desperate)
 Wait! The Queen-- I know she
 killed your wife-- you want
 revenge? I can help you!

ERIC
 How?!

Snow White is busy hanging over the edge of the waterfall.
She hears none of this conversation.

FINN
 The girl, Eric!

ERIC
 What do you care about the girl?!

Eric raises his hatchet again.

FINN
 No! The girl-- she's a weapon--
 the only weapon-- with the power--
 the power to destroy the Queen.

WE MOVE IN on Finn's COLORLESS EYES...

FLASH TO:

INT. RAVENNA'S WAGON - DAY - [FLASHBACK]

They are the same COLORLESS EYES that were peeking into the wagon during Ravenna's flashback. A YOUNGER FINN [17], peeks into the wagon, witnessing Ravenna's magical transformation at the hands of her mother.

We pick up the conversation where we left off:

RAVENNA'S MOTHER
 Now, your beauty -- and your life --
 can never be taken from you.
 (a long moment)
 Except by one.

Ravenna's Mothers leans in close, whispering to her daughter.

RAVENNA'S MOTHER
 By fairest blood, it is done...
 And only by fairest blood can it be
 undone.

BACK TO:

EXT. WATERFALL BOULDER - [BACK TO THE PRESENT]

Eric still has Finn pinned on his back.

FINN

Only the fairest woman in the land
can kill the Queen.

(beat)

And guess who that is...

This revelation hits Eric like a freight train.

ERIC

Snow White...

But then, Snow White's hand slips off the wet root--

And Eric is there to grab her.

ERIC

I've got you.

Eric's body slides across the boulder, over the edge. But Finn CATCHES ERIC'S SLEEVE with his spike.

FINN

You took my hand, Eric... now, I
get to return the favor...

Finn grabs one of Eric's hatchets off the boulder. He raises the hatchet, READY TO CHOP OFF ERIC'S HAND--

ERIC

(to Snow White)

Hold your breath!

Eric rips his sleeve loose. He and Snow White plunge towards the churning water far below.

FINN

That's the Way of the Woods.

EXT. CHURNING WATER - MOMENTS LATER

Eric smashes into the swirling, white foam at the bottom of the falls. He tries to swim to the surface, but he's stuck in the spinning torrent where the waterfall meets the river.

SMACK!!! Snow White bullets into the river, close to Eric. Her head hits a rock, starts to bleed.

And then... Eric starts to fade... his eyes close... giving up... as RED BLOOD clouds the WHITE WATER...

EXT. WINTER WOODS - SUNSET - **[THE PAST]**

Or is the RED BLOOD clouding WHITE SNOW?

Eric's wounded wife, Sara, lays out on the snow.

ERIC

SARA!!!

Eric returns from the hunt. He drops a pair of dead rabbits and runs to Sara, holding her head in his arms.

SARA

Eric... it's cold...

Eric throws off his cloak, drapes it over Sara's body.

ERIC

I'm here, Sara. I'm here.

But Sara's breathing stops. Her eyes roll back.

As Eric's eyes fill with tears, he looks off into the woods and sees--

THE WHITE WOLF, staring back at him.

INT. CHURNING WATER - **[BACK TO THE PRESENT]**

And we're back in that primordial underwater dreamworld. Eric floats, seemingly lifeless, in the white water.

FINN (V.O.)

*Only the fairest woman in the land
can kill the Queen.*

And then, Eric's eyes pop open.

EXT. ICE CANYON RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

The river now flows through high-walled ICE CANYONS.

With a SPLASH, Eric smashes up through the surface of the river, carrying Snow White in his arms.

He drags her onto the ICY SHORE.

ERIC

(hysterically)

Snow White -- no -- not like this --

(checking her breathing)

Please, breathe! Breathe!!!

Eric makes a fist and pounds her chest several times. He gives a final pound -- finally, Snow White coughs up water.

SNOW WHITE
(with a smile)
Forgot to hold my breath.

Eric breathes a huge sigh of relief... as Snow White looks around at their ARCTIC SURROUNDINGS.

SNOW WHITE
I don't suppose this is the path to
the Duke's Estate...

ERIC
We've been forced to take a slight
detour.

I/E. RAVENNA'S COACH - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Ravenna rides on a plush seat in an elegant, spacious coach. But even she is not immune to the bumps in the road.

Her Beauty Experts surround her, doing their best to primp and polish the Queen, despite the bumpy ride.

A huge BUMP IN THE ROAD! The Cosmetologist's hand strays, causing a small streak of lipstick to venture away from Ravenna's lips and onto her cheek.

The other two Beauty Experts share a smile, delighting in The Cosmetologist's misfortune.

Ravenna flashes an ICE COLD LOOK at the Cosmetologist, who quickly and carefully cleans up the mess.

COACHMAN (O.S.)
Your Beauty... We've passed into
the realm of KING BLOODAXE.

Ravenna immediately throws open the coach curtains and beholds an AWESOME SIGHT:

In the distance, a terrifying BLACK FORTRESS is set upon a jagged hill, silhouetted against a blood-red sky. It's surrounded on all sides by a sulfurous, hellish wasteland, stripped of trees. Deep quarries, mined by teams of SLAVES in chains, cut into the terrain like scars.

Ravenna may have run her kingdom into the ground... but it's nothing compared to what this King Bloodaxe has done to his.

It brings a look of dread, or perhaps envy, to her eyes.

EXT. KING BLOODAXE'S FORTRESS - RAMPART - LATER THAT NIGHT

KING BLOODAXE [50s] raises a MASSIVE CROSSBOW. He's a dark lord if there ever was one. Pallid skin. Dark, sunken eyes.

KING BLOODAXE
Release the phoenix!

An ATTENDANT releases a MULTICOLORED PHOENIX from a cage. King Bloodaxe takes careful aim and fires. Hitting the bird.

The bird BURSTS INTO FLAME. And from those flames, another PHOENIX emerges. King Bloodaxe aims and fires at this one as well. Another burst of flame. Yet again, a NEW PHOENIX rises out of the ashes soaring even higher into the sky. Bloodaxe aims his crossbow. Can he make it three in a row?

HERALD
I present Queen Ravenna!

Distracted, King Bloodaxe fires and misses the phoenix. It disappears into the clouds. Bloodaxe is not happy. He turns around to face Ravenna who stands beside his HERALD.

RAVENNA
(curtsying slightly)
King Bloodaxe...

KING BLOODAXE
Your Beauty...

Without masking his irritation, Bloodaxe kisses her hand.

EXT. KING BLOODAXE'S FORTRESS - COURTYARD - LATER

King Bloodaxe walks Ravenna through an expansive courtyard where a large PLATOON of his own DARK ARMY is marshalled. He's showing off, trying to both impress and intimidate her.

Like a gold-digging trophy wife surveying her prospective husband's riches, Ravenna takes this all in with eager eyes. She wants this kind of power.

INT. KING BLOODAXE'S DINING HALL - LATER

King Bloodaxe and Queen Ravenna sit on opposite sides of a comically long dining table in the dark and gloomy room. Stuffed and mounted HEADS of LEGENDARY CREATURES hang on the wall -- unicorns, griffins, basilisks -- as hunting trophies.

KING BLOODAXE
How do you find your meat?

Ravenna looks to the blood-raw slab of meat on her plate.

RAVENNA

Quite satisfactory. It's just...
I'm trying to watch my figure.

(beat)

It is my desire to always be
pleasing to the eye... and pleasing
in other ways.

King Bloodaxe doesn't look up from his meat.

RAVENNA (CONT'D)

Your Highness, if I may speak
candidly... I am but a weak-willed
woman who's grown lonely without a
man in my bedchamber. And as for
managing the affairs of an entire
kingdom, well, I simply wouldn't
know where to begin...

King Bloodaxe cleans his mouth, puts his silverware down.

KING BLOODAXE

Since we're being candid. Your
feminine pulchritude is renowned
throughout this and many other
kingdoms. Hips seem of appropriate
girth for child-bearing. And to
combine my holdings with the those
of your late husband, this would be
most desirable. The match seems
like a sound one. I have only one
question...

(a moment)

... about your stepdaughter.

In a minor spasm of rage, Ravenna cuts her meat so hard that
she SHATTERS the plate beneath it.

RAVENNA

(calming down)

Stepdaughter?

KING BLOODAXE

My advisors tell me she is as
beautiful as you, perhaps more so.
Should I not marry her? I would
still inherit your kingdom. My
bride would be younger and more
beautiful... with many more child-
bearing years ahead of her.

Ravenna clears her throat, trying to control her temper.

RAVENNA

It grieves me to say that the young
princess died tragically in a...
hunting accident.

(forcing a smile)

I am afraid you will have to make
due with me.

I/E. RAVENNA'S COACH - PARKED - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Beauty Experts quickly spiff themselves up as the
Coachmen open the coach door for Ravenna. They look to the
Queen with bated breath--

Until she shows them her massive ENGAGEMENT RING topped off
with an enormous BLACK GEMSTONE.

EXT. ICY REALM - DAY

Eric and Snow White trudge through icy tundra, buffeted by
wind and snow. They're very under dressed.

But then, HORNS sound in the distance. Like those signalling
the arrival of Viking invaders. Eric and Snow White look up,
see a SQUAD OF MEN ON HORSEBACK standing upon a high ridge.

Swirling snow will prevent us from seeing them clearly, but
at this distance, they appear to be GREAT BARBARIAN WARRIORS,
clad in fur and armor, and riding upon magnificent steeds.
Like something out of a Frazetta painting. Quite imposing.

And then, the men draw swords... and begin a charge down the
hillside, heading right for Eric and Snow White.

Snow White starts to run -- Eric holds her back.

ERIC

Just wait...

But Snow White decides to hide behind Eric anyway.

The men barrel down the hill... but as they ride closer...
it becomes clear that these "barbarian warriors" are only a
COUPLE OF FEET TALL. And they ride upon MINIATURE PONIES.

The **EIGHT DWARFS** line up in front of Eric, weapons drawn.

ERIC

Come now, Caesar, I thought we were
friends.

Caesar, the eldest DWARF, with the longest beard, speaks up.

CAESAR
We were friends.

NERO, an angry-looking dwarf rides forward.

NERO
Before you BETRAYED US!!!

CAESAR
Do not interrupt me, Nero!

NERO
Apologies.

CAESAR
What be your purpose here, Eric?

ERIC
We seek shelter from the storm.

TIBERIUS, the biggest and burliest dwarf, chimes in.

TIBERIUS
You expect *us* to help *you*?!

NERO
(threatening)
Give us one good reason why we
shouldn't *priggle* you right where
you stand!

The twin dwarfs, HADRIAN and TRAJAN, nod in unison. And together, the dwarfs ride closer to Eric.

CONSTANTINE (O.S.)
Hold...

The other dwarfs stop, heeding the words of CONSTANTINE, a BLIND dwarf with a solemn face.

CONSTANTINE
I smell a woman.

CLAUDIUS, a timid dwarf, tries to join the conversation.

CLAUDIUS
(stuttering)
A wo-- wo-- wo--

HADRIAN
A woman!

TRAJAN
A woman!

And then, Snow White peeks out from behind Eric's back. This elicits a chorus of OOHS and AAHS from the dwarfs.

GUS, a young beardless dwarf, much smaller than all of his brothers, seems particularly smitten with Snow White.

CAESAR

Pardon my brothers, ma'am. Until today, we'd never actually laid eyes on a flesh and blood woman.

SNOW WHITE

It's quite alright. Until today, I'd never seen a dwarf.

The dwarfs go silent, fixing their gaze on Snow White.

SNOW WHITE

Have I... said something wrong?

The dwarfs don't respond. Eric leans in close to Snow White.

ERIC

They don't like to be called...
(whispering)
... *dwarfs*.

Snow White looks to the dwarfs, puts on a friendly smile.

SNOW WHITE

So, about that shelter...?

INT. DWARF ICE CAVE - LATER THAT NIGHT

In contrast to the frozen world outside, the inside of this ICE CAVE HOME is warm and flame-lit. Furs cover the floor.

The dwarfs sit around a large, low, round table. Huge bowls of steaming, meaty stew rest in front of each dwarf. Places have been made for Eric and Snow White as well.

Constantine leads his brothers in a mystic DWARF PRAYER.

As soon as the prayer ends, the dwarfs dive in: slurping, swallowing, spilling. Bits of meat fly everywhere.

Snow White looks around at the ravenous little men, clearly a bit disgusted by their boorish behavior.

Just as Snow White prepares to eat a bite of stew herself-- SPLASH!!! Nero spills his stew onto the table.

And then, Nero starts to lick it up off the table.

SNOW WHITE

Disgusting!

Snow White slaps Nero's hand. The dwarfs go silent. Nero angrily recoils and draws his sword--

But then, the whole table BREAKS INTO LAUGHTER. Nero grudgingly laughs, sheathes his sword and sits back down.

Meanwhile, Eric taps Caesar on the shoulder, WHISPERS...

ERIC

Caesar... there's something we need to discuss.

CAESAR

Not now, Huntsman.

ERIC

I can help you settle your score with the Queen...

Caesar turns and looks Eric in the eye, intrigued.

INT. THORNY FOREST - THAT NIGHT

Finn stands amidst giant, thorny vines. He's talking to someone. Or something. Whoever he's talking to is BUZZING AROUND in the air above. At a lightning-fast speed.

FINN

There's two. A huntsman and a girl. Queen wants them both outta the way before her wedding starts. And to get the job done right, we need a little extra... *manpower*.

NEARBY, Bruno and Bilge-Rat converse, clearly frightened. They must have reunited with their old boss, Finn.

BILGE-RAT

Funny, I thought they'd be smaller.

BRUNO

And, um... less *evil*...

REVEAL: a troop of at least a dozen winged FAIRIES. Three feet tall. But these aren't normal fairies. They are strong and menacing, with bat-like wings and sharpened teeth.

The FAIRY CAPTAIN zooms towards Bilge-Rat and Bruno, clutching a thorny spear. Bilge-Rat and Bruno flinch.

FAIRY CAPTAIN

This ain't a fairy tale.

INT. ICE MINE - NEXT DAY

The icy walls glitter with gemstones. A MINE CAR TRACK snakes around stalactites and stalagmites. The eight dwarfs work at various jobs throughout the cave.

Snow White, now wearing a thicker fur ensemble, dips her feet into a STREAM. The stream spins a waterwheel, powering a conveyor belt and an ore crusher.

Across from Snow White, Gus, the beardless dwarf, pans for gold in the stream. After a moment, Gus finds a small SAPPHIRE. He gives it to Snow White with a smile.

But then, Gus playfully splashes Snow White with water.

SNOW WHITE

Oh, you're in trouble now!

The gentle splashing becomes a playful water fight.

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE ICE MINE

Eric conspires with Caesar, Nero and Constantine.

ERIC

I have Snow White, but I need a way to get her inside, understand?

CAESAR

(amused)

Aye, aye... you need our help to storm the palace.

ERIC

It's the Way of the Woods.

NERO

We no longer abide in the woods!

ERIC

Because the Queen drove you out!

NERO

With your help!

ERIC

(apologetic)

I was a different person then.

CAESAR

And you expect us to forgive you overnight?

ERIC

I don't want forgiveness. I want
the Queen dead. And so should you.

Nearby, Constantine taps gemstones with a hammer, listening to the sound they make. He interjects:

CONSTANTINE

Huntsman. Why not tell the girl
 about her destiny... to kill the
 witch-queen and free this land?

ERIC

What if she's afraid? What if she
 runs?

CONSTANTINE

And what if she sees eye to eye
 with you?

ERIC

As soon as she's found her
 strength, then I'll tell her.

SNOW WHITE (O.S.)

Tell me what...?

Eric spins around, sees Snow White standing behind him.

ERIC

It's nothing.

SNOW WHITE

Can I speak with you?

Eric nods, but as they step away from the dwarfs--

A DARK FIGURE creeps up behind them...

SNOW WHITE

I just wanted to thank you... for
 everything...

Snow White pulls off her LOCKET and places it in Eric's hand.

ERIC

This was your father's. I can't--

Eric tries to hand it back, but Snow White won't take it. She smiles, fastens the locket around Eric's neck before he has a chance to stop her.

SNOW WHITE

Too late. What do you think?

ERIC

It's very... *shiny*. Thank you.

But then, a BLADE cuts out of the darkness, comes to rest against Eric's neck. The Dark Figure steps out of the blackness. It's Prince Charmant, son of Duke Charmant!

PRINCE CHARMANT

Move and I'll cut your throat!

Eric seems more irritated than frightened.

Snow White's eyes light up when she sees Prince Charmant. It's been many years since their eyes last met.

SNOW WHITE

Prince Charmant?!

PRINCE CHARMANT

Snow White...

Eric sees Prince Charmant's hand nervously shaking.

ERIC

Take a few deep breathes, boy.
Should help steady the nerves.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Do you remember what I whispered in
your ear that day? The last time
we saw each other.

SNOW WHITE

You said... you'd come back for me.

Prince Charmant and Snow White get lost in each other's eyes for a moment, remembering old times. Until...

ERIC

(wryly)
How romantic.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Shut your mouth!
(to Snow White)
I have a horse outside.

SNOW WHITE

Just let him go. Then we can talk.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Why are you protecting him? He's a
killer--

SNOW WHITE

No -- I mean, yes -- but now he's
helping me -- it's complicated --

PRINCE CHARMANT

How complicated can it be?

ERIC

Enough chit-chat.

Eric twists Prince Charmant over his shoulder, SLAMS HIM HARD
into the rock floor. Snow White runs to Prince Charmant.
He's knocked out cold, with a bloody forehead.

SNOW WHITE

(to Eric)

What was that for?

ERIC

(playfully)

He was trying to kill me.

INT. DWARF ICE CAVE - BACK ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Prince Charmant lays on a cot. He slowly opens his eyes...
and sees Snow White coming into focus. She's leaning over
him, carefully tending to his wounded head.

PRINCE CHARMANT

I told you I'd come back.

SNOW WHITE

I thought you'd forgotten about me.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Forgotten? I think about you every
day. My father, he wouldn't let me
leave his estate. But look--

Prince Charmant pulls a STACK OF LETTERS out of his satchel.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)

Letters... all addressed to you...
all returned...

Snow White smiles, moves to open one of them.

PRINCE CHARMANT

You can read them later. We need
to go.

Prince Charmant tries to stand, but quickly gets woozy.

SNOW WHITE

You need to rest. Come here...

PRINCE CHARMANT

If I was able to track you here,
then the Queen's men can't be far
behind.

SNOW WHITE

We're safe. The Huntsman's gotten
me this far.

Prince Charmant rolls his eyes.

PRINCE CHARMANT

You can't stay here forever. Come
with me to my father's estate. We
can leave tonight. Right now!

SNOW WHITE

And the Queen will follow me there.
I'll endanger you, your family...
everything you care about.

(a moment)

Not even your father can protect me
from the Queen. No one can.

Snow White pauses for a moment, lost in thought.

SNOW WHITE (CONT'D)

I'll keep running and running...
and I won't be able to stop...
until someone brings Ravenna down.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Someone will. Someday.

(a moment)

But that someone isn't you.

Snow White smiles, comforted.

SNOW WHITE

How did you know I was in danger?

PRINCE CHARMANT

I got word that Ravenna was sending
men to track down a girl with skin
as white as snow, hair as black as
ebony and lips as red as blood.

(moving closer)

They were looking for the fairest
woman in the land. And there's
only one girl I know who fits that
description...

They lean in, but just before their lips meet--

ERIC (O.S.)
Getting late, isn't it?

Eric peeks his head into the room. Snow White and Prince Charmant quickly break apart. They look back to Eric, who stands in an open doorway.

SNOW WHITE
I suppose so...

INT. DWARF ICE CAVE - MAIN ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

As the rest of the cave sleeps, Snow White sits alone at the main table, reading all of Prince Charmant's returned LOVE LETTERS by candlelight. She smiles as she reads.

ERIC (O.S.)
I'm sorry... about earlier...

Eric steps into the room.

SNOW WHITE
No, we shouldn't have... I
shouldn't have... it's just, we
have a history.

ERIC
I think you have more than that.

SNOW WHITE
(opening up a bit)
I always hoped we would be together
again someday. But now that we
are... in so many ways, he's still
the same boy I grew up with,
playing at being a knight in
shining armor, rescuing his damsel
in distress.
(a moment)
But I am not a damsel. Not
anymore.

Eric nods proudly -- she most certainly isn't.

SNOW WHITE (CONT'D)
I can't help but think that maybe
there's someone out there... more
suitable for me...

Eric realizes where Snow White is going with this, tries to steer the conversation in a different direction.

ERIC

I saw how you were looking at each other, Snow White. I used to look at someone like that... a long time ago. My advice, such as it is: if there was ever love between you... then there is still love between you. It doesn't die.

(a moment)

So, you fell in love with a boy, now you'll have to learn to love the man he's become.

INT. ICE MINE - NEXT DAY

The dwarfs are back at work. Caesar, Nero and Constantine carefully inspect their gemstones as Eric argues with them.

ERIC

And that's the final word?

CAESAR

(re: gemstones)

Buy yourself an army. Take all you need.

ERIC

Don't you want your revenge?

NERO

This isn't about our revenge!

ERIC

Was I talking to you, little man?

CAESAR

Don't speak to my brother that way!

NERO

Aye! Don't speak to his brother that way!

CAESAR

Nero!

(bluntly, to Eric)

Eric. You are the finest hunter I have ever known... and I've hunted with many, short and tall alike. But some quarry, even the Huntsman cannot catch. We've moved on. Maybe you should too.

Eric turns away, dejected -- but SOMETHING'S WRONG.

ERIC
Snow White... where did she go?

EXT. ICE MINE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric runs out of the cave, sees Snow White and Prince Charmant standing beside a LOADED HORSE in the icy clearing.

ERIC
What's this?!

PRINCE CHARMANT
She's coming with me!

SNOW WHITE
I haven't exactly agreed yet.
(to Eric)
And what about all those things you
said last night?

ERIC
I was drunk!
(grabbing Snow White)
Get inside.

PRINCE CHARMANT
You're not her father!

ERIC
You'll get no disagreement from me
on that point.

PRINCE CHARMANT
I can protect her. That's more
than anyone can say about you!

Eric lets out a small snort of laughter.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)
Something funny?

ERIC
She doesn't need protecting, boy.
Even if she did, I doubt you'd be
the "man" for the job.

PRINCE CHARMANT
(drawing his sword)
Shall I prove it to you?

ERIC
(drawing his axe)
Oh, I wish you would.

INT. ICE MINE

The dwarfs are busy at work throughout the mine.

BUT ON A HIGH STALACTITE

There's an EVIL FAIRY perched. The fairy pulls a BOMB from his belt. He lights it, tosses it down.

KA-BLAM!!! The bomb tears into the cave wall. Rocks fly.

The EVIL FAIRIES have come.

EXT. ICE MINE ENTRANCE

Before Eric and Prince Charmant come to blows, an EXPLOSION echoes out of the cave. Eric, Snow White and Prince Charmant look back towards the cave.

ERIC

Wait here.

Eric runs back into the mine.

INT. ICE MINE

Eric storms back in, sees the chaos -- as bombs explode, the dwarfs use their mining tools to fend off the flying fairies.

CONSTANTINE

Huntsman! BEHIND YOU!!!

Eric ducks and rolls, narrowly avoiding a thrown spear.

AMIDST THE CHAOS

Our old pals, Bilge-Rat and Bruno appear, dodging spears and other shrapnel. They're not really interested in capturing Eric and Snow White-- It's the gemstones they're after.

BILGE-RAT

Bit slippery over 'ere.

With that, Bilge-Rat SLIPS on the ice, FALLS on his behind. Bruno tries to help him up, but he too SLIPS. After a few failed attempts, they manage to get to their feet and into--

THE DWARF'S STORE ROOM

Filled with glittering gemstones. Bilge-Rat and Bruno exchange a wide-smile, almost hypnotized. They immediately go to work filling up a BURLAP SACK.

EXT. ICE MINE ENTRANCE

The sound of another explosion echoes out of the cave.
Prince Charmant extends his hand to Snow White.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Now's our chance! Hop on, quick!

But then... Snow White runs back into the mine.

INT. ICE MINE - MOMENTS LATER

Snow White stumbles right into the action. Eric spots her.

ERIC
GET OUT!!!

But an EXPLOSION knocks Eric and Snow White to the floor.

Snow White sits up, rubs her head, and hears a loud BUZZING
OF WINGS. The Fairy Captain drops down in front of her.

Snow White draws her dagger, but the fairy knocks it away.

SNOW WHITE
Huntsman...

But Eric is on the other side of the cave, picking himself up
off the ground. He's disoriented. Vision blurred.

SNOW WHITE
HUNTSMAN!!!

Snow White's plea is drowned out by the sound of HOWLING.
Eric looks to a SIDE TUNNEL and sees the ghostly form of--

A WHITE WOLF

Eric shakes his head, looks again -- THE WOLF IS GONE.

Still disoriented, Eric ignores Snow White's cries. He
stumbles into the tunnel where he saw the white wolf.

MEANWHILE, the Fairy Captain closes in on Snow White.

But then--

Prince Charmant sprints into the cave, tackling the Fairy
Captain, saving Snow White.

The Fairy Captain takes flight, PULLING PRINCE CHARMANT UP
OFF THE CAVE FLOOR. Prince Charmant holds on for dear life.

IN THE DWARF'S STORE ROOM

Bilge-Rat climbs up to a HIGH SHELF to get access to more of the dwarfs' gemstones.

BILGE-RAT

Catch!

Bilge-Rat starts tossing large jewels down at Bruno. Bruno DROPS HIS SACK and tries to catch them with his bare hands. Many of the stones hit him on the head.

BILGE-RAT

With the sack, you bleedin' idiot!

BRUNO

Oh, right, that does make more sense.

Bruno opens up the sack, catching more gemstones.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHASM

Still looking for the white wolf, Eric has ventured deep inside the ice cave system. He finds himself alone at the edge of a deep precipice. Silence for a moment.

Until a SPIKE whips through the darkness, slices Eric's leg. Eric falls to his knees.

Finn leaps out of the darkness. Eric hops to his feet, draws a hatchet, attacks Finn.

Finn parries frantically with his spiked arm. SPRANG!!! SPRANG!!! SPRANG!!! His three prongs snap open and shut like giant scissors.

Eric sidesteps, grabs hold of Finn's stump-spike apparatus and PULLS WITH ALL HIS MIGHT.

ERIC

Nifty little toy.

Eric tosses the stump-spike apparatus into the chasm. He slams the weakened Finn against the rock wall and examines Finn's ARM STUMP.

ERIC

I think your head deserves the same treatment.

Eric brings his hatchet to Finn's neck.

FINN

I got news for ya, Huntsman.
(beat)
My hand ain't the only thing ya cut
off.

Finn looks to the WHITE WOLF'S TAIL hanging from Eric's belt.

And then, Finn closes his eyes and opens them again. But they aren't normal human eyes anymore... they are savage WOLF EYES! WHITE HAIRS sprout from Finn's face.

ERIC

You...?

Finn's teeth grow long and sharp. A snout BURSTS OUT from his face. He drops to all fours, SCREAMS IN PAIN. The scream becomes a HOWL. And in moments, Finn has fully transformed INTO A WHITE WOLF.

With a MISSING PAW and a MISSING TAIL.

It must have been Finn, in the form of the white wolf, who was sent by Ravenna to kill Eric's wife.

Eric grips his hatchet tight. The white wolf snarls. And they lay into each other.

INT. ICE MINE - MAIN CHAMBER

As the dwarf-fairy battle rages all around, Bruno and Bilge-Rat dart out of the store room, carrying their gemstone sack.

But Bilge-Rat spots a spear heading his way.

BILGE-RAT

Duck!

Bilge-Rat and Bruno duck. But the spear GRAZES THE BURLAP SACK, ripping it. Bilge-Rat and Bruno don't see it happen.

BRUNO

Ha! Luck's on our side, brother!

But as they run out of the cave, the tear in the sack grows... and precious gemstones start to slowly trickle out of the bag. Unbeknownst to Bilge-Rat and Bruno.

MEANWHILE, ON THE ICE CAVE CEILING

Prince Charmant fights with the Fairy Captain as they fly haphazardly throughout the cavernous mine.

But then, Prince Charmant pulls a dagger, SLICES one of the Fairy Captain's wings off. The wounded Fairy Captain spirals towards the ground. Prince Charmant breaks away--

--but he SLAMS onto the rock floor, UNCONSCIOUS.

The wounded Fairy Captain limps towards Prince Charmant's body, raises his spear, ready to deliver the deathblow.

But nearby, Snow White grabs a rope, quickly TIES A LOOP. She tosses the rope, lassos the Fairy Captain's neck and pulls tight, strangling the Fairy Captain.

ELSEWHERE IN THE ICE CAVE

Things are not going well. The evil fairies have all of the dwarfs backed against the wall. They're too powerful.

But then-- There's a LOUD WHISTLE. So loud, in fact, that all the dwarfs and fairies stop and turn towards the sound.

It's Gus, the young beardless dwarf. He's in a mine car, and he's got one of the evil fairies TIED UP next to him. Gus hits a lever. The mine car starts to race down the track.

The evil fairies turn away from their dwarf victims and chase after Gus. He leads them on a wild goose chase... all the way to the towering ORE CRUSHER MACHINE.

And then, Gus simply smiles and pulls out--

--ONE OF THE FAIRY BOMBS. He tosses it into the ore crusher. Moments later, the whole apparatus EXPLODES in a storm of flame and twisted shrapnel.

The evil fairies are all DISINTEGRATED in the blast. Gus is knocked to the floor by the shockwave. Motionless.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHASM

Eric and the white wolf trade blows, but Eric finally gets a CLEAN SHOT. As the wounded wolf tumbles towards the edge of the chasm, it TRANSFORMS BACK into a severely wounded Finn. Eric grabs him by the neck. And then, Finn starts laughing.

FINN

You're too late, Huntsman.

(explaining)

Queen marries King Bloodaxe. Noon tomorrow. A new darkness'll sweep over this land. Gonna make the Queen's reign of terror look downright benevolent.

Eric's eyes widen at this new piece of information. But then, he gets tough again.

ERIC
Not my concern.

FINN
That's the Huntsman we know and love! Couldn't give a damn about the problems of the world. Only out for himself...

Finn's words clearly get to Eric. But then, Eric's face hardens... he backs Finn up against the chasm.

FINN
The Queen -- she sent me after your wife -- kill her if you want revenge --

ERIC
I plan to.

FINN
(pleading)
If I deserve to die, then so do you! All those women in the dungeon. You helped put 'em there. We're cut from the same cloth. There ain't no difference 'tween you and me.

ERIC
There's one: I'm alive.

With a mighty heave, Eric tosses Finn into the chasm.

ERIC (CONT'D)
You're dead.

EXT. ICE FLOE - LATER THAT DAY

The SURVIVING DWARFS -- all SEVEN of them -- Caesar, Nero, Constantine, Claudius, Hadrian, Trajan and Tiberius stand at the edge of a vast arctic sea, holding back tears. Eric, Snow White and Prince Charmant nearby.

NERO
Didn't even have a chance to earn his beard...

The lifeless body of the youngest dwarf, Gus, lays out on the bed. He sacrificed himself to save his brothers.

Constantine drops a small RED RUBY into Gus' mouth. He holds his hand out, utters a SOLEMN DWARF PRAYER. And then, Gus' lips TURN TO STONE, followed by his face and neck. In moments, Gus is completely TRANSFORMED INTO STONE.

CONSTANTINE
May his spirit float Northward, to
the Dark Fells, and the dwelling-
place of our ancestors.

The seven dwarfs use their pickaxes to break off the chunk of ice. The ice floats out to sea, carrying Gus' body with it.

ERIC
(quietly)
Caesar... I'm sorry--

CAESAR
(interrupting)
Blood for blood. Flesh for flesh.

ERIC
(finishing the rhyme)
Life for life. Death for death.

CAESAR
You do not have our forgiveness,
Eric. But you have our aid, if you
desire it.

It's all too much for Snow White. The emotions overwhelm her, and she tearfully storms back towards the dwarf cave.

Prince Charmant moves to follow her, but Eric stops him.

ERIC
Stay here.

INT. DWARF ICE CAVE - WASHROOM

Snow White runs inside and locks the door behind her. She steps to a WASH BASIN. Her tears splash down into the water, distorting her reflection.

And then, she reaches for a STONE KNIFE.

ERIC (O.S.)
(banging on the door)
Snow White! Open the door!

Snow White brings the knife to her cheek, closes her eyes.

Eric finally throws open the door, sees Snow White.

SNOW WHITE

We do strange things when all hope
seems lost.

ERIC

Snow White... put it down...

SNOW WHITE

My beauty... the Queen won't stop
until she's taken it from me. What
if I don't give her the chance...?

Unbeknownst to Eric and Snow White, ALL SEVEN DWARFS peek
their heads into the room, spying on the scene. And then,
Prince Charmant pokes his head in as well, eavesdropping.

Meanwhile, Snow White presses the blade against her cheek.

SNOW WHITE

I'll be free.

ERIC

Snow White... there's something I
have to tell you...

Snow White listens intently... as do Prince Charmant and the
seven dwarfs...

ERIC

This is hard for me to say... and I
would have told you sooner...

NERO

(whispering)
Just spit it out.

Claudius slaps Nero on the back of the head.

ERIC

By fairest blood it is done...
And only by fairest blood can it be
undone.

Prince Charmant and the dwarfs exchange puzzled looks.

ERIC

(explaining)
Only the fairest woman in the land
can kill the Queen.

Snow White can hardly believe her ears. It's almost as if
the wind is knocked out of her.

She drops the stone knife. Eric quickly picks it up.

SNOW WHITE
You've been using me. All this
time. For your revenge.

ERIC
No--

SNOW WHITE
I trusted you...

Snow White rips the locket from Eric's neck.

SNOW WHITE
Get out!

Snow White sees Prince Charmant and the dwarfs peeking in..

SNOW WHITE
All of you! Get out!

Eric nods to Prince Charmant and the dwarfs. He closes the door, leaving Snow White alone in the wash room.

INT. DWARF ICE CAVE - LATER

Eric and Prince Charmant argue as the dwarfs sit around their round table.

PRINCE CHARMANT
How could you not have told her?

ERIC
You and I can sort this out later.
We've got bigger things to worry
about now.

The dwarfs listen intently, *what's Eric talking about?*

ERIC (CONT'D)
The Queen means to marry King
Bloodaxe. Tomorrow at noon.

The dwarfs let out a collective GASP.

PRINCE CHARMANT
(truly disturbed)
My father and the king fought for
decades to keep Bloodaxe at bay.
If he marries the Queen...
(a moment)
There will be no hope for us.

ERIC
Maybe a glimmer...

Eric dips his fingers in lampblack and scrawls a diagram on the white cave walls.

ERIC
There's only one safe passage from
Bloodaxe's realm into our own.

PRINCE CHARMANT
The Perilous Pass.

ERIC
We'll hijack Bloodaxe's wedding
caravan, smuggle Snow White into
the palace and use her to kill the
Queen before the wedding begins...

PRINCE CHARMANT
Sounds risky to me...

ERIC
Luckily, it's a risk you won't have
to share.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Pardon me?

ERIC
You'll put us in danger.

Prince Charmant stands and draws his sword.

PRINCE CHARMANT
I followed you through the Dark
Forest... further than any of my
line have dared venture before. I
risked my life to save Snow White.

Eric SLAPS THE BLADE away, GRABS Prince Charmant's neck.

ERIC
If you had saved Snow White, she
would never have learned to save
herself.

Eric drops the Prince, SHATTERING one of the dwarfs' chairs.
The dwarfs CRINGE at the destruction of their property.

But Prince Charmant hops to his feet, charges Eric. Eric
sidesteps, easily trips Prince Charmant. Prince Charmant
tumbles to the ground, DESTROYING several dwarf beds. Again,
the dwarfs cringe.

ERIC
Why are you doing this?

PRINCE CHARMANT
Because I love her! Do you even
know what that means?
(beat)
How could you? You were going to
trade her for a handful of gold--

ERIC
It was more than a handful.
(beat)
And I have loved more than you can
possibly imagine!

Prince Charmant SLASHES at Eric with his sword.

ERIC
You want to play rough? Let's play
rough!

Prince Charmant attacks Eric with a flurry of fencing moves,
skilled but dainty. As Eric and Prince Charmant fight, they
leave a WAKE OF DESTRUCTION throughout the dwarfs' home.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Maybe you're jealous.

ERIC
Jealous?

PRINCE CHARMANT
That Snow White wants to be with me
and not you.

ERIC
I think you have the wrong idea
about me, boy.

Eric forces Prince Charmant up against a wall.

ERIC
Listen carefully. I will say this
only once. Snow White doesn't need
a protector. Not anymore. She
needs a partner, and I won't always
be there for her. Understand?

After a moment, Prince Charmant nods. Eric backs off.

But then, Prince Charmant takes a swing, knocks Eric to the
ground, OBLITERATING the dwarfs' dinner table.

Eric sits up, licks the blood off his lips and GRINS.

PRINCE CHARMANT
And Snow White... who's going to
tell her about this plan?

ERIC
We both will. Together.

LATER:

Eric and Prince Charmant open the washroom door--

But the room is empty. They look to a high window. IT'S
WIDE OPEN. Powerful wind blows snow into the washroom.

Eric and Prince Charmant share a worried look.

CUT TO:

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

Ravenna stares at herself in her Magic Mirror. She's being
fitted by her Beauty Experts for her WEDDING DRESS. As
usual, the Beauty experts jostle behind her back, fighting
for their territory.

Ravenna holds a sample of WHITE FABRIC up to her chest,
seeing how it plays against her skin.

RAVENNA
Such beautiful material... It will
be a shame to see it spangled with
my new husband's blood on our
wedding night.

But then, the Royal Guard Captain escorts Bilge-Rat and Bruno
in. Bruno still carries the burlap SACK. And, somehow, gems
are still trickling out of it. One drops every few feet.
Bilge-Rat and Bruno still seem clueless about the leak.

BILGE-RAT
Before you say anythin', Your
Beauty... we knew you'd be a bit
peevish with us for not comin' back
with the girl like you wanted...

BRUNO
But don't worry. We did bring ya a
proper weddin' gift...

BILGE-RAT
To help ease your pain.

Bilge-Rat reaches into the sack just as the last gemstone falls out of it. He looks to Bruno, concerned. Bruno flips the sack inside out, sees that all the gems are gone.

RAVENNA

And Finn...?

Bilge-Rat and Bruno shake their head in unison, *no*.

RAVENNA

That's the last time I send a man
to do a woman's job!

(calming herself)

Tell me exactly where Snow White
is... and maybe, just maybe, I
won't use you to dye my wedding
carpet.

BRUNO

Sounds fair to me.

BILGE-RAT

She's with the dwarfs. In the Ice-
Lands.

Ravenna ponders for a moment.

RAVENNA

(to Guard Captain)

Give them a seat of honor at my
ceremony.

Bilge-Rat and Bruno are escorted out of the throne room,
thanking Ravenna profusely and bowing obsequiously.

RAVENNA

SPECK!!!

A HATCH in the floor POPS OPEN. Speck, Ravenna's jittery,
bespectacled alchemist, pops his head out of the hole.

RAVENNA

We have work to do.

INT. ALCHEMY CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

This is the dark underbelly of Ravenna's posh throne room.
Filled with cobwebs, potions and jars of magical ingredients.

Speck walks down a line of old wooden shelves, picking up
ingredients. Ravenna walks behind him.

LATER:

Ravenna oversees as Speck frantically whips together strange ingredients in oddly-shaped vials.

RAVENNA (V.O.)(CONT'D)
*Fang of asp, rabbit's toe and
 arrowroot to send a shot of deadly
 poison to her heart...*

Speck brings the mixture to a boil... as Ravenna dips an apple into it. But not just any apple. A RED-AND-WHITE apple, clearly plucked from the apple tree in the courtyard.

LATER:

Speck combines different ingredients in a large glass jug.

RAVENNA (V.O.)(CONT'D)
*Mandrake, mugwort and musk of eel
 to hide my true form...*

Ravenna pours the liquid over herself, SCREAMING IN PAIN.

She remains shrouded in darkness, so we won't see HER FULL TRANSFORMATION clearly just yet. But we'll watch as her spine starts to curve, her body starts to hunch and her hair begins to turn bone-white.

LATER:

Speck carefully grinds up a powder with a mortar and pestle.

RAVENNA (V.O.)(CONT'D)
*And essence of thunder, with a
 pinch of powdered lightning... to
 speed my flight.*

Speck pours the powder into his hand. And then, he BLOWS THE POWDER onto Ravenna, still partially hidden in the darkness.

Ravenna starts to laugh, but the LAUGHTER transforms into the WILD CACKLES of birds. Wings sprout out of the darkness. And Ravenna transforms into a flock of red-eyed RAVENS.

The ravens zoom past Speck and out a small window.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENDLESS ICE FIELDS - SUNSET

Blizzard conditions. It's hard to see even a few feet.

But then, Snow White appears out of the snow. Shivering. Delirious. Tears freezing before they leave her eyes.

Snow White looks to the west, sees the sun starting to set.
She doesn't have long.

But then--

SOMETHING darts past her. Over her. Behind her.

Something colorful. Something beautiful. Something warm.

FAIRIES

Vaguely human-like. But not quite. With translucent
dragonfly wings that sparkle in the setting sun.

And when they arrive, the wind starts to die down, the snow
dissipates and the sky clears.

The fairies dance and twirl around Snow White's freezing,
barely conscious body, engulfing her in light... in warmth...
in life. They are here to protect her.

But then, the sun starts to disappear beneath the horizon.

And BLACK-WINGED CREATURES start to chase off the fairies.

RAVENS

Before long, the sun sets, leaving only faint moonlight to
illuminate the ice fields. No more fairies. No more warmth.

Snow White drops to her knees.

OLD CRONE (O.S.)
Good evening, dearie...

Snow White turns around and sees an ugly OLD CRONE limping
out of the darkness. It's Ravenna in disguise.

OLD CRONE (CONT'D)
(sweetly)
Is everything alright, dearie...?

SNOW WHITE
(a bit delirious)
I... I can't believe I was so
foolish... I thought he really... I
thought he really cared...

Snow White looks down at the locket in her hand. And then,
she tosses it away.

OLD CRONE
That's over now...

The Old Crone reaches into her robes and presents her ripe red-and-white apple to Snow White.

OLD CRONE (CONT'D)
 Something to warm your heart...
 with happier memories... of life
 and love...

Snow White immediately recognizes the red-and-white apple. It brings up all sorts of memories. She gently takes it.

But before she bites--

SNOW WHITE
 No... no... I'm lost... I have to
 find my way back. The Queen. I'm
 the only one who can--

OLD CRONE
 Don't worry your head about that,
 dearie... just have a bite...

With the Old Crone's help, Snow White TAKES A BITE.

SNOW WHITE
 (growing light-headed)
 Yes... I do feel a bit... warm...

And then, Snow White drops to the ground.

The Old Crone looks down at Snow White and smiles. And when she smiles, she transforms BACK INTO RAVENNA.

Ravenna is finally the fairest in the land.

After a moment, Ravenna transforms back into the flock of ravens. The birds scatter and soar up into the moonlit sky.

EXT. DWARF ICE CAVE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Eric, Prince Charmant and the seven dwarfs layer on thick furs, strap on bits and pieces of armor and gird themselves with assorted weaponry. The dwarfs saddle up their tiny horses. They're all getting ready for action.

During the commotion, Constantine tugs on Eric's shirt.

CONSTANTINE
 The girl is dead. There's little
 question about that. The ice has
 taken stronger folk in less time...

Constantine hands Eric a glass VIAL filled with RED FLUID.

CONSTANTINE

But if you get this to her soon enough, you might be able to bring her back. No guarantees.

ERIC

If I find her, I'll catch up with you. If I don't... stop the wedding any way you can.

PRINCE CHARMANT (O.S.)

Huntsman... I've been thinking...

Eric turns to face Prince Charmant.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)

As much as it pains me to admit it... you're right. I have little skill in battle. And men are not quick to respect me... I imagine it would be much the same with *dwarfs*.

(a moment)

You should be the one to lead the attack on Bloodaxe's caravan. I'll go after Snow White.

Eric knows that Prince Charmant is probably right.

ERIC

You realize its most likely a suicide mission.

PRINCE CHARMANT

I am prepared to die.

After a moment, Eric hands Prince Charmant the dwarfs' life potion and clasps his hand in a show of respect.

ERIC

I'm trusting you.

Prince Charmant nods, then leaps onto his stallion and rides into the night. Eric watches as the young Prince fades into black, almost impressed with his bravery.

NERO (O.S.)

Huntsman! We found you a horse!

Tiberius presents a TINY MINIATURE PONY to Eric. Eric sighs as the dwarfs burst into laughter.

CUT TO:

EXT. PERILOUS PASS - SUNRISE

A solitary pass cuts through the jagged mountain range.

Just as Eric predicted, King Bloodaxe's WEDDING CARAVAN rolls through. It consists of several dozen INFANTRY and CAVALRY, along with a few store-wagons bearing gifts and supplies.

And at the end of the caravan--

King Bloodaxe's ROLLING MINIATURE PALACE. Reminiscent of Genghis Khan's mobile yurt palace, only bigger and more imposing. It consists of a massive rolling platform pulled by a dozen draft horses. Sitting on the platform is a WOODEN HOUSE-LIKE STRUCTURE -- King Bloodaxe's home away from home.

I/E. KING BLOODAXE'S ROLLING PALACE

King Bloodaxe drops a tiny PIXIE (like a fairy, only smaller and less human-like) into a KILLING JAR... and watches with cold eyes as it slowly dies.

The HEAD GUARD pops his head into the chamber.

HEAD GUARD

We've reached the pass, Your
Highness.

King Bloodaxe nods. He then carefully removes the dead pixie and pins it to a board, where it is displayed next to dozens of other pixies. Like a butterfly collection.

EXT. PERILOUS PASS - ROUND THE BEND - MOMENTS LATER

King Bloodaxe's wedding caravan rounds a corner... but finds its path blocked by a HAY WAGON with a BROKEN WHEEL, hitched to a team of miniature ponies.

Three of the dwarfs -- Caesar, Claudius and Nero -- mill about the wagon, pretending to fix the broken wheel.

The five ADVANCED GUARDS riding at the head of the caravan see the broken wagon and signal for the caravan to halt.

POCKMARKED GUARD

What've we got here?

SNAGGLETOOTHED GUARD

Looks like dwarfs to me.

Nero fumes a bit upon hearing that word. Claudius gives him a look, reminding him to stay calm.

POCKMARKED GUARD
Definitely dwarfs.

The Guards know they're insulting the dwarfs.

EMACIATED GUARD
I ain't seen a dwarf in... I don't
know how long.

Caesar tries to swallow his pride, stay in character.

CAESAR
Perhaps you goodly gentleman might
help us reattach the wheel?

POCKMARKED GUARD
I don't think we'll be doin' that,
little fella.

CAESAR
Well, it looks to me like you lot
have some place mighty important to
be getting to. Mightn't you be
able to at least help us push it
off the road, so that you can be
getting on your way?

LATER:

The dwarfs and the Guards push the hay wagon--

BEHIND A BOULDER

Out of sight of the rest of the caravan.

CAESAR
Much obliged.
(a moment)
Just one more thing...

NERO
Would you mind apologizing?

SNAGGLETOOTHED GUARD
For what?

CLAUDIUS
F-- f-- for calling us...

EMACIATED GUARD
For calling you what you are?

POCKMARKED GUARD
Dwarfs.

And then, the remaining four dwarfs burst out of the hay in the back of the wagon and start to attack the guards.

Eric leaps down from the boulder and gets into the action.

In seconds, the Advanced Guards are down for the count.

EXT. ENDLESS ICE FIELDS - SUNRISE

Prince Charmant rides upon his stallion, braving the bitter weather. He's caked with snow and bitten with frost.

He seems barely alive himself, slumping over, perhaps ready to accept defeat. But then, he sees a GLINT OF GOLD.

Prince Charmant reaches down and grabs SNOW WHITE'S LOCKET.

And then, there's a gentle wind, which blows away the snow and clears the mist, revealing an ICE CLEARING up ahead.

Prince Charmant leads his horse by the reins and steps into--

THE ICE CLEARING

A small enclosed glen formed by glacial walls and accessed only through a small entrance at the front.

That's when Prince Charmant sees Snow White's body, resting upon a glacial outcropping, which looks almost like an altar. Her body has been covered in a CRYSTAL-CLEAR BLOCK OF ICE.

Assorted ANIMALS surround Snow White's body -- polar bears, arctic foxes, snow owls -- as if keeping vigil over her.

Prince Charmant takes a step towards Snow White's ICE COFFIN. The beasts raise their heads and snarl at Prince Charmant.

But he takes a deep breath and bravely continues forward.

As soon as Prince Charmant reaches the ice coffin, the animals disperse, leaving him alone with Snow White's body.

Prince Charmant looks down through the ice at Snow White. He sees the half-eaten apple still in her hand.

And then, he draws his sword and brings it down on the ice coffin. The ice shatters, leaving Snow White's body intact.

Prince Charmant quickly uncorks the dwarfs' life potion and tries to pour it into her mouth. But it doesn't work. Her mouth is frozen shut. Like a delicate porcelain doll.

PRINCE CHARMANT

No... no...

But then, an idea! He drinks the life potion himself, then kneels beside Snow White's body and gently KISSES HER.

Nothing happens... until... Snow White's lips seem to SOFTEN, followed by the rest of her face and body. Her eyes open...

She sits up and kisses Prince Charmant passionately on the lips, wrapping her arms around him.

SNOW WHITE

(after a moment)

Where's the Huntsman?

PRINCE CHARMANT

Would you forget about him?

SNOW WHITE

I overheard you all talking about the wedding. He's gone to attack the Queen, hasn't he?

(a moment)

And we're meant to follow him.

Snow White tries to stand, but her legs don't work yet.

PRINCE CHARMANT

We'll find another way.

SNOW WHITE

There is no other way.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Snow White. I'm not going to let you get hurt again.

SNOW WHITE

I appreciate the sentiment. But I don't need your protection...

(a moment)

I need your love.

Prince Charmant nods, realizing that Snow White is right.

PRINCE CHARMANT

So, we're supposed to simply waltz into the Queen's palace... with two men, a girl, and seven dwarfs...?

SNOW WHITE

(after a moment)

What if we bring reenforcements?

EXT. PERILOUS PASS - KING BLOODAXE'S ROLLING PALACE

King Bloodaxe's wedding caravan is still halted...

The rolling palace is surrounded by at least a DOZEN GUARDS.

And then--

Eric and the seven dwarfs pop out from underneath the rolling palace platform, engaging Bloodaxe's guards. The fight ranges all around the perimeter of the rolling palace.

Eventually, Eric and the dwarfs dispatch all of the Guards.

I/E. KING BLOODAXE'S ROLLING PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric and the seven dwarfs charge inside, expecting to find King Bloodaxe alone and unprotected--

But instead, they find dozens of ADDITIONAL GUARDS, waiting with swords at the ready. They've been trapped.

CAESAR

By the Blood of *Brimir*...

And then, King Bloodaxe steps out from behind his guards.

KING BLOODAXE

Do you have any idea how many times
I've been ambushed in the Perilous
Pass..?

CUT TO:

EXT. DUKE CHARMANT'S ESTATE - LATER THAT DAY

Prince Charmant and Snow White, both riding the same white stallion, crest a hill and ride down towards the compound.

INT. DUKE CHARMANT'S WAR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As usual, Duke Charmant sits, pouring over maps with his fellow knights.

Until-- The doors fly open.

Prince Charmant marches into the room, holding the still-weakened Snow White in his arms.

PRINCE CHARMANT

FATHER!!!

The Duke and his knights look up and see Prince Charmant, bruised, bloody and tattered. A far cry from the naive young Prince who stepped through these doors a few weeks ago.

PRINCE CHARMANT
(with authority)
I need men. And horses.

And this time, Duke Charmant and his knights do not laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAVENNA'S PALACE - LATER THAT DAY

The walls are festooned with white wedding banners.

King Bloodaxe's long WEDDING CARAVAN makes its way through the Royal Village and towards the palace.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - LATER

The Royal Guard Captain escorts Ravenna up to the rear of one of King Bloodaxe's LOCKED STORE-WAGONS.

ROYAL GUARD CAPTAIN
They come bearing gifts...

The Royal Guard Captain throw open the door, revealing--

Eric and the seven dwarfs, bound and gagged inside.

Ravenna can't help but smile.

INT. RAVENNA'S DUNGEON - LATER

TEN ROYAL GUARDS drag Eric down into the dungeon. They toss him into a cell and slam the door shut behind him.

BULBOUS GUARD
Enjoy your stay, Huntsman!

That's when Eric looks around and sees that--

The dungeon is filled with frightened, beautiful young women. Many of whom Eric recognizes. He helped to put them there.

In fact, the Redhead that Eric captured at the beginning of our story -- she's in the adjacent cell.

The women just stare at Eric. They recognize him too.

EXT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL - LATER

Within the palace walls. The doors of the magnificent GOTHIC STRUCTURE fly open, and an epic ORGAN CONCERTO wafts out, signalling that the wedding is soon to begin.

GUESTS start to stream into the cathedral. Obviously, there are no young, beautiful women in attendance. Just stuffy old LORDS and dowdy old LADIES.

As the guests step inside, they pass--

BILGE-RAT AND BRUNO

Who are prominently displayed in STOCKS outside the front doors, looking more than a little bit peeved.

BILGE-RAT
Seat of honor, my arse.

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM

Ravenna is now garbed in her BEAUTIFUL WHITE WEDDING DRESS. Intricately stitched and ruched, with a long, flowing train.

She examines herself in the Magic Mirror. She looks beautiful. Absolutely flawless.

After a moment:

RAVENNA
Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
Who is fairest of them all?

Mirror Man emerges from his frame and speaks:

MIRROR MAN
From misty glade to sunburnt sand,
(a moment)
Snow White is fairest in the land.

As if by reflex, Ravenna clutches her stomach. She tries to control a dry heave. Her body is literally in pain at hearing this news.

Ravenna drops to her knees, frothing, convulsing with rage.

INT. RAVENNA'S DUNGEON - MOMENTS LATER

Eric stews in the dungeon. But then, he hears WEDDING BELLS in the distance.

ERIC
(to himself)
It's starting early.

Eric looks around, clearly trying to formulate a plan.

He approaches the Redhead -- who recoils in fear.

ERIC
Please, no... I won't hurt you.

REDHEAD
You-- you put us here.

ERIC
I know, I know... and for that, I'm
sorry, but you must believe me when
I tell you that... I've changed.

Eric starts to address all the women in the dungeon.

ERIC (CONT'D)
The Queen is my enemy now. And she
must be destroyed. But I need your
help to do it.

REDHEAD
We can't-- it's impossible-- we're--
we're all alone.

ERIC
You are not alone! We can get out
of this! Together.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL - LATER THAT DAY

Packed to the brim. Guests sit in the front of the nave.
And the rear of the church is filled with Ravenna's SOLDIERS,
standing at attention.

King Bloodaxe, decked out in formal finery, black of course,
waits at the altar.

The ORGANIST begins a wedding march.

And Ravenna glides into the cathedral, walking alone, her
face shrouded by a lace veil. Her white bridal train drifts
over the blood-red carpet.

AND UP IN THE RAFTERS

The seven dwarfs hang in small cages, frowning, arms crossed.

DOWN BELOW

Every so often, the wedding guests gawk and point at the strange little men hanging in the cages above.

King Bloodaxe in particular seems to enjoy these twisted wedding decorations.

EXT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL - STOCKS

Bilge-Rat and Bruno stew in the hot sun. But then, Bilge-Rat drops his toothpick down into his hand. He picks the lock and sets himself and his brother free.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL - RECTORY

As the wedding continues, Bilge-Rat and Bruno sneak inside and swipe two PRIEST ROBES off the wall.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL - NAVE

Bilge-Rat and Bruno sneak into the wedding, dressed in their ABSURDLY ILL-FITTING ROBES. They tiptoe towards the altar.

INT. RAVENNA'S DUNGEON

Bulbous Guard waddles down the aisle, making his rounds.

Eric pretends to be asleep. Until... he grabs a ROPE and pulls. The rope emerges from the hay, tripping the Guard.

As soon as Bulbous Guard hits the ground, the imprisoned women reach through their bars and BEAT HIM SENSELESS.

Eric grabs the KEY RING, unlocks his cell, tosses the keys to the Redhead. She quickly frees the other female prisoners.

INT. RAVENNA'S DUNGEON - ARMORY

Eric breaks inside and quickly straps on his weapons. But then, he sees CRATES FULL OF OTHER WEAPONS.

MOMENTS LATER:

As the female prisoners stream out of the dungeon, Eric hands them each a weapon: spikes, swords, flails and maces.

REDHEAD

What do we do with it?

ERIC
Swing it at anything that moves.

EXT. PALACE RAMPART

Eric leads the female prisoners up onto the rampart--

From this vantage point, Eric is able to peer through a high window in the CATHEDRAL. It's FILLED WITH SOLDIERS. Way too many to fight through. Even for the Huntsman.

Eric has hit a dead end.

But then, a DOZEN TRUMPETS SOUND--

Eric and the female prisoners look to the horizon and see--

SEVERAL HUNDRED ARMED KNIGHTS, standing upon a ridge overlooking the palace. Their silver armor gleaming in the bright noonday sun. Heralds carry bright standards that billow in the wind. Duke Charmant and his knights have come.

EXT. OVERLOOKING RIDGE

Prince Charmant, clad in shining silver armor stands beside his father on horseback, at the head of the force of knights.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Thank you, father...

DUKE CHARMANT
When the battle is won and the
Queen is dead, then you can thank
me.

It's the Duke's strange way of telling his son that he loves him and is proud of him. Prince Charmant manages a smile.

PRINCE CHARMANT
I need your ten fastest knights.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL

As she walks down the aisle, Ravenna also hears the TRUMPETS SOUND. She looks to her Royal Guard Captain and NODS.

The Guard Captain runs down off the altar and musters all of Ravenna's soldiers, who stand near the rear of the cathedral.

AT THE ALTAR, King Bloodaxe exchanges suspicious looks with his guards, wondering what the hell is going on outside.

EXT. PALACE RAMPART

Eric sees the soldiers heading towards the exit of the cathedral. He springs into action, leaping off the rampart.

EXT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL

Eric runs to the front door. And uses a WOODEN BEAM to bar the doors... just as the Queen's soldiers try to open them. He has trapped Ravenna's soldiers inside the cathedral.

EXT. OVERLOOKING RIDGE

Amidst Duke Charmant's cavalry, Snow White waits on horseback. She wears a leather tunic and light mail.

Prince Charmant and a small force of TEN KNIGHTS ride to her.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Ready?

SNOW WHITE

(with a smile)

Not really.

And then, Prince Charmant and his knights snap their visors shut. Prince Charmant draws his sword--

PRINCE CHARMANT

CHARGE!!!

Prince Charmant, Snow White and the small team of knights rides down the hill at a breakneck pace, towards the LOWERED DRAWBRIDGE. As they ride, the armored knights take up positions around Snow White, shielding and protecting her.

The main cavalry force remains on the ridge. Duke Charmant watches his son ride into battle, both proud and worried.

But then, THE DRAWBRIDGE RISES AND CLOSES, blocking the entry point for Prince Charmant and Snow White.

EXT. RAMPART

Eric sees the small group of knights riding towards the CLOSED DRAWBRIDGE. He immediately realizes what he has to do. He runs back to the female prisoners...

ERIC

Follow me.

EXT. DRAWBRIDGE CONTROL ROOM

Eric and the female prisoners peek around the corner and see the Aged Gatekeeper protected by a small force of Guards.

ERIC
(to the female prisoners)
Do exactly what I do.

Eric runs out from around the corner, with his axe held high, running right at the drawbridge guards.

ERIC
AAAAHHHH!!!!!!

And then, the female prisoners run out from the around the corner, swinging their weapons wildly.

FEMALE PRISONERS
AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!

The drawbridge guards FLEE. Eric runs to the Gatekeeper.

ERIC
Lower the drawbridge! Now!

AGED GATEKEEPER
Would it kill you to say "please"?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE

Prince Charmant, Snow White and the knights ride headlong towards the front of the palace.

AND THE DRAWBRIDGE LOWERS! It touches down just as Prince Charmant, Snow White and the knights reach it.

But then, a small FORCE OF ARCHERS pops out on the rampart and fires a barrage of arrows. Some of them hit their mark. Several of the knights fall off their steeds.

And Prince Charmant takes an arrow in the side.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - NEAR THE APPLE TREE

Snow White, Prince Charmant and the remaining knights ride into the courtyard. Eric flags them down, and for the first time, sees that Snow White is alive.

ERIC
Snow White... I'm sorry for everything.

SNOW WHITE
It's the Way of the Woods. I
understand.

ERIC
No. The Way of the Woods, that's
just some old words--

SNOW WHITE
Huntsman! You don't have to say
anything. I'm here. Now let's go
kill the Queen.

Huntsman nods, sort of impressed, sort of surprised by Snow
White's new HARDNESS. She reminds him of... himself.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Little help over here.

Eric helps Prince Charmant off his horse. He winces.

ERIC
Boy's got his first battle scar.
(patting him on the back)
You'll survive.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Where are the Queen's men?

ERIC
Archers on the rampart. I trapped
the rest inside the cathedral.
Should be a few more minutes before
the doors give way.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL

Using the pews as battering rams, Ravenna's soldiers finally
FORCE OPEN the doors. They stream out of the cathedral.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - NEAR THE APPLE TREE

Eric hears the doors being smashed open.

ERIC
Scratch that. We need to go. Now.

PRINCE CHARMANT
I'm coming with you.

Prince Charmant moves to follow, but he LIMPS with each step.

ERIC

You signal the cavalry. I'll take
Snow White the rest of the way.

Prince Charmant nods, realizes Eric is right. And then, he
looks to Snow White.

PRINCE CHARMANT

Good luck.

SNOW WHITE

You as well.

And then, Snow White and Prince Charmant lean in and kiss...
right beneath their favorite apple tree.

Eric remains stone faced for a moment, but something like a
smile forms at the edges of his mouth. He's not entirely put
off by this display of young love. Perhaps it reminds him of
the old days spent with Sara.

But the Queen's SOLDIERS start to charge into the courtyard.

ERIC

Quickly!

Eric and Snow White run off and disappear around a corner.

The knights and the female prisoners help Prince Charmant
retreat through a door just as Ravenna's army passes by.

INT. ROYAL CATHEDRAL

The wedding proceeds: Queen Ravenna and King Bloodaxe now
stand at the altar. A BISHOP stands between them.

NEARBY, Bilge-Rat and Bruno, still in disguise, have sidled
up on either side of the young RINGBEARER, who carries the
substantial WEDDING RING on a pillow.

Bilge-Rat tries to swipe the ring -- the Ringbearer slaps his
hand away. Next, Bruno tries to swipe the ring from the
other side -- the Ringbearer slaps his hand away too.

BISHOP

If there is anyone here who has
reason why these two should not be
wed, speak now or forever hold your
peace...

BILGE-RAT

(reacting to the slap)

OW!!!

Queen Ravenna and King Bloodaxe, along with everyone else in the church, whips their head towards Bilge-Rat and Bruno.

RAVENNA
What did you say?!

BILGE-RAT
Oh, I didn't say anythin'.

KING BLOODAXE
You clearly did.

BILGE-RAT
Oh, you mean my brother?

BRUNO
Right. See, we're twins. That's where you might be confused.

BILGE-RAT
People mix us up all the time.

KING BLOODAXE
Can someone please kill them?

CRASH!!! Eric and Snow White swing THROUGH A STAINED GLASS WINDOW, landing up in the choir loft. The crowd GASPS.

Eric and Snow White look to the altar and see that Ravenna is not well-guarded. Most of her soldiers have left to fend off Duke Charmant's cavalry attack.

And then, Eric draws two hatchets and throws them both. The hatchets spin through the air, SLICING ALL THE ROPES which suspend the dwarfs' cages in the air. The cages SHATTER on the floor, freeing the angry dwarfs.

STUFFY OLD LADY
DWARFS!!! AAGGGGHHHHHH!!!!!!!

A whole series of SCREAMS echoes throughout the cathedral. The crowd panics and starts to rush towards the exit.

With the Ringbearer and everyone else distracted, Bilge-Rat and Bruno reach for the wedding ring -- but just before they grab it, they get caught up in the mob of guests escaping the cathedral. They're swept off and out of sight.

AT THE ALTAR

King Bloodaxe looks to his guards.

KING BLOODAXE
It's a trap! I knew it.

His Guards rally to him and draw swords, fighting their way out of the cathedral, adding to the already chaotic scene.

RAVENNA

I was going to kill you anyway!

KING BLOODAXE

I was going to kill you!

RAVENNA

I would have liked to have seen you try!

KING BLOODAXE

I will be back... and next time, I won't be bearing a ring!

Ravenna turns to her own Guards, what's left of them anyway.

RAVENNA

Get me to the tower!

Eric and Snow White see Ravenna on the move. They leap down into the nave and give chase--

INT. ROYAL STABLES

Hundreds of the Queen's finest soldiers storm inside.

They strap on black armor, gird themselves with lance and sword, and leap onto mighty steeds.

INT. SERVANTS QUARTERS

Still hiding out, Prince Charmant pulls a longbow from his back. He wraps the tip in rags, douses it with oil and dips it in the fire pit, CREATING A FLAMING ARROW.

Despite his wound, Prince Charmant mans up and runs out into the courtyard, firing his FLAMING ARROW high into the sky.

EXT. OVERLOOKING RIDGE

Duke Charmant, still waiting with his large force of knights, spots the FLAMING ARROW and smiles.

He slips on his helmet and leads a SLOW MARCH down towards the palace. His knights follow.

But then, the Queen's BLACK KNIGHTS ride out of the palace, across the drawbridge, forming a seemingly impenetrable wall.

EXT. RAVENNA'S TOWER ENTRANCE

Eric and Snow White round a corner and find--

Ravenna's Royal Guards, blocking the main door to Ravenna's tower. A dozen in all. Eric and Snow White exchange a look.

ERIC

It's not too late to turn back.

SNOW WHITE

(with a smile)

It most certainly is.

The Guards attack. Eric and Snow White spring into action. Eric draws his hatchets, Snow White draws her daggers.

Two warriors at the top of their game.

Snow White finally has a chance to show off all the skills that Eric taught her. In moments, all of the Royal Guards have been knocked aside.

Eric and Snow White race into the tower.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS - MOMENTS LATER

Eric and Snow White run through the hall, but find the door to Ravenna's throne room LOCKED.

INT. SERVANT'S QUARTERS

The Redhead tries to clean and dress Prince Charmant's wound. BUGLES SOUND in the distance.

PRINCE CHARMANT

They've begun the charge.

REDHEAD

What about the archers?

PRINCE CHARMANT

The archers?

REDHEAD

On the rampart.

Prince Charmant totally forgot about the archers.

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Prince Charmant, still limping, leads his knights and the female prisoners out of the scullery and towards the rampart. But when they turn a corner, they run right into--

THE SEVEN DWARFS

FEMALE PRISONERS
AAAHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

SEVEN DWARFS
AAAHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

PRINCE CHARMANT
Quiet... quiet...

CAESAR
Where are you going?

PRINCE CHARMANT
To get rid of the archers.

TIBERIUS
That sounds like fun.

NERO
Need any help?

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS

With a final shove, Eric and Snow White force open the door--
Revealing Ravenna... and the fully-formed MIRROR MAN!

RAVENNA
(re: Mirror Man)
You'll want to be careful with
him... he's quite sharp.

And then, Mirror Man's flowing mirrored skin SUDDENLY
HARDENS, almost like freezing water, forming RAZOR SHARP
MIRRORED SCALES that cover his whole body.

ERIC
You take the Queen. I'll deal
with...
(struggling for the word)
... *the mirror.*

Eric swings his hatchet at Mirror Man, but all he gets for his trouble is a SLICED UP HAND.

Mirror Man's movements are almost superhuman. Eric must dodge every punch or else risk a deadly wound.

IN RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM

Snow White draws two daggers and races towards Ravenna--

But Ravenna lifts up her wedding dress and pulls a large CURVED DAGGER from a hidden holster on her thigh.

They clash. Dagger vs. dagger.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE

Duke Charmant and his knights BREAK INTO A GALLOP. They're now careening down the hillside, heading straight for a collision with the Queen's formidable black knights.

EXT. FORWARD RAMPART

Several dozen of the QUEEN'S ARCHERS stand on the ramparts, waiting for Duke Charmant's knights to come within range.

But then--

Prince Charmant, the female prisoners and the dwarfs sneak up behind the archers. Ever so quietly.

They grab the archers by the legs and flip them over the side of the wall. The archers splash into the moat.

INT. RAVENNA'S THRONE ROOM

Mirror Man knocks Eric's hatchet away. With no weapon to defend himself, Mirror Man drives Eric all the way onto--

THE BALCONY

Mirror Man connects with a punch to Eric. Eric falls flat.

As Eric writhes on the floor, he spots Duke Charmant's approaching army and manages a slight smile.

But then, Mirror Man raises his foot over Eric's face. Eric manages to roll out of the way just as Mirror Man SLAMS his deadly foot down. The mirrored foot shatters.

It's now or never. Eric has to make a move. He summons all his mettle, screams and grabs Mirror Man around the waist.

With severely WOUNDED HANDS, Eric tosses Mirror Man off the balcony. Mirror Man shatters on the ground far below.

Eric drops to his knees, badly wounded.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS

Snow White and Ravenna's knife battle has ranged out of Ravenna's throne room and into the mirrored hall. They spar along its entire length.

But then, Ravenna knocks both of Snow White's daggers away and pushes her back. Snow White stumbles backwards, BASHES INTO A MIRROR. She grabs her head, DAZED and DISORIENTED.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE

Duke Charmant and his charging knights are about to collide with the Queen's black knights.

The black knights level sharp lances...

EXT. FORWARD RAMPART

But the dwarfs and the female prisoners have taken up the archers' longbows. Prince Charmant holds a bow of his own. He talks the dwarfs and the female prisoners through the proper firing technique.

PRINCE CHARMANT
Carefully nock the arrow...

The female prisoners follow the instructions well.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)
Breathe deep. And with two
fingers, draw the bowstring back...
all the way to the ear.

As for the dwarfs, it takes two of them to operate a longbow.

PRINCE CHARMANT (CONT'D)
Exhale... and release!

They unleash a storm of arrows.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE

The arrows catch the Queen's black knights completely by surprise, thinning their ranks significantly--

--just as Duke Charmant and his knights crash into the black knights. The cavalry battle is on.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS

Snow White lays on the floor. Ravenna stands over her.

RAVENNA

Sometimes, when I look in the mirror, it feels as if there's a different person on the other side of the glass, staring back at me. And in that world, life is perfect. I'm a loving stepmother. A good wife. A righteous queen.

(another)

But when I try to step across to the other side, the mirror blocks my path.

Ravenna raises her dagger. And thrusts it at Snow White-- But Snow White throws up her hand, holding the dagger at bay.

RAVENNA

Just... one... cut...

The tip of Ravenna's blade dances just millimeters away from Snow White's beautiful face.

Just as Ravenna prepares to stab Snow White--

Eric leaps into the path of the blade.

And is stabbed right in the heart.

In his last throes of life, Eric reaches out and DIGS HIS FINGERS into Ravenna's face, tearing off a CHUNK OF SKIN--

--revealing ROTTEN, PUTRID GREEN FLESH beneath.

Eric falls to the floor.

And then--

Ravenna spots her reflection in a mirror. She looks HIDEOUS.

RAVENNA

No...

Ravenna looks away, only to find herself staring at her reflection in another mirror. There are SO MANY MIRRORS that no matter which way she turns, her DISGUSTING REFLECTION is there, staring back at her.

RAVENNA

NO!!!!!!

MEANWHILE, Snow White regains her senses. She looks to a CUT on her hand. A drop of blood splashes onto her white tunic.

ERIC
(barely able to speak)
By fairest blood it is done...

SNOW WHITE
And only by fairest blood can it be
undone...

Snow White takes advantage of Ravenna's distraction. She grabs a MIRROR SHARD from the floor--

And PLUNGES it into Ravenna's chest.

But just before Ravenna's death, time seems to SLOW DOWN for a moment... and instead of her own hideous reflection in the mirror... she sees her MOTHER staring at her.

And then, Ravenna emits a bloodcurdling DEATH SCREAM! And every mirror in the hall SHATTERS!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PALACE

The tide of battle turns in favor of Duke Charmant and his knights. The Queen's black knights break rank and scatter, retreating through the village and out of sight.

INT. HALL OF MIRRORS

Snow White lays next to the badly-wounded Eric.

ERIC
Not bad...
(smiling through the pain)
For a girl...

SNOW WHITE
You'll be fine. Stay with me.

Eric's eyes close.

SNOW WHITE
No! Look at me. I want you to
know... you are not alone. I'm
with you.

His eyes open again. Snow White frantically pulls the locket from her neck, places it in Eric's slack hand and closes his fingers around it.

SNOW WHITE
It's you and I...

Eric looks down at the locket, smiles.

ERIC
Together...

Eric finally closes his eyes.

SNOW WHITE
No -- no -- please -- don't go --

Prince Charmant and the dwarfs run into the hall, joyous.

PRINCE CHARMANT
We have the palace!

They see Eric lying dead on the ground. Snow White looks to Prince Charmant with tears in her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - THAT NIGHT

Snow White holds a torch in her hand. She steps forward and lights a large WOODEN PYRE.

The Huntsman's body lays atop the pile of wood.

And then, the seven dwarfs ignite a different portion of the pyre with their own torches. The pyre fully ignites.

Illuminating the MASSIVE CROWD gathered for this ceremony: Prince Charmant, Duke Charmant, the female prisoners and all of the knights. All here to witness a hero's funeral.

WHITE flecks of ash float up into the BLACK NIGHT SKY...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PALACE COURTYARD - DAY - WEEKS LATER

And WHITE SNOW drifts back down to the ground...

The Queen's REBUILT STONE SARCOPHAGUS stands in the middle of the courtyard. Duke Charmant and his knights hold Speck at sword-point, forcing him to reverse the aging procedure.

The stone sarcophagus door opens... and out steps the YOUNG BLONDE WOMAN that we met earlier. She's back to normal.

EXT. ROYAL VILLAGE - THAT DAY

The Blonde Woman joins a throng of VILLAGERS gathered around a DECORATED DAIS, where Snow White and Prince Charmant stand.

A few familiar faces are visible in the crowd: the BEAUTIFUL PRISONERS... who have cleaned themselves up quite nicely, and the SCARRED WOMEN... who no longer wear their burkas.

IN THE CROWD,

Our old buddies, Bilge-Rat and Bruno sneak up behind THE REDHEAD, reaching for a NECKLACE hanging around her neck.

But just before they grab it, the Redhead spins around and cold-cocks them both with one swing, laying them out.

Snow White's not the only girl who's learned something from the Huntsman.

UP ON THE DAIS,

Prince Charmant and Snow White, both in regal attire, kneel before Duke Charmant, who places crowns upon their heads.

But something catches Snow White's eye. Off in the distance.

She looks through the falling snow and sees a WHITE WOLF on the horizon, at the edge of the woods. The white wolf stops for a moment and looks Snow White dead in the eye.

Snow White seems a bit frightened...

Until she sees that this white wolf is different. It's gentle. At peace. And it has a tail.

In fact, for a split-second, Snow White can almost swear she sees THE HUNTSMAN in the distance, staring back at her.

But when she blinks, it's the white wolf again. The magnificent creature turns away and FADES INTO THE WOODS.

PRINCE CHARMANT (O.S.)
(quietly)
Snow White...

Snow White turns back to Prince Charmant.

And then, Prince Charmant hands her a RED AND WHITE APPLE. Snow White smiles as old memories come flooding back.

They KISS PASSIONATELY as the crowd roars.

FADE TO BLACK.