

“Among mankind,” says Beauty, “there are many that deserve that name more than you, and I prefer you, just as you are, to those, who, under a human form, hide a treacherous, corrupt, and ungrateful heart.”

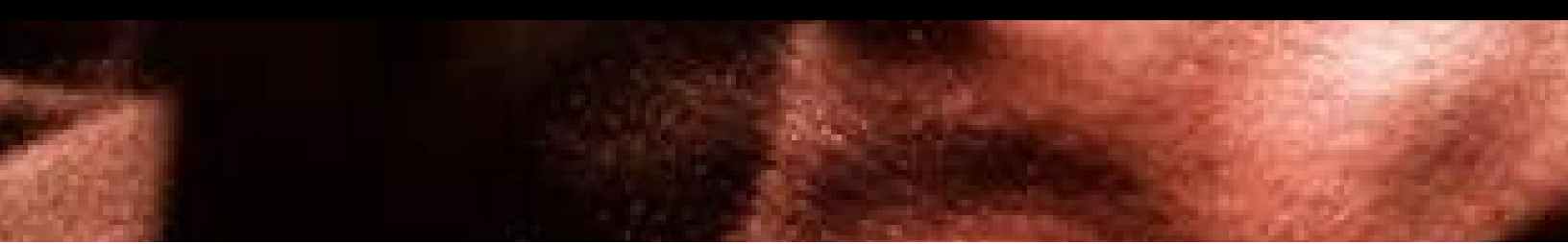
— Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont 1756

BEAUTY AND THE FREAK

An Original Screenplay
by Jackie Bateman



In a gritty town, a feisty streetwise teenager longs to find her mother to fix her broken family, and a musclebound boy hidden away in the shadows wants to be part of her world; they discover in each other a glimmer of light in a dark existence of abandonment and the relentless cruelty of teenage struggle, and must rise out of the quagmire to a place they can survive.



Beauty and the Freak is set in a gritty community, *The End of the F****ing World* on steroids, where two damaged teenagers are trapped by their own fates. Based on a manuscript (written by Jackie Bateman) that was short listed in the UK for the International Yeovil Literary Prize, it was granted a Very Highly Commended award. 15-year old KAT lives in a clapped-out house with an alcoholic dad. Her mum abandoned them years ago, yet where she is and why she left is never spoken of. On New Year's Day, Kat's dad TOM, a hungover mess, falls down the stairs. Kat longs for a lighter touch, believing that if her mum returns her broken family will be fixed, and her dad will stop drinking himself to destruction (literally). But for now, feisty Kat handles life solo. Her best pal LANNIE and her family stick her under their wing when she needs them. Her Granma FLO keeps things real.

ROBBIE is a hulking figure who keeps to the shadows. His world is dark and lonely, and even if he gets out of his home-schooled hovel, he can never escape the way he looks. Born with *myostatin-related muscle hypertrophy*, he has a rare genetic condition that reduces his body fat and creates an overgrowth of muscle mass. You may have seen the German toddler doing press-ups, the weirdly muscly cow, on the internet. Well, Robbie is here in this town, and his condition is real. Despite his bodybuilder-gone-wrong body, not once does Robbie wish he were 'ordinary'; his main obstacle is other people's judgements. His search is simply to belong. His PA has been protecting him from hungry exploiters, as well as cruel kids. But when Robbie finds a letter from social services about Pa's 'Disability Living Allowance' it angers him, until he finally bursts out of the house. Robbie needs a woman from the past called NURSE NOLA, the nurse who looked after him while doctors diagnosed his syndrome and performed the relentless research that stripped away his childhood. She's the only one who will understand him; if he finds her, he'll find a saviour. But he discovers her daughter Kat instead - and their friendship unfurls.

Kat is infatuated with NATHAN. The trouble is, SONYA likes him too, and she's one of the hardest girls around. As if Kat's life couldn't get any tougher, the war begins. Turns out Nathan isn't the star prize after all, and Kat finds herself in a dangerous situation. When Robbie uses his muscle to rescue her from Nathan's groping hands, his physical potential is finally exposed – along with his blind rage. Kat is scared of his powerful bulk, and Robbie must earn back her trust. Spiraling, he attempts (and fails) to take his own life.

We discover that when Nola made a near-fatal mistake in the hospital, it triggered the spiral that ultimately led her to abandon them all. The underbelly of the story speaks of depression, of a tormented mother who doesn't want to be found. When Kat finds out where she is, she makes the journey to get her back, but when she gets close, she turns back. For she has everything she needs now. The family that are there for her – and Robbie.

Dogs bred to fight. Dealers on street corners. Kids are left to figure out how to survive the minefield that is teenage life, family spats, and worst of all, the rage and fury of their peers. When Robbie comes along, everything is thrown, a 'freak of nature' who shows up folk for who they really are. When Kat becomes his ally, she might as well throw herself under the bus. For in a place like this, being different isn't just a curse, but a death wish.