**The Stick House**

**Story Outline**

**The Inward Journey**

Cognitive events out in the street – the Beast is somewhere prominent, music from a van, a poster with his face on, the howling of a wolf?

The branding of the audience as they enter.

**In The Stick House**

Marietta was lost to the Beast at the gaming table at the age of 11 by her father.

The Beast, a wild and untamed being, wants her to beget his sons.

She makes a deal with the Beast that he waits until she is 21 to claim her.

He builds her a stick house between his home in the forest and the village that fears him.

He also makes her wear a red choker. As the days to his claim on her draw nearer the choker start to get tighter. Only the Beast can take it off.

The villagers and Marietta have never seen the Beast so do not know what form he takes but myth is that he is the owner of tremendous wealth.

She grows up there alone apart from her only ally, another village outcast, the Hobbledehoy.

She is outcast from the village because of her beauty, because she is Russian and because she wears the mark of the Beast.

She lives off the land and barters with the village for herbs and remedies.

The hobbledehoy is a misshapen orphan who lives by foraging. He is seen as a wild dog by villagers.

Four days before her 21st birthday and she is having a sexual affair with the woodcutter.

He goes nightly into the forest and indiscriminately kills any wild animal that crosses his path – hoping that it might just turn out to be the beast.

Marietta is receiving threats from the village – they want her gone.

The village is under threat – one of them is branding people and they are disappearing into trains, never to be seen again.

A child is drowned in the well and enraged, as they blame her for a witch, they come to burn her house down.

The woodcutter comes to warn her and hide her. The only place they have to go is the forest.

He urges her to flee with him.

She won’t leave without the hobbledehoy but is persuaded.

The two of them enter the forest.

The hobbledehoy pops up. He has been hurt. He has been branded. On his arm is a bandage.

He goes to find Marietta.

The audience follows.

**In The Wood**

Once inside the light curtain the hobbledehoy roars off and leaves us standing.

Our hearts beating.

A howl from the forest, the smell of damp fur, the sound of pounding feet.

We are led to a grass mound and invited to lie. The night sky is revealed. It is beautiful.

The hobbledehoy pops out of the ground

Magician-like he shows us his story of a young woman, his mother, cruelly abused and raped and left for dead. He is born. A product of sin. Once he was born his mother simply vanished. His father has gone into the wood with Marietta. He is the woodcutter.

We are led again – through shadow and sound.

We come upon Marietta and the Woodcutter.

She needs to take her choker off.

He tries with his knife.

She sees the symbol on the handle and realises he is the one who brands his fellow villagers.

She struggles and he takes his chance to rape her.

She grabs the axe and takes his hand off.

He runs away.

There we find the hobbledehoy

The beast’s voice roars out.

Our hearts beat fast – as if they might explode

He gives Marietta the choice – live with him in harmony and security or remain outside with encroaching danger and uncertainty.

The hobbledehoy gives Marietta a box – in it is the heart of the woodcutter.

She goes into the gates towards the beast.

Our hearts stop.

**The Outward Journey**

The beast is the usher at the end. Thanking you for coming. Give them a cake with their token in

(glass red heart?) and a taste of him. Their number is on the cake… and he addresses them by

name.

**In The Stick House**

Marietta’s mother is in a convent having been committed by her husband for alleged insanity

From there she sends Marietta corn dollies to keep her safe from evil spirits/harm.

She is aware what her husband has done and talks about the beast in all men

She also mentions the chaos and war outside and the rise of a powerful nation that is overrunning the world.

From the scrapbook Marietta has kept of anything of her mother’s comes the mother in a Pepper’s Ghost

The audience find their corn dolly which is strapped to their wrist like Marietta.

We need to lead them to the book – through s short treasure hunt?