***Belle* (2014)**

*Belle* is a British heritage film directed by Amma Asante and released in 2014.



**The Plot:**

*Belle* tells the true story of Dido Elizabeth Belle, a woman born to a black African slave mother and a white British naval officer father in late eighteenth century. In the film, Dido is brought to live in Kenwood House, a stately home in north London, where she is raised by her great uncle, the Chief Justice Lord Mansfield. After her father passes away, Dido is left a small fortune, resulting in one of the crucial tensions in the film: as a wealthy heiress, Dido must marry well to maintain her high position in eighteenth-century British aristocratic society. But as a mixed-race woman the chances of finding a suitable match are extremely unlikely. Meanwhile, her great uncle, Lord Mansfield, prepares to rule on the *Zong* case. This was an insurance case regarding the transportation of hundreds of African slaves as part of the transatlantic slave trade. The owners of the slave ship, the *Zong,* claimed due to low water supplies, the crew had to throw slaves overboard to ensure the survival of the rest of the ship’s passengers – or “cargo” as the owners would have called the slaves. The insurance company, however, claimed the crew did so only in order to claim compensation on their lost cargo. As Lord Mansfield deliberates, Dido involves herself in the case through the help of Mr Davinier, a lawyer who is also working on the case. The film culminates in Dido’s romantic and political fulfilment. She declares her love to Mr Davinier, and Lord Mansfield rules that the slaves were thrown purposefully overboard, indicating that the slaves are not cargo but people.

**Further information about the film:**

* [**http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2404181/**](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2404181/)

**Further information about Dido Elizabeth Belle:**

* [**http://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/07/06/dido-belle-britains-first-black-aristocrat/**](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2016/07/06/dido-belle-britains-first-black-aristocrat/)
* [**https://scone-palace.co.uk/dido-elizabeth-belle-her-story-1761-1804**](https://scone-palace.co.uk/dido-elizabeth-belle-her-story-1761-1804)
* [**http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/belle-happened-dido-film-ended/**](http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/belle-happened-dido-film-ended/)

**Further information about the *Zong* case:**

* [**http://www.blackpast.org/gah/zong-massacre-1781**](http://www.blackpast.org/gah/zong-massacre-1781)