

Beauty and the Beast

There was once a very rich merchant, who had six children: three sons and three daughters. His youngest daughter went by the name of Beauty, which made her sisters very jealous. She spent the greatest part of her time in reading good books.

All at once, the merchant lost his whole fortune, excepting a small country house, and told his children with tears in his eyes, they must go there and work for their living. When they came to their country house, Beauty rose at four in the morning and made haste to have the house clean and dinner ready for the family. In less than two months, she grew stronger and healthier than ever. After she had done her work, she read, played on the harpsichord, or else sung whilst she spun.

On the contrary, her two sisters got up at ten and did nothing the whole day. After about a year, the merchant received a letter that a vessel was safely arrived. The two eldest daughters immediately begged of him to buy them new gowns; but Beauty asked for nothing.

“What will you have, Beauty?” said her father. “Since you have the goodness to think of me,” answered she, “be so kind to bring me a rose.”

The good man went on his journey, and after a great deal of trouble, he came back as poor as before.

He was within thirty miles of his own house, when going through a large forest he lost himself. Night coming on, he began to apprehend being either starved to death with cold and hunger, or else devoured by the wolves, when, on a sudden, he saw a light at some distance; it came from a palace. His horse followed him, and seeing a large stable open, went in, and finding both hay and oats, the poor beast fell to eating very heartily; and entering into a large hall, the man found a good fire, and a table

plentifully set out with but one cover laid. As he was wet quite through with the rain and snow, he drew near the fire to dry himself. “I hope,” said he, “the master of the house, or his servants will excuse the liberty I take.”

He waited and still nobody came. At last, he was so hungry that he took a chicken and ate it in two mouthfuls, trembling all the while. After this he drank a few glasses of wine, and growing more courageous, he went out of the hall until he came into a chamber, and he concluded it was best to shut the door and go to bed.

It was ten the next morning before the merchant waked, and he was astonished to see a good suit of clothes on a little table. “Thank you, good Madam Fairy,” said he aloud.

The good man went to look for his horse, but passing through an arbor of roses, he remembered Beauty’s request to him and gathered a branch; immediately, he heard a great noise and saw a frightful Beast coming toward him.

“You are very ungrateful,” said the Beast to him, in a terrible voice; “I have saved your life and, in return, you steal my roses, but you shall die for it.”

The merchant fell on his knees and said, “I beseech you to forgive me, indeed I had no intention to offend in gathering a rose for one of my daughters.”

Replied the monster, “You say you have got daughters. I will forgive you, on condition that one of them come willingly. Go about your business, and swear that if your daughter refuse to die in your stead, you will return within three months.”

The merchant had no mind to sacrifice his daughters to the ugly monster, but he thought he should see them once more, so he promised he would return, and the Beast told him he might set out when he pleased.

In a few hours, the good man was at home. When his children came round him, he burst into tears. "Here, Beauty," said he, "take these roses, but how dear they are like to cost your unhappy father;" and then related his fatal adventure.

Answered Beauty, "My father shall not suffer upon my account, since the monster will accept of one of his daughters, I will deliver myself up to all his fury, and I am very happy in thinking that my death will save my father's life."

The horse took the direct road to the palace. The good man and his daughter came into the great hall, where they found a table splendidly served up, and two covers. When they had supped, they heard a great noise. Beauty was sadly terrified at the beast's horrid form, but she took courage as well as she could, and the monster having asked her if she came willingly; "Ye - e - es," said she, trembling.

The beast responded, "You are very good, and I am greatly obliged to you; honest man, go your way tomorrow morning, but never think of coming here again," and immediately the monster withdrew.

"Oh, daughter," said the merchant, embracing Beauty, "I am almost frightened to death, believe me, you had better go back, and let me stay here."

"No, father," said Beauty, in a resolute tone, "you shall set out tomorrow morning and leave me to the care and protection of providence."

As soon as he was gone, Beauty sat down in the great hall, and fell a crying, for she firmly believed Beast would eat her up that night. However, she thought she might as well walk about this fine castle; it was a delightful pleasant place, and she was extremely surprised at seeing a door, over which was written, "Beauty's Apartment." She opened it hastily and was quite dazzled with the magnificence, a large library, a harpsichord, and several music books. "Well," said she to herself, "Were I but to stay here a day, there would not have been all these preparations." This consideration inspired her with fresh

courage; and opening the library, she took a book and read these words, in letters of gold:

Welcome Beauty, banish fear,

You are queen and mistress here.

Speak your wishes, speak your will,

Swift obedience meets them still.

"Alas," said she, with a sigh, "there is nothing I desire so much as to see my poor father, and know what he is doing." She had no sooner said this, when casting her eyes on a great looking glass, to her great amazement, she saw her own home, where her father arrived with a very dejected countenance. A moment after, everything disappeared.

At noon she found dinner ready, though without seeing anybody. But at night, as she was going to sit down to supper, she heard the noise Beast made and could not help being sadly terrified. "Beauty," said the monster, "will you give me leave to see you sup?" "That is as you please," answered Beauty trembling.

"No," replied the Beast, "you alone are mistress here; you need only bid me gone. Tell me, do not you think me very ugly?" "That is true," said Beauty, "for I cannot tell a lie, but I believe you are very good natured."

"Yes, yes," said the Beast, "my heart is good, but still I am a monster." "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."

Beauty ate a hearty supper and had almost conquered her dread of the monster when he said to her, "Beauty, will you be my wife?"

She said trembling, "No Beast." Beast said, in a mournful voice, "then farewell, Beauty," and only turned back to look at her as he went out.

Beauty spent three months very contentedly in the palace. Every evening Beast paid her a visit, and Beauty daily discovered some valuable qualifications in the monster. Every night, the monster always asked her,

if she would be his wife. One day she said to him, "Beast, I am too sincere to make you believe that will ever happen; I shall always esteem you as a friend."

Said the Beast, "I love you with the tenderest affection. Promise me never to leave me." "I could," answered she, "indeed, promise never to leave you entirely, but I have so great a desire to see my father that I shall fret to death." "I will send you to your father, you shall remain with him, and poor Beast will die with grief." "No," said Beauty, weeping, "I love you too well to be the cause of your death. I give you my promise to return in a week."

"You shall be there tomorrow morning," said the Beast, "but remember your promise. You need only lay your ring on a table before you go to bed, when you have a mind to come back. Farewell Beauty." Beast sighed, bidding her good night. When she waked the next morning, she found herself at her father's, who, thought he should have died with joy to see his dear daughter again.

Beauty's sisters sickened with envy, when they saw her dressed like a princess, and more beautiful than ever. When the week was expired, they cried, and she promised to stay a week longer.

On the tenth night she spent at her father's, she dreamed that she saw Beast, dying. Beauty started out of her sleep, and bursting into tears. "Am I not very wicked," said she, "to act so unkindly to Beast?" Beauty having said this, rose, put her ring on the table, and then laid down again and fell asleep. When she waked the next morning, she was overjoyed to find herself in the Beast's palace.

She waited for evening. At last the wished-for hour came, the clock struck nine, yet no Beast appeared. Beauty then feared she had been the cause of his death; she recollected her dream, and flew to the canal in the garden, where she dreamed she saw him. There she found poor Beast stretched out, quite senseless, and, as she imagined, dead. She threw herself upon him without any dread, and found his heart beat still. But

Beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty, "You forgot your promise, but since I have the happiness of seeing you once more, I die satisfied."

"No, dear Beast," said Beauty, "you must not die. Live to be my husband. The grief I now feel convinces me, that I cannot live without you." Beauty scarce had pronounced these words, when she saw the palace sparkle with light. She turned to her dear Beast, but how great was her surprise! Beast was disappeared, and she saw, at her feet, one of the loveliest princes that eye ever beheld; but she could not forbear asking where Beast was.

"You see him at your feet," said the prince. Beauty, agreeably surprised, gave the charming prince her hand to rise; they went together into the castle, and Beauty was overjoyed to find, in the great hall, her father and his whole family.

The prince married Beauty and lived with her many years; and their happiness—as it was founded on virtue—was complete.