

## Beauty and the beast

### Description

There was once a merchant who was extremely wealthy. He had six children, three boys and three girls; and, as this merchant was a witty man, he spared nothing for the education of his children, and gave them all sorts of teachers. His daughters were very beautiful, but the youngest, especially, was admired, and when she was a child, she was called La belle enfant, so that the name remained with her, which caused much jealousy among her sisters. This youngest daughter, who was more beautiful than her sisters, was also better than them. The two eldest sisters had a lot of pride, because they were rich; they were ladies, and did not want to receive visits from other merchants' daughters; they needed people of quality for their company. They went every day to the ball, to the comedy, to the promenade, and made fun of their youngest daughter, who spent most of her time reading good books. As it was known that these girls were very rich, several large merchants asked them to marry; but the two eldest answered that they would never marry, unless they found a duke, or at least a count. La Belle (for I have told you that this was the name of the youngest), la Belle, I say, thanked those who wanted to marry her quite honestly; but she told them that she was too young, and that she wished to keep her father company for some years. Suddenly the merchant lost his property, and all he had left was a small house in the country, far from the city.

He told his children, crying, that they should go and live in this house, and that by working like peasants they could live there. His two eldest daughters replied that they did not want to leave the city, and that they had several lovers who would be only too happy to marry them, even though they no longer had a fortune. The good ladies were mistaken; their lovers no longer wanted to look at them when they were poor. As no one liked them because of their pride, they said: « they don't deserve to be pitied, we are very happy to see their pride lowered; let them go and be ladies by guarding the sheep ». But at the same time, everyone said: « As for the Belle, we are very sorry for her misfortune; she is such a good girl; she spoke to the poor people with so much kindness; she was so gentle, so honest ». There were even several gentlemen who wanted to marry her, even though she didn't have a penny; but she told them that she couldn't bring herself to abandon her poor father in his misfortune, and that she would follow him to the country, to console him and help him work. Poor Belle had been very distressed at first to lose her fortune; but she had said to herself: when I cry a lot, my tears will not give me back my property; it is necessary to try to be happy without fortune.

When they arrived at their country house, the merchant and his three sons were busy plowing the land. La Belle got up at four o'clock in the morning, and hurried to clean the house and prepare dinner for the family. At first she had much difficulty, for she was not accustomed to working as a servant; but after two months she grew stronger, and the fatigue gave her perfect health. When she had done her work, she read, played the harpsichord, or sang while spinning. Her two sisters, on the other hand, were bored to death; they got up at ten o'clock in the morning, walked around all day, and enjoyed missing their beautiful clothes and company. See our youngest daughter, » they would say among themselves, « she is so low-spirited and stupid that she is content with her unfortunate situation. The good merchant did not think like his daughters. He knew that Beauty was better suited than her sisters to shine in company. He admired the virtue of this young girl, and especially her patience; for her sisters, not content to let her do all the work of the house, insulted her at every moment.

A year had passed since this family had lived in solitude, when the merchant received a letter informing him that a ship on which he had goods had just arrived. This news thought to turn the heads of his two eldest daughters, who thought that in the end they would be able to leave this country, where they were so bored; and when they saw their father ready to leave, they asked him to bring them dresses, palatines, headdresses, and all sorts of trifles. Beauty did not ask him for anything; for she thought in herself, that all the money for goods would not be enough to buy what her sisters wished. You don't ask me to buy you anything, » said her father. Since you are kind enough to think of me, » she said, « I beg you to bring me a rose, for there are none here. It was not that Beauty cared about a rose; but she did not want to condemn, by her example, the conduct of her sisters, who would have said that it was to distinguish herself that she asked for nothing. The good man left; but when he arrived, he was sued for his goods, and after much trouble, he returned as poor as he was before. He had only thirty miles to go to his house, and he was already looking forward to seeing his children; but, as he had to pass through a large wood, before finding his house, he got lost. It was snowing horribly; the wind was so great, that it threw him off his horse twice, and, night having come, he thought he would die of hunger or cold, or be eaten by the wolves, whom he heard howling around him. Suddenly, looking down a long avenue of trees, he saw a great light, but it seemed far away. He walked that way, and saw that the light came from a large palace that was all lit up.







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« the wind was so great, that he threw it twice off his horse. »

The merchant thanked God for the help he was sending him, and hurried to this castle; but he was quite surprised to find no one in the courts. His horse, which was following him, seeing a large open stable, entered it; and, having found hay and oats, the poor animal, which was dying of hunger, threw itself on them with great greed. The merchant tied him up in the stable, and walked towards the house, where he found no one; but, having entered a large room, he found there a good fire, and a table laden with meat, where there was only one place setting. As the rain and snow had wet him to the bone, he approached the fire to dry himself, and said to himself: the master of the house or his servants will forgive me the liberty I have taken, and no doubt they will come soon. He waited for a considerable time; but when eleven o'clock came, and he saw no one, he could not resist hunger, and took a chicken, which he ate in two mouthfuls, and trembling. He also drank a few glasses of wine, and, having become bolder, he left the room and went through several large, beautifully furnished apartments. At the end he found a room where there was a good bed, and as it was past midnight and he was tired, he decided to close the door and go to bed.

It was ten o'clock in the morning when he got up the next day, and he was very surprised to find a very clean suit in place of his own, which was all spoiled. Surely, » he said, « this palace belongs to some good fairy who has taken pity on my situation. He looked out of the window and saw no more snow, but cradles of flowers that enchanted the view. He returned to the large room where he had dined the night before, and saw a small table with chocolate. I thank you, Madam Fairy, » he said aloud, « for having had the goodness to think of my lunch. The good man, after having taken his chocolate, went out to fetch his horse, and, as he passed under a cradle of roses, he remembered that the Beauty had asked him for some, and picked a branch where there were several. At the same time, he heard a great noise, and saw a Beast coming towards him, so horrible that he was ready to faint. You are very ungrateful, » said the Beast, in a terrible voice; « I saved your life by receiving you in my castle, and for my trouble you steal my roses, which I love better than anything in the world. You must die to repair this fault; I give you only a quarter of an hour to ask God for forgiveness. The merchant threw himself on his knees and said to the beast, joining his hands: « My lord, forgive me, I did not think I was offending you by picking a rose for one of my daughters, who had asked me for one. – I am not called monsignor, answered the monster, but the Beast. I don't like compliments, I want people to say what they think; so don't think you can touch me with your flattery; but you told me you had daughters; I'm willing to forgive you, on condition that one of your daughters comes voluntarily, to die in your place: don't reason with me; go away, and if your daughters refuse to die for you, swear that you'll come back in three months. The good man had no intention of sacrificing one of his daughters to this vile monster; but he thought, at least I will have the pleasure of kissing them once more. So he swore to come back, and the Beast told him he could go whenever he wanted; but, she added, I don't want you to go away empty-handed. Go back to the room where you slept, and you will find a large empty chest; you may put in it anything you like; I will have it carried to your house. At the same time, the Beast withdrew, and the good man said to himself, « If I have to die, I will have the consolation of leaving bread for my poor children.



« saw a Beast come to him so horrible, that he was very near to fainting »

He returned to the room where he had lain, and, having found there a great quantity of gold coins, he filled the great chest, of which the Beast had spoken to him, closed it, and, having taken up his horse, which he found in the stable, he went out of that palace with a sadness equal to the joy he had, when he had entered it. His horse took by itself one of the roads of the forest, and in a few hours, the good man arrived at his little house. His children gathered around him; but instead of being touched by their caresses, the merchant began to cry as he looked at them. He held in his hand the branch of roses, which he was bringing to Beauty: he gave it to her, and said: Beauty, take these roses; they will cost your unfortunate father dearly; and at once he told his family the disastrous adventure that had befallen him. At this account, his two eldest daughters shouted loudly, and said insults to Beauty who did not cry. See what the pride of this little creature produces, they said; why didn't she ask for adjustments like us? But no, Miss wanted to distinguish herself; she is going to cause the death of our father and



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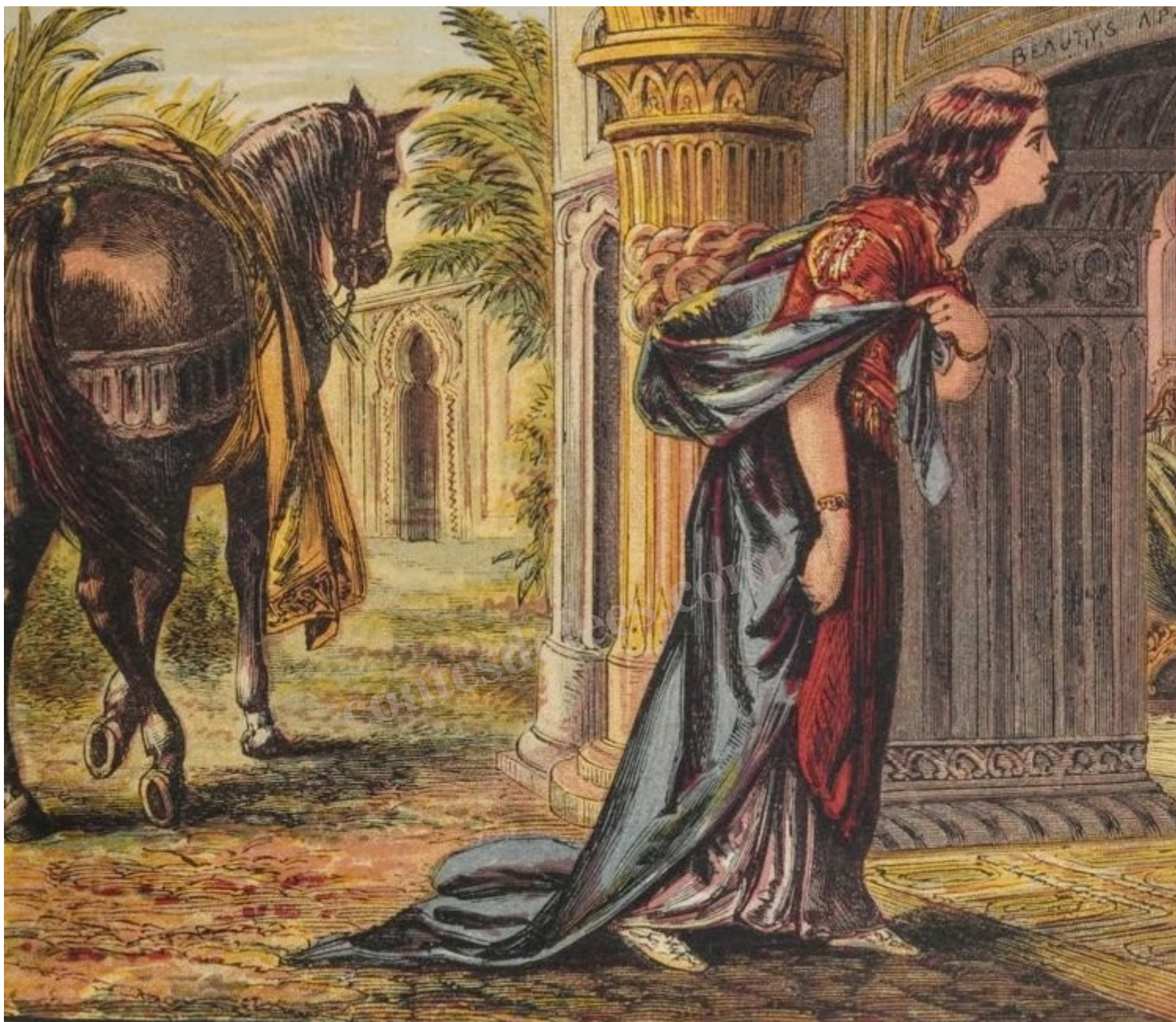
she does not cry. That would be very useless, said Beauty, why should I cry for the death of my father? he will not perish. Since the monster wants to accept one of his daughters, I want to give myself up to all his fury, and I find myself very happy, since by dying I will have the joy of saving my father and of proving my tenderness to him. No, my sister, said her three brothers, you will not die, we will go to this monster, and we will die under his blows, if we cannot kill him. Do not hope for it, my children, said the merchant, the power of this Beast is so great, that I have no hope left of killing it. I am charmed by the good heart of the Beauty, but I do not want to expose her to death. I am old, I have only a short time left to live; thus, I will only lose a few years of life, which I only regret because of you, my dear children. I assure you, father, » said Beauty, « that you will not go to this palace without me; you cannot prevent me from following you. Although I am young, I am not very attached to life, and I prefer to be devoured by this monster, than to die of the sorrow which your loss would give me. It was said in vain, Beauty absolutely wanted to leave for the beautiful palace, and her sisters were charmed, because the virtues of this younger girl had inspired them much jealousy. The merchant was so busy with the pain of losing his daughter that he did not think about the chest he had filled with gold; but, as soon as he had shut himself up in his room to go to bed, he was very surprised to find it at the side of his bed. He resolved not to tell his children that he had become so rich, because his daughters would have wanted to return to the city; that he was resolved to die in the country; but he confided this secret to Beauty, who told him that some gentlemen had come during his absence, and that there were two who loved his sisters. She begged her father to marry them; for she was so good that she loved them, and forgave them with all her heart the evil they had done to her. These two wicked girls were rubbing their eyes with an onion, to cry when Beauty left with her father; but her brothers were crying all right, as well as the merchant: only Beauty did not cry, because she did not want to increase their pain. The horse took the road to the palace, and in the evening they saw it illuminated, as the first time. The horse was alone in the stable, and the good man entered with his daughter into the great hall, where they found a beautifully served table with two place settings. The merchant had not the heart to eat; but Belle, endeavoring to look calm, sat down to the table, and served him; then she said to herself: the Beast wants to fatten me up before he eats me, since he gives me such good food. When they had supped, they heard a great noise, and the merchant said farewell to his poor daughter, weeping; for he thought it was the Beast. Belle could not help shuddering at the sight of that horrible figure; but she reassured herself as best she could, and the monster having asked her if she had come with a good heart, she told him, trembling, that she had. You are very good, said the Beast, and I am very grateful to you. Good man, leave tomorrow morning, and don't you ever think of coming back here. Goodbye, Beauty. Farewell, the Beast, » she answered, and immediately the monster withdrew. Ah, my daughter, » said the merchant, embracing Beauty, « I am half dead with fright. Believe me, leave me here; no, my father, » said Beauty firmly, « you will leave tomorrow morning, and abandon me to the help of heaven; perhaps he will have pity on me. They went to bed, and thought they would not sleep all night; but no sooner were they in their beds than their eyes closed. While she was sleeping, Beauty saw a lady who said to her: « I am pleased with your good heart, Beauty; the good deed you are doing, in giving your life to save your father's, will not go unrewarded. When Beauty woke up, she told her father about this dream, and although he comforted him a little, this did not prevent him from crying out loud when he had to part with his dear daughter.



« You are very good, » said the Beast, « and I am much obliged. »

When he was gone, Beauty sat down in the great hall, and began to weep also; but, as she had much courage, she commended herself to God, and resolved not to grieve, for the little time she had to live; for she firmly believed that the Beast would eat her in the evening. She resolved to go for a walk in the meantime, and to visit this beautiful castle. She could not help but admire its beauty. But she was very surprised to find a door, on which it was written : Apartment of the Beautiful.





« she was quite surprised to find a door, on which it said: Apartment of the Beautiful »

She opened this door with haste, and was dazzled by the magnificence which reigned there; but what struck her sight most was a large library, a harpsichord, and several books of music. They don't want me to be bored, » she said, softly; then she thought, « if I had only one day to stay here, they wouldn't have made me such a supply. This thought revived her courage. She opened the bookcase, and saw a book where it was written in golden letters: Wish, order; you are here the queen and the mistress. Alas! » she said, sighing, « I wish nothing but to see my poor father, and to know what he is doing now. What a surprise it was for her to look into a large mirror and see her house, where her father was arriving with an extremely sad face. Her sisters came to meet him, and, in spite of the grimaces they made to appear distressed, the joy they had at the loss of their sister showed on their faces. A moment



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later, all this disappeared, and Beauty could not help but think that the Beast was very complacent, that she had nothing to fear from her.

At noon, she found the table set, and during her dinner she heard an excellent concert, although she saw no one. In the evening, as she was about to sit down at the table, she heard the noise that the Beast was making, and could not help but shudder. Beauty, » said the monster, « would you like me to see you eat? – You are the master, » replied Beauty, trembling. – No, answered the Beast, there is no mistress here but you. You have only to tell me to go away if I bother you; I will leave at once. Tell me, don't you think I am ugly? – That is true, » said Beauty, « for I cannot lie; but I believe you are very good. – You are right, said the monster, but, besides that I am ugly, I have no spirit: I know well that I am only a Beast. – One is not a Beast, resumed Beauty, when one believes to have no spirit: a fool has never known that. – So eat, Beauty, » said the monster, « and try not to be bored in your house, for all this is yours, and I would be sorry if you were not happy. – You are very kind, » said La Belle. I confess that I am very happy with your heart; when I think of it, you don't seem so ugly to me. – Oh lady, yes, answered the Beast, I have a good heart, but I am a monster. – There are many men who are more monsters than you, said Beauty; and I like you better with your face than those who, with the face of men, hide a false, corrupt, ungrateful heart. – If I had a mind, » said the Beast, « I would pay you a great compliment to thank you; but I am a fool, and all I can say is that I am much obliged to you.

La Belle ate her supper with good appetite. She was almost not afraid of the monster anymore; but she almost died of fright, when he said to her: « Beauty, do you want to be my wife? She was some time without answering: she was afraid to excite the anger of the monster, by refusing him: she said to him however while trembling: not the Beast. At this moment, the poor monster wanted to sigh, and he made a hissing sound so terrible that the whole palace resounded; but Belle was soon reassured, for the Beast having said to her sadly: Farewell then to Beauty, left the room, turning around from time to time to look at her again. Belle, seeing herself alone, felt great compassion for this poor Beast: Alas! she said, it is a pity that she is so ugly, she is so good!

Belle spent three months in this palace with enough tranquility. Every evening, the Beast visited her, talked to her during supper, with enough common sense, but never with what is called wit, in the world. Every day Belle discovered new goodness in this monster. The habit of seeing him had accustomed her to his ugliness; and, far from fearing the moment of his visit, she often looked at her watch to see if it was soon nine o'clock; for the Beast never failed to come at that hour. There was only one thing that saddened Beauty, and that was that the monster, before going to bed, always asked her if she wanted to be his wife, and seemed penetrated with pain when she told him she did not. She said one day: « You grieve me, the Beast; I wish I could marry you, but I am too sincere to make you believe that it will ever happen. I will always be your friend; try to be content with that. – I must, » said the Beast, « I do myself justice. I know that I am very horrible; but I love you very much; however I am too happy that you want to stay here; promise me that you will never leave me. La Belle blushed at these words. She had seen in her mirror that her father was sick with grief at having lost her; and she wished to see him again.



« What a surprise it was! » as she cast her eyes upon a large mirror. »

« I could promise you, » she said to the Beast, « that I would never leave you altogether; but I am so anxious to see my father again, that I shall die of grief if you refuse me this pleasure. – I would rather die myself, » said the monster, « than give you grief. I will send you to your father's house; you will stay there, and your poor Beast will die of grief. – No, » said Beauty, weeping, « I love you too much to want to cause your death. I promise you that I will return in eight days. You have shown me that my sisters are married, and that my brothers have left for the army. My father is all alone, so please let me stay with him for a week. – You will be there tomorrow morning, said the Beast; but remember your promise. You will only have to put your ring on a table when you go to bed, when you want to come back. Goodbye, Beauty. The Beast sighed as was his custom as he said these words, and Beauty



went to bed sad to see him distressed. When she awoke in the morning, she found herself in her father's house; and having rung a bell which was beside her bed, she saw the maid coming, who gave a great cry when she saw her. The good man ran to this cry, and almost died of joy at seeing his dear daughter again; and they held each other for more than fifteen minutes. Beauty, after the first transports, thought she had no clothes to get up; but the maid told her, that she had just found in the next room a big chest full of dresses all of gold, decorated with diamonds. Belle thanked the good Beast for his attentions; she took the least rich of these dresses, and told the maid to clutch the others, which she wanted to present to her sisters; but as soon as she had said these words, the chest disappeared. Her father told her that the Beast wanted her to keep it all for herself; and immediately the dresses and the chest returned to the same place. Beauty got dressed, and in the meantime her sisters were warned, and they came running with their husbands; they were both very unhappy. The eldest had married a gentleman, handsome as the day; but he was so in love with his own face, that he was occupied only with it, from morning till night, and despised the beauty of his wife. The second had married a man of great wit; but he used it only to enrage everyone, and his wife all the first. The sisters of Beauty almost died of grief, when they saw her dressed like a princess, and more beautiful than the day. She caressed them, but nothing could stifle their jealousy, which increased greatly when she told them how happy she was. These two jealous women went down into the garden to cry at their ease, and they said to themselves: « Why is this little creature happier than us? Aren't we nicer than her? – Sister, » said the elder, « I have a thought; let's try to keep her here for more than a week; her silly Beast will be angry at her for not speaking to him, and perhaps he will eat her up. – You are right, my sister, » replied the other. For that, it is necessary to make great caresses to him; and, having taken this resolution, they went up, and made so much friendship to their sister, that Beauty wept of joy. When the eight days were over, the two sisters tore their hair out, and were so distressed at her departure, that she promised to stay another eight days with her father.



« Let's try to stop her here more than eight days. »

However, Belle blamed herself for the grief she was about to give her poor Beast, whom she loved with all her heart, and she missed seeing her. On the tenth night that she spent at her father's house, she dreamed that she was in the garden of the palace, and that she saw the Beast lying on the grass and close to death, reproaching her for her ingratitude. Beauty woke up with a start and shed tears. – Am I not very bad, » she said, « to give grief to a Beast who has been so kind to me? Is it her fault that she is so ugly, and that she has little spirit? She is good, that is better than all the rest. Why didn't I want to marry her? I would be happier with her than my sisters are with their husbands. It is neither the beauty nor the spirit of a husband that makes a woman happy: it is the goodness of character, virtue, complacency; and the Beast has all these good qualities. I have no love for her, but I have esteem, friendship, gratitude. Come on, we must not make her unhappy: I would reproach myself all my life for



my ingratitude. At these words, Belle got up, put her ring on the table, and returned to bed. As soon as she was in bed, she fell asleep; and when she woke up in the morning, she saw with joy that she was in the Beast's palace. She dressed beautifully to please him, and was bored to death all day, waiting for nine o'clock at night; but though the clock struck, the Beast did not appear. Beauty then feared to have caused his death. She ran all over the palace, crying out loud; she was in despair. After searching everywhere, she remembered her dream, and ran into the garden towards the canal, where she had seen it while sleeping. She found the poor Beast lying unconscious, and thought she was dead.



« She found the poor Beast lying unconscious. »

She threw herself upon his body, not abhorring his face; and feeling that his heart was still beating, she took water from the canal, and threw it upon his head. The beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty: « You have forgotten your promise; the grief of having lost you has made me resolve to let myself die of hunger; but I die content, since I have the pleasure of seeing you once more. – No, my dear Beast,

you will not die, said Beauty, you will live to become my husband; from this moment I give you my hand, and I swear that I will be only yours. Alas! I thought I had only friendship for you; but the pain I feel makes me see that I could not live without seeing you. As soon as Beauty had spoken these words, she saw the castle shining with light; the fireworks, the music, everything announced a festival to her; but all these beauties did not stop her sight: she turned towards her dear Beast, whose danger made her shudder. What was her surprise! The Beast had disappeared, and she saw at her feet only a prince more beautiful than Love, who thanked her for having finished his enchantment. Although this prince deserved all her attention, she could not help asking him where the Beast was. – You see it at your feet, said the prince. A wicked fairy had condemned me to remain under this figure, until a beautiful girl agreed to marry me, and she had forbidden me to show my spirit. Thus, there was only you in the world, good enough to let you touch the goodness of my character; and, by offering you my crown, I cannot fulfill the obligations I have to you. La Belle, pleasantly surprised, gave her hand to this handsome prince to get up. They went together to the castle, and Beauty almost died of joy when she found, in the great hall, her father and all his family, whom the beautiful lady, who had appeared to her in a dream, had brought to the castle. – Belle, said this lady who was a great fairy, come to receive the reward of your good choice: you preferred virtue to beauty and spirit, you deserve to find all these qualities gathered in the same person. You will become a great queen: I hope that the throne will not destroy your virtues. – As for you, ladies, » said the fairy to Belle's two sisters, « I know your heart and all the malice it contains. Become two statues; but preserve all your reason under the stone which will wrap you. You will remain at the door of your sister's palace, and I do not impose on you any other punishment than to be witnesses of her happiness. You will not be able to return to your first state until you recognize your faults; but I am afraid that you will always remain statues. Pride, anger, gluttony and laziness can be corrected: but it is a kind of miracle to convert a wicked and envious heart. At that moment, the fairy gave a blow of her wand which transported all those who were in that room, in the kingdom of the prince. His subjects saw him with joy, and he married the Beauty, who lived with him for a very long time, and in perfect happiness, because it was founded on virtue.









# LA BELLE ET LA BÊTE

Version de 1802

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