

The Original Tale

Once upon a time in a land far away lived a handsome Prince. To be his friend one had to be beautiful and rich. One day a tired old woman came to the Prince's castle. Displeased with her ugly appearance the Prince ordered her to leave and never return. The old woman begged him for shelter from the dark night. When the Prince refused her the old woman changed into a beautiful fairy. "Your beauty is false for there is no love in your heart. Until you can find it in your heart to love others for themselves and not their appearances you will be forever doomed to walk these lands as an ugly, fearsome beast. When a beautiful woman refuses all others to marry you in spite of your appearance, then the curse will be broken!" The Prince realizing his error pleaded with the fairy for forgiveness, but it was too late. He was changed into a beast.

Act I

As the play begins, Jacques, a wealthy suitor, has come to ask Beauty to the grand cotillion. When she refuses, her sisters, Mimi and Fifi, are eager to go in her place. Soon Mr. Arneaux, their father, arrives with exciting news that his fortunes, once thought lost at sea, are returning to dock. He asks each of his daughters for their wishes. Mimi and Fifi want expensive gifts, but Beauty will be pleased with a single rose. Mr. Arneaux and Jacques leave together for the trip. Along the way, Jacques expresses his feelings for Beauty. Soon they part company. When Mr. Arneaux arrives at the dock, he discovers that his ship has been sold to pay old debts. Having no money, he starts for home through the forest. As night approaches, he becomes weak from the cold. Soon he discovers a strange palace, but faints before reaching it. When he awakens he is greeted by a feast in the palace. He eats the meal and falls asleep. The next morning as he prepares to leave, he picks a single rose in the garden to give to Beauty. The Beast challenges him and tells him to send his daughter back to the palace or lose his life. Mr. Arneaux returns home to tell his daughters of his ordeal. Beauty agrees to return to the palace. Beauty is frightened by the Beast's appearance, but she is not harmed and given everything she needs.

Act II

After several months, Beauty wishes for the Beast's companionship. She teaches the Beast how to enjoy life more. Beauty decides she would like to return to see her family for one last time before returning to the palace forever. The beast gives her a magic mirror to allow her to see whatever she wishes and a magic ring to return her home and back to the palace. Her family is happy for her return, but does not understand how she has come to care so for the Beast. Jacques, at the request of Mr. Arneaux arrives to ask for Beauty's hand in marriage, but she explains that she only cares for the Beast. When the Beast falls ill, Beauty explains her feelings to her family and then rushes back to be by his side. When she proclaims her love for him and that she will marry no one else, the enchantment is broken, the Beast is transformed back to a handsome Prince and they all lived happily ever after.