**Beauty and the Beast**

In the original story, Beauty is actually the youngest child of six children (three boys, and three girls). Her father is not an inventor, but rather a very wealthy merchant who eventually loses his fortune. The merchant and his family are forced to move to the countryside to live a simple life where he and his sons try their best to adapt to their new, country home. Beauty's two older sisters, on the other hand, are depicted as two miserable women who constantly whine and express a longing for their former life of luxury. They grow to hate Beauty not only because they are jealous of her beauty, but also because in some weird way, they resent her for not sharing their displeasure over living a peasant life. They actually feel bitter because Beauty has adjusted to their new life and they somehow interpret this as their younger sister’s way of trying to make them look bad.

Also, you know those memorable characters such as Cogsworth and Lumière? Yeah, they don’t exist in the original story. In fact, the concept of all the servants also being enchanted is something that’s unique to the animated Disney version. In the original story, the Beast lived alone in his castle and in my opinion that just made his existence even more depressing than what was presented in the Disney adaptation.

Speaking of missing characters, Gaston and his crew are also *NOT* in the original story. Gaston was another character created by Disney for the film and is no doubt one of the most memorable Disney villains to date. People love Gaston just because of how much fun it is to hate him.

One day Beauty’s father hears that one of his cargo ships will be arriving at the port and he and his family sees this as an opportunity to restore their fortunes. On the way into town, he asks his daughters what they would like him to bring for them. The two sisters request expensive dresses and jewels while Beauty simply requests her father to bring her a rose.

Upon his arrival in town, the father finds out that his ship has been seized to pay off his debts and now he must return home empty handed. However, Beauty’s dad gets lost along the way and seeks shelter in an old castle during a storm. Once there, her father finds no one in the castle and helps himself to some food that had been prepared. When he awoke in the morning there was breakfast prepared for him and he assumed that this was perhaps the doing of a very kind fairy.

On his way out, the merchant stops to a pick a rose from the garden for his daughter and this is when he is confronted by an angry Beast, who felt like Beauty’s father was now taking advantage of his hospitality. Upon hearing that the merchant has daughters, he agrees to spare his life on the condition that one of his daughters willingly take his place. Before the merchant is sent home, Beast allows him to fill a chest with a gold to take with him. When his children hear of the Beast and his demands, they are sorrowful and his two elder daughters wail loudly. They see that Beauty is calm and not crying, and they despise her for it.

*"Do but see the pride of that little wretch,"* said they; *"she would not ask for fine clothes, as we did; but no truly, Miss wanted to distinguish herself, so now she will be the death of our poor father, and yet she does not so much as shed a tear."*

Beauty tells them that she will not cry because she will not allow her father to die because of her. She volunteers to take her father’s place as the Beast’s prisoner, and her sisters are secretly thrilled at the prospect that the Beast may devour her. Beauty’s three brothers protest this and proclaim that they will slay the Beast, but the merchant tells them that the Beast is far too powerful and that they will perish as well.

Beauty goes to the palace where the Beast informs her that she is now mistress of the castle and that he is her servant. Beauty passes her time in the library and by exploring her new home and each night she has supper with the Beast who stays by her side. Each night the two conversed and each night, the Beast would ask Beauty to marry her, only for her to reject his proposal. In fact, throughout the story, she acknowledges to herself that while the Beast is good natured and kind, is it his gruesome form that she fails to see past. This routine of having supper together and then rejecting the poor Beast is one that would continue for more than three months.

Unlike in the Disney film, beast is very open to Beauty about his affection for her. It is because of these feelings for her that he allows her to visit her father and family again under the condition that she would return to him after one week. Beauty agrees and is given a magic ring that could transport her back to her family on a whim, and she uses that to be reunited with her kin. Beauty’s sisters, who had since married, were furious to see their sister alive and dressed more elegantly than they were. Being the spiteful, horrible souls they were, they concocted a plan to convince Beauty to break her promise to Beast and to stay longer than a week in an attempt to anger the Beast into devouring Beauty.

Beauty fell for this ruse. With her sisters pretending to be nice to her and showing her a level of affection she had never experienced from them, she promised them to stay one week longer. In this time, she began to feel guilty for being so long apart from Beast whom she longed to see again. It was on her tenth night away from him she had a nightmare of Beast dying that she awoke in tears. Beauty realizes now that while he may be ugly, that she truly loves him. She realizes that it is not a man’s handsomeness or wit that makes him a worthy husband, but rather is virtue and sweetness of temper. She now sees that even though he is ugly, her marriage to Beast is one that would be far more fulfilling than any of her sisters’ marriages.

The next morning, Beauty uses the ring and is returned back to Beast’s castle. She eventually finds him lying on the floor of his rose garden, dying after starving himself for each day Beauty did not return to him. Beauty holds his beastly hands and confesses her love to him, sobbing uncontrollably.

After the spell is broken, and Beast turns into his human form, they make their way back into the castle where an enchantress had appeared with Beauty’s entire family. She tells Beauty that her pure heart and virtue will make her a great queen. She then focuses her gaze upon Beauty’s two sisters who have been so malicious and spiteful over the years, and curses them, turning them both into stone so that they can forever behold their sister’s happiness.

As we all know, Beauty married they prince, and the both lived happily, ever after.