



The Beast Within: A Tale of Beauty's Prince

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A cursed prince sits alone in a secluded castle. Few have seen him, but those who claim they have say his hair is wild and nails are sharp--like a beast's! But how did this prince, once jovial and beloved by the people, come to be a reclusive and bitter monster? And is it possible that he can ever find true love and break the curse that has been placed upon him?

The Beast Within: A Tale of Beauty's Prince Details

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From Reader Review The Beast Within: A Tale of Beauty's Prince for online ebook

Karen Whittard says

The beast within tells the story of how Prince Adam becomes cursed, how the curse takes place and what he is like before he meets Belle. It continues on to the bit where Belle and Beast fall in love, beast transforms back to prince Adam and they live happily ever after.

It has some scenes which we have come to know and love from Beauty and the beast. But adds dimensions to the story that we didn't know about before. Prince Adam being best friends with Gaston, Prince Adams past loves and the fact that he wasn't just cursed by one witch but four.

It adds great depth to the beloved story. I throughly enjoyed finding out more about Prince Adam/the beast.

I was only annoyed that they still didn't call him Adam but constantly the prince which was a tad annoying after it kept being repeated. When he has a name I feel like it should have been used.

But all in all a throughly enjoyable read.

Let me know what you thought about the book.

Happy reading everyone

Callie Rose Tyler says

What an utter disappointment.

Right off the bat they are changing the story that we know from the movie replacing the enchantress with three obnoxious villainous witches that frequent the castle to torture the Beast. Who thought that was a good idea?

This is a huge letdown, the Beast should start off unlikable and then change and grow through the love of Belle, instead they've made him immediately sympathetic.

You are ruining the original!

I only read the first two chapters and could not power through because Beauty and the Beast is one of my favorite movies and I could not bare to see it permanently tainted.

kari says

I think this may be where I jump off of this series. I don't think it works for me.

Here's my unsolicited advice to the author: If you are enamored of these three bird-like witches, then by all means, write their story. Write a whole bunch of them. Original stories. Write their history and all the terrible things they've done. Enjoy doing that as it appears you thoroughly enjoy writing about them, but don't shoehorn them into stories where they don't belong. This is twice now that they've overtaken a story and I didn't enjoy it.

And if you are going to use Disney's version with Belle as the jumping off point, well, the prince was eleven when he was changed. Pay attention to your source material. The Beast and Gaston were friends? No. Just. No.

To readers: If you are looking for insight into the Beast, don't look here as you won't get it. The whole story is about him being messed about by four witches. Belle barely appears. You don't get to read about his transformation, how he goes from being beastly to a caring person. If you want that story, watch the Disney movie. It's got more insight than this.

There isn't anything more to it.

Done.

Sarah says

So Disney is now writing their own fan fiction. This wouldn't bother me if only the fan fiction in question were consistent with the films that they themselves release.

The Beast Within is an entry in a series by Serena Valentino examining how the iconic Disney villains turned bad. Given this information, the book already has a strike against it—the villain of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* isn't the Beast, it's Gaston.

But the Beast is the more interesting of the two characters, being the only Disney Prince who's an antihero. (At least the only animated one. Allowing for characters from their live-action franchises, he's joined by Edmund Pevensie, Loki Odinson, and Kylo Ren. And I totally bring them up because they're relevant, definitely not because I'm infatuated with any of those characters. What do you take me for, a fangirl?)

clears throat

Anyway...what was I saying? Oh yes, the Beast is an antihero of sorts—he starts out a rotten pretty person, loses his looks and status, becomes a decent chap when a girl is kind to him in spite of his ugliness and temper, and finally transforms into a hero when said girl (and his loyal servants) are threatened with violence and death. He's one of the most dynamic characters in the Disney animated canon. Whereas a book about Gaston would have consisted solely of hunting and killing things. So even though the Beast/Prince technically does not belong in the lineup with Maleficent and Ursula, I was more than willing to read his story anyway.

And Valentino has some promising ideas. There's a lot of evocative imagery in this little book. I especially liked those creepy statues that move through the gardens when the Prince's back is turned. This is a nod to

the original tale by Gabrielle de Villeneuve, and I salute Valentino for putting it in. She did her homework!

But I don't think she was given much time or freedom for this project. The pieces never seem to coalesce and the mood is all over the place, ranging from deliciously spooky and mature to kiddie-table slapstick. Don't take this as a slight to slapstick comedy, I love the stuff when it's done well. But it's never been a strong point of Disney's, and it really does not mesh with the story or vibe that this book was going for.

The metamorphosis of the Prince happens in an instant in most versions of this story, including the original, Disney's 1991 version, and then the 2017 live-action remake of the '91 animated film. In this book, it takes a few months, and the Prince starts to lose his mind along with his handsome body. He starts avoiding mirrors, but his official state portraits still show his evolution into a hideous beast—perhaps this plot point is a nod to *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. This is effective characterization. It made me pity him even as I rooted for him to learn his lesson, the narcissistic swine.

Unfortunately, the application of the curse is pretty silly. The Enchantress in this version is the Prince's old girlfriend, Circe, whom he publically abandons when he finds out she's a farmer's daughter. (Um, Disney? Farmer's daughters didn't have a whole lot of free time for hanging out with royalty. This is kind of far-fetched). Circe has three older sisters—Lucinda, Martha, and Ruby—who then show up at the castle and lay the famous curse upon the Prince, cackling that he'll never break it in time.

These three are exactly what I meant earlier about the uneven tone. They can be menacing occasionally, but mostly they're a trio of silly cartoon characters. They squawk rhyming incantations while clobbering each other with household objects and falling out of their chairs. Like a production of *Macbeth* where the role of the Three Witches is played by the Three Stooges. They don't belong in the same story with a cruel, beautiful young man who thinks his garden statuery is trying to kill him.

A few other problems in brief:

- 1). Gaston is here portrayed as the son of the Prince father's steward (or butler or something) and the Prince's best friend from early childhood. He actually tries to help the Prince on several occasions. While I think this is a nod to Darcy and Wickham in *Pride & Prejudice* and therefore enjoyed it—and there's a great scene when the Beast finally transforms and tries to kill his friend—it's not in character for Gaston AT ALL. The thing about narcissists is that they repulse each other. They can only be friends with docile, enabling persons.
- 2). Once Belle shows up, the whole story feels like it's on fast-forward, with occasional inane commentary from those three goofy witches. The writing in these scenes is patchy at best, especially compared to those fun creepy passages in the earlier half of the book. This makes me think that Valentino just ran out of time. There is zero development of Belle's character, or her relationship to the Beast.
- 3). The book insists that the story takes place not in France, but in an imaginary kingdom that has contact with France. The narrator even refers to Lumiere as “the flirty fellow with the French accent” even though we know that in-universe, *they all have French accents*. “They can sing, they can dance/After all, miss, this is France,” state the lyrics in “Be Our Guest.” Circe and her sisters make references to a mad queen who flung herself off a cliff to her death many years ago, implying that this is the same kingdom where *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* took place. The shared universe idea is cute, but there's nothing in the movies themselves to suggest that it's the same country.
- 4). Finally, can we get this poor man a name? He is referred to in this book solely as “the Prince” or “the Beast”, even in the passages narrated from his perspective. I can understand if he forgot his name after years

of enchantment, but then he and Belle should have figured it out at the end. On the interwebs, this character is sometimes referred to as Adam. Adam is not a particularly 18th century French aristocrat-type name, but it is a very nice name, that might be a literary reference in this context (Frankenstein's Creature was also occasionally called Adam). So I'll continue to call him Adam, but ANY NAME AT ALL IN CANON WOULD BE NICE.

At any rate, this isn't horrible for a media tie-in, but it doesn't quite reach its potential either. A short and harmless read, perfectly appropriate for ages ten and up. The flaws in the book appear to come from Disney rather than the author. I would happily read more of Serena Valentino's work.

Dannii Elle says

This is the second instalment in the Villains series, which rework the original tales from the initial villain's perspective.

Of the series, this is the title I was both the most eager and hesitant to get to. Eager, as the Beauty and the Beast films are so beloved to me. Hesitant, as I had never viewed the Beast as the story-line's villain and had, instead, reserved that spot for Gaston. I feared Valentino would approach the Beast from a less sensitive viewpoint than he deserved.

My fears were quickly assuaged and this allowed the Beast's quirks, personality and characteristics to remain much like the original. An understanding and prior knowledge of how his present predicament had befallen him was provided and it was in perfect keeping with everything already known about him.

There were also exciting additional characters that added some much needed individuality. It made for an entertaining reading experience seeing former character, from this series, reintroduced and particulars of future titles already hinted at.

The only downfall was the plot's finale. This adhered almost too much to the original and felt a bit like it rushed through its predecessor's plot points to finish the book. For me, I would have greatly preferred a protracted ending, that saw this book close as the original opened.

Shay says

Despite the fact that this tale diverges from the original Disney movie, I loved it! This is from Beast's point of view. It follows his full transition from prince to beast and slowly maneuvers into the tale that we already know. I was rather intrigued with the characterization of Beast himself. This book gives a back story. As askew as it may seem to some it's still great!

megs_bookrack says

2.5-?s.

Okay. This one was rough. There's not a lot here and what is, wasn't great for me. Ugh, this hurts my heart to write this. I have all the books in this series and am obsessed with the covers and naked books. I have read the first book in the series, *Fairest of All*, and gave it four stars. I don't know if maybe the fact that Beauty & the Beast is my favorite fairy tale of all time made me judge this one differently - I just don't know.

First, let's get this right out of the way: I **hated** the Prince/Beast. There was nothing redeemable about him and his story arc was completely flat. I don't feel he evolved as a character at all. Belle ends up with him and you're like, gurl, NO! While reading his character, all I could picture in my head was Joffrey Baratheon, and any GOT fan knows that is not a pretty picture.

The story was all over the place. Some parts of the book were taken directly from the Disney movie (the original animated one that I have watched 2,568,401 times) which normally wouldn't bother me, but the dialogue was exact and it didn't explore any of the scenes at all. It felt so rushed and like there was no heart behind it at all. Picture: Beast saving Belle from wolves, here's a library, Gaston & Beast fight, a kiss, THE END - in about 20 pages with no coherent connection or exploration of ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc.

One thing I did enjoy was the friendship of the Prince and Gaston prior to him being cursed. That was interesting and I thought that added to the original story in a unique way. Even though this one let me down, I am definitely planning to read the rest of the books in the series. Maybe the others will work for me more as I am not as attached to the stories and characters. I would recommend this for a MUCH younger audience; perhaps tweens wouldn't feel so bent with it as I was! Thanks for reading my rant - I truly do not enjoy having to write a review like this. It makes me sad :(

Side (unrelated) note: This satisfied Challenge #1 of Retellathon for me - *read a retelling of your favorite fairytale*

Ashley says

I bought this book while at Disney World and was really excited to read it, because Beauty and the Beast is my favorite Disney movie and I've always been curious about the prince's life before he met Belle. Unfortunately, this was just...it's just not very good. This is written like really bad fanfiction; certain choices the writer has made don't make sense time- or plot-wise in relation to the film (why would the Beast have been friends with Gaston? Why is he romancing women when the film makes it clear he was cursed as an early teenager?) and this book has no real character development. I wanted to really enjoy this book but sadly, I can't recommend it, even for a fun, light read.

Jessica says

I was so disappointed with this. I had read Valentino's previous Disney villain novel "Fairest of All" and enjoyed it immensely. I'd also read previous works of Valentino's and enjoyed those as well. So when I saw this new story out, I did something unusual for me, and bought it without looking up reviews or reading through it a bit. Valentino had established herself a competent writer with a flair for darker themes, so I was confident in my purchase.

That'll teach me.

I'm not sure if she was trying out a new writing style, was told she was writing for a much younger audience, or simply had other projects that took away attention and time from this, but this particular story reads like an amateur attempt.

The writing is overly simplistic and choppy. It can't seem to decide if it's a really young childrens book, or a young adult book. Certain adjectives are used frequently, to the point of excess, oftentimes in the same sentence. The plot is thin and feels hastily thrown together. It's as though the author had a basic idea, and didn't have the time to properly develop it. Many words are devoted to things that aren't important, while character development and plot points get left behind. All of our characters are paper-thin, with no depth. The entire premise of the book depends on the turning of our selfish prince (or should I say "Prince" as he's referred to the entire time), into a human with an understanding of real love and compassion, and yet... we never see that transformation. He seems to go from selfish, to despair, to capable of real love, within the span of a few pages.

The overall plot idea is interesting, but there just isn't much to it all. I found I was more interested in the story behind the weird sisters, and the subtle little side plot with Ursula.

Even if we chalk this up to being a young children's book, I still find it disappointing, as the writing itself is choppy and inconsistent. Children's books do not need to be simple. Valentino is a good wordsmith. I've seen it. So I'm not sure what happened here.

The price is pretty hefty for the size of the book as well. \$16 at a brick and mortar store, \$13 on Amazon. While that is for hardcover there are full length adult novels available in hardcover for not much more than that. I read the book in one night.

I'll hold on to it for my collection, but overall, a disappointing read. If you can, flip through it at a local bookstore before you decide to buy.

I hear she is working on another story to explore Ursula's past, so I have hopes that this was a fluke and the new story will have more depth and the more complex writing style we've seen from Ms. Valentino before.

Kevin says

FANBOY POV:

What an amazing retelling. This is a retelling that doesn't stray away from the original story.

CRITIC POV:

Some of the scenes look rushed. I won't recommend this book to readers who haven't seen or read *Beauty and The Beast*.

THE REVIEW

WRITING STYLE:

There is something hypnotizing about Miss Valentino's writing. Her prose knows when to grab you at the right moment. My only problem is sometimes it feels like there are parts that are just there for the sake of sounding poetic and musical. Other than that, Miss Valentino's writing is beautiful and loveable.

PACE:

Despite some of the paragraphs feeling rushed, I don't feel like the story is moving too fast. As a matter of fact, I love the transitions from one setting to another. Time moves back and forth without being confusing. That is talent.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:

There is nothing new about the characters. I appreciate that because I know Miss Valentino is basing everything from the animated version. There are some new information and new characters, and it's amazing how those new elements blend perfectly with the classic version.

PLOT:

This novel still follows the same Beauty and The Beast story. However, its main focus now is Prince Adam and how he becomes the Beast. I love how the main conflict is what is really inside Prince Adam; is he a beast or a prince who has never experienced true love?

MY VERDICT:

If you want to see Beauty and The Beast from a new lens, this novel is nothing but perfect. It is a quick read, and it will totally entertain everyone who is a big fan of Beauty and The Beast.

RATING BREAKDOWN

WRITING STYLE: +1 STAR(S)

PACE: +1 STAR(S)

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: +1 STAR(S)

PLOT: +1 STAR(S)

MY VERDICT: +1 STAR(S)

Danny Phantom says

Para morir, uno tuvo primero que estar vivo. Y la Bestia por fin podía decir que había encontrado el amor, que había vivido.

2.5

La verdad es que no fue nada de lo que esperaba, el libro es entretenido, muy fácil y rápido de leer pero no me convenció del todo, la Bestia me cayó mal todo el libro, si, ya sabíamos que es un hombre egoísta, superficial, etc, pero es que aquí fue insoportable por como se comportaba aun sabiendo ya lo del hechizo, además de que según yo, que recuerde, claro, en la historia de Disney no fue que se convirtió en la Bestia por lo que sucede en la historia. El libro en si esta bien, para pasar el rato, no es la gran cosa, pero me entretuvo bastante, además de que me gustó que metiera a Ursula en la historia, que uniera las historias fue interesante y me gustó eso, pero bueno, la portada me encanta y esperaba más.

Mischenko says

To see this review and others please visit www.readrantrockandroll.com

I decided to spend my entire rainy Sunday reading nothing but *Beauty and the Beast*. After finishing *Lost in a Book* this morning, I was still hungry for more. This review may contain some spoilers so read at your own risk.

The Beast Within begins with the Prince and how he's sickened with the fact that he's been transformed into a beast. He's tormented by the three evil sister witches who have cast a spell on him. At this point Beast

understands that only true love, both given and received, can break the curse that's been bestowed upon him.

The majority of the story heads back to the time when the Prince's life was perfect and he hadn't a care in the world. He was arrogant and vain. Here we learn about his best friend Gaston, and Circe, his beautiful and soon to be wife. This is where the questions begin. Is Gaston a real friend? Is the love the Prince feels for Circe true love that will have the power to break the spell?

I liked the way the author used the three sister witches in the story with the added twists. I truthfully enjoyed learning about the Beast before the curse as well, but the relationship with Belle fell short on detail and the ending came way to fast for me. I found it strange how Circe became so understanding in the last moments and she wanted everything to be fixed after spending the majority of the book bitter toward the Beast.

I still really liked it and I'm glad to have read it. This is perfect for upper grade school readers all the way up to adult.

4****

Isa Cantos (Crónicas de una Merodeadora) says

"Don't forget, Beast, true love, both given and received, before the last petal falls".

No saben cuánto amo las historias que tienen que ver con *La Bella y la Bestia*... ¡y no saben cuánto amo cuando se ingenian giros geniales para historias nuevas!

En *The Beast Within* todo empieza con la Bestia recordando cómo llegó hasta el punto de depender de Bella para romper una maldición que le impusieron por vanidoso y egoísta. Ahora, lo interesante de este libro es que se aleja un poco de la versión de maldición instantánea por no ayudar a una viejita/bruja. Esta versión es mucho más retorcida y cruel. Aquí la maldición no depende de una sola bruja, sino de cuatro hermanas, una de ellas Circe. ¿Les suena ese nombre? Bueno, a mí sí. Y no es nada que se confirme en el libro, pero Circe es el nombre de una diosa hechicera griega que castigaba a sus enemigos convirtiéndolos en animales. ¿Coincidencia? No lo creo.

Me fascinó poder leer desde la mente del Príncipe cómo fue que se metió en el lío que terminó con su maldición. Y, de nuevo, no es la típica escena que todos tenemos en mente, fue más bien una colección de errores que terminó con su castigo inevitable. Y, por eso mismo, es increíble leer cómo poco a poco va perdiendo su humanidad y convirtiéndose en la Bestia que siempre temió tener en el interior. Es una perspectiva nueva que realmente la da nuevas luces al cuento clásico.

Katie.dorny says

I loved this book. It showed a different story than the film and it got me out of my reading slump. It was a quick read and I'm excited to read the others by Serena Valentino!

Jo (An Unexpected Bookish Geek) says

It's pretty common knowledge, for people that know me, that I'm a rather big fan of Beauty and the Beast. I love the film, the songs are wonderful, and it just doesn't get old. Plus, that AMAZING library scene, I could just put on replay. When I spotted this book in the bookstore, I was unaware that this is in fact the second book in the series. Well, I went ahead and read it anyway.

This book was unique, and there was a different perspective shown on the Beast. I thought the story was interesting and definitely had that fairytale feel to it. I think the new characters that were added to this, especially the witches, were very much needed. It added individuality to the book, and kept me intrigued. The issue that I had with the book, was the ending. I felt like I was reading the original. I think I could have enjoyed this more, if the ending was different, and didn't seem as rushed.
