





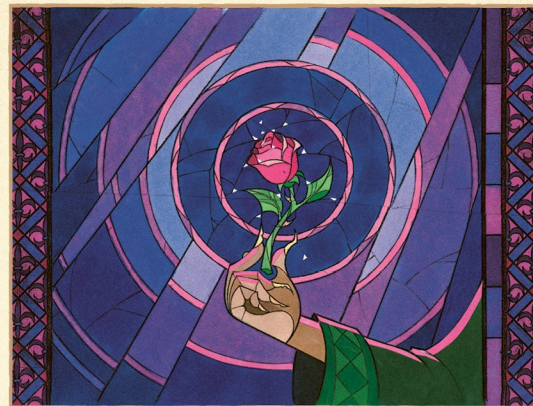
Long, long ago in a land far from here, an old woman in a worn-out cloak knocked on the door of a magnificent palace.

The night was cold and the poor, elderly woman needed a place to shelter. The door was opened by a handsome but spoiled Prince. The woman begged the Prince for a place to stay. She only had one rose to give him in exchange for his hospitality. But the Prince's heart was hard. He did not want the rose and thought the old woman in the worn-out cloak ugly. Instead of inviting the old woman inside, the Prince denied her request.

The old woman asked the Prince to look beyond her ugliness, but he could not. Once again he turned her away. Suddenly, the old woman transformed into a youthful enchantress. Seeing the Enchantress, the Prince said he was sorry, but she had seen the ugliness in the Prince's heart and resolved to punish him.

The Enchantress cast a spell on the Prince and everyone who resided in the palace. The Prince changed into a beast, with long claws and covered all over in coarse fur. The palace staff transformed into talking objects.

Horrified by his new appearance, the Beast locked himself away in a wing of the palace, watching the world through a magic mirror.



The Enchantress left behind the rose she had originally offered him. It was enchanted. She told the Beast that in order to break the spell, he must gain the love of someone and also fall in love with them before the enchanted rose shed its final petal. If the Beast failed, the spell would be everlasting.

As time moved on, the world forgot all about the Prince and his palace and the Beast descended into a deep sadness, certain that no one could ever love a monster such as him.

.. ... ..



One morning in an ordinary village, a young woman named Belle left her house to go to the bookshop. As she walked, Belle dreamed of a life outside the village filled with exciting adventures, just like the ones she read about.

In the village, Belle was greeted by people going about their day. Belle loved stories and longed to share them with the townspeople, but nobody would listen.

Besides, they thought Belle was a bit odd.

The only person who did have time for Belle's stories was the bookseller.

Belle was the bookseller's best customer. She hoped he would have a new book for her, but he did not, for it had only been a day since she had last asked.



When she left the bookshop, Belle caught the eye of a man named Gaston. Gaston was the strongest and handsomest man in the village – at least, according to himself. He was determined to marry Belle.

“Hello, Belle,” said Gaston.

“Bonjour, Gaston,” Belle replied, still reading as Gaston took the book from her.



“Belle, it’s about time you got your head out of those books and paid attention to more important things. Like me,” said Gaston.

“I have to get home to help my father,” Belle said.

“That crazy old loon. He needs all the help he can get,” said Gaston’s friend, LeFou.

“My father is not crazy. He’s a genius,” Belle said.

But as she spoke, an explosion came from her house. Belle hurried to see what had happened.