



WHAT'S THE Story?

THE WISHBONE-ESQUE
BOOK CLUB YOU NEVER
KNEW YOU WANTED

Atlantis

Beauty and the Beast is a timeless tale of a cursed prince and the woman who falls in love with him and breaks his spell. There are two definitive versions of this story. The first is the original, the 1740 French fairy tale *La Belle et la Bête* by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. The second, and perhaps the more famous, is the 1991 animated Disney film *Beauty and the Beast*, a film that defined the Disney renaissance and earned the first ever Oscar nomination for an animated film. But like most fairy tales, the story goes back even further.

Beauty and the Beast is a version of the Animal Bridegroom trope, a trope that exists in many old folktales and myths that no doubt inspired the story we know now. The myth of Eros and Psyche, where Psyche believes her mysterious groom to be a beast before she uncovers that he is in fact a god, had a lot of influence on the Beauty and the Beast fairy tale. The Italian story of The Pig King also may have influenced the story. Like Beauty and the Beast, it features a prince that appears as a pig until he finds worthy bride (In illustrations of the Beauty and The Beast fairy tale, the “beast” of the story is sometimes depicted as a boar, perhaps due to the influence of The Pig King.) Variations of the story appear throughout the world, especially in Europe, and feature grooms that appear as snakes, lions, wolves, and even horses. The common theme in all these stories is that of transformation. The reward for the young heroine, who willingly goes with the beast to save her family in most versions of this story, is that the beast is secretly a handsome prince. For girls hearing these fairy tales, it was propaganda to ensure them that their own arranged grooms might not be as beastly as they seem.

Some modern versions of the story reinforce the idea that if the heroine is good and kind she can turn the beast into a prince, but others stray away from that idea. Guillermo del Toro’s *The Shape of Water* for instance, is about the heroine loving the beast despite his appearance, and no transformation is needed because he is never a beast on the inside. As we read our retellings, we shall see what approach to the trope each version decides to take.

What is a Retelling?

Whenever an existing story inspires a movie, book, television show, video game, or play, it goes through a process called adaptation. Retellings adapt stories by changing elements to fit a new context. For example, a retelling may change its source material to fit a new type of medium, a different genre, or a new era. Despite changes, retellings inherently carry story elements from the source material.

Retellings and adaptations have been around as long as stories have been told. Many classic myths and fables had hundreds of versions before being put into print. Retellings are part of our collective history, existing in every culture, medium, and time period.

The What’s The Story Book Club seeks to understand how classic stories influence our past and continue to expand how we think, feel, and experience the world through adaptations and retellings.

Each month we choose a well-known myth, fairy tale, or piece of literature. We discuss the original, or best-known versions of the story. Then you choose a retelling that you wish to experience. Your choice can be any genre or medium, as long as the story relates to that month’s source material.

As you read or watch your retelling, take note of what elements you recognize from the original story, what elements are changed, and anything you find interesting about the adaptation. We will discuss each version that our group chose when we meet again.



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Children's Fiction

Beauty and the Beast : a retelling by Demelza Carlton
Beasts and Beauty : dangerous tales by Soman Chainani
Beauty and the Beast: the only one who didn't run away by Wendy Mass
The Beast and the Bethany by Jack Meggitt-Phillips
The Beast Within : a tale of beauty's prince by Serena Valentino

YA Novels

Beau & Bett by Kathryn Berla
Becoming Beauty by Sarah E. Boucher
As Old as Time by Liz Braswell
The Merchants Daughter by Melanie Dickerson
Beastly by Alex Flinn
Cruel Beauty by Rosamund Hodge
Of Beast and Beauty by Stacey Jay
Beast : a tale of love and revenge by Lisa Jensen
A Curse so Dark and Lonely by Brigid Kemmerer
A Court of Thorns and Roses by Sarah Maas
Bookish and the Beast by Ashley Poston
Hunted by Meagan Spooner
Beauty by Robin McKinley
Grim by Various

Adult Fiction

Beauty and the Clockwork Beast by Nancy Campbell Allen
When Beauty Tamed the Beast by Eloisa James
Bryony and Roses by T. Kingfisher
Belle: an Amish retelling by Sarah Price
Five Enchanted Roses by Various

Other Media

Belle (series) by Dave Franchini (ecomic Hoopla)
Dark tales. Beauty and the Beast by Pete Katz
Beauty and the Beast (ASL) by Child's Play (evideo Libby)
Beauty and the Beast (series) by Mallory Reaves
Beauty and the Dreaded Sea Beast by Louise Simonson (ecomic Hoopla)

TV/ Movies

Beauty & the Beast (tv series 1978-1990)
Beauty and the Beast (tv series 2012-2016)
Beauty and the Beast / Belle et la bête (1946)
Disney's Beauty and the Beast (1991 & 2017)
Jane Eyre (2004 & 2006 & 2007 & 2011& 2020)
Penelope (2006)
The Shape Of Water (2017)

eMaterial on Libby or Hoopla

Enchant : beauty and the beast retold by Demelza Carlton
Christmas with the Beast: paranormal romance by Rebecca Hamilton
Kill the Beast by Michele Israel Harper
The Beast of Beswick by Amalie Howard
Roses by G. R. Mannering
Beauty and the Basement by Olivia Snowe
The beast and the beauty : a bad boy romance by Nikki Steele
Beauty and the Professor by Skye Warren
Belle and the Beast: A Christian Romance (evideo)
The Beautiful Beast : a Beauty and the beast story (evideo)
Beauty and the Beast (2017) (evideo)

Awesome things that Phoenix Public Library doesn't own

A Ruin of Roses by K.F. Breene
The Misadventures of an Amateur Naturalist by Ceinwen Langley
The Loneliest Cottage by Melissa Storm
Beastly (2011) (Roku)
Belle (2022) (Ruko)
The Beautician and the Beast (1997)
Beauty and the Beast: A Latter-Day Tale (2007) (various platforms)
Beauty and the Beast: musical
Blood Of Beasts (2005) (Tubi)
The Scarlet Flower (1952) & (1978) (Ruko)

