



The Spinster & The Beast

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Elizabeth Wicklow is a confirmed spinster, content to chaperone her lovely nieces on their hunt for husbands. While she has no foolish notions about her own martial state, her heart quakes at the sight of Major Rutledge, a man from her past. Unfortunately, Major Rutledge is enamored by one of her nieces! What could possibly be more devastating?

Elizabeth decides to vent her frustrations in a letter. Thinking no one will read it, she spares no details.

However, her deepest secrets are about to be discovered... by the elusive “Mr. Nobody.”

Sensuality Level : Sweet

Word Count: 20,000

The Spinster & The Beast Details

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Author : Caylen McQueen

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Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Novella, Historical, Regency, Fairy Tales, Beauty and The Beast, Short Stories

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From Reader Review *The Spinster & The Beast* for online ebook

Diane Morris says

I enjoyed this novella. You have an older woman of the Regency period escorting her nieces. An encounter with a beau of her own youth (a decade past) is demoralizing because he is now looking to court one of her nieces. Her anger and bitterness are written down in a letter and hidden under a rock. Later she realizes that perhaps she was a bit hasty and shouldn't have let the letter out into the world. Too late, it's been found and there is a reply to her instead.

The hero is also heartbroke though he seems past his anger and bitterness and lives with his grandmother who is an invalid. He essentially took a musketball or shrapnel to his face and has given up all hope of even going out into society. He finds her letter and answers, seeing it, at first, as a light entertainment or a flirtation that can never really be or perhaps merely answering the anger and bitterness he sees in the letter and knows that the unknown writer can rise above it.

I understood the motivations of everyone, was mildly entertained by the story and got my "Awwwh" HEA.

Gerrie says

I love the beauty and the beast theme, and I can endlessly read books where authors come up with new variations on one of my favorite stories. I also love epistolary novels, and there're certainly enough great letters between the hero and heroine for this novella to qualify as one. Further, the book had a real fairy tale feel to it, so the fact that the H and h feel in love so quickly through their letters was believable.

The book was very well written, the author is a talented story teller, and I love what she did with the beauty and the beast theme. So why am I only giving this book three stars instead of four? There were two instances that were, quite simply, gross and unnecessary. Since this is a very short novella, these two instances really stood out, and inserted a very jarring note into the charm and fluid ease of the story.

First: the heroine has a very bad head cold. She's running an errand (I think she's going to pick up or deliver a letter to the tree where she and the hero leave their correspondence), but should really be home in bed. She runs into a former suitor, who had essentially dumped her. Of course, she wants to look her absolute best when she runs into him, but she's at her absolute worst. There are so many ways the author could have conveyed this. What the author did was have a large glob of snot fall from the heroine's nose (the author's exact words, not mine), and she wiped it off with her sleeve. And the author used the word snot (I have no idea if it was in use in England at that time), which was so inappropriate to a Regency story.

Second: the hero lives with his elderly grandmother. At one point, while he and his grandmother are sitting and talking, she reaches into her ear, and takes out a large piece of wax and looks at it. When I read that, I just thought "yuck!" At least there was a really good reason in the plot for the heroine to be stuffed up and sniffing, although the "snot" dripping was not necessary. But the ear wax incident with the grandmother was totally gratuitous, and served no purpose whatsoever. Except to detract from an otherwise lovely story.

I look forward to reading more books by this author, and hope she'll find less revolting ways to make a point.

Xenia says

I had to give this romance novella 4 stars even though there are a few spelling errors and other things I did not like. It is almost the perfect romance story. The premise is really great and so it could have happily been a longer book. I think the letter writing back and forth between the hero and the heroine could have been stretched out. I also did not care for the use of the word "snot" or the scene with Nan and the ear wax. Those things took away from the quality of the writing.

Never the less, I was not distracted away from the beauty and message of this story. I loved the hero and the heroine. Some people reviewing this book on amazon gave it low ratings because their focused on historical accuracy and the fact that the book is so short. I think that when you spend time over analyzing things what happens is that you miss what is really important. This story is a tale of two people making a soul to soul connection that defies convention an is the true nature of love. It is the same type of connection that John Thornton had for Margaret Hale and that Mr. Darcy had for Elizaebth Bennett.

This is the second book by this author that I read and both were extremely enjoyable. Some may be put off by the name of the book, but it really is a novella of substance. I LOVED IT!!! I will definitely read it again and again.

Stephani Austin says

3.5 stars. It's a cute, sweet story. There was nothing in the story I didn't like, but it felt more like a novella than a novel. Because of this there wasn't a lot of background development. It is nice for what it is.

Hannah says

[Liz would be a little mo

Sometime says

This one was mostly good. I loved the letter writing that took up a large portion of the book. But the insta-love through a few letters was a bit much. It was nice for a quick read but not anything spectacular.

Sondra Hildreth says

Wonderful!

I purchased this novella years ago and have read it many times, and have loved it more each time. The two main characters both have their reasons to feel alone and expect to remain alone, yet thanks to a silly whim

they managed to find each other and supply the friendship and love they both desperately needed and deserved. Lovely, lovely story!

Rachel says

If you've never watched the 1945 b&w movie the Enchanted Cottage with Robert Young and Dorothy Mcguire, and you loved this book "The Spinster and the Beast", then I encourage you to rent it or catch it on TCM, you will not be disappointed, as I was not when I read this short story.

We have Elizabeth a 36 year old Spinster, who believes she's too old by society's opinion and her own insecurities, she believes she will never have what her heart secretly desires, a love of her own.

Then we have Adam a war hero, who was injured in battle and bares the scars on the outside as well as on the inside he has become a recluse, fearful of rejection and then disgust from his peers, he stays hidden from society and mourns the thought that he will never win the affections of a lady.

Through Elizabeth's hand, begins a correspondence between the two damaged souls, one scarred by the injuries sustained from war, the other due to insecurities, and both with the fear of rejection by society's standards. Strangers who slowly become friends, told through letter and the author allows the reader to fall in love with this couple as they are falling in love with each other.

Enjoyable short story that left me smiling.

Anna Marie says

A novella, I can't count this in my Challenge. But it was definitely a wonderful (if not too short!) read!

Back to historical fiction! Liz is a spinster of six and thirty years, who has been on the shelf far too long to desire a husband and family of her own the way she does. She should be focusing on helping her two young nieces have their season, not feeling sorry for herself. But when her ex-beau returns from fighting on the continent and declares himself a contender for one of her nieces hands, she is privately emotionally distraught. Major Pain (not his name, but it fits) totally blows her off, and is smitten with her teenaged relative. Mortified, Liz feels the need to write out her frustrations, and in a moment of whimsy, she hides her confession under a rock beside a knobby tree.

Adam has returned from the continent a scarred man. His face was blown off in the war, and he is holed up in his estate with his 80-year old grandmother, ashamed of his appearance (Although, as with all disfigurement stories, the author is a coward and leaves him one unmarked side of his visage. Apparently in novels with facial injuries, it's *ALWAYS* confined to one hemisphere of the skull, and never with any hair loss, vision loss, or hearing loss. How fortunate for all of these fictional men!). He finds the letter when his leg injury (mentioned only once as a vice to get him to sit by the knobby tree) requires him to rest, and he spies the note she left there.

Anyhoo... Adam replies to Liz's letter, and after two weeks of corresponding, they declare undying love to each other. He whips off the mask he wears around like it's nothing (!) and they fall into each other's arms.

The end. It... was sweet. The letters were charming. The story was nice. But for ONCE I'd like an author to commit to the fact that their heroine *isn't* beautiful in the end, and that their hero doesn't have a 'handsome' side. Not everyone does. It's annoying. It's a cop-out. It... took two stars off my review. Otherwise, I would've really liked it.

PS: Someone else commented about the whole snot and ear-wax additions to the story. I agree... it was gross and unnecessary. Not sure why anyone would do that to their own novelette...

Ritsky says

This book is supposed to be sweet. It should have been fluffy and heartwarming. However, I found myself only at the "almost" point. Too bad. Maybe because it's too short and that their interaction via letter could sound creepy when you actually think of it. It should have been sweet, but it is not quite it.

Mandiy says

This was pretty bad. I rarely finish a book and then give it one star, but I'm making an exception. I've finished so few books recently that I really needed something short, and I've been aching for a Beauty and the Beast retelling so why not this??

Okay so I'll start with what was good in this:

- Letter format. I wish the whole book had been this and all the narration cut out. I am now looking for epistolary format books of any kind because I was reminded that I really like this.
- It was super short and a quick read (78 pages on Kindle)
- Nan. I liked her for the most part.

Well, here goes all the rest of it.

- While it was a novella, it could have easily been a short story. There wasn't any additional development and there was a lot of repetition.
- So much wallowing and self-pity.
- Terrible female character. She only gets over a man (from 10 years ago) when she "meets" a new man?? :|
- SO much wallowing.

So now I'm motivated to read something great. I didn't have very high expectations to start and I started up a trial of Kindle Unlimited so I could read this (and a few others) for free so I didn't drop actual dollars on it. Maybe the author has some other good books, but this was just really not what I wanted to be the one to break my non-reading streak.

Allison says

This story was very short but very sweet.

Carla CJ says

Beautiful in its simplicity

So romantic! I may be a sap, but I loved how they grew into love with just letters. And their anonymity allowed them to be completely honest with each other, which was usually unheard of in their time. I was in happy tears when he realized and confessed himself unabashedly that he had fallen in love with her.

Cindy Caron says

A wonderful tale of perceptions, both of ourselves and others, and how hearts don't care what the rest of the world thinks. When it decides to love, the only thing that matters is what's in the heart. Liz not only considers herself a confirmed spinster at the ripe age of thirty and six, but a homely one at that. Back from the war with not only a lame leg, but a disfigured face, Adam has become a recluse, the only person to see him, even though her eyesight is failing, is his aged eighty year old grandmother. When a former beau returns from the war and seemingly makes fun of her at her niece's coming out, then continues to "rub it in her face" when he decides to court her young niece, Liz uses a tried and trusted method of settling herself. She pens her feelings in a letter and addresses it to "Mr. Nobody", then hiding it under a rock far away from town, hoping for peace within. But when her letter is found, and replied to, who knows what the outcome will be?

Beautifully written, tasteful and easy to follow, this short heart warmer will surely capture your heart, as it did mine.

Keri says

You know I understand wanting to put a little reality in your book, but snot running down the lip and wiping ear wax on the couch was a bit much for me. I enjoyed the book up until those two incidents. Had to make myself finish the book after that.
