

The Beast: rewritten for a contest

By : swords edge

For nicky's contest, rewritten to fit their contest rules. takes place on a modern day ranch with a little girl lost in the woods who finds and age old castle. in the novel, which i will publish latter, it takes place in middlevil times and the end of the short story is different... but can't say because it'll spoil the twist that they wanted.



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the little girl rode faster through the trees, her pale face was stained with tears as she became more distressed as she got farther into the woods.

She was lost and she knew it, all the thoughts running through her 8 year old mind was about how mad daddy would be when he found out she had ran away, shacking her straight brown hair out of her face she urged her favorite chestnut horse on. The woods around her were turning dark and monstrous as the branches turned black with the night, they seemed to be reaching out to her, trying to eat her.

â no!â she cried ducking her head lower trying to get away from the reach of a black branch who's claws were trying to grab her, â leave me alone!â she pressed the horse faster trying to dodge the branches that were snagging her white and pink laced dress.

As the night got darker the green eyed girl got sleeper until her eyes finally started to droop and her head nodded, long before this the horse had stopped running and had went to a trot, the sliver moon was high in the sky and some where a clock chimed midnight signaling the 3rd hour the girl had spent inside of the mystical woods, her head fell again but it snapped back up remembering what would happen if she fell asleep.

â if I fall asleep i'll fall off and I wont be able to get back up again. . .â she whispered to herself touching her left leg, but she didn't feel the soft pat, she never did.

Around her the dreadful trees creaked and moaned in the wind and autumn levees swirling about her making the girl shiver in her thin cloths. â why didn't I listen to daddy? I should have stayed in the house with Travis and little Ben. . . we were going to eat a special cake that daddy was going to bring back from his trip to the city for my birthday party latter, now they'll have wasted the money on a stupid little girl who want to see her pony. . .â she said to no one in general but rather to recite what she had done to deserve being lost in the black forest, as her daddy had called it. The horse whined and stomped its hooves stopping in its tracks.

â whats the matter boy?â the girl asked it, it stumped its hooves again in protest to move forward, looking up the girl saw why.

In front of them stood a dark castle surrounded buy a spiked metal fence that loomed high above their heads threateningly, but the scariest part to the girl, though, was that it wasn't there a minute ago. â shh. . . maybe who ever lives here would let us stay for the night and show us where the next town is...â she whispered patting her chestnut lovingly, but the horse was still hesitant to step forward. â please Brownie? Iâ m really tired and I don't think I can stay on you for much longer,â that got it's attention, slowly it stepped forward closer to the gate. â excuse me! Excuse me is anyone there?â she shouted, her voice shaking not just from the cold the was raking her body, â my names Maria Rose and Iâ m lost and I need a place to stay tonight, can I please rest here?â she called, moments latter the gate opened by it's self, slowly the pushed her horse forward ignoring her own instinct to run.

Behind her the gate shut with a loud clank startling her and her pony. â shh. . .it's just the gate, no need to be worried,â she whispered but she didn't quite believe it herself.

â little girl, what are you doing here?â a deep voice asked behind Maria, startled, the horse reared and bucked Maria into the air, screaming she began to fall to the earth but hit something else, instead of the hard ground she had fallen on something a little softer. Her eyes squeezed shut as she grabbed onto something above her and held fast to it still afraid of hitting the earth never to get up again. Pushing her head deeper into whatever she was holding onto she felt hot breath run down her neck and hair, after this she realized that she was being held unto rather tightly by something big and furry and warm.

â are you alright?â came the deep voice, besides it's roughness she could make out worry for her and a warm caring as it's hot breath ran down her making her cold body shiver, she whimpered as who ever was holding her shifted their arms so that she was more conferrable, slowly, after that, it stood being careful not to joust her.

â y-yes,â she whispered allowing the first tear to escape her shut eyes.

â can you walk?â the voice rumbled, Maria was guessing it was a man who said the words but she hadn't ever heard a man with such a deep voice before or with such hairy arms. Feeling him slowly lower her to the

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ground she cried out.

“no!” the man stopped then slowly raised her back up again.

“why not? Where you hurt when I caught you?” he sounded distressed and angry, Maria could feel his muscles tense at his rage with himself for hurting her.

“no,” she stated remembering her lag.

“then why not?” she felt his muscles relax but she was still afraid of his rage, he felt like he had tons of muscle that he could probably snap her in half with.

“I’m crippled,” she stated plainly as if she had just said it was night time or that rain was wet, the man took a sharp breath at her statement taken aback by her calmness.

“how,” his voice was strained as if he was afraid to ask, Maria rubbed her head closer to his chest feeling herself slowly fall into a nice sleep.

“I was born with it. . . since I was a baby I could never feel my left leg, almost like it's not there. Daddy thinks it's because mommy fell on some ice when I was inside her but he's not mad at her for it, and neither am I,” she stated, she felt the man's arms move slightly.

“did you feel that?” he asked her, for the first time she opened her eyes to look up into his eyes.

“feel what?” but whatever she was going to say next came out in a strangled gasp as she looked up into the green eyes of a large beast. She looked around around her and found what she thought were very hairy arms were much more than that, his big limbs were covered with long dark brown hair and he had claws like cats at the end of human like hands and as her eyes strayed back up to his head she saw that he had a head like no beast she has ever seen before with dark horns curling back to match his pointed dark teeth.

“hideous aren't I?” he asked, chuckling slightly at her expression. But he stopped when the girl put her hand to his cheek and frowned saying.

“your better than the men who killed mommy,” after that line the beast's face went blank but his eyes betrayed him as they flared with rage.

“what did you say?” he asked calmly, or as calmly as a beast can. Maria frowned looking up at him like he was a little child that didn't understand.

“I said you're not as hideous as the men who killed my mommy,” she dropped her hand as the beast closed his eyes sighing.

“that's what I thought you said,” the girl touched the beast's chest with her hand making him snap open his eyes to look at her.

“why are you sad?” she asked, the beast smiled kindly at her.

“because it's time for you to go home,”

“but I don't want to go home!” the girl exclaimed making the beast pause and ask.

“why not?” the little girl huffed and said.

“because I'm running away,” the beast chuckled.

“why are you running away?”

“because,”

“well that's not a very good reason,”

“I don't care, I want to stay here with you,” the beast took a sharp breath.

“no,” he said sternly, “maybe when you grow up you can come back, but right now your father needs you, ok?” the little girl nodded closing her eyes again tired beyond belief, “now when you wake up it will be morning time and you'll be in your bed all nice and warm with a little birthday present to remember me by,” and like that Maria fell asleep in the arms of the beast who had saved her life more than once that night. In the morning she was in her bed and she found a pretty necklace around her neck, and to the day she died she never did forget that night, or the beast. And thought she never saw him again but her granddaughter on the other hand would leave the city to her parents country side ranch and take a walk into the forest never to return.

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