There was once a very rich merchant, who had three sons and three daughters. He loved his children very much and, being a sensible man, he spared no cost for their education. Each had tutors in the arts and music and all manner of interesting things. The merchant's daughters were especially beautiful, especially the youngest. When she was little, the whole town would admire her, calling her "The little Beauty" so that, as she grew, she was still called Beauty, a fact which made her sisters most jealous.

The youngest, loving learning more than the others, excelled at her studies. The elder sisters were proud and arrogant and often rude to others, believing that because they were rich they were somehow better than the people of the town. They gave themselves ridiculous airs, and refused to visit the daughters of their father's business associates. Neither would they company with anyone they did not consider to be of quality, which meant people who had more money and put on more ridiculous airs than they themselves. Daily parties and outings became the norm: Each day brought: balls, plays, concerts, and so forth. They derided youngest sister, and considered her a fool because she passed so much of her time reading books.

As it was known that they would marry with huge dowries, several eminent merchants sought to woo the merchant's daughters. But the two eldest asserted that they would never marry, unless it were to a duke, or an earl at the very least. Beauty, however, politely thanked all that courted her, and told them she was too young yet to marry, but wished to stay with her father a few years longer.

One day, suddenly, some bad decisions caused the merchant lost his whole fortune and his estate in the city. He had only a small country house to his name, and it was at a great distance from town. With tears in his eyes, he called his children to announce that they work for their living in the country. The two eldest rebelled, swearing that they would never leave the town for they had several lovers, who sure would be glad to have them with or without their dowries. Alas,
good ladies were mistaken, for their lovers slighted and abandoned them to their new-found poverty. Their arrogance and meanness spiritedness had made them so ill-liked that the townspeople were secretly very glad to see them humbled. "Let them go and give themselves airs in milking the cows and minding their dairy! But," they whispered, "we shall miss Beauty and wish her well always. She was such a lovely, sweet-tempered creature and always spoke so kindly to poor and rich people alike. Indeed, several gentlemen would have married her, though they knew she had not a penny. Still she told them she would not abandon her poor father in his misfortunes, but was determined to go along with him into the country to comfort and attend him.

Poor Beauty at first grieved at the loss of her fortune. "But," said she, "were I to cry or complain, that would not make things better. She resolved to make herself happy without a fortune.

Arriving at their country house, the merchant and his three sons began to work as farmers and dairymen, while Beauty rose at four each morning, and ensured that the house was clean and comfortable, and dinner ready for the family. At first, she found it very difficult, for she was unaccustomed to labor as a servant, but in fewer than two months she grew stronger and healthier than ever. At the end of the day when her work was finished, she read, played the harpsichord, or sang songs while she spun.

Her two sisters, on the other hand, were at a loss as how to spend their time; they arose at ten each morning, and did nothing but saunter about the whole day, lamenting the loss of their fine clothes and acquaintances. "Look at our youngest sister," they said to one to the other, "what a poor, stupid creature she is, to content herself with such an unhappy dismal existence."

The good merchant was of quite a different opinion. He knew very well that Beauty outshone her sisters, in her person as well as her mind. He admired her humility and industry, but above all her humility and patience. For her sisters not only left her all the work of the house to do, but rewarded her with insults every waking moment.

After the family had retired to the country for a year, the merchant received notice that a vessel carrying cargo that belonged to him had safely arrived. This news spun the heads of the two eldest daughters, who immediately envisioned themselves returning to town in glory and new finery, for they were long weary of a country life. Seeing their father preparing to leave for town, they begged of him to buy them new clothes, scarves, ribbons, and all manner of trifles. He
promised to see what he could do. "And what for you, Beauty? Will you have fine clothes like your sisters?" But Beauty asked for nothing - for she thought to herself, that all the money her father was going to receive, would scarce be sufficient to purchase everything her sisters demanded.

"Since you have the goodness to think of me," answered she, "be so kind to bring me a rose, for as none grow hereabouts, they are a kind of rarity." Not that Beauty cared for a rose, but she asked for something, so she would not seem by her example to condemn her sisters' conduct, who would have said she did it to reflect poorly on them.

The good man departed on his journey, but upon arriving in town, he found that recovering his cargo would not be easy. He went to speak with his old business friends and lawyers about the merchandise, but finally, after a great deal of trouble and pains to no purpose, he set off for home as poor as when he left.

He was within thirty miles of his own house, thinking on the pleasure he should have in seeing his children again, when he became lost in a dark forest. The weather had been warm and sunny but suddenly it was raining and snowing fiercely. The wind blew so hard that it twice threw him off his horse, and with night coming on, he feared that he might die from cold and hunger, or else be devoured by the wolves he heard howling all round him. Suddenly, looking through a long walk of trees, he saw a light at some distance, and going a little farther in that direction, he perceived it came from a brightly-lit palace. The merchant rejoiced at this happy discovery, and rode toward the palace as quickly as he could. Here, dismounting, he was greatly surprised to find no one in the outer courts. Leading his horse, he found a large stable open, and finding both hay and oats, the poor beast fell to eating very heartily. The merchant tied him up to the manger, and himself walked towards the house, where still seeing no one, he entered a large hall with a good fire, and a great feast set out but with only one place setting laid. As he was soaked by the rain and snow, he drew near the fire to warm himself and dry his clothes. "I hope," he said in a half-audible voice hoping that someone would hear him, "that the master of the house, or his servants will excuse the liberty I take; I suppose it will not be long before some of them appear."

He waited for hours and no one appeared. The clock strike nine, ten, eleven, and still no one had come. At last, he was so hungry that he could stay no longer, but took a chicken, and ate it in two mouthfuls, trembling all the while. He then drank a few glasses of wine, and
growing more courageous, he went out of the hall, crossing several grand salons of magnificent furniture, until he reached a guest chamber, with a warm bed turned down and waiting for him. It was now past midnight and he was weary from his many adventures of the day. He decided it was best to shut the door, and go to bed where he fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

It was ten the next morning before the merchant awoke, and as he began to rise, he was astonished to see a fine suit of clothes put out for him. His own clothes had been quite spoiled from the elements. Certainly, he thought, this palace belongs to some kind fairy, who has seen and pitied my distress. He looked through a window, but instead of snow, he saw a garden of delightful arbors, interwoven with the most beautiful flowers he had ever seen. He returned to the great hall, where he had supped the night before, and found frothy hot chocolate waiting on a small table. "Thank you, good Madam Fairy," said he aloud, "for being so careful, as to provide me a breakfast; I am extremely obliged to you for all your favors."

The good man drank his chocolate, and then went to look for his horse. Passing through an arbor of roses he remembered Beauty's request to him, and gathered a branch on which were several. Immediately he heard a great noise, and saw such a frightful Beast coming towards him, that he was nearly fainted.

"You are truly ungrateful," said the Beast to him, in a terrible voice. "I have saved your life by receiving you into my home, and in return, you steal my roses, which I value beyond all else in the universe. You shall die for it; I give you but a quarter of an hour to prepare yourself, and make your peace with God."

The merchant fell on his knees, and lifted up both his hands, "My lord," said he, "I beg your forgiveness. Indeed I had no intention to offend you in gathering a rose for one of my daughters, who desired me to bring her one."

"My name is not 'My Lord','" replied the monster, "but 'Beast'. I am no lover of compliments, not I. I like people to speak their mind honestly. Do not imagine that I am to be moved by any of your flattering speeches." Here he paused. "But you say you have got daughters? I will forgive you, on condition that one of them come willingly, and suffer for you. Let me have no words, but go about your business, and swear that if your daughter should refuse to die in your stead, you will return within three months."
The merchant had no mind to sacrifice his daughters to the ugly monster, and hoped only that he should have the satisfaction of seeing them once more, so he promised, upon oath that he would return. The Beast told him he might set out whenever he pleased, "but," added he, "you shall not depart empty-handed; go back to the chamber where you spent the night, and you will see a great empty chest; fill it with whatever you like best, and I will send it to your home," and thereupon the Beast withdrew.

"Well," said the good man to himself, "if I must die, I shall be comforted to know that I am leaving something to my poor children." He returned to the bedchamber, and finding a great quantity of broad pieces of gold, he filled the great chest the Beast had mentioned, locked it, and afterwards took his horse out of the stable, leaving the palace with as much grief as he had entered it with joy. The horse, of his own accord, took one of the roads of the forest, and in a few hours the good man was at home.

His children came to him, but instead of receiving their embraces with pleasure, he looked on them, and holding up the branch he had in his hands, he burst into tears. "Here, Beauty," said he, "take these roses, but little do you know how dear they are like to cost your unhappy father," and then related his fateful adventure. Immediately the two eldest set up lamentable outcries, and loudly blamed Beauty, who did not cry at all.

"Do but see the pride of that little wretch," said they; "she would not ask for fine clothes, as we did; but no, Miss wanted to set herself above us, so now she will be the death of our poor father. And yet she does not so much as shed a tear."

"Why should I?" answered Beauty, "It would be needless, for my father shall not suffer upon my account. Since the monster will accept of one of his daughters, I will deliver myself up to all his fury. I am very content that my death will save my father's life, and be a proof of my tender love for him."

"No, sister," said her three brothers, "that shall not be. We will seek out the monster, and either kill him, or perish in the attempt."

"Do not imagine any such thing, my sons," said the merchant, "Beast's power is so great, you cannot overcome him. I am moved by Beauty's kind and generous offer, but I cannot yield to it. I am old, and have not long to live. I can lose, at most, only a few years, which I regret for your sakes alone, my dear children."
"Indeed father," said Beauty, "you shall not go to the palace without me; you cannot keep me from following you." Despite everything her father and brothers said, Beauty could not be persuaded otherwise. She still insisted on setting out for the fine palace, and her sisters were delighted at it, for her good heart and kind ways made them envious and jealous.

The merchant was so afflicted at the thoughts of losing his daughter that he had quite forgotten the chest full of gold. But as he retired that night to rest, no sooner had he shut his chamber door than to his great astonishment, he found the chest by his bedside. He was determined, however, not to tell his children, that he was grown rich, because they would have wanted to return to town, and he was resolved not to leave the countryside. He trusted only Beauty with the secret, who recounted to him how two gentlemen had come in his absence to court her sisters. She begged her father to consent to their marriage, and to give them fortunes, for she was so good that she loved them and forgave all their cruelty to her. These wicked creatures rubbed their eyes with an onion to force some tears when they parted with their sister, but her brothers held each other to console themselves at the loss of her. Only Beauty shed no tears at parting, because she would not increase their unhappiness.

Setting off, the horse took the most direct road to the palace. As dusk fell, they saw it illuminated as the father had at his first visit. The horse went of himself into the stable, and the good man and his daughter came into the great hall, where they found a table splendidly set and two place settings. The merchant had little heart to eat, but Beauty, wanting to put her father at ease, eagerly sat down to table. " Afterwards," she thought to herself, "Beast surely has a mind to fatten me before he eats me, since he provides such delicious suppers."

When they had supped they heard a tremendous noise, and the merchant, all in tears, bid his favorite child farewell, for he thought Beast was coming. Beauty shuddered in terror at his horrid form, but she took courage as best as she could. The monster demanded to know if she came willingly: "Ye -- e -- es," she responded, trembling.

The beast smiled quite briefly to himself and said, "You are very good, and I am greatly obliged to you; honest man, go your ways tomorrow morning, but never think of coming here again."

"Farewell Beauty, farewell Beast," answered he, and immediately the monster withdrew. "Oh, daughter," said the merchant, embracing
Beauty, "I am nearly frightened to death. Believe me, you had better return home, and let me stay here."

"No, father," said Beauty, resolutely, "you shall set out tomorrow morning, and leave me to my destiny." They retired to their beds, thinking they should not close their eyes all night. But scarcely had their heads met their pillows than they fell fast asleep. In her dreams, Beauty saw a fine lady who came to her and said, "I am content, Beauty, with your good will. This good action of yours to sacrifice your own life to save your father's shall not go unrewarded." Beauty awoke, and told her father her dream, and though it helped to comfort him a little, he could not help crying bitterly when he took leave of her in the morning.

As soon as his silhouette had vanished from the horizon, Beauty sat down in the great hall, and fell to sobbing. But as she was a person of great resolution, she said her prayers, and resolved not to be uneasy the little time she had to live, for she firmly believed Beast would devour her that night.

Her tears spent, she began to notice that her surrounding were so lovely and it occurred to her that she might as well explore the palace and grounds a bit until then. The Beast's home was a delightful pleasant place, and she was extremely surprised upon finding a door, over which was written, "Beauty's Apartment." She opened it hastily, and was quite dazzled with the magnificence that reigned throughout. Amazed, her eyes rested upon a large library, a harpsichord, and several music books. "Well," said she to herself, "I see my time will not hang heavy upon my hands for want of amusement." Then she reflected, "Were I but to stay here a day, he would not have ordered all these preparations." This idea inspired her with courage; and opening the library she took a book, and read these words, in letters of gold:

Welcome Beauty, banish fear,
You are queen and mistress here.
Speak your wishes, speak your will,
Swift obedience meets them still.

"Alas," said she, with a sigh, "there is nothing I desire so much as to see my poor father, and know what he is doing." She had no sooner said this than casting her eyes on a great looking glass, to her great amazement, she saw her own home and her father arriving there with a very dejected countenance. Her sisters went to meet him, and notwithstanding their attempts to feign grief, their joy at having got rid of their sister was visible in every feature. In the next moment,
the vision disappeared, and Beauty took heart at this proof of Beast's willingness to allay her fears.

At noon she found dinner ready, and while at table, was entertained with an excellent concert of unseen music. But at night, as she was going to sit down to supper, she heard the noise Beast made, and could not help being terrified. "Beauty," said the monster, "will you give me leave to see you sup?"

"That is as you please," answered Beauty trembling.

"No," replied the Beast, "you alone are mistress here; you need only bid me gone, if my presence is troublesome, and I will immediately withdraw. But, tell me, do not you think me very ugly?"

"That is true," said Beauty, "for I cannot tell a lie. But I believe to be good of heart."

"So I am," said the monster, "so I am." But then, besides my ugliness, I have no sense. I know very well, that I am a poor, silly, stupid creature."

"'Tis no sign of folly to think so," replied Beauty, "for never did a fool know this, or had so humble an estimation of his own understanding."

"Eat then, Beauty," said the monster, "and amuse yourself in your palace, for everything here is yours. I should be unconsolable if you were not happy."

"You are most kind," answered Beauty. "I am touched by your kindness, and when I consider that, your deformity seems scarcely noticeable."

"Yes, yes," said the Beast, "my heart is good, but still I am a monster."

"Among mankind," says Beauty, "there are many that deserve that name more than you, and I prefer you, just as you are, to those, who, under a human form, hide a treacherous, corrupt, and ungrateful heart."

"If I had sense enough," replied the Beast, "I would replay your fine compliment to thank you, but I am so dull, that I can only thank you for your kind words."
Beauty ate a hearty supper, and had almost conquered her dread of the monster, when he asked her, "Beauty, will you be my wife?"

Breathless, she paused some time before she dared answer, for she was afraid of making him angry, if she refused. At last, however, she said trembling, "No, Beast." Immediately the poor monster began to sigh, and hissed so frightfully, that the whole palace echoed. But Beauty soon recovered from her fright, for Beast having said, in a mournful voice, "Then farewell, Beauty," left the room, turning back now and then to look at her as he went out.

When Beauty was alone, she felt a great deal of compassion for poor Beast. "Alas," said she, "Tis thousand pities that someone so good should be so ugly."

Beauty spent three months very contentedly in the palace. Every evening, Beast paid her a visit, and talked to her, during supper, very rationally, with plain good common sense, but never with what the world calls wit. Each day, Beauty discovered some new virtue in the monster, and as the days passed, she grew accustomed to his deformity. It was not long before she found herself looking forward to the evening when she knew he would visit. She would often check her watch to see when it would be nine, for the Beast never missed coming at that hour.

There was but one thing that gave Beauty any concern: that every night, before she went to bed, the monster always asked her to be his wife. One day she said to him, "Beast, I wish I could consent to marry you, but I cannot lead you to falsely believe that will ever happen. I shall always treasure you as a dearest friend, please be satisfied with this."

"I must," said the Beast, "For, alas! I know too well my own misfortune. But then I love you more than life itself. I know that I ought to think myself happy, that you will stay here; promise me never to leave me."

Beauty blushed at these words; she had seen in her mirror's reflection that her father had grown sick with pining for the loss of her. She longed to see him again. "I could indeed," answered she, "promise never to leave you entirely, were it not for one thing. I have so great a desire to see my father, that I fear I shall die if you do not let me see him one more time."

"I had rather die myself," said the monster, "than have you suffer any unhappiness. I will send you to your father. You shall remain with him, and poor Beast will die with grief."
"No," said Beauty, weeping, "I love you too well to be the cause of your death. I give you my promise to return in a week. You have shown me that my sisters are married, and my brothers gone to the army. Oly let me stay a week with my father, as he is alone."

"You shall be there tomorrow morning," said the Beast, "but remember your promise. You need only lay your ring on a table before you go to bed, when you are ready to come back. Farewell Beauty." Beast sighed, as usual, bidding her good night, and Beauty went to bed with a heavy heart at seeing him so miserable. As he had promised, she found herself at her father's house when she woke in the morning. Having rung a little bell, that was by her bedside, she saw the maid come, who, the moment she saw her, gave a loud shriek, at which her father ran upstairs, and thought he should have died with joy to see his dearest daughter again. He held her fast, locked in his arms for more than a quarter of an hour. Soon after, Beauty began to think of rising, and was afraid she had no clothes to wear but the maid told her, that she had just found, in the next room, a large trunk full of gowns, covered with gold and diamonds. Beauty thanked the good Beast for his kind care, and taking one of the plainest of them, she intended to make a present of the others to her sisters. Scarcely had she said so when the trunk disappeared. Her father told her that Beast insisted on her keeping them herself, and immediately both gowns and trunk reappeared.

Beauty dressed herself, and in the meantime sent for her sisters who hastened to their father's house with their husbands. They both appeared very unhappy. The eldest had married a gentleman, extremely handsome indeed, but so fond of himself that he could see nothing but his own dear self, and neglected his wife. The second had married a man of wit, but he only made use of it to plague and torment everybody, and his wife most of all. Beauty's sisters were sick with envy when they saw her dressed like a princess and more beautiful than ever. Nor could all her affection for them stifle their jealousy, which was ready to burst when she told them how happy she was. They went down into the garden to vent it in tears; and asked themselves in what way is this little creature better than us, that she should be so much happier? "Sister," said the oldest, "a thought just strikes my mind; let us endeavor to detain her above a week, and perhaps the silly monster will become so enraged at her for breaking her word, that he will devour her."

"Right, sister," answered the other, "therefore we must show her as much kindness as possible." After they had made this secret pact, they went up, and behaved so affectionately to their sister, that poor Beauty wept for joy. As the week drew to a close, they cried and tore
their hair, and seemed so sorry to part with her, that she promised to stay one week longer.

In the meantime, Beauty could not help reproaching herself for the pain she was likely to cause poor Beast, whom she sincerely loved and found she herself longing to see again. The tenth night she spent at her father's, she dreamed she was in the palace garden, and that she saw Beast extended on the great lawn. He seemed near death and reproached her with her ingratitude. Beauty started out of her sleep, and bursting into tears. "Am I not very wicked," said she, "to act so unkindly to this Beast who has done everything in his power to please me? Is it his fault if he is so ugly, and has so little sense? He is kind and good, and that is more than enough. Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with the monster than my sisters are with their husbands. It is neither wit, nor a fine person, in a husband, that makes a woman happy, but virtue, sweetness of temper, and a good heart, and Beast has all these. It is true, I do not feel the tenderness of affection for him, but I respect him and deeply value his friendship. I will not make him miserable. Were I to be so ungrateful, I should never forgive myself." Beauty rose, put her ring on the table, and then retired again. Scarce was she in bed before she fell asleep, and when she waked the next morning, she was overjoyed to find herself in the Beast's palace.

She put on one of her favorite dresses to please him, and waited for evening with the greatest impatience. At last, the wished-for hour came, the clock struck nine, and yet no Beast appeared. Beauty grew frantic that she had been the cause of his death; she ran crying and wringing her hands all about the palace, like one in despair. Having sought for him everywhere, she recollected her dream, and flew to the small stream in the garden, where she dreamed she saw him. There she found poor Beast stretched out, quite senseless, and, as she imagined, dead. She threw herself upon him without any dread, and finding his heart beat still, she fetched some water from the small stream, she poured it on his head. Beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty, "You forgot your promise, and I so despaired at having lost you, that I resolved to starve myself. Now that I have the happiness of seeing you once more, I die satisfied."

"No, dear Beast," said Beauty, "you must not die. Live to be my husband. From this moment, I give you my hand and swear to be none but yours. Alas! I thought I had only a friendship for you, but the grief I feel at the thought of losing you makes me see that I cannot live without you." Beauty scarce had pronounced these words, when she saw the palace sparkle with light and fireworks, instruments of music, everything seemed to give notice of some great event. She
turned to her dear Beast, for whom she trembled with fear; but how
great was her surprise! There was no Beast but at her feet, one of the
loveliest princes that eye ever beheld. He thanked her for having put
an end to the spell under which he had so long resembled a Beast.
Though this prince was worthy of all her attention, she cared only for
the Beast and asked where he was.

"You see him at your feet, said the prince. A wicked fairy had
condemned me to remain under that shape until a woman of good
heart should consent to marry me. The fairy likewise cast a spell
upon me to keep me stupid. Only you in all the world had the great
heart to be won by the goodness of my temper, and in offering you
my crown I cannot come near to repaying you."

Beauty was most happily surprised, and offered the charming prince
her hand to rise. They returned together into the palace where
Beauty was overjoyed to find her father and his whole family in the
great hall. They had been transported there by the beautiful lady who
appeared in her dream.

"Beauty," said this lady, "come and receive the reward of your
wisdom> You have chosen virtue over either wit or beauty, and
deserve to find a person in whom all these qualities are united. You
are going to be a great queen. I hope the throne will not lessen your
virtue, or make you forget yourself. As to you, ladies," said the fairy
to Beauty's two sisters, "I know your hearts, and the malice they
contain. Become two statues, but even statues, you shall still retain
your reason. You shall stand before your sister's palace gate, and it
will be your punishment to behold her happiness. It will not be in
your power to return to your former state until you own your faults
and so I am very much afraid that you will always remain statues.
Pride, anger, luttony, and idleness are sometimes conquered, but the
conversion of a malicious and envious mind is miracle we dare not
hope for."

Whereupon the fairy gave a stroke with her wand, and in a moment
all that were in the hall were transported into the prince's dominions.
His subjects received him with joy. He and Beauty married, and lived
together many years, and their happiness -- as it was founded on
virtue -- was complete.
APPENDICE II

Weekend at the Beach

It feels like such a long time since the last time I saw you. I know it's only been several weeks since I saw you. So far my summer has been great!

I spend my all my weekends at the beach. I am getting a nice tan and you can no longer say I am paler than you. I have been playing lots of volleyball, surfing and building a nice collection of sea shells. Just this past weekend I took second place in a sandcastle building contest!

On the weekdays I work. I drive an ice cream truck around and sell ice cream to the kids. It is so cool. It is a combination of the two things I love most, ice cream and kids. The pay isn't too great but I love the job so much.

I hope the summer's been going well for you too. There's only a month and a half left in summer vacation and after that it's back to school. Would you like to meet up some time before school starts?