



Belle: The Mysterious Message

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It isn't easy being the prisoner of the fearsome Beast, but Belle is making the most of it. There are so many rooms to explore in the elaborate castle-including an amazing library. This may not be so bad after all! Things get even more interesting when Belle discovers a secret message hidden in one of the books. She soon realizes she's hot on the trail of a decades-old mystery! Will Belle, with the help of Lumiere, an enchanted candelabrum, and a teacup named Chip, be able to solve this beastly case?

Belle: The Mysterious Message Details

Date : Published January 5th 2010 by Disney Press (first published 2010)

ISBN : 9781423129776

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Format : Paperback 96 pages

Genre : Childrens, Young Adult, Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Juvenile

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From Reader Review Belle: The Mysterious Message for online ebook

Amara Tanith says

Movie tie-in material isn't exactly known for being high-quality stuff. When it comes to tie-in books, then, there are two avenues that are most often followed:

A) The uncreative novelization that adds nothing to the story and pales in comparison to the film experience.
OR

B) The tie-in book, usually for children's movies, that specifically contradicts the movie's plot, characterization, or lesson.

Disney favors the latter.

In the case of *Belle: The Mysterious Message*, Kitty Richards has written a midquel to Disney's 1991 movie, *Beauty and the Beast*. As my fellow '90's children may remember, this movie in fact already has a film midquel in the form of 1997's *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas* (as well the three/four shorts in 1998/2003's *Beauty and the Beast: Belle's Magical World*.) As for why Disney insists on adding scenes to the original picture instead of moving forward with the characters, I haven't the slightest idea.

But it certainly creates a load of continuity problems. That's the problem with a midquel: if you use the main characters of the source material, you're adding character development that was never present in the original. And that's a big problem in a movie like *Beauty and the Beast*, where the entire story revolves around the main characters growing closer. If you have important "learning to understand each other" scenes in the spin-off midquels, suddenly the movie itself fundamentally changes.

In the case of *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas*, this is striking. Tim Curry's character, the organ and former court composer, Forte, is an antagonist to both Belle and the Beast with the goal of keeping them from falling in love. Obviously, this determination to keep them apart and the resulting danger does a lot to bring the couple together... and that makes absolutely no sense in *Beauty and the Beast* continuity. There's simply no room for this character development in the original film.

Belle: The Mysterious Message isn't nearly as jarring, but it's there nonetheless. For half of the book, as a matter of fact, it seemed as if the problem would have been avoided by focusing on Belle and her mission, and ignoring the Beast completely. Unfortunately, the second half dashed that hope; but more on that later.

This short mystery takes place sometime after the *Beauty and the Beast* library scene and sometime before Belle leaves the castle. In the story, Belle and Chip discover a dusty old book hidden beneath one of the library's bookshelves. Belle starts reading the fairy tale within to her enchanted friends... only for everyone to face disappointment when they realize the last chapter of the book is missing.

As it turns out, the Beast ripped out the last chapter as a child; his tutor then decided to hide the pages, leaving clues for how the young prince could get the pages back. Unfortunately for Belle, the tutor left before the Beast ever found the book under the shelf and the first clue it contained.

So Belle and her friends start to follow the tutor's clues in hopes of finding the end to their story.

Unfortunately for the original movie's continuity, they're forced to bring the Beast in on the plan, and Belle and the Beast have several scenes bringing them together as friends, completely in disregard of the movie's relationship dynamics.

Still, for all its discontinuity-making flaws, *Belle: The Mysterious Message* is a nice, short mystery for any young Disney princess fan. Perhaps a little boring for an adult reader, but a child should find it enjoyable enough.

Daisy says

Read this for fun.

I've always been a lover of disney and when I went in the Disney Store today and saw it, I thought why not. It's a really quick and easy read but it's a lot of fun. There's mystery in it and obviously it's very cute.

Definitely read it to your kids, or if you're like me and like to feed your inner child, take a break from what you're doing and go on a short adventure.

Noe says

I didn't like that the Beast got his things taken away and his book thrown under the shelf. I liked that Belle got him his soldier and helped him.

Kelli says

great for little girls! My four year old could listen to it over and over as long as I don't get tired of reading it! Little clues to solve and helps reinforce that princesses can be smart too. Thank goodness it wasn't about dresses or balls or crowns or anything like that.

Noelle says

This is a cute little Beauty and the Beast story. I absolutely loved the illustrations in the book.

One thing that bothers me about all Beauty and the Beast stories is that none are set after the spell has been broken. Therefore, we never read a story in which Beast is human again. This book is one of those stories.

I recommend this book as a great story for those girls who love princesses and are newer readers, or for those people who are die-hard Disney Princess fans.

Tia says

It was very interesting and nice

Joanna says

I read a translated version of this to help improve my reading in french. In french it was my correct reading level, sadly, so I could relate how a child reading this felt. As a Disney fanatic, it was a cute little additional story before Beast turns back to his princely self. The illustrations were beautiful to look at throughout the book. The story itself was interesting enough while reading and deciphering the translation. I read it much slower than an adult would and possibly slower than someone on my reading level since I was translating it word for word while learning new phrases and vocabulary. The clues in the story keeps it moving along, but in the end it wraps up too quickly for my tastes. There are new characters mentioned in the book, but I wish there was a bit more character depth even among the original characters of the movie. Overall, kids will enjoy reading this new tale within the original tale. It's a nice little chapter book for kids and Disney fanatics, but as an adult reader I was left wanting more.

Amanda says

this is my 3rd time to read this book and each time i read it i like it even more! its a fun and easy read!

Jenna Knepp says

I liked how you turned a fantastic Disney movie to a mystery chapter book

Isabella says

Belle: The mysterious message was about a book with a missing chapter and Belle and her friends found clues when they asked the Beast where the gnome was. They reset the whole mystery hunt for the Beast because it was really meant for him. The Beast said he had a favorite spot to watch the clouds and then they saw the gnome and found the missing chapter. My favorite character was Belle because she was a girl. I liked Belle: The Mysterious Message because it was a mystery.

Amanda Mic Perkins says

Very good. Honestly, 3/4 of the clues stumped me. Which just goes to show how weak thought out this book is.

Isabelle Maria says

It was amazing

Sarah says

This story takes place during Belle's stay at the castle, sometime after the Beast has given her the library. It's a fast-paced mystery adventure, where Belle shows her determination to figure out pieces to the Beast's past (and a good story she just has to know the end to), and that doing kind things for people can go a long way. Young readers who are fans of Belle, Disney, Beauty and the Beast, and mystery-adventures will love this Disney Princess chapter book!

Johnny says

I'm going to get a little absurd in writing this review, but children's books don't have to be mindless, right? This is the fifth book in the Disney Princess early chapter books series, and my daughter absolutely loves every one of them; however, the plot of this one doesn't totally fit with the plot of the film and the subsequent musical version, both of which my daughter is intimately acquainted with. In this book, Belle is still trapped at the Beast's castle, so it fills in some of the gaps sped through via musical montage in the film. The Beast has already shown Belle the library in the antecedent action, and in it she discovers a book called The Knight Who Was Afraid of Dragons. She sits up late at night reading it to some of the supporting animate objects from the film, but comes to the end only to find the last chapter missing. She does however find a clue that leads her and the enchanted household items on a curious scavenger hunt around the castle, all placed there years earlier by the Beast's former tutor who hid the last pages of the book to teach him a lesson after an especially petulant outburst.

All of that is fine and appropriate for the intended audience, but my four-year-old daughter knew exactly when this is all supposed to take place in terms of the original Disney story (she's only seen the movie twice, but listens to the Broadway version often), and even she questioned why the Beast is so mean to Belle when he makes his cameo appearance in the book. In the original Disney film, the seeds of love have already been sown by the time he shows her the library. (And while I'm on the subject, when exactly did this enchantress change him into a Beast? The film suggests years and years have passed; that darned rose is supposed to drop its last petal on his twenty-first birthday, so was he a pre-adolescent when she turned him into the Beast? That's kind of harsh, isn't it?)

At the end of the book, there's a cute suggestion that the Beast and Belle's teamwork that results in their discovery of the missing chapter leads directly into Mrs. Potts's final lyrics in "There's Something There," but even that irked me since the scene in the book takes place outdoors and (after I checked) the scene in the film takes place in front of a roaring fire indoors.

I still gave it four stars, but as an adult reader I just crave books that are both entertaining for my young kids and yet not mindless for the adults who have to read them aloud!

Lily Jo Cullip says

Do you like books? Belle loves reading books. Belle read the knight who is afraid of dragons one day he had to fight one! But there was a missing chapter. Will they find the missing chapter? Find clues to figure out what will happen to the knight who is afraid of dragons.
