



2002

Beauty and the Beast

John D. Newman

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr>

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Newman, John D. (2002) "Beauty and the Beast," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 23 : Iss. 2 , Article 33.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol23/iss2/33>

This Play Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Children's Book and Media Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

Congdon, Constance. *Beauty and the Beast*. 1992. 51 pp.

A 3-6

Belle is a cheerful, industrious maiden who takes care of her three selfish, squabbling siblings. When her widower father ventures to another land, he is sheltered in a castle belonging to an ominous beast who releases him on condition that he send Belle in his stead. Belle, against her father's wishes, goes to the beast and, over the course of time, learns to love the creature whom she originally despised.

The dialogue of this play is rich and poetic and the characters of the father, the heroine, and the beast are resonating. The adaptation retains much the strength of the original tale and would engage the adults in the audience at least as well as the children.

However, the characters of Belle's siblings, are drawn with cartoonish simplicity and while they seem intended as comic relief, their buffoonery seems to belie the emotional reality of the main plot. When Belle returns from the beast's castle, she tries to assert herself and overcome the passivity which has made her a slave to her family's caprices. However, Belle backs away from her new-found power and never fully achieves the transformation which she initiates.

The script demands extensive and expensive costuming, but the demands on other production elements are more modest. While many scenes would probably have benefitted from the high production values of the Children's Theatre Company, the script generally yields itself to simpler theatrical solutions.

This play is found in:

Jennings, Coleman A. *Eight Plays for Children: The New Generation Play Project*. University of Texas Press, 1999. ISBN 0-292-74056-5 cloth, 0-292-74057-3 paperback. \$44.95 cloth, \$19.95 paperback. 479 pp.

A Reviewed by John D. Newman